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IIAS

International Institute
for Asian Studies

theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

61
Swiss photographic
collections on Asia



Preserving
histories



Reviving
cultural
identity



Revealing stories
from the past



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The Focus 'pull-out' supplement

When you understand where you come from and the environment around you, you can take the future into your hands and contribute to a better destiny. Guest editors Paul Bucherer-Dietschi and Anke Schürer-Ries introduce the photographic collections on Asia in Swiss archives, comment on their significance to research and cultural heritage, and reflect on the technical and methodological aspects of building and maintaining such collections.

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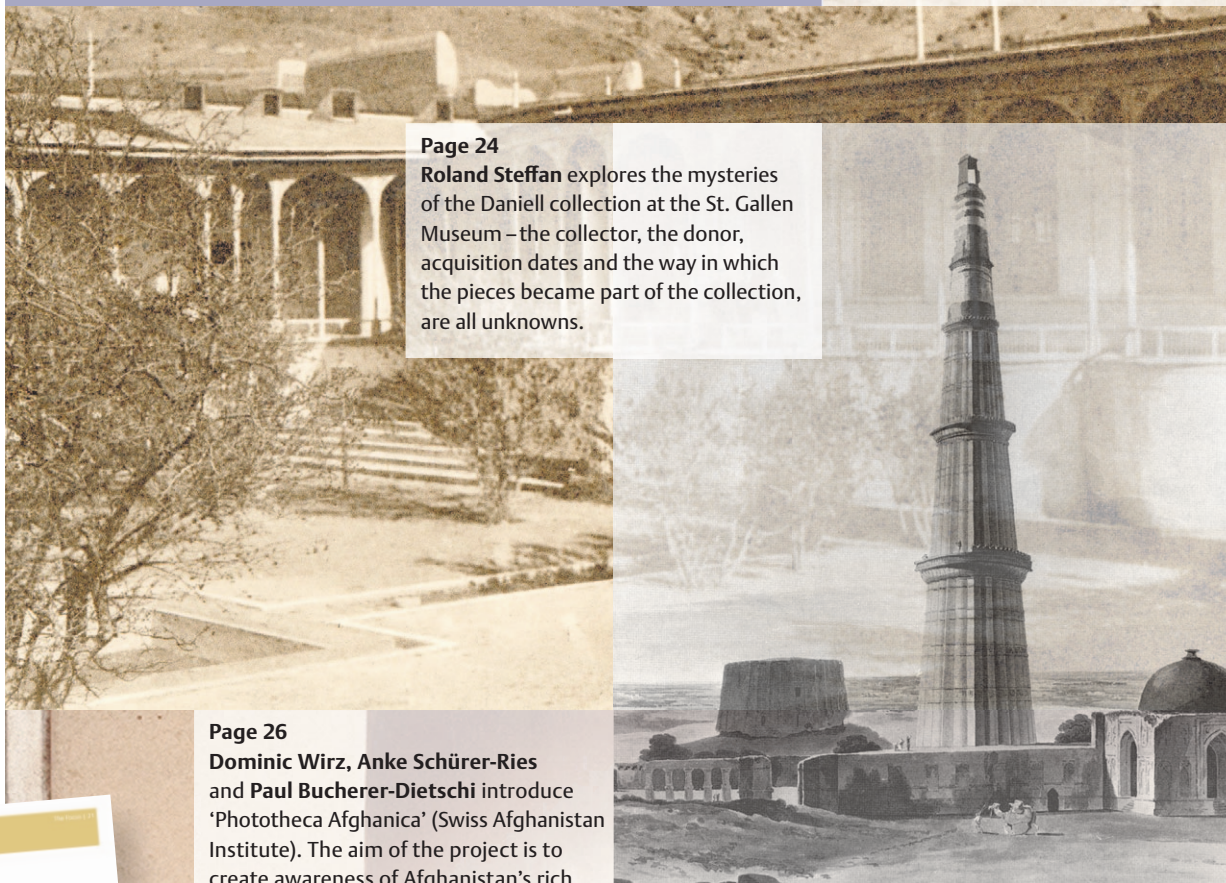
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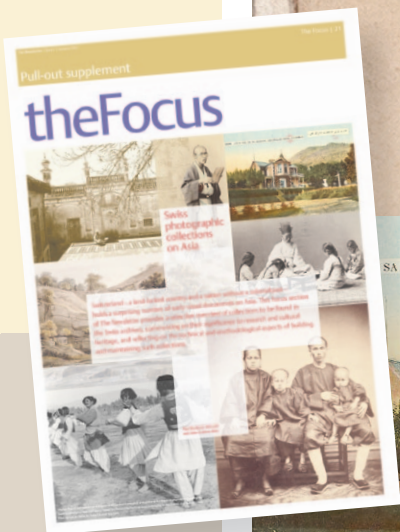
The Focus Swiss photographic collections on Asia

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Guest editors **Paul Bucherer-Dietschi** and **Anke Schürer-Ries** provide a selective overview of collections of visual documents on Asia, to be found in Swiss archives, thereby commenting on their significance to research and cultural heritage, and reflecting on the technical and methodological aspects of building and maintaining such collections.

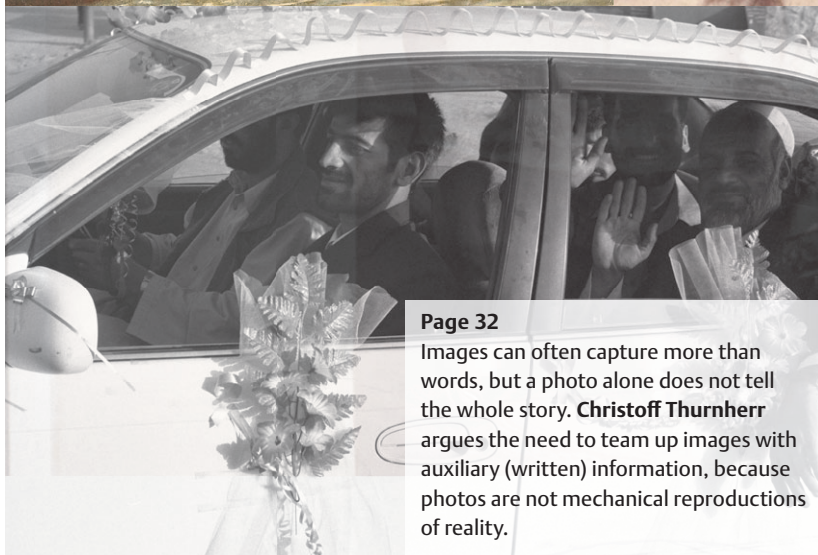


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Roland Steffan explores the mysteries of the Daniell collection at the St. Gallen Museum – the collector, the donor, acquisition dates and the way in which the pieces became part of the collection, are all unknowns.

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Guy Thomas and **Anke Schürer-Ries** of Basel Mission/Mission 21 show how historical, but also modern digitised and born-digital images, have brought about a want for access to, and understanding of, the image as a key icon of cultural heritage.



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Images can often capture more than words, but a photo alone does not tell the whole story. **Christoff Thurnherr** argues the need to team up images with auxiliary (written) information, because photos are not mechanical reproductions of reality.



Page 34
Thomas Psota discusses how ethnographic artefacts are commonly found partnered with illustrations. The early hand-produced images were commonly substituted with photography once the technology was introduced and developed in the 19th century.

Calling all newsletter editors!

It is a busy time for the ICAS Secretariat; the countdown to next year's conference in Macao has begun. The deadline for papers, panels and roundtables recently passed and an impressive 1500 proposals were submitted. Furthermore, more than 25 dissertations and 100 books from globally renowned publishers have already been entered for the ICAS Book Prize 2013, with the deadline for contributions ending on 15 October 2012 – so there is still some time to make sure your publication is included and to take a shot at one of the 5 awards!

Sonja Zweegers

AS THE EDITOR of one of the international newsletters dedicated to Asian studies, I thought ICAS 8 in Macao would be the perfect occasion to organise a roundtable discussion on the state of these newsletters: resources, submissions, editorial boards, hardcopy printing, online presence, distribution, and so on. As an editor of a newsletter you are faced with an array of wonderful opportunities and quite a few dilemmas – my hope is that a number of my peers and colleagues will join me in exploring some of these facets. Eventually we may even help each other with a few of the quandaries, and expand the possibilities of our chosen medium.

So, I am calling all Asian studies newsletter editors to please contact me about joining the roundtable that I am putting together for ICAS 8. Send me an email at iasnews@ias.nl and let me know your thoughts about possible topics, and in which ways you would like to contribute to the discussion.

During the conference in Macao we will also be producing a daily ICAS newsletter, in cooperation with one of Macao's morning newspapers, and a large team of on-the-scene reporters. In addition, IAS will host a special booth in the exhibition hall for *The Newsletter* and the daily ICAS newsletter; all editors will be welcome to visit and join in our promotion of Asian studies newsletters as a whole.

My thanks

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Lu Caixia, who functioned as our regional editor in Singapore for the last few issues. She is moving to a new institute and we will unfortunately no longer be able to benefit from her editorial qualities; we will greatly miss her and her wonderful contributions to this publication, and wish her all the best in her future adventures. We are pleased, however, that ISEAS will continue the cooperation, and are grateful that Dr. Lee Hock Guan will be taking over as regional editor. Please contact him at ias_iseas@iseas.edu.sg if you would like to contribute to our 'News from Asia' section, which includes a selection of short articles on local stories relevant to Asian studies (pp 40-43).

Finally, I have had some requests from individuals who would like to receive multiple copies of *The Newsletter*, so as to distribute them at their institutions and at academic events. These requests are more than welcome, so please feel free to place an order.

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is the premier international gathering in the field of Asian Studies. It attracts participants from over 60 countries to engage in global dialogues on Asia that transcend boundaries between academic disciplines and geographic areas.

Macao: The East-West Crossroads 24-27 June 2013

The more than four century long interaction between Western and Chinese traditions in Macao, the first and last European colony in China, has left the city with a unique blend of cultural diversity, modernity, and cosmopolitanism.

Join us at this world heritage site for ICAS 8, which is hosted by the University of Macau.
Venue: The Venetian Hotel

ICAS Book Prize 2013

Established in 2004, the ICAS Book Prize competition aims to create an international focus for publications on Asia and to increase the visibility for Asia Studies worldwide.

All scientific books pertaining to Asia, published between October 2010 and October 2012, are eligible.

In all, five prizes are awarded:
Best Study in Social Sciences
Best Study in Humanities
Best Dissertation in Social Sciences
Best Dissertation in Humanities
Colleagues' Choice Award

The awards will be presented during ICAS 8.

Deadline for submissions
15 October 2012

For more information www.icassecretariat.org

The Newsletter and IIAS

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) is a post-doctoral research centre based in the Netherlands. IIAS encourages the multi-disciplinary and comparative study of Asia and promotes national and international cooperation.

The Newsletter is a free quarterly publication by IIAS. As well as being a window into the institute, The Newsletter also links IIAS with the community of Asia scholars and the worldwide public interested in Asia and Asian studies. The Newsletter bridges the gap between specialist knowledge and public discourse, and continues to serve as a forum for scholars to share research, commentary and opinion with colleagues in academia and beyond.

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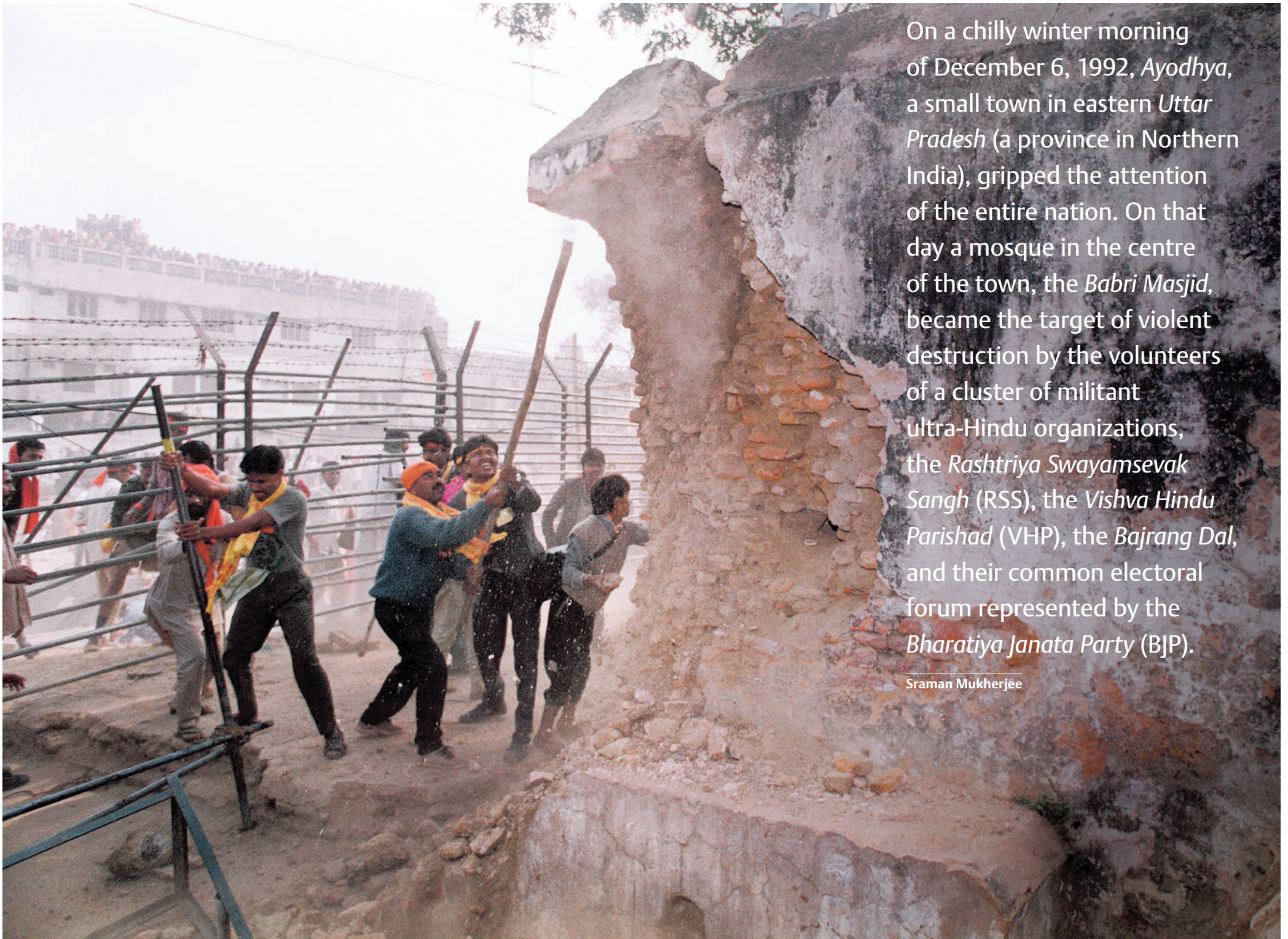
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Of methods and aims



On a chilly winter morning of December 6, 1992, Ayodhya, a small town in eastern Uttar Pradesh (a province in Northern India), gripped the attention of the entire nation. On that day a mosque in the centre of the town, the *Babri Masjid*, became the target of violent destruction by the volunteers of a cluster of militant ultra-Hindu organizations, the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS), the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* (VHP), the *Bajrang Dal*, and their common electoral forum represented by the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP).

