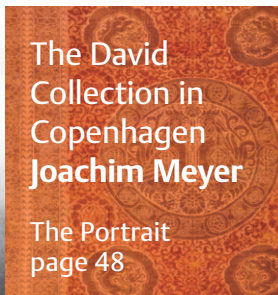


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IIAS

International Institute
for Asian Studies

theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

Cultural
57
Heritage



The Focus pages 17-32 “Cultural heritage projects mediate what we behold, and what we are told, of the past,” states guest editor Imran bin Tajudeen. “They involve representations and narrations of, and interventions on, aspects of the histories of specifically-defined communities within contemporary frames of reference and signification.”

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The Focus Cultural Heritage

17-18
The politics of cultural heritage

The term "heritage" shares with another equally slippery word "tradition" the basic meaning of that which is handed down, writes **Imran bin Tajudeen**. It is thus by definition a dynamic and subjective notion.

Start Here



19
European lessons for Asian heritage studies

There are lessons to be learned from European experiments with heritage promotion and conservation, says **Michael Herzfield**, who warns of the dangers of repeating the less salutary effects in Asian contexts.



20-21
Authenticity and hybridity: Scrutinising heritage

Nira Wickramasinghe builds on her earlier work on hybrid objects in Sri Lanka under colonial rule that traced the genealogy of the idea of authenticity, a concept central to all heritage claims, back to pre-colonial and colonial pasts.



22-23
Architectural conservation of the mosque

Architectural historic preservation has been used to express or represent national, Islamic and even ethnic identity. **Hasan Uddin Khan** investigates agency and utility in the conservation of religious built environments.



24-25
From loot to trophy

Mrinalini Rajagopalan discusses the curious sale of the Mogol Sultan Akber's Palace in London in 1843, just one example of the disregard shown by British colonizers towards cultural heritage in India.



26-27
The colonial bungalow in India

The bungalow as a house form is a contested concept of heritage in the Indian context, explain **Miki Desai and Madhavi Desai**. It is often perceived in scholarly discourses as a building type with a strong imperial ancestry.



28-29
Framing and representation of cultural heritage

In tracing the evolution of perspectives regarding heritage, **Hazel Hahn** treats a range of architectural types and underlines the need to understand and protect intangible heritage and urban historical heritage in a broad sense.



30-31
Constructing cultural heritage

As **Sarah Moser** shows, several new cities under construction in Indonesia and Malaysia exemplify attempts to revive interpretations of local cultural heritage in a post-modern, city-centric idiom.



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Relics, replicas, and the generals in the 'fairyland' of Myanmar

Naypyidaw, Myanmar's new administrative capital, is the latest example of the ruling generals' policy to engineer and re-create the country's cultural heritage, a policy started in the mid 1990s, writes **Paul Franck**.

IIAS vision

I would like to reflect on the global character of IIAS. Just a few weeks ago, IIAS, as the secretariat of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), worked closely with the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) to organize in Honolulu, Hawai'i, one of the largest ever conferences on the field of Asian studies. The success of this enterprise can be appreciated in a few numbers: over 5,000 participants, 770 panels, and a quite remarkably balanced representation of Asian, European, American, and Australian scholars.

Philippe Peycam

OF COURSE, THE EVENT'S LOCATION IN HAWAII and the island's legendary hospitality contributed greatly to this success. The conference really served its purpose as a meeting-ground between scholars from different parts of the world and as a tremendous catalyst for new intellectual and institutional connections. ICAS 8 will again take place in Asia in the summer of 2013. The future host will, no doubt, draw inspiration from the 2011 AAS-ICAS joint conference. This latter achievement is the result of a longstanding collaboration between IIAS and the AAS. We will continue this dialogue, hoping to repeat such a unique global gathering of Asia scholars in a not too distant future. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my predecessor, Prof. Wim Stokhof, one of the principal architects of ICAS, and subsequently of the Hawai'i success. We at IIAS were moved when, prior to the AAS Presidential address, our American colleagues paid a special homage to Wim (the full text of this tribute is reproduced by my colleague Dr. Paul van der Velde on p.44).

The Hawai'i achievement is quintessentially IIAS, with its ability to function as a truly global platform on Asia and Asian studies. This global vision is all the more perceptible in that IIAS recently embraced the idea of "Global Asia" as one of its new thematic clusters: forms of Asian connections and projection in the world, through transnational/regional and intercultural movements of people, ideas, goods, ideologies, etc. This also includes connections within and across different parts of the massive geographical region called Asia. A few recent initiatives taken as parts of this cluster are worth highlighting here. The first is this IIAS-Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (Singapore) original partnership aimed at encouraging research on intra-Asian connectivity. The joint IIAS-ISEAS fellowship positions now being offered are intended for young doctoral graduates whose work relates "to the ways in which Asian polities and societies have interacted over time through religious, cultural, and economic exchanges and diasporic networks". The 2011-2012 sub-theme is about "tracing patterns of intra-Asian transnational connectivity throughout and across modern colonial empires". Another new "Global Asia" initiative which IIAS is pursuing is rather more unusual and at an exploratory stage. The programme Asian Studies in Africa (ASA) aims to initiate what could become a triangular transcontinental capacity-building programme involving higher education partners in Africa, Asia and Europe. Its gestation is the result of an unprecedented collaboration between the Institute for Humanities in Africa, at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS) in Amsterdam, the Africa Studies Centre in Leiden, and, of course, IIAS. A first workshop was held in Leiden last December. The programme's rationale lies in the realization that although the countries and peoples of Africa and Asia have over centuries been connected through circuits of trade, socio-cultural exchanges as well as settlement of communities, the present forms of intensive relationships of capital investments, commerce, political alliances and cultural transfers of knowledge, call for more systematic scholarly engagements with the Asian and African realities. The initiators of the programme also recognize the need for a critical infrastructure of humanities and social science knowledge in both regions, in which a focus on Asian Studies in African institutions – and ultimately African studies in Asian institutions – becomes an essential part.

I can not end these few words about IIAS's global vision without mentioning the present newsletter, and especially its departing Managing Editor, Anna Yeadel, who, for the past four years, has devoted her energy and talent to making it the wonderful global periodical on Asian studies that it is today. On behalf of IIAS, I wholeheartedly thank Anna and wish her all the best and continuing success. I also wish to thank Marie Lenstrup, who has edited the present issue in Anna's absence. In my previous note, I mentioned how we were in the midst of revamping our communication policy by building more synergies between this newsletter, our website and the various databases resulting from years of projects and partnerships. Two new positions have been recently filled: Sonja Zweegers is our new Newsletter Editor, and Sandra Dehue our new Content Manager. Both Sonja and Sandra have considerable experience in creative editing and communication, and both specialise on Asia. I am delighted to welcome them to the IIAS team!

Philippe Peycam
 Director of IIAS
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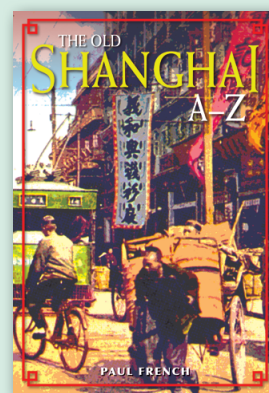
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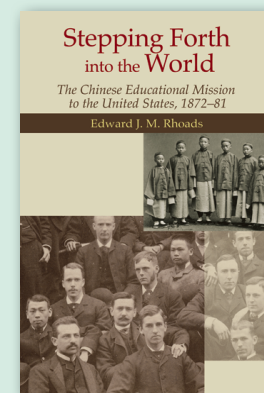
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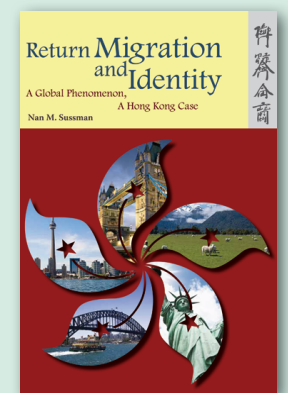
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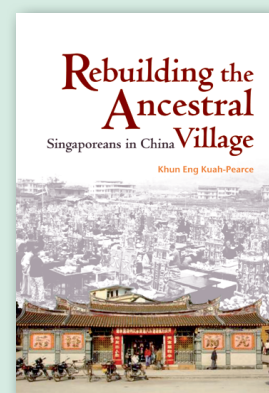
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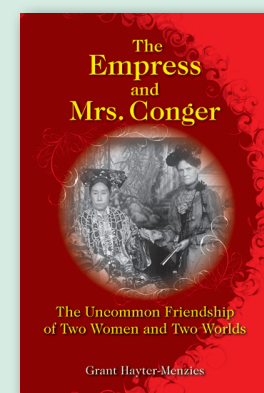
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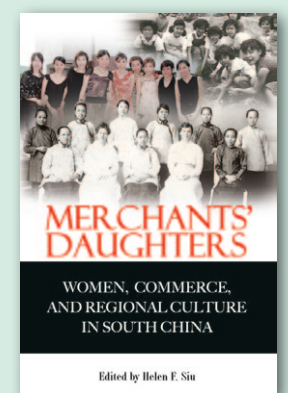
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Postcolonial global cities: The Indian experience

Grappling with the facets and nuances of postcolonial cities is a daunting task fraught with complexity, given the much contested nature of the 'post-colonial' concept. The colonial experience has often been taken as a hegemonic, unifying category. This ill-equips one to deal with, or account for, societal or experiential differences.

It leads us inevitably to reduce the manifold divergences and diversities manifest in the colonial experience to the oversimplification of a domination-subjugation relationship played out by the two actors (the colonizers and the colonized).

Swati Bhattacharya and Jayesh G



whereas in Delhi the result was a 'tale of two cities' with Old and New Delhi – the latter being the imperial capital separated from the former by large parks and *maidans*. This was done to maintain a distinction between the colonized and the colonizer and to indicate the superiority and homogeneity of the latter.

However, colonizers' desire for exclusivity and separation was severely constrained because of the very contradictory contours of colonial life. The colonizer had a desire for virgin native territory; however, the indispensable role played by the native in colonial life made this desire impossible to meet (Chattopadhyay, 2000). Although having the natives constantly within visual range was often distasteful to the colonizers, they were unable to cope without them in foreign lands. The great protective walls around mansions in the White town and the huge masonry gates and iron railings enclosing their compounds, while appearing to exclude the natives and emphasize strength and superiority over them, were in reality negotiated as a result of the presence of these natives as servants within those very protective spaces. The articulation of servant's spaces (as in European houses) could not be accomplished here because of the constant fear of disease. The building of servant's quarters, though an architectural afterthought, breached the perceived impervious border between the spaces of the server and the served (Chattopadhyay, 2000). The very perception of natives as threats made it imperative to position them at the centre of colonizers' attention.

Secondly, the fetish for exclusivity led colonizers to use their homes as recreational spaces. They accommodated large numbers of visiting friends and relatives within spatially limited zones of comfort. The colonizer thus had perforce to withdraw from spaces in which he had expected to tread freely. This was another stark rebuttal of their aspirations for unlimited control over the colonized.

Thirdly, though the residences seem at first sight to have been built on a European pattern, a closer examination reveals that they were in fact developed more along the lines of native housing patterns, which were characterized by scant regard for privacy. Not only in their geographical space, but also in their personal lives, thoughts and emotions did the colonizers compromise on privacy. For example, almost all conversation took place within earshot of native domestic servants.

Destruction of the native city

Fourthly, but most importantly, declaring the walled city of Old Delhi a 'slum' and attempting to obliterate it (Hosagrahar, 2001) may be read as a violent reaction to and a protest against the perceived 'inferiority' of the colonizer and hence their 'defeat' in the face of well-organized, disciplined, urban, civilized and, by virtue of these qualities, an ominous colonized people. The total destruction of existing structures and buildings of public utility and civic facilities (Priya, 1993) such as the closing of large drinking water storage tanks, sewers and drainage systems and the conversion of clean drinking water canals to sewer pipes, bear testimony to the colonizers' reaction to and their fervent attempts at remedying their 'defeat' vis-à-vis the colonized. These phenomena are clear negations of the idea of uni-linearity inherent in accounts of both plain domination and plain resistance.

This indicates clear reasons for the haphazard nature of spatial development in the native sections of colonial cities. The 'chance erected, chance directed' nature of these cities is good proof of fractured colonial identities, wherein original plans formulated by the colonizer assumed a different form on the ground post-implementation because of overt as well as covert pressure from the colonized and subsequent reactions from the colonizers against them. Such cities also draw attention to the irony of the 'civilizing mission' of the colonizers, when it was actually their actions that brought about chaos and disharmony.

The articulation of social (re)organization would help us better understand the fracture. Colonial policies brought about far-flung social changes, prime among them the creation of the Indian intelligentsia. This intelligentsia was an outcome of colonial policies and a product of Macaulay's system of education. It was from the intelligentsia that the lower to middle administrative and managerial core of the empire was drawn. This class stepped into numerous white-collar jobs created by the colonizers, and later also came to fill higher-level administrative positions in the imperial government.

A democratic tug-of-war

It was envisaged that this native-born class would facilitate and consolidate imperial rule by working in close alliance with the colonizers while mediating at their behest with the native population. However, the colonial experience of antagonism between European interests and the Indian intelligentsia can hardly be concealed. The records of the Calcutta European Association clearly illustrate that the dominant racial minority of the colonizers felt a constant pressure from antagonistic native interests in commerce and administration.

'POSTCOLONIALISM' CAME INTO USE and has traveled a long way to respond to earlier unanswered questions regarding colonialism. However, many commentators have gradually brought to light and unfolded the dangers of its 'monolithic' and 'totalizing' tendencies (Gandhi, 1999). A large body of postcolonial literature has woven itself around the study of this dichotomy of either a completely smothering European colonialism or a body of movements and practices resisting colonialism or opposing it. This poses difficulties in identifying similarities across the constructed divide separating the experiences of the colonizer and the colonized. Generalizing tendencies pulled to such extremes make postcolonialism vulnerable to its much criticized bent towards Euro-centrism.

Thus, we believe that such isolated understanding fails to grasp the totality of the phenomenon. It goes without saying that the colonial encounter was usually marked by the massive domination of the colonizer; however, we contest that this picture is complete without the narrative of the intermittent defeat and moments of subjugation of colonizers themselves.

Fractured identities

Colonization was not an absolute wherein colonizers dictated, hegemonized, directed and controlled while the colonized emulated, resisted or suffered. The experience of the colonizer too was marked by that sense of 'victimization' that is more often than not attributed just to the colonized. What has often been obscured in accounts of the colonial encounter is the fact that colonizers in several instances felt like the colonized. Thus, colonization was not just a uni-dimensional act in which the colonizer dominated the colonized. No, colonialism was characterized by the frequent crossing of boundaries in the 'given' roles of the colonizer and the colonized where even the former experienced 'ignominy' and the latter experienced 'glory'.

Thus, we identify postcolonial identities as fractured identities entailing moments of 'domination' by the colonized and 'subjugation' of the colonizer and not as monolithic identities of colonizers as rulers and the colonized as the ruled over; the terms domination and subjugation are subject to qualification, as domination by the colonized is always highly limited and subjugation of the colonizer never meant a total collapse. This fracture is further influenced by the proximity of both groups to the centre of colonial power, implying that postcolonial identities are far from being rigidly homogenous or uniform. Rather, they present a mixed bag of similarities and dissimilarities.

These variegated identities were inherited by postcolonial cities and, as we shall see, came to bear upon the destinies

of these cities and to guide their development. The postcolonial city is a site of vibrant contestation wherein innumerable antagonisms and negotiations are played out in the bid to turn global. Here, we shall demonstrate how postcolonial identities came to formulate the global destinies of two important Indian cities: Delhi and Kolkata.

Below, we first deal with understanding postcolonial identities and subsequently aim to understand the nature of the two postcolonial global cities Delhi and Kolkata based on inherited fractured postcolonial identities. We do not just recount well known historical details; rather we focus on analyzing and comprehending these events in context, as a means to understanding the postcolonial global city more comprehensively.

To dominate or to be dominated

Prevailing literature on postcolonial identities suggests that the colonizer was a controller and that the colonized were sufferers, emulators or resisters. The identities of colonizer and colonized are defined in black and white, as the suppressor and the suppressed (active or passive) respectively. However, this is a partial truth. Postcolonial identities are fractured. The intermittent 'domination' of the colonized over the colonizer has to be recognized.

Thus, the colonizers' identities as being controllers throughout were not monolithic – they were fractured with bouts of 'defeat' as well. The same is true of the identities of the colonized. Their identities were not restricted to being active or passive subjects. There was a fracture here as they also 'dominated' at sanguine points in time. The colonizer faced such 'suffering' and on many accounts 'resisted' the colonized, which suggests that we need to break out of earlier totalizing accounts of postcolonial identities on the basis of arguments in support of fractured identities that successfully debunk the notion of a single identity.

This may be understood through two historical articulations: spatial (re)organization and social (re)organization. Though spatial (re)organization was carried out so as to give way to colonial aspirations of unbound control over the colonized, it was badly shaken and gave way to negotiation between spaces earmarked for the colonizer and for the colonized.

Colonial space

In both the cities of Delhi and Calcutta, the colonial desire for strict boundaries to separate the rulers from the ruled led to the creation of separate spaces that were manifested in clear architectural symbols of imperialism and a distinct geographical separation. In Calcutta, the White and Black towns resulted,

Above: A window in Kolkata. Photo by Lecercle

Colonization was not just a uni-dimensional act in which the colonizer dominated the colonized. No, colonialism was characterized by the frequent crossing of boundaries in the 'given' roles of the colonizer and the colonized where even the former experienced 'ignominy' and the latter experienced 'glory'.

The Calcutta Municipal Corporation was an important body through which most developmental works were directed. The Calcutta Municipal Act of 1875 gave a majority in the Corporation to natives to whom the appointed European Chairman had to pay heed. This proved to be apocalyptic for European business interests as the Corporation brought within its purview the welfare of the city's native population. To this end, several licenses were revoked or refused to Europeans and many construction projects were held up due to the inconvenience that they would cause to natives. An example of this was the license for a jute *godown* (warehouse) that was withheld from James Finley, a powerful businessman, because the project would have troubled the native residents of the area. The European community appealed to the British government to alter the constitution of the Corporation, and the native elected population was subsequently reduced by the Municipal Amendment Act of 1899.

The Corporation's constitution was made democratic again by the then Minister of Local Self-Government, Surendranath Banerjee, in 1923. As a result, the 1924 municipal elections witnessed the first native elected Mayor of Calcutta. The Corporation thus regained its earlier flavour and directed many welfare activities towards natives. A number of free primary schools and medical relief services came to be established. Electricity rates for local consumers were reduced after pressure from the Corporation, while strikes and closures became common. Moreover, the Corporation took to paying tribute to 'martyred terrorists' through municipal resolutions. All this intimidated the colonizers who sought to remedy this anomaly by capitalizing on the plurality of the native society and introducing separate electorates.

The criminal underworld

In Delhi too, sections of the intelligentsia sought to protect the interests of the native population in the face of a conscious policy of neglect and destruction of Old Delhi in favor of the imperial Delhi of Lutyen. The establishment of the Delhi Improvement Trust to look into the 'welfare' of Old Delhi reflected this well. Additionally, colonizers had to contend with a new commercial elite who, with their growing clout, were also compelling the colonizers to give way.



Left: The Lotus temple, the famous Bahá'í House of Worship in Delhi. Photo by Ranjith Shenoy.

Another social entity that often 'victimized' the colonizers was the underworld that was another outcome of the social upheaval caused by colonial policies. The reports of the Justices of Peace and the Penal Code identified and codified crimes which included a plethora of non-harmful native practices and behaviours. One such native practice was the enactment of satirical street plays where the lower classes targeted native commercial elites.

Reining in a section of the colonized was one way of mitigating the intimidation that the colonizers faced. However, records reveal that the more intense the punishment, the more accomplished the criminals became at organizing and implementing their crimes. With every adoption of a stronger stance by the colonizers, criminals were further emboldened.

Noteworthy is the number of instances where the colonizer had to give in. Not only were they themselves intimidated by criminals, they also caved in to vociferous demands and lobbying by the native commercial elite who wanted sections of the native population restricted. Furthermore, public punishments did not horrify the native population, but rather attracted them to spectacles of 'villainous heroes meeting their ends' (Banerjee, 2003). Such colonial practices compelled criticism from home, too, forcing colonizers to backtrack and shift the arena of punishment to the privacy of jails.

These incidents demonstrate the rupture in the perceived monolithic identities of the colonizer and the colonized as subjugator and subjugated respectively. The experiences of colonizer and colonized were complex: the colonized, too, 'dominated', pressurized and forced the colonizers into changing their stance, opting for alternatives and stepping down.

The building of servant's quarters, though an architectural afterthought, breached the perceived impervious border between the spaces of the server and the served.

Proximity to power centres

The colonial experience bore many shades. It did not just represent victimization of the colonized, although that constituted a substantial portion of it. It was not a unilateral act of rampant domination by the colonizers or unrelieved suffering (or resistance) for the colonized. The archives at our disposal view the colonized either as active or passive subjects. This perception must be relegated with the understanding that roles were reversed between the colonizer and the colonized at several points in time when the lives and ambitions of the colonizers were restricted, frustrated and constrained. The colonized also found a number of avenues to experience moments of domination and control.

This fracture was further affected by the proximity of the colonized and the colonizer to the colonial power centre. Proximity affected the degree to which their identities would be fractured through a negotiation of their roles. That is to say that nearer the centre of power, moments of victory for the colonized were fewer given the resources and strength that colonizers at the power centre could field against the 'domination' of the colonized. Likewise, a greater distance from the power centre gave the colonized greater leeway and compelled the colonizer to give way more frequently.

Both Calcutta and Delhi were centres of power at varying junctures during the colonial experience. Prior to 1912, when the imperial capital was Calcutta, the opportunities of the colonized to 'dominate' were infrequent and rather limited, as evidenced by the municipal amendments mentioned above. On the other hand, being distant from this centre Delhi could gather the wherewithal to become a parallel centre of power for the revolutionaries of the 1857 revolt. This was one incident marked by a long period of 'domination' by the colonized as it proved difficult for colonizers to get through to these revolutionaries.

After the imperial capital shifted to Delhi, the 'victimization' of the colonizer became more pronounced in Calcutta. The outcomes of ongoing competition between European and Indian interests in Calcutta are indicative of this. The colonized could make the colonizer yield much more way in the form of commerce, welfare activities directed through the administration towards the native population, concessions extracted from European interests by various segments of the colonized, and so on. The elected representatives in Calcutta, too, had a freer hand as compared to those in Delhi, who had to abandon a number of priorities such as the development of Old Delhi.

At the time of India's independence, the postcolonial identities in the two cities Delhi and Calcutta differed from each other in terms of their degree of fracture. In Delhi identities were less fractured as compared to those in Calcutta.

Old colonizers and new global forces

Postcolonial identities were thus fluid. What logically follows is that we must view even the colonizers as postcolonial people as the colonial experience extends also to the colonizer who has drawn much from the colonial venture. The postcolonial identities of these postcolonial people gave postcolonial cities a substantial portion of their present form. But are identities like outfits to be worn or discarded as required? It would be pertinent to answer this by accepting that there may be multiple layers of identities, evolving with time, overlapping each other and not necessarily at odds. After independence, Delhi was retained as the Indian capital. Hence, there was not much change from its earlier position as a power centre comprising the colonizer and the colonized, except that both sides had evolved in keeping with international changes. So in Delhi, inherited, less-fractured postcolonial identities largely remained. Erstwhile colonizers made way for global forces focused more on the economic, cultural, ideological and social fronts rather than the territorial. Colonizer groups were further diluted by new powers from various quarters of the globe, whereas the colonized became citizens of independent nation-states. Delhi has witnessed very infrequent 'victimization' from these global forces although incidences do exist.

One example is the planning and development initiative when the provisional Delhi Development Authority was established (along with the Town Planning Organization under the Chairman of the Delhi Improvement Trust). Entities like the Ford Foundation Consultant Team made their presence felt as early as 1955 and assisted in preparing a master plan for the development of the city. Despite the presence of global forces, the new plan, in accordance with an earlier indigenous plan, prioritized city development rather than 'slum clearance'.

Another instance is the feminist movement that arrived (largely but not exclusively) as white middle class feminism and made its way into the capital where it came to be negotiated in the context of a home grown feminist movement.

Towards a global city

Contrastingly, there are innumerable examples of the relatively free influence of global forces in Delhi. (By 'global forces' we mean much more than just economic forces – rather, this includes a whole gamut of ideas, practices, conventions, and so on.) For instance, attempts at 'beautifying' and 'modernizing' the city have entailed a wholesale import of global ideas which have met negligible 'direction' or 'control'. The increase in the number of malls, iconic buildings and export villages along with a simultaneous relegation of the poor to the peripheries of the city through frequent land development or rehabilitation schemes (Priya, 1993; Ramachandran, 2003) are evidence of this. These exotic places have little utility when it comes to issues of development. However, they are seen as essential and important strides on the path to becoming a robust global city.

Building such exotic locations are also steps towards establishing a cultural space to facilitate interaction with global forces. These places are lined with global eating joints, apparel brands, technology stores and so on which help familiarize residents with the various ideas promulgated by global forces. Not only these spaces, but also these ideas hold great appeal and thus, 'state-of-the-art' technology, communication and innovation are implemented almost uncontested. A recent example is the establishment of the BRT (Bus Rapid Transport) system in certain sections of the city. The arrangement emerged as highly unwieldy given the density of vehicular traffic in the city. However, the enthusiasm marking its implementation was noteworthy. Delhi has thus gradually evolved from being a space carved out by global forces to one carved out for global forces, the city itself keen to cater to these global forces on their own terms.

Kolkata on its own terms

However, Calcutta (now Kolkata) has continued to retain its distance from the power centre and therefore its inherited highly-fractured postcolonial identities have provided ample opportunities for 'dominating' and 'controlling' global forces. Thus, global forces were presented with a number of bottlenecks starting in 1953 when the city witnessed violent protests against a tram fare hike for second class passengers. The movement against the privately owned British tram company assumed such magnitude (including mob violence, assault on the state machinery and public property), that the state government had to suspend the price rise and refer the matter to a tribunal. Numerous companies faced closure due to their inability to cope with this 'domination' and as a protest against it. Only much later did they return to the city. Cultural global forces also took some time to create a niche for themselves in the city. Most global fast food chains were absent for quite long and found their way into Kolkata much later than into other large Indian cities (where these influences soon went 'glocal', as in the localization of the Global Chicken McGrill by McDonalds who introduced such items as the McAloo Tikki Burger (Potato Kebab Burger).

Robin Evans reminds us that spatial organization initiates the processes of social inclusion or exclusion. The early absence and the highly protracted subsequent development in Kolkata of spaces of interaction with global forces signals the balance that the city desires in its interaction with global forces. It would be difficult, premature or rather wrong to say that Kolkata does not wish to figure as a global city on the inter-national map. But catch is that it wants to do so on its own terms by maintaining an edge over the global forces. This constraint is not often acceptable to these global forces and is viewed by them as arbitrary obstruction.

Delhi vs. Kolkata

Given this, how do Delhi and Kolkata stand as postcolonial global cities? As we have seen, Delhi is less likely to 'dominate' global forces and oblige them to change their stance; indeed, the city has granted them enough space to flex their muscles. It has presented them with few obstacles and hence has been able to attract much foreign investment. Delhi has also allowed social and cultural imports that have greatly helped transform its appearance and soul into that of a global city. It fits well in the scheme of global forces. The city has greatly internalized its inherited postcolonial identities and there seems no great possibility of strangling global forces in the city. Delhi being the capital, maintaining its 'global' stance is viewed as essential. Its future strides in this direction also seem unhindered at present.

Kolkata, on the other hand, witnessed a steady withdrawal of global forces, especially on the economic and developmental front. The perceived capriciousness of global economic forces in particular was dealt with heavy-handedly, despite the ideological affiliations of those in power. Differences in ideology did not matter as long as they were perceived as implementing the same agenda of supporting the supposed randomness of global forces. The fatigue, claustrophobia and 'victimization' caused by restrictions imposed by the city on these global forces was obvious and made them wary to the point of withdrawal.

Continues on page 6 >>

Postcolonial global cities: The Indian experience

Continued from page 5 >>

This situation has been changing and efforts to attract global forces to the city have recently resumed with fruitful results. It remains to be seen whether this development will continue in view of larger realities.

Conclusion

We have argued that postcolonial identities are fractured identities defined in terms of two aspects: the recognition that the colonial experience consisted of moments of 'domination' by the colonized and 'victimization' of the colonizer and that the frequency of this role reversal depended on the proximity to the centre of power. We have demonstrated this by establishing how the two postcolonial cities Delhi and Kolkata have, by virtues of their inherited postcolonial identities, acquired different forms today.

Delhi inherited less-fractured postcolonial identities as colonizers succumbed less to the colonized by virtue of the city being the imperial power centre, as opposed to Kolkata where colonizers faced 'domination' on several occasions. Hence, Delhi presented itself as more congenial to global forces than Kolkata and has donned the mantle of global city earlier and much faster than Kolkata.

It is through this kind of analysis of postcolonial identities that we aspire to draw attention to the possibility of recognizing the first and second worlds as postcolonial along with the third world. This also entails recognizing that a first world city can be deemed as a postcolonial city possessing postcolonial identities, given that it too has drawn a great deal from the colonial experience.

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Note

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Erstwhile colonizers made way for global forces focused more on the economic, cultural, ideological and social fronts rather than the territorial.

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Designing colonial cities: the making of modern town planning in the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia 1905-1950

Far-reaching socio-economic changes caused by burgeoning private enterprise, in combination with new insights and demands in terms of hygiene, infrastructure, architecture and town planning; emerging anti-sentiments among growing numbers of indigenous inhabitants; and the direct confrontation of administrators with local issues: together these provided a prolific setting for the making of modern town planning in the Dutch East Indies in the first half of the twentieth century.

Pauline K.M. van Roosmalen

Before 1905

After nearly three centuries of Dutch domination, the Dutch East Indies –the archipelago that is today called Indonesia –underwent two major changes around the turn of the twentieth century. The first change was the introduction of the Agrarian Act (*Agrarische Wet*) in 1870. This act enabled private individuals to possess land on a long lease and, as a result, opened up business opportunities. The second change was the enactment of the Decentralisation Act (*Decentralisatiewet*) in 1903 and the Local Council Ordinance (*Locale Radenordonnantie*) in 1905. These two acts enabled the government to decentralise the archipelago's administration to local administrative entities –soon referred to as municipalities.

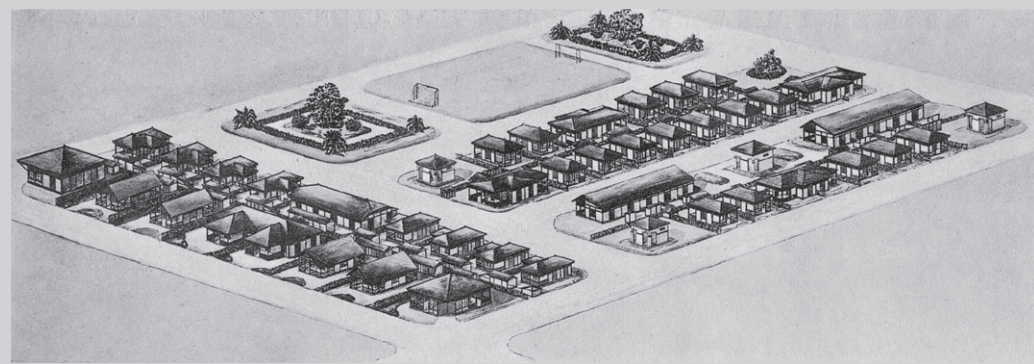
The introduction of the Agrarian Act fundamentally changed the outlook of the colony and its society. Prior to the enactment of the Agrarian Act it was predominantly male Dutch civil servants who set off to the Dutch East Indies. Following the Agrarian Act increasing numbers of businessmen, other professionals, and their wives headed to the archipelago from the Netherlands and other European countries. Consequently, as the Dutch/European Indian community became more diverse in terms of profession, gender and nationality, the Dutch Indian community increasingly became a multicultural version of Dutch/European society in Europe.

Given the need to address these rapid socio-economic and demographic changes, the decision to delegate the administration from the central government to local municipalities appeared to be a prudent one. In reality, however, decentralisation was anything but easy –as the municipalities soon discovered. The most important obstacle was that the government had left the municipalities severely under-resourced. Consequently, they lacked almost everything: sufficient administrative authority, annual budget, experience, knowledge, labour and materials. A serious handicap from a town planning perspective was that the maintenance of public works –formerly the shared responsibility of the Department of Public Works (*Burgerlijke Openbare Werken*) and Home Affairs (*Binnenlandsch Bestuur*) –was long overdue in many instances. When the municipalities approached the government to discuss matters or to ask for input, the response was generally dismissive.

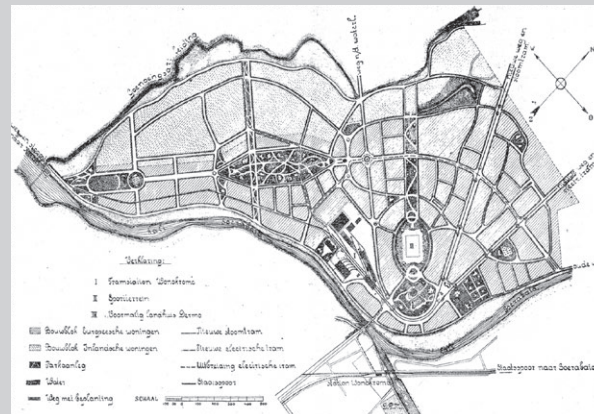
Convinced that it was more efficient to tackle these setbacks collectively than individually, the municipalities established the Association for Local Interests (*Vereeniging voor Locale Belangen - VLB*) in 1912. The VLB, its journal *Local Interests (Locale Belangen)*, and its annual Decentralisation Congress offered professionals, including architects and town planners, useful and necessary platforms to exchange expertise and knowledge.¹ Several congresses and in particular several preliminary advisories written at the request of the congress organising committees, were instrumental in the emergence, rationalisation, professionalisation and institutionalisation of modern town planning in the Dutch East Indies.

The emergence of town planning

As was customary in all European colonies around the world, Dutch Indian society was ethnically diverse and very class-conscious: by and large, Europeans, Indo-Europeans, Indonesians and other Asians socialised and lived in different social groups. Consequently, social groups and



1.



2a.



3a.



2b.



3b.

1: Batavia: bird's-eye sketch of kampung Taman Sari (1913). Design: Batavia Municipality.

2a: Surabaya: existing town with projection of Darmo (1914). Design: Bureau Maclaine Pont/H. Maclaine Pont.

2b: Surabaya: building scheme Darmo (1914). Design: Bureau Maclaine Pont/H. Maclaine Pont.

3a: Semarang: town plan with projection of new neighbourhoods plans (1916). Design: Bureau Maclaine Pont/H.Th. Karsten and Semarang Department for Public Works (*Dienst Gemeentewerken*)/ir A. Plate.

3b: Semarang: De Vogelplein in New Tjandi (1916). Design: Bureau Maclaine Pont/H.Th. Karsten and Semarang Department for Public Works (*Dienst Gemeentewerken*)/ir A. Plate.

neighbourhoods had their own distinctive features even though the borders of the various ethnic groups were in many ways permeable in order to 'allow the mutual penetration of races [...] everywhere the demands of life demanded individuals to mingle'.²

In general, neighbourhoods for Europeans, Indo-Europeans, well-to-do Chinese and indigenous dignitaries were vast and moderately to sparsely populated. The parcels of land were relatively large, the houses luxurious and the gardens lush. The overall atmosphere was European. Middle class Asians, Indonesians and Indo-Europeans lived in considerably denser populated areas where the streets were narrower, sometimes unpaved, and the houses smaller and often combined with shops. The atmosphere in neighbourhoods was either indigenous, Chinese, British-Indian or Arab. The predominantly indigenous areas at the lower end of the socio-economic scale were the *kampungs*: densely populated and often unplanned, semi-permanent, predominantly indigenous settlements where facilities such as running water, baths, and toilets were often public.

The socio-economic division within ethnic neighbourhoods largely coincided with the rationale that characterised

modern town planning in Europe at the time: the principle of zoning; or in other words the division of a town plan into neighbourhoods based on socio-economic strata. The situation in the Dutch colony was complicated, however, due to administrative and financial constraints which meant that administrators and architects were not at liberty to interfere in *kampungs* because they were governed by an autonomous indigenous administration. The consequence was that, initially, administrators and architects/planners could only address the needs of the non-Indonesian neighbourhoods.

The first newly-developed residential areas in the archipelago, Menteng-Nieuw Gondangdia in Batavia (1910) planned by P.A.J. Moojen and others, is illustrative of this approach. The plan, though clearly designed with notions of planning in terms of vistas, is basically a street plan bordered by plots of land destined for housing and some open, public spaces. What the designers seem to have overlooked, though, was how the new neighbourhood connected to the existing town and how it would affect future developments of Batavia. To circumvent the municipality's administrative limitation with regard to *kampungs*, Batavia resorted to the construction of

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Designing colonial cities

Continued from page 7 >>

Taman Sari (1913), a new *kampung* designed to be a model for well planned indigenous neighbourhoods with good houses and public hygiene facilities. Unfortunately though, its designers again overlooked two important aspects: the social and cultural requirements with regard to, for example, the spatial and hierarchical layout of the area and the individual houses (the 'plan'), and the tradition of communal construction of dwellings (see illustration 1). As a result, particularly of the first omission, the *kampung's* anticipated inhabitants did not move into the houses and in 1917 the Batavia municipality decided to demolish Taman Sari.

Despite their shortcomings, both plans were well intended attempts to address an urgent issue in the colony: the need for qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient housing. Instrumental in creating awareness about this issue and in stimulating municipalities to improve housing conditions in general and in *kampungs* in particular, were the pleas from medical specialists, notably W.T. de Vogel and H.F. Tillema from Semarang. The initial necessity to eliminate bad housing as a breeding ground for ill-health and epidemics (and, later on, as fertile soil for nationalists hoping to create political unrest) finally stimulated the government to promulgate directives that laid the foundations for coherent town planning in the late 1920s.

This was not yet the situation, however, in the first decade of the twentieth century. Almost immediately after the municipalities were established the Dutch Indian government, following the approach in the Netherlands where the housing situation was little better, agreed to draw up a Housing Act. A decade later, when the draft for this act was presented in 1916, the government decided not to decree it. The reason for this unexpected turn of events was that H.A. Kindermann, the then sitting advisor for decentralisation, was of the opinion that, rather than implementing a Housing Act that would stipulate the demolition of the majority of the existing housing stock without offering a substitute, it would be more realistic and effective to adjust existing building regulations and design coherent town plans.

Kindermann's approach was supported wholeheartedly by many architects and administrators, but it was difficult to achieve because of the many administrative, financial, legal and technical limitations. With the Housing Act abolished, ten years into the Decentralisation administrators and architects were still without any administrative, financial, legal or practical tools to address the housing and planning problems in major and minor towns throughout the archipelago. Thus, although architects and town planners had no choice but to continue their work rather haphazardly and by trial and error, in the second half of the 1910s town plans became increasingly comprehensive and visionary. Darmo in Surabaya (1914), New Candi and adjacent areas in Semarang (1916, revised 1919) and the northern extension plan for Bandung (1919) are all examples of this second phase in Dutch Indian town planning (see illustrations 2a and 2b, 3a and 3b, and 4).

What distinguishes Henri Maclaine Pont's Darmo plan from Moojen's Menteng plan is that Darmo is clearly divided into a European and an indigenous area and is appropriately linked to the existing town and harbour – i.e. the workplaces – by roads, a steam- and an electric tramway. Thomas Karsten's plan for Semarang and the plan for Bandung North by the General Engineers and Architectural Bureau (*Algemeen Ingenieurs- en Architectenbureau - AIA*) demonstrate an even more coherent approach. These plans no longer focus on a single, isolated neighbourhood but instead encompass various new neighbourhoods and, in fact, due to their vastness, almost the entire town; a trend that eventually led to the introduction of regional planning.

The rationalisation and professionalisation of town planning

The changing approach to designing town plans followed and reflected the changes and development of Dutch Indian society and the gradually accumulated knowledge of architects and town planners. What was still lacking by the end of the 1910s, however, was the vision and tools to address town planning systematically.

In an attempt to fill this gap, the Association for Local Interests invited the architects Karsten and Maclaine Pont to write preliminary advisories about town planning in the Dutch East Indies for the 1920 Decentralisation Congress. Maclaine Pont and Karsten, both of whom had graduated from the Polytechnic in Delft, had moved independently to the Dutch East Indies in the early 1910s and by a process of trial and error each had amassed knowledge about life and work in the colony. Given that it would have been interesting to be able to compare the no doubt different visions of both men, it is unfortunate that, due to ill health, Maclaine Pont was unable to finish and present his contribution to the congress.

Consequently, his text 'Town planning in the Dutch Indies' (*'Stedenbouw in Indië'*), although published in a newspaper at the time of the congress, more or less sank into oblivion.³ Karsten's text, on the other hand, was presented and discussed at length during the congress and won much acclaim among colleagues and administrators in the colony as well as in the Netherlands.⁴ 'Dutch Indian Town Planning' (*'Indiese Stedenbouw'*), a concise yet comprehensive description of Karsten's ideas and suggestions about town planning, offered what administrators and colleagues had spent years waiting for: a handbook on town planning in general and in the Dutch East Indies in particular. With hindsight, one can see how this work laid the foundations for Karsten's career and reputation as the colony's town planning theorist and designer.⁵

The relevance of 'Dutch Indian Town Planning' in terms of the professionalisation of town planning in the archipelago notwithstanding, it was two governmental resolutions from the second half of the 1920s that ultimately institutionalized the colony's town planning practice. The first resolution, from 1926, granted priority rights on land to municipalities over third parties if they were able to substantiate the indispensability of the land for a sound and coherent development of the town, based on a sufficiently detailed town plan approved by the local and central governments. The second resolution, from 1929, stated that municipalities were eligible for a subsidy of up to fifty percent for *kampung* improvement projects, provided the application was supported by an approved improvement plan. As the administrative autonomy of the *kampungs* had been lifted some ten years earlier, these two resolutions finally gave administrators and town planners the space and the financial means they had been pleading for since decentralisation was introduced.

The 1926 regulation was precisely what the municipality of Malang needed to undo the recent acquisition of a large plot of land by a private entrepreneur – an acquisition that would have severely obstructed the future extension of Malang in a northwest direction. Subsequently, Karsten was invited to design the town plan that was to endorse the municipality's request for priority rights over this land. After the government rejected the request and the plan, citing a lack of sufficient detail, Karsten reworked the design and presented it again in 1933 and in 1935. The 1933 plan was a meticulously elaborated version of the 1929 version (see illustration 5). The 1935 plan, though different in scale, ideologically resembled Karsten's extension plan for Bogor (*Buitenzorg*) (1917). It aimed to prepare the town and its immediate surroundings for long-term future developments, and thus anticipated and provided for regional developments.

As statistics and socio-cultural understanding increased and improved from the 1930s onwards, regional planning and 'planology' – a highly rational, 'scientific' form of planning supported by Karsten – won ground. The resulting rationalisation of the planning practice enabled architects to design town plans that complied better with the market and were less intuitive in style than in the early days. Although many designers supported the trend towards rationalisation and supra-local planning, regional planning in the archipelago only really took off after 1945. Postwar examples of regional planning include the plans designed in 1948 by the (Central) Planning Bureau for north Celebes and the region southeast of Bogor.

The institutionalisation of town planning

With the pragmatic side of the town planning practice more or less in place, there was only one more issue that needed to be addressed: a legal framework. In order to realize this, the government appointed a Town Planning Committee (*Stadsvormingscommissie*) in 1934. The committee's task was to study the full extent of town planning and draw up one suitable regulation to replace the 1926 stipulation. The committee, a combination of administrators, civil servants, lawyers and architects, presented the findings of its work in 1938 in the form of a draft for a Town Planning Ordinance (*Stadsvormingsordonnantie - SVO*) for municipalities in Java and an explanation to this ordinance. Sadly, the timing of the presentation of the Town Planning Ordinance was rather unfortunate. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 and the Japanese occupation of the archipelago in 1942 postponed its enactment until a later date.

After the war, the infrastructure of town planning practice was fundamentally reorganised. As only a small number of professionals were still around – many, among them Karsten, died in the internment camps or had left the archipelago – it was decided to consolidate all expertise in a central organisation, the (Central) Planning Bureau ((CPB) in Batavia. The bureau's main task was to survey war damage and to design and coordinate the execution of reconstruction plans in towns and regions under Dutch control.⁶ On Java this meant the strip of land between Batavia and Bandung; on Sumatra, the

towns Medan, Padang and Palembang and the islands of Kalimantan (*Borneo*), Sulawesi (*Celebes*), Moluccas and New Guinea. The CPB focused on several areas in particular: the capital Batavia, and economically vital towns on Kalimantan and Sulawesi that were heavily damaged by hostile and allied attacks due to their relevance for the oil industry. Ironically, it was the need for a legal framework to execute the reconstruction plans of these towns in East Indonesia that led to the Town Planning Ordinance finally being decreed in August 1948.⁷

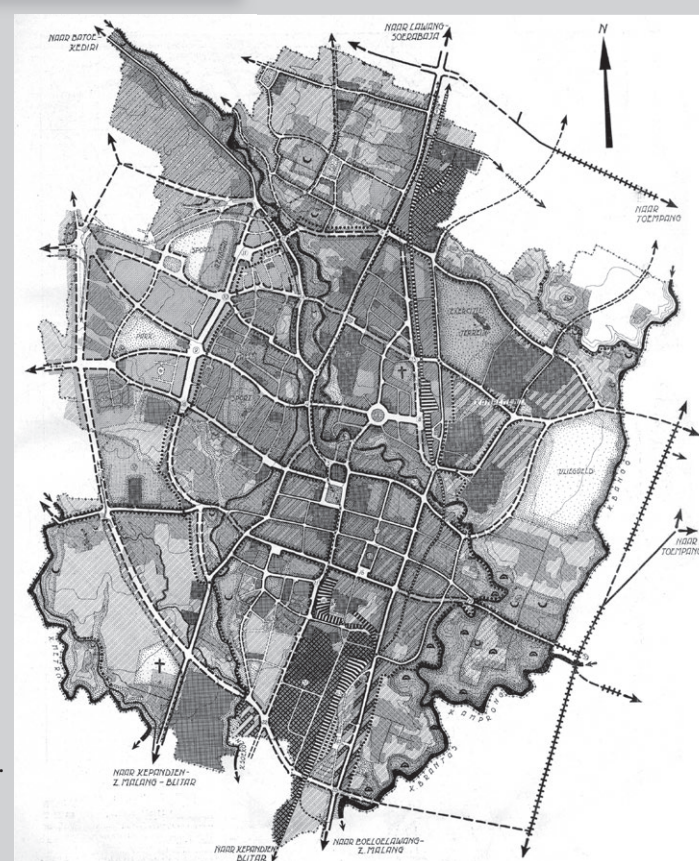
Backed by the Town Planning Ordinance, the CPB was able to manoeuvre. The first plan designed under the auspices of the bureau was Kebayoran Baru, a satellite town to the south of Batavia (see illustration 6). Designed to fill the dire need for houses in the capital, the new town epitomised the expansion and rationalisation of prewar town planning. Not only was the design for Kebayoran Baru the first plan to organise a new town, it was also the first plan to outline the various functional and socio-economic zones (dwelling, work, leisure, green). In East Indonesia, the CPB took this rationalisation one step further and implemented the so-called 'survey before plan' approach, which had been introduced in the 1930s but had never been fully implemented in the archipelago due to a lack of statistics. Based on this approach, where a wide variety of data about existing and possible future conditions was collected and analysed prior to the design process, the CPB planners were able to design plans for Banjarmasin, Balikpapan (1949) and Samarinda (1950), and a regional plan for North Sulawesi. Particularly the latter not only provided a reconstruction of the heavily damaged towns, but also improved awkward prewar situations and anticipated future (regional) developments (see illustration 7).

The rational, but particularly the supra-local approach of the post World War II plans indicated a new direction in town planning, or rather, spatial planning. Unlike the period before 1942, this time the government acted promptly. In 1948, only three months after the Town Planning Ordinance was decreed, it appointed a committee to prepare an act on regional planning in non-urban areas. The committee, chaired by the engineer Jac. P. Thijsse who also headed the CPB, met several times and in 1951 presented a draft of the Spatial Planning Act (*Wetsontwerp op de Ruimtelijke Ordening*). Again, the timing was poor, as the Netherlands had transferred sovereignty to Indonesia by the end of 1949 and, subsequently, by then all Dutch professionals in leading positions had been replaced by Indonesians. History repeated itself: the draft was presented to the minister of the Department of Public Works and Energy (*Departemen Pekerjaan Umum dan Tenaga*) but was never decreed. Although an official

As the Dutch/ European Indian community became more diverse in terms of profession, gender and nationality, the Dutch Indian community increasingly became a multi-cultural version of Dutch/European society in Europe.



4: Bandung: sketch extension plan Bandung North (1917). Design: Algemeen Ingenieurs- en Architectenbureau/ F.J.L. Ghijsels.



5: Malang: design town plan (1933). Design: H.Th. Karsten.

reason was never given, Thijsse gave two plausible reasons why the act never gained legal force. The first reason was that the draft was written in Dutch and those responsible did not have enough understanding of Dutch to translate the text. The second reason was the unremitting lack of qualitative and quantitative personnel to guarantee the implementation of the act. To sidestep this problem, it was easiest to refrain from assessing the act—and thus the obligation to execute and observe it.

The decision not to decree the Spatial Planning Act was unsatisfactory from both a methodological and a historical point of view. By not decreeing the act, the government obstructed the legal and methodological expansion of town planning into the vaster realm of spatial planning. It also discontinued the ongoing professionalisation and adaptation of town planning as an autonomous discipline—a development that had begun in 1905 and, so far, had only been interrupted between 1942 and 1945. The absence of a Spatial Planning Act meant that the predominantly prewar Town Planning Act prevailed until, finally, in 1992, it was replaced by an Indonesian Act on Spatial Planning (*Undang-undang 24 Penataan Ruang*), and finally in 2007 by a completely revised act (*Undang-undang 26 Penataan Ruang*).

After 1950⁸

Although the postponement of the assessment of the Spatial Planning Act was a direct result of the Indonesianisation of administrative and other institutions—i.e. the replacement of Dutch professionals in leading positions by Indonesians—that followed the 1949 transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to the Republic of Indonesia, it was not symptomatic of town planning, or indeed architecture practice in the new republic. As Indonesia (still) offered good career opportunities, many Dutch professionals resumed and even began their careers in the republic in the 1950s. It was not until 1957, when Indonesia flexed its muscles regarding the status of New Guinea and diplomatic relations came to an abrupt halt, that all Dutch professionals, including architects and town planners, left the country and the outlook on town planning and architecture gradually started to change.

To eliminate bad housing as a breeding ground for ill-health and epidemics (and, later on, as fertile soil for nationalists hoping to create political unrest), the government promulgated directives that laid the foundations for coherent town planning in the late 1920s.

Vacant teaching and other positions in the field of architecture and town planning were almost instantly filled by colleagues from the US, Austria and Germany. Consultancy and teaching by architects and town planners from Harvard and Kentucky, together with scholarships that enabled Indonesian students to study in the US, gradually led to a more American design approach being adopted in the archipelago.

The new approach was not so much a shift in methodology as it was a shift in focus. Contrary to the relatively small-scale neighbourhoods and towns designed by Dutch town planners, American town planners designed vast towns with dense business centres linked to vast, quiet and green residential suburbs by long, wide traffic routes. The new approach fostered town plans and architecture in which transportation by car instead of on foot or by bicycle was the norm, as were high-rises and air-conditioning. Norms so fundamentally different from the earlier Dutch /European approach that it was this rather than the transfer of sovereignty that ultimately altered the outlook of late colonial towns in the archipelago.

Conclusion

Town planning is not a purely utilitarian, social and/or aesthetic profession. This justifies the question, particularly in a colonial context, whether (and, if so, to what extent) town plans aimed at emphasizing or confirming Dutch dominance over the archipelago?

Based on my research, I see no evidence to support an affirmative answer to this question. Although there is some evidence of nuance—the government’s 1929 decision to subsidise *kampung* improvement projects was prompted as much by concerns about hygiene as it was by concerns over simmering political unrest—the sources analysed bear witness to a professional and pragmatic approach towards town planning: the objective was to design functional and aesthetic town plans for Europeans, Indonesians and other Asians. Although this does not deny that there may have been town planners who (wholeheartedly) supported the colonial system, I have found no evidence or indications that town plans were designed with this intention in mind.

The only plan that could be considered a demonstration of colonial aspirations was the plan for north Bandung. Born out of the ambition of Governor-General Count J.P. van Limburg Stirum to transform Bandung into the colony’s new representative administrative capital, the development of the plan also illustrates the ambivalent position of both the Dutch Indian government and town planners. Caught between visionary considerations on the one hand and pragmatic ones on the other, the plan was only partially executed and, in fact, was abandoned only a couple of years after its conception. Consequently, until this day Bandung has the dubious honour of being the embodiment of grand aspirations but deficient circumstances.

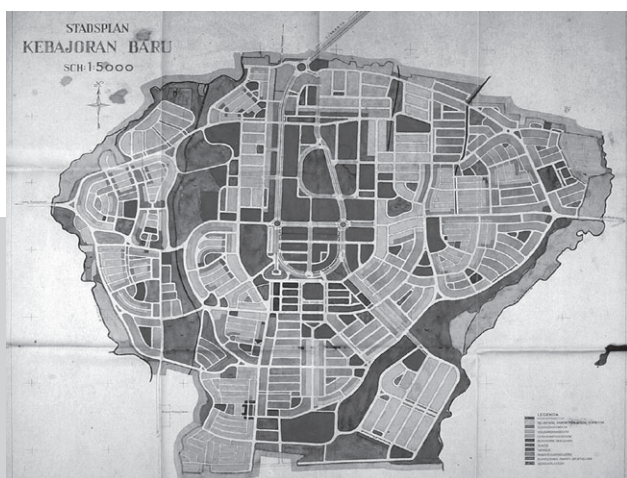
Rather than arguing that Dutch Indian town planning is an expression of colonial power, I would argue that Dutch Indian town planning was, in fact, an autonomous discipline—after the Dutch transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia, it continued along the same lines. Had the Dutch Indian approach to town planning not been autonomous but colonial, post-colonial town planners would surely—if not immediately, then at least after some time—have abandoned it. As this did not happen, one can safely assert that Dutch Indian town planning was not a tool of the colonial politics of the Dutch Indian government but an autonomous discipline.

Another aspect that comes through in this study is the gradual emancipation of non-European inhabitants and professionals. Although their number never equalled the number of Europeans, the involvement of non-European architects, town planners and administrators in administration and town planning gradually increased and undoubtedly changed perspectives. During the Dutch period, people such as Abdoelrachman, R. Abikoeno, R. Slamet, R.Ng. Soebroto, Moh. Soesilo, Soetoto and Moh. Hoesni Thamrin were influential. After all the Dutch professionals left in 1957, important town plans were designed by Lucius O’Brien, R.S. Danunagoro, Herbowo, Kandar Tisnawinata and Radinal Mochtar. These were the architects and town planners who heralded a new era: an era in which Indonesian town plans were designed by Indonesian town planners.

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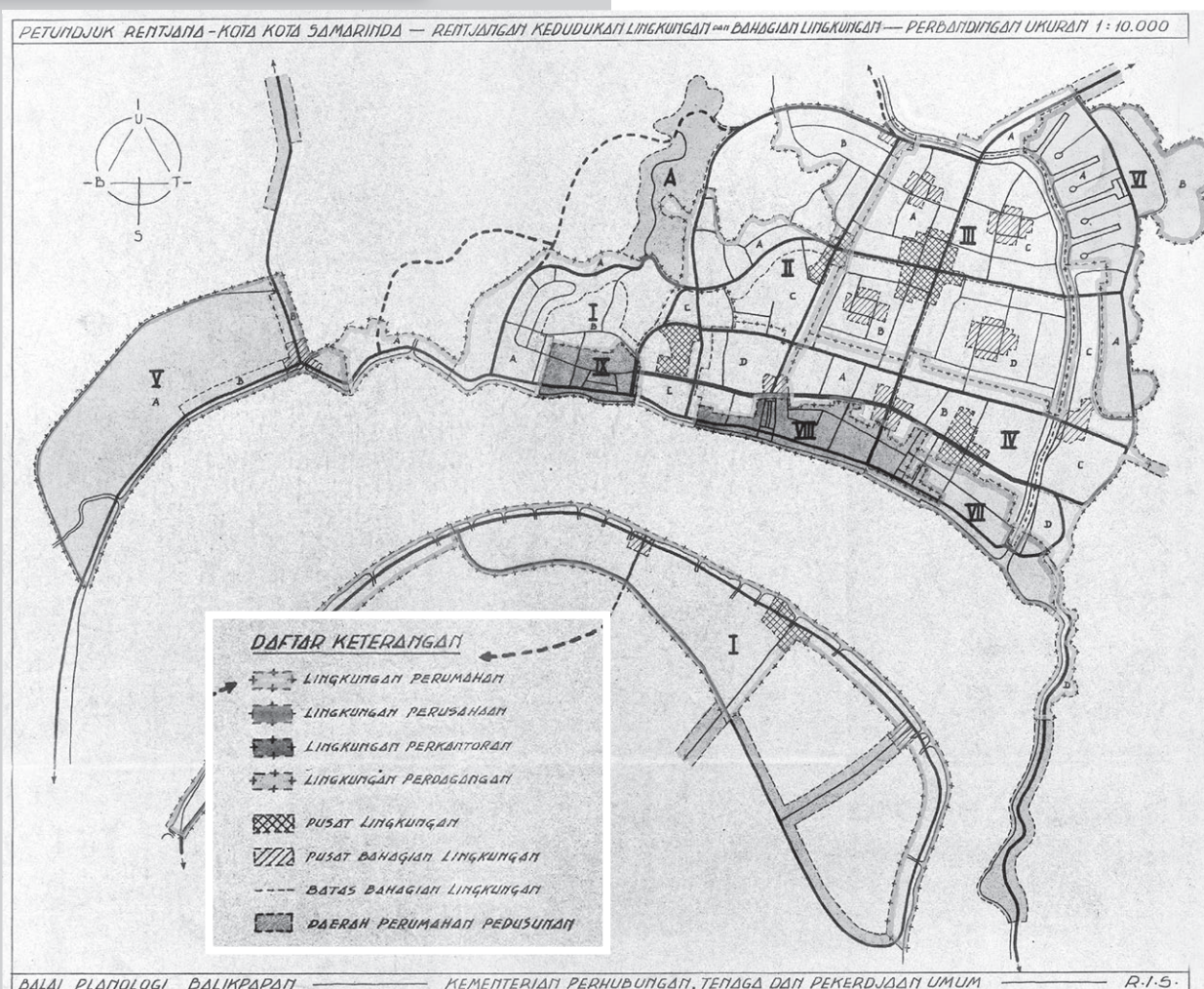
Notes

- 1 By the beginning of the 20th century, architects and engineers were already associated. A Dutch Indian section of the Royal Institute for Engineers (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Ingenieurs - KIVI*) was established in 1850. In 1898 the Association of Architects in the Dutch East Indies (*Vereeniging van Bouwkundigen in Nederlandsch-Indië*) was established. Both associations published their own journal. The engineers’ journal was successively published under the following names: *The Journal of KIVI, section Dutch East Indies (Het Tijdschrift van het KIVI, afdeling Nederlands-Indië)*, *The Engineer (De Ingenieur)* and *The Engineer in the Dutch East Indies (De Ingenieur in Nederlandsch-Indië)*. The architects’ periodical was called: *Dutch Indian Architecture Journal (Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift)*. After *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* merged with *Locale Techniek* in 1934, it was renamed *IBT/Locale Techniek*. From 1938 until its last issue in 1942 it was called *Locale Techniek/IBT*.
- 2 ‘laisser le chemin libre pour l’interpénétration des races dans les villes partout où les besoins de la vie exigent que les individus se mêlent.’ Cohen, A.B., Hébard, Stuart E. and Durand, Emm. (1932). ‘A propos de la séparation des villes au Maroc et aux Indes Néerlandaises’, in: Jean Royer, *L’Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux, Tome I*, Délayance Editeur, La Charité-sur-Loire. 276-277, 276.
- 3 Maclaine Pont, H. (1920). ‘Stedenbouw in Indië I’, *Java-Bode* 107 (8-5-1920), s.p.; Maclaine Pont, H. (1920). ‘Stedenbouw in Indië II’, *Java-Bode* 109 (11-5-1920), s.p.; Maclaine Pont, H. (1920). ‘De Bandoengsche uitbreidingsplannen I’, *Preangerbode* 142 (22-5-1920), s.p.; Maclaine Pont, H. (1920). ‘De Bandoengsche uitbreidingsplannen II’, *Preangerbode* 145 (27-5-1920), s.p.
- 4 Karsten, Thomas. (1920). ‘Indiese stedebouw’, *Locale Belangen Mededeeling* 40, 145-250.
- 5 Although in many ways Karsten dominated the town planning practice in the Dutch East Indies, the emergence of town planning can not be solely attributed to him. Many others, for example directors of municipal departments of public works (ir H. Heetjans in Bandung, ir J.J.G.E. Rückert in Semarang), mayors (ir D. de longh in Semarang, E.A. Voorneman in Malang, F.H. van de Wetering in Manado and Palembang), and central governmental officials (mr A.B. Cohen Stuart) also made valuable contributions to the emergence, professionalisation and institutionalisation of Dutch Indian town planning.
- 6 Two days after Japan surrendered, Indonesia proclaimed its independence from the Netherlands. As the Netherlands refused to acknowledge its former colony’s independence, Indonesia and the Netherlands became involved in a three-year colonial war. Under international pressure the Netherlands transferred sovereignty to Indonesia in December 1949.
- 7 In order to apply the Town Planning Ordinance to these towns, a minor but essential revision was made to the prewar draft: the condition that the ordinance applied to municipalities on Java was replaced by the condition that the Town Planning Ordinance was applicable to all towns, with or without municipal status, throughout the archipelago.
- 8 Although developments after 1950 fall outside my core research, it is useful to describe them briefly in order to comprehend Indonesian town planning today.



6: Kebajoran Baru: building plan (1949). Design: (Central) Planning Bureau/ M. Soesilo.

7: Samarinda: town plan with rearranged neighbourhoods (1950). Design: (Central) Planning Bureau/ H. Lüning.



Engaging China on Africa's agriculture

While China's involvement in Africa's development has triggered tremendous 'disturbances' in the West's policy towards Africa in recent years, it remains a puzzle what this will lead to in the global development landscape in general and the implications for sustainable development in Africa in particular.

Yongjun Zhao argues that ongoing debates on China's role have been informed by taken-for-granted rhetoric and simplistic representations of fact,¹ which have failed to render well-informed, more critical or balanced perspectives on the policy and institutional processes of China's engagement with Africa.

Yongjun Zhao

The National
Grand Theatre in
Dakar, Senegal.



Myths of China's role in Africa

There is a lack of empirical data on how the Chinese interact with African communities and the impact this has on their livelihoods and surrounding environments.² As Chinese investments in Africa are part of the global process of rising commercial pressures on agricultural land and natural resource use, policymakers and researchers have yet to grapple with the underlying challenges. Solutions to sustainable development in affected areas requires a re-examination of the multifaceted development processes, a realistic assessment of the current scenarios, and more practical guidelines on multi-stakeholder engagement concerning not only China's role, but also that of others.

The ineffectiveness of Western development aid to Africa provides China with the opportunity to deliver its own resources 'with no strings attached'. For some African recipients, the Chinese bring the desired capital, technology, skills and resources, enabling much faster delivery of development results than the West. By contrast, the West perceives China's expansion into Africa as a facilitator for stalling the progress made by 'traditional' donors in governance reform. Nevertheless, the fact that Africa's governments are more receptive to Chinese aid highlights their historical links, such as China's support for Africa's independence.³ In this respect, the China model of development—if there is one—may provide an alternative to conventional approaches introduced by the West and imitated by some African peoples and nations.

However, what the China development model constitutes remains controversial and dubious. 'China going Latin' with regard to shared economic reform trajectories appears to be a strong criticism of this problematic, given that—despite its unprecedented economic growth—China continues to experience chronic poverty, rising social inequality and poor governance.⁴ Despite this, the presumed China model has been entrenched in Africa's own development, which facilitates China's pursuit of its own political and economic agenda. Consequently, China's inroad to the continent is also facilitated by the scant input from African public and civil societies—a key factor in the lack of transparency in this development partnership. Failing to understand China's own development experiences and the way it does business in Africa will render engagement with China futile. The Chinese may also find Africa's experiences in terms of social and political reform particularly relevant. Thus, there is a need to bring these dimensions to the fore, something which will benefit both parties if they are serious about achieving the outcomes of sustainable development cooperation in the long run. Viewed from multidisciplinary angles and from the perspectives of different stakeholders, this can be better attained if the purpose of the development sector is to enhance the understanding of the nature of development cooperation and multilateral engagement for the benefits of the African poor. To this end, the study of land reform and agricultural development in China and Africa from comparative perspectives should generate thought-provoking lessons for developing more relevant research programmes tailored to a better understanding of the nature and dynamics of their cooperation.

Contesting land reform and development in China and Africa

China's clinging to African land is partly a consequence of its domestic demand for food. China's arable land is depleting so rapidly that, already in 2006, only approximately 122 million hectares remained.⁵ Food shortages and rising food prices have resulted in China becoming more dependent on grain imports. Thus, the rich soils of Africa and other countries have

become a target for grain production by Chinese businesses aiming to export to the Chinese market. China has set up a number of investment schemes relating to food production in Africa.⁶ Its agricultural aid to the continent is mounting through the establishment of agro-technical demonstration stations. Chinese businesses have explicitly rejected 'Afro-pessimism' and have invested in African agricultural production by bringing the equipment and expertise needed.⁷ After introducing agricultural biotechnology developed in China to Mozambique, for instance, more drought resistant crops such as rice are now being cultivated to cope with increased pressure on the food supply. The Chinese appear to be investing in African land via cooperative projects rather than exclusive land deals. Coupled with other investments in improvement to infrastructure, education and technology, some believe that China can play a significant role in bringing better solutions to Africa's hunger problems.⁸

Yet, there is a lack of data on the impact of all these efforts on poverty alleviation. China's land management—sometimes criticised for, for instance, evicting smallholders and extracting their natural resources in a land rush for biofuels—underscores poor governance in terms of lack of transparency and inadequate prior consultation and impact assessments. All these issues interact with and partly derive from ongoing African governance processes. Given the economic, political and socio-cultural differences between Africa and China, the risks inherent in China's inroads into Africa cannot be underestimated. Moreover, China's programmes have yet to encompass innovative institutional approaches to accommodate the needs of the affected groups and remain trapped in local politics, particularly concerning customary land tenure.⁹

Despite all the pros and cons of China's role in Africa, a better understanding of China's own development issues will help illuminate China's engagement and influence in Africa. The China model with regard to land reform appears to be exemplary for many African countries struggling with rising inequality in land ownership. The lack of access to land and land tenure insecurity are often claimed to hamstring rapid rural economic development. China's acclaimed land reform success, seen as a result of the Communist-led revolution, has far-reaching implications for land reform in Africa and especially for countries like Zimbabwe, which has pursued a radical approach in recent years. It is also relevant for the case of South Africa's land reform, which has been heavily attacked because of its market-oriented and 'pro-Whites' approach and for its failure to deliver land faster to the landless.¹⁰

Paradoxically, China's land reform has yet to meet the challenges of scaled grain production, chronic poverty and rising social conflicts. Although land equality has been instituted, the current land tenure structure—characterised by individual household land use rights (house responsibility system, or HRS) under village collective landownership—has resulted in the fragmentation of local social institutions. It has contributed to poor governance and also rising conflicts among various actors in village affairs, in particular over land use and management. In fact, since its inception, the more economic-driven HRS policy has marked a watershed; a shift away from the communes of the 1960s, while still serving the political agenda of the state. To a certain extent, this land tenure arrangement, as evidenced by the loosening of inter-household relations and collective action in agricultural production, has facilitated unprecedented land grabs by businesses and local governments across the country in the name of public interest. It has also contributed to natural resource degradation and depletion—an indicator the vulnerability of the poor in coping

with resource constraints and the effects of climate change and natural disasters.¹¹ Current reform measures, which increasingly emphasise improvements in land use and the transferable rights of smallholders (resembling the pro-market approach), have not achieved the desired objectives, especially concerning curbing the loss of farmland. The issues surrounding adequate compensation, resettlement, and access to productive land and job creation for the displaced groups are also hindering China's overall economic and social transformation under the banner of rural-urban integration.

Africa's ongoing land reforms, designed to legalise land tenure through titling and registering land under individual, group, communal and customary ownership, have had limited positive outcomes. In fact, these measures have contributed to increasing social inequality, poor political governance, the unsustainable use of land resources and they have exacerbated poverty. Although local social and political contexts are taken as important factors in the design of these reforms, they are far from being well understood and linked to feasible points of action. Academic debates on these issues need to go beyond the narrow domain of tenure security and enforcement of land rights. While land reforms may be innovative in pursuit of the 'third way'—that is, in prioritizing local concepts and practice in the flexible design of specific land tenure systems—they are far from practical to implement in the real-life local setting. Decentralisation in varying forms is crucial for coupling land reform with governance, in order to bring about genuine democracy and power transfers to local areas.¹² In a nutshell, current reform measures have failed to explain which land tenure arrangements, under what conditions, can be compatible with sustainable land resource use, governance and development. Moreover, current research efforts have failed to put forward a clear conceptual framework for further research and policy design. Questions over what constitutes and conditions land tenure from multi-stakeholder perspectives and from the perspective of land use, governance and development linkages have not been adequately and convincingly answered.

China's current land tenure structure, interwoven as it is with strong state intervention seen as necessary to safeguard Chinese interests and social stability, appears to have been a prerequisite for achieving economic growth. The marketisation of farmland, in terms of creating more favourable conditions for farmers to lease and transfer their land rights to other entities while keeping the village collective landownership intact, may sound attractive to African policymakers. However, collective landownership is solely determined by the government and not by the farmers themselves. This implies that the alliance of village elites, township, county and provincial government can play a dominant role in approving plans and applications for land use changes. As the lowest level of government representation, the village collective is essential in meeting the demands of its masters rather than its constituency. This institutional arrangement marks a difference from many African countries where local governance is too weak to exert effective control over land management and its underlying social and political relations. That said, the village collective in China can also be corrupt in striking lucrative land deals with businesses to the disadvantage of individual farmers. Neither land privatisation nor collectivisation/nationalisation are appropriate approaches to land reform unless underlying factors are taken into account. Again, the question remains how to develop appropriate land tenure and governance systems which protect farmers' rights and serve their needs for sustainable land use and development in the context of rising commercial interests and agricultural land loss in both China and Africa.

Comparative perspectives on land and development

Although different in terms of the social and political contexts underpinning development and land policy reform, China's and Africa's ongoing economic development agendas are similar in terms of their pro-market rhetoric. In both cases, it is hard to generalise what farmers want from the land they work as owners, renters or labourers. But it is possible to speculate that not many farmers would like to maintain their rural status forever, an assumption that may even hold true for farmers in developed countries. Their pragmatic views on land use and governance, interwoven with cultural, social and political relations, may compound an understanding of their preference for a specific land tenure system. This contradicts the conventional view that land tenure security is essential for capitalising on farmers' incentives to farm and to make related investments. Notwithstanding the importance of understanding complex social and political contexts, it is imperative to investigate the basic conditions that make land tenure really work – not only for the sake of the farmers, but also in the interests of the wider public and the nation as a whole. This requires a more practical approach to understanding what land reform can really deliver for farmers and other stakeholders, which makes Africa-China comparative studies pertinent to questions of sustainable land use and food security.

Furthermore, land tenure and the role of land cannot be understood in isolation from the overall challenges of development and governance. If sustainable land resource use and poor farmers' livelihoods are considered more seriously by decision-makers and investors, a practical roadmap for change may emerge. A match between a land tenure system and sustainable land resource use should be pursued as fundamental to good governance and sustainable development. Thus, a specific sustainable land use plan concerning farmland, forests, water, woodlands, etc., should be instituted to determine the design of an appropriate land tenure regime. It may even be that several land tenure systems need to be present in one village. A reorganisation of existing land tenure relations and forms of governance is needed. This may sound daunting, but is necessary for sustainably managed land use systems. Land tenure, livelihoods, land resource use and governance are intermingled; one cannot be sustainable without the other. Land tenure systems designed from a sustainable development and governance perspective can deliver a useful paradigm shift away from the conventional approaches mentioned earlier. This would provide the opportunity for both Chinese and African policymakers, business actors and even farmers to work together towards a feasible framework of action; a framework that would contribute to the attainment of sustainable development and agricultural investment goals on both continents.

New research agenda on Africa-China development cooperation

African and Chinese researchers, practitioners and decision-makers with common interests in sustainable land use and agricultural development need to find effective communication

channels to share experiences and learn lessons in order to improve their understanding of and capacity to tackle development challenges. Empirical knowledge is imperative to increasing knowledge and understanding and thus, to contributing to more constructive interactions among the major players; something that is key to addressing the fundamental question of Africa's land reform. Such research collaboration from comparative perspectives would be a timely contribution to the process of knowledge attainment and capacity building for Africa's smallholders and would foster participatory land governance and sustainable development. This collaboration would provide feasible strategies for the creation of appropriate pro-poor social institutions at national, regional and international levels to facilitate models of social and political change, especially in Africa. In brief, this new research agenda should address the major research questions as follows:

- What are the entry points for the study of linkages between land tenure, resource use, development and governance to mark a paradigm shift away from the ongoing approaches to land reform?
- How can the lessons of China's land reform and development inform Africa's land struggles and reform agenda?
- How can we develop a more critical framework for the analysis of farmers' responses to land policy reform and the roles of community governance in policymaking concerning sustainable land use and development?
- How can China's African development policy and practice be improved in light of local, national and global contestations over its role and effects?
- How can the roles of African and Chinese researchers, civil societies and businesses be enhanced in order to foster more sustainable and equitable development outcomes in Africa?
- What lessons can be learnt from China's development aid to Africa and donor harmonisation, and what are the implications for the roles of other emerging powers (e.g. Brazil and India) in Africa?

The research agenda is expected to create synergies among the existing research initiatives and to offer opportunities for more innovative and collaborative efforts among the members and others. Its success is contingent upon the support of all corners of society in Africa and China with a strong will to be the change agents in helping the poor find more feasible solutions to poverty and under-representation.

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Notes

- 1 Ong'ayo, Antony Otengo. 2010. 'China-Africa relations: a review of the civil society-academic dialogue process 2007-2010', *Perspectives on Emerging Powers in Africa*, Issue 4, December, pp 2-6.
- 2 Many criticisms point to China as a colonial power whose invasion of Africa cannot sustain itself in the long run, as reported recently in two consecutive articles in *The Guardian* by Rice and Mbaye on 6 and 7 February 2011. See www.guardian.co.uk.
- 3 AFRODAD. 2008. *Mapping Chinese Development Assistance in Africa: A Synthesis analysis of Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe* (draft report), Harare: AFRODAD.
- 4 De haan, Arjan. 2010 'A defining moment? China's social policy response to the financial crisis', *Journal of International Development*, 22, pp 758-771. See also, Fischer, Andrew. 2010. 'Is China Turning Latin? China's balancing act between power and dependence in the lead up to global crisis', *Journal of International Development* 22, pp 739-757.
- 5 Brautigam, Deborah. 2009. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 234.
- 6 For details, see a complete list of foreign investors in Africa compiled by the ILC and other organisations, in GLP 2010 *Land Grab in Africa: Emerging Land System Drivers in a Teleconnected World*, GLP Report No. 1, pp 24-35.
- 7 ChinaAfrica 'China's food and agriculture fund for Africa', www.chinafrica.asia/china-food-agriculturefund-for-Africa. See also: Alden, Chris et al. (eds). 2009. *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*, London: Hurst Publishers Ltd.
- 8 Rubinstein, Carl. 2009. 'China's eye on African agriculture', *Asian Times Online*, www.atimes.com/atimes/China_Business/KJ02Cb01.html.
- 9 Brautigam, Deborah. 2009. *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 234.
- 10 See Mkodzongi, Grasian. 2010. 'South Africa: The next frontier for land occupations', *Pambazuka News*, Issue 477, www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/63718.
- 11 Zhao, Yongjun. 2010. *China's Rural Development Challenges: Land Tenure Reform and Local Institutional Experimentation*, Groningen: Centre for Development Studies, University of Groningen.
- 12 For debates on Africa's land tenure reforms, see Peters, Pauline E. 2009. 'Challenges in land tenure and land reform in Africa: anthropological contributions', *World Development*, Vol. 37, No. 8, pp 1317-1325. Also see: Ubink, J.M. et al. (eds). 2009. *Legalising Land Rights: Local Practices, State Responses and Tenure Security in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Leiden University Press.



The question remains how to develop appropriate land tenure and governance systems which protect farmers' rights and serve their needs for sustainable land use and development in the context of rising commercial interests and agricultural land loss in both China and Africa.

A typical mixed smallholding in Tanzania.



Nagtsang Boy's *Joys and Sorrows*, or How China liberated the Tibetan grasslands



Nagtsang Nulo's *Joys and Sorrows* has enjoyed spectacular success among a Tibetan readership in China. Its influence reached the remotest corners of the reading world, places far from large cities with their well-supplied bookshops and titles emerging on the shelves soon after they leave the press. Nulo's book was sold in the tiniest dusty shops in prefecture and county towns and villages, places where books do not change often and are not often bought. This book, however, was bought and read both by city dwellers and by Tibetans in rural communities in agricultural valleys and high on the Tibetan plateau. If titles existing in the shadowlands of the publishing world could be awarded a bestseller status, Nulo's story deserved such. With this difference: his book was published with private money, as a private initiative, and sold, more often than not, from under the counter. It has never been part of the officially allowed and supported publishing world. Yet it was to be found in every other house: people read it, borrowed it or just kept it. Also those unfamiliar with books and reading, the illiterate if you will, appreciated its value.

Niko Andric

Machu and the rest of Tibet

Nagtsang Nulo himself is –according to today's maps –from Gansu. This province is one of five administrative units within China with compact groups of native Tibetans. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) with its main urban center in Lhasa is the region most widely associated with "Tibet", but many more Tibetans live in provinces to the north and east: Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu. Tibetans do not form a majority in any of these four provinces, but locally their presence is large enough to warrant other, lower level "Tibetan Autonomous" units: prefectures and, under them, counties. From such a place –Machu County, Ganlho Prefecture, Gansu Province –comes the author of this book.

Machu lies in the large grassland loop created by the Yellow River which here suddenly changes its direction and flows towards the north-west. More fertile than the neighboring Golog or the more distant Yushu grasslands, with a slightly milder climate and at lower altitude, Machu is known for excellent conditions for rearing horses. Proud herders claim that in their homeland the grass can grow so tall that a flock of sheep can hide in it without being seen by the herder. Nulo's delightful homeland, part of Tibet if one defines it by dominant population or linguistic factors, has had a more ambiguous political status –which also explains why it is in Gansu province now.

A closer look at a political map of Asia as it was before the 1950s reveals that there was no *one* Tibet. There were *many*. As Geoffrey Samuel stresses, the Dalai Lama's regime at Lhasa was only one, albeit in "pre-modern" times the largest, of a range of more or less local power formations within Tibetan areas (Samuel: 39). Today's Tibet Autonomous Region

corresponds with what was a domain controlled by the government headed by the Dalai Lamas prior to the 1950s. Territories which found themselves beyond TAR borders (Nulo's homeland among them) used to have looser (and sometimes simply no) connection to that Central Tibetan state. On the level of cultural affinities, some connectedness was probably felt, but politically these Tibetan lands had their own ambitions and identities. Lhasa could certainly claim them as areas which either once belonged under Lhasa, or at least should do so. It could not, however, effectively put claims into action or was uninterested in doing so.

Chinese influences and Liberation

This vast stretch of land between the Dalai Lamas' state and China "proper" resembled a political patchwork of different shapes and sizes of principalities, kingdoms, monastic estates and nomadic confederacies and was inhabited by agriculturalist, pastoralist and urban communities. On a meta-level they had, since the 18th century, been placed under Chinese jurisdiction. Local Tibetan (or Mongol) leaders were absorbed into Chinese official structures: granted official ranks, they were to be the state's representatives responsible for collecting taxes, conducting censuses, mediating conflicts and occasionally interacting with other levels of the state. Some accepted these ranks with an eye on short-term gain, some for security reasons at a time of local conflict, some were forced, and some seemed perfectly unaware of what those ranks implied as if assuming that one could brush off the duties they entailed anytime it felt convenient. In any case, the state's interference into the lives of its Tibetan subjects remained limited and so these Western flanks of Manchu China have largely lived a life apart.

The emergence of the Republic and then the People's Republic of China on the political map of Asia was to change this "unsupervised" status of the areas adjoining China to the west. None of the interventions carried out by the semi-independent governors under Kuomintang rule to tighten their control over local Tibetan populations was as consequential as what is officially called Liberation. The government of the People's Republic of China, soon after it was proclaimed, sent out two messages important for Tibetans: that all Tibetan lands were an integral part of the country, and that the next step was to "liberate" them. Tibetans were to undergo a Communist revolution –just as other groups among China's population. In the case of the Dalai Lama's Tibet, liberation meant driving away imperialist forces, wiping out feudalism, aristocracy and monastic establishments, introducing new ownership and production systems and transferring power into the hands of the people. In Central Tibet it was perhaps possible to identify the aristocracy, land-owning monasteries and people "ascribed" to them, and foreigners from countries dubbed imperialist. But in the grasslands of the north-east, in Nulo's Machu for example, the ranks of exploiters of the poor and powerless were not so numerous, the monasteries less powerful, and an aristocracy as such did not exist. The application of liberation principles to the nomadic population of Machu echoes with disbelief until today: "From what did we need to be liberated?"

Before the Tibetan society was successfully re-structured along the new lines, with "subalterns" taking the reins, there were years of chaos as local communities did not accept change without resistance. Some see a true uprising in this, but others, those who lived through these years, speak of chaotic disorganized moves, men running into the mountains, women staying behind, some communities taking to arms,

Inset:
Nulo (on the right) and a childhood friend in June 1961, a few years after the events described in Nulo's book. Very few photos from Tibet during this period have survived, so this is a true rarity.

Background:
Gansu province.
Photo: Courtesy of Drea-Geneva, Flickr.

others succumbing to the new rules. This chaotic 1958/1959 marked a passage from the old to the new society. Fervent Tibetan followers of the new ideology even named their children Liberation. And all – fervent followers and open adversaries alike – used and continue to use this time as a point of reference: whether today is better or worse, whether it was worse or better before – the liberation ends the past and marks the start of the present. It works similar for many scholars of Tibetan Studies who call pre-1959 Tibet “pre-modern”. This transition from the old society through chaos into the new liberated one is what Nulo’s *Joys and Sorrows* are about.

Degrees of freedom

The Dalai Lama’s *Five Point Peace Plan* was prepared for “the whole of Tibet”, i.e. for all Tibetan-inhabited areas in the west of China. The suggestion to present this “Greater Tibet” with one-model autonomy was rebuffed when Beijing stated that developments in these five consecutive areas proceeded along different paths and at different speeds, so treating them the same would no be justified. Indeed, the non-TAR areas were not only liberated earlier but they also underwent the so-called democratic reforms sooner: pooling communally managed resources, abolishing private property, introducing class categories and restructuring society into people’s communes. In Central Tibet, the problem of radical social reforms remained theoretical until as late as 1966 or the Cultural Revolution years because it was agreed between the Beijing and Lhasa governments that reforms would be gradual and adjusted to the local conditions. Thus, while in Gansu and Qinghai collectivization started already in the 1950s, in TAR private property was generally accepted until the Cultural Revolution and only land owned by the aristocracy or monasteries was redistributed earlier.

According to the linear vision of development favoured by PRC ideologists, TAR lagged behind the more advanced non-TAR regions: the reforms there were delayed because people were believed to be less fit or ready to undergo them. Today, the non-TAR parts of Tibet, being better integrated with the rest of the country, enjoy milder rule than that exercised over Central Tibet which is considered potentially troublesome, more prone to separatist sentiments and less developed in terms of “social consciousness”.

When western nongovernmental organizations reported abuses of religious or political freedoms in TAR, the situation in rural Gansu and Qinghai was more relaxed. Photos of the Dalai Lama were visible not only in private but also in public spaces such as shops and restaurants. People openly wore pendants with the image of the Dalai Lama. Small devotional “jewelry” bearing his image and pirated recordings of his speeches were easily available in smaller towns and villages. A Han shopkeeper would simply, and not the least bit secretly, propose something “extra”: perhaps a DVD of the ceremony when the Dalai Lama was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal or childhood photos of the disappeared 11th Panchen Lama. Not only privately did people watch films unavailable for official circulation, but also in restaurants the owners would half-shut the blinds and play a video of religious teachings from India. On a bus from Ngawa a Tibetan driver played a pop music VCD mixed with the Dalai Lama’s speeches subtitled in Chinese: he seemed undisturbed by the presence of Han passengers, while Tibetans on board discussed whether the singer was already in India, in hiding or living his life as he used to do before publishing this album.

Publication

So it was in 2007, one year before a wide wave of social unrest swept through Tibet. Also in 2007, Nulo published his *Joys and Sorrows*.

Joys and Sorrows were published as the author’s private project. After the initial print run which Nulo financed himself, a series of unauthorized re-prints followed. Whichever its source, the book was openly sold in city bookshops in 2007 and early 2008. In rural areas it remained on the shelves well into 2008 before becoming a backlist item. As with the singer whose VCD was played on the Ngawa bus, a wave of rumors about Nulo’s whereabouts followed. “Is he still in China?” “Has he been arrested?” Nulo admitted that he expected trouble but did not meet any. It is a paradox to western logic how the author of such a revolutionary book – compared to Chinese “scar literature” and raking up so many bitter memories which run counter to the state-promoted vision of a society where all *ethnies* live in harmony and affection for each other – escaped repression and could continue his usual life, even meeting with foreigners and organizing the book’s foreign editions.

Focus on the edges

Machu lies not only on the borders of what is sometimes called ethnographic or cultural Tibet, but also at the borders of specialist knowledge about Tibetan history, cultures or lifestyles. It falls pray to “heartlandism” which focuses

scholarly attention on agricultural, urban or generally “developed” communities. The main history books on Tibet, be that *The Dragon in the Land of Snows* (Shakya: 1999), *China’s Tibet Policy* (Norbu: 2001) or *History of Tibet* (Smith: 1996) – all of indisputable value – gloss over the political or historical whereabouts of pastoralists’ lands. This state-centrism makes the authors engage in endless discussion on whether Tibet was dependent or independent of China. Engrossed in debates like that, which as Robert Barnett says have more political than scholarly value, they (consciously or not) pay no attention to the existence of places like Machu (1998: 180) – nomads’ lands that do not fit black-and-white arguments about the “Tibet Question”.

Joys and Sorrows is a call from beyond the heartland, from the heart of the pastoral lands. The value of Nulo’s book lies in the fact that it draws the readers’ attention to what is located on the edges of their mental map of Tibet. The reader needs to rescale perception and transform the far corner of the map into its new center. Those who envision Tibet as one homogenous entity will see in Nulo’s narrative confirmation of other stories of human experience in the early years of the People’s Republic of China. Those who see the academic value of a Tibetan context in the multitude of Tibets within one Tibet, in the patchwork of political entities, in the plural societies rather one society (to borrow from Samuel’s *Civilized Shamans* again) will see Nulo’s book as speaking of the “small homeland” rather than the big one. The Land of Snow, like a large umbrella under which all the little Tibets hide, is repeatedly called upon in the pages of *Joys and Sorrows* and there is no question that this is where Nulo’s concern and allegiance lie. The main narrative, however, revolves around the fate of his immediate neighborhood, his little *phayul* or homeland, which is rooted in the author’s perception and a source of his early identification.

In the absence of studies in Western languages, this piece of “history from below” must be appreciated. The more murky the political predicament of north-east Tibet, the more we should welcome Nulo’s *subjective* voice. Although subjective, his narrative reveals how the situation in Machu was perceived by its population. This perception continues to influence the actions of contemporary local actors up to this day.

The end of Zomia?

With Machu and other pastoral lands as the background, Nulo’s story is set in the north-west arm of Zomia. The name coined by Willem van Schendel in 2002. Zomia is a vast stretch of upland land cutting through the south-east quarter of Asia. It is, as James Scott argues, the last region of the world whose peoples have not yet been fully incorporated into the nation-states machinery (2009: ix). Whether they have or not is difficult to measure, especially today, but pastoral parts of the north-east Tibetan plateau undeniably lived in the shadow of states up to the 1950s. To one side was the Dalai Lama’s state – whether or not and to what degree it was sovereign – and to the other side Manchu and later Republican China – whether or not and to what degree it really “ruled” these territories. Seen from this point of view, Nulo’s book tells of what happens when the state remembers its distant areas and how Zomia fights to stay outside of its reach.

Today’s nomad-inhabited highlands of Gansu, Qinghai and Sichuan are well incorporated into China’s administration system, leaving no doubt that they belong to it. They are also “taken over” by the exile Tibetan discourse. While the Lhasa government showed no reaction when the People’s Liberation Army entered Tibetan parts of Qinghai and Sichuan (thus giving a sign of not treating these areas as its immediate territory), today exile voices are firm that this is Tibet too (although by now “Tibet” has become more an imaginary entity than a map-based reality). But Tibetan pastoralists, even if rehabilitated into full citizens of Tibetan society, are still Zomia-nized. Evidence? The debate around the language in which Nulo composed his book.