Sraman Mukherjee

THE MOSQUE WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN BUILT in 1528 by *Mir Baqui*, a courtier of the Mughal emperor *Babur*. The structure, however, attracted a more recent notoriety, particularly in postcolonial India, as one that was allegedly built on the site of a destroyed *mandir* (temple) commemorating the birthplace of the epical Hindu deity *Rama*. Without going into the details of the contentious history of interreligious tensions around the site it will suffice to point out that since 1989-90, activists and volunteers of the militant ultra Hindu lobby have repeatedly congregated around the site with the agenda of 'liberating' the 'true' birth place of *Rama* (*Ramjanmabhumi*). For them this 'liberation' was possible only through redressing a historic injustice inflicted on the nation's Hindu community by the Muslims centuries ago, by demolishing the sixteenth century mosque and making way for building a new *Ram Mandir*, the foundation of which had been ceremonially laid in an adjacent site in 1989.

Since 1992, the rubble of the destroyed mosque has become the site of multiple readings. In the context of contemporary South Asia it highlighted, more virulently than ever before, the power of historic structures and the associated questions of heritage and patrimony in congealing or fracturing public spheres. At the same time, what the events of December 1992 brought to the foreground was the potential authenticating status, and also the question of professional integrity among practitioners of disciplines of history and archaeology. Both sides, the pro-*Mandir* ultra Hindu lobbyists and the opposing camp of left/liberal/secular historians and archaeologists took recourse to archaeology in proving or disproving their cases about the authenticity of Ayodhya as *Ramjanmabhumi* and the evidence of a prior vandalized Hindu temple at the site of the mosque. Central to all these debates was the status of archaeology as a science, and its potential for unearthing 'true' histories. As archaeologists and historians sought to retrieve the scientific method and scope of the discipline from 'gross vulgarization' by political leaders, what came to fore was the range of extra-disciplinary meanings and intents that could, and did, accrue around an academic field.¹

This article is not about the political and symbolic potential of the *Babri Masjid* as a monument. I use this moment of violent rupture in the public positioning of archaeology in contemporary South Asia as an entry point to reflect back on the claims of the discipline as a science around issues of its indigenization and translation in colonial India. The material focus of this study lies in a select body of Bengali writings published during early twentieth century. These writings in regional vernaculars sought to popularize the idea of heritage and the disciplinary field of archaeology and scientific history among non-specialist readers. Such translations involved remarkable transmutations of the parameters of methods and aims of archaeology as a discipline of Western/European 'origins'. Exploring how a range of linguistic, religious and territorial identities came to be played around such texts, this study will look for a prior history of ways and forms in which disciplinary practices of archaeology came to be overlaid with a range of extra-disciplinary concerns.

Pratna-vidya: the new science of archaeology

In South Asia, as in other regions that came under European political and cultural colonization between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, the discipline of archaeology had a distinctly Western, more specifically colonial origin. In much of the non-Western world, archaeology and museums evolved as part of a grid of modern disciplinary and institutional practices, including cartography, surveys and census, which sought to colonize and order newly acquired territories. Western scholar-administrators in South Asia argued for a long time that the colony was singularly bereft of indigenous scientific textual records about its own past. Archaeology here became an integral component of the British 'civilizing mission' of enlightening the 'natives' by endowing them with an authentic history. Reliance on material remains emerged as the sole avenue of 'knowing' history. Architectural and sculptural remains, along with stone and copper plate inscriptions were privileged as a higher order of evidence, over indigenous textual records, in recovering India's pasts.

The violent destruction of *Babri Masjid*. © AFP Photo/ Douglas E. Curran.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century these very questions shaped the imagination of the Indian nation as an immemorially ancient community and informed the issue of Indian authorship over India's past. As the colonial enterprise was grafted on the nation-building process, the material remains were rediscovered as replete with history and artistic heritage of the nation. In the process, several claims of the colonial archaeological discourse were contested. These contestations ranged from specialized art historical debates around questions of autonomy, origins and influence to heated public disputes on professional integrity or authorial intentions of the 'Western' versus the 'Indian' scholars.² By the early twentieth century, along with English, regional vernacular tracts on scientific history and archaeology emerged as a space where the Indian scholars could pit an entire range of authorial claims about India's past.

Pratna-vidya (the science of archaeology), a Bengali article written by Akshay Kumar Maitreya, serves here as an illustration of both internalization and indigenization of the methods of a modern western discipline by a Bengali scholar.³ The central concern of *Pratna-vidya* is to demarcate the specialized terrain of the emerging discipline of archaeology by elaborating on its methods and aims. Writing in 1912, Maitreya's citation was the renowned archaeologist and Egyptologist, Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie's work *Methods and Aims in Archaeology*.⁴ Published at the turn of the twentieth century, the book sought to lay out the technical/disciplinary expertise in the field of archaeological research. For Maitreya, however, the prime attraction of this work lay in its rather strict exposition of the question of ethics in archaeology and in Petrie's strong espousal of the values and integrity of character that he sought to instill among archaeologists. For Petrie proficiency in archaeology required a combination of disciplinary expertise in different branches of liberal arts, natural and social sciences. However, faced with a growing creed of relic hunting speculators in Egypt, for him, the integrity of the archaeologists ultimately lay in an almost fanatical devotion to the cause of science, their work being something more than a professional career, their commitment to research as being their '... honour and the end of their being.'⁵

The field of archaeology in colonial India

Read alongside Petrie's 'master-text', Maitreya's article appears as a historically and culturally contextualized review and translation of the methods and aims of archaeological research; the context being that of early twentieth century colonial Bengal. Following Petrie, Maitreya marks out the main sources of archaeological investigation as epigraphy, numismatics, sculptural and architectural remains. The areas of expertise that Maitreya prescribed for mastering this craft were epigraphic and linguistic skills, knowledge of history and numismatics, experience of field-work and scientific treatment of evidence. What ultimately distinguishes the eligible researchers in archaeology, for both Petrie and Maitreya, is integrity of character, devotion to truth (*satyanishtha*) and a complete unbiased, objective, scientific treatment of the excavated evidence. It is these demands of truth, objectivity and devotion to the cause of scientific history that provides important insights into Maitreya's altered self-positioning in the field of archaeological research.

The question of eligibility-ineligibility (*'adhikar-anadhikar charcha'*) in archaeological research brings to the fore the location of Akshay Kumar Maitreya in an increasingly professionalized field, where 'amateur' gentlemen scholars could still claim for themselves the same status as their professional peers, on the grounds of their internalization of the scientific methods of the discipline. In this sense, Maitreya provides an interesting, but by no means exceptional, case study in colonial India. Trained as a legal professional, Maitreya's chief claim to fame lay as an author of numerous historical and archaeological articles, essays and monographs in Bengali and English. With his mastery over ancient languages and the modern science of epigraphy, Maitreya emerged as a towering figure among contemporary Bengali archaeologists. For Maitreya archaeology was never a domain of professional service. His self-positioning was among the ranks of those devoted researchers '... who live to work...' as against those '... who work to live...'.⁶ Archaeology was Maitreya's passion as well as his time-tested disciplinary tool for the recovery of his ancient Bengali ancestry. Fervour for recovering the lost glory of ancient Bengal combined, in Maitreya, with a self-projected loyalty to truth and objective, unbiased and scientific analysis of excavated remains. Maitreya's self-positioning as a leading Bengali archaeologist of his time was based as much on the rigorous fidelity to the methods and intentions of the modern discipline of archaeology, as on his carving out of a critical space of Bengali authorship over Bengal's, more specifically *Varendra's*, past. Maitreya's bilingual locations (English and Bengali) and his location within *Varendra* Research Society and Museum in *Rajshahi* (a provincial town in northern Bengal, now in Bangladesh) provided the space for articulating these authorial claims.

Established in 1910 by Maitreya along with other local archaeologists and historians and landed patrons, the *Varendra* Research Society emerged as a crucial antiquarian body for the practice of scientific history. Antiquarian societies in colonial India provided a platform where the 'specialist' professionals, from within the official preview of the Archaeological Survey and the Museums, would cohabit with the 'amateur' gentlemen intellectuals – civil servants, lawyers, landlords, teachers in universities, colleges and schools – to engage in the recovery of lost histories from material evidence. The quest for the 'ancient' land of *Varendra* and its physical reconstruction within the space of the *Varendra* Research Society's Museum in the district town of *Rajshahi*, was symptomatic of the modern quest for ancient territories, particularly the sites of ancient capitals. The idea of *Varendra* (covering districts of northern and eastern Bengal, now parts of Bangladesh and eastern India) as an ancient land of Buddhist and Hindu/Brahmin civilization lost to medieval Islamic iconoclasm was one that Maitreya and the other Bengali gentlemen scholars of the *Varendra* Research Society inherited from early colonial archaeologists, like Alexander Cunningham, in the late nineteenth century.⁷ The particular context of this historical quest was provided by the repeated colonial administrative and territorial reconfigurations of Bengal in the early twentieth century; first the reconfiguration of Eastern Bengal and Assam and Western Bengal, Bihar and Orissa as two separate administrative units in 1905, and then the reunification of the Bengali speaking districts of Eastern and Western Bengal in 1911 and the separation of Bihar and Orissa from Bengal as a separate provincial unit in 1912.

A search for sites of capitals in this ancient land took scholars like Akshay Kumar Maitreya and his fellow historians in the Society, like Rama Prasad Chanda, to the ruins of the city of *Gaur* (in northern Bengal, now in India). However, the search for the material remains of a pre-Islamic capital of an ancient Bengali kingdom among the ruins of *Gaur* proved elusive. The only monuments that the twentieth century

Hindu Bengali archaeologists encountered in *Gaur* could be dated back to the Mohammedan past. To account for this absence, the Bengali archaeologists re-invoked an established trajectory of the destruction of India's ancient pre-Islamic civilization by the iconoclastic raids of the Muslims. To this was added a narrative of modern vandalism of archaeological relics by early colonial officials and native landlords.⁸ The only path to the recovery of an ancient pre-Mohammedan history of *Gaur* lay in investigating the absent traces of the ancient pre-Islamic Bengali civilization in the monumental remains of Islamic antiquity in which the city of *Gaur* abounded – '... *jaha ache, tahar modhyei jaha nai tahar onushandhan korite hoibe...*' (roughly translated as 'the search for the lost and elusive in the extant presence').⁹ Lost traces of a pre-Islamic Bengali civilization of *Varendra* were traced among the Mohammedan monuments of *Gaur*. From this collection of sculptures and epigraphs from *Gaur* and the neighbouring Buddhist site of *Paharpur*, these Bengali scholars now set about to compile an authentic chronological history of the pre-Islamic Bengal, specifically of the *Pala* and *Sena* kingdoms between the eighth and twelfth centuries A.D.

Sculptural art and self-fashioning in colonial Bengal

The positioning of Buddhist and Brahminical sculptures as the prime source for selective configuration of an ancient pre-Islamic Bengali civilization gives a different edge to Akshay Kumar Maitreya's exposition on marking out the eligible participants from non-specialist intruders in the emerging field of archaeological research. The positioning of the modern Bengali archaeologist as the sole eligible decoder of this ancient pre-Islamic Bengali civilization from the sculptural art of the region had its roots in an ongoing debate in the early decades of the twentieth century, between the Bengali archaeologists and a school of artists and aesthetes, about the interpretation of ancient Indian sculptures. Towards the end of *Pratnavidya*, Maitreya emerges as a virulent critic of the new school of aesthetic reappraisal of ancient Indian sculptures, represented by Abanindranath Tagore, with strong support in the Orientalist camp of E.B. Havell and A.K. Coomaraswamy. While the aesthetes critiqued the archaeologists for their dry historicist approach devoid of spiritual empathy and artistic appreciation, the latter in turn saw the aesthetic approach as seriously lacking in the rigors of scientific method and historical analysis. Without going into the details of this debate, it will suffice to point out that within the nationalist project of reclaiming art as the signifier of the emergent Indian nation, the field continued to be deeply fractured.¹⁰

The historian saw his own role as salvaging both the art and the history of the nation, of *Swadesh* and *Swajati*, which, for Maitreya, remained a flexible category. It could extend to encompass the whole of India, the nation and her people and at the same time could speak of a distinctly regional identity of Bengal and the Bengalis. This became a shared concern of other prominent fellow Bengali historians and archaeologists of his time. The idea of an Eastern school of early medieval sculptures as encoding the key to the lost civilization of the Bengalis found its powerful invocation around the same years in Rakhaldas Banerjee's monograph *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*.¹¹ For both Maitreya and Banerjee, the sculptures of the *Pala* and *Sena* empires stood as the clearest marker of a separate regional glory that he wished to recover for Bengal. With all its scholarly rigour, the book endured as a tome of specialized empiricist research out of the reach of non-specialist literate audience.