It is perhaps unusual that *Joys and Sorrows*’ first translation was into Tibetan: the book was translated into literary Tibetan and published in India in 2008. The language of the original was criticized as being too inaccessible and was criticised as one of the shortcomings of the book (LLN 2007/2008: 57). This drawback – from a point of view of a reader accustomed to reading in a more standard version of Tibetan – is, however, the very key to the book’s success. Written in a “down-to-earth” language, with dialogue sounding as if taken straight from everyday life, and a style typical of the pastoral lands, *Joys and Sorrows* is not easy for those unfamiliar with vocabulary and expressions typical of the grasslands. At the same time, readers from there can see in Nulo’s verses a reflection of their own speech and highly valued oratorical style, and feel it is a book not only *about* them but also *for* them. *Joys and Sorrows* is comprehensible to those readers who, although literate, are not comfortable with reading works composed

in a more “sophisticated” literary style. This time, they need not feel relegated to the hinterlands of the Tibetan literary world. Whether the colloquial style of *Joys and Sorrows* is truly a drawback thus depends on your perspective.

Book untouched by a westerner

In her study on Tibetan (auto)biographies from the writing/publishing contact zone between Tibet and the West, Laurie McMillin shows how Western readers “coerce” narrators to produce a “particular kind of story” (2001: 212). Either by their participation in book production or merely by “being there” as the book’s potential readers whose tastes must be considered in a specific author-audience compromise, the Western agents are palpably there. In many cases the story gains its plot through an interaction between the Tibetan actor (who “owns” his life narrative) and his collaborators: the story is told to them, it is edited and published by them. This does not diminish the authenticity of the experiences the narrator wants to share, but their representation and interpretation is often achieved through the prism of a Western image of how Tibet should be viewed or presented to the public.

Nulo’s book is an exception. It has not been produced at the juncture of exile-Tibetan and Western world, or on terms dictated by the expectations of a Western publisher or audience. In private conversations, Nulo stated his interest in making his book accessible to as large a number of readers in as many countries as possible. The priority for him was, however, the readership in Tibet: those who shared his experiences and, even more, those born later, who were spared first-hand experience of what liberation meant. For Nulo, it was thus more a matter of preserving the memory and saving it from being erased than of winning the support of international community.

The book has now been translated into English,¹ and hence some intervention and intermediation has occurred, but the original manuscript is entirely Nulo’s work – nobody else could claim or conceal co-authorship. Many supposedly Tibetan-written accounts have been manipulated to some degree (perhaps in good faith) by non-Tibetan, western actors (sometimes almost imperceptibly as in the case of the Dalai Lama’s *My Land and My People*), and this knowledge makes one appreciate the original rhythm, the authorial selection of topics, and even the redundancies as evidence of *Joys and Sorrows*’ originality. If the book ever feels difficult to read, this should be taken as the best indicator that the story comes in a straight line from the author’s desk to the reader’s.

Tibetan readers in China received *Joys and Sorrows* enthusiastically. “This is the best Tibetan book I have ever read”, a young intellectual in Qinghai exclaimed. “I cried all the time when reading it”, admitted a nomad who had taught himself to read. “It deserves the Nobel Prize for Literature”, a government employee in Xining said – but then a doubt emerged: “Can a non-existing state submit candidates for the Nobel Prize?”

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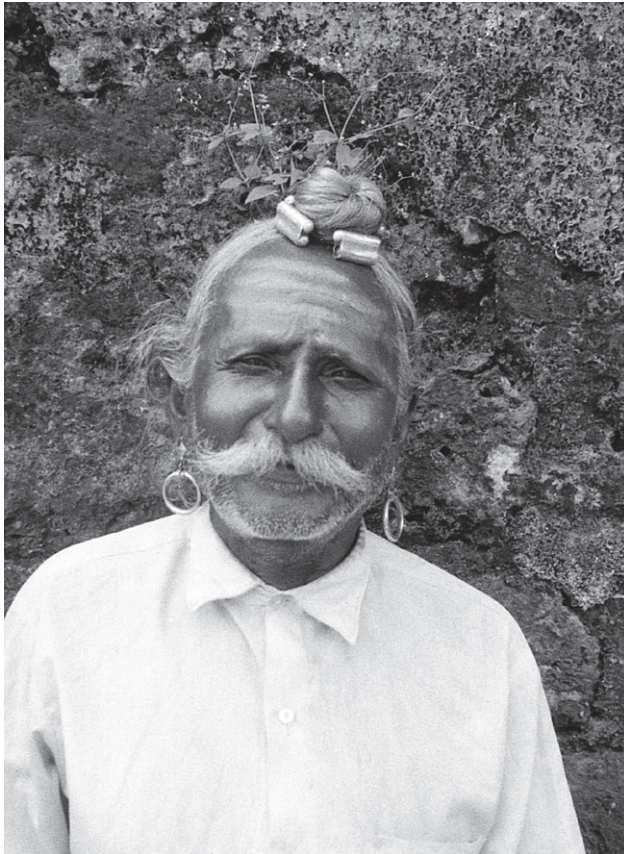
Notes

- 1 The English edition will be published later this year by the German publisher Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag in the series *Memories of Central Asia (Erinnerungen an Zentralasien)* edited by Prof. Ingeborg Baldauf of Humboldt University in Berlin.

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Gadulia Lohar: Nomads in India



LEFT
(top to bottom)

1: An ayurvedic doctor. Maposa Goa 1969.

2: An ayurvedic doctor and a client or patient in his roadside pharmacy and consulting room. Maposa Goa 1969.

3: On fallow plots of land along the roads people lived with extremely meagre possessions. Calangute Goa 1969.

4: Three of the millions of homeless people in India. Calangute Goa 1969.

RIGHT

5: A man with special powers and knowledge that he is willing to share in return for anything you can afford and consider fair. Rajasthan 1969.



I had taken few photographs until during a journey through Rajasthan in 1969 a friend lent me a camera. At that time, I still had some disdain for the camera as an obstacle to the view, because I had seen people in special moments and amazing places mainly busy with their devices. However, during a trip by train, bus and boat from New Delhi via Mumbai (in 1969 still called Bombay) to Goa, I shot in about five weeks over 250 pictures on four rolls of film.

Ewald Vanvugt

LONG FORGOTTEN, MY OLD NEGATIVES from that time have recently come to light again, and with the past now before my eyes I felt astounded and grateful. After more than forty years, some of my own pictures from India were completely new to me, while others reminded me vividly of meetings with remarkable people.

Outside train stations and on fallow plots of land along the roads, people lived with extremely meagre possessions. Far from all were beggars; indeed, many managed to scratch a living as smiths, seasonal land labourers, travelling entertainers and even as ayurvedic doctors with their knowledge of rare herbs and cures. Almost as poor as most wanderers, they possessed special skills and tools and costumes, some even owned a horse and wagon, marking them as people who worked for a living. Women and children without men stayed close to the improvised cooking fires. Nowhere did I meet an interpreter to help me talk with them, but the gradations of their wealth and poverty and of the strength with which they carried their fate fascinated me. I photographed such wandering people in several parts of Rajasthan without knowing who they were.

Recently, I found myself with a copy of the *National Geographic* of February 2010 which carried an article about nomads in India, illustrated with superb photographs by Steve McCurry. Some of the people in his pictures I recognized immediately, because only days before I had seen the faces of their ancestors in my own newly restored pictures. In the excellent article 'Lost nomads' John Lancaster explains precisely who I had photographed in 1969. The nomadic smiths belong to a people of wandering groups with the collective name Gadulia Lohar – after *gaadi*, Hindi for wagon or cart, and *lohar*, Hindi for smith.



LEFT
(top to bottom)

6: A woman cares for at least four children and possibly considers the elderly couple in the background as family as well. Rajasthan 1969.

7: A nomadic smith at work on the side of a road, with his family and a customer. Rajasthan 1969.

8: Father and son, perhaps ancestors of the nomadic smiths in Steve McCurry's similar picture from 2010 at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/02/nomads/mccurry-photography>. Rajasthan 1969.



RIGHT
9: The travelling clown with two heads, four arms and four legs is mildly mocking a sacred person. The white-haired and white-bearded man with the sign painted on his forehead and the prayer beads in his hand clearly represents a Hindu holy man or *sadhu* who is being carried on the back of a disciple. The boys next to him have the skill to let air escape from a balloon with a penetrating sound that attracts the attention of everybody in the bazaar. Rajasthan 1969.



According to their oral tradition, they are descendants of an ancient Hindu people that lived homelessly ever since the Mogul emperor Akbar conquered the massive fort Chittaurgarh in South Rajasthan in 1568 by. The fort protected the capital of Mewar, a kingdom of the high-caste Hindu rulers and warriors known as Rajputs. The Gadulia Lohar consider themselves to be Rajputs too: their ancestors served the kingdom as weapon-makers. Ashamed about the loss of their country they vowed to live as exiles without a fixed abode.

They are one the many nomadic groups in India. Some lived off criminal activities, but the majority existed peacefully alongside mainstream India and made useful contributions to the larger community. But sedentary society was so preoccupied with the criminals that it was generally convinced all nomads were thieves or worse.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, European colonial governments spent much energy and money to capture nomads in permanent settlements and deprive them of their right to travel. Less than eighty years ago, the British military and civil servants in India considered all wandering groups to be rebels and criminals, and treated them harshly—their European prejudices about gypsies reinforcing their opinions about local nomads. The government of India still is striving for the settlement of the wandering groups. Bureaucracies don't like people without a fixed address. Officially seven percent of India's present population, or 80 million people, belong to one of the nomadic peoples.

The Gadulia Lohar stuck to their ancestral occupation as smiths and weapon-makers. Forty years ago I saw them sharpen knives and repair copper pots and kettles. Copper cooking pots have since become obsolete, so the main work

of the smiths today is forging from scrap iron new kitchen spoons and other utensils. According to John Lancaster and other reporters, the Gadulia Lohar are still treated with disrespect by everybody around them, including the authorities and in particular the police. And as is the case in so many similar situations across time and space: deeply entrenched opinions about their untrustworthy nature hinder them in finding work, and their resulting poverty and despair drive some to crime.

The Indian author and social activist Mahasweta Devi has long argued for more compassion and funds for the nomadic peoples from the Indian authorities and from the population. Mahasweta Devi has said many times: 'These peoples belong to the very poor, usually they are illiterate and not familiar with the social programmes. Urgently needed are the political will and the social mobilisation for a more humane existence of the nomads.' (See e.g. her article 'India's Denotified Tribes' at <http://indiatribals.blogspot.com/2008/01/mahasweta-devi-on-indias-denotified.html>)

If my old half-frame photo-negatives had not been scanned by the International Institute of Social History, the pictures would not have reappeared with such clarity and detail, each as large as a page in a newspaper. Then most likely I would never have recognised the faces in Steve McCurry's contemporary photographs as relatives of the people I once looked in the eye. The photos from 1969 illustrate and underscore that the nomadic way of life and the lowly status of the Gadulia Lohar have hardly changed in generations.

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Some technical information is necessary to understand the circumstances of the find in my archives. The camera I used back in 1969 was an Olympus from Japan, about as big as a fist. Because it only used half of a regular negative for each photo, it was known as a 'half-frame camera', very high-tech at the time, allowing the photographer to fit 72 photos on to a regular 36-exposure roll of film.

Over many years as an increasingly keen travel photographer, I have used many different cameras, using mostly film with 36 exposures, usually black and white. Since the advent of digital photography transformed our practices, my sheets of photo-negatives have slumbered in boxes in the attic.

An old-fashioned contact print of a half-frame photo-negative is hardly larger than a stamp (18 x 24 mm) and even under a magnifying glass the image can be rather vague. However, when the negative is digitally scanned, the photo can be magnified to fill a large computer monitor with translucent clarity and detail

Some years ago I made arrangements with the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam to store and take care of my personal papers. Last year Frank de Jong of the IISH and I started to go through my photo archive and in the process we unearthed amongst several treasures the half-frame photo-negatives made in India. So far, the IISH has published a selection of about 500 of my photos on Flickr (see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/iisg/sets>), mostly taken in Asia and South America in between 1969 and 1974.

Betel chewing in Laos

The global betel chewing community stands at around 600 million. Nguyễn Xuân Hiên recently mapped this community, based on on-the-spot, up-to-date observations and surveys during the last decade, and on a review of literature from the last half century. His and Peter A. Reichart's research categorizes the global betel chewing community into two groups: autochthon and allochthon/migrant betel chewers. It also shows that Laos is an integral part of the global betel chewing area and in this article, Nguyễn and Reichart shed light on the little-known betel chewing customs of this landlocked nation.

Nguyễn Xuân Hiên and Peter A. Reichart

Laotian betel chewing as seen by outsiders

More than a century ago, the French explorer P. Néis observed (1885: 24) '...getting near a [Laotian] village, the first sight to see is the leaf-clusters of palm-trees, especially of coconuts and arecas.' In the first decade of the 21st century, the authors observed the same landscape on the outskirts of Vientiane and Luang Prabang: in the gardens of farmers and villagers, two or three areca palms can be seen with betel vines twining round their trunks. The products of these palms are mainly for domestic consumption. Further south, in Savannakhet and Sekong for example, the number of palms per household increases and sometimes betel vines are even planted separately on a bamboo frame.

Our observation is that Laotian areca palms (*Areca catechu* L., *māk* or *māk* or *mag* in the vernacular) are less luxuriant than Vietnamese ones. In addition, the betel vines or creepers (*Peper bitel*, *p'ou* or *plu* or *blū*) in Laos are thinner, with smaller and tougher leaves, as compared to those in the neighbouring country. The areca nuts are rather small, with a thick dark green covering, and are mostly oblong in shape. In mountainous areas of the Northern Highlands the authors have come across numerous specimens of semi-wild areca palms (*Areca laosensis*) with dark orange round nuts.

The Laotian betel quid (package) commonly consists of: 1) a whole or half leaf of betel, 2) a quarter of an unpeeled areca nut, 3) a small lump of slaked lime, 4) a piece of astringent bark and 5) a generous pinch of tobacco. It has been said that some poor Laotian women only chew dried areca core, lime and tobacco.

Most chewers prefer fresh nuts, but in the off-season they chew dried nuts. Areca nuts, in whole pieces or in fine slices, are hung above the fire-hole, usually located in the middle of houses on stilts. In the southern part of the country, the drying process has taken on a small business dimension. Areca slices are dried with charcoal, then bound with bamboo string into 20-slice-chains; these chains are then packed in quantities of 50 or 100 in woven bamboo boxes. Such businesses are dominated by the Chinese and sometimes the Vietnamese.

Most of the slaked lime (*poûn*) is from the limestone that is found almost everywhere in this mountainous country. Limestone pieces (of 20-30cm) are placed in a furnace (made of hard clay) then burnt for a day and a night. This artisanal burning gives an unevenly-burnt, rather dirty product; the slaked lime is not snowy white. In Luang Prabang, betel chewers from affluent families colour their lime with curcuma (*Curcuma longa*). The Thai ethnic group living along the Mekong river-side also burn mollusc shells in order to produce the raw lime, and in turn the slaked lime (*pun*), used in betel chewing.

In most cases, the astringent matter used in the betel quid is a slice of *sisiet* cut from the bark of the perennial, 25-30m-high Kunz tree (*Pentace burmanica*). The mature bark is removed in pieces of (roughly) 45-50cm, four to five centimetres wide and one to two centimetres thick. In some southern provinces, the bark is put into boiling water, then concentrated over a low fire for two to three hours until it has turned brown-black in colour and can be formed into balls of between five and eight centimeters in diameter; this produces a substance similar to *cachu*, the extract of *Acacia catechu* used as a stimulant by Indian chewers and some Southeast Asians. This concentrated ball is also called *sisiet*. Chewers fold a small lump of *sisiet* into a betel leaf together with the other components and the quid is ready to chew. In Xieng Khouang, another tree – the *Careva arborea* – is used to extract *cachu*. The ethnic communities in mountainous areas also use the bark of various trees such as *Artocarpus rigidus* and *Artocarpus asperulus*. What all these tree barks have in common is that they taste astringent. In fact, the more mature the bark, the more astringent the taste. Mountain people appreciate a quid with a bitter taste; they believe that it prevents malaria and other diseases.

Traditionally, the tobacco used in the Laotian quid has been homemade and very heavy. Recently it has been replaced by cigarettes. In mountainous regions, Lao Theung (midland people) and Lao Soung (highland people) chewers are generally also heavy smokers. Locals believe smoking and chewing will give them strength against the damp, misty weather.

In Laos, areca and betel planting is not undertaken for business. The interregional and international exchange of these products develops sporadically and on a small scale; mainly products are traded from the south to the north and from plains regions to the highlands. The Laotians do not participate in this business which flourishes in the dry season. Dried areca slices, raw lime and, when stocks are low, betel leaves are imported, sometimes from bordering provinces in Vietnam.

As is the case in most betel chewing countries, to date there are no reliable figures on the prevalence of this centuries-old custom in Laos. Most of the Laotian chewers the authors have met are mature women (over forty) with unblackened dentition. They sometimes display branches of areca or some betel leaves arranged on banana leaves at local markets or along roads to earn a few *kips* (Lao currency). Apparently this is more for pleasure than business because, if asked, they happily share their commodities with market-goers.

The betel quid still remains effective in ritual life. Part of a banana leaf is made into a conical container, into which is put a whole betel leaf, two or four areca quarters and, in most cases, a *sisiet* slice. This is then laid on the altar in order to eliminate summer ailments. It is believed that without the offering of a betel quid, the effectiveness of the prayers of *Mo* masters (a kind of medium) evaporates completely. A wedding go-between of the P'anoi people usually brings a jar of raw rice beer, betel leaves, whole areca nuts and *Artocarpus* (*puo* 'c *hât*) bark slices as presents for the bridal family.

Betel chewing practices among ethnic groups

Laos counts between 70 and 100 ethnic groups. On-the-spot observation by the authors revealed that in the Boloven Highlands, the Kha Alak practice the culture of betel; in the North, the Akha, the P'anoi, the Man and the Thai chew betel, too. However, it is worth noting that the Thai community in Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Hua Phan Provinces can be divided into a) (recent) Thai immigrants from Thailand, b) local Thais (who immigrated from South China in the 18th-19th century

or earlier), and c) Thai immigrants from Vietnam (from the 1950s on). All these Thais chew betel to varying degrees. However, their betel quid composition and especially their manner of betel rolling are quite diverse. The Thailand Thais, influenced by their compatriots, prefer the betel quid in a conical betel leaf; the Vietnamese Thais continue to roll betel into fine rolls; and the local Thais chew betel while they smoke. All of them hold the use of betel in ritual feasts and ceremonies in high esteem.

The Vietnamese ethnic community in Laos adopts a different pattern. They number between 20,000 and 50,000 (from a total of 7 million Laotians) and are highly mobile. They have settled mainly in Pakxe, Thakhek, Kaysone Phomvihane (Savannakhet) and Phongsali, Xam Nua, Ban Nape (along the Vietnamese border). It is possible to distinguish two sub-groups within this community: the Viet sub-group (mainly living in the south and originating from Quảng Bình, Hà Tĩnh and Nghệ An provinces, which are strongholds of Vietnamese traditional betel-chewing) and the Vietnamese Thai sub-group (mainly settled around the north eastern borders). The first sub-group still maintains their original customs. They prepare their betel rolls in the traditional Vietnamese way, by spreading a little snow white slaked lime on the betel leaf's dark surface, roughly rolling it up and then pressing a fine, peeled areca quarter against it. All of this is then placed in the mouth. A small pinch of cigarette tobacco is used later to brush the chewer's front teeth. The betel quid is chewed for over twenty minutes and the red betel saliva is spat out twice during the session. While some chewers still have betel paraphernalia from their native areas – the wooden betel box (*tráp trấu*) that, in the past, was considered to be the 'face of the family'; a bronze betel box (*ang trấu*), the symbol of betel chewing; a tiny silver lime tube (*ống vôi*); a bronze or ceramic spittoon (*ống phồng*) – many do not. Fortunately, the ceramic lime-pots are sometimes still conserved as heritage objects. It has been observed that local chewers usually use bronze stupa-shaped lime tubes. Similar tubes are found in Vietnamese border areas, such as Mường Lay District (Điện Biên Province) and Mai Châu District (Hòa Bình Province).

It should be noted that the authors did not observe or collect information about the chewing of industry-made, ready-to-chew *pan masala*. Likewise, no information was obtained relating to Laotian folktales over betel chewing and/or its components.

General speaking, the characteristics of Laotian betel chewing customs are:

- the quid is still close to its natural state; in particular, no stimulants are added
- betel is mainly grown for familial consumption and not for sale
- there is a close link with tobacco smoking
- betel chewing is not as prevalent or as impressive as in Vietnamese bordering provinces
- Laotian betel chewing is a peaceful practice, reflecting the life of local people
- the practices of autochthon betel chewers (native Laotians) from those of allochthon/migrant chewers (Vietnamese immigrants) are clearly distinguishable.

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Images below from left to right:

1: Map of betel chewing areas (Nguyễn Xuân Hiên, 1998-2009). The solid dark zone shows the primary, autochthon betel chewing areas. The striped zone shows the (main, rather scarce) secondary, allochthon betel chewing areas.

2: A semi-wild areca-nut from Luang Namtha Province.

3: The betel service of a Vietnamese immigrant in Savannakhet.

4: A casual betel quid on the Thailand-Laos border.

5: A Laotian lime tube in Xam Nua.



Pull-out supplement

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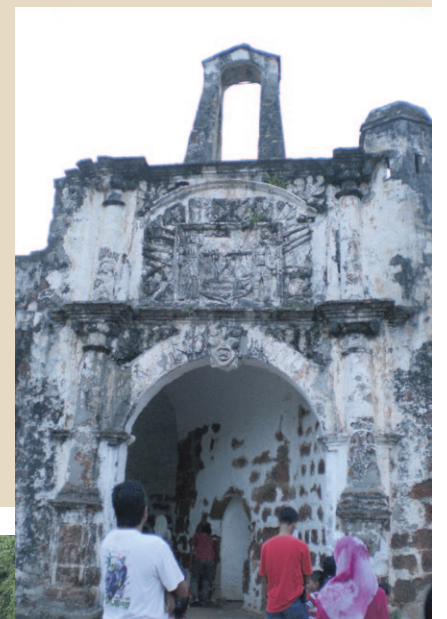
Cultural Heritage

The term “heritage” shares with another equally slippery word “tradition” the basic meaning of that which is handed down. It is thus by definition a dynamic and subjective notion, and is laden with an even greater connotative burden when the term “culture”, the sum of human endeavours, is appended as an adjective. Cultural heritage projects mediate what we behold, and what we are told, of the past – they involve representations and narrations of, and interventions on, aspects of the histories of specifically-defined communities within contemporary frames of reference and signification. The articles in this section focus on the histories and motivations behind how cultural heritage has come to be produced, framed or presented. Agency and intent is highlighted in questioning what aspects have been selected and why others are excluded, how they are narrated and when these developments took place.

Imran bin Tajudeen



Chinese-style gateways in Makassar, Indonesia (above) and Melaka, Malaysia (right), two of numerous examples erected since the first decade of the twenty-first century in historic areas of cities in Malaysia and Indonesia as part of efforts to create Chinatown-themed areas. Source: Author.



Porta de Santiago (above), the only remaining fragment of the Portuguese fort of A Famosa, Melaka, Malaysia which was built in 1511 using stones pillaged from the mosque and tombs of the Melaka Sultanate. The fort, dismantled in 1810 by the British, is being rebuilt (left). Source: Author.



The politics of cultural heritage

Continued from page 17 >>

THE PRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION of “cultural heritage” today is typically orchestrated through the discursive frameworks defined by political entities. Indeed, existing frameworks for the promotion and management of cultural heritage privilege the nation-state as primary agent. Through heritage legislation and listing, restoration and conservation, and didactic valorisation, government authorities involved in the business of defining, creating and promoting “cultural heritage” select and frame specific aspects of the past to fix and propagate specific ideas regarding identities.

Discursive perspectives

The politics of narrating and representing cultural heritage can be investigated through the discourse between the producers of cultural heritage projects and the interpretations they produce; the multivalent histories of cultural practices and forms of the heritage entity in question; the knowledge, practices and perception of local communities and experts; and the reception and reaction of audiences or visitors, intended or otherwise. The state (and other actors) have entered the discursive framework through their production of socio-cultural narratives for heritage sites as didactic tools in identity construction and management.

As mentioned earlier, the exercise of producing cultural heritage involves contemporary frames of reference and signification. The articles in this section discuss the disjuncture between what John Clark (1993) has referred to as the discourses of the world or of production, and the discourses of interpretation. Such disjuncture is specifically investigated by examining the role of colonial and early nationalist perspectives or imperial practices in promoting the recognition and currency of certain cultural objects and practices as heritage; where contemporary strategies stand in relation to this legacy; and how they are informed by political or economic priorities or ideological agendas.

UNESCO's World Heritage Program provides a dominant framework for cultural heritage intervention and promotion; here the nation-state is the agent for proposals, and is the recipient of the mandate and funding for further action. Another impetus, and one which is increasingly bound to the World Heritage List, is tourism and the revenue and prestige it generates for the host country or site. Yet there are other sources of initiative, legitimacy and motivation. Communities may possess specific mechanisms by which groups or individuals are empowered to act as custodians, or through which aspects of socio-cultural practices are performed regularly. State disempowerment or suppression of these alternative agencies and mechanisms constitute yet another layer of politics.

Heritage mystique

During my own fieldwork in historic cities and at officially-designated sites of cultural heritage in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in 2005 and 2008, I observed first-hand how local understandings of cultural heritage may take shape precisely in reaction to state discourses on national, regional or ethnic identities. We are given a stark reminder of the phenomenon of popular self-deception in David Lowenthal's (1998: 249) observation, in the context of the reconstruction of “British Heritage”, that

— Lack of hard evidence seldom distresses the public at large, who are mostly credulous, undemanding, accustomed to heritage mystique, and often laud the distortions, omissions, and fabrications central to heritage reconstruction.

While we often hear of how official sites exclude local communities, I have also observed the challenge of encouraging local residents in historic city quarters to engage with aspects of heritage in their midst that had not yet received official recognition.

Conversely, local communities can also act as creators of heritage mystique. The pseudo-Chinese forms in San Francisco's Chinatown, for instance, began as part of a self-Orientalising exercise by local Chinese landlords to promote the area as a tourist attraction in order to save the community from eviction. In contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia, in connection with tourism promotion by local Chinese business interests, we witness a process I have referred to elsewhere as Chinatownification: large areas of old towns that were formerly more ethnically diverse have today been re-inscribed architecturally and in heritage representation as ‘Chinatown’.

Recuperating hybridity as productive discourse

Heritage production by the state typically involves the celebration of a primordial national essence aligned with the re-imagined culture(s) of the modern nation-state's majority or dominant group(s) to the exclusion of minority groups. Michael Herzfeld argues that the conceptualisation of heritage as

reification and objectification of culture, entangled with assumptions of tradition framed within nation-state boundaries, originates from Europe, and consequently “heritage” can be understood as an inextricable hybrid of European roots and Asian weave of appropriation and reinterpretation.

If conceptions of ‘cultural heritage’ are understood to be tied to the teleological genealogies of the modern nation, can we then hope to discuss it in ways that transcend the latter's artificial boundaries, and avoid committing interpretive violence on history? Using Sri Lanka as case study, Nira Wickramasinghe proffers that a recuperation of the notion of hybridity highlights multiple antecedents in cultural production, and can serve to counter the prevalent popular self-deception that some stable, immutable “essence of the past” infuses national or even ethnic identities – a fiction that fulfils a perceived need for anchors in a fluid world.

Hybridity and multivalency are likewise emphasised in the article by Miki and Madhavi Desai on the regional varieties of colonial bungalows of India, whose developments are read against their socio-political contexts of production and use, particularly the agency of local Indian builders, buyers and occupants. The article demonstrates the potential of micro-regional perspectives on heritage from the colonial era to depart from grand narratives that over-emphasise colonial agency.

Origins and bases of heritage practices and values

Contemporary cultural heritage categories, priorities and practices in Asia often owe their origins to the politics of imperial rivalry and the legitimisation of European colonial rule. Mrinalini Rajagopalan historicises British strategies towards “heritage”, from earlier practices of looting and the emergence of pillaged colonial artefacts in museums and collections in the imperial capital, to the initiation of on-site conservation of Mughal Indian monuments. This shift “from loot to trophy” in cultural heritage strategies is read against Britain's changing ideological posturing towards her colonies and her own heritage.

Hazel Hahn discusses the heritage of countries from the former French Indochina, beginning with colonial attempts to define this heterogeneous entity, united only by their subjugation under French rule, through architecture. Specific emphases and omissions in this endeavour changed in tandem with French colonial interests and scholarship; Hahn compares these with the cultural heritage outlook in the postcolonial nation-states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

In a broad survey of the Islamic World, Hasan-Uddin Khan presents the challenges posed by the continued or intensified use of mosques and their multi-cultural, temporally layered composition against theories on conservation and physical “preservation”. He suggests that necessary changes could be conceptualised in relation to the “integrity of aesthetic feeling, meaning and use”. Community agency in maintenance and restoration is discussed vis-à-vis the role of the state, the impact of tourism as source of revenue and the support of state-centric agencies such as UNESCO.

Revivalism: The nation-state as architect and client

The articles on new administrative cities and heritage policies in Malaysia and Indonesia by Sarah Moser and in Myanmar by Paul Franck focus on the state as primary agent and discuss how state projects create cultural heritage anew. Seen in conjunction with Hahn's article on French Indochina, one can read in these projects a systematic bias towards majority ethnic groups who dominate the state apparatus, and the concomitant obscuration of minority groups in these official narratives.

The architectural forms used for state edifices in Malaysia and in Indonesia's Riau Islands, in Myanmar, and in French Indochina vary from pan-Islamic and Buddhist “classicism” to royal revivalism. Arguably, we can see parallels between the creation of these revivalist, syncretistic state symbols and the revival of Graeco-Roman forms as markers of European identity in Neo-Classical, Romantic and Baroque architecture. In French Indochina, we see a direct link via the French colonisers who assumed the task of re-inventing what they understood to be the classical styles suited for their colonies. In fact, both in British Malaya (Malaysia) and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), colonial architects initiated the use of pan-Islamic forms in ‘Indo-Saracenic’ designs for government buildings and new mosques. Classicist revivalism in the service of state notions of identity in Europe and Asia, though not contemporaneous, both show the selective use of re-imagined glorious pasts.

(Re)inscribing glorious pasts: Asia-Europe engagements

The growing sophistication of the heritage industry is reflected in the complexity of state narratives and physical interventions on cultural heritage sites that are increasingly articulate in pre-empting criticism by recourse to arguments about the restoration of past glory and restitution of honour besmirched by perceived past injustices. These narratives justify an emphasis

3: Interpretive map from the Dutch colonial Fort Rotterdam, Makassar, Indonesia and the pre-colonial Somba Opu citadel with a vernacular house theme park containing houses from the highlands that never existed in pre-colonial Makassar city. Source: Author.



In connection with tourism promotion by local Chinese business interests, we witness a process of Chinatownification: large areas of old towns that were formerly more ethnically diverse are re-inscribed architecturally and in heritage representation as ‘Chinatown’.

in certain readings of identity while suppressing other interpretations or removing other layers. While the incidents involving the Babri Mosque in India require no introduction, an earlier, pertinent example bears reiteration: the removal from the Parthenon of all medieval Christian, Renaissance and Ottoman accretions by the Greek state in the mid-19th century and again in 1975. Conversely, the official brochure for the Cordoba Mosque-Cathedral defends the erection of the cathedral by referring to the restoration of Catholicism to its rightful position; the reader is sternly reminded that the insertion of the cathedral in fact protected the mosque from further destruction.

In connection with the notion of glorious pasts, it is interesting to note how Franck observes that Myanmar's generals, in carrying out projects that re-inscribe the past, have simply appropriated a strategy previously employed by Burmese royalty, and how Moser interprets references to historic royal architecture in new projects as a signifier of the rejuvenation of pre-colonial golden ages in Johor, Malaysia and Riau, Indonesia. To what extent do heritage projects by the modern state in Asia owe their practices and persuasive logic to pre-colonial precedence, particularly to the royal imperative of each successive ruler or dynasty to selectively restore and re-inscribe or to wilfully neglect or remove historic structures based on its preferred vision of the past? How does this history compare with pre-modern and modern European notions and practices of “cultural heritage”—and conversely, how much can contemporary heritage practice in Asia be claimed to derive from European precedence?

Meanwhile, postcolonial Asian cities that have lost their pre-colonial heritage to European conquest have turned to the restoration of European forts, often with financial aid from the former coloniser, as a means to achieve recognition by UNESCO. Some have succeeded in this venture: the Portuguese forts of Galle in Sri Lanka and of A Famosa in Melaka, Malaysia, are two examples. Melaka, which received UNESCO listing in 2009, privileges the rebuilding of its Portuguese fort over archaeological research on the pre-colonial city, of which few significant vestiges remain (fig. 2). Fort Rotterdam, the Dutch fort in Makassar, Indonesia, is preserved with all buildings nearly intact; conversely Makassar's pre-colonial citadel, whose brick walls have been restored, lacks any extant original buildings and is occupied by a vernacular house theme park (figure 3). These examples appear to indicate that prioritisation of European colonial heritage remains prevalent, while portrayals of the Native as alternately rural or regal, harking back to colonial representations of the colonised Other, enjoy continued currency.

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European lessons for Asian heritage studies

The heritage industry in Europe is grounded in a historically recent idea of the nation-state. That idea was exported to various Asian countries, which often transformed it along with associated notions of history and heritage. This brief essay examines some of the lessons to be learned from European experiments with heritage promotion and conservation (notably in capital cities) and warns of the dangers of repeating or even exacerbating the less salutary effects of those experiments in Asian contexts and especially that of Thailand, the country of the author's principal research focus in Asia.

Michael Herzfeld

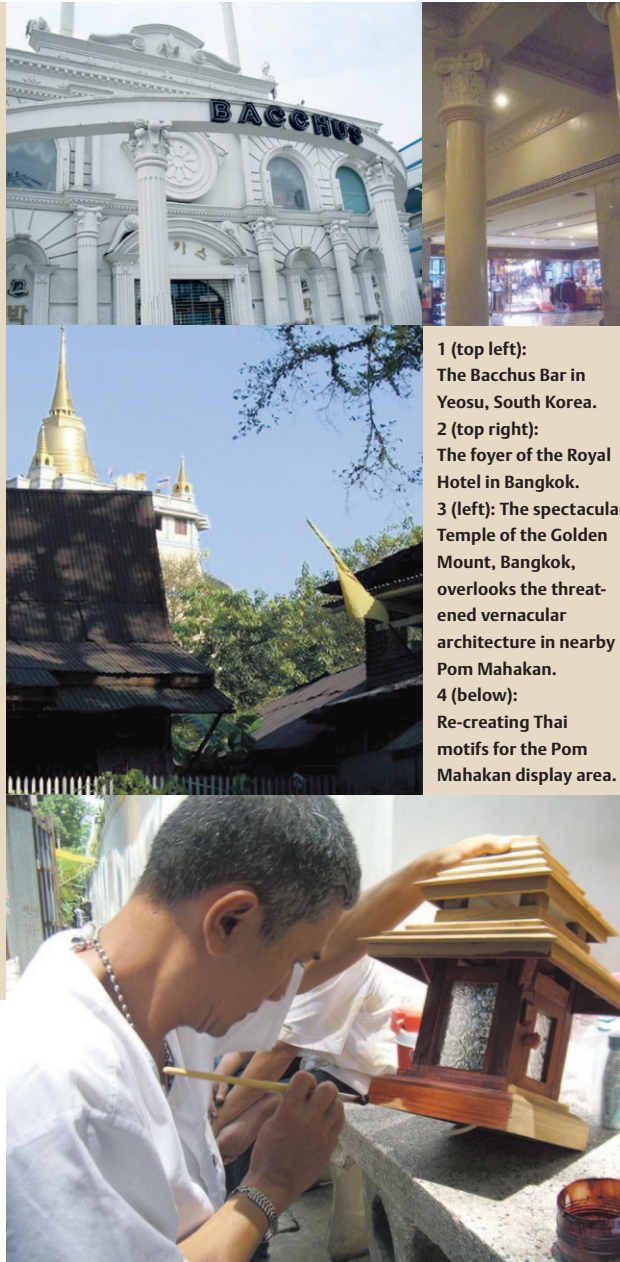
RAJADAMNOEN AVENUE, the grand sweep leading down toward the ritual grounds in front of Bangkok's famed Grand Palace, has recently been dubbed the future "Champs-Élysées of Asia". Such reconfigurations are signs of a subaltern cultural politics. Despite protestations of never having been colonised, and perhaps with more defensive zeal than unequivocally postcolonial countries with more clearly identifiable grievances, Thailand follows a model of respectability that owes much to a Western bourgeois aesthetic (Peleggi 2002). Thai planners and politicians, largely Western-schooled, envision a city of neoliberal shopping malls purveying "Thai tradition" amid a gentle sea of green parks and shaded avenues and peopled, to judge from the available architectural drawings, by strolling citizens who look anything but Thai.

There is another Thailand, however, and it is not nearly so complaisant. While –perhaps sincerely– expressing adherence to the fundamental principles of the current political order and cheerfully committed to the preservation of a heritage (*moradok*) retrofitted to reflect the essence of "Thainess" (*khwaam pen thai*), this Thailand is fiercely egalitarian. It is the Thailand that generated the Assembly of the Poor in the 1990s (Massingham 2003) and that periodically takes to the streets in paroxysms of anger against the increasing replacement of the old feudal order by a perhaps equally repressive class structure. In what Peter Jackson (2004) has called a regime of images, this Thailand must also represent itself through adroit management of the official forms of Thai identity; just as the existence of slums is masked by the erection of billboards when important dignitaries come visiting, so the persistence of such an egalitarian substrate is masked by the polite performances of bureaucrats and citizens acting together to recall the formalities of the old feudal system (*sakdinaa*) –performances that encapsulate the tension between hierarchy and egalitarianism through ironic and ambiguous displays of politeness (*marayaat*). This concealed, culturally intimate Thainess is less permeated by European models, although it also looks to Western ideals of "democracy" as the key to political legitimacy.

The European inheritance in heritage

We cannot understand the development of heritage politics in Asia without looking closely at what has happened in Europe. There are at least four reasons for this. One, clearly, is the long and complex history of the European colonization of Asian lands and its impact even, or especially, on the few that did not fall directly under European rule. A second has to do with the emergence in Europe of a notion of culture as a national "thing" or possession, spawning a host of national museums of culture in Asia that similarly represent the nation-state as a homogeneous multiplication and extension of the property-owning individual at the dawn of capitalism. The third reason for which the study of heritage in Asia should be viewed in part from a Western perspective is that the West has itself suffered a series of embarrassing setbacks in the various attempts to create an enlightened understanding of heritage. And the fourth issue concerns the actual permeation of local architectural styles by Western classicism, from the elaborate extravaganza of the Bacchus bar in Yeosu, South Korea (fig. 1), to the classical column

National museums, from Greece to Thailand and from Norway to South Korea, display cultural fixity rather than dynamic change and variety.



1 (top left): The Bacchus Bar in Yeosu, South Korea.
2 (top right): The foyer of the Royal Hotel in Bangkok.
3 (left): The spectacular Temple of the Golden Mount, Bangkok, overlooks the threatened vernacular architecture in nearby Pom Mahakan.
4 (below): Re-creating Thai motifs for the Pom Mahakan display area.

capitals adorning the historic Royal Hotel at the bottom end of Bangkok's Rajadamnoen Avenue (itself a piece of the egalitarian history of Thailand's student resistance to dictatorship despite its name and dynastic trappings) (fig. 2). I will briefly address each of these matters in turn.

First, then, the history of colonization: it simply does not make sense to speak of Asian heritage as though the colonial past had no impact on it. The very notion of a national heritage is, in some degree, a Western invention, variously transformed through its Asian incarnations.

That observation leads straight to the second point. The European nation-state, anthropologist Richard Handler (1985) has argued, extends the idea of the person as defined by the ownership of personal property to that of a nation defined by owning a distinctive, inalienable collective culture. National museums, from Greece to Thailand and from Norway to South Korea, display cultural fixity rather than dynamic change and variety.

The objectification of culture as a fixed object rather than a fluid process may have been necessary for the creation of national unity, but –partly for that reason– it often promotes negative effects. It excludes local and minority identities and represses reinvention and divergence even by members of the mainstream. It also sets a terrible model of exclusion that is fiercely imitated by local (and often separatist) movements seeking to repel outsiders in the name of cultural purity.

A xenophobic view of heritage

Such exclusion is a serious issue in Europe, where –this is my third key point– local irredentists sometimes translate racist and anti-immigrant postures into violent discrimination. The rise of the far Right in France, Italy, and Austria is closely associated with destructive cultural politics; the restriction of foreign ("ethnic") foods in some Italian cities is the distractingly trivial thin end of a dangerous wedge assiduously driven between local communities and immigrant groups.

Clearly there are compelling lessons to be learned from Europe here –above all, that "local history" and "local knowledge" are not necessarily "better" than the reified "national" ones. Some local movements do serve admirably to protect the interests of oppressed ethnic and social groups; others, however, provide a disingenuous excuse for acts of horrific intolerance. The reification of culture guarantees nothing except the serious threat of eventual breakdown in cultural fluidity and interaction.

On the other hand, national master plans that claim to seek urban "development," "improvement" or "renewal" –all euphemisms for an architectural eugenics designed to isolate and marginalize potentially restive working-class populations – actually often entail the destruction of vernacular or extremely old architecture as well as the repression of dissident and marginal populations. In this context Mussolini's depredations in Rome or some of the more recent demolition of the medieval core of Barcelona come particularly to mind. Threats to the physical presence of local communities in the name of urban beautification and a repressive understanding of "heritage" are now rampant in Asia as well (see fig. 3).

One notably pernicious version of this process is the deliberate spatial isolation of temples and palaces that previously had an organic relationship with the social life of streets and markets. This deliberate deracination, or "spatial cleansing" (Herzfeld 2006), appears in the lofty separation of the Acropolis from the busy city life of Athens, the separation of previously well integrated temples (*wat*) from the old, noisy, messy markets that animated them in Thailand, and the current assault on modern Romans' sense that the ancient buildings around them are part of the fabric of their city –a city from which residents are also increasingly alienated physically by an epidemic of evictions. Stylistic formalism buttresses such changes. In 19th-century Greece, neo-classicism, largely orchestrated by West European architects (Bastéa 2000) and embraced by a rising bourgeoisie, served to mask or destroy older, vernacular cultural dynamics. Thus, when it now reappears in East Asia, it is not hard to see what cultural hierarchies it is expanding into new spaces.

Towards multiple heritages

Yet there are alternatives. In Thailand, some communities endorse official images while also recording local resistance to city and state authority. In the small urban community of Pom Mahakan in Bangkok, a highly stylized museum area, with a pavilion specifically dedicated to "local wisdom," yet ornamented with conventionally Thai motifs, houses the documentation of nineteen years of struggle against eviction (fig. 4). Here contrasted but also convergent forms of heritage bespeak a valuable debate over the basis of legitimacy. This, I suggest, is an example worthy of study and emulation.

A benign heritage policy respects all social and cultural groups and their capacity for creative change, adaptation, and redefinition. As the roiling Preah Vihear dispute between Thailand and Cambodia, violent hostilities between Hindu and Muslim groups over the Babri/Ayodhya mosque/temple in India (Ratnagar 2004) and Israeli-Palestinian tensions over the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem all demonstrate, neither state and state-based institutions nor political and religious organizations offer much hope today for such engagement.

Yet this is an effort that must be made. A culturally open record of conflict, one that also shows clearly how all preservation inevitably also entails selective destruction and the displacement of living populations, might be distasteful or embarrassing to state and international authorities, but, for the same reasons, it would generate valuable lessons for future generations. A spirit of mutual generosity is one that encourages the greatest possible array of distinctive voices. Such is the real challenge of heritage. What national government will dare to break with the prevailing, narrow vision and work to achieve a culturally pluralist vision for the future of the past?

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Authenticity and hybridity: Scrutinising heritage

This essay revisits some of the author's earlier work on hybrid objects in Sri Lanka under colonial rule that traced the genealogy of the idea of authenticity, a concept central to all heritage claims, back to pre-colonial and colonial pasts. Writing as a historian whose archive was and still is colonised Sri Lanka, she has argued that hybridity could only fail to become an instrument of empowerment. Indeed it contradicted itself by implying the existence of 'pure' and separate parents and, taken in this sense, extended rather than contradicted the colonial and national privileging of 'purity' as the supreme value.¹

Nira Wickramasinghe



Left: Throne displayed in the Colombo Museum. Photo by Sumaya Samarasinghe.

Right: Colombo Museum. Image courtesy of Calamur, Flickr.

WHILE THE IMPURITY OF ALL CULTURAL formations and products is no longer a subject of dispute among scholars, the concept of heritage remains implicitly tied up with notions of cultural purity² and is often invoked by proponents of social and political conservatism in the public sphere. It is no accident that in Sri Lanka the party created in 2004 by Buddhist monks to defend traditional values is called *Jathika Hela Urumaya* or National (Pristine) Heritage Party.

Hybrid heritages

But outside the circle of the few who believe that cultural heritage is not a given and is constantly being shaped and reshaped, heritage has a reassuring, self-congratulating effect on peoples in search of certainties about a fictional unmoving national culture in a world in constant flux. Walter Benjamin warned against the 'appreciation of heritage', describing it as a greater 'catastrophe' than indifference or disregard.³ Can hybridity, one of postcolonialism's most debated ideas but somewhat passé, act once again as agent provocateur and inject power dynamics into the staid realm of national and international heritage practices by subverting authenticity claims?

Interestingly, the best known theorists of hybridity, Homi K. Bhaba and Salman Rushdie, do not refer to hybrid things, most probably because they understand hybridity as the result of the internalisation of subjectivity. For them hybridity marks a valid movement away from the perception of divided subjects towards the perception of divisions within the constructed subject. Things have little place in their analysis.

It is, however, possible to envisage rekindling 'hybridity' as a potentially transformative and creative notion to think through cultural production in contact zones. Hybrid heritages read as rhizomes seem to offer a suitable counterpoint to the international and national focus on authenticity.

Things would not be conceived as beholding a single origin from which they sprout like a tree but could be likened to rhizomes, root-like organisms that spread and grow horizontally, with no centre, beginning or end, and which live in a state of constant play.⁴ While value accorded to things based on authenticity as 'genuineness' plays into the hands of majoritarian cultural politics, a turn to heritage conceived as temporally unbound rhizomes could diffuse such state-centred tendencies and privilege criteria as communal memory, aesthetic pleasure, and dionysian play rather than truthfulness.

The role and source of authenticity

The move away from authenticity for heritage scholars and practitioners is perhaps as disconcerting a thought as asking historians to drop linear narratives. Yet many historians working on colonial pasts have expressed doubt over the Venice Charter of 1964 and UNESCO's endorsement of 'authenticity' as a guiding principle of its heritage policy. The attribution of 'world heritage status', based on a materialist understanding of authenticity as something that exists, can be measured or tested and that is the basis of hierarchies between listed and unlisted sites, is also a cause of concern. The dangers inherent in the folklorisation of cultures were highlighted long ago by historians of colonial societies.⁵ Yet even the attempt to move away from euro-centric notions of built environment in the Nara Document on Authenticity remains committed to 'the wholeness, realness, truthfulness of the site' and to tools of measurement to assess these features.⁶

There is, however, a clear difference between the materialist understanding of authenticity as something that can be verified and tested in order to confer upon objects the seal of originality, genuineness, and truthfulness and the more complex reading of authenticity by critical scholars. These scholars argue, for instance, that authenticity is constructed,

It is no accident that in Sri Lanka the party created in 2004 by Buddhist monks to defend traditional values is called Jathika Hela Urumaya or National (Pristine) Heritage Party.



Ironically, the throne was itself a hybrid object, modelled in the Dutch style, sculpted possibly by South Indian craftsmen, fashioned by the Dutch Governor Thomas van Rhee in 1692 as a present for King Vimala Dharma Suriya II (1687-1707). In 1934 after its ceremonial return to Kandy, the throne was taken out from the Audience Hall in Kandy and placed in the King's pavilion for inspection by the people. It was then taken to the Colombo museum and placed in the Bronze Room as an exhibit. Trapped in a glass cage, the throne became an object of awe. After this, the throne was placed in the Treasury Room and taken out only for special exhibitions, as in 1936. This was in lieu of the initial plan to return it to the Old Palace in Kandy. Through this symbolic act it became the property and the pride of the state and the people, and no longer a Kandyan cultural object.⁹

Pearson has argued that the basic style of the throne is French, specifically Louis XIV, but the decorative motif is 'Eastern'.¹⁰ In this sense, hybridisation had taken place during the construction process, in the working of the wood and the carving of the motifs. But once the chair was gifted to the King of Kandy, its hybridity was under-emphasised; it was transformed into a symbol of the authentic Kandyan royalty. Upon its return to the island in 1934 it eventually became vested it with a new identity, that of the nation-state that was to emerge after independence.

A nationalist agenda

The throne could have been read and projected in other ways: as the symbol of the reconciliation between a declining colonial power and an assertive colonised people, or more likely, as the symbol of the hybridity of all things and the celebration of the hybrid nature of works of art. But hybridity was quite unceremoniously dethroned in the nationalist agenda. Nationalists chose to forget about the origins of the throne, a gift from the colonisers and a product of non-Kandyan artisans. There was no place for multiple or layered origins.

Later, nation-builders rewrote the history of the throne in the explanatory vignette that was attached to it in the museum. In their alteration of its origin, the identity of the throne was made more clearly Sinhalese and traced back to the early seventeenth century, in the reign of Rajasinha II when Kandy had reached the peak of its power, driving away the Portuguese and extending the kingdom. Rajasinha II, the father of the king to whom it appears to have been donated, was deemed undoubtedly the best contender to lay claim to the throne.

Heritage policies of well-meaning international bodies such as UNESCO are clearly continuations of colonial and nationalist or patriotic state desires to create an unambiguous cultural past where the majoritarian culture is endowed with the quality of pristineness and purity. Just as the census report of colonial times that denied the possibility of mixed identities was un-problematically adopted by the independent state of Sri Lanka, culture lost itself by what Aime Cesaire called a walled segregation into the particular. Scrutinising hybrid objects in history allows us to understand how authenticity has been used, who needs authenticity, and why.

Proof positive of authenticity

Looking at local notions of authenticity in the past helps us comprehend present-day popular acceptance of national authorities sanctioning a certain understanding of authenticity, what Arendt called the 'modern art of self-deception' inherent in democratic politics.¹¹ I would argue that in Sri Lanka the notion of authenticity of objects is tied to issues of proof. For example in ancient Lanka relics were accepted as genuine only after some miraculous event proved their authenticity.

The arrival in Lanka of relics that were parts of Sakyamuni Buddha's corporeal remains after cremation, plus his right collar bone and his alms bowl, is recounted in the Mahavamsa, a fifth century chronicle 'of varied content and lacking nothing' that narrates the ancient mytho-history of the island of Lanka from the coming of the legendary ancestor of the Sinhalese people, Prince Vijaya, to the present day.

Once a suitable monument had been prepared for the installation, in accordance with the prediction of Sakyamuni Buddha himself, "the relic rose up in the air from the elephant's back and floating in the air plain to view, at the height of seven *talas*, throwing the people into amazement; it wrought that miracle of the double appearances".¹² The relic then rested on the head of the monarch, and full of joy the king laid it in the *cetiya* (a dome shaped shrine). With the performance of a miracle any doubt about the origin of the relic was dispelled. People could rest assured that these were truly the remains of the Buddha sent to them by King Asoka with the blessing of Sakka, king of the gods. Relics as pure and exceptional objects were not subject to human scrutiny

but still needed to prove their authenticity in order to be worshipped by the people. There was no need for experts or intercessors. Later practices of authentication of genuineness had to rely on more prosaic procedures.

Return to history

Heritage as a present-centred cultural practice and instrument of cultural power will only gain from being historicised. Apart from the obvious political role of such a position, delving into past notions of heritage and authentication and uncovering the principles upon which such ideas were based can lead us to question some of the fundamental premises of today's heritage practices by states. A return to a historically grounded view of heritage and authenticity remains vital to engage with debates about the production of identity, power and authority in the colony and post-colony.

David Harvey calls for the historicisation of heritage studies by tracing the assemblage of notions of heritage in the past rather than thinking of heritage purely from the standpoint of the now. Acts of remembering were performed in the past well before the 20th century and need to be read in a longer temporal framework. Heritage processes were not simply recent products of post-modern economic and social tendencies.¹³

Historians who, over the centuries, have been uncovering the selective remembering of past events by states and nationalists have been studying heritage much as how Mr Jourdain wrote prose: unknowingly. Regretfully, seminal work produced by historians of colonialism and modernity is rarely used or referenced by scholars in the field of 'heritage studies' where the Gordian knot between peoples of the past and their everyday lives is too often severed. When writing about heritage under colonialism scholars draw more predictably on studies of colonial representations of lost heritage and miss the fundamental connection between modernity's need for order and purity and the endorsement of authenticity by ordinary subjects through the production of self-deception.

Heritage studies would be enriched if scholars would also draw upon the variety of works that explore peoples' perceptions and world views in the past and the practices through which they engaged with objects, relics, monuments or spaces. When international heritage bodies begin to give official value to the hybridity of all cultural products, a first crucial step will be taken towards subverting dominant state narratives on cultural heritage and breaking down the tendency towards popular self-deception.

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objects embedded in regimes of meaning and exchange, regimes of value always produced and negotiated by a variety of experts.⁷ Authenticity, they would contend, is defined by the authority and gravity of expert knowledge through a discourse of calculability that is not inherent to objects or sites but ascribed.

This expert knowledge has been shown to format and shape social relations.⁸ It is thus important to regularly remind ourselves when we marvel at the success of the global technology of heritage at creating and preserving a new cultural canon, of the lineages between the national identity fostered by states in conjunction with world heritage practices and colonial state policies on archaeology and knowledge.

The King of Kandy's throne

Hybrid things have a life of their own, sometimes more revealing for the historian as they can span many centuries and reflect long-term trends and breaks that are not encompassed in the average life of a human being. The story of the throne of the King of Kandy in the central Sri Lankan highlands – the last of the indigenous rulers to fall to the British in 1815 – and how it was ceremoniously returned by the Duke of Gloucester to the people of the island in 1934 tells us much about the way a national identity was fashioned, what elements were left out and why some features were valued above others.

The throne was covered in gold sheeting and encrusted with jewels: its arms formed a pair of lions of Sinhala; a large sun, symbolising the origin of the Kandyan monarchs, surmounted its back. From the outset the identity of the throne was contested as politicians debated whether it should be placed in Kandy or in the lowlands. At stake was the contours of the identity that an independent state would assume in the future, whether it should privilege Kandy, the lowlands or another locale, while hybrid symbols were never discussed.

Heritage policies of well-meaning international bodies such as UNESCO are clearly continuations of colonial and nationalist or patriotic state desires to create an unambiguous cultural past where the majoritarian culture is endowed with the quality of pristineness and purity.

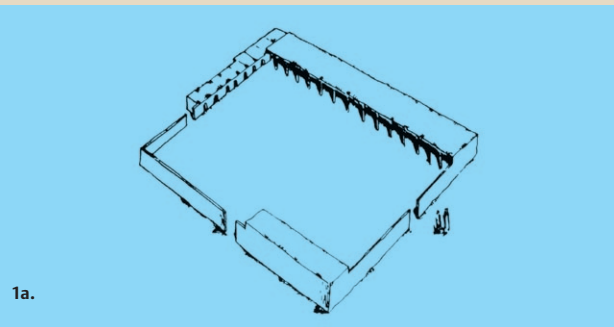
Notes

- 1 Wickramasinghe, N. (2002) 'From Hybridity to Authenticity: the Biography of a few Kandyan Things' in Neluka Silva (ed.), *The Hybrid Island: Culture Crossings and the Invention of Identity in Sri Lanka*, SSA: Colombo and London: Zed Books, p. 91.
- 2 De Jong, F. (2009) 'Hybrid Heritage', in *African Arts*, Winter issue, pp. 1-5.
- 3 Mathur, S. (2007) *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 168.
- 4 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1980) *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2. Mille Plateaux*, Paris: Minuit.
- 5 see Ranger, T. and Hobsbawm, E. (1992) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 6 Jones, S. (2010) 'Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves: Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity', in *Journal of Material Culture* 2010, 15 (2), p. 186.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Mitchell, T. (2002) *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
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- 10 Pearson, J. (1929) 'The Throne of the Kings of Kandy', in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon)*, Vol. XXXI, no. 82.
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- 13 Harvey, D. C. (2001) 'Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, meaning and the scope of heritage studies', in *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, pp. 319-338.

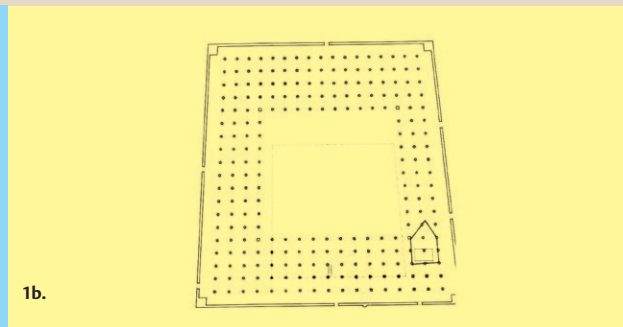
Architectural conservation of the mosque

Architectural historic preservation has been used as a means to express or represent national, Islamic and even ethnic identity, and often this is linked to tourism or used to serve political ends, particularly in nation building. This article investigates agency and utility in the conservation of religious built environments in different societies in the Islamic world and its meaning to these societies today. Conservation should be interpreted more broadly than the physical continuity of historic structures; it should also enable the continuity of non-material aspects of culture.

Hasan-Uddin Khan



1a.



1b.



1c.



1d.

Stewardship and the built environment

Islam enjoins its followers to act as stewards of the earth, and whatever act that reinforces this is regarded positively. The notion of stewardship includes the protection of heritage, both natural and constructed. The Quran says: “The servants of [Allah] All Merciful are they who tread gently upon the earth with humility” (Quran XXV: 63). Being prudent with both building and natural capital supports this notion of safeguarding them for future generations. Historic buildings are reflections of cultural values, and contain within them our collective memory; an integral part of our identity is lost when they disappear.

While many of the issues and ideas discussed here may apply to many other building types, I will focus largely on the mosque in this article as it is Islam’s most emblematic building. It is worth noting that contemporary architectural conservation is a relatively recent phenomenon in Muslim societies – generally practiced only since the 1960s – except perhaps for the preservation of historic archaeological sites and major historic monuments. Most of the great historic mosques of Islam have experienced change, enlargement, and restoration over the centuries. Restoration entails bringing the structure back to the state of some period of existence or origin: but to what period and state remains a point of debate. This includes even the most historic and architecturally significant buildings, as we will see.

“Value” as a tool for decision-making

There are a number of factors to be considered in restoring religious buildings, which include political, economic, cultural and physical contexts. Broad philosophical and ethical considerations are as important as the parameters of architectural ‘best practices’, and this is even more so for religious structures, as they express religious and cultural values to both the local communities and the world at large.

Two influential 19th century thinkers, John Ruskin and Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, posited two different approaches to conservation. Ruskin argued that restoration was a “lie” which destroyed the soul of a building in use. In marked contrast, Viollet-le-Duc wrote that restoration was a means to re-establish a building, giving us an understanding of history and place.¹ The first calls for cultural continuity and the notion of maintenance as an ongoing process, and the latter for the restoration and revitalisation of the built environment. Later, the 20th century Austrian art historian Alois Reigl defined heritage values.² He wrote of Memorial Values, which dealt with age and history, and Present-day Values, of usefulness, newness, and artistic value. For mosque preservation, one must add to this enumeration, the values of religion and culture. Decision-making about their conservation or restoration is made through an overlay of these different values, which need to be clearly defined and stated.

I consider religious values and significance to be the first consideration for conservation intervention for a mosque. The mosque developed as a building type from the house of the Prophet Muhammad and has undergone many changes in its physical manifestation. Even though this original mosque may no longer exist, the *memory* of it and its associations may

be preserved in the structures that have succeeded it. An important example of this is the Ka’aba and its mosque the Haram al-Sharif (discussed later), which has been altered over the centuries and yet retains its significance. Second is the importance of a mosque in connection with its age and social memory. If a building has survived over the centuries it will have accrued great meaning to the community that uses it. Perhaps it is a reminder of some golden age of Islam. Examples include the 9th century Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo and the Bakiriyya Mosque in Sana’a dating from 1597. A third reason for restoration would be architectural value, where the structure and ornament in a mosque is worth preserving as an exemplar of artistry. This is exemplified in buildings such as the 16th century Ottoman Sokollu Mehmet Paşa Mosque in Istanbul or the 17th century Masjid-i Shah in Isfahan. Fourth is cultural value, which is to be differentiated from the religious and architectural values. Preservation for cultural purposes, to recognise specific ethnic or religious groups, or social significance, provides another reason for intervention. This last motivation is often given shape through political decisions.

Continuity and change in the religious places of Islam

If mosques remain in present use they are often well maintained, as is the case with the earthen mosque of Djenne in Mali, Al Aqsa in Jerusalem, or the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf (important to Shi’ite Muslims), although this is not always the case. Conversely, questions related to the use and maintenance of mosques, or their restoration, are made acute by their function as living institutions and places of worship, particularly in the case of the need for expansion and enlargement to accommodate increased usage. If one were to follow Viollet-le-Duc’s principles, this would be acceptable as long as the architecture of the whole is not compromised and is clearly discernable.

In the past the physical form of mosques was not static; even the most important and iconic of them grew and changed. A particularly striking example of this dynamism can be seen in the most holy place in Islam, the Ka’aba in Makkah and its mosque, the Haram al-Sharif, both of which form the focus of the hajj pilgrimage. The Quran says the Ka’aba is “The very first house [of worship] established for humanity ...The place where Abraham stood [to pray]” (Quran III: 96-97). Such an important religious place as the Ka’aba and its mosque has had to withstand the immense pressure of rising use. The hajj to Makkah involved 280,000 pilgrims in the 1950s and now accommodates two million; consequently the Haram al-Sharif has been extended and rebuilt extensively over the centuries. Additions or reconstructions have altered or even obliterated not only the historic features of the monuments but also their setting, and perhaps overwhelmed something of the spirit of the pilgrimage. Such changes may be understood to be the latest phase in the continual alteration of the buildings, which has occurred throughout their existence; but the speed of change since the 20th century has allowed little reflection on what the design means in terms of continuity or preservation.

Consider also the Mosque of the Prophet – the Masjid an-Nabawi. The structure started off as the Prophet’s house in Medina, a simple courtyard with rooms on two sides that was designated as a mosque in 622 CE. Eighty years later

1: The Mosque of the Prophet over the centuries.

1a: The house of the Prophet. After Cresswell.

1b: Plan of mosque in the seventh-century. After Cresswell.

1c: Plan of mosque in the seventeenth-century. Courtesy MIT Rotch Library.

1d: The mosque in 2009. Courtesy Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

caliph Al-Walid replaced it with a new building with minarets. There were several alterations and additions, including those made by the Ottomans who controlled Medina from 1517. After the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 the mosque underwent several major modifications, including the one in 1986 by the architect Abdel Wahid El-Wakil. Although El-Wakil intended to incorporate the old structure into his design for a more commodious building, the old mosque was torn down and replaced with a new one, the second largest mosque in the world (figures 1a-1d). Currently, extensive additions are underway, which will again considerably alter the area.

What do these examples of enlargement mean, and how do they relate to the notion of historic preservation of cultural heritage? The present building has no relationship with the past except that it recognises the magnificence and the presence of Islam and the central role of the Prophet. How far should we go in the preservation of past heritage? How much should we allow for change in restoring a mosque? To what degree does contemporary utility, however discreetly provided, rupture the sense of historical integrity?

Perhaps what we should look for is not integrity of the past, which now exists in juxtaposition with the contemporary, but the integrity of aesthetic feeling, meaning, and use, revealed in a continuity of forms. In this way the old can inform the new but is differentiated from it. A good example of this strategy is the Khulafa Mosque in Baghdad,³ originally built in the 9th century and replaced in the 13th century. All that remained of the second building was the restored Suq al-Gazi minaret. The memories associated with the site are important to the city and its population. In 1961, the Iraqi architect, Mohamed Makiya was commissioned to build a new mosque on the site that integrated the old minaret. The building was to be modern but was to respect the space and materials of the remaining minaret (figures 2a and 2b). Makiya designed the main octagonal prayer hall to be surrounded by *riwaqs* (arcades), and he employed yellow brick to match the minaret and yet be distinctive from it –thus following the guidelines of the Venice Charter.⁴ The 1963 project successfully retained the spirit of place and the past.

Religious appropriation

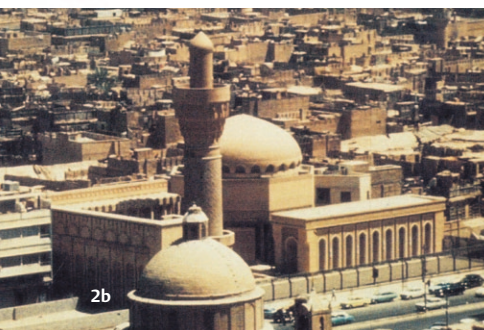
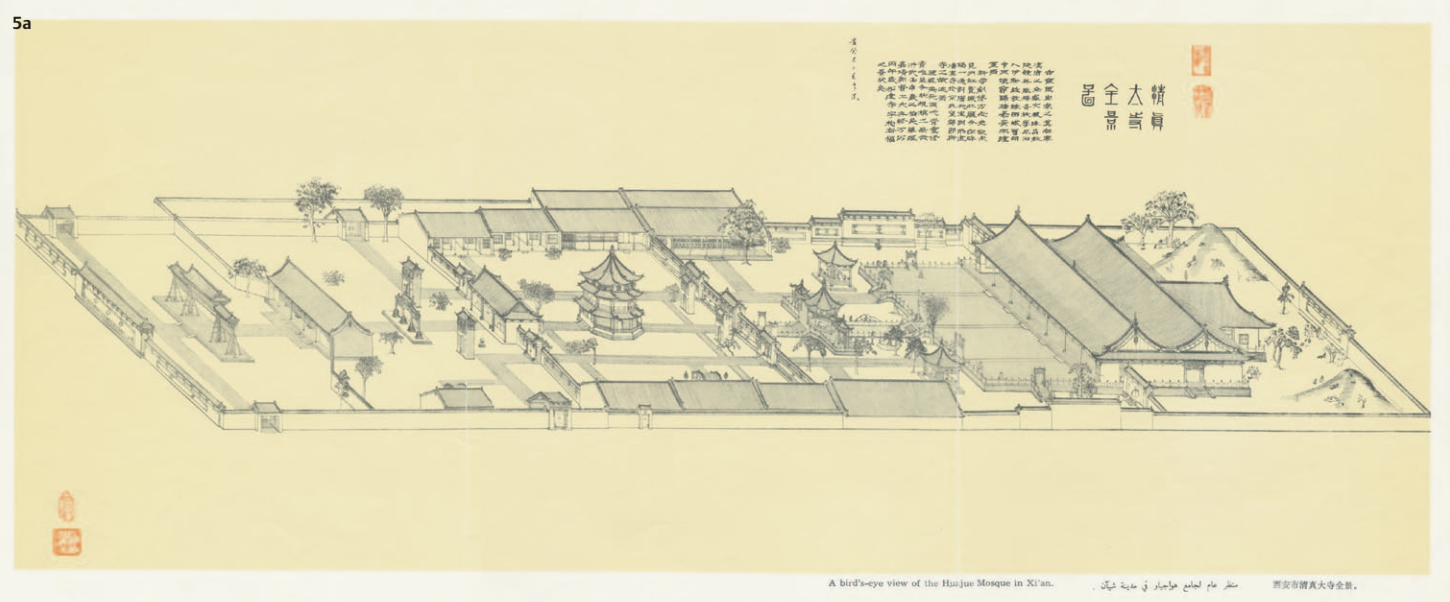
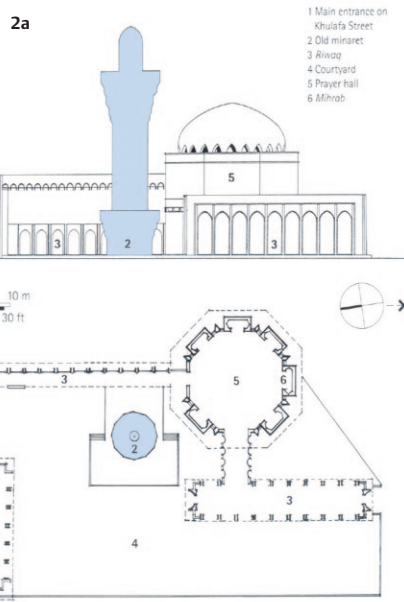
Muslims have sometimes taken over and adapted the buildings of other religions, but such appropriation occurs in all religions. For example, the magnificent Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain (8th – 10th centuries), which was built and adapted by the Umayyads from a former Christian church, was converted back into a church in the 14th century, and under King Charles V in 1523 a cathedral was inserted into its centre to re-establish the might and dominance of Catholicism (figure 3).

Conversely, Constantine’s Basilica in Istanbul was built in 360 CE and used as a church until it was converted into a mosque in 1453, known as the Ayasofia or Hagia Sophia. The conversion of the interior of the basilica into a mosque involved the removal of the altar and relics, the plastering over of the mosaics, the addition of a *maqsura*, a *minbar*, and the mounting of the enormous shields of calligraphy with the names of God and the prophets at the intersection of walls. The slight shift of the interior axis to face Makkah is barely

Most of the great historic mosques of Islam have experienced change, enlargement, and restoration over the centuries.

Restoration entails bringing the structure back to the state of some period of existence or origin: but to what period and state remains a point of debate.

Strategies for cultural continuity in the Islamic world



discernable. Meanwhile, on the exterior four minarets were added to proclaim the building as an edifice of Islam (figure 4). From 1935 the building complex has housed a historic museum. It has undergone several restorations, the most recent being at the end of the early 20th century.

In the Cordoba Mosque-Cathedral and Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, the notion of restoring cultural heritage is a politically charged one, raising questions regarding which cultural layer is accorded privilege over another and why this is so. It also highlights the time dimension to old monuments that problematises simple notions of the cultural component of architectural legacies.

State policies on religious heritage

What one restores and why is often a matter of politics. As the historian Renata Holod acknowledged: "Efforts at structuring conservation programmes are therefore faced with several difficulties. The old environments have lost status; at best they have suffered from benevolent neglect on the part of governing elites ...the impetus to [conserve] lies within the realm of political and ideological decisions."⁵ For example, since 1947 in Pakistan conservation preference is given to mosques rather than temples or churches because Pakistan sees itself as an Islamic state, even though other religions had built significant religious edifices within its boundaries. It should be noted that important Buddhist stupas are preserved, but given the meagre resources of the archaeology department, the priority is to conserve Islamic buildings.

A dramatic case of non-conservation is that of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan, dating from the 6th century, which were deemed "un-Islamic" and destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban. Several Muslim governments, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the UAE, joined the international protests to save the monuments, but to no avail.

What should have been the attitude of Islam as a religion of tolerance in these cases? Should religious edifices belonging to another religion be preserved? And within Muslim countries themselves, how would this affect the preservation of Shiite mosques in predominantly Sunni countries? This is an ethical question. Suffice it to note, preservation is certainly a political act.

At a time of religious liberalisation in China, at the end of the 20th century, government funds were made available to restore the great timber Xian Mosque, said to have been built in the 8th century but largely rebuilt during the Ming dynasty in the 14th century (figures 5a and 5b). This was a political gesture as much as it was in recognition of the mosque's historical importance.

Mechanisms and agency enabling conservation and restoration

Preservation in the Islamic world has largely been the purview of governments, ministries, departments or local government. Their preservation efforts have been negatively affected by the lack of expertise in archaeological departments, which are by far largely responsible for conservation of historic monuments.

2: The Khulafa mosque rebuilt in 1963.

2a: Plan and elevation of the redesigned mosque with the remaining historic minaret shown in blue.

2b: The new mosque in context. Imagery courtesy Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

3: Roman Catholic cathedral inserted into the Cordoba Mosque in 1523. Courtesy Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

4: The Ayasofia: a church converted into a mosque. Photo: H.U. Khan.

5: The Great Mosque of Xian. 5a: Drawing of mosque.

5b: Entry porch to the prayer hall. Photos: H.U. Khan.

In more recent times preservation work has been augmented by non-state initiatives by NGOs, local community groups, often using *zakat* (charitable) funds, and wealthy individuals. Like the building of a mosque, its preservation is regarded as a pious act.

Further, the institution of the *waqf*, or charitable trust, plays an important role in mosque custodianship. Originally, edifices such as mosques were run, maintained and restored through the endowed trust income, administered by an independent group of trustees. Within the urban areas much of the social and religious building came under *waqfs*. As an institution it still has a great potential for enabling the restoration of buildings and the conservation of areas. For example, even in a self-declared secular state, the Turkish Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, a *waqf*, has been reasonably successful in this endeavour, especially for the restoration of mosques and the reuse of madrasas, such as the Selimiye complex in Edirne.

Ultimately, however, international bodies continue to play major, decisive roles for conservation around the globe, UNESCO among them. In 1960 UNESCO established a World Heritage List which identified places and buildings of importance to all humankind, and with the aid of international campaigns raises funds and provides expertise to save them. Only one mosque is identified by name – the Great Mosque and Hospital of Divriği in Turkey, which remains in its original form. A number of designated sites include mosques within them; for example Historic Cairo, Registan Square of Samarkand with its mosques, the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat in Bangladesh, and the town of Timbuktu in Mali, which has three major mosques. The exclusion of so much of the Islamic world's built heritage from this list is telling. It is partially due to the fact that Islamic governments are sometimes reluctant to nominate such individual buildings due to the long and arduous process this entails even though, once on the List, the chances of international support and finance increase. If and when governments go through the tedious process of writing up the nominations, they tend to include whole areas rather than individual structures. Another reason is that inclusion of buildings from outside the West has only gained momentum since the 1980s.

Tourism and restoration

Revenues obtained through tourism significantly fund the conservation of religious edifices, and the judicious provision of facilities and utilisation of sites can yield direct economic benefits. Yet mass tourism, including religious pilgrimage, can also damage the urban fabric of old cities and the historic buildings themselves. Tour groups in search of the "authentic" often stimulate an artificial life separate from the environments and lives of the people that inhabit them. Souvenir shops and traffic congestion affect the environment, and tourism can alter the religious experience. One way to protect ancient buildings is to restrict access to them. Yet how can one limit access to mosques and religious buildings that in theory belong to the *ummah* (community of believers)?

Many historic mosques come under the aegis of departments of archaeology, usually housed within the Ministries of Culture and Tourism. Herein lies a conflict of interest: most of the countries of the Islamic world need the income that tourism brings, so their decision-making as to what should be restored is over-burdened with governmental concern for the need to generate funds – even though the restoration could lead to cultural conflict and degradation. The balance between tourism and conservation is a delicate one and, since mosques are part of the religious built environment, results in a highly charged, often emotive, overlay of interests.

Some conclusions

We have to remember that the importance of conservation is not limited to maintaining the forms of historic buildings for posterity; conservation is also the mechanism for the continuation of traditions, indeed for the growth of culture. In order to facilitate the transmittal of Islamic heritage, preservation needs to be a forward-looking enterprise.

As a principle, I propose that religious buildings should remain inviolate and be preserved as long as their forms possess religious meaning for the local communities concerned, and as long as their survival can be prolonged by technical means. However, I recommend that we should recognise the need for change and the adaptive reuse of some structures. In these instances the philosophical values, outlined earlier, may act as guiding principles, but these may be compromised by ideological or fiscal concerns. Historic preservation is a professional activity, but one that is tempered by a number of motives external to the field itself, necessitating a balancing act and negotiation.

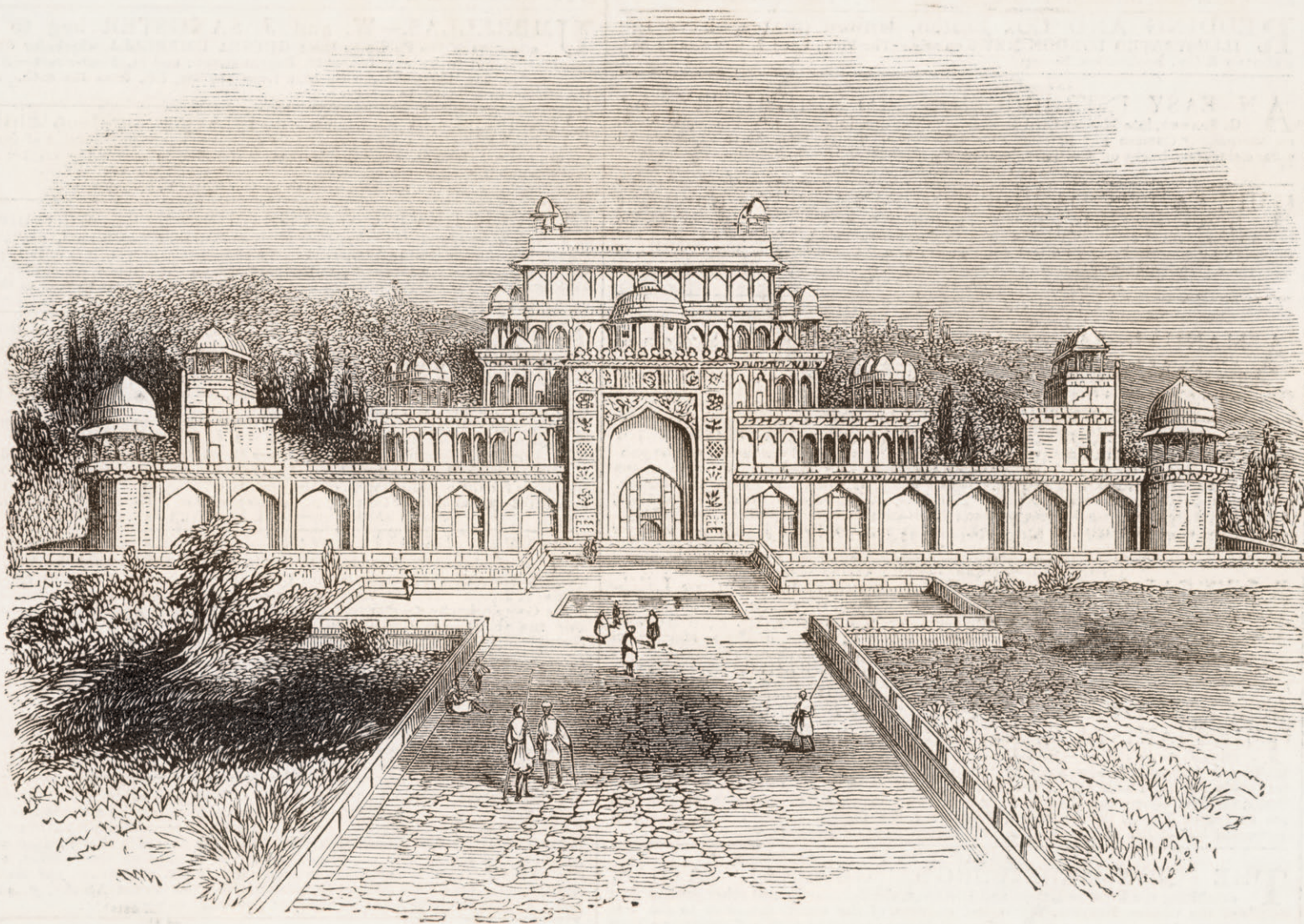
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Notes

- 1 See Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* ([1849] 1992) and Viollet-le-Duc in *The foundations of architecture* ([1854] 1990).
- 2 Reigl's 1903 work, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen, seine Entstehung* was translated as an article "The modern cult of monuments: its character and origin" by K. W. Forster and D. Ghirardo, in *Oppositions* 25 (1982), pp. 21-50.
- 3 See Hasan-Uddin Khan and Renata Holod, *The Mosque and the Modern World* (1997) for a discussion of the mosque, pp. 142-144.
- 4 The 1964 *International Charter for the Conservation and restoration of Monuments and Sites*, widely known as the *Venice Charter*, whose principles still largely guide the principles of historic preservation states, in Article 12: Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.
- 5 See Renata Holod's introduction in *Conservation as Cultural Survival* (1980) p.x.

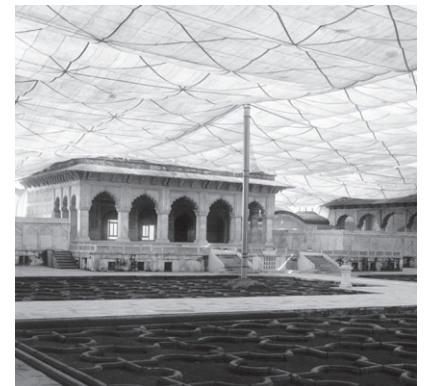
From loot to trophy

SALE OF THE MOGOL SULTAN AKBER'S PALACE AT THE EAST INDIA DOCKS.



TOMB OF AKBER.

How do we reconcile the robust efforts by Europeans and Americans to preserve their own cultural heritage, on the one hand, with the contemporaneous auctioning off of Indian monuments and antiquities, on the other?



On October 28 1843 the *Illustrated London News* published a curious article titled “Sale of the Mogol Sultan Akber’s Palace at the East India Docks” which began on the following melancholic note: “There is no reflection more mortifying to human pride than that which occurs to the moralist when he witnesses the degradation, ruin, and dispersion of the mighty edifices of ancient days – edifices which were destined by their founders to carry down to the latest generations the memory of the monarch or potentate at whose expence [sic] they were constructed”.¹ Such was the unfortunate fate of the once-grand palace of the Mughal emperor Akbar that the newspaper was reporting on.

Mrinalini Rajagopalan

THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN to its British audience the imperial lineage of Akbar and his role as an indefatigable patron of architecture and craft. It then provided a detailed description of the palace and fort complex that Akbar had commissioned for himself in Agra in 1564 (figure 1). The combination of grand scale and delicate detailing of the palace complex caused the authors to exclaim that: “Akber built like a giant, and finished his work like a jeweler”.²

Selling heritage

Indeed the admiration for Akbar’s architecture and the awestruck tone in which it is described in the piece almost distracts the reader from the title of the piece. If Akbar’s palace was indeed so magnificent, why was it being sold at the East India Docks nearly three centuries after it was built? Who in London would be interested in acquiring a Mughal palace, and why? Was the melancholic opening note meant to be a censure of this practice of selling Indian architectural objects on the open market, or a cynical resignation to it? Almost as an answer (and possible justification) to this last question, the article mentions that the sixteenth-century palace and fort had fallen from its original splendour and become little more than a ruin in contemporary times.

Upon visiting the premises over twenty years previously, the author of the news report had noticed the crumbling walls of the fort, the dried-up moat and the utter disrepair of the mansions and residences within the palace courts which had been stripped of their embellishments and robbed of many precious details. The report blamed these appalling conditions on the obstinate stinginess of unwise Indian rulers who refused to spend even trifling amounts of money on the upkeep of such architectural gems. The article skips over the fact that the fort had unfortunately been used as a garrison by the

British military for the past 40 years when they had conquered Agra from the Marāhtās in 1803. During this time, important structures like the Dīwān i-Ām (the Hall of Audience) was used as an arsenal whilst other structures had been completely razed and replaced with military barracks.³

The article, however, does incriminate the officers of the East India Company as agents partly responsible for the structure’s dilapidation on another count. For instance, Lord W. Bentinck (Governor General of India between 1828-1835) had removed marbles from the main audience hall in the palace and the seraglio with the purpose of auctioning them off. Hardly a stern chastisement of the role of British agents in despoiling Indian antiquities, this anecdote leads the article’s author to claim that the marbles being sold at the East India Docks in 1843 were the very pieces that Bentinck wanted to auction a few years earlier. The “sale of the Mogol Sultan Akber’s palace” therefore included: inlaid marble panels sold by the case costing between £5 and £14, and window screens either carved of red sandstone or made from terracotta which fetched anywhere between 12 shillings to 40 shillings a case (figure 2). The buyers, it was noted, were mainly “indefatigable and enthusiastic lovers of the fine arts”.⁴

The disregard shown by Lord Bentinck towards cultural heritage in India, deplorable as it seems in hindsight, was in fact consistent with the activities of many British officials during this time. Historians like James Hevia have compellingly argued that British armies in India, Southeast Asia and China were often “paid” through the loot they could amass from the wealthy palaces, mansions and forts in these regions.⁵ Hevia also reminds us that the term “loot” itself made its way into English from the original Hindi term (*lūt*), meaning thievery or pillage, and while it first appeared in English dictionaries as early as 1788,

it was only between the First Opium War of 1841, the Crimean War (1854-55) and the Indian Mutiny (1857-58) that the term became commonly accepted and understood in England.⁶

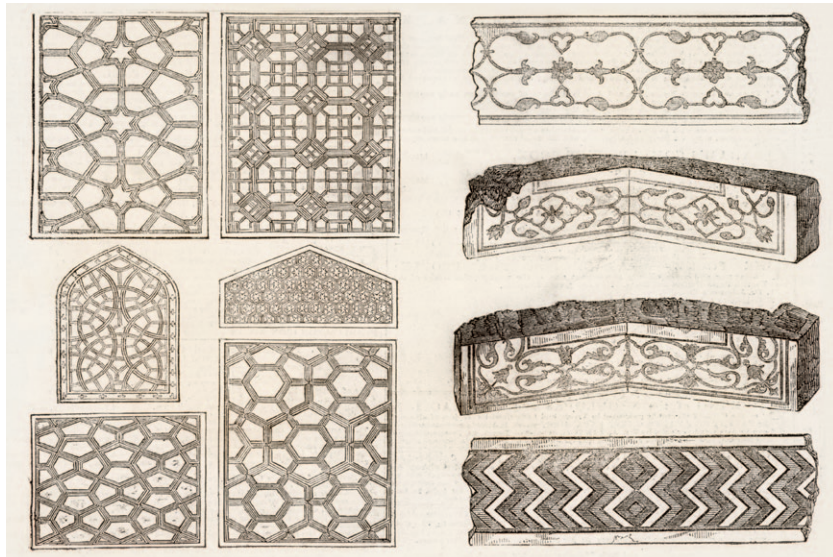
Although the article in *Illustrated London News* frames Bentinck as the villain of the piece, it was unlikely that the marbles offered for sale had anything to do with either Bentinck or Akbar’s Palace. More likely, the British public opinion of Bentinck as a miserly and tyrannical Governor General and a rumor of his desire to dismantle the Taj Mahal and auction it off to the highest bidders, had by 1843 (8 years after the end of his tenure in India) gained enough traction in England so that it could be leveraged at auctions to increase the value of the architectural fragments being hawked. It is also unlikely that the auctioneers or the buyers of Akbar’s palace on the East India docks saw these architectural fragments as loot, and indeed, may have even believed, as the *Illustrated London News* article implies, that they were in fact “saving” Akbar’s palace from complete erosion by securing it in the hands of “art lovers” in Britain. In either case, the auction brings up many vexing questions regarding the particular vectors that determine cultural heritage in colonial contexts.

The turn toward preservation *in-situ*

In 1843 India was not yet a colony of the British Empire and although the British had been a substantial military and political presence in the subcontinent for almost a century, their role was seen to be less in the realm of governance and more as aiding the commercial interests of the East India Company. Yet even in these early days, East India Company officials had amassed large “collections” of Indian artefacts – as a means of generating personal wealth, certainly, but also as a means of socially reinventing themselves in England as connoisseurs of Oriental art and antiquities.⁷

1 (above): Depiction of the Tomb of Akbar in the *Illustrated London News*, October 28, 1843.

The vexed history of architectural heritage in Imperial India



2 (above): The inlaid marbles and windows sold at the October 1843 auction at the East India Docks. *Illustrated London News*, October 28, 1843.

3 (left): ASI restorations of the Hall of Audience and the palaces in the Agra Fort, c. 1906. Photo by Frederick Oscar Oertel, courtesy of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, UK.

The mid-nineteenth century was also the period when robust debates regarding the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage were unfolding in Europe – particularly in Britain and France. In 1830, the French government established the position of Inspector General of Historic Monuments and around the same time, English intellectuals like John Ruskin and William Morris began to plead for the conservation of English heritage. Galvanized by the dramatic changes wrought by industrialisation and mass production (exemplified for John Ruskin by the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London), Morris in particular led tireless efforts for the preservation of British monuments as “national” heritage – a project that resulted in the establishment of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877. In North America, similar programs of heritage conservation were underway as evidenced by the 1858 “rescue” of George Washington’s estate, Mt. Vernon, from ruin by an independent women’s group. How do we reconcile these robust efforts by Europeans and Americans to preserve their own cultural heritage, on the one hand, with the contemporaneous auctioning off of Indian monuments and antiquities, on the other?

The laissez-faire attitude towards Indian antiquities appears to have changed dramatically with the official recognition of India as a British dominion in 1858 and specifically with the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1862. It is worth noting here that the first “official” body of preservation in India preceded the establishment of similar institutions in England (such as the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building (1877) and the National Trust (1895)), which unlike the governmental bureaucracy of the ASI were established by philanthropists and citizen’s groups. Indeed, the first Ancient Monuments Act of Britain was passed by the government in 1882, two decades after the establishment of the ASI. As with urban planning and architecture, the colonies thus also served as experimental grounds for heritage management and preservation policy, which were later carried back to the metropolises of empire. The ASI – a colonial institution entrusted with the protection of Indian antiquities across the length and breadth of the subcontinent – owes its existence largely to the efforts of colonial officials such as Alexander Cunningham. A lover of Indian antiquities and tireless champion of their preservation, Cunningham argued that the British government was obliged to preserve Indian heritage as a benefit to its colonised subjects. Whilst Cunningham’s role echoes the efforts of similar public agents in Britain and North America, it should be noted that the discourse of heritage preservation in Europe and America was centered around questions of nationalism, whereas in the case of India it was seen as part of the colonial project and its civilizing mission.