To shift from this scholarly monograph in English to a spate of contemporary Bengali articles on the same theme by Akshay Kumar Maitreya is to encounter a different intensity of passion and emotion, and also polemics in the iconographic analysis of this newly conceived school of Eastern Indian sculpture. The switch from English to vernacular served a purpose that was more than one of mere popular dissemination of Western disciplinary methods in the field. Writing in Bengali also signalled a deliberate self-distancing from the close scrutiny of the colonial masters and the rigours of their *scientific* counter-evidence. Vernacular emerged in these writings as a powerful medium where the Bengali archaeologist, without compromising the rigours of his scientific training, could effectively inject large doses of the regional glory of pre-Muslim Bengal into the sculpted figures.

Throughout a series of articles published especially in *Sagarika* (1912) and *Bangabhaskarja Nidarshan* (1922) the *Pala* and the *Sena* empires appear as the last great moments of indigenous regional political autonomy and artistic excellence before the onslaught of Muslim invasions. The works marked the passage of the sculptures of Bengal to the sculptures of

the ancient Bengalis. Drawing on Partha Chatterjee's formulation on the construction of a Hindu nationalist subjectivity through history-writing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Guha-Thakurta persuasively argues that the '... term *Bengali* here became implicitly synonymous with Hindu Bengali, as it came to define the new nationalist persona of the Bengali historian and his agenda for recovering what he considered the truly autonomous history of the region/nation of a time before the beginnings of the country's first subjection to foreign [read Muslim] yoke.'¹² Sculptures were stamped with the authorship of an ancient, eminently civilized nation to which the modern Bengali could trace his ancestry. In the claimed stylistic spread of this sculptural field from *Varendra* in northern Bengal, to the neighbouring territories of *Magadha* (in present Bihar) and *Kalinga* (in present Orissa) and to far flung lands of mainland and island Southeast Asia, Maitreya located the political, territorial, and cultural colonies of ancient Bengalis. Writing in Bengal's truncated colonized present, more importantly within his self-projected limits of the modern scientific disciplines archaeology and history, vernacular in Maitreya's work emerges as a space of transmutation designed to turn disciplinary aims and methods, questions of science, into a field of nationalist and regional assertions.

To read overlays of extra-disciplinary meanings and intentions around archaeology through a parallel reading of anti-Islamic vandalism at Ayodhya in the 1990s, and early twentieth century Bengali texts on archaeology, is not to dismiss the altered historical, political and cultural contexts in which these two unfolded. 'Pre-Islamic' and 'Hindu' had different connotations at these different points. The difference is also apparent in the public spheres of colonial India and Bengal of early twentieth century and of contemporary South Asia in which archaeology as a field of scientific practice is called upon to authenticate selective pasts. Nor does this study argue for a regional specificity of archaeology in the public domain in South Asia. The plea is merely one for recognizing these apparent extra-disciplinary intentions and meanings as constitutive elements of the disciplinary field, rather than as momentary lapses from standardized scientific parameters.

Sraman Mukherjee is Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Presidency University (Kolkata, India), a Social Science Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Minnesota, and a former affiliated fellow at IAS. (sramanmukherjee@gmail.com)

Notes

- 1 While the literature on this field is substantial, for a recent critical appraisal of the Ayodhya debate and the attendant contentions around the public positioning of archaeology in contemporary South Asia, see: Tapati Guha-Thakurta. 2004. 'Archaeology and the monument: on two contentious sites of faith and history', in *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, pp.269-303.
- 2 The literature on the connections between cultural politics of colonialism, nationalism, heritage and the disciplinary and institutional fields of archaeology and museums is vast. In the context of colonial and postcolonial India a recent critical study of the field is Guha-Thakurta's book *Monuments, Objects, Histories*.
- 3 A.K. Maitreya. 1912. '*Pratnavidya*', *Sahitya*, 23:9 (1319 b.), pp.691- 698.
- 4 W.M. Flinders Petrie. 1904. *Methods and aims in archaeology*. London, New York: Macmillan.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p.2.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 See A.K. Maitreya. 'The Stones of *Varendra*', *Modern Review*, June 1912, pp.618-622; August 1912, pp.183-186; September 1912, pp.244-249 and A.K. Maitreya. 1949. *The ancient monuments of Varendra (North Bengal)*, edited with an introduction and appendices by Kshitis Chandra Sarkar, *Rajshahi: Varendra Research Society (Mongograph No. 7)*.
- 8 A.K. Maitreya. 1902. 'To the Ruins of *Gaur*', *Modern Review*, pp.425-428; A.K. Maitreya, 'Gour Under the Hindus', *Modern Review*, 1902, pp. 518-521.
- 9 A.K. Maitreya, '*Gaur-Tattva*' in *Gaurer Katha*, reprint, Calcutta: Sahityalok, Baishakh 1390b. (1983), p. 5.
- 10 For a critical engagement with the nuances of this debate see Guha-Thakurta. 2004. 'Wresting the nation's prerogative: art history and nationalism in Bengal', in *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, pp.140-171.
- 11 R. Banerjee. 1933. *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*. New Delhi: ASI.
- 12 Guha-Thakurta. 2004. *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, p.333, endnote #49; P. Chatterjee. 1994. 'The nation and its pasts' and 'Histories and the nation', in *Nation and its Fragments*. New Delhi: OUP.

Lost paradise

Bali has always been popular with European artists; at the beginning of the previous century they were already enjoying the island's ancient culture, breathtaking nature and friendly population. In 1932, the aristocratic Belgian, Jean Le Mayeur (1880-1958), made a home for himself in the tropical paradise; he mainly painted near-nude female dancers and was thus known as the 'Paul Gauguin of Bali'. His colourful impressionist paintings and pastels were sold to American tourists for two or three hundred dollars, which was a substantial amount at that time. These days, his works are sold for small fortunes through the international auction houses.

Louis Zweers



1 (above): German painter König with a young Balinese model. He worked with various models. ca. 1950. B/W photo. National Archive.

2 (right): Arthur Jo König, *Sitting Balinese Girl*. Bali, July 1952. Watercolour and gouache, 38 x 32 cm. In original frame. Signed and dated Art. Jo König 7.52. Author's collection.

DUTCH ARTIST, WILLEM GERARD HOFKER (1902-1981), was also found painting in pre-war Bali; he too painted lovely barely-dressed Balinese women. His fellow countryman, Rudolf Bonnet (1895-1978) produced large drawings, mostly character portraits, in a style resembling Jan Toorop. Walter Spies (1895-1942), a German artist who had moved permanently to Bali in 1925, became known for his mystical and exotic representations of Balinese landscapes. It is clear that the European painters were mainly fascinated by the young Balinese beauties, who would pose candidly, and normally bare from the waist up. But other facets of the island were also appreciated for their beauty, and artists were inspired by tropical landscapes, sawas (rice fields), temples, village scenes and dancers. The Western image of Bali was dominated by the idealisation of its women, landscape and exotic nature.

Arie Smit and Ubud

I visited the Neka Art Museum in the village Ubud, which is a bubbling hub of Balinese art and culture. In one of the rooms I admired the oil paintings by the Dutch painter Arie Smit (b.1916). He had moved to Indonesia in 1938 as a soldier in the Dutch colonial army, for which he was deployed to the topographical service. During the Japanese occupation he was forced to labour on the notorious Burma railway, also known as the 'Railway of Death'. He later decided to become an Indonesian citizen, which meant that when the Dutch (including Dutch-Indonesians) left Indonesia after independence (at least 300.000 between 1946-1968), he was allowed to stay. The guard at the museum proudly stated about Smit, "He was the best".

Down the road from the museum I came to the gate of the villa 'Saing', which is surrounded by a high wall. A Balinese young boy, with a batik scarf wrapped around his head, opened the door for me. I asked whether Arie Smit was home. Without so much of a word, but with a nod of the head, the boy led me through the spacious inner courtyard, copiously filled with well-nurtured tropical trees, plants and flowers. Through an arch in one of the plastered walls surrounding the courtyard we came to a squat building, upon which the boy called out excitedly that a visitor from Holland had arrived. I approached the old artist, standing in his full creative glory, and after apologising for my unannounced visit I told him I was interested in knowing more about the tragic life of the German artist Arthur Johann (Jo) König (1910-1953), who had lived and worked on Bali. Smit took a look at a number of old photographs of the artist that I had brought with me and said, "I knew him personally. He was a quiet man and lived outside Ubud".¹



Arthur Johann (Jo) König

The young German left to Java in the early 1930s; he had completed his degree at the art academies of Dresden and Leipzig. He was only planning on staying for a few months, yet he never again left the tropics. König, already a talented painter, went to work as a draughtsman at the printer De Unie, in the centre of Batavia (present-day Jakarta).

In October 1937 there was an exhibition of his oil paintings, depicting tropical landscapes and graceful young women, at the Hotel des Indes in Batavia. An art critic from the Dutch East Indies newspaper *De Javabode*, was full of praise for his work. A second showing of his work took place during an exhibition in 1939, organised by the Bataviasche Kunstkring.² His career was then interrupted by the Second World War.

When the German army invaded the Netherlands in 1940, all Germans in the Dutch East Indies were confined to internment camps. König was interned in northern Sumatra. Later, due to the encroaching threat of the Japanese forces, all prisoners were moved to British-India. The Brits took a much milder approach to internship, and eventually the Indian Maharaja of Bundi in Rajasthan argued for the release of the talented artist; König went on to produce a number of enormous murals for the Maharaja's palace. Afterwards he was free to roam British-India as he pleased; which he gladly did, whilst sketching exotic landscapes and scenes of rural life.

After the war König eagerly returned to the Indonesian archipelago, which had always fascinated him tremendously. In 1945 he moved back to the badly damaged and unsettled Batavia, where he met a young Dutch woman, whom he married shortly thereafter. He became the head of the advertising firm, *Unie Studios*, and in October 1947 his oil paintings were once again on display at the Hotel des Indes. The Dutch East Indies daily newspaper, *Het Dagblad*, praised his work with the words "Arthur Jo König is a man of impeccable taste with a distinct gift for expressing harmony, in both form and in colour".³

After the first of the *politieonele acties* in August 1947 (Dutch military action during the Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1949), the Dutch-German couple established a new home in the cool highlands of the artists' village Ubud, on Bali. Ubud was considered to be the painters' paradise, and life was simple and cheap. König built himself a small studio on stilts and with a thatched roof; he had beautiful views of endless rice fields and the 3000-metre elevated volcano Gunung Agung standing proud on the horizon.

Every evening, in the nearby village of Pliatan, young girls danced to the light of oil lamps and to the beautifully smooth music of the gamelan ensemble. The married couple would walk home after the performances, through the dark woods, with no sounds other than the squeals of the monkeys in the background. König's paintings of exotic young women, gamelan musicians and local processions, displayed the island as a harmonious society. However, the image was rather deceiving; all the while the Balinese guerrillas continued their struggle against the Dutch military.

After the Dutch conceded independence for Indonesia in 1949, the chaos nevertheless endured. Armed youths terrorised the island; their attacks were mostly politically motivated. Their victims included Balinese village heads, Chinese businessmen, and former soldiers of the Dutch colonial army. Most Dutch people left, and took their families with them. Dutch schools and society buildings were abandoned. The remaining Europeans, including teachers, doctors, missionaries and representatives of KPM (the Dutch shipping company), were left alone, for the meantime.

König continued his work, but the Indonesian Nationalists made it known to all that the Balinese women were no longer to be painted by European artists showing their bare breasts. Tourists arriving at Denpasar airport were similarly warned that it was illegal to take any photos of half naked Balinese women. This would be judged as an insult to the Balinese women and the Indonesian postcolonial nation. This prohibition was later withdrawn again.⁴

Lost paradise

Shock waves rippled through the small European community still living on Bali in 1951, when Belgian artist Jean Le Mayeur was attacked in his home in Sanur. His Balinese wife Ni Pollock had managed to warn the staff, and together they were able to chase away the intruders. Le Mayeur was left with a serious knife wound to his shoulder. And then in 1953, König's wife took their daughter to see a doctor on Java; they were gone for a few days. Upon their return she found her husband's dead body. The house and everything in it had been completely destroyed, yet nothing had been taken. This had not been a common robbery-homicide.



3 (right): Arthur Jo König, Portrait of young Balinese woman. Bali, ca. 1950. Oil paint, with small cracks. Signed Arth. Jo König. Collection of President Sukarno.

4 (below): Arthur Jo König, Woman in sunlit street. Bali, December 1947. Oil on canvas, 52 x 42 cm. Signed and dated A. Jo König 12.47. Author's collection.