That colonial forms of knowledge significantly impacted and shaped Indian heritage is borne out by the words and actions of Cunningham’s most ardent supporter, Lord Curzon (Governor General of India, 1898-1905). In 1900 during an impassioned speech urging heritage preservation in India, Curzon mentioned the dangers to much of Indian cultural heritage, which included an ill-educated “native” public who had little regard for their own cultural heritage; the deplorable history of Oriental Indian despots who had mutilated and destroyed monuments of religions and cultures alien to their own; as well as the inexcusable actions of British soldiers and officials in the past who had freely looted Indian antiquities to gain quick riches.⁸ Curzon specifically repeats the shameful (and not entirely truthful) anecdote of Bentinck’s desire to dismantle the Taj Mahal and auction off the fragments, as an example of Britain’s past complicity in the erosion and dilapidation of Indian cultural heritage. Positioning himself as a true steward of India’s cultural heritage, neither consumed by the ignorance of Indian rulers nor given to the greed of his British predecessors, Curzon passed the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act in 1904 – a policy that continues to be the main legislative framework for the protection of cultural heritage in India.

It was under the directive of Curzon that Akbar’s fort and mausoleum were restored by the ASI in 1905, just in time for the visit of the Prince of Wales to India (figure 3). No longer seen as quarries offering fragments of Oriental curiosity that could be auctioned off in Britain, monuments in India now assumed a different life and value under policies of colonial heritage management. They became signifiers of those mighty empires and grand sovereigns that had preceded the British Empire in India. That the Prince of Wales could gaze upon the restored mausoleum of Akbar in 1905 must have reaffirmed his own place within the glorious history of his new colony.

Cultural preservation also pressed a further continuity between the now defunct Mughal empire and the British government; if Mughal emperors like Akbar had demonstrated their cultural keenness and artistic proclivities by building these magnificent structures in the past, then the British government displayed similar cultural magnanimity and foresight in saving Indian heritage for posterity. Indeed in 1904 when Curzon presented the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, he invoked the example of restorations undertaken at the Taj Mahal, the Agra Fort and the mausoleum of Akbar, which included the refurbishment of gardens, cleaning of water-courses, and the removal of recent unsightly additions to the complex. Justifying the large expenditure necessitated by the repairs, Curzon said:

— *Since I came to India we have spent upon repairs at Agra alone a sum of between £40,000 and £50,000. Every rupee has been an offering of reverence to the past and a gift of recovered beauty to the future; and I do not believe that there is a taxpayer in this country who will grudge one anna⁹ of the outlay. It will take some three or four years more to complete the task, and then Agra will be given back to the world, a pearl of great price.¹⁰*

From Bentinck to Curzon; from an auction on the East India docks in 1843 to the model of colonial preservation in 1904, from a site to be plundered for its cultural resources to a “pearl” restored through the efforts of British interventionists, the cultural heritage of Agra had definitively passed from colonial loot to colonial trophy.

Radical shift or variations on a theme?

On the one hand the two moments of the monuments presented here are evocative of a significant shift in terms of cultural heritage in India. There is little doubt that the colonial institutionalization of architectural and cultural preservation in India did much to arrest the physical dilapidation, vandalism and dismantling of monuments – whether at the hands of colonial agents, indigenous persons or due to the vagaries of nature. The establishment of colonial bureaucracies like the ASI also advanced the cause of preserving Indian monuments and antiquities in situ, ensuring their presence within India rather than in the museums or markets of Britain. Seen from this perspective, the story of cultural heritage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries seems a triumphal and celebratory narrative, the moment of 1904 appearing as a positive reclamation of the wanton disregard that marked the auction in 1843.

Despite the monumental changes brought about by the colonial administration in the management of India’s cultural heritage it would, however, be overly simplistic to wholly conflate the beginnings of heritage preservation in India with the colonial enterprise. Indeed, there is ample evidence to suggest that Indian monuments were preserved and managed through imperial patronage as well as by local communities in India long before the British arrived there. For example in 1809 the Hindu ruler of Gwalior, Daulat Rao Sindhia, provided stipends for the upkeep of, and forbade the quarrying of stone from, the Arhai din ka Jhonpra, a 12th century mosque built by the earliest Islamic rulers of the subcontinent.¹¹ Similarly, in 1857 the last Mughal emperor of India, Bahadur Shah Zafar, issued a decree asking that peasants stop the cultivation of crops around the Qutb Minar (another 12th century Islamic structure) as a means to protect the monument.¹² Thus, whilst it is important to acknowledge the radical shifts brought about by colonial preservation policies, it is also essential to recognize the older forms of cultural preservation that were disregarded and swept aside as a part of colonialism.

There are also, however, continuities between the two moments in the colonial attitudes towards Indian built heritage that warrant critical examination. The most important is that the agents who determined an object’s value, whether based on capitalist “exchange” value at auction or on “exhibition” value, were all colonial officers. In addition, Indian cultural heritage was often preserved or restored for an exclusively European audience. The histories and policies of preservation established by colonial experts for Indian cultural heritage endures to this day in postcolonial India with little change or amendment. The second related point is that although Curzon and Cunningham believed that preservation in India was

a service that the colonial government extended to the colonised population, it is clear that prevailing European parameters of aesthetic and archaeological value were being imposed upon Indian art and architecture. In many ways, if Indian monuments had been dismantled and their fragments auctioned as curios in the mid-nineteenth century, the later movement of institutionalised preservation also separated these monuments from their wider cultural contexts and set them in environments akin to museums.

A common consequence of ASI policies was the cessation of indigenous practices of pilgrimage and memorialization. For example, it is highly possible that the mausoleum of Akbar would have been a site of veneration for local communities as well as pilgrims – practices discontinued once the structure was taken into custody by the ASI for preservation.¹³ Ebba Koch has convincingly argued that the traditions of *zīyārāt* (tomb visitation) were actively practiced, and encouraged by Mughal emperors in northern India from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. It was only during the reign of the more orthodox Islamic emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) that tomb veneration was frowned upon, although this hardly means that the practice was eradicated. Specific evidence of these practices at Akbar’s mausoleum comes from a 1909 monograph on the structure published by the ASI.¹⁴ A cenotaph on the topmost storey of the mausoleum was designed to accommodate festive awnings and flags for memorial ceremonies. The colonial apparatus of preservation often interfered with such practices and radically altered the multivalent meanings of monuments in India. From objects of aesthetic beauty as well as religious sites, memorial institutions, burial grounds, festive spaces, etc., preservation turned Indian cultural heritage into fixed objects that were valued merely for their historical and artistic import. If the auction severed heritage from its physical context, colonial norms of preservation disconnected other vital links between the object and its larger cultural milieu.

The fate of the Agra monuments from 1843 to 1905 and from commodity to culture is but one example of the vexed history of the colonial origins of heritage preservation in India. The terms and conditions of preservation established by the British in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have survived unchanged in contemporary India, and colonial preservation has left a complicated legacy in postcolonial India. Monuments continue to exist in sanitized spaces cordoned off from their once vibrant cultural traditions, physically segregated from their larger social environments with ticketed entry, while their pasts are accessible only through colonial histories. And whilst we may never recover those pieces of Indian cultural heritage that were auctioned at the East India Docks in October, 1843, postcolonial India must surely reclaim the terms upon which its cultural heritage is evaluated.

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The colonial bungalow in India

The roots of the bungalow in India lie in the early attempts of British military engineers in the eighteenth century to design a standardised and permanent dwelling based on indigenous domestic structures for the East India Company when the British were still traders in the subcontinent. In its later version, the archetypal bungalow in the nineteenth century consisted of a low, one-storey, spacious building, internally divided, having a symmetrical layout with a veranda all around, situated in a large compound. This basic model was also adopted with modifications almost everywhere British imperial rule existed at that time.

Miki Desai and Madhavi Desai



1: Evidence of European influence on traditional dwellings of the Bonra community in Gujarat.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING, THE BUNGALOW as a house form is a contested concept of heritage in the Indian context. It is often perceived in scholarly discourses as a building type with a strong imperial ancestry. It was a counter concept to the more or less socially-g geared, collective lifestyle that was manifest in the urban and rural dwellings of a vast number of indigenous settlements of India. At the same time, traditional house types with a resemblance to the bungalow do exist in West Bengal, Karnataka and Kerala, but the context was not similar to those belonging to British residents. Thus, anchoring the bungalow as an Indian heritage appears at first glance to be problematic.

However, there is another dimension to this phenomenon. During the late nineteenth century, Indian elites and professionals saw the British bungalow lifestyle as something to emulate. By the 1930s the bungalow had become a model that was augmented and personalised by the middle classes. Socially and politically fostering the idea of a house in the centre of a plot, this popular type got transformed in different regions of India. Thus, an imperial socio-political house concept metamorphosed in the colonial and postcolonial period into a widely popular and aesthetically rich cultural icon. It became a part of the mindset of the populace and developed many socio-cultural meanings along with spatial, stylistic and technological variations, terminating in the modernist house.

However, with increasing land pressures since the 1970s, other housing types such as apartments became more widespread. In the twenty-first century, these bungalows have become significant symbols representing a socio-cultural past that is fast disappearing as a result of rapid population growth and accelerated urbanisation. Colonial bungalows, with their staggering regional variation and expression, have yet to receive adequate recognition as valuable heritage.

In India, architectural conservation efforts and awareness are still framed by the legacy of colonial archaeology – consequently; the government’s efforts are largely limited to the classical Hindu, Indo-Islamic and Buddhist monuments. The domestic genre remains marginalised, and there is still a vast lacuna in the state of related knowledge and a lack of general awareness and sensitivity. In the recent past, colonial public buildings have been grudgingly accepted as heritage. However, the bungalow remains threatened, as it finds space in neither any discourses nor policy matters, with a few exceptions such as the imperial bungalows in New Delhi. This article attempts to frame the meaning and significance of colonial period bungalows against the state’s notion of national monuments in India, urging for a re-interpretation of the concept of heritage from an Indian as well as an Asian perspective.

Traditional urban housing in India

Differences in climate, topography and geology gave the indigenous settlements and dwellings of India a varied regional character. The majority were walled cities with a fort built during medieval times for defence. Their morphology was characterised by an organic built form where the indigenous dwelling formed the primary unit of the urban fabric. They had narrow winding streets on a pedestrian scale, a high degree of functional (private and commercial) mix, and inward looking residential clusters with courtyards which reflected India’s social norms in domestic life. There was high population density and an intensive utilisation of land with close groupings of thick-walled houses.

The community-oriented layout reflected inherited cultural identities and status based on caste, occupation and religion. These traditional dwellings and settlements still exist today, albeit in a modified form; however, they are yet to be recognised as living heritage. The early impact of colonial culture was felt on these traditional settlements and dwellings in myriad ways, especially in the facades, as seen in the Bohra houses of Gujarat (photo 1). When the bungalow was adopted as a preferred house type, the form was in sharp contrast to the traditional dwelling. “[It went]...from a one-, two- or more storeyed, courtyard type dwelling, with rooms giving inward onto the courtyard, and structurally joined to similar houses on one or more sides, to a free standing, ‘courtyard-less’, ‘outward-facing’, one- or two storeyed ‘European-style’ bungalow.”²

The colonial bungalow

Broadly speaking, there were two bungalow categories: the urban and the rural. The latter were inhabited by British residents of India such as managers of various kinds of plantations or factories. They also included the *dak* bungalows (government guest houses, usually in remote localities) and other dwelling structures that were spread all over the districts of British India.

In urban areas, large pieces of land adjacent to the city were reserved by the British for their cantonment and civil lines. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the bungalow, set in a spacious lot, was the norm as the residential house type for British military officers associated with the Indian Army, colonial administrators and business people as well as a small group of wealthy Indian elites. The early bungalows were austere, with simple volumes and a stark whitewashed finish. This basic model developed into a more European classical form in outward appearance as time passed. It was symmetrical in form and largely so in spatial organisation. It had a hall in the centre and rooms on each side of the hall, and a veranda in front facing the garden and sometimes also on both sides (photo 2). The kitchen and servants’ quarters were separate in most instances.

More elaborate types emerged on the scene in the nineteenth century to indicate the superior social position of its British owners. The veranda also disappeared from the sides and remained only in the front and at times in the back. The bungalow with its Doric, and later Tuscan, columns on the facade holding up the roof became a symbol of not only the evolution of the Indian prototype into a European building form but also of the commercial and the military might of Britain. The labour of building the bungalows was supplied by Indian craftsmen and contractors. Therefore, the physical fabric of the bungalow remained rooted in Indian architectural traditions in spite of changes in the construction materials, technology and practices.³ The bungalow, though initially designed for an alien people, reflected the cultural bases of the Indian population among whom it was found. This type did not undergo much modification in the twentieth century. Few of these bungalows have survived in independent India, mainly in the military controlled cantonments.

Middle class adoption and regionalisation

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the bungalow as a generic building type influenced domestic architecture across the country. Its dispersed settlement pattern was considered

to be healthier and was socially preferred. Set in a compound, it was also climatically suitable as it allowed a freer circulation of the prevailing winds.

We will now discuss the regional variants of the bungalow that developed in the great colonial cities of Calcutta (now Kolkata), Madras (now Chennai), New Delhi, Bangalore (now Bengaluru), and Bombay (now Mumbai). In general, elements were borrowed from the original colonial bungalow type, the encircling veranda was modified as an informal entrance space, and a courtyard was often introduced as a traditional Indian architectural device. While most families seem to have embraced the bungalow as a new form of house, they continued to live their daily lives according to local traditional mores within its shell, as social change was slower and more difficult.

Our narrative brings to the fore some of the major developments in the house forms found in the five cities mentioned above. The few examples that remain today in the cities of India should be part of the conservation agenda as they express socio-cultural changes and are a record of the political history of Indian society in the colonial period, as the following descriptions will show.

Kolkata: Rajbaris

Kolkata served as the capital of the East India Company from 1772 to 1911 during the British Raj era. From the late eighteenth century, the local elites/petty aristocrats from among the region’s native Bengalis were courted by the British to serve as a comprador class of *zamindars* (landlords) who collected revenue on land. Their assistance to the colonial administrative system reaped rich benefits – they owned large properties and came to be known as the Great Families of Kolkata. This association generated a unique urban typology in the nineteenth century in the form of opulent residences called Rajbaris in Kolkata. These mansions were intended to compete with and match the scale and grandeur of British architecture. Located on large grounds, the Rajbari expressed British colonial ideas of siting and spatiality while simultaneously responding to the traditional life style of the *zamindars*. The building had a courtyard with the *thakur dalan*, the temple of God. It was in the colonnaded portico, the facades and the furnishings that the building showed the adaptation of British forms to Indian norms. Displaying neo-classical facades and strong European influences in their visual character, the Rajbaris were planned as twin- or multiple-courtyard houses which addressed the need for gender segregation and strict social hierarchy in a Bengali joint family. Over time, British trappings in terms of furniture and furnishing were added.⁴ The Rajbari mansion is unusual and important as a house form that has come about through historic synthesis of the local and colonial cultures. The mansions are difficult to maintain by today’s nuclear families and are being replaced or are gradually falling apart without attention and awareness and in the absence of urban conservation policies.

Chennai: Garden houses

Madras was one of the three provinces originally established by the British East India Company. In 1684, it was elevated to a Presidency which included much of southern India. Chennai was its port city and trading centre. The last quarter of the eighteenth century was a period of rapid expansion for Chennai which gave rise to an indigenous colonial model of a palatial mansion called the “garden house”.⁵ It was the

During the late nineteenth century, Indian elites and professionals saw the British bungalow lifestyle as something to emulate. By the 1930s the bungalow had become a model that was augmented and personalised by the middle classes.

A postcolonial cultural interpretation towards heritage¹



2 (left): A typical colonial bungalow.
3 (above): A garden house in Chennai.
4 (right): A bungalow in Bangalore.



early suburban home of the British, an exclusive residence that stood in the centre of a large landscaped plot in the picturesque tradition. While the first houses were rather plain, simple and massive, the garden house grew to be more ornate as time went by, with stylistic variations. It was an amalgam of the cantonment bungalow and the European villa (photo 3). To its rear were servants' quarters, stables and often cowsheds, while in front was a lawn with flowering shrubs and trees where garden parties were held and tennis or croquet was played. The houses were spacious and symmetrical with colonnaded verandas in the front and at the back. The porch was a commodious, major feature. Designed in Neo-Classical style, the garden house was built as a solid masonry structure in lime plaster with the use of European elements such as pediments and balustrades. These houses were later bought by the zamindars and rajahs who more or less continued the British lifestyle. In the post-Independence period, a few were modernised and renovated for contemporary functions. The garden houses, though colonial in origin, have special local and regional value as Indian heritage.

The bungalow, though initially designed for an alien people, reflected the cultural bases of the Indian population among whom it was found.

New Delhi: Imperial bungalows

The capital of the British Raj shifted from Kolkata to Delhi in 1911 and an extensive urban design addition (called New Delhi) was constructed between 1913 and 1930. A range of bungalows were built here, located on tree-lined roads in what is known as the Lutyens' Bungalow Zone after Sir Edwin Lutyens, the principal architect of the new capital. While earlier bungalows were built of stone by local masons, New Delhi's bungalows were mostly built of brick and lime mortar and plastered. By the 1930s, many were built on vast pieces of virgin land for British legislators and civil servants, others for the Indian nobility, professionals and senior officials in the colonial administration and the legal system. The size and characteristics of each bungalow were commensurate with the occupant's position in the imperial community's socio-economic and political hierarchy. Most bungalows were of only one storey with a porch in front, and had tall columns and arches. They also had elaborate fireplaces and finely-crafted colonial furniture. A few bungalows that belonged to elite Indians included a courtyard as an exception. The facade was treated in a simple classical manner—Tuscan rather than Romantic Revival was in vogue at the time. Classical columns became symbols of the European heritage and of good taste. Today, the top government officials and politicians in power have chosen to live almost the same lifestyle. These imperial bungalows from the late colonial period have become the carriers of a socio-political mindset that has endured to the present time.

Bengaluru: Carpenter Gothic bungalows

Bengaluru was the largest military cantonment town of the British Raj in Southern India and was part of the Madras Presidency region. It was founded in the early nineteenth century; later the town flourished as a military station as well

as an administrative and residential centre.⁶ Around 1883, the cantonment was enlarged by the addition of Richmond Town, Benson Town and Cleveland Town where a number of bungalows were built for military officers or for retired Britons. Many bungalow designs in Bengaluru were inspired by what was going on in Europe and the Americas, as the Carpenter Gothic style began to influence public buildings and institutions there. From the 1880s to the 1930s these bungalows became taller and assumed a Romantic expression, with steeply pitched roofs whether or not they were required for climatic reasons. Most examples possessed symmetrical plans that invariably had a central hall. The facades received maximum attention. Cast iron were used for railings, brackets and pillars. The porches of the bungalows were prominent with sloping roofs and fretwork infill (photo 4). Gradually, the Carpenter Gothic style was adapted by the locals as the town grew. The Bengaluru Monkey-Tops, as the bungalows are popularly known, are a record of not just socio-cultural but also craft history which is unique to the region. With the rapid growth in the twenty-first century of Bengaluru as the Silicon Valley of India, these fine examples are threatened by real estate speculation and city redevelopment plans as urban land prices soar.

Mumbai: Suburban Art Deco bungalows

The trading centre of Mumbai became an important port town after the takeover by the British Crown in 1858, growing into a leading metropolis by the time of Independence in 1947. In the late nineteenth century, wealthier classes built garden city type bungalows in up-market areas of South Mumbai. By the mid-1930s, the city expanded extensively into newly developed suburbs.⁷ Their infrastructural network prompted rapid residential growth where the bungalow (and even a villa-type house) became a popular choice of the middle class. Though earlier bungalows were somewhat similar to the ones in Bangalore, Art Deco became the preferred style towards the 1940s and flat roofs, made possible by reinforced concrete, began to be associated with modernity. The Art Deco style was featured on facades and in interior details. Curved balconies, bay windows, decorative surfaces, vertical and horizontal mouldings and patterned floorings gave them the ambience and modern language of that time.⁸ The remaining Art Deco bungalows in Mumbai—arguably superior to the examples found in Miami, Florida—are excellent examples of craftsmanship and early modernist principles and require an urgent conservation awareness and policy in view of the fast growth of this megacity.

Standard bungalows

Other cities and towns of India were likewise dotted with regional variations of bungalows, large and small. During the twentieth century, these went through stylistic and technological transformations while responding to socio-economic changes. Internal forces, such as the nationalistic fervour arising from the long drawn-out freedom struggle against British colonial rule and the making of New Delhi, affected their design. In addition, stylistic influences from continental Europe and America resulted in the adoption of Art Deco and Streamline Moderne features, followed by the International Style. With the arrival of Le Corbusier, the principles of the Modern Movement dominated the post-Independence era and the bungalow became a favourite 'modern' option for the individual homeowner. Thus, the simple cantonment bungalow finally terminated in the modernist house.

Heritage value

Thus, bungalows constitute a very special and unique typology in India, with a strong cultural/historic position as representatives of a by-gone era. Historically they symbolise the individualisation of private property, a concept new to the collective lifestyle of traditional societies in India. Over a period of time they were absorbed into Indian society, the imperial roots long forgotten. The bungalow faces many problems of survival in the twenty-first century. For example, the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and gardens have become the most nagging problem for the owners, and the law of inheritance and division of properties is causing socio-political confusion and fracture among the families.

An analysis of the transition between the colonial and postcolonial periods, using the bungalow as a phenomenon, would provide an excellent opportunity to investigate a number of questions regarding the built environment and its relation to society. In the Indian context, the failure to understand the bungalow's origins and evolution with its deeper social and cultural connections has brought about weak descriptions of its position in urban geography. In the twenty-first century, in view of the forces of globalisation and market economy, indigenous insights into the understanding and preservation/adaptation of this heritage will assist in meeting the contemporary challenges of not only filling the housing needs of the country but also issues of urban design and planning from a local or Asian perspective.

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Notes

- This article is based on the forthcoming publication: Desai, Madhavi, Miki Desai and Jon Lang, "The Bungalow in Twentieth Century India: The Cultural Expression of Changing Ways of Life and Aspirations in the Domestic Architecture of Colonial and Post-Colonial Society", Ashgate, UK. All photographs are by Miki Desai.
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The framing and representation of cultural heritage

Colonial narratives of urban development, centered on cities like Saigon, Hanoi and Phnom Penh, and those of restoration and conservation, centered especially on Angkor as well as Luang Prabang and Vientiane, framed issues of heritage by underlining the “civilising mission” in bringing progress and protecting local cultures. Yet imperial rivalry and the exploitation of colonial possessions also provided a major impetus for the classification of monuments and historical sites.

Hazel Hahn



POSTCOLONIAL CONSTRUCTIONS of national identities and histories, and economic development and globalization, have significantly changed heritage issues. In tracing the evolution of perspectives regarding heritage, this article treats a range of architectural types, such as religious, monumental, residential and commercial types, and underlines the need to understand and protect intangible heritage and urban historical heritage in a broad sense.

Early phase of colonisation

During the early phase of French colonisation of Cochinchina (a small portion of southern Vietnam) and Cambodia from the 1860s onwards, several perspectives emerged, which were later to be articulated as heritage issues.

First, perceptions of local culture were framed by narratives of colonial conquest and urban development. Saigon, seen as an unimpressive town, was to be a European city, and much of the local architecture rapidly disappeared from the area. The French news magazine *L'illustration* reported in 1864 that European architecture was taking over in Saigon, and that most of the pagodas had disappeared.¹ Thus, concerns about the disappearance of local architecture, seen as fragile, were expressed within the narrative of development.

Cholon, the Chinese commercial city and a busy port next to Saigon, was to remain a “native” city; indeed throughout the colonial period Cholon was a dynamic economic centre. The French saw Chinese architecture as superior to the “Annamese” (Vietnamese) equivalent, seen to be subordinate to and influenced by the former. *L'illustration* praised Chinese temples in Cholon as worthy of a city that used to count 100,000 inhabitants. At the same time another framework, a hierarchy among European, Chinese and Annamese cultures, was established in respect of artistic qualities and directions of cultural influence.

The appreciation of local culture was largely the purview of the Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient (EFEO), which was established in 1898 in Hanoi, for study, classification and potential conservation. Local culture was all too often sidelined in the process of colonisation. When the French established the protectorate of Tonkin (northern Vietnam) in the 1880s, although they were aware of Hanoi's long history, the Imperial Citadel, re-constructed in the early 19th century, was virtually destroyed, and the Bao Thien pagoda, one of the most significant ancient Buddhist sacred structures, was demolished to make way for the St. Joseph Cathedral.²

Both in Saigon and Hanoi – which became the capital of the Indochina Union – imperial prestige and authority were to be manifested through landmark buildings in the beaux-arts style. The European sector of Hanoi, laid out along wide boulevards below the ancient city, would be filled with French villas and gardens for colonial administration, residences, commerce and leisure. The Municipal Theatre of Saigon (figure 1) was rivaled by “the Theatre” of Hanoi emulating the Opéra Garnier of Paris, and grand hotels were built. Indeed, European-style buildings were not exclusively built by and for Europeans. The Vietnamese middle class which eventually rose, and the wealthy Chinese in Cholon, possessed degrees of agency in creating the urban environment; many French-style buildings in Saigon-Cholon were built by the Chinese.³

The European district in Phnom Penh also showcased “modern” – neo-classical – architecture. By 1890, Phnom Penh was divided into three districts: below the European district was a Chinese one – the commercial centre and the only densely populated area – below which lay a Cambodian district around the Royal Palace. A Vietnamese district was added to the west.⁴ The presence of the royal court provided crucial symbolic and ritual significance, and Buddhist temples and monasteries were important urban sites. In Phnom Penh narratives of development and colonial prestige were thus juxtaposed to those of the renewal of Khmer court and religious architecture. However, little effort was made to protect local architecture; in particular, wooden architecture which was virtually ignored by colonial scholarship.⁵

While accessing local culture was far from a prime motive for the establishment of French Indochina, accessing Angkor, known in Europe from the 1860s, was a crucial exception. Admired as marvels rivalling Egyptian monuments, and viewed as the “ruins” of a bygone civilization and race,⁶ narratives about Angkor's monuments were interwoven into the politics of imperial rivalry and the civilising mission, although Angkor did not come under French control until 1907.⁷ The monuments of Angkor in Cambodia and of Champa in present-day central Vietnam influenced EFEO to preserve certain monuments in Hanoi and elsewhere.⁸ Although Vietnam always had pride of place within French Indochina, Angkor was the centre of cultural prestige and tourism. The first lists of historical monuments of Indochina, produced in 1901, established a hierarchy of heritage among the different areas of French Indochina.⁹ Only four temples in Vientiane and monuments and objects in five Lao villages were included, as Laos was not regarded by the French as an ancient kingdom worthy of being preserved.¹⁰

Above:
Mansion of the
Résident Supérieur
(Presidential Palace),
Vientiane. Author's
photograph.

The invention of the “Indochinese style” was part of the emergence of an “Indochinese” identity which by the 1930s had become more concrete, not only from the colonial perspective but also from that of many Vietnamese, who staffed much of the colonial administrations in Cambodia and Laos.

The advent of “Indochinese culture” and the “Indochinese style”

After the turn of the century, urban development continued to be the primary framework for cultural heritage in Saigon-Cholon and Hanoi. While colonial administrators, following precedents set by Vietnamese kings, protected certain sites such as the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, the differences between the French sense of historical monuments and Vietnamese conceptions also led to the loss of certain types of heritage.¹¹ The French viewed Saigon and Hanoi as pleasant, “modern” cities in which “the Far East is mixed with the Provence”.¹² Colonial-era urban planners showed little sensitivity for the need to conserve local architecture. The French architect Ernest Hébrard, who became the first director of the Central Service of Architecture and Urban Planning in 1923 and who was commissioned to design plans for Hanoi, Saigon-Cholon, Haiphong, Phnom Penh and Dalat, juxtaposed the “old cities” of Indochina with “new” cities, seen as a terrain for modern development.¹³ However, he was also the architect at the forefront of developing the “Indochinese style” which integrated Asian elements: Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Khmer, Vietnamese, Siamese and so forth.¹⁴ For inspiration he looked first towards Chinese models, starting with the Imperial Palace of the Forbidden City in Beijing.¹⁵ His buildings, the Indochinese University (1927) and the Louis Finot Museum (1932), are in mixed styles.

The “Indochinese style” was not one cohesive style but an eclectic mix, paralleling the vague and speculative definitions of the designation *Indo-chine* itself, which arose in the early 19th century because this region was seen as having been heavily influenced by Indian or Chinese cultures. An earlier example of what could be considered a “hybrid” style was the Indochina pavilion at the Franco-British Exposition in London held in 1908. Designed by L. Siffert, it combined Siamese, Vietnamese, Khmer and European traits.¹⁶ Georges Groslier's Albert Sarraut Museum (National Museum) in Phnom Penh (1920) incorporated Angkorian and European elements.¹⁷

The invention of the “Indochinese style” was part of the emergence of an “Indochinese” identity which by the 1930s had become more concrete, not only from the colonial perspective but also from that of many Vietnamese, who staffed much of the colonial administrations in Cambodia and Laos.¹⁸ The sense of heritage as exploitable properties also motivated the promotion of *Indo-chine* within French Indochina and abroad as possessing numerous cultural attractions such as the ancient imperial capital Hue, as well as natural heritage such as Halong Bay. Angkor was from early on integrated into plans for developing tourism and was designated as “Angkor Park” from the 1920s.¹⁹ Colonial-era designations of tourist routes such as the “grand circuit” and “small circuit” are still used today.

Postcolonial framing of urban historical heritage In the postcolonial era diverse narratives of national and regional heritage led both to the evolution of the meanings of cultural heritage, which includes archeological sites, ancient monuments, colonial-era architecture, post-colonial architecture, and to the inclusion of elements that were left out of the frameworks of the colonial period.

Phnom Penh

The golden age of Phnom Penh's urban development began in 1953 with independence. Until 1970, city planners and architects embraced the modern movement adapted to the Khmer context, designing universities, ministries, a sports complex, and gardens. Since the 1980s the city has undergone rapid changes, and since the 1990s the pressures of economic expansion and speculative real-estate development, and the absence of regulation regarding constructions or demolitions, particularly threaten architectural heritage. The meaning of urban heritage has been transformed and includes not only archaeological sites and older monuments but also wooden architecture as well as modern architecture built in the 1950s and 60s.²⁰ Wooden architecture, a major trait of Cambodian culture since ancient times that once filled Angkor, has been disappearing, although much that was built in the late 19th and 20th centuries is still visible.²¹

Phnom Penh's shophouses, built mainly by the Chinese from the 1870s onwards, testify to the city's diverse legacy. By the early 20th century half of Phnom Penh's population was Chinese.²² The Cambodian law of 1996 on the protection of cultural heritage includes urban historical heritage. However, application of the law is difficult, given the challenge of regulation and the obscure diffusion of responsibilities into various government authorities.²³ In 2005 the Heritage Mission was created by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the French Embassy, in order to classify and protect non-Angkorian architectural sites. Colonial architecture and modern architecture are particularly threatened because of the large lots they are situated on.

In French Indochina and contemporary Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos

Hanoi

In postcolonial Hanoi conflicting national historical narratives and identities have complicated heritage issues. The Ancient Quarter—the economic centre—has maintained its formal and social configurations through the colonial period despite extensive changes in social and commercial relations.²⁴ Since economic liberalization began in Vietnam in 1986, in spite of plans for preserving the historic ambiance of the Ancient Quarter marked by the proximity of living and working, and the coexistence of handicraft, wholesale and retail, it has been in an increasingly critical position. Many of this quarter's tube houses—divided into bays for commerce, storage, courtyard, living quarters and kitchen—have disappeared.²⁵ Overpopulated, the inhabitable space per person is sometimes less than 2.2 m².²⁶ Throughout the 1990s, many of the streets retained their specific trades, such as metal work or Buddhist paraphernalia. However, economic revitalization and the flow of global tourism has led to the wholesale conversion of living space into commercial space.²⁷

The “French Quarter” of Hanoi is also threatened by the pressures of economic change, real estate development and population growth, due to its central location. Villas sit on large lots which make them particularly vulnerable to development. From the 1960s up to the 1980s, French colonial architectural legacy was often overlooked and criticized. Nguyen Quang Nhat and Nguyen Nang Dac in *Vietnamese Architecture* (1971), published by the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations of the South Vietnamese government, called the style of colonial public buildings “pseudo-classical”, underlining its conservative and imitative qualities, and praised the later fusion style. The authors also noted that the Vietnamese had to learn to appreciate their own heritage, suggesting that a sense of pride in Vietnamese heritage eroded under the colonial regime.²⁸

The passage of time has made it easier to attempt to conserve colonial-era buildings, many of which fell into decrepit states. Recent joint efforts by scholars, architects, local and international administrators as well as residents to preserve French villas have seen some success. Đào Ngọc Nghiêm, former director of the Service of Urban Planning of Hanoi, notes that the more real estate value rises, the more questions linked to the utilisation of the villas become complex, while the buildings continue to deteriorate. In 2008 about 80% of the 970 villas of Hanoi belonging to the state were occupied partly illegally and had undergone modifications. About 50% of the villas were occupied by 5 to 10 households, and in some cases up to 50 households lived in a single villa.²⁹ In 2009, after 536 villas belonging to the state were sold, city authorities decided to preserve 46 villas as a cultural feature of the city, after the municipal People's Council highlighted the need to maintain the city's distinctive cultural features.³⁰

Luang Prabang

Laos has also undergone a series of changes regarding cultural heritage since gaining independence in 1954. The designation of Luang Prabang—the former capital of the kingdom of Lang Xang—as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1995 had significant political resonance. The interpretation of Luang Prabang's cultural significance by UNESCO and the Lao government allowed the latter to construct and promote a simplified narrative about a unified Lao national identity, belying ethnic complexity and fragmentation.³¹ The UNESCO designation led to economic development through tourism, on which the government heavily relies.³² This has led to the commodification of the physical environment, paradoxically eroding the everyday life and experience of local residents, as the city has undergone a transformation into an environment built mainly for tourism.³³ In addition, although Luang Prabang's heritage includes a “fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures” with colonial-era structures,³⁴ the re-telling of Lao national history privileges Lao religious architecture. Non-monumental colonial-era buildings (fig. 2)—many in mixed styles—outside the protected area are potentially vulnerable to re-development.

Vientiane

Vientiane, the administrative capital of French Laos, in 1902 consisted of about a hundred Laotian huts, some Chinese shops and a few pagodas in ruins.³⁵ A beaux-arts mansion (figure 3) of the Résident Supérieur claimed a major part of the local budget. The population only reached 10,000 in the late 1930s.³⁶ Although colonial Laos was only a fragment of the former Lao kingdom, the French claimed to “restore” the ancient city of Vientiane, destroyed by the Siamese in 1827, of which the “ruins attest a great past”.³⁷ Laos was marginal in the listing of monuments in Indochina; in 1930 only 13 structures in Vientiane were included. But the colonial government claimed that great progress was made in the conservation and restoration of archeological sites and structures.³⁸ The colonial civil service was increasingly staffed by the Vietnamese, and trading and shops run by Vietnamese and Chinese, so that by the late 1930s Laotians were in the minority.³⁹ Consequently, the “Indochinese” identity being promoted was often perceived to be a threat to Laotians.



Top:
Municipal Theater,
Saigon, designed by
Eugène Ferret, 1897.
Author's photograph.

Below:
A house in Luang
Prabang. Author's
photograph.

Today critical issues in Vientiane concern the heritage of both the pre-modern period and the colonial period. In contrast to Luang Prabang which is seen as the site of Lao heritage, the government views Vientiane as a site for modernization.⁴⁰ A tranquil, small city which fascinates visitors with its laidback riverside atmosphere and an improbable concentration of national and cosmopolitan institutions as well as pagodas, monuments and colonial buildings, Vientiane is now undergoing dramatic urban development. The government's decree issued in 1997 on the preservation of cultural, historical and natural heritage, reflecting the desire to use heritage to encourage patriotism and nationalism, was ironically violated by the government itself when some of the last remnants of the foundations of the city wall dating back to the 14th century, as well as several colonial buildings, were destroyed.⁴¹

Conclusion

French colonisers' view of Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh as modern cities ironically led to the opinion that local culture was in need of “protection”. However, efforts at such protection were often half-hearted, since apart from Angkorian and Cham monuments local culture received uneven attention, in spite of EFEO's work. The narrative of “discovery”, restoration and conservation distanced modern, dynamic European culture from Asian culture—Khmer culture in particular was seen as being in “ruins”—and provided the motivation for turning French Indochina into a tourist destination.

Elements of heritage neglected under the colonial regime, such as wooden architecture, shop houses, tube houses and the great number of minor religious structures and dwellings, have only recently been highlighted. The erosion of everyday rituals, overall ambiance and lived experiences in Luang Prabang and in the Ancient Quarter of Hanoi point to a critical need for protecting intangible heritage and broader urban historical heritage. As French Indochina ultimately remained a modern construct with limited success in forging an identity, notions of “Indochinese culture” today resonate with exoticism and nostalgia, but also pragmatically refer to “fusion” styles. Whether in beaux-arts, fusion or more modern styles, colonial architecture, in addition to ancient heritage, is threatened by global dynamics and the powerful allure of the new “modern”—contemporary postmodern architecture providing clean, comfortable and stylish built environments.

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Notes

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Constructing cultural heritage

In the decade since the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis, many regions of Southeast Asia have experienced a building boom in which new suburbs, skyscrapers, 'creative' districts, high-tech zones, and even entire new cities have sprung up. While the recent construction boom has produced architecture and urbanism that can be characterised as 'global', 'modern' and 'placeless', a growing number of these projects have attempted to express a sense of cultural heritage through the integration of indigenous cultural motifs and elements of vernacular architectural forms. Several new cities under construction in Indonesia and Malaysia exemplify recent attempts to strategically revive interpretations of local cultural heritage in a distinctly post-modern, city-centric idiom.

Sarah Moser



The socio-political context of cultural heritage revival

The emergence of cultural heritage revivalism in new cities is tied to broader processes and must be examined in the context of the dramatic changes that have occurred in much of urban Southeast Asia over the past several decades. Widespread industrialisation, rapidly growing economies, increasing global connections, and national agendas of modernization have propelled Southeast Asia from a predominantly agricultural to a highly urbanised region that is home to several of the world's megacities. As populations have urbanised, routines of everyday life have altered, patterns of settlement have changed, and social fabrics have been disrupted, all of which serves to contribute to a more fragmented, city-centred way of life.

Asian urban development and architecture from the 1970s to the 1990s has been described as the 'Manhattan transfer' (AD King 1996), a phenomenon in which many government officials and architects sought to replicate the skyline of New York City and other metropolises, believed to be the symbol of an economically successful and modern society. The urban artifacts from this period can be characterized as generic and placeless, dominated by steel, glass and concrete towers, resulting in one Asian metropolis looking much like any other.

This generic urban growth, combined with massive cultural, political and economic changes, has led many Southeast Asians to feel that an essence of indigenous culture has been neglected or even lost (Yeoh and Kong 1997; Kong and Tay 1998). The result is an emerging tendency to look to a more 'authentic' and 'unchanging' past as an anchor in a time of change. Television shows, marketing campaigns, and chain food outlets are tapping into this nostalgia for and romanticisation of a more simple, rural past. Food courts in new shopping malls are frequently adopting nostalgic décor intended to evoke a sense of pre-urban everyday life, with chain food stalls disguised as quaint 'Mom and Pop' businesses. Many television shows are set in a bucolic past, a 'simpler' time without the responsibilities and burdens of modern

city life. This is not to say that the consumption of modern, global goods such as American fast food and international brand names is abating; however, I suggest that in the energetic adoption of modern, urban-focused capitalism, many urban middle class Southeast Asians are increasingly nostalgic about aspects of their culture that have been lost during the recent decades of unceasing change.

Even at the state level, the focus on economic development and modernisation has, in recent years, begun to expand to include the revival of indigenous cultural forms. Official support for nurturing cultural heritage can be seen in the funding of indigenous dance and music programs, the creation of Sepak Takraw (takro) leagues (a Southeast Asian volleyball-like sport played with the feet), the use of interpretations of local or 'Islamic' clothing for government or national events, the adoption of a greater number of cultural heritage activities in school curricula, and increased support for indigenous arts (Moser 2010a).

The strategic adoption of 'cultural heritage' themes is also a key component of urban economic agendas. Strategies to increase tourism in the region have adapted to cater to the growing number of tourists who seek an 'authentic' cultural experience (Wang 1999). With the increasing awareness of 'global cities' and the growing perception that cities are in competition with one another, many of the urban spectacles being created have adopted an overt 'cultural heritage' theme (Moser 2011).

As state officials seek to distinguish their country and their cities from other cities in the region (Ho 2000), they employ cultural heritage as a theme in iconic architectural projects intended to establish a sense of place and to locate their cities on the cultural map (BSA Yeoh 2005). Even skyscrapers, which have long been powerful symbols of global corporate power, have paid homage to 'cultural heritage'. For example, the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, integrate many overtly Islamic design motifs, and Taipei 101 in Taiwan

Above left: Entrance gates to Taman Tamadun Islam (Islamic Civilizations Park), a self-proclaimed 'edutainment' park designed to promote global Muslim heritage and reposition Southeast Asia as central to the story of Islam. Source: Author.

Above right: Re-creation of imagined Arab Islamic urban heritage, Putrajaya. Source: Author.

integrates the profile of the Chinese brick pagoda, Chinese beliefs about numerology, feng shui and auspicious colours. Beyond the preservation of heritage buildings or districts, government officials in Southeast Asia are frequently seeking to create a sense of 'existential authenticity' (Wang 1999) in completely new urban environments.

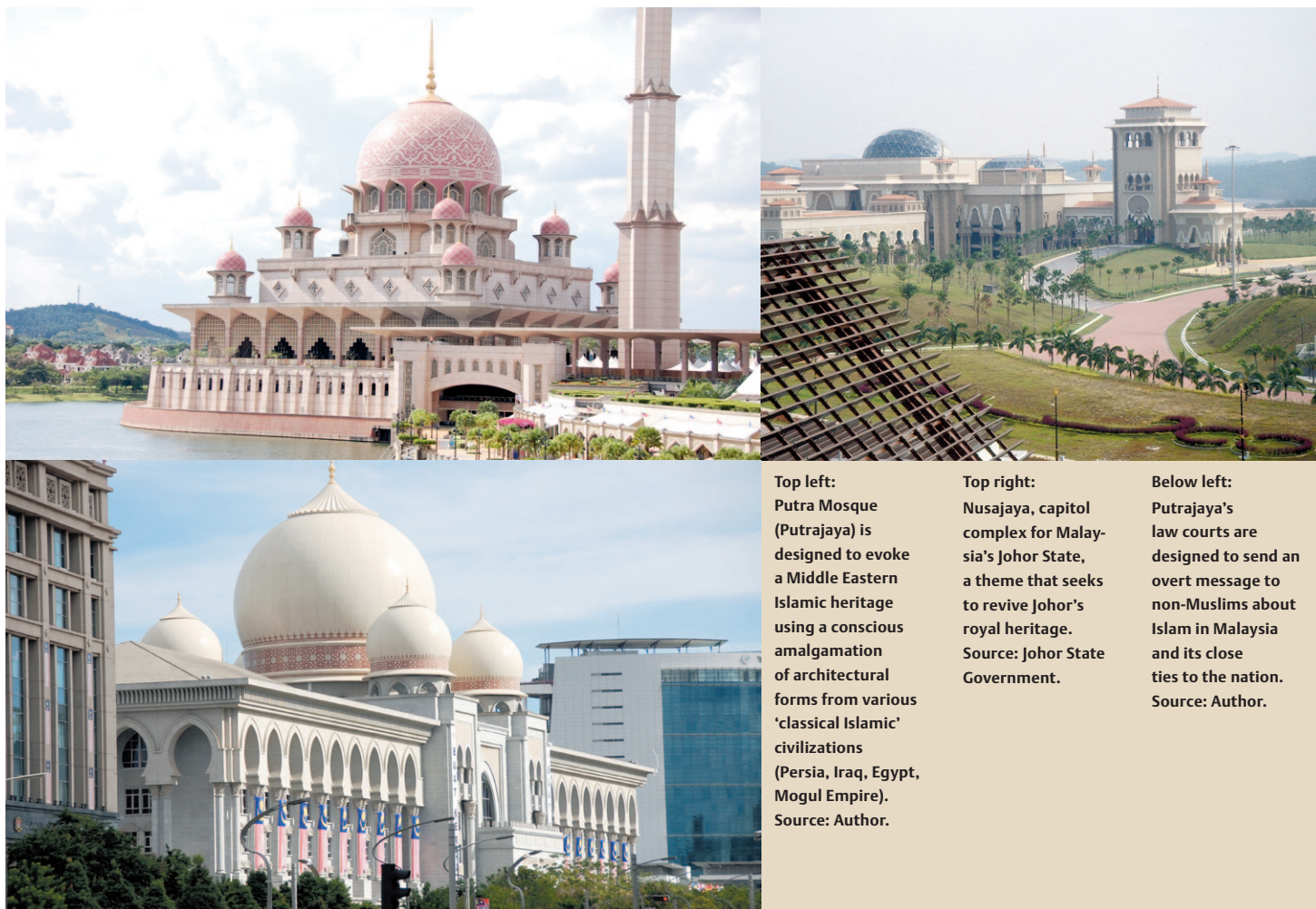
The (re)creation of conflicting heritage themes

The (re)creation of cultural heritage in contemporary architecture and urbanism projects looks back to various –and often competing–versions of a glorious past. The variety of interpretations of cultural heritage reinforces two important aspects of culture. First is the notion that culture does not sit still but is constantly in flux. Second is that heritage is subject to multiple competing narratives and is part of a creative process that involves inventing tradition and recreating, reinterpreting, and re-contextualizing aspects of an often imagined past. In this way, interpretations of cultural heritage are neither 'right' nor 'wrong', but like culture itself, are constantly being reinterpreted over time in an endless series of hybrids.

What is important to emphasise is that reviving cultural heritage is not necessarily a neutral endeavour, but can prioritise certain groups while excluding others and has been adopted as a political strategy by the ruling elite as a source of legitimacy for their ideological agendas.

The power of the cultural politics embedded in notions of 'heritage' can be seen in various realms that seek to link 'traditional values' and 'cultural heritage' to government policies. The revival of a particular group's cultural heritage may be politically motivated in regions of racial or religious tension as a way of declaring ascendancy of one group over another. For example, Malay and indigenous Indonesian ruling elites frequently use notions of cultural heritage to make claims to resources; by emphasizing their indigenous identity and establishing connections to an ancient pre-colonial past, they justify their 'rightful' claim to the land of economically

In new cities in Malaysia and Indonesia



Top left: Putra Mosque (Putrajaya) is designed to evoke a Middle Eastern Islamic heritage using a conscious amalgamation of architectural forms from various 'classical Islamic' civilizations (Persia, Iraq, Egypt, Mogul Empire). Source: Author.

Top right: Nusajaya, capitol complex for Malaysia's Johor State, a theme that seeks to revive Johor's royal heritage. Source: Johor State Government.

Below left: Putrajaya's law courts are designed to send an overt message to non-Muslims about Islam in Malaysia and its close ties to the nation. Source: Author.

powerful Chinese populations (King 2008). In other contexts, Muslim officials from secular, conservative political parties choose to emphasise their connection to Islam through the construction of overtly Islamic architecture for state buildings in order to claim ascendancy over local non-Muslim (mainly Chinese) populations, as well as to strategically attract supporters away from Islamic political parties.

Numerous heritage themes are being explored in current Southeast Asian urban development. One dimension of cultural heritage that was promoted in an urban waterfront revitalisation project in Tanjung Pinang, the capital of Indonesia's Riau Islands Province, was a maritime theme. Intending to promote the nautical heritage of the Riau Islands, this theme used anchor, rope and sailboat motifs along with depictions of fishing and sea life to decorate public spaces and government properties. This is among the most neutral of heritage themes, as it did not prioritise a particular ethnic or cultural group. The maritime theme has since been abandoned for the revival of a more specific cultural narrative. The waterfront has now been renovated with a royal theme, featuring cast concrete details and pavilions intended to evoke nearby pre-colonial royal buildings.

A variety of ethnic and cultural groups in Southeast Asia have looked to local pre-colonial royalty as a source of inspiration in attempts to revive a sense of cultural heritage. Aside from smaller projects such as Tanjung Pinang's waterfront, the royal revival theme has been expressed architecturally in recent years in a number of new mega-projects in Malaysia and Indonesia. Royal revivalism focuses on 'high' court culture to the exclusion of 'low', everyday cultures and traditions of 'regular' subjects. Similarly, but at a smaller scale, Riau Islands Province has adopted a royal theme for many new buildings, even going so far as to use deep yellow paint, the colour of Riau royalty, for many state buildings and buildings associated with the tourist industry.

Perhaps the most common and visible example of cultural heritage revival in Indonesia and Malaysia is demonstrated in the turn to great Islamic civilisations in history for inspiration. While Islam has been in Southeast Asia for half a millennia and Muslims constitute a quarter of a billion people, this heritage style looks not to indigenous expressions of Islam but to imported designs. The recent conflation of generic 'Islamic' symbols with indigenous identity is not without criticism. Some argue that the imported cultural and architectural forms adopted in Putrajaya, Nusajaya and Dompak amount to pastiche and fail to embody local values of community and humility (Mohamad Tajuddin 2005).

The move to assert Malayness has also inspired a revivalist movement that looks to indigenous architectural roots rather than to Middle Eastern sources. Architects in Malaysia experimented with this style as early as the post-independence period of the 1960s, when Muzium Nasional in Kuala Lumpur was constructed as a gigantic version of a traditional Malay house. This style fell out of favour for several decades until

In the energetic adoption of modern, urban-focused capitalism, many urban middle class Southeast Asians are increasingly nostalgic about aspects of their culture that have been lost during the recent decades of unceasing change.

recently when numerous state mosques have drawn on vernacular styles of architecture. This can be read in the context of a broad government-led movement that seeks to revive interpretations of Malay tradition, including making mandatory new Malay-Islamic uniforms for civil servants.

Urban strategies for reviving cultural heritage

A number of strategies have been adopted to create a sense of cultural heritage in new master planned cities, although almost none of the actual planning philosophies have their origins in indigenous culture. The designs of the master plans themselves do not aim to reproduce indigenous urban fabric but draw on a combination of ideas borrowed from New Urbanism, European colonial-era planning, the unique modernist planning of Singapore and other international styles.

One exception can be found in several new mega-developments in Malaysia including Nusajaya and *Taman Tamadun Islam* (Islamic Civilizations Park), which are designed around a central axis oriented towards Mecca in order to project a sense of Islamic authenticity, although no cities in the world outside of Malaysia are oriented towards Mecca. Despite this exception, it is not through urban layout or orientation that a sense of cultural heritage is usually expressed in new cities, but through architecture and decorative arts. Ultimately, this means that while new cities evoke some sense of cultural heritage, they do not facilitate traditional social interactions or recreate the unique morphology of vernacular Southeast Asian settlements.

Cultural heritage in new cities is commonly expressed through what I call the 'giant house' approach, which superizes a vernacular house type using concrete, steel and other modern materials rather than timber and other traditional materials. This can be seen in Nusajaya, the new capital of Malaysia's Johor State and opposite Singapore, which has been positioned as both a global city and competition for Singapore's economic dominance in the region. A key part of Nusajaya's narrative, however, is as a new site of cultural heritage, namely a site of Johor's royal revival. The design for Nusajaya has been guided by the ruling elite's desire to restore the Johor Sultanate to its former glory through the construction of a new royal-themed capital city. Intended to create a city with a strong Malay presence to counter the popular perception of Singapore as a Chinese city and an attempt to regain Johor's pre-colonial status as a major regional trade entrepôt, Nusajaya uses the 'giant house' strategy to express a sense of royal heritage. The architecture of the state capitol and government offices imitates the style of the Sultan of Johor's colonial-era residences, while grandiose plazas feature Islamic or traditional Malay motifs in the paving.

Evoking a recognisable 'essence' of cultural heritage through building materials is another common strategy, used primarily in government edifices. For example, in Putrajaya, Malaysia's new capital city, materials have been selected from around the Middle East in order to project an air of authenticity. Marble, sandstone and other materials used in 'classic' Islamic architecture have been worked by imported craftspeople from India.

More commonly, however, traditional materials are rejected in favour of concrete. Indonesia and Malaysia's rich wood carving heritage is nowhere to be seen in new master planned cities, except in simplified re-creation of local motifs using poured concrete, sandblasting or simply painted on buildings.

Indigenous culture and neoliberal growth

The most common architectural strategy to evoke cultural heritage used in new cities, and in the region more widely, is simply placing a 'traditional' roof on top of a modern structure. This expression of heritage can be seen in many new state buildings including government offices, banks and ferry terminals. In Putrajaya, Arab domes dominate the skyline and arches, minarets and other overtly 'Islamic' features have been employed liberally throughout the city to advertise it as a Muslim capital (Moser 2010b). While at an earlier stage of construction, Dompak, the new capital city of Indonesia's Riau Islands Province, has also topped its key government buildings with a combination of Arab-style domes and vaguely vernacular-style roofs (Moser 2011), a move intended to demonstrate modernity and development without having lost touch with cultural heritage.

Another strategy for reviving cultural heritage through the built environment can be seen in *Taman Tamadun Islam* (Islamic Civilizations Park), a recent mega-project on Malaysia's east coast that has transformed a jungle-covered island into an Islamic 'edutainment' site. Featuring a convention centre, guest houses, an 'Islamic gardens of the world' area, an educational theme park, and an outdoor museum of scaled down replicas of architecture found in the Muslim world, the massive project aims to strengthen and showcase Malaysia's connection to world Islamic heritage.

The desire to create new cities is itself a form of cultural heritage revival. In the case of Indonesia's Riau Islands and Malaysia, new cities are a format used to symbolize a return to a glorious past before colonial powers diminished the economic and symbolic importance of indigenous sultanates and as a way to stake out indigenous preeminence vis-à-vis economically powerful Chinese populations. State officials conceptualise that the way to successfully revive the glory of former times is through a city-centric development strategy that adopts the language of 'global cities' (Sassen 2001) with a local twist (Moser 2011).

While the official rhetoric often makes grandiose claims that these ostentatious new cities are evidence that the country is developing while maintaining cultural heritage, in reality, the ruling elite behind new cities in Indonesia and Malaysia pay lip service to indigenous culture while prioritizing neoliberal growth and a corporate culture of golf courses, luxury housing and global consumerism.

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Relics, replicas, and the generals in the “fairyland” of Myanmar

Is Naypyidaw, Myanmar’s new administrative capital, becoming a “Legoland”? The military regime moved all ministries there in 2005 while it was still under construction. And after building replicas of the Shwedagon, the country’s most sacred pagoda, and the Mahamuni, the country’s most venerated Buddha image, there are now rumours that the military regime will erect there a replica of the famous golden boulder located at Kyaikhtiyo, a most sacred place for Burmese Buddhists. More than just a fortress located in the country’s geographical centre, the military regime appears to be turning the new capital into a microcosm of the realm they control.

Paul Franck

THIS IS THE LATEST EXAMPLE of the ruling generals’ policy to engineer and re-create the country’s cultural heritage, a policy started in the mid 1990s. With assistance from hand-picked Myanmar academics and developed within a regional context of promotion of ‘Asian values’ (Myanmar became a member of ASEAN in 1997), this policy simultaneously constructs Myanmar’s cultural heritage as a tool for propaganda and legitimacy, a commodity, and a means to restrict expressions of ethnicity and religion. These are all aspects that will be successively considered here.

‘The origin of Myanmar is Myanmar’

On July 3-4, 2010, in Naypyidaw on the occasion of a research paper reading session attended by Myanmar academics, a decade-long governmental stance was re-affirmed in the following tautological statement: ‘the origin of Myanmar is Myanmar’ and ‘Myanmar is the land of human origin’, a modification of the belief previously taught in schools that ‘the origin of Myanmar is Tagaung’, the first legendary Myanmar kingdom.

Since the late 1990s, the generals have indeed embarked on a grandiose, but scientifically dubious, venture that seeks to ‘construct’ a supposed continuity between fossilized remains of Pondaung primates said to date back 40 million years and present-day Myanmar people. At that time, Lieutenant General Secretary I Khin Nyunt was at the forefront of this venture. He was reported by Myanmar newspapers to have said that “there are firm historical links that Myanmar have evolved through Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, and different stages of civilization in their own nation.”

In Myanmar this rhetoric emphasising a primeval lineage is supposed to serve two main purposes. First, it is seen by the generals as a means to cement national spirit towards a supposed common heritage while the legacy of Aung San, Myanmar’s independence hero, has been obliterated from official narratives by the regime. Second, it is an attempt to enhance the country’s profile on the international scene when its socio-economic records otherwise invariably put it in the world’s lowest rankings. With Khin Nyunt’s arrest in 2004 and Senior General Than Shwe’s consolidation of his power base, efforts in pursuing these claims have been somewhat overshadowed by more immediate and materialistic concerns. Yet, some of these claims do reappear sporadically at official events as evidenced by the July 2010 research paper reading session.

‘Lord of the White Elephant’ and the monarchical trappings of the generals

On August 2, 2010, in the remote forests of Rakhaing State, a white elephant was captured. Some days later, it was transported to Naypyidaw and offered to Than Shwe (*in absentia*) amid grand ceremonies. The event is most peculiar as a white elephant is a palladium for royalty. Although the top general does not go as far as bearing the title of ‘Lord of the White Elephant’, one of the regnal titles assumed by Myanmar kings, the parallel between monarchical practices and the August 2010 events is no less than striking.

This recourse to monarchical trappings can be traced back to the military regime’s abandonment in the early 1990s of its ‘Burmese Path to Socialism’ policy initiated almost thirty years before. In a complete reversal of policy, the junta began to foreground the legacy of the Burmese monarchy. Exemplifying the change, a Central Committee for Revitalization and Preservation of Myanmar Cultural Heritage was established in 1993 by Than Shwe and headed by Khin Nyunt.

The initiative materialised with the construction of museums and universities of culture, and the reconstruction of palaces at former royal capitals, which has been criticised by academics in and outside the country. Master builders in charge of reconstructing the royal palaces of Bagan and Bago, from the 12th and 16th century respectively, face a lack of historical sources and archaeological remains and have taken great liberty in interpreting what these two palaces would have looked like. While this is seemingly not in conflict with the government’s policy of promoting ‘the correct knowledge and view’ of Myanmar culture, it may also be viewed as the latest instance of a long-standing monarchical tradition of re-writing history.

Personally too, the generals have sought to emulate the practices of Buddhist kingship in order to further assert their legitimacy. Just like former rulers during the monarchy, Than Shwe had a new umbrella hoisted on top of the Shwedagon Pagoda in 1999. He commissioned a replica of the Shwedagon named Uppatasanti Pagoda at his new capital. The highly controversial reconstruction of temples in Bagan with modern construction materials was also done under the auspices of the generals, just as traditionally kings renovated the architectural legacy of their predecessors. But it is with the construction of Naypyidaw that these royal pretensions have so far culminated. For this labour-intensive and resource-consuming grand project was patterned on those developed by rulers from the last dynasty (1752-1885), when successive royal capitals were built so as to fulfil prophecies.

Generals and tycoons united: commodification and the state

With the open door economic policy starting from the early 1990s, the government has progressively withdrawn from some of its official obligations. One obligation it was fast to relinquish was the provision of housing for civil servants and needy people, a responsibility that it had, in fact, consistently failed to assume. Instead, the government acts as a facilitator and encourages the newly-formed business groups to cater to the needs of Yangon’s increasing population. Limited opportunities in domestic investments, land and real estate speculation fuelled by the money-laundering of drug lords, and an ever growing fragmentation of the housing market, all have led to a boom in property developments since the mid 1990s.

Not surprisingly, a large proportion of these new developments is located in downtown Yangon where many colonial housing blocks have been already destroyed.

Since 2009, a new step towards further economic liberalisation has been taken by the military regime with the privatisation of



Top: View of Yangon with Shwedagon in the background.

Below left: Renovation of the façade of KMD.

Below right: Rowe & Co. being renovated.

industrial and property assets. Auctioned off to a group of tycoons who dominate the country’s economic sphere, these assets include some iconic buildings of colonial-era Yangon. One is the former Secretariat, famous for its red brick façades and intricate stucco ornamentation, now vacant since the transfer of government offices to the new capital. Another is the former Rowe & Co. Department Store, which until recently housed immigration offices, located right next to the Yangon City Development Committee and the Sule Pagoda. In February 2011, local newspapers reported that these two buildings included within a list of five government buildings would be ‘renovated’. If the recent renovation of the KMD Centre, a private school in downtown Yangon, is any indication, façades would be kept while the buildings’ structure will be reinforced, or possibly replaced.

What these five iconic buildings will be used for, however, remains unknown. Local authorities and some private companies nevertheless may have realized the commercial and tourism-related value of these old buildings. From being historical markers of the British colony and therefore prone to the regime’s disregard, these buildings seem now to be considered commodities. What this shift in perception will hold for the long term remains to be seen. In the meantime, the city’s old urban fabric is progressively eliminated and no strategic planning is devised at the city level.

‘The people’s desire’?

In all these considerations about cultural heritage in Myanmar, there is clearly little room for the ‘people’s desire’. This expression is taken from government billboards placed conspicuously all over the cities of the country. Central to this discourse is the national unity and stability of the Union, an objective that, according to the regime, everyone should strive to defend. This political line is asserted without acknowledging the ethnic and religious diversity of the country. The construction of nationalities’ museums and libraries in Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayin, Mon, Rakhaing, and Kayah States in the late 1980s and early 1990s and a very selective electoral representation of these populations at the newly-formed parliament are but very small concessions in recognition of their cultural identity and heritage. Meanwhile, ethnic insurgencies against the central government have undermined any efforts to promote greater recognition of this diversity.

The military regime has speedily approved large-scale infrastructure projects funded by neighbouring countries. With massive investments at stake, neither impact assessments on the environment nor consultations with local communities which are the norm in other countries have been undertaken. A direct threat to cultural and natural sites located in some of the states above mentioned, these projects include several dams, ports, and railway lines in Rakhaing, Kachin, and Shan states, constructed by Chinese and Thai companies.

Meanwhile, other communities that suffer from active discrimination, this time on the basis of their religion, see their agency in preserving their cultural heritage limited to the upkeep of the community’s religious sites and the sometimes public holding of religious festivities. Hindus, Muslims, and converted Christians have to repress any overt claims to cultural identity, as these are invariably interpreted as disrupting the ‘unity and stability of the Union’.

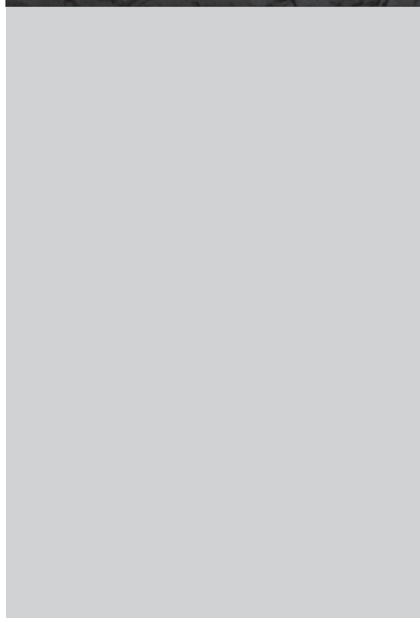
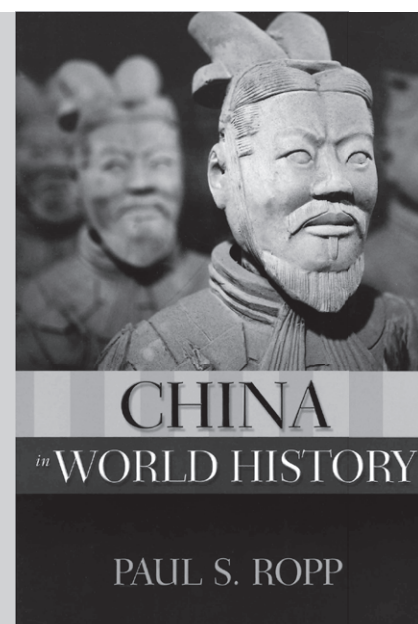
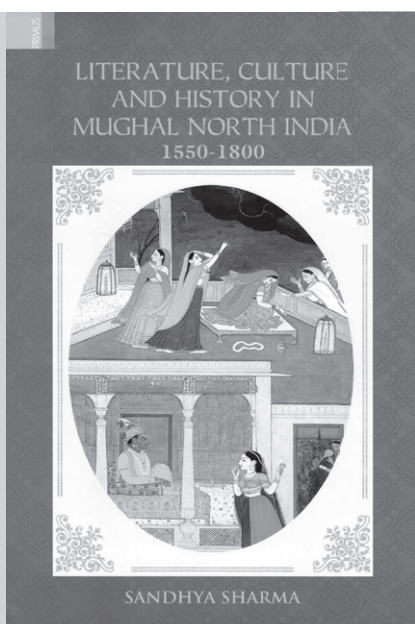
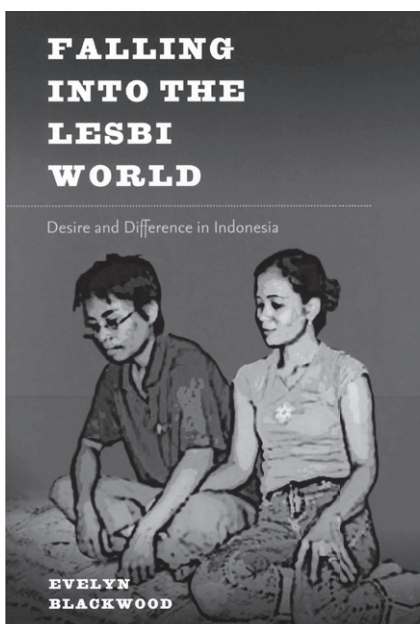
By contrast, owing to perceived closer cultural and religious affinities and because of the regime’s fear of possible economic and political retaliations by Beijing authorities, Chinese communities, even recent groups of migrants, enjoy a great freedom of movement and entrepreneurship. Public expressions of cultural identity are also very much tolerated as seen with Chinese New Year’s celebrations. This selective treatment of religious and ethnic communities, and the regime’s construction of a national cultural heritage as a means to restrict expressions of ethnicity and religion, have led a single group – the Buddhist Barmars – to dominate the public cultural sphere.

This brief overview on the politics of cultural heritage in Myanmar has shown that, both in discourse and actual policy, the colonial past and some of its markers, and the diversity of cultures have been suppressed. Emphasis has been placed on a supposed common Myanmar heritage, one that privileges the junta’s royal pretensions. All this has given the regime’s policy an Orwellian dimension in which the population is denied any agency for the preservation of its own cultural heritage. In this respect, Myanmar’s cultural heritage – as controlled and re-created by the military regime – cannot be contested, and communities’ heritage not overtly claimed unless it is some government-labelled Buddhist heritage.

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The highly controversial reconstruction of temples in Bagan with modern construction materials was done under the auspices of the generals, just as traditionally kings renovated the architectural legacy of their predecessors.

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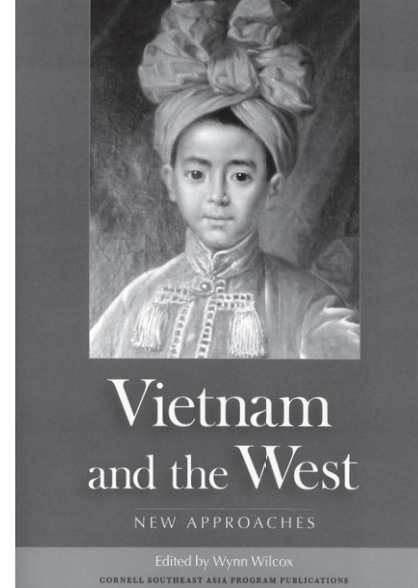
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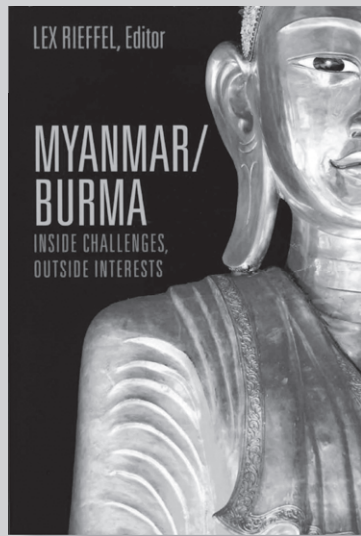
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Myanmar/Burma: Inside Challenges, Outside Interests



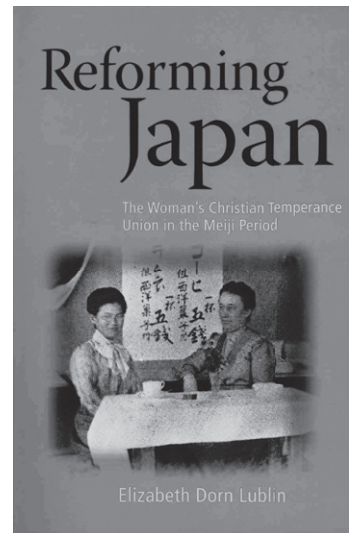
Edited by Lex Rieffel
Brookings Institution Press, 2010
ISBN 978 0 8157 0505 5
xix + 212 pages, paperback

BURMA HAD THE BRIGHTEST PROSPECTS of any Southeast Asian nation after World War II. In the years since, however, it has dropped to the bottom of the world's socioeconomic ladder. The grossly misruled nation—officially known as Myanmar—is in the midst of a political transition based on a new constitution and its first multiparty elections in twenty years. That transition, together with a recent change in U.S. policy, prompted this book.

Two military dictators have ruled Myanmar with an iron fist for nearly fifty years. A popular uprising in 1988 was brutally suppressed, but it forced the generals to hold an election in 1990. When an anti-regime party led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi won by a landslide, however, the generals rejected the results, put Suu Kyi under house arrest for most of two decades, and continued to exploit the country's abundant resources for their own benefit while depriving citizens of basic services. Years of Western sanctions had no measurable impact, but in 2009 the Obama administration adopted a new policy of "pragmatic engagement", encouraging a greater respect of democratic principles and human rights as a basis for eventual removal of sanctions.

This volume examines Burma today primarily through the eyes of its ASEAN partners, its superpower neighbours China and India, and its own people. It provides insights into the overarching problem of national reconciliation, the strategic competition between China and India, the role of ASEAN, and the underperforming, resource-cursed economy. Glossary; References; Index.

The Northern Region of Korea: History, Identity, and Culture



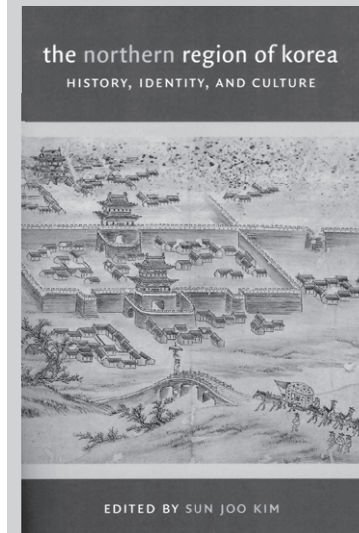
Edited by Sun Joo Kim
University of Washington Press, 2010
ISBN 978 0 295 99041 5
xi + 397 pages, paperback

THE RESIDENTS OF THE THREE NORTHERN PROVINCES OF KOREA have long had cultural and linguistic characteristics that have marked them as distinct from their brethren in the central area near the capital and in the southern provinces. The making and legitimating of centralized Korean nation-states over the centuries, however, have marginalized the northern region and its subjectivities.

Contributors to this book address the problem of amnesia regarding this distinct subjectivity of the northern region of Korea in contemporary, historical, and cultural discourses, which have largely been dominated by grand paradigms, such as modernization theory, the positivist perspective, and Marxism.

Through the use of storytelling, linguistic analysis, and journal entries from turn-of-the-century missionaries and traveling Russians in addition to many varieties of unconventional primary sources, the authors explore unfamiliar terrain while examining the culture, identity, and regional distinctiveness of the northern region and its people. They investigate how the northern part of the Korean peninsula developed and changed historically from the early Chosŏn to the colonial period and come to a consensus regarding the importance of regionalism as a vital factor in historical transformation, especially in regard to Korea's tumultuous modern ear.

Reforming Japan: The Women's Christian Temperance Union in the Meiji Period



Elisabeth Dorn Lublin
University of Hawai'i Press, 2010
ISBN 978 0 8248 3522 4
ix + 252 pages, paperback

IN 1902 THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION (WCTU) petitioned the Japanese government to stop rewarding good deeds with the bestowal of sake cups. Alcohol production and consumption, its members argued, harmed individuals, endangered public welfare, and wasted resources. This campaign was part of a wide-ranging reform program to eliminate prostitution, eradicate drinking, spread Christianity, and improve the lives of women.

As this book shows, members did not passively accept and propagate government policy but felt a duty to shape it by defining social problems and influencing opinion. Far from being monolithic, the WCTU included a diverse community of participants and a variety of concerns and tactics. Members were among the most active in the area of moral and social reform. In focusing on their activities, this book sheds light on an understudied part of that movement. The book opens with an organizational history of the WCTU and then examines such components of its reform program as opposition to licensed prostitution, temperance outreach, and wartime service. Throughout, Elisabeth Lublin argues that WCTU women were motivated by the conviction that their values and beliefs were essential to national progress and that they had a right and duty to promote them. She also illustrates that, contrary to notions about Meiji-period women, those in the WCTU were politically engaged and, far from being submissive to the state, sought to use its authority to achieve their goals.

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Remaking area studies



This collected volume offers fascinating insights and contentions in regard to studying and teaching about Asia and the Pacific. At its heart is a discussion about area studies within global transformations in the flow of capital and people, the rise of new political centers, and intense cultural exchanges and identity claims. Specifically, its essays critically engage the social, intellectual and institutional contexts within which knowledge about an area is produced.

Eyal Ben-Ari

Goss, Jon and Wesley-Smith, Terence (eds), 2010.
Remaking Area Studies: Teaching and Learning Across Asia and the Pacific.
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
248 pages. ISBN 978 0 8248 3321 3 (paperback).

FOR THOSE OF US WHO TEACH, this collection also offers suggestions about student-centered practices through regional learning communities. Hence, the volume not only identifies the current crisis in area studies but also addresses solutions in terms of the production of knowledge through research and learning. Very well written with excellent editorial introductions to the volume as a whole and to each part, the collection will appeal to specialists in area studies and in the disciplines comprising in them (primarily the social sciences and the humanities).

Apart from the introduction, the volume is divided into three main parts. The excellent introduction comprises short summaries of the chapters and (more importantly) establishes an analytical framework for the volume in terms of critiquing present-day area studies. The first part looks at area studies from the perspective of processes centered on, and research related to, globalization. The idea here is to question the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices through which area studies have been created and recreated during the past few decades: for instance the importance of the Cold War for such studies in the United States where they were established in order to “know” regions of strategic importance to the American state. Of special interest is Dirlik’s analysis of recent (and now reigning) paradigms within “Western” academe: he critiques four frames that include civilizational studies, oceanic studies, Asianization of Asian Studies and diasporic studies. The second part includes essays about the emergence and cultivation of area studies in Japan and the Pacific Islands. What I found fascinating in this section are analyses of the sociology of institutions producing area studies. Readers are offered articles about the academic, official state and intellectual perspectives involved in particular contexts such as Japan or Singapore. The analysis found in the volume’s first two parts forms the basis for the final section includes a number of essays on the development of web-based courses that link institutions based in the US, East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

The background to this fascinating volume comprises processes encapsulated in the terms “globalization” and especially the dominance and contestation of American power (economic, political, military and cultural) by Asian “powers”. The crisis the editors rightly identify centers on the apparent erosion of the conceptual and spatial boundaries historically identified with area studies. As they explain, such studies—be they for instance “Asian”, “Southeast Asian”, “Pacific”, “Chinese” or “Japanese” studies—are produced and reproduced historically and promoted and defended institutionally. With the changes brought about by the end of the

As the basic units of area studies—nation-states—have undergone significant changes during the past few decades (but, of course, have not withered away) so the certainty, clarity, and “objectivity” of a field comprising them are all questioned.

Photo by
Steve Cadman

Cold War, less funding has been available for “knowing” local areas (with the exception of the “Middle East” and parts of Central and Southeast Asia) bringing about pressures for institutional changes within academe. These transformations have been accompanied by new intellectual challenges centered on critical analyses of identity, a concept now seen as much more mobile and labile than in the past. Furthermore, the extended critique of centers of power has progressively evolved into an understanding of the relations between power and the production of knowledge. Finally, as the basic units of area studies—nation-states—have undergone significant changes during the past few decades (but, of course, have not withered away) so the certainty, clarity, and “objectivity” of a field comprising them are all questioned.

As a commentator based outside of the United States I felt, at times, uncomfortable with the contentions of some of the contributions. In what follows I offer a number of comments based on a cautious and respectful reading of this important volume. For example, in their very good introduction, the editors talk about what they call the complicity of scholars in area studies with the national security project and the continued need to face issues of ethics or integrity. To be sure, ethics in scholarly work often entails more than the stress on individual and (especially in the American case) legal responsibility. But my impression is that American-based scholars often use ethics as a synonym for politics (it is a bad word when directed at “us”), that is, they use ethics to refer to processes centered on the state, its policies and representatives, and involving impulsion towards activism. A more explicit focus on politics by the contributors, at least for me, would have raised questions not only about the worthiness of collective action and the transformational capacities of the state. No less importantly, it raises questions about political positioning in the academic world and how belonging to different political and ideological camps is part and parcel of contemporary debates within the scholarly world. By such positioning, I refer not to the hackneyed custom found among some American based scholars to check academic venues for their representativeness (are there enough female contributors to the volume? Why are there no South American scholars represented since they are of the “Pacific?”). Rather, I refer to the potential closure of questions implied by a certain political view within academic circles.

Take the whole notion of the (American or US) national security project which is left relatively unexamined in the volume. To be sure, many scholars in area studies (within and outside the US) have participated in security related enterprises and to an extent this trend has been intensified by the horrible “War on Terror”. But could it be that an almost knee-jerk reaction to the argument about complicity (and its accompanying plea for ethics and integrity) simultaneously responds to political expectations within academia and (perhaps) tries to assuage scholarly guilt, but also blinds us to the great contributions of scholars in area studies since the Second World War: be they critiques of power, educating

policy-makers, or self reflexivity. I would very cautiously suggest that underlying the genuine commitment of the contributors to this volume to going beyond accepted paradigms that dominate area studies is a political agenda broadly termed post-colonial: to “just-ing,” to redeeming past scholarly work. In this way, I courteously suggest, their agenda may close questions about the more “positive” aspects of area studies and a deeper reflexivity about the social circumstances within which knowledge within them is produced: for instance the unintended consequences of government funding for studies of Southeast Asia or China.

Along these lines, and following the editors, I see the major challenge that this volume presents as that of finding “new forms of area studies that take ideas of internationalization and democratization seriously [and] must find space for the other ways of knowing and living in the world that continue to shape the day-to-day lives of most inhabitants of the planet”. The key problem is to understand what is meant by “new ways of knowing”. There are a number of assumptions in the various articles in the volume, each of which encouraged me to think about different directions or solutions. The first solution entails producing multiple local or indigenous knowledges. Most strongly represented in Teresia Teiwa’s essay, this plea harks back to the 1950s and 1960s with particular calls for African or Asian ways of knowing that are somehow different than the received “Western” ones. The danger in such a view is that of a knowledge that is essentialized (only natives can “really” know) and privileged (their truth is paramount). The second solution (and one rather often celebrated in contemporary scholarly circles) is to underscore the special views that can only be had from the periphery. But the risk here is that of privileging the peripheral or marginal view, as has been asserted by advocates of critical approaches in the “West” for years (think of Marxist or feminist analyses). When coupled with an emphasis on indigeneity, one ends up with pleas for such things as the unique advantage of an Islamic sociology, a Japanese anthropology or a Chinese ethnology (to mention the disciplines most close to me). I have yet to find an analytical advantage to such conceptual frameworks that is somehow critically different from received “Western” theories

The third solution is interactional and one I find most interesting as presented in the volume. The emphasis here is on co-learning through cooperative efforts. But here the power imbalances between the institutions participating in the project described in *Remaking Area Studies* take on importance (and to be fair, the contributors are aware of this point). Take the modules developed for the joint seminars held between the institutions. To my ears, they sound like any fashionable modules developed in universities around the United States (and in the institutions I know well in Israel, parts of Japan and Southeast Asia): migration and multiculturalism; tourism, representation and identity, and globalization and popular culture. Let me be very clear, I am not denigrating these efforts but trying to understand what new forms of knowledge were produced within them. Furthermore, notice that it was a team at the University of Hawaii that initiated and established (with American funding) connections with other regional colleges: Did this fact mean that the de-facto center was American? And, if this was the case, is this fact important? At this historical point should we not, then, perhaps focus more on how interactive technologies (email, websites and video conferencing) destabilize the relationship between subjects and objects of knowledge, rather than be preoccupied with guilt underlying historical cases of exploitation and inequality? Again, I would like to clarify that I am not arguing for a move away from history. Rather, my impression is that too strong an emphasis on a certain kind of history—one that answers expectations related to the politics of identity—may foreclose issues such as internal exploitation within Asian and Pacific societies before the encroachment of colonialism, or the contemporary alliances between local elites and external conglomerates.

To conclude, my reading of this valuable volume suggests three avenues for continued scholarly attention. First, to develop further the interactional approach to studying and teaching but perhaps without the guilt, essentializing and privileging of knowledge implied by some present-day debates. Second, following the contributions by Eades and Kong, to be thoroughly aware of the actual institutional and organizational dynamics within which research and learning take place. And third, to carry the challenges posed by this fascinating collection to comparative analyses of area studies in other parts of the world.

I enjoyed reading this volume very much and would recommend it not only to scholars within “Asian” and “Pacific” studies but to anyone interested in the complex relations between scholarly activities and area studies.

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Dangdut, the sound of Indonesia

Until recently, studies of Indonesian pop culture invariably dealt with the state. The formation of modern pop culture coincided with the New Order (1966-1998) fostered by the economic growth and development that the regime oversaw. Once it was established that the New Order was an authoritarian regime, the state was taken to be the determining institution in the production and regulation of culture.

Thomas Barker



Andrew N. Weintraub, 2010.

Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music.
New York: Oxford University Press.
258pp + iv, ISBN 978 0 19 539567 9 (paperback)

KRISHNA SEN'S 1994 STUDY of the Indonesian film industry is representative in this regard. Sen argued that the history of film post-1966 was the history of increasing state hegemony over film. Conversely, other cultural theorists came to emphasize resistance as the *modus operandi* of pop culture. In this vein, oppositional art cinema director Garin Nugroho came to represent the entire 1990s film industry because of his political stance. This was despite the fact that his films were seen by few people domestically and catered mainly to a global film festival audience.

With the end of the New Order regime in 1998, the emphasis in studies of pop culture changed. Andrew Weintraub's book *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music* is one such study. Alongside recent work by Ariel Heryanto (2008), Matthew Cohen (2006) and others, Weintraub articulates a much more complex cultural history. He begins by tracing the musical roots of the *dangdut* genre in pre-independence popular music, following what would become *dangdut* as it developed through the 1970s with iconic figures such as Rhoma Irama. He moves through the New Order to the post-1998 present with *dangdut* at the centre of debates around Islam, women and regionalism. Although minor studies of the genre have appeared before (e.g. Frederick, 1982), Weintraub brings a great passion to his work, being a self-confessed fan of the music. Broadly, the book is chronological in its approach, tracing the genre from its beginnings to the present, with thematic emphasis in each chapter.

In exploring the origins of the genre, Weintraub situates himself into a debate over cultural authenticity that has reverberations across other cultural forms. By showing how *dangdut* is rooted in a variety of musical styles such as Orkes Melayu, Indian film music, etc., he disputes the oft-cited claim made by musician Rhoma Irama that *dangdut* is a single-origin Malay music from a sultanate in Deli, Sumatra. This places *Dangdut Stories* amongst a growing body of work that recognizes the broadly cosmopolitan cultural history of Indonesia, a counter to the ethno-nationalist conception of Indonesia that was ascendant in the 1950s and which came to be institutionalized during the New Order.

Dangdut becomes a kind of signifier of the people that can be mobilized by various interests and groups, such as its appropriation by New Order politicians and the cultural elite as a means of reaching out to the people.

Top: Dangdut singer. Photo by [gastia.com](#) via flickr.

Above left: 'Dangdut Mania #1' taken at 'Pesta Kesenian Rakyat di Pacitan' (People's Art Festival in Pacitan) by Doni Ismanto (via flickr).

Bottom right: Author Andrew Weintraub singing on the television show *Bukan Empat Mata*. Alongside him are Rhoma Irama, Iis Dahlia and host Tukul Arwana. Broadcast 17 January 2011 on Trans7.

Weintraub's analysis is substantiated by his analysis of song structures, lyrics, instrumentation, rhythm and melody. This method is particularly crucial to the chapter on authenticity where he is able to show how *dangdut* and its distinctive *chalte* drumbeat emerge. It is because Weintraub is an ethnomusicologist by training, and an avid *dangdut* musician himself, that he is able to draw out musical and lyrical content of the music that would remain opaque to a majority of listeners. This approach is thus very textual, and no doubt comes from his earlier work on traditional music such as presented in his *Power Plays: Wayang Golek Puppet Theater of West Java* (2004).

The convincing argument about authenticity feeds into what is the book's crucial chapter: the construction of the 'people' (*rakyat*) through *dangdut*. Reminiscent of James Siegal's reflection on the May 1998 violence, Weintraub perceptively looks at how the people are represented in *dangdut*, by *dangdut*, and as *dangdut*. This chapter nicely encapsulates the cultural debates that surround the meaning of *dangdut* in Indonesia, and can be read into the later chapters that deal with cultural debates in post-Suharto Indonesia. *Dangdut* becomes a kind of signifier of the people that can be mobilized by various interests and groups, such as its appropriation by New Order politicians and the cultural elite as a means of reaching out to the people. What is lacking, however, is an account of how *dangdut* figured in the politics of the *rakyat* in any way.

The dearth of cultural politics in the book relates to the fact that the book is a study of *dangdut* as music. Hence, the methodology that gives the book so much of its empirical richness also produces the book's unresolved tension. Whilst this method works in studies of traditional culture, where the object under study is 'static' and can be studied as a distinct musical form, the approach is limited when it encounters modern pop culture such as *dangdut*. This is most perceptible in the fact that there is little in the way of pop culture theory in the book. Weintraub treats *dangdut* as a genre of music, rather than as pop culture. As a result, the book is sorely lacking in what Stuart Hall insists must be the topic of pop culture studies: politics, and the struggle for and against a culture of the powerful.

At various points in the text, Weintraub tells us that songs were controversial or were banned. In the chapter on Islam and singer Inul Daratista, these instances are explored, but in earlier sections such contextualization is missing. There is discussion of Rhoma Irama's diverse oeuvre of songs, yet although he was banned from performing by the Soeharto government in the late 1970s, Weintraub fails to tell us the details of why, how, what, and who. Then, in chapter five 'Dangdut and the Spectacle of Excess', the emphasis is on song lyrics, what they evoke and whether audiences respond to the lyrical content of the songs. Weintraub's readings are almost purely textual, and there is little effort to link the lyrics, their message and their responses to the broader cultural politics of the period.

It has always struck me that *dangdut* is not just a music but also a space within Indonesian society in which various types of moral and cultural transgressions take place. Weintraub reads this more narrowly as the perceived 'excess' of the genre, and its challenge to middle class politeness. There is more to say here about what *dangdut* means culturally and socially, as a carnivalesque space that counterpoises the routine and morality of everyday life. *Dangdut* is in part the music of decadence, associated with prostitution, alcohol,

sexuality, dancing and skimpy clothes. Touring *dangdut* groups, reminiscent of the turn-of-the-century peripatetic theatre groups studied by Cohen (2006), thus provide sanctioned spaces in which transgressions can occur. This holds much in common with the local cinemas screening *filem esek-esek* (sex films) that have become sites for prostitution and 'tearoom trade' since at least the 1990s.

With his emphasis on the music and the meaning of *dangdut*, Weintraub only gives us a relatively superficial consideration of *dangdut*. In his emphasis on the music, there is little empirical data about the music industry and its output; in talking about personalities, there is little information about the size of *dangdut* in terms of the number of performers, companies and so on. Lacking is also some sense of the pull of artists like Rhoma Irama who features prominently in the book: his concert audience numbers, where he toured, how frequently he played, and so on. These details would substantiate the claim in the book's title of *dangdut* being 'Indonesia's most popular music'. Anecdotally we know this to be true, yet Weintraub offers little empirical evidence to substantiate this claim.

Overall, *Dangdut Stories* is a fascinating and exhaustive overview of the music of *dangdut* and its place in Indonesian social life. Although *dangdut* is familiar to anyone who studies Indonesia as the ever-present beat of the city, the *kampung* and everywhere in between, this book provides much needed detail about the music and its origins. It also serves as a good introductory text to the music for those unfamiliar with this very Indonesian form of popular music. Hopefully, the book will prompt more people to consider Indonesian pop culture with far greater seriousness and theoretical ambition than it has hitherto enjoyed.

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Seesawing between poverty and ignorance, prejudice and self-righteousness

In the 1960s and 1970s in Thailand, I had the privilege of breaking out of the ivory tower sprung from my bourgeois roots and associate instead with monks recruited among the poor and intensely involved with women who had fallen to the bottom of the pile. In a steeply hierarchical society, they taught me to see life from the bottom up, and even as I could never participate in their experiences, I learned to sympathise with the logic of a hand-to-mouth existence in which my views didn't hold.

Niels Mulder

Whittaker, Andrea (ed.). 2010.
Abortion in Asia: local dilemmas, global politics.
 New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, xii + 253 pages
 ISBN 978 1 84545 734 1 (hardback)

IN THOSE YEARS, the west enjoyed the breakthrough of the pill and the decriminalisation of pregnancy termination. Henceforward, women could and should have control over their own bodies; an opinion shared by the Bangkok women with whom I was in touch. They were not impressed by the ban by 'nice people' on abortion that was still, albeit in underground conditions, readily accessible.

To them, the ways of the self-satisfied 'nice people' belonged in another universe of discourse, and one does not need to have fallen to the bottom to agree on this. In the Philippine countryside where I now live, girls as young as 13 are pregnant first and marry later. Subsequently, some of them save to have their union solemnised in church. It is estimated that the rate of secretive abortions in this country is about 0.5-1% of the total population per year, although it is said locally that few resort to this as the means of pregnancy prevention are well known and available.