As we sit in his garden, Arie Smit concluded his story, "König was having an affair with his young Balinese model. His Dutch wife was aware of this". Rumours had it, that the white married artist had been killed by the infuriated family of his young and beautiful, Balinese model and lover. The case has never been solved. From the shade of the trees near his studio, we look out over the dense thicket of the valley, and we continue for some time to talk about Bali's history and culture. Then Smit says, in a near whisper, "That German artist lived too short a life. He left just a small oeuvre. I would leave the König-case be".⁵

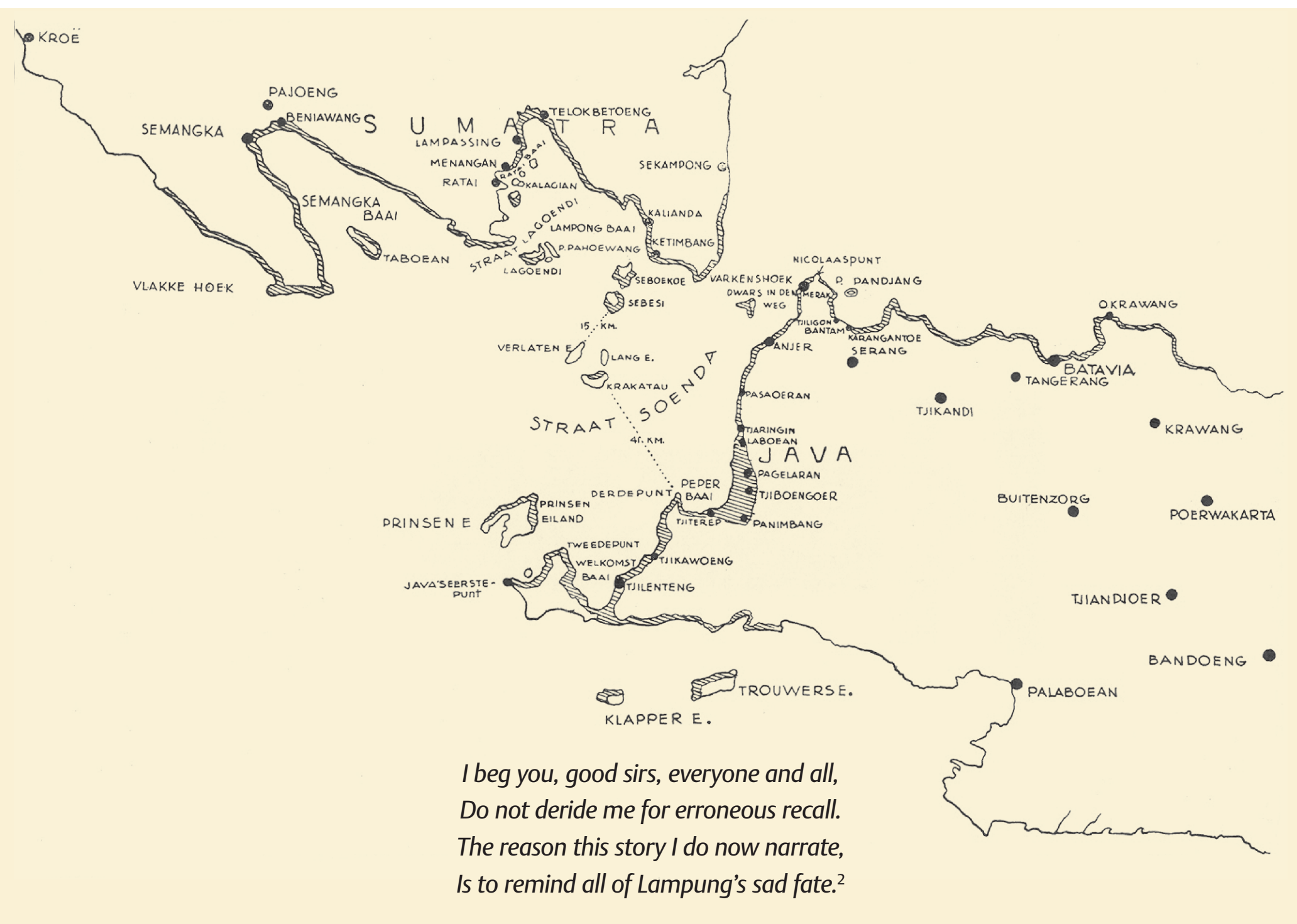
The Neka Art Museum doesn't have any pieces of work by König, and only very occasionally does one of his pieces come up for auction. Sukarno's collection contains one portrait by König, of a young Balinese woman; its paint is badly distressed. Could this be his Balinese mistress?

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Notes

- 1 Conversation between author and artist Arie Smit, in Ubud, Bali, 13 October 2003. For more information about this artist: Spruit, R. 1995. *Artists on Bali*, Amsterdam/Kuala Lumpur: The Pepin Press, 108-127
- 2 *Javabode*, 5 October 1937, 2; *De Ochtend Post*, 7 October 1937.
- 3 *Het Dagblad*, October 1947; *Oriëntatie*, 22 November 1947 (2), 44.
- 4 Last, J. 1955. *Bali in de kentering*, Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 45-46.
- 5 For more information about Jo König: Haks, L. & G. Maris. 1995. *Lexicon of foreign artists who visualized Indonesia*. Utrecht: Uitgever Bestebreurtje, 152 and 504; Van Donk, R. 1996. *Paradise Framed, A guide to Indonesian paintings, drawings, water-colors, lithographs and woodcut*, 123-124; Zweers, L. 1998. *Indië voorbij*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 110-117.

The tale of Lampung submerged



As the history books have recorded, one of the world's most cataclysmic volcanic outbursts was the 1883 eruption of Mount Krakatau, situated in the Sunda Strait that separates the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Java. The eruption nearly wiped out the entire island of Krakatau, but after a number of submarine eruptions starting in 1927 it became clear that a new island was starting to emerge in the original location. Known as *Gunung Anak Krakatau* ('The Child of Krakatau'), it is, like its predecessor, an active volcano, which continues to grow consistently.

Suryadi

1 (above):
A map of Sunda Strait, which separates Indonesia's islands of Sumatra and Java. The shaded areas of the Sumatra and Java coasts were the areas hit by the tsunami following the catastrophic 1883 eruption of Krakatau. Source: Ch. E. Stehn et al. 1933. *Herdenking Krakatau uitbarsting*. Batavia: Java Bode.

2 (right):
The Krakatau eruption in 1883 (KITLV #5888).

THE FIRST KNOWN MENTION of Krakatau in the West is on the 1584 map by Lucas Janszoon Waghenauer, who labeled the area 'Pulo Carcata'.³ Since then the name Krakatau has been variously represented as *Rakata*, *Krakatoa*, and more rarely *Krakatou* and *Krakatao*. Its first known eruption occurred in 416 A.D. The last eruption before 1883 occurred about 200 years previously, and had left three remnants: Pulau Sertung ('Verlaten eiland' in Dutch; 'The Deserted island' in English), Pulau Rakata Kecil ('Lang eiland' in Dutch; 'Long island' in English) and the biggest of the three, Pulau Rakata ('Krakatau island'), which had three cones: Perbuatan, Danan and Rakata (Fig. 1).

In 1883 there began a marked increase in earthquake activity in the Sunda Strait. On May 20th, volcanic eruptions began first from the cone Perbuatan and within a few days from a second newly formed vent. In July the violence of the eruptions increased and by the middle of August three main vents and numerous smaller ones were expelling large volumes of ash and steam. The last three days of activity, 26-28 August, were marked by a succession of explosive blasts, at first separated by intervals of ten minutes, but later becoming continuous. Huge quantities of pumice and ash were ejected together with rock fragments. On the morning of August 27th, more than three months after the first tremors on Rakata, enormous explosions took place at 5:30, 6:44, 10:02, and 10:52, bringing about the collapse of Danan, Perbuatan, and the northwest part of Rakata. Ash was blown to heights of seventy kilometers (Fig. 2)

and the accompanying tsunami swept the shores of Sunda Strait, with waves reaching heights of forty meters at the shore, taking the lives of—to cite the words of the colonial-era journalist, A. Zimmerman—"thirty-seven Europeans and over thirty-six thousand natives."⁴ The waves reached Australia within five hours, Ceylon in six hours, Calcutta in nine, Aden in twelve, Cape Town in thirteen, and such was its force that it was felt even at Cape Horn seventeen hours later. The caldera formed as a result of the explosion was five to seven kilometers in diameter with a depth of 279 meters below sea level; it has been modified since by the emergence of the volcano *Anak Krakatau* on the northeast margin on the principal basin.

The effects of the eruption were felt not just in Indonesia and its immediate neighbors; the aftermath affected the global climate for months, which can be read about in an early extensive report compiled by the Krakatoa Committee of the British Royal Society in London in 1888.⁵ Since that time numerous reports and scholarly publications have been devoted to the eruption and it is no exaggeration to say that because of the catastrophic intensity of the eruption and the devastation it caused, Krakatau has frequently been made the subject of writings, both scholarly and literary. A bibliographical compilation on Krakatau lists no less than 1083 references pertinent to its 1883 eruption, under a wide range of fields: geology, zoology, botany, meteorology, and oceanography to name just a few,⁶ not including

some works that are relatively recent, such as Simon Winchester's bestselling book, *Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded: August 27, 1883* (London: Viking, 2003), suggesting that interest in Krakatau is still very much alive today.

In addition to scholarly works, there have been dozens of modern literary texts, mainly in the Western literary travelogue genre, and also cinematic representations. However, it may come as some surprise that one of the contemporaneous reports of the eruption was one that was written by a native son in the form of a *syair*, a classical Malay rhyming poem, titled *Syair Lampung Karam* (*The Tale of Lampung Submerged*).

Although attention paid to Mount Krakatau since its devastating eruption in 1883 appears to be very much alive even today, little has been written about the aforementioned poem, which was published in four editions between 1883 and 1888, with four different (but similar) titles. The poem is not even recorded in the bibliography referred to above, the largest on Krakatau ever compiled. The reason for this apparent lapse is perhaps not only because the account was written in poetic form, the *syair*, but also because it was written in Jawi script, and consequently known only to persons who were interested in classical Malay literature and who were able to read Malay in Jawi script.

A native's reflections of the cataclysmic eruption of Mount Krakatau in 1883¹

The lithographed editions of *The Tale of Lampung Submerged*

Syair Lampung Karam [The Tale of Lampung Submerged], appeared as four lithographed editions that were published in Singapore in the late nineteenth century. The first edition of the poem was forty-two pages in length and entitled *Syair Negeri Lampung yang Dinaiki oleh Air dan Hujan Abu* [A Poem about Lampung when Engulfed by Water and a Rain of Ash]. The small book's colophon notes that the edition was published in 1301 of the Muslim year (November 1883 to October 1884). One copy of this edition is preserved at the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta, another lies in The Russian State Library, Moscow.

The second edition, entitled *Inilah Syair Lampung Dinaiki Air Laut* [This is a Poem about Lampung when Engulfed by Sea Water], was published in Singapore on 2 *Safar* 1302, the second day of the second month of the Muslim year 1302 (21 November 1884). A copy of this edition is preserved at Indonesia's National Library in Jakarta.

The third edition, entitled *Syair Lampung dan Anyer dan Tanjung Karang Naik Air Laut* [A Poem about Lampung and Anyer and Tanjung Karang when Engulfed by Sea Water], was published by Haji Said on 27 *Rabiulawal* 1303, the 27th day of the third month of the Muslim year 1303 (3 January 1886). In some advertisements for this book, its title is given as *Syair Negeri Anyer Tenggelam*⁷ [A Poem about Anyer Under Water]. A copy of this edition is preserved at Cambridge University Library.

The last known edition, on which the transliteration and translation of the poem that appear in this article are based, is titled *Inilah Syair Lampung Karam Adanya* [This is a Poem about Lampung when it was Submerged] (Fig. 3 – see page 10). This edition was published on 10 *Safar* 1306, the tenth day of the second month of the Muslim year 1306 (16 October 1888). Copies of this edition are preserved at the National Library in Jakarta; Leiden University Library; the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London; the University of Malaya Library; and the collection of Malay Books of the Methodist missionary Emil Lüring in Frankfurt, Germany.

The authorship of the poem

The colophon of the 1888 edition reveals that the poem was composed by Muhammad Saleh (stanza 374) in the Bangkahulu Quarter (later Bencoolen Street) of Singapore (stanza 369) (Fig. 4 – see page 10). Elsewhere in the poem (stanza 4), the author states that he had come from Tanjung Karang and that he himself had witnessed the catastrophe caused by the terrible eruption (stanza 103). Very little is known about the author; he very well may have been one of those refugees who fled to Singapore carrying with them graphic memories of the disaster. Unfortunately he does not say where he was born.

In Lampung there is a story about an almost-legendary character by the name of Muhammad Saleh (or 'Soleh'), a religious leader who was instrumental in the building of the Jamik al-Anwar Mosque in Teluk Betung, Lampung, of which construction had begun in 1839. (Destroyed by the eruption of Krakatau in 1883, the mosque was rebuilt later.) Muhammad Saleh was a migrant to Lampung from Boné, South Sulawesi. Due to his extensive knowledge on Islam, he became a prominent religious leader in Teluk Betung and later served as its regent. In an article by Zulkarnain Zubairi and Iyar Jarkasih, published in a newspaper in Tanjung Karang, Lampung, the two journalists suggest that the name of Mohammad Saleh written in the colophon of the 1888 edition of the *syair* was possibly their former religious leader.⁸ Unfortunately, no single bibliographical evidence has yet been found to support this claim.

The publisher of the 1888 edition was Cap al-Hajj Muhammad Tayib (or Taib). As to the book's copyist, from its colophon we know that Encik Ibrahim, the copyist of the 1884 edition, was also the copyist of the 1888 edition. Encik Ibrahim was a prolific Malay copyist who lived in Riau before moving to Singapore where, in 1881, he began to work as a copyist for the lithographic printers there. As Ian Proudfoot mentions, for most of two decades "Ibrahim became the leading lithographic copyist in Singapore, working with most of the active lithographic printers of the day."⁹

In stanzas 367 and 368 of the 1888 edition Muhammad Saleh tells us that he finished writing the poem on 14 *Zulhijjah* 1300, the fourteenth day of the twelfth month of the Muslim year 1300 (15 October 1883), just three short months after Krakatau initially erupted. Given that the first lithographed edition of the poem appeared in Singapore almost immediately thereafter, it seems reasonable to surmise that the author had previously been approached and enticed to write down his tale by people connected with the Singaporean indigenous press, perhaps even by the copyist-publisher Encik Ibrahim.



As Ian Proudfoot described in his *Early Malay Printed Books*, the indigenous and Straits-Chinese (*peranakan*) printing firms in late nineteenth century Singapore were engaged in a cut-throat competition. Because *Syair Lampung Karam* contained first-hand and in depth information about the hugely devastating eruption that had recently taken place in the neighboring Dutch East Indies, the work may very well have become a prize in the struggle for such a publication among the publishers in Singapore at that time. An insightful publisher of the poem would have been able to profit greatly by printing it for the indigenous readership. Apparently, the first edition of this book sold very well indeed; as we know, the second edition was launched in late 1884, just a few months after the first edition had appeared.