In spite of this, those in power – the Church, politicians, lawgivers, religious zealots, and even health providers – are determined to torpedo the proposed Reproductive Health Bill. Women's health, poverty, and even family planning are none of their concern. In an editorial, the low-brow daily paper *Bulgar: the Voice of the Masses* called it "The war between people with and without morals" (09.11.10). The moral high ground is occupied by those who agree with the Church, irrespective of whether they keep mistresses, defraud the state, cheat their customers, oppress the peasantry, or shamelessly gamble. In Philippine discourse, words like 'moral' and 'immoral' have lost all sense – as indeed evidenced by the popular bumper sticker proclaiming the driver to be "Pro Gun, Pro Life".

View from below

Abortion in Asia brings together the narratives and reflections of some twenty activist-scholars who are committed to women's health, family welfare, reproductive and human rights. Ergo, they have their roots in discourses that are well beyond the horizon of the people they write about. Whereas this is an anthropological truism, the five ethnographical chapters (three on areas of Southeast Asia, two on the Subcontinent) on abortion practice and experience do open a perspective from the bottom up, and the view they reveal is not beautiful. It seems as if we have landed in a funnel skyscraping from ignorance, uncertainty, poverty, arbitrariness, and awareness of risks, to complacency, negation, indifference, sophistry, and hypocrisy. The poor at the bottom suffer, and up above nobody much cares; the rich even manage to get safe abortions when they need them.

This litany is balanced by three chapters that are devoted to activism and reform (on Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) that, together with the first set of chapters, sandwich a half-policy and half-culture oriented chapter on Vietnam. Because the capital concepts of Family and Life are stubbornly resistant to reform, the activist chapters dwell extensively on the ground work of lobbying, influencing those who matter, what news to spread and what to keep quiet, etc. It seems we must live with a painfully slow process of enlightenment in which, these days more than ever, those at the top are pressured by an array of fundamentalists, nationalists, arch conservatives, and other self-righteous moralists.

Personal experiences, reasons, uncertainties, reflections, and the volatile mix in the funnel recur over and over in the ethnographic case studies, even as the exact mix varies. These are invariably, implicitly or explicitly, placed in the context of desirable reforms and open-mindedness. It is not that the wall of silence and conservatism is impregnable; on the contrary, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and India (as in Tamil Nadu) have liberal laws on their books, yet still the desire for (safe) abortion is frustrated by prejudice, unavailability, ignorance of the law, physicians' arrogance, religious and other beliefs, and so on.

Intentions

The editor introduces the collection with a pellucid overview in which a whole gamut of structural forces, gender configurations, worldviews, and understandings of women's bodies are reviewed, and in which indications are provided as to how these affect the control women and men have over reproductive decisions and events. These, and interventions at the macro levels of the state and international donor agencies, are the propulsive factors in the prevalence of unsafe abortion and the related negative effects on women's health and mortality. Through bringing this out in the open, the book aims to spark a dialogue between academics and advocates, and between anthropology and public health.

Because the capital concepts of Family and Life are stubbornly resistant to reform, the activist chapters dwell extensively on the ground work of lobbying, influencing those who matter, what news to spread and what to keep quiet, etc.

To this end, the editor notes the discrepancies between the high-flown intentions voiced in conferences on women, population, public and reproductive health, and down-to-earth culturally specific ideas of self and personhood. Whereas the first derive from western ideas on individual personality and agency, in most places in this world the individual is seen and experienced as enclosed within the group – and in their turn, such groups (families, clans) are the basic units of society. As a result, the editor observes that, across Asia, the notion of reproductive rights springing from the idea of 'property of one's own person' is novel and a challenge to activists, as decisions involve family members both living and dead.

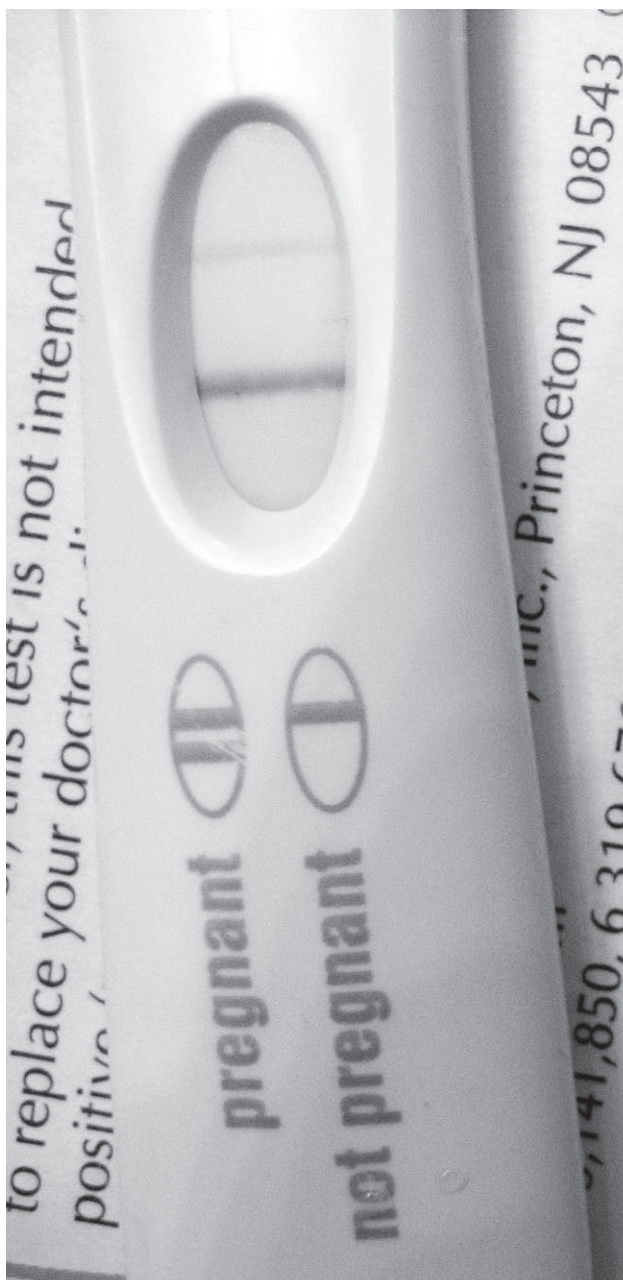
Asia?

Be this as it may, I am uneasy with the title's use of 'Asia' and 'Asian'. Apart from a geographic connection, I am not aware of cultural commonalities among Israeli, Yemenites, Farsi, Samoyeds, Tibetans, Austronesians, East Asians, and Hindus. Besides, seven of the substantial chapters concern Southeast Asia, with one outlier about adolescent women in Dhaka's slums and one on the cost of abortion in Tamil Nadu. The country profiles of other states in South and East Asia that the editor dutifully provides are perfunctory and play no part in the development of the collection. Perhaps using the term 'Asia' was inspired by the spurious idea of 'Asian values' that is often invoked but cannot be anthropologically substantiated.

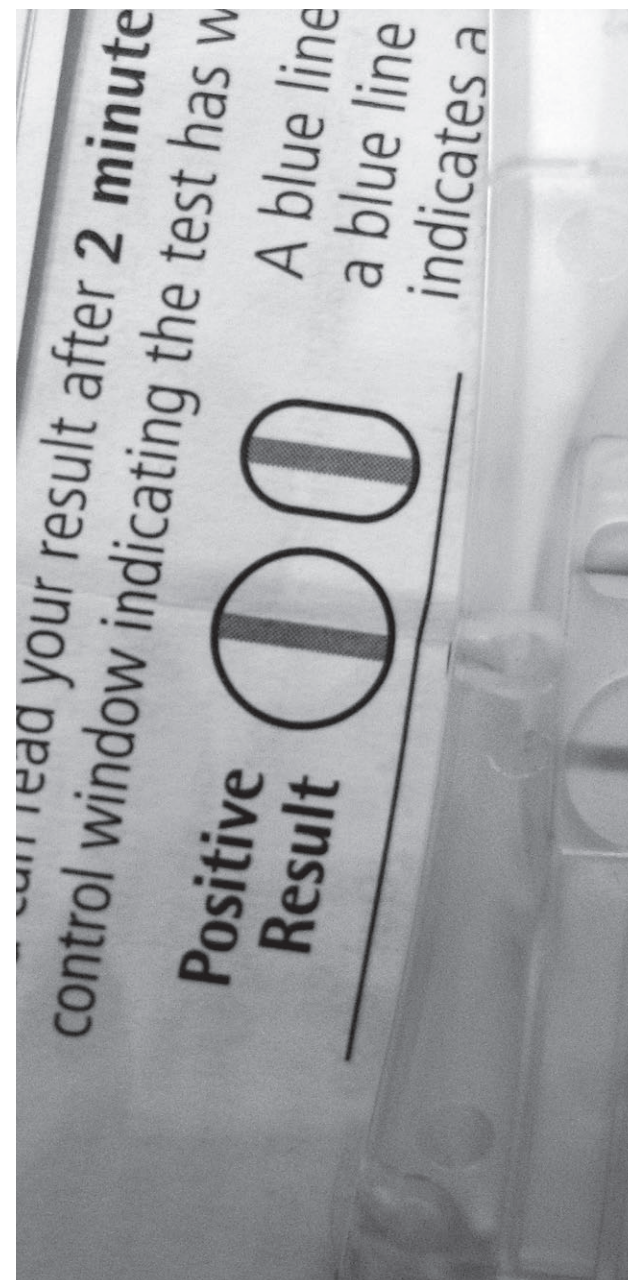
The idea resurfaces in the editor's epilogue on the research agenda ahead when she notes "the moral panic across Asia over earlier ages of initiation of sexual activity, and what is seen as modern western values usurping Asian values" (p. 244). Such a panic and the idea of usurpation is certainly propagated by self-serving politicians, but in the countryside where I live nobody panics when a pubescent girl gets pregnant.

Since the same factors keep recurring in the various contributions, continuous reading of the collection can be wearisome. Further, while one of the merits of the collection is its attention to detail, at times this can make it hard to see the wood for the trees. The positive side is that the reader gains an insight into individual experiences and decision making, the morals of those in power, and activist strategies and priorities. In short, this collection is a treasure trove of information on a delicate and poorly understood subject.

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Is this the result she was hoping for?
 Photo by fahrenheit45one via Flickr.



Mao Zedong and China



If Mao Zedong were to catch a glimpse of present day China, he would surely turn in his grave, except for the inconvenient fact that he doesn't have one. Indeed, his embalmed body is today one of the major tourist highlights in Tiananmen Square. Not only has China embraced state led capitalist-style economic growth, but Mao himself, as kitsch and commodity, 'floods the consumer market', as Professor Rebecca Karl puts it in her excellent new biography. These days 'CCP' could just as easily stand for the Chinese Capitalist Party, rather than the Chinese Communist Party.

Paul Doolan

Rebecca E. Karl, 2010

Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A concise history.
Durham and London: Duke University Press.
208 pages, ISBN 978 0 8223 4795 8 (paperback)

THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF CHINESE COMMUNISM, and in particular of Maoism, has been plagued by moralistic, badly researched books that are closer to soap-operas than serious studies: books like Li Zhisui's *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (1994) and *Mao: The Unknown Story* by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday (2005). The latter supplies hundreds of intimate details about Mao's personal life, from the state of his cotton underwear to his encounters with multiple girlfriends, but the account is based on a huge number of anonymous interviews as well as documents that cannot be traced and checked. Any piece of information that can be used to attack the cult of and personality of Mao is uncritically used, regardless of origin.

Rebecca Karl's marvelous newest book provides a healthy antidote to this gossipy approach to history and can serve as an excellent introduction to the topic for the beginning student, as well as the interested general reader. Her aim, she explains in her short introduction, is to engage the 'academic and market realm' implicitly, placing Mao and China as 'integral to the history of the twentieth century' and positioning Mao as 'central to the history of Chinese and global socialism, as well as central to the history of revolution and modernity'. Furthermore, she hopes to 'reattach Mao to a historical moment of crisis'. I took this all to simply mean that she wishes to embed Mao within the historical context of his times. But I became apprehensive when I read that she wants to understand how 'Mao dared to propose and activate a revolutionary project' and she hopes to recall Mao in order 'to remember possibility against the pressure to concede to the world as it now appears'. Karl concludes this increasingly radical sounding introduction by lamenting the dearth of utopian dreams in today's world. She then quotes Lacanian-Marxist philosopher Slavoj Zizek in what I took to be an attempt to establish her own credibility as an intellectual of the radical left. Most alarmingly she adds: 'I am optimistic, though, something of (Mao's) philosophy, passion, and

historical method can be retrieved for a rethinking of our present'. I began to imagine a new cultural-revolution beginning in the halls of New York University as Professor Karl and her gallant young students are moved to rethink their privileged present through their study of Mao's 'philosophy, passion and historical method'.

But what follows this interesting introduction is a lively, well written, and, as the title suggests, remarkably concise history of Mao and China in the 20th century. Karl succeeds in giving us a balanced portrait of Mao, warts and all. What's more, Karl succeeds remarkably well at explaining the phenomena of Mao by profiling him against the historical background and examining with subtlety the complex interplay of the individual (Mao) and the forces that made, and occasional unmade, him. We are taken through his early life, his love for his mother and his early friendships, his concern for the plight of women and his eventual repositioning of himself from liberal to convinced communist. The alliance with the GMD and the hard years of the civil war and the Sino-Japanese war are vividly described and we understand why Mao reevaluates the Marxist perspective and puts the peasant at the centre of his thinking. The achievements during the key years of the Jiangxi Soviet are summarized, when the communists successfully redistribute the land, mint their own currency, create progressive marriage laws, open schools for children and adults, male and female, and launch a series of hygiene and health campaigns. Surprisingly, the Long March gets short shrift and is summarized in a couple of paragraphs. Karl tells us that, despite later myth making, Mao saw the Long March as a major defeat.

In her chapter on the Yan'an period, from the mid 1930s to the late 1940s, Karl brings us an analysis of the actions taken and successes achieved at improving the lives of the peasants, as well as developments in Mao's thought, such as the concept of 'protracted war' and 'the mass line'. But she correctly points out that some of the contradictions that would later cause so much violence in the People's Republic of China had already emerged at this point, in particular the contradiction between bureaucracy and mass politics. Karl ominously remarks that 'Mao saw bureaucratization as the enemy of revolution'. The good years of the early 1950s are examined, in which 'momentous social revolution' is completed in the countryside

while the economy grows at a rate of 16% per annum and industrial workplaces provide 'subsidized housing, cradle to grave medical care, permanent jobs, educational facilities from pre-school through high school'.

Karl's section on the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Great Leap Forward are excellent for she highlights Mao's huge mistakes but explains these (while not excusing them) as the result of choices made within certain historical parameters. This is surely the task of the historian when dealing with biography; not to apportion blame, but to seek to understand. Similarly, Mao's complex role during the Cultural Revolution is not excused, but is explained. Her argument that this period of euphoric chaos and violence was not simply Mao's attempt to regain power, but was in effect an attack on the party rooted in his increasing hatred of everything that smacked of 'bureaucratism' and 'economism' is convincing. In Karl's words: 'It is said, the Cultural Revolution was launched by Mao to seize state power (...) it is more appropriate to understand the movement not merely as a bid for state power, but as an attempt to seize politics – the power of mass culture and speech for revolution'. It is at this point in 1966 that Mao, described by Karl as 'ruthless' coins the most radical of slogans: 'Dare to rebel against authority'. Yet a year later he ordered the army to crush the young revolutionaries and restore normalcy. As Karl puts it: 'The about-face was total'.

Karl includes a section on the post-Mao period, which she describes as 'the marketization of everything', including the commoditization of Mao. She concludes her analysis of depoliticized contemporary China with the Beijing Olympics, which she describes as the 'reduction of Mao's dream of socialist modernization to a crass fulfillment of nationalist pride'. She concludes: 'Only in repudiating Maoism and everything Mao stood for is it possible for current Communist Party leaders to retain Mao as their fig leaf of legitimacy'.

Although Karl mentions Mao's theory and historical method and obviously considers him to be a thinker of some stature, I am disappointed that I am none the wiser regarding what 'Mao Zedong Thought' actually is. We learn from Karl that it has been described as the *sinification* of Marxism, that is was his 'theory of politics', that it was his simultaneous interpretation of Chinese history and China's present through Marxist categories, and that it became 'the standard for disciplining the Communist Party'. This all sounds interesting, but I would have liked more substance regarding the content of Mao Zedong Thought itself.

Throughout the book, the main narrative is interrupted by occasional 'Interludes', extracts taken from interviews that Karl has made with some people who have experienced the events described. Personally I found these interludes to be arbitrary and they added little extra value. I couldn't see the point of the interview with Sabu Kohso on the Cultural Revolution, particularly because the interviewee is a Japanese born, New York based writer who, as far as I could make out, has never been to China. These interludes fail to appear in the table of contents or the index.

This brings me to some weaknesses in the editing of Karl's work. Edgar Snow is mentioned three times in the book – the first time he is simply 'Edgar Snow', the second time she has forgotten that we've already met him and he becomes 'The American journalist Edgar Snow, who had spent a good deal of time in Yan'an' and the third time we get the repetitive and extended '(Mao's) old friend Edgar Snow, the American journalist who had spent time in Yan'an and written a best-selling account of Chinese Communism in the 1940s for an American audience'. A proper copyeditor would have spotted this. Even the page numbering in the index entry on Snow is incorrect.

Lastly, the book is clearly meant to be an introduction to this crucial episode of Chinese history, yet it lacks a single map. How is the lay reader, the target audience for this book, supposed to successfully navigate through sentences like 'Mao moved from Xiantan to Hunan's provincial capital, Changsha' and 'Mao returned (from Canton) to Changsha and thence to Shaoshan' and 'On the north side of the Jinggangshan Mountains in Jiangxi Province, just east of the provincial border with Hunan, stands a remote and forbidding promontory known as Huangyangjie'. Without a map, these are just exotic sounding but ultimately meaningless words. Karl deserved better from Duke University Press.

Nevertheless, Rebecca Karl has written an admirable volume, has achieved her aims, and her book should become the standard introduction to Mao and China in the 20th century.

China's Great Helmsman, Chairman Mao Zedong, gazing eternally to the left. Photo by Xiaming.

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The problem with art history

In this book Elkins reveals a train of thought about art history in general and provides us with a daring and provocative exercise in understanding the way in which we see Chinese or any other unfamiliar art form: mainly as a subject incorporated in our own western art history. Elkins builds his argument around his study of a large number of leading writings about Chinese art by western art historians during the major part of the twentieth century. While providing us with ample quotations from these books, he notices the presumptions and blind spots that form an intrinsic part of the western art historical method itself. His razor-sharp dissection of the problem shows an open-minded and agile search for a better way to deal with the art of other cultures in a serious and thoughtful manner.

Lucien van Valen

Elkins, James. 2010.

Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History
Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
208 pages, ISBN 978 962 209 000 2 (hardback)

THERE ARE MANY ASPECTS to be considered in the book. Indeed, besides reading the book from one end to the other, Elkins suggests that it is feasible - depending on your knowledge of the matter at hand - to go back and forth through the various parts of the book. According to Elkins, young art history students can also take the book as a case study in which Chinese landscape painting plays the role of the unfamiliar (p. 10). It is up to each individual reader to pick and choose the parts that are relevant to them.

The first section of the book is a lengthy introduction by Elkins where he maps the long and winding road from the first steps of writing the book through the almost twenty years until it was finally published in the present form. This is followed by the main body of the text in which many of the Anglo-American and some European books that deal with the history of painting in China participate in the argument. Each work is allowed to speak for itself, and in the analysis they appear to represent 'the western view' of the arts of China. To give just one example: Elkins mentions Richard Barnhart who has advocated that art historians must value and study the different schools of Chinese painting equally. Traditionally, a division is made between two large groups: the Wu-school or literati painters, and the Zhe-school or professional painters and court painters. This division has deeply influenced the western approach to Chinese art. It seems to Elkins that in western art history only literati painting was taken seriously, and that professional painting never gained the same status. In most of the western sources, Elkins also finds a hiatus in the history of painting after a supposed decline of originality set in at the end of the Ming dynasty. It seems almost as if painting during the Qing dynasty and the subsequent periods was not good enough for existing western art history books.

I find the book intriguing in terms of the writer's sharp dissection and analysis of texts and the reconstruction of arguments as they were presented by two or three generations of art historians. However, sometimes a long, meandering description of the theory that is used in art historical discourse takes Elkins on a path that winds further and further away from Chinese landscape painting.

From an early age, I have been fascinated by the difference between familiar western painting and unfamiliar eastern painting. After training both as a painter and as a Sinologist, my knowledge of Chinese language became one of the tools for understanding more about this other way of painting. I have read most, if not all, of the western and Chinese books that are quoted and discussed in this book, and I have seen many of the paintings that are discussed, again both the Chinese and the western. This background makes it possible to concentrate on the deeper argument that I believe Elkins aims to make.

Elkins's argument revolves around the why and how of art history and in his reasoning he specifically criticises the way in which art history treats any unfamiliar or non-western art.

Elkins proposes six hypotheses to pin down the relationship of non-western art to western art history. I want to quote just three of them, with the intention of providing a glimpse of the full depth of the argument. The first hypothesis of the six sets the tone:

The history of Western Art is deeply related to the enterprise of art history itself, so much so that the history of Chinese landscape painting tends to appear as an example, or as a set of possible examples, and not a co-equal in the production or understanding of art history itself. (p. 24)

This gives the reader a first hint of the underlying problem at stake for art history: that it is neither art nor history, yet it cannot exist independently of either art or history. Art history is based on specific comparisons between art styles and periods. The art historian makes the rules and, typically, it is a western set of rules. These rules are by nature problematic when they are applied to compare works of art regardless of the place of origin or their position in a time period. The next section of the book covers this problem of comparisons, and at this point Elkins gives a warning:

The question is how it is feasible, within a given disciplinary practice, to manage the comparisons that continue to give us our art and our history. There is a moral to be drawn, I think, about not running from comparison. (p. 45)

This warning presents a problem, as I would say that art is given to us by artists and not by art historians; just as historians do not make history but only record it. If you compare art or cultures there is always the problem of the known and the unknown. However, if you want to compare the works of an artist, what other way is there than to relate the works to commonly available reference works by other artists. In my view, it is purely a matter of respect and taking the artist seriously that allows one to compare any artist anywhere in the world to any other artist. Similarly, you can compare the works of any artist with the works of a direct colleague without implying that they are bound by the same culture;

it merely implies that they are all works of art. Elkins draws this conclusion in the second hypothesis:

Because all understanding works by comparison, no account can be free of it. Comparisons to Western art continue to mold what is said about Chinese landscape painting. Being self-critical, provisional, sensitive, linguistically accomplished, circumspect, abstract, or informal about comparisons does not vitiate their power, and there is no evidence that we have escaped from even the largest mismatches. (p. 45)

This seems like an open door, but the consequences are too often forgotten in art history. As Elkins puts it: you cannot subtract the comparison and come up with a pure vision of a Chinese painting.

At the end of this section, Elkins states that Chinese painting is schizophonic: there is a difference between the painting and its appearance in art history. Furthermore, he labels Chinese painting schismogenetic because it appears as partly western and partly Chinese. That statement I cannot accept, because this is a condition that only exists in the eyes of western viewers and in the eye of the art historian. Hence, I would rather call it a condition of the western viewer and of art history, than a condition of the painting itself. However, Elkins hits the nail on the head with his third hypothesis:

The project of writing art history is Western, and so any history of Chinese landscape painting is partly fundamentally a Western endeavor, even if it is written by a Chinese historian, in Chinese, for Chinese readers. (p. 57)

Based on my own experience from years of discussions with Chinese artists, museum staff and art students—all of whom shared a general interest in western art history—I fully agree with Elkins. Some of the people I have met express great admiration for art history; but, at the same time, they all make it very clear that, in their opinion, art history has nothing to do with China. It just has no bearing in China. The problem with art history is more general than its inability

to deal in a decent way with anything that falls outside of western culture. For the Chinese, art history is a curious discipline that has the status of being typically western. Chinese painting, on the other hand, has a long history that is known and appreciated without the weight of a separate field of study. In China, Chinese painting is mostly valued and criticised by painters and connoisseurs—people who know art from within—and not so much by people who study art history.

This is not a book about Chinese landscape painting. This is a book about western art history and, more specifically, about western art historians and the way in which they engage with Chinese landscapes. The title can be taken as a contradiction related to the misunderstanding between art and art history, as Chinese landscape painting is not art history and is certainly not western. The argument is invigorating and sharp, but in the end the only conclusion one can draw is that the issue still comes down to the inherent problem of western art history.

This is a courageous book, and it absolutely touches the core and the boundaries of western art history. It does not do the same for Chinese landscape painting. Here, Chinese landscape painting serves simply as an example to demonstrate the boundaries and flaws of western art history. In my view, Elkins treats Chinese landscape painting in a way that makes it more of a victim than a serious subject. One could say that he uses Chinese landscape painting to express his discomfort with the boundaries of western art history. On the positive side, Elkins has found a very inspiring way to put my own discomfort with western art history into words.

At the end of this review, I will counsel the reader not to start with the introduction by Jennifer Purtle, as it will certainly influence the way in which the book is perceived. Purtle's introduction is a critical review of the book, and she appreciates and recognises the larger influence of the argument. As she puts it: 'But rather than provide the final word on the subject, Elkins's work becomes a point of departure, a text from which an open debate to any number of art historians for whom Chinese landscape painting might serve as a hobbyhorse.' Calling Chinese painting a hobbyhorse is not very nice to say the least, and I would suggest that Purtle's use of this term amply proves the validity of Elkins' argument.

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Elkins builds on a large number of previous books on the history of painting in China. A few are shown above.

News

ASEFUAN's Academic Conference and Annual General Meeting

Securing Public Health in a Globalized World
Amsterdam, The Netherlands, August 3-5 2011

People in Asia and Europe have benefited greatly from the increase in trade, tourism, and mobility between the two regions. This growing interdependence has given a positive impetus for development, yet at the same time public health is becoming more of a shared concern and responsibility. The conference will address public health issues related to Asia-Europe relations. It focuses on themes that play a role in both Asia and Europe, as well as topics that illustrate their interdependency and the need for interregional cooperation.

The event offers a platform for the exchange of research results, innovative healthcare solutions and best practices, with the aim of fostering closer cooperation between Asian and European partners involved in government, academic research, civil society and private sector. Topics include international cooperation and response systems for cross-border influenza epidemics, public-private initiatives on global health issues, healthcare in ageing societies, technological innovation in the healthcare sector, WTO and patenting issues related to medicines, and more.

- **Speakers:** The event features speakers from government, research institutes, academia, private sector and civil society, such as the Universities of Amsterdam, Leiden and Maastricht, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European External Action Service, the Dutch Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam Medical Centre, the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, the European Public Health Association, and more.
- **Venue:** The conference will be held in the Doelenzaal at Singel 421 in central Amsterdam.
- **Partners:** Organizing partners are the Asia-Europe Foundation and its alumni network (ASEFUAN), the International Institute for Asian Studies and the University of Amsterdam, supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various public health organizations in Asia and Europe.

See www.asefuan.org/agm2011 for more details, or contact the organizing committee at agm2011@asefuan.org



The Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN)

The Europe China Research and Advice Network (ECRAN) is a new project funded by the European Union. It was launched in January 2011 and aims to provide policy briefings to EU policy makers, notably the European External Action Service. The goal of ECRAN is to enhance understanding and expertise in Europe on developments taking place in China, notably on the political, economic and social levels. It will pursue this goal by

- establishing a network of experts and institutions across Europe who share a common interest in contemporary China,
- providing briefings, publications, seminars, annual conventions, and
- maintaining a website (www.euecran.eu, forthcoming) where material on EU-China relations can be accessed.

Through these activities, ECRAN will create a stronger sense of community among China-interested groups within Europe.

ECRAN has nearly 150 experts in its network, but is looking to expand. We would like to hear from experts interested in joining our network, who would like the opportunity to provide research and EU policy advice. If you are interested in joining ECRAN, please submit your CV to euecran@gmail.com

Report from the international Workshop on History of Logic in China

Organized by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Scaliger Institute, the Needham Research Institute, NOW and the Institute for Logic, Language and Information (ILLIC), the workshop took place in Amsterdam from 24 to 26 November 2010.

The convenors were Prof. Johan van Benthem (University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Dr. Jeremy Seligman (Auckland University, New Zealand) and Dr. Fenrong Liu (Tsinghua University, Beijing, China).

The speakers of the workshop were the following: Chris Fraser (University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong), Chien-Shuo Chiu (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan), Karel van der Leeuw (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands), Thierry Lucas (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium), Jincheng Zhai (Nankai University, China), Jer-shiam Lee (Yunlin Science and Technology University, Taiwan), Christoph Harbsneier (University of Oslo, Norway), Chad Hansen (National University of Singapore, Singapore), Wujin Yang (Renmin University, China), Fenrong Liu (Tsinghua University, China), Jeremy Seligman (Auckland University, New Zealand), Johan van Benthem (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands), Paul van Els (Leiden University, the Netherlands), Hsien-Chung Lee (Soochow University, Taiwan), Zhaoshi Zeng (Sun Yat-sen University, China), Yun Xie (Sun Yat-sen University, China).

In addition, to promote the interaction between historians and modern logicians, ten commentators were invited from various institutions of logic in the Netherlands to speak at the workshop and this turned out to be very successful.

The workshop was preceded by a public lecture evening on 24 November. The event was opened by the President of the University of Amsterdam, Prof. Karel van der Toorn, and then followed by two public lectures by Dr. Fenrong Liu on *Chinese Logic and Philosophy: Reconstruction or Integration?* and Prof. Rens Bod on *Towards a World History of the Humanities: The Impact of China*.

The workshop brought together experts in Chinese logic and Western logic to compare themes and insights in these two traditions in detail. While focusing on the School of Mohism in the Pre-Qin period, the workshop also studied logical contributions by other schools, for instance Confucianism. Basic concepts and reasoning patterns were extensively explored at the workshop, as were links with modern logical notions and theories. We discussed how ancient Chinese logic developed, even into the 20th century, and studied how this affects current ways of thinking. While the main emphasis of the event was scholarly, it also touched on major scientific and cultural issues today. As was remarked by Prof. Johan van Benthem in his concluding speech 'The most interesting project for today is not to start separating logic traditions and imprisoning them in resplendent cultural uniqueness. The real test of congeniality between logical, and indeed between cultural, traditions on this planet is like in the animal kingdom: can they produce viable new *joint offspring*?' The workshop participants believe that there will be many instances of this sort of mixing in the future.

An article related to the workshop, *Chinese Logic and Philosophy: Reconstruction or Integration?* by Fenrong Liu and Jeremy Seligman will appear in the autumn edition of this newsletter. It will explore the problems and historical reality of making comparisons and building bridges between the Western tradition of logic in philosophy and related ideas in the Chinese tradition. A special issue of the journal *Studies in Logic* containing some of the papers presented at the workshop is also planned for later in 2011.

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IIAS Seminar Series

The State and Economic Development in Asia and Europe Report from the first seminar, held 17 February 2011

Financial crises – Regulation and government response in Asia and Europe

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, a shift in the global economy is taking place. The centre of economic power is moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific region. This development will have considerable impact on the position of the European Union. The 2008 financial crisis and its consequences for the fiscal situation of member states constitute the background for all economic policy measures in the years to come. In the 1990s, Japan was confronted with a financial crisis and still has to find a solution to the economic and fiscal policy consequences that resulted from this crisis. Policy responses and experiences are of great value for discussions about the future of Europe and the European economy. The way in which China – as the largest emerging economy in Asia – was affected by the 2008 financial crisis in the U.S. and Europe will also have a considerable impact on the further development of the global economy. Therefore, the first seminar chose a comparative approach to discuss policy responses to the recent financial crises in Asia and Europe.

Xu Guangdong (Central University of Political Science and Law, Beijing) gave an overview of China's economic policies. With its investment-friendly instruments, governments at central and local levels have been able to sustain economic growth, even after the financial crisis hit important foreign trading partners. The 2008 stimulus package was enacted swiftly. These measures were crucial to stabilise the economy as additional government investments could make up for declining demand in some sectors of the economy. However, the instruments also reversed the recent trend of decreasing state influence on economic development. Hence, although China's banking system was not affected by the 2008 financial crisis, recent policy measures will have important implications for the role of the state in China's economy in the future.

Jan-Hein Chrisstoffels (Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation¹) explained which causes led to the economic downturn in Japan in the 1990s. He placed special emphasis on the severe macro-economic aftermath of the 1980s asset bubble that led to the Japanese banking crisis in the 1990s. He gave an overview of the government responses to the crisis, the political considerations behind the chosen measures, and the fiscal consequences for Japan. Further, he showed how Japan's debt situation differs from that of some European countries as only 10% of government debt is held by foreigners and about 90% by Japanese institutional investors. The key question for Japan's economic policymakers today is how to deal with an ageing population and the huge competitive pressures from an increasingly global marketplace. The tragedy of the earthquake and tsunami that befell Japan on 11 March 2011 and its still unknown human and economic costs will further complicate the response to these challenges.

Itai Agur (De Nederlandsche Bank²) gave his perspective on the European financial crisis. He compared the causes of the crisis with the 1997 Asian crisis and explained how the initial banking crisis became a fiscal crisis for many governments in the Euro area. Obviously, this development will have considerable consequences for economic policies in Europe with respect to the latitude policymakers will have and the place of decision making, due to the further harmonisation of policies among EU member states.

Chaired by Henk Schulte Nordholt, the discussion also touched upon the duration of debt restructuring. Undoubtedly, the political battle in Europe to overcome this crisis will further emerge in the coming years when hard choices will have been made and their social consequences will lead to public debate and discontent. Thus, the aftermath of the financial crisis has become Europe's starting position for facing the challenges that come along with major shifts in the global economy in the coming decades. Researchers and policymakers will have to find answers to pressing issues such as the supply of natural resources and the political implications of poverty in other parts of the world. These issues were discussed in the second and third seminars of the series. The final seminar on 12 May 2011 drew conclusions from the experiences of the integration of the East Asian economies into the global economy and Europe's response.

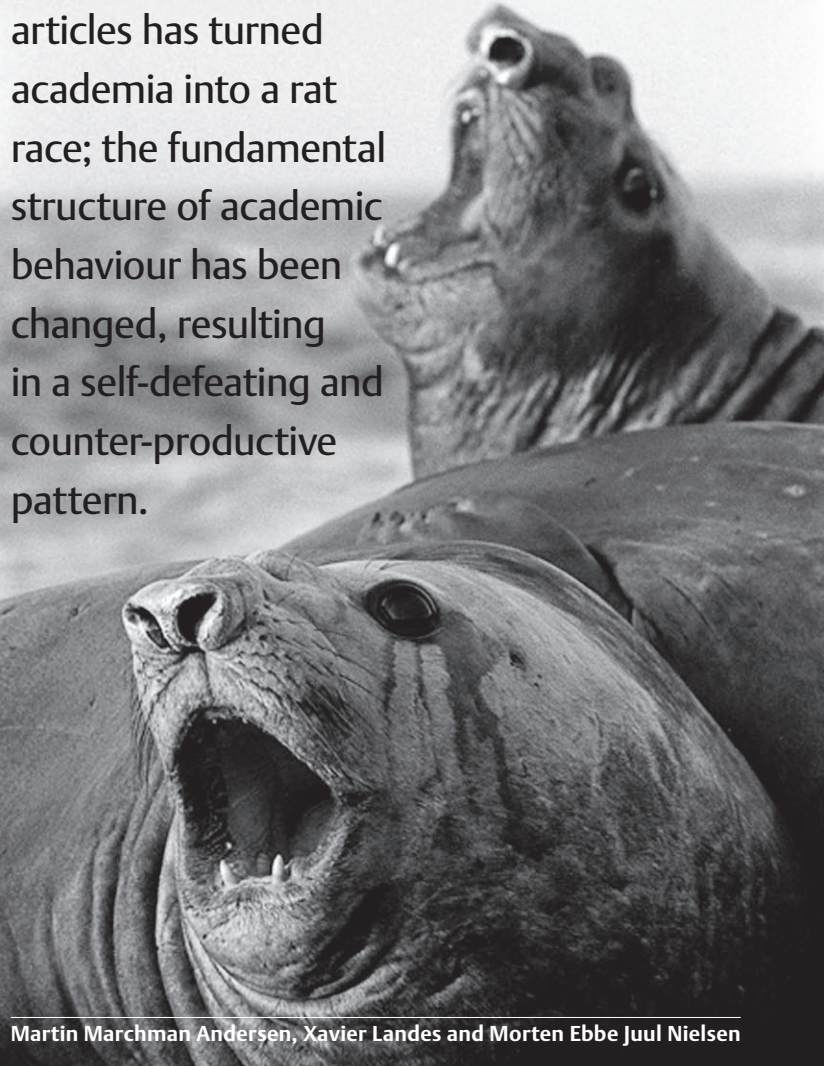
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¹ Mr Chrisstoffels did not speak on behalf of the Ministry or the Dutch government; all views Mr Chrisstoffels expressed during this seminar were his own.

² Mr Agur did not speak on behalf of the DNB; all views Mr Agur expressed during this seminar were his own.

Opinion: On academia and sea elephants

The social benefits expected from academia are generally identified as belonging to three broad categories: *research*, *education* and *contribution to wider society*. Universities and higher education institutions are meant to operate within these fields. However, evaluating the current state of academia according to these criteria reveals a somewhat disturbing phenomenon. It seems that an increased pressure to produce peer-reviewed articles creates an unbalanced emphasis on the *research* criterion at the expense of the other two. More fatally, the pressure to produce articles has turned academia into a rat race; the fundamental structure of academic behaviour has been changed, resulting in a self-defeating and counter-productive pattern.



Martin Marchman Andersen, Xavier Landes and Morten Ebbe Juul Nielsen

THE NUMBER OF WORKING HOURS among academics and researchers is on a constant rise. They bracket their lives and devote ever increasing amounts of time and energy to their work, which often impacts their personal life. They spend less and less time with their partners, children, relatives or friends; they experience loneliness and stress. A study published some years ago on the well-being of academics in Great Britain found that their levels of psychological distress were worse than those of accident and emergency staff (nurses and doctors).¹ Almost half of British academics experience levels of stress requiring medical intervention. In our experience, this pattern is consistent across Europe and North America: different places, different people, same story.

It seems plausible that at least a part of this pattern can be explained by the increased pressure to produce articles in peer-reviewed journals – certainly within the humanities and social sciences – since that has become the main criterion of evaluation. Terrific levels of productivity in this one domain have now become the prerequisite for obtaining tenure or funding, and the exigency has become even more pressing in a context of economic downturn. (To be clear here, the point is not to abandon the principle of competition, but nevertheless: endorsing competition as a principle does not mean accepting all the potential flaws that follow from a particular structure of competition.) In any case, this over-emphasis comes at the cost of other social benefits and, as we shall argue, even at the cost of the thing which it is supposed to foster, namely quality research. As a result, academics are stuck in a ‘race to the bottom’.

Above: Are academic publications lists as bloated? Sea elephants on Amsterdam Island in the Indian Ocean. Photo by StormPetrel1.

When applying for a position, the chances of being hired do not just depend on your absolute level of publications, but on how much you have published relative to your competitors.

Let us elaborate this last point: When applying for a position, the chances of being hired do not just depend on your *absolute* level of publications, but on how much you have published *relative* to your competitors. Of course, job applications mention other criteria such as the ability to teach, the ability to raise external funds and sometimes other fussy conditions like personality traits, and so forth. But, in the end, it is almost exclusively how much you produce *in comparison with people around you* that counts. As a result, anyone involved in the competition faces a strong incentive to publish, and therefore everyone raises the standards for all.

The behaviour of male sea elephants seems to be analogous: The bigger a male is, the higher his chances of beating his opponents during fights and, thus, gaining access to the females. In this evolutionary process the competition has reached a level where males often suffocate females during the reproductive act due to their excessive dimensions.² If one considers that the purpose of inflation is to maximise the reproductive performance of males, a self-defeating dynamic is clearly at work here.

We should remind ourselves that ‘to publish more’ is not an intrinsic good. First, to be useful a publication should bring forth some new insight. The more academics are pressured to publish, the more they tend to publish everything. Most of us have received similar advice from an older colleague: ‘no matter what: just publish, publish *everything*’. Consequently, the standard volume of published work is rising for everyone and, everything else being equal, the quality of everyone’s publications must be going down.

Secondly, it is a banal point, but *someone should read it*. If not, there is no advantage at all to be had. Again, the more academics are pressured to publish, the less they pay attention to each other’s work, for the simple reason that they won’t have the time to read other people’s stuff. The picture is quite absurd. The average number of readers per academic article varies from below 1 (it is an average) to a handful of people. A common joke among academics is to say that, on average, four people read an article: the two anonymous referees, the author herself and her mother.

More seriously, why put such an emphasis on publications if so few people actually access the knowledge? It is particularly worrying if we consider the fact that the majority of ‘innovation’ flows from our ability to produce new ideas that will be discussed by peers. Academia has always been a *community* of ideas based on the confrontation of arguments and enquiries. It has been this way because this kind of human interaction produces the most benefits. But, in reality, academia appears more like a rat race. The point here is that it has become impossible to read everything of value – or just a reasonable selection of it – that is published in each our fields. The chance is high that we will lose track of some important contributions, new developments and occasions to produce better research. Moreover, in order to publish something, we are forced into ever higher degrees of specialisation. Consequently, we find ourselves locked in highly specific, tall and narrow ivory towers, with very little knowledge about the forest of ivory towers surrounding us.

If we take the question to another level, the problem is that publications are only one kind of social benefit that a society can expect from its higher education. Colleges and universities also have an *educational purpose*. They are supposed to offer valuable courses and consistent pedagogical follow-up. If we were completely rational, we would be forced to see teaching as a burden, time wasted for our research and publications. In Denmark where we work, the most efficient researchers are usually relieved of their teaching duties and this ‘burden’ then falls largely on the shoulders of young researchers, who actually need more time for their own research and cannot provide the quality of teaching normally associated with well-established professors. Moreover, while specialisation might be productive in the natural sciences (though there are good reasons to doubt this as well), specialisation within the humanities makes fertile points of contact between individual scholars and society ever harder to achieve.

In terms of the third social benefit – *contribution to wider society* – why should we bother writing popular articles, contributing to social debates, organising conferences open to a wider public, since these activities will not help us to get a position or gain recognition from our employers? As a result, society is losing some of its richness and the social benefit produced by universities is declining. In sum, the gap is increasing between researchers in their ivory towers and the rest of society. Without advocating for the return of the *intellectuals engagés* of the last century, it is still plausible to find it regrettable that academics in the humanities and social sciences are largely absent from the public scene.

Two further remarks: First of all, it should be recognised that we are all responsible for this situation. By trying to stand out from the crowd, we are raising the requirements for everyone else. It resembles what is known in game theory as the ‘prisoner’s dilemma’ or social coordination problem. What is rational to do according to immediate self-interest is collectively self-defeating; it is a so-called ‘smart for one, dumb for all’ logic. Secondly, *what can be done?* One solution raised by, among others, Alain de Botton consists of paying less attention to our relative positions in the publications pecking order.³ But the problem is that standing apart from the competition almost certainly means giving up on the chance of a decent academic position. In the existing system it does not seem to be a viable option. It simply clashes with *the structure of incentives* that academics face – to publish more than their competitors.

Other solutions include restricting the amount of working hours (which can be seen as a justification for incremental taxes on extra hours worked) or applying strong negative normative judgements to high achievers, justified by specific social conventions. It is uncertain whether the first option is enforceable since it is (1) difficult to evaluate the amount of hours effectively worked and (2) difficult to enforce such a restriction (especially in a context of international and decentralised competition). Regarding the second option, some uneasiness stems from its intrusive and indiscriminate character. Peer pressure of this kind could have a healthy impact, but it could also promote a harsh conformism and undermine the positive impact of competition, especially in an environment that pretends to be innovative.

These suggestions illustrate that there is no straightforward solution. A more workable option would be to value achievements and contributions other than publications and, thus, to expand the array of criteria for evaluating the contributions of a given academic. It would be even more desirable inasmuch as more of the social benefits of universities would be produced through *cooperation*, and not just competition. More cooperation among academics might bring about the more desirable scenario where fewer but better articles would be published, and at lower psycho-social costs. In order to realise this scenario, we need to move away from a common misconception about academic work, sometimes fostered by academics themselves: the idea of the lonely, secluded genius, developing his or her ideas in isolation, in silent communion with books and papers. As a knowledge producer, academia has always relied on the *exchange of ideas*, in dialogue, something which is currently being undermined by the extremely competitive behaviour propelled by a heavy reliance on individual production.

So, our contention is that combining the idea of the lonely genius with that of ‘more production equals better quality’ engenders the fatal notion that we should structure incentives so as to ‘squeeze as much out of those brainiacs as possible’. But consider: is it not plausible that a single article, carefully constructed through dialogue and criticism in academic forums, informed by several points of view and academic (sub-) disciplines, can be *better*, and contribute *more* (to both research and the public) than 10 highly specialised peer-reviewed articles, read only by those peer reviewers? Certainly, expanding the range of criteria will not (and should not) cancel out competition. It will not change the fact that some researchers will fare better than others, but it might result in an academia with better working conditions for those involved and, more importantly, fewer but more qualified articles. However, the current national and international standards for research evaluation give the universities no strong incentive to change the current situation. Hardly surprising; but it does confirm that this is a matter for political attention at the highest levels!

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Notes

- 1 Kinman, Gali et al. 2006. ‘The Well-being of the UK Academy, 1998-2004’, *Quality in Higher Education*, 12:1, pp.15-27
- 2 Frank, Robert. 1999. *Luxury Fever: Why Money Fails to Satisfy in an Era of Excess*. New York: The Free Press. pp.150-2
- 3 De Botton, Alain. 2004. *Status Anxiety*. New York: Vintage Books

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Share your views by posting a comment at www.iias.nl/newsletter-57.

Announcements

IIAS is pleased to collaborate with the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) who have collected a number of highlights “fresh from Southeast Asia” presented on this page and the next. The coordinator for this content is Jayati Bhattacharya. We hope to provide a similar news service from other regions of Asia in future issues of the Newsletter.

Report on the conference Inter-Asian Connections II

FOLLOWING UP ON THE 2008 Inter-Asian Connections conference inaugurated in Dubai, Inter-Asian Connections II was held in Singapore from 8-10 December 2010. It will be followed by Inter-Asian Connections III in Hong Kong in 2012. The Singapore event sustained the excitement evinced in the first event of exploring new frontiers of research in the connections, convergences and comparisons among societies in Asia.

The organizers of the series are the Asia Research Institute (ARI) and The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Division (HSS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS), The Hong Kong Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (HKIHSS) at the University of Hong Kong, and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) of New York. Scholars came from Asia, Europe, Australia and America to present papers and discuss the continuities, discontinuities and new connections that increasingly traverse the region. The event was organized into five two-day workshops, with several plenary sessions including a keynote speech, presentation of workshop goals and findings, and a special session to honor the 80th birthday of Professor Wang Gungwu, doyen of China-Southeast Asia scholarship and Professor at NUS. The five workshops and their chairs were

- Regional Knowledge Hubs in Asia: the Social Sciences and Humanities in Science and Technology Human Capital – V.V. Krishna (NUS) and Tim Turpin (University of Western Sydney)
- Inter-Asian Temple and Trust Networks within and out of Southeast Asia – Kenneth Dean (McGill University)
- How Asia Became Territorial – Itty Abraham (University of Texas at Austin) and See Seng Tan (S. Rajarantnam School of International Studies)
- Reproduction Migration in Asia – Biao Xiang (University of Oxford) and Mika Toyota (NUS)
- Old Histories, New Geographies: Contrapuntal Mobilities of Trade in Asia – Engseng Ho (Duke University) and Lakshmi Subramanian (Jamia Millia Islamia)

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Ackbar Abbas of the University of California, Irvine. He spoke on the topic of “‘Poor Theory’ and Asian Cultural Practices”, which addressed the relation in contemporary Asia between dislocated spaces – anachronisms, the confusion of progressive and retrograde, the dislocation of local and specific – and cultural practices like cinema, architecture, performances, and theory itself. Other plenary sessions dealt with ‘Electronic Media and Academic Interaction among Scholars in Asia’ with presentations by Paul H. Kratoska, NUS Press and Michael Duckworth, Hong Kong University Press, and a ‘Curriculum Development Workshop’ where workshop leaders Xiang Biao, Itty Abraham and Engseng Ho discussed the curriculum they have developed and taught on Asian connections and convergences in their home institutions.

The conference was deemed very successful by the participants. One observed that when academic research is forced to ‘follow the model of the fast factory, such ...intellectually intensive event is particularly welcomed’. Another noted that ‘[T]he interdisciplinary mix in our own workshop [is] instructive and stimulating, bringing some new insights’. Indeed, several reports expressed the desire to take back insights gained from exchanges with participants in other workshops at the plenary sessions to further explore these problems in their own workshops. We are hopeful that these questions can be pursued in many subsequent events that register the re-emergence of an interdependent, transnational Asia.

Conference details are available at <http://www.ssrc.org/pages/conference-on-inter-asian-connections-iisingsapore-december-8-10-2010>

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Kerdomnel Khmer Group

Preservation and Conservation of Cambodian Culture and Heritage



ADOPTING THE SLOGAN ‘Together We Can Protect’, young Cambodian researchers and foreign colleagues who are passionate about Cambodian culture and heritage, formed a group called KDNK or *Kerdomnel Khmer* (Khmer Heritage) in 2009. The group’s main purpose is to spread information about Cambodian and Southeast Asian culture to Cambodians through various media such as the KDNK’s website, newsletter and magazine. The group aims to document all activities related to the preservation and conservation of Cambodian culture and heritage.

Kerdomnel Khmer – Magazine of Arts and Archaeology, is a result of the hard work of Cambodian students, professors, professional artists from the fields of arts, archeology, history, culture, tourism and journalism. KDNK intends to protect and spread Cambodian culture and civilization, which have had a long and glorious history, and to make them known both in Cambodia and abroad. KDNK especially encourages Cambodians to understand the value of their national cultural heritage and protect it in the spirit of three important slogans: ‘If culture fades away, the nation is destroyed’, ‘Destroying culture is destroying national identity’, and ‘Preserving culture is preserving the national soul’. With *Kerdomnel Khmer Magazine*’s first issue, KDNK received letters of appreciation from His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni, king of Cambodia, and Prime Minister Hun Sen, as well as His Excellency Him Chhem, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts.

In 2010, KDNK started a new project, *The recording of the past ...throughout the French Protectorate Building in Cambodia*, providing research opportunities to both local and foreign students of archaeology and art history. Ten young archaeological students have been volunteering with KDNK. The group plans to organize conferences on Cambodian culture, history, epigraphy, arts, music, photography, architecture, tourism and other related areas. These activities will be held in selected local institutions and organizations in cooperation with the Royal University of Fine-Arts, Bophana Centre and IT Center. KDNK cooperates with both local and international institutes such as IT Center, Bophana Center, Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, University of Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III and Nalanda Sriwijaya Centre (ISEAS). In 2011, the group established the KDNK Foundation to promote the preservation and conservation of Khmer culture and heritage.

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‘Heritage’ and Singapore

THE RAPIDLY CHANGING SKYLINE of Singapore and its ever-increasing – and somewhat intimidating – concrete towers, apparently speak little of the nation’s tryst with the ideas of ‘heritage’. Though archaeological finds near Fort Canning reveal a fourteenth-century kingdom of Temasek, it is widely held that modern Singapore was the product of Sir Stamford Raffles establishing a port there in 1819. As a result, the heritage issues of Singapore revolve around the historical imprints of colonial times and various intangibles associated with events, ideas and memories of those times.

The cost of the rapid pace of its development and the visual effects of frequent alterations of lived spaces often leave the resident population in Singapore groping for images and objects which manifest and sensitise their sense of belonging to the land. The government, in spite of undertaking massive developmental plans, has in recent years been active in creating awareness among its people of the island’s past and its cultures. Singapore may now boast of having the largest number of well-maintained museums in Southeast Asia. The National Heritage Board of Singapore also encourages historical consciousness by promoting a series of historic sites, organising tours along ‘heritage trails’ as well as exhibitions on diverse aspects of cultural vibrancy and other related aspects.

The latest addition in this venture is a privately-owned but government endorsed enterprise: the state of the art ‘ArtScience Museum’ at Marina Bay Sands Casino which was opened by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 17 February 2011. The following day, the Foreign Minister of Singapore and patron of the exhibition, George Yeo inaugurated a stunning display of Tang treasures acquired from the Belitung shipwreck entitled “*Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*”. The fascinating collection of artefacts, including magnificent ceramics, brought to light historically significant cross-cultural exchanges dating back to ninth century C.E. Almost concurrently, two other exhibitions, “*Travelling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World*” and “*Genghis Khan: The Exhibition*”, were opened to the public.

In its recent efforts to promote an increasing number of museums, Singapore has seen highly profitable enterprises such as the two new casinos making efforts to demonstrate social commitment by establishing museums. This ties in well with the government’s desire to promote the concept of ‘heritage’ and historical consciousness among Singaporeans. The soon-to-be opened Maritime Xperiential Museum at Sentosa is another example of this trend. With the gathering momentum of ‘heritage tourism’, the need for ecological sustainability and a good number of World heritage sites in its vicinity, Singapore is taking this opportunity to promote both its tourism sector and its aspirations towards becoming a heritage city.

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The ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands

NUMBER 16 NOW AVAILABLE

MOUSSONS

Social Science Research on Southeast Asia
Recherche en sciences humaines sur l’Asie du Sud-Est



Un ensemble de / A set of

7 articles
par / by

Alice VITTRANT, Robert H. BARNES, Ramses AMER,
Aurore CANDIER, Christophe MUNIER-GAILLARD,
Nagata SHUICHI, Cheera THONGKRAJAI

1 note
par / by
Josiane CAUQUELIN

COMPTES RENDUS / BOOK REVIEWS

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George Town: A historic urban landscape in Southeast Asia

George Town, the capital of Penang, Malaysia, is now a World Heritage Site. How it was built and the way it should be conserved or developed are issues constantly contested as part of a discussion on the extent to which it is possible to acknowledge the contributions of diverse peoples, mostly migrants. The 'Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca', comprising the former British Straits Settlements ports of George Town and Melaka, were jointly listed by UNESCO in July 2008. Melaka dates from 1400 and has seen Portuguese, Dutch and British rule, whereas George Town, Penang, dates from 1786 and flourished in the era of British expansionism. Both cities illustrate the co-evolution of Asian family business and the shop-house form in Southeast Asia. The attainment of world heritage status for George Town was partly due to long-term, bottom-up lobbying by the Penang Heritage Trust and the arts education group Arts-Ed, as well as private conservation efforts. The listing is now celebrated with a month-long George Town Festival in July.



Nagore Sufi-shrine dating from 1801



Dragon dance in front of the Teochew Temple



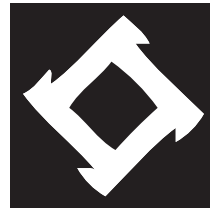
Cultural tourism at Armenian Street

Conservation is a challenge in a city that is under-regulated and hungry for private investment. At least now, the state leadership accepts that the city's 'Outstanding Universal Values' have to be protected. The first OUV is the city's built heritage or townscape consisting of several thousand double-storey shop-houses, studded with an East India Company fort, religious monuments, townhouses and bungalows, public buildings and mercantile offices. A special area plan for the two sites was drawn up in fulfilment of UNESCO requirements, but the semi-government George Town World Heritage Incorporated has lasting difficulty in employing architectural heritage expertise at local salaries to carry out monitoring and advisory functions. Furthermore, lax urban management has resulted in the proliferation of illegal swift-breeding, a threat that has depopulated entire historic towns across Southeast Asia.

The second OUV is the city's living heritage. Thousands of people live and work in George Town, and continue to observe their traditions and festivals. Recognising the importance of the local community, heritage NGOs have started to address the 'intangibles'. Revitalization of the local economy is the key to sustaining conservation efforts and community livelihoods. Another OUV is the multi-layered and plural history of Penang's trading port. Churches, mosques, as well as Hindu, Buddhist and Chinese temples clustered around an axis dubbed the 'Street of Harmony', illustrate the cultural diversity. Indeed, the long-term interaction between Nanyang (South Seas) Chinese and Indian Ocean diasporas is rich fodder for regional historians.

The historic urban landscape of George Town, with its extensive coastline and living streets, goes beyond the Western paradigm of preserving built heritage. Prof. Ken Taylor, member of AusHeritage rightly perceives that, 'The concept of cultural landscape in Asia [is] ...manifested in rural and urban settings and the inextricable role of intangible values in the relationship between people, place and identity'.

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Asian Studies Association of Australia Book Series



New and Forthcoming books

South Asia Series Published by Routledge

Series Editor: Peter Mayer (peter.mayer@adelaide.edu.au)

New

Peter Mayer, *Suicide and Society in India*

Southeast Asia Series Published by National University Press/ The University of Hawaii Press and NIAS/KITLV

Series Editor: Howard Dick (h.dick@unimelb.edu.au)

New

Kurt Stenross, *Madurese Seafarers: Prahus, Timber and Illegality on the Margins of Indonesia*

Forthcoming

Katharine McKinnon, *Professionals in the Hills: The Politics of Aid in Northern Thailand*

East Asia Series Published by Routledge

Series Editors: Morris Low (m.low@uq.edu.au) and Tessa Morris-Suzuki (tessa.morris-suzuki@anu.edu.au)

Forthcoming in 2012

Romit Dasgupta, *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities*

Women in Asia Series Published by Routledge

Series Editor: Lenore Lyons (lenore.lyons@uwa.edu.au)

Forthcoming

Kabita Chakraborty, *Young Muslim Women in India*

Ayxem Eli, *Women in China's Muslim Northwest: Gender, Social Hierarchy and Ethnicity*

Kyungja Jung, *Practising Feminism in South Korea*

Emma Fulu, *Intimate Partner Violence in the Maldives*

Jongmi Kim, *New Femininities and Consumption in South Korea*

Larissa Sandy, *Women and Sex Work in Cambodia*

Kay Schaffer and Xianlin Song, *Women's Writing in Post-Socialist China*

For more information about the ASAA please visit our website at: www.asaa.asn.au

Local History, from the Outside

The overarching theme of the workshop "Local History, From the Outside: Using Foreign Sources in Asian History" held by the University of Tokyo from 11-12 December 2010, was to explore the possibilities of using European language sources for writing Asian history from a local perspective. It envisaged opening new approaches in the conventional historiography on Japan as practiced by domestic historians. Bringing together scholars from different countries and various fields of research, Matsukata Fuyuko (Historiographical Institute, University of Tokyo) spearheaded the workshop.

Three sessions were chaired by Patrizia Carioti (L'Orientale, University of Naples). The first session dealt with trade and exchange in South and Southeast Asia. Ilioka Naoko (ISEAS, Singapore) explored trading environment in northern Vietnam during the mid-17th century. Wada Ikuko (Kyoto University) looked at the Dutch East India Company's slave trade and local slave market in India during the 17th and 18th centuries, while Shimada Ryuto (Seinan Gakuin University, Fukuoka)

examined the economics of gift exchange between the Dutch East India Company and the court of Ayutthaya. Eric Tagliacozzo (Cornell University) discussed the narcotics trade in insular Southeast Asia through the 'long nineteenth century'.

The second session focused on Japan in the Late-Edo period. Here, Ueno Akiko (Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History and Human History) and Kiri Paramore (University of Leiden) discussed the Tokugawa state's efforts to institutionalize knowledge. Fukuoka Mariko (University of Tokyo) described how nationals of non-treaty nations, such as Germans and Chinese, took advantage of their non-treaty status to conduct business at Japanese treaty ports.

In the third session, Martha Chalkin (University of Pittsburg) discussed the ivory trade and its long-term influence on ecology, economy and material culture throughout the world, and also the usefulness of rich European archives for the study of this trade. Robert Hellyer (Lake Forest University) introduced

British and American archives and analyzed Japan's nineteenth-century foreign trade in the context of a larger transpacific commerce. Adam Clulow (Monash University) compared Dutch encounters with two powerful Asian states, Mughal India and Tokugawa Japan during the early 17th century.

Although those papers most often relied on conventional Eurocentric views and European and American archival materials, the researchers also intended to look at reactions and transformations of local societies from a global perspective. Leonard Blussé (Leiden University) summed up the workshop and Haneda Masashi, Director of the Institute of Oriental Culture (University of Tokyo) pointed out the importance of Chinese, Korean and Southeast Asian archives and encouraged a follow-up meeting in the near future.

For workshop details, see <http://haneda.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/english/eurasia/local-history-from-the-outside.html>.

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ICAS News

When 5000 Asia scholars meet: *The AAS-ICAS Joint Conference in Honolulu*



Paul van der Velde and Martina van den Haak

THE CONFERENCE KICKED OFF with a reception on the lawn of the Hilton Hawaiian Village Beach Resort & Spa on 30 March, attended by more than a third of all participants and exhibitors. The Lieutenant Governor of Hawai'i and representatives of the University of Hawai'i, the East-West Center, AAS and ICAS held welcoming speeches after which the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble performed. An *aloha* atmosphere took possession of all present and this atmosphere also reigned during the whole of the four-day joint conference at the Hawai'i Convention Center, which turned out to be the biggest Asia scholars meeting ever with an attendance of more than 5000 delegates.

It is too early as yet to assess the impact of the conference. We will do that at a later stage when we have received feedback from the participants and exhibitors. In this contribution we will provide the full citations of the ICAS Book Prize winners, as during the awards ceremony we only read out summaries of them. But first we will quote the citation of the AAS for Exceptional Service in Asian Studies which was given by the AAS to Wim Stokhof, founding director of the International Institute for Asian Studies and co-founder of the International Convention of Asia Scholars.

Top:
Visitors listening to the speeches at the welcome reception

Right:
Performance by the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble during the welcome reception



The Association for Asian Studies Citation for Exceptional Service in Asian Studies

The AAS wishes to acknowledge the distinguished contributions of Dr. Willem Arnoldus Stokhof to contemporary Asian Studies. Educated as a linguist at the University of Amsterdam, Dr. Stokhof has trained a generation of students for research in the languages and cultures of Indonesia. Dr. Stokhof has also pioneered internationalized forums for Asian Studies and scholarly cooperation. He served as Secretary to the Committee for Advanced Asia Studies of the European Science Foundation. He was founder-secretary of the European Alliance for Asian Studies and the initiator of the Annual Asia-Europe Workshop Series in Singapore. He was the founding director of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden and Amsterdam. Under Stokhof's tireless direction, the IIAS heightened cooperation between Asia- and Western-based scholars, and promoted new, collaborative models of research. Perhaps more relevant to our current gathering (*the AAS-ICAS joint conference, ed.*), Stokhof was the co-founder of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), a conference forum that has also strengthened ties between scholars in Asia and the West.

Stokhof has also fostered international co-operation in Islamic Studies. He was the founding director of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in Leiden. He directed the Indonesian-Netherlands Co-operation in Islamic Studies, training more than thirty Ph.D.s from Indonesia. He also chaired the Indonesian Linguistic Development Project (ILDEP), and directed the INPA training program for upgrading Indonesia's governors and *bupatis* in co-operation with the ministries of Interior Affairs of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

In recognition of his visionary contributions, unparalleled in their influence, the Association for Asian Studies honors and thanks Dr. Stokhof.

In the next issue of The Newsletter we will come back to the AAS-ICAS Joint Conference. In the meanwhile, take a look at the more than 600 pictures taken by a professional conference photographer at <http://www.vreeburgavservices.nl>.

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ICAS Book Prize 2011

The ICAS Book Prize, now in its fourth edition, saw a steep rise in the number of books submitted. We received no less than 200 books from 45 publishers in the field of Asian studies. The IBP 2011 Reading Committee consisted of Anand Yang (Chair) and Manuela Ciotti, Derek Heng, Alex McKay and Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce. The prizes were presented at the Award ceremony in the Hawai'i Convention Center in Honolulu on 1 April 2011, where also the prizes of the AAS were awarded.

IBP 2011 Social Sciences winner



URADYN E. BULAG
Collaborative Nationalism.
The Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010

The history of Inner Asia has been shaped by the tripartite interaction of China, Tibet, and Mongolia, and in the light of modern Chinese state policies towards its "minority groups" *Collaborative Nationalism* is concerned with 'reconsidering the question of the political in ethnopolitics'. China's nationalising project is aimed at a collaborative nationalism, and this work is essentially an examination of the politics of friendship. Central to this are the competing visions of Chinggis Khan, whose achievements have been contested and appropriated to serve the interests of different regions and ethnic groups. Bulag examines these issues in a stimulating, even impassioned exploration of the levels of friendship and association between ethnic groups, centralising Mongolia in Inner Asian history and advancing the concept of "collaborative nationalism" as a device through which to understand the actualities of inter-ethnic relationships. We are pleased to award the ICAS Book Prize 2011 to Uradyn Bulag for his highly original work, well grounded in both Asian and European sources, which will inspire students and specialists alike to rethink approaches to the region and to the analysis of national identities.

IBP 2011 Humanities winner



STEIN TØNNESSON
Vietnam 1946: How the War Began
University of California Press, 2009

It is immediately apparent that *Vietnam 1946: How the War Began* is an important book. Tønnesson argues that this was not merely an ideological conflict, as has hitherto been regarded and understood, but one that was first and foremost the result of geo-political blunders and misreading by all parties involved during the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly, he argues that the conflict could have been prevented, and concludes by examining how each of the key figures involved might have acted to prevent war. One of the great strengths of *Vietnam 1946* is that it is the product of several decades of research and reflection. It carries the authority of an author who has closely studied both the available sources and the individuals involved in the decision-making processes. We are pleased to award the IBP 2011 Humanities to Stein Tønnesson for his compelling narrative that ultimately recognises the limits of historical enquiry, for important records remain unavailable.

IBP 2011 Colleagues' Choice winner

More than 5000 votes were cast by Asia scholars in this third edition of the Colleagues' Choice award. The winner received 2000 votes. It clearly shows that social networks are becoming increasingly important in the life of academics. They increase their visibility not only in the field but also in society at large.



ALEXANDER HUANG
Chinese Shakespeares:
Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange
Columbia University Press, 2009

The Chinese appreciation of Beethoven is well known: of Shakespeare, less so. *Chinese Shakespeares* is an original and engaging study of the Chinese adoption of the English language's greatest playwright. This work may be enjoyed in its own right, but is also a study of both Chinese cultural engagement with the West and of cross-cultural communication in theatre and film. Shakespeare's works largely escaped a colonial context in their early manifestations in China, and were often imbued with localised meanings that enabled their partial indigenisation. Shakespeare continues

to be interpreted and reinterpreted in China for both local and global audiences and Huang's study of the various manifestations and meanings, translations and performances, will be the standard text in the field for years to come. We are pleased to award the IBP Colleagues' Choice Award for a study which draws on a wide range of sources, and is a significant contribution to literary studies, cultural history, and studies of globalisation.

IBP 2011 Best Ph.D.s

This year we received nearly 40 theses which represented a strong increase over previous years. The IBP Best Ph.D. 2011 Reading Committee consisted of 2009 winners Birgit Abels and Iza Hussin.

IBP 2011 Best Ph.D. in the Social Sciences



IMRAN BIN TAJUDEEN
Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Emporia in Nusantara: Historic Adaptation and Contemporary Accentuations
National University of Singapore Thesis, 2009

Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Emporia in Nusantara is a rich and nuanced study of urban architectural forms in the ports of Austronesian Southeast Asia. In particular, the port cities of Nusantara have been shaped by both the regional diaspora and intra-regional trading and shipping networks, making them a uniquely dynamic – and challenging – environment for study. Tajudeen's reading offers a number of useful interpretive interventions into the scholarship on native architecture, not only reading 'artefacts as texts', but 'texts on artefacts', incorporating the dimension of time both in terms of the 'predicament of ruination' and in terms of the writing and transformation of history in heritage and preservation projects. Tajudeen's work offers a new reading of the Asian urban built environment as a vernacular practice, continually being interpreted and reconstructed by local, state and regional actors, and therefore constantly in need of a creative and responsive scholarly approach. For theoretical originality, contributions of data from the field and the potential for advancing Asian studies scholarship, we are very pleased to award Imran bin Tajudeen the ICAS Best Thesis Prize in the Social Sciences.

IBP 2011 Best Ph.D. in the Humanities



CARMEN PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ
A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting
Leiden University thesis, 2009

A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting presents a meticulous and well thought-out analysis of Iranian nineteenth-century visual representations of identity and their aesthetics. In doing so, González builds on a large and hitherto understudied, if not undiscovered, body of photographs that were taken through the lenses of both Iranian and non-Iranian photographers. By cross-examining nineteenth-century Iranian portrait photography and the rich Iranian portrait painting tradition, she is able to pinpoint the subtleties that underlie the visual negotiation of a distinctly Iranian identity that is alert, in a critical way, to European influence. What makes her approach so valuable and fresh is González's ability to unveil the processes of the creation of meaning through photographic art in nineteenth-century Iran. She does so by contextualizing portrait photography within its historical and cultural frameworks of reference. Such a project requires a full-fledged theoretical framework that is informed by several disciplines including Islamic art history, history of photography, post-colonial studies, and world art history that she has carefully crafted. We are pleased to award Carmen Pérez González the ICAS Best Thesis Prize in the Humanities for this extraordinary piece of Ph.D. work that will certainly have repercussions beyond world art and Iranian Studies.

IIAS News

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to work on an important piece of research in the social sciences and humanities with a Postdoctoral Fellowship. The deadline for application is 1 October 2011.

We are particularly looking for researchers focusing on one of the Institute's three thematic clusters: 'Asian Cities', 'Heritage and Social Agency in Asia', and 'Global Asia'. However, some positions will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed.

ASIAN CITIES

The Asian Cities cluster deals with cities and urban cultures with related issues of flows of ideas and goods, cosmopolitanism, urban cultural diversity and connectivity, framing the existence of vibrant 'civil societies' and political urban microcultures. It also deals with such issues as urban development in the light of the diversity of urban societies.

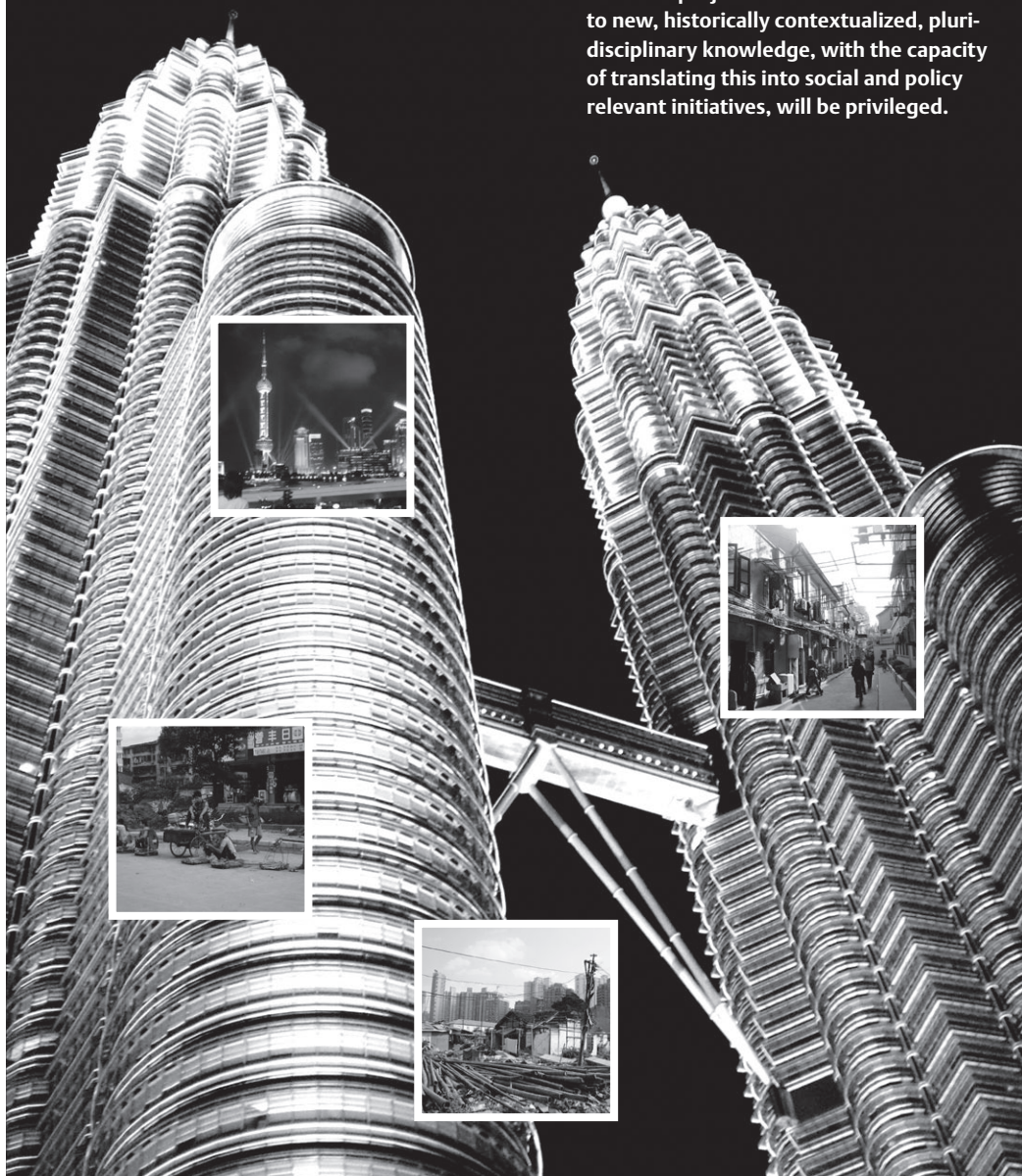
HERITAGE AND SOCIAL AGENCY

The Heritage and Social Agency in Asia cluster explores the notion of heritage as it evolved from a Europe-originated concept associated with architecture to incorporate a broader diversity of cultures and values.

GLOBAL ASIA

The Global Asia cluster addresses Asia's role in the various globalization processes. It examines examples of and issues related to multiple, transnational intra-Asian interactions as well as Asia's projection in the world. Historical experiences as well as more contemporary trends will be addressed.

Research projects that can contribute to new, historically contextualized, interdisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged.



Two new employees

IIAS welcomes two new employees who will help reinforce the communication and editorial strategy of the institute.



Succeeding interim managing editor Marie Lenstrup, **Sonia Zweegers** joins the IIAS as the new Newsletter editor and will start her position on May 15. Sonia holds an MA in Cultural Anthropology.



Sandra Dehue will primarily work on IIAS corporate information as editor and communication officer. Sandra holds an MA in Chinese Studies. With Thomas Voorter (MA) as Communication Coordinator and Webmaster, this brings the new communication team at full strength.

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IIAS Research

Themes and Projects

Asian Cities

THE POSTCOLONIAL 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 interdisciplinary 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

Heritage

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

Global Asia

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

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 work-shops 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,
c.cullen@nri.org.uk, and **Harm Beukers,**
h.beukers@hum.leidenuniv.nl

ENERGY PROGRAMME ASIA – EPA

Established in September 2007, this programme addresses the domestic and geopolitical aspects of energy security for China and the European Union. The geopolitical aspects involve analysing the effects of competition for access to oil and gas resources and the security of energy supply among the main global consumer countries of the EU and China. The domestic aspects involve analysing domestic energy demand and supply, energy efficiency policies, and the deployment of renewable energy resources. Within this programme scholars from the Netherlands and China will visit each other's institutes and will jointly publish their research outcomes. Institutes involved: Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

Sponsored by: KNAW China Exchange Programme and IIAS.

Coordinator: Mehdi Parvizi Amineh,
m.p.amineh@uva.nl

SENSHI SOSHO

This project, funded and coordinated by the Philippus Cortis Foundation, aims to translate a maximum of 6 official Japanese publications of the series known as 'Senshi Sosho' 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

Networks



Harvested jatropha

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 SOUTH EAST ASIAN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN DEX

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

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

GENDER, MIGRATION AND FAMILY IN EAST AND SOUTH EAST 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, m.lu@iias.nl

JATROPH RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (JARAK)

IIAS has become partner in a new network called JARAK, the Jatropha Research and Knowledge network on claims and facts concerning socially sustainable jatropha production in Indonesia. Jatropha is crop that seems very promising: 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.

Coordinator: Dr. Jacqueline Vel,
j.a.c.vel@law.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

Academic Events

For details of all events, see www.iias.nl/events.

10–11 June 2011

Workshop Reading Matters: Chinese and Western Traditions of Interpreting the Classics
Leiden, the Netherlands

20–25 June 2011

IIAS Summer Programme: Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives
Leiden, the Netherlands

24–27 July 2011

Roundtable Climate Change and City Development: Coping with Sea Water Rising
Palembang, Indonesia

20–21 October 2011

Roundtable Science and Nature in Europe and Asia: Scientific Traditions and New Technologies
Leiden, the Netherlands

November 2011

Roundtable Postcolonial Dialogue(s): Crossed and Parallel Identities in Former Colonizing and Colonized Societies
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

15–16 December 2011

Conference EUforAsia, Leiden, the Netherlands

Senshi Sosho



IIAS Fellows

Central Asia

Dr Irina Morozova

Humboldt University Berlin, Germany. Sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation
The History of Perestroika in Central Asia (social transformation in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia 1982-1991)
1 Sep 2010 – 31 Dec 2011

East Asia

Dr Mehdi P. Amineh

Programme Coordinator of Energy Programme Asia (EPA). Sponsored by IIAS and KNAW/CASS
Domestic and Geopolitical Energy Security for China and the EU
1 Sep 2007 – 1 Sep 2011

Dr Gregory Bracken

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

Prof. Dennis Cheng

Department of Chinese Literature, National Taiwan University, Republic of China. IIAS Professor, holder of the European Chair of Chinese Studies; Sponsored by IIAS, BICER of the Ministry of Education Taiwan
1 Sep 2010 – 1 Sep 2011

Prof. Jae-mok Choi

Department of Philosophy, Yeungnam University, Korea
Japan Meiji Youmeigaku and Modern Korea
1 Mar 2011 – 28 Feb 2012

Dr Won Kyung Choi

Academy of East Asian Studies, Sungkyunkwan University, Korea
Korean Intellectuals' Expanding Perceptions of the World in the 19th Century
1 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2012

Dr Kimie Hara

University of Waterloo, Canada
Beyond San Francisco: The Post-World War II Japanese Peace Treaty and the Regional Conflicts in East Asia
15 Mar – 15 Aug 2011

Dr Masae Kato

University of Amsterdam, 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 Apr 2012

Huiwen Koo

Department of Economics, National Taiwan University, Taiwan
Trade Regulation in the 17th Century Japan: A Study of the Taxation Trade and Itowappu
1 Aug – 31 Aug 2011

Ms Takako Kondo

Department of Japan Studies, Leiden University, the Netherlands. Sponsored by Asiascape and IIAS.
Translating (Japanese) Contemporary Art
1 Sep 2009 – 31 Aug 2012

Dr Nikky Lin

National Science Council, Republic of China (Taiwan)
The Return of Modernism: A Comparative Study between Modernist Poetry in Taiwan and Mainland China in the post-1949 era
1 Feb 2011 – 1 Feb 2012

Prof. Ayami Nakatani

Okayama University, Japan
A comparative study of the policies and practices concerning the reconciliation of work and private lives in Japan and the Netherlands
1 Apr – 30 Sep 2011

Prof. Tak-Wing Ngo

IIAS Extraordinary Chair at the Faculty of History and Arts, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands
History of Asia
1 May 2008 – 1 May 2012

Prof. Takeharu Okubo

Meiji University, Japan
The Influence of Dutch Jurisprudence in late 19th century Japan
1 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2012

Prof. Carla Risseeuw

Leiden University, the Netherlands
Ageing in Asia and Europe
1 Jan 2008 – 1 Apr 2011

Prof. Hikaru Sugawara

Senshu University, Japan
Reconsidering the political thought of Japan and "Dutch Learning": Nishi Amane and C.W.Opzoomer
30 May 2011 – 31 Mar 2012

Prof. Togo Tsukahara

Kobe University, Japan
Global warming and Parasites: Historical research on tropical medicine by means of GIS (Geographic Information System)
1 Apr – 30 Sep 2011

South Asia

Rene Barendse

Independent scholar
Portugal's Asian empire in the 1630's
1 Aug 2010 – 1 Aug 2011

Dr Ana Dragojlovic

The Australian National University, Australia
Indisch genealogy and forms of relatedness: rethinking diaspora and citizenship
1 Jun – 30 Sep 2011

Marloes van Houten

-Conflict Impact, Social Capital and Resilience in the local communities of Nepal's Mid-Western Hills -Culture (sports, arts and rituals) and its role in trauma healing processes (on the individual level) and reconciliation of groups
1 Jan – 30 Jun 2011

Dr Annu Jalais

Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, the Netherlands
Religion, Community, and the Working Classes of Bengal
1 May – 31 Jul 2011

Dr Duncan McDuie-Ra

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
The competing and contradictory dynamics of transnationalism: a view from Northeast India
28 Feb – 22 Jun 2011

Dr Dipika Mukherjee

Negotiating Languages and Forging Identities: Surinamese-Indian Women in the Netherlands
1 Sep – 31 Oct 2011

Dr Saraju Rath

Independent scholar
Scanning, Preservation, and Transliteration of Selected Manuscripts of the Taittirya Tradition
5 Jan 2004 – 1 Apr 2012

Dr Ellen Raven

Leiden University, the Netherlands.
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

Dr Rituparna Roy

Independent scholar
The Aftermath of Partition on the Bengal Border: A Comparative Study of English & Bangla Partition novels
1 Sep 2009 – 1 Apr 2012

Dr Alexander Stolyarov

Institute of Oriental Studies of the RAS
Early Medieval North Indian Copper-plate Land Grants
1 Jul – 15 Aug 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 Eriko Aoki

Faculty of Sociology, Ryukoku University, Japan
An Anthropological Study of Changes in Religious Life in Central Flores, Eastern Indonesia
1 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2012

Ms Yetty Haning

Centre for Studies & Advocation of Human Rights of Nusa Cendana University, Indonesia
Timor Sea Border Issues
1 Sep 2008 – 1 Apr 2012

Mitch Hendriks

University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
1 May – 1 Aug 2011

Dr Irina Katkova

St.Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russia
St. Petersburg collection of Malay letters of Dutch East Indian Company
1 Aug – 31 Aug 2011

Prof. Su Fang Ng

Department of English, University of Oklahoma, USA
Global Renaissance: Early Modern Classicism and Empire from the British Isles to the Malay Peninsula
1 Jun – 30 Jun 2011

Prof. Gerard Persoon

IIAS Extraordinary Chair, Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Leiden University, the Netherlands
Environment and Development: indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia
1 Jul 2009 – 1 Jul 2014

Dr Imran bin Tajudeen

National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore
Mosques as colonial heritage in the former Netherlands East Indies
1 Jul 2010 – 1 Jul 2011

Colophon

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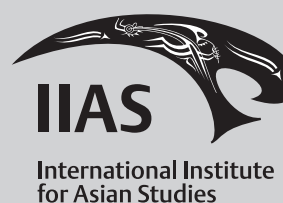
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IIAS Extraordinary Chair

Gerard Persoon 'Environment (and development) Southeast Asia' Extraordinary Chair at the Faculty of Social Science, Leiden University 1 July 2009–1 July 2014.
Tak-Wing Ngo 'History of Asia' Extraordinary Chair at the Faculty of History and Arts, Erasmus University of Rotterdam 1 May 2008–1 May 2012.



The David Collection in Copenhagen

The David Collection was founded in 1945 by C. L. David as a private museum in his townhouse in the center of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Joachim Meyer



C. L. DAVID (1878-1960), A PROMINENT ATTORNEY, had begun to collect Danish early modern art and European 18th-century fine and decorative art in the 1910s. In this last field, he was aided by directors from the Danish Museum of Art and Design, who gradually also guided him to another field that had previously attracted little interest in Denmark: Islamic art. Since David had especially devoted himself to European porcelain and faience, it was natural for him to first and foremost emphasize ceramics in his acquisitions in the Islamic sphere, made mainly from art dealers in Paris and through Middle Eastern channels. The Islamic part of David's collection was, however, still rather modest at the time of his death in 1960.

A bachelor and childless, C. L. David left his townhouse and works of art to a private foundation, along with financial means that made it possible to expand his collections. Unlike many other private collectors, David had been quite open to the idea of developing the museum that he had founded. From the 1970s, a decision was consequently made to place increasing emphasis on expanding the Islamic holdings. The Islamic Collection has grown to become not only the museum's most important, with over 4,000 objects, but also Scandinavia's most significant in its field. Today it is considered among the ten most important Islamic collections in the Western world. In 2003, the museum began publishing the English-language *Journal of the David Collection*, which deals solely with Islamic art and uses the museum's own holdings as its point of departure.

Following the museum's refurbishment and reinstallation of the collections in 2009, the Islamic Collection is now presented in a new, contemporary setting, enhanced by digital and other modern techniques used to elucidate the objects on display. The other collections were also reinstalled. Chinoiserie plays a central role in the Collection of European 18th-Century Art, among other things in its holdings of fine, early porcelain from Meissen and various French manufactories, and in pieces made in the Far East for a European clientele. This is a theme that is also linked with the Islamic Collection.

The Islamic Collection

The Islamic Collection has been built up in keeping with the classical pattern for Western collections of this kind. It embodies works of art from Spain in the west to India in the east, but not works from Sub-Saharan Africa or Southeast Asia. In addition, there is a small group of objects made by Muslims in China or for local Muslim communities. Chronologically, the collection ranges from works dating to shortly after the advent of Islam to the middle of the 19th century. Within this geographic and chronological span, the collection reveals both the many artistic links and the various culturally and ethnically conditioned differences that characterize works of art from the enormous area where Islam has been the dominant religion. The collection encompasses all types of materials. Since objects that are sensitive to light – textiles, miniature paintings, and calligraphic leaves – are displayed together with those made of sturdier materials, the lighting is subdued throughout the exhibition area. The museum holds numerous masterpieces, such as

a Spanish Umayyad ivory casket from c. 970 and a Fatimid rock-crystal ewer from around the year 1000. Among the internationally most important groups is early Iranian and Iraqi glass from the 9th-10th century. The fine holdings of ceramics from Iran and Syria from the 12th and 13th centuries include significant works acquired during the founder's own lifetime.

As the small rooms of 19th-century buildings such as C. L. David's home, now home to the museum, make it impossible to exhibit large objects such as carpets, a decision was made at an early stage not to collect this characteristic type of Islamic art. The museum consequently has only a modest collection of carpets, and they are either of small size or are fragments of larger carpets. It has, however, been possible to build up a fine collection of woven textiles, including a unique Il-Khanid group from the 13th-14th century. Il-Khanid art is rich in Far Eastern motifs such as the phoenix and peony, combined in eclectic fashion with other elements that are more typically Islamic. But the advanced technique used in making these Il-Khanid textiles also often bears witness to very direct ties to China. In many cases, it is probable that the museum's textiles were made in China or by weavers of Chinese descent who had been taken prisoner by the Mongol world conquerors.

India

Although the Islamic armies had already reached the Indian subcontinent at the beginning of the 8th century, the earliest works of art in the David Collection with links to Indian culture were made in Afghanistan in the 11th-12th century under the Ghaznavids and Ghurids. Indian art does, however, play a significant role in the Islamic Collection. Examples of printed fabrics and woven textiles, *bidri* ware, and bronzes both large and small come from the early Islamic and Deccan sultanates. From the heyday of the Mughal Empire, the David Collection has a number of fine miniature paintings from Akbar's reign, objects of rock crystal, rare items in painted glass, and several refined works of art with mother-of-pearl inlays from Gujarat. The many pieces of jewelry encrusted with precious stones, enamel work, and miniatures are testimony that the decline of the Mughal court was countered by an artistic flowering at the courts in cities such as Jaipur, Lucknow, and Bundi. Work by Company school painters is also represented. As in the rest of the Islamic Collection, these works of art are accompanied by coins, which provide very concrete historical and artistic testimony to a highly developed Islamic culture.

The Islamic Collection moreover features a number of special galleries. The miniature gallery's cabinets with drawers enable the visitor to make a closer study of a large selection of Indian miniature paintings. This is also where a few of the one hundred Rajput paintings that were originally collected by the Danish anthropologist Werner Jakobsen (1912-1979) are to be found. Although Rajput painting is peripheral in an Islamic context, it was natural in Denmark for this group to find its final home in the David Collection.

Joachim Meyer
David Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark
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Top left: The gallery devoted to Mughal India.

Top right: Miniature from a copy of the *Ramayana*. 'Sita Shies Away from Hanuman, Believing He is Ravana in Disguise'. Northern India; 1594. Leaf: 37.8 x 25.6 cm. Inv. no. 68/1998. The Mughal emperor Akbar was known for his tolerance and curiosity about other religions. He had holy Hindu scriptures translated into Persian, and in 1594 presented his mother with the magnificent copy of the *Ramayana* from which this miniature comes.

Inset above: Dish of colorless glass, decorated with enamel and gilded. Northern India; c. 1700. Diam: 28.4 cm. Inv. no. 37/1999. The flowers on the dish were contoured on the inside with gold and filled in with red and yellow enamel, while the outside was painted solely in yellow. This produces a kind of three-dimensional effect that is characteristic of much of painted Mughal glass art.

Right: Left half of a lampas-woven textile, silk and gilded paper. China or the eastern Islamic area; first half of 14th century. 228 x 63.5 cm. Inv. no. 40/1997. The use of paper rather than animal substrate for the 'gold thread' indicates that the textile was woven in the eastern part of the Mongol empire. Together with a number of other lengths of cloth that are found today in the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar, this piece originally made up part of the walls of a tent or canopy.

Bottom right: Dagger with gilded bronze hilt, set with rubies. India, Vijayanagar or Deccan; mid-16th century. L: 42 cm. Inv. no. 36/1997. The hilt's masterful composition of various animals engaged in battle was clearly influenced by Hindu art. Sultan Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur (1558-1579) was depicted several times in contemporary miniatures with a dagger similar to this one. It is uncertain whether the dagger was made in the Deccan or was taken as booty from Vijayanagar, which the leading Deccan sultans conquered in the battle of Talikota in 1565.