The Tale of Lampung Submerged can be categorized as a "journalism poem" (*syair kewartawanan*), to borrow a term used by the late classical Malay scholar, Sri Wulan Rudjiati Mulyadi.¹⁰ This kind of *syair* typically contains eyewitness reports of diverse real-life events, including events of historical importance, political development, and natural disasters. Nevertheless, the purpose of the author of this poem was more to share his experience of witnessing the natural disaster, rather than to exploit it; he advised his readers to let their souls draw closer to the Almighty God.

Warning from the Almighty God

Composed as a *syair* – a prominent Malay literary genre that in previous decades had multiple functions, including the teaching of religious doctrines and reporting the factual news – the poem represents the native attitudes about the natural calamity that tend to be comprehended based on Islamic theology and philosophy. The aesthetic element of the poem is also able to arouse the emotions of its native readers.

In this poem, with its 375 four-line stanzas, from his native eyes, Muhammad Saleh dramatically relates the catastrophic situation, as it developed following the horrifying Krakatau eruption. He graphically depicts what happened to numerous towns and villages in the South Sumatra region where tens of thousands of people died as a result of the disaster. He describes how, even when faced with a calamity of such proportions, people still cared for each other. The colonial Dutch East Indies government acted quickly to help the victims. At the same time, he also gives a lively account of those who abused the situation for their own profit, and stole from others.

The author mentions in stanzas 12 and 13 that at four o'clock in the morning on 22 *Syawal* 1300, the 22nd day of the tenth month of the Muslim year 1300 (26 August 1883) he heard a thundering sound coming from the sea, which he assumed to be the horn of a steamship. Apparently, the sound he had heard was a precursor to the first huge explosion of Krakatau, which occurred one and a half hours later.

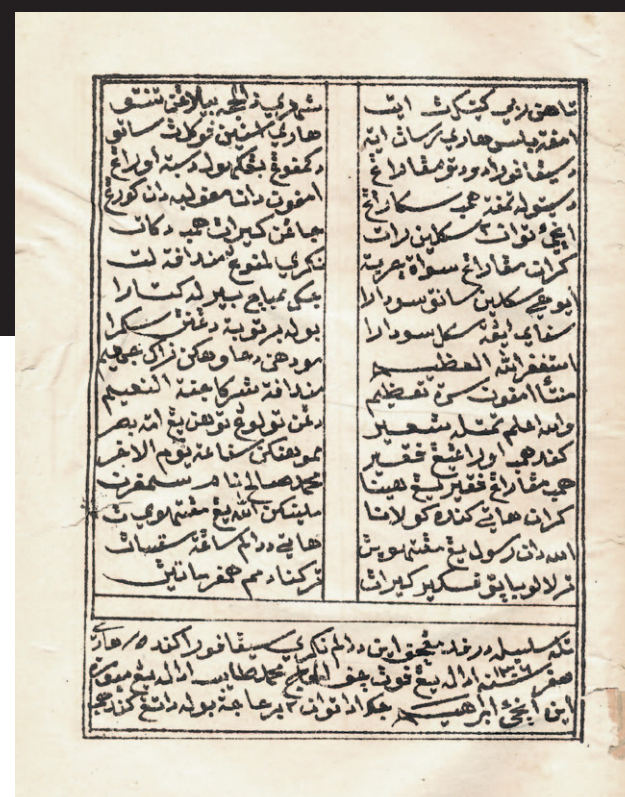
Continued on page 10 >

The tale of Lampung submerged continued



Sample of the transliteration and translation

| | |
|--|--|
| Ini Sya'ir Lampung Karam Adanya | This is the tale of Lampung submerged |
| 1 Bismillah itu permulaan kata, Alhamdulillah puji yang nyata, Berkat Muhammad penghulu kita, Fakir mengarang suatu cerita. | "In the name of God" is our opening phrase; To show our devotion, to Allah give praise. By the light of Mohammad, our spiritual guide, This humble servant may his tale transcribe. |
| 2 Fakir yang daif dagang yang hina, Mengarang syair sebarang guna, Sajaknya janggal banyak tak kena, Daripada akal tidak sempurna. | Though I'm only a tradesman of humble birth, I've composed a poem, for what it's worth, A clumsy string, of uncertain rhyme, The modest product of an imperfect mind. |
| 3 Jikalau ada khilaf dan sesat, Janganlah, Tuan, sahaya diumpat, Diambil kalam dicecah da'wat, Hati mengingatkan tangan menyurat. | For my errors, kind sirs, and if I meander, I pray you'll be kind and curb your slander. With pen in hand, I dip the nib in ink, Moving my fingers in order to think. |
| 4 Awal mula hamba berpikir, Di Tanjung Karang tempat musyafir, Menghilangkan dendam sebabnya hasir, Dikarangkan nazam makamnya syair. | To begin, we must backtrack, this I can tell, To Tanjung Karang, where I used to dwell. Hoping to ease the source of my pain, I'll set down my words in linking quatrains. |
| 5 Daripada hati sangat hasrat, Dibawa berdiri sangat mudarat, Ke sana-sini tiada bertempat, Mencari pikiran sambil menyurat. | My heart is eager despite my history, For even to stand means suffering and misery. I find no solace, no matter where I go; Can I express my thoughts truly? I do not know. |
| 6 Mula pertama asalnya itu, Pada bulan Rajab datanglah abu, Dua jari tebalnya tentu, Tiga hari kerasnya itu. | To begin, hearken back to the start of it all: Rajab, the seventh month, when ash started to fall. For three long days, dark rain fell thick and hard, Until a layer two fingers deep covered the yard. |



> Continued from page 9
In the last two stanzas of the poem the author speaks of his great sadness, "the melancholy within my brooding heart," and how difficult it was for him not to dwell on the disaster: "Only Allah and His Prophet can truly discern / The sorrow and pain that make my heart burn." So distraught the author is, he worries that he might perish: "With all the images that pass my mind's eye / I, in my fevered delirium, fear that I may die." (stanza 374 and 375). In various stanzas throughout the poem, he states that he witnessed the effects of the eruption with his own two eyes. To cite just two examples: in stanza 84 he writes, "So this is my story, dear sirs, I tell you no lies/One that I witnessed, with my own two eyes"; and in stanza 103, "I couldn't believe what my eyes were seeing."

Since the poem is a rare written document casting light on local perceptions of the eruption, the description of the 1883 Krakatau eruption in it tends to differ markedly from those presented in Western reports. As a Muslim, and in accordance with the tastes of the day, the writer inserts moral observations and pieces of advice, suggesting that in the face of such an immense natural disaster, people became increasingly devout and mindful of Almighty God.

Perhaps it is a generalization, but in Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country, people tend to view natural disasters as a warning or punishment from God. Thus, for example, survivors of the earthquakes and tsunami that devastated Aceh in December 2004 expressed their feelings in spiritual or moralistic terms. As reported by Reza Indria,¹¹ religious activities among the survivors of that disaster increased exponentially. Numerous politicians and religious leaders have cited a decline in the nation's morals as the reason behind the series of natural disasters that have affected Indonesia in the past decade. These same people have said that the disasters will continue if Indonesians do not take steps to eradicate corruption and pornography, as well as to shun a consumerist and hedonistic lifestyle. As is suggested by media and public discourse in Indonesia, both theological perspectives and traditional beliefs influence public views about natural disasters. If Muhammad Saleh's thoughts can be said to be representative of beliefs held by the general public at that time, then such perceptions have apparently existed in the minds of the people of this archipelago for a very long time indeed, and are likely to be passed on to future generations.

3 (above):
The Tale of Lampung Submerged, from the 1888 edition, p. 1. (UB Leiden (o) 895 D 6).

4 (right):
The last page and the colophon of *The Tale of Lampung Submerged*, from the 1888 edition, p. 36. (UB Leiden (o) 895 D 6).

To benefit a larger readership
The Tale of Lampung Submerged has always had a limited readership, and has generally escaped the attention of international scholars. In order to introduce the poem to a larger readership, I transliterated the poem into Latin script, based on the 1888 lithographed edition, as presented in my book *Sya'ir Lampung Karam: Sebuah Dokumen Pribumi Tentang Dahsyatnya Letusan Krakatau 1883* (Padang: Komunitas Penggiat Sastra Padang, 2009; 2nd edition, 2010). John McGlynn from the Lontar Foundation¹² in Jakarta translated my transliteration into English, which should be published in 2013.

Through the publication of the transliteration and the English translation of this poem, it is hoped that our understanding of one of the world's most terrifying natural disasters will be enhanced. Furthermore, it is also hoped that the transliteration and the English translation of the poem will reach an audience far larger than the philologists and experts of Indonesian and Malay manuscripts only. The poem reveals that, in addition to the many scientific analyses of the 1883 Krakatau cataclysmic explosion, which appear mostly in Western scholarly publications, there is also a native account of the disaster – and Lontar's English translation of Muhamad Salleh's *The Tale of Lampung Submerged* will hopefully enrich the body of knowledge we have about the mount of Krakatau.

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Notes

- 1 This article is an extract from Suryadi. 2008. 'Sya'ir Lampung Karam: Image of the 1883 Eruption of the Krakatau Mountain in A Classical Malay Literary Text', paper delivered at 24th ASEASUK Conference, Liverpool John Moores University, 20-22 June 2008.
- 2 Muhammad Saleh. 1888. *Inilah Sya'ir Lampung Karam Adanya* (copyist: Encik Ibrahim), Singapura: Al-Hajj Muhammad Tayib [Press], 10 Safar 1306 / 16 October 1888 (lithographed Jawi), p.36 (stanza 370). Translation by John McGlynn, based on the transliteration of the poem in Suryadi. 2010. *Sya'ir Lampung Karam: Sebuah Dokumen Pribumi tentang Dahsyatnya Letusan Krakatau 1883*, Padang: KPSP, p. 112.

- 3 Lucas Janszoon Waghenauer. 1584. *T'eerste deel van de spiegel der zeevaardt, van de navigatie der Westersche zee, innehoudende alle de custen van Vranckrijk, Spaingen en de 't principaelste deel van Engelandt, in diversche zee caerten begrepen*, Leiden: Christoffel Plantijn.
- 4 A. Zimmerman. 1928. 'Krakatau', *Inter Ocean* IX (2): 96.
- 5 G.J. Symons et al. (eds.). 1888. *The Eruption of Krakatoa and Subsequent Phenomena*, London: Trübner.
- 6 Audrey Brody, K. Kusumadinata and J.W. Brody. 1982. *Krakatoa: A Selected Natural History Bibliography*, Wellington: New Zealand Oceanographic Institute.
- 7 Anyer is a town on Java's northwestern coast, across the Sunda Strait from Lampung (See Fig. 1).
- 8 Zulkarnain Zubairi and Iyar Jarkasih: 'Jejak Islam di Lampung (5): Masjid Al-Anwar pintu Islam di pesisir', *Lampung Post*, 15 August 2010; 'Jejak Islam di Lampung (20): Kitab beraksara Jawi Abad XIV [!] di Masjid Jami'Al Anwar', *Lampung Post*, 31 August 2010.
- 9 Ian Proudfoot. 1993. *Early Malay Printed Books: A Provisional Account of Materials Published in the Singapore-Malaysia Area up to 1920, Noting Holdings in Major Public Collections*, Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies and the Library University of Malaya, pp. 41-2.
- 10 Sri Wulan Rudjati Mulyadi. 1991. "Wartawan" yang Berdendang dalam Sya'ir dan Naskah Kita', *Lembaran Sastra* 12: 155-168.
- 11 Reza Indria. 2004. 'Muslim Theological Perspectives on Natural Disasters (The Case of Indonesian Earthquakes and Tsunami of 2004)', *Master thesis*, Leiden University, p. 1.
- 12 For more on the Lontar Foundation, see: Roy Voragen. 2011. 'Lontar: Found in Translation', *The Newsletter* No. 58 (Leiden: IIAS), pp. 38-9.

Internal child trafficking in China



Although *transnational* trafficking in children has attracted worldwide attention in the last two decades, *internal* trafficking has been relatively ignored. A number of geographical contexts have been largely neglected by the academic community and one of them has been China; a country with a remarkably long history of the phenomenon and one in which the particular practice is culturally embedded, to the point that it is viewed simply as tradition.

Anqi Shen, Georgios A. Antonopoulos and Georgios Papanicolaou

Supply, demand, facilitation

Child trafficking has a long history in China although it remerged as a 'new' tendency in the last two decades or so. In addition to a change in scale, the characteristics of child trafficking have also transformed. As a result it has attracted the attention of some high echelons of the Chinese establishment who consider it a 'lucrative business'. For instance, an expert from the Criminal Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) explains in no uncertain terms that, "compared with trafficking in women, trafficking in children is more profitable and easier".¹

There are a number of supply, demand and facilitating factors involved. Some are common to other geographical contexts, whereas others need to be understood within the unique local historical, cultural, socio-political and economic context of China. These include: poverty, high profits and low risks for traffickers, loopholes in law and ineffective implementation of law, regional economic imbalance, movement of people and 'floating populations'.

Of great significance is the 'One Child Policy'. This particular policy is often the platform for the facilitation of internal child trafficking in a country that favours large families (primarily in rural areas) and that has a male-dominant culture, placing higher value on boys than girls.

Supply and recruitment

Recording crime in China is rather unsystematic and inconsistent. Although internal trafficking is an acknowledged issue and the media are not banned from reporting on it, it appears that annual official figures of internal human trafficking either do not exist, due to the lack of an operational recording system, or are kept confidential due to political sensitivities.

The various ways in which children are found and selected for trafficking depend on the age of the children, the purposes for trafficking and the specific circumstances. New born babies and extremely young children may be obtained through various channels, including: collecting abandoned infants, receiving unwanted children from their parents (with or without payment), purchasing children from other traffickers, stealing/kidnapping or even using force or violence to snatch them. Unwanted newborns can be bought from their parents, private clinics or illegitimate midwife services. Families suffering financial hardship may also seek to sell 'additional' children in exchange for money (this has been the case with the Uighur community in the west of the country).

For older children, abduction and/or deception are the most common methods of recruiting. Investigated cases reveal that female traffickers often play a crucial role in tempting children away from their homes.² Teenagers (and sometimes their parents) tend to be deceived with fraudulent job offers such as working in factories, building sites, and restaurants.

Demand for children

Traditionally, children have mostly been trafficked from the economically underdeveloped areas (such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan and Xinjiang) to the more developed urban regions in the east. Trafficked children are sold for a variety of purposes:

- *Illegal adoption.* Both boys and girls are wanted for the purpose of adoption, but buying a boy is much more expensive than buying a girl. In urban areas, trafficked boys or girls are purchased by childless families.³ In a case that was publicised in 2005, the scheme involved the sale of babies to a *legal* orphanage (the Hengyang Social Welfare Institute). The orphanage official was willing to pay for babies because foreign adopting parents usually donate large amounts of money (US\$ 3000-5000 per child) when they legally adopt a baby or child from a Chinese orphanage.⁴
- *Forced marriage.* Traditionally, girls (and women) have been abducted and sold as wives for impoverished men. In many rural areas it is tradition for a man and/or his family to buy girls for wedlock;⁵ in some localities this is known as *maiqing* ('bought marriage').⁶ Buying a wife is not seen as a criminal act, but as part of the culture of rural China.
- *Labour exploitation.* This form of exploitation has existed for centuries, however, trafficking children for the purpose of labour exploitation started to be a political issue in the 1990s.⁷
- *Street trading, begging and street crime.* Trafficked children are sold to individuals who force them to carry out street trades, such as selling flowers, polishing shoes, and performing in street 'kid shows'.⁸ Disabled children (primarily) are also used for begging, as they supposedly garner more sympathy. Some trafficked children are deliberately injured by their exploiters and forced to beg for money; this has become a distinctive feature of the local informal economy in the Henan and Anhui provinces.
- *Sexual exploitation.* Teenage girls are deceived by fraudulent job offers, such as factory or restaurant work, and are subsequently sold into prostitution. The Ministry of Public Security suggests that labour and sexual exploitation-related trafficking including of children is gradually replacing the more traditional purposes of human trafficking in China.⁹

Above: A father holds photos of his missing daughter who was trafficked into prostitution while his youngest child and wife stand with him.
© Nick Rain.

Traffickers and their process

Individuals traditionally involved in the trafficking of children in China typically do not have criminal records or even a history of trafficking. Many cases involve people who can abuse a position of trust, such as school teachers. In the case of systematic or large scale trafficking, the business tends to have a naturally defined horizontal 'structure' with independent, autonomous 'entities' involved in the process. In some cases individuals act as intermediaries who link disconnected actors of the business or assist in the sale of children by identifying potential buyers. Generally, individuals or small groups form temporary collaborations. There is some evidence that these collaborations often emerge through familial and ethnic ties (primarily among the Uighur community).

Different roles exist in the trafficking process, these include: (1) Organisers: individuals in the position to initiate trafficking schemes due to their legal status and/or employment (e.g., director of orphanage); (2) Recruiters: often people from the same community as the children themselves; (3) Sellers: mainly local residents who are familiar with the market, its peculiarities and 'needs'. In many cases the recruiter and the seller are the same person; (4) Facilitators: individuals who may otherwise not be involved in the sale or other aspects of the business. For example, some owners of homes rented by traffickers not only 'turn a blind eye', but they also assist by identifying (prospective) buyers.¹⁰

Local protectionism plays a part in the existence and growth of child trafficking. Local officials of course recognise the illegality, yet appear "sympathetic towards the families who had spent money on purchasing, [and they suggest that] these families should not doubly lose (loss of purchasing money as well as children purchased)".¹¹ Where significant profits are made from forcing children into work in local businesses, and even street dealing or begging, local officials choose to ignore the practice, and view these cases as successful local entrepreneurship. In addition, local governmental authorities do not perform their functions effectively in managing, supervising and inspecting small-scale private workplaces, coalmines, brick kilns, factories and other enterprises that regularly employ trafficked children,¹² and in actual fact facilitate child trafficking business by hampering, or preventing altogether, anti-child trafficking investigations and operations.

Generally, internal child trafficking in China is the result of a complex intertwining of supply, demand and facilitating factors, heavily affected by the socioeconomic change in the country supported passively or actively by local officials, and embedded in the Chinese cultural milieu.

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Mall danger

The Opinion



Jakarta is dangerous – or, at least, many every day experiences make it feel so. Security guards are prevalent; in uniform, at guard houses, smoking cigarettes, waving mirrors beneath cars as they approach the entrances of malls and hotels. Surveillance is one means of creating both a threatened sense of security and a sense of fear. Part of the contestation and re-configuring of space relates to practices of surveillance, which is an act performed with an intent to trace, track and record the movements of potential and possible suspects. Surveillance, meaning to ‘watch over’, is a somewhat ambivalent practice; it seeks to prevent crime, yet simultaneously casts a suspicious gaze on those who are being watched.

Andy Fuller

SURVEILLANCE IS PERFORMED through various technologies. Practices are aligned with positions of power, because watching seeks to control, regulate, categorise and counter unwanted behaviours and actions. Surveillance has not disappeared with the demise of colonial and authoritarian states, but is a practice that continually adapts and lends itself to varying conditions and circumstances. Surveillance is seemingly restrictive and prescriptive, yet in other circumstances it may be creative and countering of dominant or mainstream narratives. So, does surveillance necessarily work in favour of a dominant political or ideological power?

Throughout the streets of Jakarta, and elsewhere, codes of ethics are placed at entrances to inner urban communities. In another case, Lippo Karawaci, a ‘private city’ west of Jakarta, has its own private infrastructure with its own security staff, acting as police.¹ The signs suggest and invoke the values that are supposedly held within the particular community. At times they are no more than a simple recital of nationalist or religious sentiments. Elsewhere, large statues of national symbols (such as the Garuda) symbolically invite the viewer or passerby to keep the nation in mind. That is, to remember that one is part of a great and grand imagined community – a particular nation, with its necessary memories, narratives and ideologies. Surveillance is, thus, something that one performs against oneself, as well as something that can be performed by an *other*, outside and external force. Surveillance may simply take on the form of reminding the citizen of the ideologies they are supposed to espouse.

Recent urban developments in Asian cities show increased questioning of fixed definitions and values that are applied to notions of public and private space. This is apparent in some of the footage that is found in *Recording the Future* (RtF; an audio-visual archive developed by KITLV, LIPI and Offstream Productions). At the Mangga Dua Square mall, for example, the camera crew record the surveillance to which the visitors are subjected to; a uniformed security guard waves an endlessly beeping detector over visitors and the bags they carry, whilst maintaining a constant banter with other nearby security guards. The laxity of this screening suggests that this mall is open to a wide range of visitors. It is a mall that is at the lower end of the highly competitive quest for prestige and elitism within Jakarta’s mall culture.²

Recording the Future has a muted connection to surveillance. Some recordings from the RtF archives mimic surveillance practices; for example, the long-duration tripod recordings at major intersections and at the port in Ternate. This ongoing

audio-visual archive, however, only became possible with the decline of the Suharto-led New Order government – an era during which surveillance played a key role in determining and undermining the rights and freedoms of movement and expression. The footage of RtF isn’t neutral; the project (with its multiple collaborators) presents the many micro-narratives that make up everyday life in Indonesia. The project aims, rather openly, to “observe ... the way people use public spaces”. A more combative attitude towards the state is in part facilitated, however, by the activist and provocative inquiring of Lexy Rambadeta – a prominent voice throughout many hours of the recordings. Ratih Prebatarasi, a more recent collaborator, adopts a subtler, more open approach. Some passersby who are questioned in RtF are reluctant to express a political opinion, choosing vague positive statements instead of direct praise or criticism. Elsewhere, the camera crew are themselves subject to monitoring and censure. They are forbidden from filming in a bakery in Mangga Dua Square, and on another occasion a security guard inquires as to whether or not they have permission to record in the mall. Schulte Nordholt and Steijlen have pointed out that this project would never have been possible in the pre-New Order era.³

Malls are simultaneously sites of play, consumption and performance. In the case of Mangga Dua Square, for example, (at least in the past) visitors would come to sing songs on karaoke stages or play video games in gaming parlours. Elsewhere in Jakarta, malls such as Grand Indonesia or Senayan City, are home to the boutiques and shops of luxury brands. These shops, which receive only a small number of visitors, enhance a mall’s claims to grandeur, opulence and affluence. These are spaces in which visitors are invited to wander, gaze and consume with their eyes the objects displayed resplendent before them. Such wandering evokes notions of *flânerie*: wandering aimlessly, consuming and classifying what is around oneself, yet avoiding being taken over by strong emotions; being a somewhat critical, but nonetheless complicit participant in everyday life.

Conversations with security guards (both uniformed and ununiformed) revealed unexpected threats to the *flâneurs* who visit malls. When asked about the common crimes committed in malls, security guards responded that hypnosis is at times applied to unsuspecting visitors. Hypnosis, apparently, can be performed on those who are wandering aimlessly, not concentrating on anything in particular. It is at these moments that the hypnotists strike. With gleaming signs, displays and sales, malls are an arena for hypnotists to perform their art. Under hypnosis, a victim may unwittingly visit an automatic

teller machine and pass over large amounts of cash to the hypnotist. The security guard interviewed at Mangga Dua Square mall, however, reassures the *Recording the Future* camera crew that they know who the perpetrators are.

The hypnotists, looking for aimless wanderers, are themselves under surveillance. Moreover, their methods are known by the enforcers of security. Hypnosis, real or otherwise, is common in anecdotes; it is a disturbance of daily behaviour. It is a slip from normal behaviour when one is in control, to an inexplicable situation when one suddenly finds oneself not able to control or determine one’s actions. A mall, with its formalisation and limitations on behaviour, disrupts established patterns of interacting with others and ways of relating to one’s surroundings. As van Leeuwen writes, one indeed needs to learn how to behave in a mall. And thus, despite allusions of frivolity and fun, malls may not be spaces that one can enter without a sense of caution. One may involuntarily withdraw large amounts of cash and give it to a stranger.

Malls in Jakarta, based on preliminary observations at Mangga Dua Square and elsewhere, are spaces that provide relevant case studies for the crossovers and problematic dichotomy of acting as one pleases and being subjected to a watchful gaze; malls are subject to the gaze of security staff and hypnotists. Nonetheless, malls are spaces in which identities can be shaped and where mingling with strangers takes place.⁴ Degrees of public and private are subject to negotiation. Practices of surveillance and security seek to maintain a degree of exclusion; these practices, however, are not impenetrable to subversion.

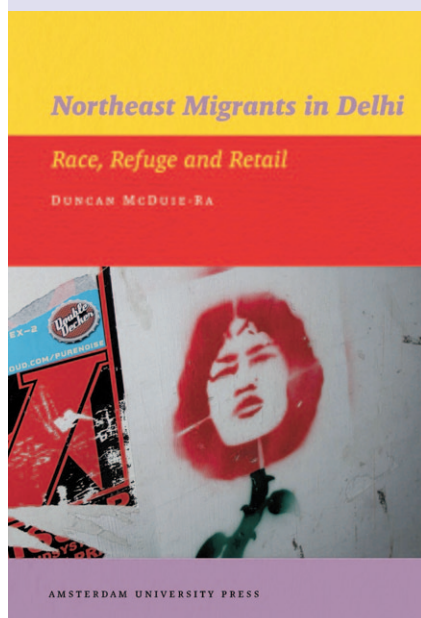
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New ICAS and IAS publications

Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge and Retail Duncan McDuire-Ra



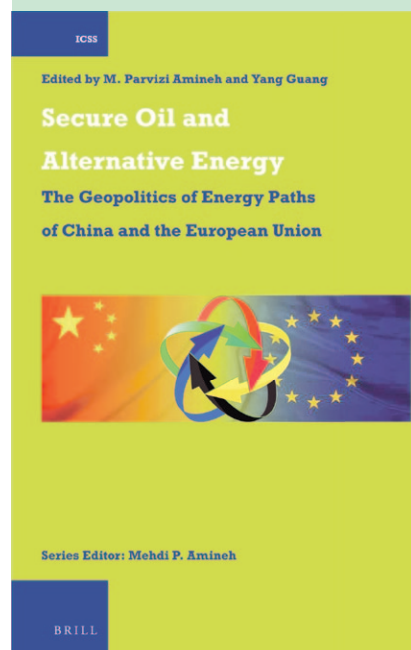
– McDuire-Ra's illuminating account of the unexpected lives of northeast migrants in a metropolis compels us to rethink conventional ways of thinking about India's changing frontier lands and peoples. This rigorously researched and superbly written book is anthropology at its best.

Amita Baviskar, Associate Professor at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University

Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge and Retail is an ethnographic study of migrants from India's northeast border region living and working in Delhi, the nation's capital. Northeast India borders China, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. Despite burgeoning interest in the region, little attention is given to the thousands of migrants leaving the region for Indian cities for refuge, work, and study. The stories of Northeast migrants reveal an everyday Northeast India rarely captured elsewhere and offer an alternative view of contemporary India. Northeast migrants covet the employment opportunities created by India's embrace of globalization; shopping malls, restaurants, and call centres. Yet Northeast migrants also experience high levels of racism, harassment, and violence. Far from simply victims of the city, Northeast migrants have created their own 'map' of Delhi, enabling a sense of belonging, albeit an uneasy one. Interdisciplinary in nature, this book will appeal to scholars of anthropology, urban studies, geography, migration, and Asian studies.

Dr Duncan McDuire-Ra, PhD is Senior Lecturer in Development Studies, convenor of Development Studies, School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

Secure Oil and Alternative Energy: The Geopolitics of Energy Paths of China and the European Union Edited by M. Parvizi Amineh and Yang Guang



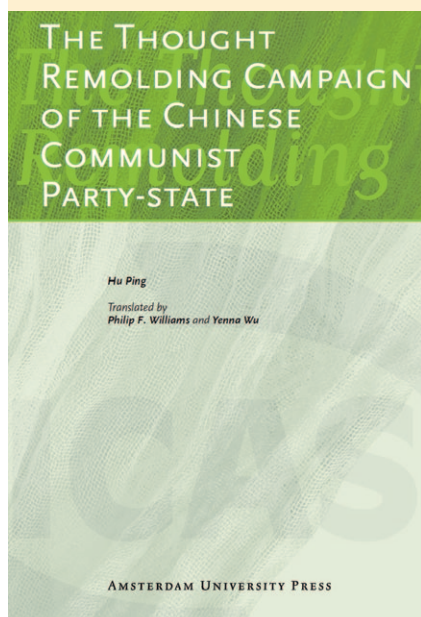
THIS BOOK, PUBLISHED BY BRILL, is the second major publication of the joint research programme between the Energy Programme Asia (EPA) of IAS and the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS-CASS), in collaboration with three other Chinese research institutes of CASS and four universities in the Netherlands. This is the follow-on study to the well-received *The Globalization of Energy: China and the European Union* (Brill 2010). The other three Chinese institutes of CASS are: the Institute of Industrial Ecology (IIE), the Institute of Russian, East Europe and Central Asian Studies (IREECAS) and Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS). The joint research programme was supported by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IAS.

M. Parvizi Amineh is Director of the Energy Programme Asia (EPA) at IAS and a member of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam. Yang Guang is Director-General of the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing, China, President of the Chinese Associations of Middle East Studies, Executive President of the Chinese Society of African Studies, and editor-in-chief of the academic journal West Asia and Africa.

– While intensive cooperation between China and the EU in the fields of energy use, environmental protection, and sustainability is highly needed, the question remains unanswered how this cooperation could be organized. Since the proven gas and oil reserves lay outside China and the EU, they are both facing geopolitical challenges to energy security in the foreseeable future. This volume puts the geopolitical implementation of China's and the EU's energy security into the context of (a) geo-economic systems in a global scale including the Central Eurasian, the Middle East and Africa hydrocarbon energy complex and (b) the emergence of a geo-economic energy network spreading from China to Western Europe. The edited volume consists of 14 high-quality papers on topics such as the geo-politics of energy-supply security, alternative sources of energy, energy transition and, at the global level, energy governance.

Prof. Dr. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, Director Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, Forschungs-und Studienstätte für Europäische Kulturgeschichte

The Thought Remolding Campaign of the Chinese Communist Party-State Hu Ping. Translated by Philip F. Williams and Yenna Wu



– With a rare combination of psychological insight and philosophical rigor, Hu Ping takes us on an empathetic and sometimes wry journey along the twisting pathways of compliance and resistance. His astute analysis culminates in a clarion call to resist the overwhelming power of the state.

Andrew Nathan, Professor of Political Science, Columbia University

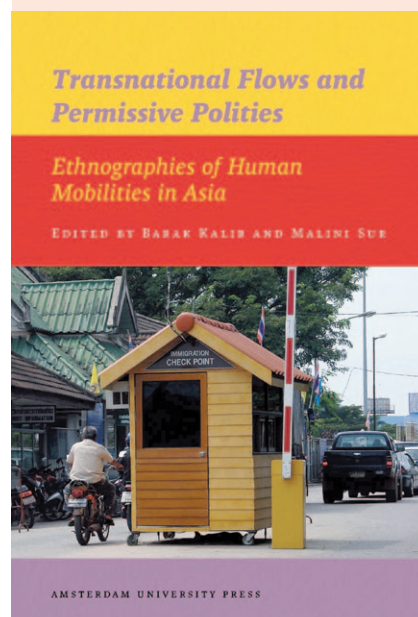
– An incisive critique of the intellectual chicanery, psychological manipulation, and physical coercion that form the core of Chinese communism. Hu Ping makes a significant contribution to the literature on totalitarianism in the tradition of Vaclav Havel.

Professor Steven Levine, University of North Carolina

IN ITS COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS of a wide range of primary and secondary sources in both Chinese and Western languages, this authoritative work stands as the definitive study of the theory, implementation and legacy of the Chinese Communist Party's thought-remolding campaign. This decades-long campaign involved the extraction of confessions from millions of Chinese citizens suspected of heterodoxy or disobedience to party dictates, along with their subjection to various forms of 're-education' and indoctrination. Hu Ping's carefully structured overview provides a valuable insider's perspective, and supersedes the previous landmark study on this vastly interesting topic.

Hu Ping is chief editor of the New York-based monthly journal Beijing Spring, and is on the Board of Directors of the NGO Human Rights in China. He has authored over ten books, including *Chine, à quand la démocratie? – les illusions de modernization* (2004; translated by Marie Holzman). Philip F. Williams is visiting professor of Asian history at Montana State University and professor emeritus of Chinese, Arizona State University. Yenna Wu is distinguished teaching professor of Chinese at the University of California, Riverside.

Transnational Flows and Permissive Polities: Ethnographies of Human Mobilities in Asia Edited by Barak Kalir and Malini Sur



– By foregrounding the negotiations that lie at the intersection of competing political and social authorities, this volume radically transforms conventional meanings of sovereignty. By separating legality from order, rules from rule, legitimacy from power, and, illegality from crime, we encounter gendered and national state effects that take shape in startling and counter-intuitive ways. The complex relation of human movement to subjectivity becomes the common axis for fine-grained empirical essays that range across Asia, from the Persian Gulf to India, from Israel to China.

Itty Abraham, National University of Singapore

Transnational Flows and Permissive Polities examines how legality and other sources of authority intersect in the regulation of human mobility. The book focuses on the ethnographic exploration of the experiences and views of mobile subjects in the vast and rapidly changing continent of Asia. The contributors analyze tensions between the letter of the law and social legitimation, territorial boundaries and commodity flows, state practices and migrant subjectivities, and labour brokerage and national and international organizations. This volume offers key insights for students of globalization and transnationality and policy relevance for development practitioners, governments, and NGOs.

Barak Kalir is assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. He is Co-Director of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, and Director of the Master Programme in Contemporary Asian Studies.

Malini Sur received her PhD from the University of Amsterdam in 2012 and is a fellow at the University of Toronto, in autumn 2012.

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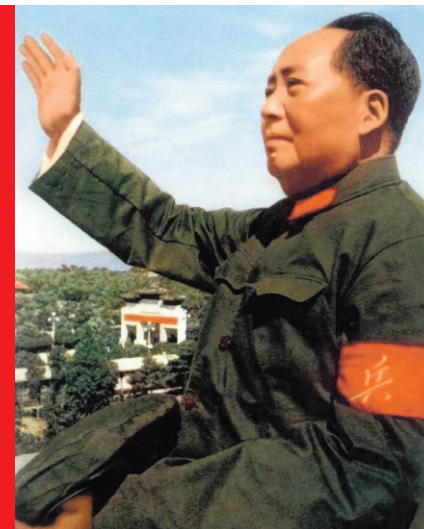
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The Chinese Communist Party, then and now

As it approaches its hundredth birthday, the Chinese Communist Party faces a crisis of legitimacy. It has weathered the turbulent events of the twentieth century to emerge as the single dominant force in Chinese politics. Ruling over a fifth of the world's population, the CCP is enmeshed with every organ of Chinese government and dominates the apparatus of state, from the military to the media. As Will Hutton notes in the foreword to *Friends and Enemies*, "Today's China is the Party's creation" (Brown, p. x). It is impossible to understand contemporary Chinese society without addressing the role of the CCP within it.

Mireille Mazard



Brown, Kerry. 2009.

Friends and Enemies: The Past, Present and Future of the Communist Party of China. London, UK and New York, NY: Anthem Press. 224 pages, paperback. ISBN: 9781843317814

Laliberté, André and Marc Lanteigne (eds.) 2008.

The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century: Adaptation and the Reinvention of Legitimacy. Abingdon, UK and New York, NY: Routledge. 208 pages, paperback. ISBN: 9780415692182

HOWEVER, THE PARTY'S domestic (and increasingly international) political might have its challengers. The Chinese government's own official figures count tens of thousands of popular protests every year. The 2011 'disappearance' and subsequent house arrest of Ai Weiwei, who challenged the government by investigating a corruption scandal in the wake of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, emblemizes the Party's response to its challengers. It was also a potent reminder that Tibetans and Uighurs are not the only citizens with cause for complaint.

The two volumes reviewed here each examine the CCP's authority and its role in the political structures of the PRC, asking how the Party maintains its contested power. Kerry Brown explores the "past, present and future" of the CCP from its academic origins in Shanghai to the present and future incarnations of the Politburo. Laliberté and Lanteigne examine adaptation, the reinvention of legitimacy, and the shifting goals and policies of the Chinese government.

Left with more doubts

Friends and Enemies is an intelligent and accessible history of the Party. Brown condenses almost ninety years of CCP history (till 2008) into the first hundred pages. Chapter One examines the CCP's early days, beginning with its Shanghai meetings, supported by the Soviets, and its conflicted alliance with the KMT. Chapter Two charts the period of Mao's rule, from 1949 to his death in 1976. The reform period, discussed in Chapter Three, witnessed some subtle and some conspicuous political changes, not least the democracy movement, which ended in a crackdown. The remaining chapters, just under half the book, are devoted to the current state of the Party, the challenges it faces in the twenty-first century, and how its future affects that of the globe. The events of Tiananmen Square leave the democratization issue unresolved, and Brown takes up this thorny question in the final chapter, which examines the changing context for socialist governance in a globalized, wired age.

Friends and Enemies is a useful complement to more detailed, technical sources such as the Cambridge History of China (vols. 12-15), and the work of historians like Frank Dikötter and Michael Dutton (see Dikötter 2010, Dutton 2005). The book would make excellent reading for students, and I recommend it to anyone with an interest in modern China who is not already a master of the twists and turns of twentieth-century Chinese politics.

Brown, who spent several years in China as a diplomat and businessman, draws on his professional background to augment his academic research, affording him a refreshing perspective on CCP mentality. The Party, he notes, "acts as though it were answerable to no one but itself" (p. 6); but Brown does not demonize or dehumanize its members, whose ranks today include entrepreneurs, intellectuals, ambitious students, as well as farm laborers and the more traditional proletariat. To Brown, the Party is not an impersonal or abstract entity, but a multitude of human faces: the officials, cadres, and other Party members that he personally met in China (ch. 1).

Brown cuts through much of the myth-making by the Party's friends and enemies alike. This entails a productive

problem-ization of historical 'facts'. Yet some historical 'facts' are called into question only to leave the reader with more doubts. Was the Hundred Flowers campaign a cynical ploy or an innocent plan gone wrong? Brown seems to dismiss the former possibility (p. 66). He also implies that Lin Biao never planned an assassination attempt against Mao, and that the plane crash that killed him may have been deliberate (p. 78). Controversies of this nature should not be glossed over, and Brown should have given a detailed explanation of his sources. Some of the most interesting and original material appears in the final chapters of the book, where Brown's political insights are especially valuable. China, he reminds us, may well "redefine the role of the state in the coming century" (pp. 184).

Rebranding China

The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century explores the reinvention in response to current challenges. The editors note "growing internal unrest, [...]" and other signs that the authority of the [...] CCP is being questioned. Yet, there exists no credible alternative" (p. 1). After the crisis of 1989, the Party (led by Deng Xiaoping) "turned to a strategy of eudaemonic legitimacy" (p. 8), rebranding itself as the guarantor of the greatest happiness for the greatest number. However, "the social tensions generated by the transition towards a market economy, in the absence of any political reform, became intolerable" (p. 3). As China got richer, its system of "market socialism" accrued both capitalist and socialist ills: corruption, inefficiency, radical inequalities, environmental degradation, and land grabs for the purposes of expanding China's gleaming new cities and suburbs, all aggravated by a lack of democracy (p. 7). Today, public dissatisfaction and outright resistance pose a threat to the Party's grip on Chinese politics. The Party-state may face three options in future: "retreat, retrenchment and adaptation" (p. 5, original emphasis). The editors argue that it is banking on the third strategy (p. 7), cautiously dismantling some of its former structures, drafting new laws and policies, and encouraging the growth of a uniquely state-led civil society.

The volume's chapters each explore different aspects of this reinvention, in connection with the three pillars of the CCP's legitimacy: economic performance, political stability, and nationalist ideology. Xu Feng (ch. 2) examines the Party's efforts to construct "harmonious communities" as the building-blocks of a "harmonious society", a replacement for the once all-encompassing *danwei* (work unit) system. Hélène Piquet (ch. 3) outlines the establishment of Chinese Labor Law, designed to aid the transition from "iron rice bowls" to a more flexible (and risky) labor economy. Marc Lanteigne (ch. 9) examines Chinese governance in the context of globalization and development. Susan Henders (ch. 6) looks at Hong Kong's special administrative status and the limits of the "one country, two systems" policy. Charles Burton (ch. 8) appraises the "Beijing consensus" as a model for economic development, and suggests that "a more just society based on a democratic government [...] could strengthen China's social solidarity, national pride and unified sense of purpose" (p. 160).

Jonathan Schwartz (ch. 4) points to a dilemma faced by the Chinese state: its quest for economic growth has severely damaged the environment. This, in turn, leads to public dissatisfaction, and protests against industry and government. The state now recognizes pollution as a social as well as environmental problem, yet it is reluctant to crack down on polluters, as this would entail curbing economic growth. It increasingly turns to NGOs to circumvent this conflict. André Laliberté (ch. 5) examines Taiwanese and other overseas Chinese charity operations in mainland China, where common cultural ground presents both opportunities and challenges. Although the Party-state regulates and coordinates the operations of charities such as Tzu Chi at the highest level, their success in delivering crucial aid depends on a complex set of factors on the ground. Cadres, for example, might be less inclined to cooperate with overseas organizations at the start of their careers, when they have more at stake. The Party's

emphasis on nationalism means that something as simple as placing a commemorative plaque on a newly-built school can be politically sensitive when a Taiwanese charity is involved.

Diana Lary (ch. 7) examines the CCP's use of history to legitimate the current regime. It has fashioned itself into the Qing dynasty's heir, and employs the past to bolster its somewhat "flimsy" basis for ideological (and territorial) legitimacy, throughout the former Qing empire, including Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan (see p. 133). Lary employs the seventeenth-century figure of Zheng Chenggong as a case study for the strategic reinventions of the past. Zheng, the Taiwanese son of a Fujianese pirate and a Japanese mother, serves as a polyvalent symbol: for the CCP, an icon of national reunification with Taiwan; for Minnan people, a regional cultural hero; for Taiwanese, a hero of independence from the mainland.

While the volume contains much interesting material, it is not always clear how the articles complement one another. Some chapters (like Lary's) are aimed at a wide audience of social scientists, while others are written for a narrow audience of political scientists or public policy experts. The editors could have tied the material together more clearly with a concluding chapter. Finally, to live up to the title's ambitions, the book should have included more human detail, and a focus on the state in China's vast rural hinterland.

Editing process

Both Brown's history and Laliberté and Lanteigne's edited volume suffer from the defects of the digital printing paradigm: the page layout, binding, and copy-editing all leave much to be desired. Especially irksome are the errors and inconsistencies in the transcription of Chinese terms. *Friends and Enemies* gives four (!) different spellings for "Yan'an" (pp. 41, 48, 50, 64). *The Chinese Party-State* gives two spellings of "ZhengChenggong" (pp. 141, 143), and has *danwei* inconsistently misspelled as *danewei* (throughout ch. 1). Two Chinese terms appear alongside the pinyin for completely different words (p. 90). Regardless of Chinese ability, any copy-editor should have caught inconsistencies in romanization. Both books should have been equipped with glossaries providing the most important terms in both pinyin and Chinese characters. At a time when authors are being asked to do more and more of the publisher's work, copy-editing their own texts, even providing their own index, these problems are symptomatic of a lack of investment in quality. It is to be hoped that future editions will remedy these problems, which have become endemic to digital imprints.

Both books avoid the common (and false) assumption that greater wealth will naturally lead China to greater democracy, the myth of the "end of history". Instead, they show that the Party has maintained its firm grip on the Chinese government and its extraordinary penetration of everyday life, while carrying out radical reforms in some key areas. The failures of some of these reforms – such as the corruption of village elections, and the loss of social services – is itself worthy of study. Both books leave the reader with the sense that these are crucial and unresolved questions, and that the will of the CCP is somehow more and less than the sum of its parts.

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The 1965-1966 killings

The study of the 1965-1966 killings in Indonesia, and for that matter the study of the country's politics more generally, will never be the same again with the recent release of the documentary film *The Act of Killing* (21 August 2012, Toronto International Film Festival), directed by Joshua Oppenheimer with co-director Christine Cynn. The film's protagonists are leading figures in the local paramilitary organisation Pemuda Pancasila [Pancasila Youth], who were responsible for the killings of hundreds of real or suspected communists in North Sumatera in 1965-1966, as part of a nationwide program that took approximately one million lives. Although testimonies and published analyses of the event have slowly emerged, it is one of those topics that most people have some knowledge about, but prefer not to discuss even in private.

Ariel Heryanto



THE RESULT OF SEVEN YEARS of hard work, involving many hundreds of hours of footage, the documentary radically challenges some of the old and familiar assumptions in the study of politics and violence. It also demonstrates an ingenious method of documentary filmmaking that will be of special interest to students of media studies, history, visual ethnography, and the anthropology of media. Undoubtedly, human rights activists and institutions will have a deep interest in the way this film penetrates the entrenched impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of one of the worst massacres in modern history. Some of the leaders of the groups responsible for the massacre still hold government offices at local and national levels today.

All currently existing films with a focus on the 1965 killings and its aftermath (as distinct from those that present the same events only in the background of their story)² are dedicated to giving a voice to the survivors and members of their families, occasionally with sympathetic comments from experts. These films have broken the general onscreen silence that has lasted for over a quarter of a century. To my knowledge, a total of 16 such documentaries have been produced, most of them in small circles, by individual survivors,³ local non-governmental organisations⁴ and filmmakers,⁵ in addition to three titles by foreign filmmakers.⁶

All these documentaries show the ordeals of the victims and the various forms of their victimisation. Made with low budgets and very basic technology, most of these locally produced documentaries feature talking heads from among the survivors and eye-witnesses. Frail and aged-looking women appear in many of these films, speaking emotionally about their endless agony and presenting their condemnations against the past injustice and the continued failure on the part of the successive governments to acknowledge it.⁷

Individually and collectively, those films have merits of their own, and their importance to the fledgling efforts to unearth the buried history cannot be over-emphasised. However, due to their limited circulation, but also to the successful anti-communist propaganda that has been deeply embedded and normalised in the public consciousness since 1966, these documentaries have yet to make any significant impact in public. For now, their impact is certainly too limited to undermine the New Order propaganda. These previous films presented a counter-claim that boldly reversed the positions of good versus evil that were firmly implanted in the nation's history by successive governments and their supporters, best

exemplified in the nearly four-and-a-half-hour anti-communist state-produced film entitled *Pengkhianatan G 30 September* (1984). However, a reversal of this kind only reproduces, and does not eliminate or problematise, the fundamental framework of a good versus evil dichotomy that structures the government propaganda and public imagination. While giving voice to the silenced victims, the perpetrators of the 1965-1966 killings did not appear in these alternative films. In government-sponsored propaganda and off-screen statements, whenever these perpetrators (or their sponsors and supporters) speak of the events, their statements consist mainly of denials along with the frequent placing of blame on the victims.

In remarkable contrast, *The Act of Killing* is fascinating as much as disturbing for its radical subversion of the prevailing paradigm, in that it presents a narrative of the killings in a complex story, with multi-layered sub-narratives, rich with ironies and contradictions. An adequate discussion of the significance and problematics that this film brings to the fore is far beyond the scope of this brief article. Here I can only mention in the simplest terms some of the most obvious aspects that will have immediate impact for our current scholarship on the issue.

The Act of Killing graphically visualizes acts of violence that make the horrors in the previous documentaries (allusions to anti-communist captors, torturers, rapists), as well as in *Pengkhianatan G 30 September* (the evils of an allegedly communist-backed movement against rightist six generals and one lieutenant on the eve of 1 October 1965) pale into insignificance. In this respect, *The Act of Killing* incriminates the perpetrators of the 1965-1966 killings more seriously than any of the preceding films have done. But this new documentary goes much further than simply validating or reinforcing the survivors' allegations about the cruelty of the military-orchestrated anti-communist pogrom.

Instead of submitting new 'facts' or a set of serious 'evidence' about the crimes against humanity in 1965-1966, *The Act of Killing* presents an abundance of extravagantly-styled self-incriminations by the 1965 executioners themselves, as they speak proudly to the camera about how they pushed their cruelty to the extreme when killing the communists and members of their families, and raping their female targets,

including children. In front of the camera, they go on to demonstrate step-by-step how they carried out the killings at the original sites of their actions in 1965, thus making the survivors' allegations of their crimes redundant. *The Act of Killing* exposes in a most obscene fashion what the successive Indonesian governments since 1966 have erased from official history and government pronouncements.

More than one of the perpetrators in this film observes perceptively that 'their' film will outdo the government's infamous *Pengkhianatan G 30 September* in portraying scenes of horrendous violence. They remark that the general public is utterly wrong to assume (in line with New Order government propaganda) that the Communists are cruel or brutal; "We are crueler and more brutal than the Communists", they claim. They elaborate what they mean in great detail, both through words and re-enactments on camera. The film contains some of the most violent scenes and language I have seen or heard, on or off screen, from or on Indonesia. Viewers need to have a strong stomach to watch this film.

Questions raised

However, violent scenes and perverted language are only a part of the image that this film presents. *The Act of Killing* is unusual in the series of documentaries on the theme to date; it is the first long film on the 1965-1966 killings to feature the perpetrators, instead of the survivors or their sympathisers, as the main characters. This is only possible with the consent of those individual executioners, especially as they appear without their identities being concealed. They recollect their own crimes, most of the time laughing, singing and dancing, and only occasionally with remorse and reported nightmares.

Three closely-related sets of questions came up in my mind when I first saw two earlier and shorter versions of the film in 2010 and 2011. Some clues began to dawn on me after watching the final and longer version in 2012, and after having further conversations with Oppenheimer, the director.

The first set of questions concerns methods. How did the filmmakers manage to persuade these perpetrators to speak so freely, and in such self-incriminating way? Since it was evident

1 (above): Executioners preparing for the film shooting, in which they acted in rotation as their 1965 victims. Courtesy of the copyright owner who wishes not to be named.

Facts and fictions in dangerous liaisons¹

that there was no hidden camera involved, I wondered if some strategy of deception was being cleverly used. However, if we presuppose that these individuals were active participants in the filmmaking project, the question can be formulated differently from their perspective, vis-à-vis the professional filmmakers: why would these perpetrators want to make all these serious self-incriminations, and liberally so, presumably knowing full well that their statements would eventually be widely disseminated to the public? What did they wish to gain for themselves or give to the audience? While they might have been extremely cruel in their youth, could they possibly, some 40 years later, be so foolish as to not be aware of the risks involved in making their self-incriminations the way they did?

The second set of questions relates to ethical issues. Regardless of the political aptness and risk-awareness of these actors, I wondered for a moment if the filmmakers had given them viewing access to the recordings, so that they could judge reflexively for themselves how they appeared on screen, and could gauge the potential impacts both on themselves and on their audience. Had the filmmakers actually discussed these issues and confronted the actors with the kind of questions that the film audience would likely raise? It is a relief to see in the long version of the film affirmative answers to these questions.

The third set of questions interrogates issues of truth. Regardless of what these perpetrators have said about what they did to the Communists in 1965-1966, to what extent do their statements and re-enactments represent the actual events of 1965-1966? How do we know and assess this? How much fact and/or fiction have gone into the narratives in this film? Does it matter? The remaining space below is devoted to preliminary answers to these questions.

Boastfully self-incriminating

One immediate, if partial, answer to the first set of questions is evident throughout the film: these executioners enjoy boasting. Off-screen, director Oppenheimer investigates this point further in a separate, but immediately related component of the larger project.⁸ The executioners are well aware of the risks involved, and their discussions about these risks are on record. Perhaps we all enjoy some boasting sometimes, in front of some people. One would assume, however, that most people are careful not to do so about absolutely anything, at any time, and before the general public.

So the boasting thesis prompts further and more important questions. Under what conditions – real or perceived – did these 1965-1966 executioners have the pleasure and the privilege of boasting so liberally about what they admit to as their ‘crimes’? What circumstances made it possible for them to enjoy a full and extended period of impunity? Selected scenes in *The Act of Killing* provide some answers. The protagonists in this film enjoy the patronage of their fellow executioners and other anti-communist politicians who have climbed the political ladder, and who have been running the country or provinces in the past several decades. Top national and local politicians who serve as their patrons appear in the film, demonstrating their close relations with members of the local paramilitary, including the film’s protagonists.

A detailed study in English of the political roles of militia groups and gangs of thugs (locally called *preman*, from the Dutch word *vrijman* [free man]) in New Order Indonesia and their mutually beneficial relations with the state apparatus, especially the military, is available in the work of Loren Rytter. Focusing on Pemuda Pancasila, Rytter emphasises the salient role of the branch in Medan, the birthplace and the strongest base of the group, in the 1965-1966 killings.⁹ However, as Rytter has hinted, with the changing configurations within the top level of state power after 1998, it is unclear to what extent

and for how much longer these people can remain in power and provide protection to their subordinates or partners in the provinces. Rytter observes that “contracts for Pemuda Pancasila in preman projects may be drying up, with the balance shifting in favor of ascendant Islamic oriented *preman*” (1998: 72).

Thanks to the executioners’ self-confidence, there was little or no need for the filmmakers to persuade them to speak to the camera as they did. To ensure that fundamental ethical requirements were appropriately observed, the filmmakers did not simply share the rough footage with the film actors-cum-political executioners (Question 2); the latter’s viewing of the footage, and their comments on the footage as they watched, are in fact important parts of the story in *The Act of Killing*. This is one area where the filmmakers display their innovation, but it is also the area where things start to get marvelously complicated.

“We are crueler and more brutal than the Communists”, they claim. They elaborate what they mean in great detail, both through words and re-enactments on camera.

Instead of simply filming these dangerously boastful individuals as an object of the camera, Oppenheimer invited them to take a big share in the process of the making of the film. Oppenheimer offered them the liberty to create a fictive story for their collaborative project, based on their memory of and personal experience in the 1965-1966 killings, plus their reflective response to that past in the act of recollecting. These former executioners took part in the design, scripting, casting and shooting of a film that they wished to produce and star in. *The Act of Killing* shows how they prepared and produced their film, and how they commented on the footage that resulted from their collaborative work, as well as the unintended consequences of the experience upon the life of at least one of the protagonists. Oppenheimer also asked some of them quite bluntly about their preparedness to face possible charges of war crimes. One of them responds mockingly, in full confidence of his immunity to prosecution: “Please help tell them to indict me”.

The Act of Killing is not a documentary with a straightforward narrative structure of the kind that characterises all the preceding films on the 1965-1966 killings. It is a documentary film about historical agents and also about how these agents make a film about themselves, based on their remembered actions in 1965-1966. Even as it presents an oral history investigation of that murky period, and first-hand recollection from some of the executioners, it is also about these executioners’ consciously drafted fictions and re-enactments as a medium through which they articulate their memories and comment on those memories. Therefore, instead of relegating the protagonists to an object of someone else’s rolling camera, the directors allow them to co-author their own self-incriminating narratives, which they do with considerable liberty, wit, laughter and pleasure.

Framed as such, the selected facts interweave with consciously invented fiction, memories of the past, and the experience of narrating before the camera to converge into an extremely fascinating account of the complex story, with moments of horror, laughter, singing and dancing, full of ironies and surprising slippages. Ultimately (in relation to the third set of questions), the final outcome is no more or less instructive than any of the preceding films on the subject, including those with a sole commitment to factual truths (as in the form of survivor testimonies) or with liberal fabrication (as in the government anti-communist propaganda). They are all highly instructive in different ways; not so much for the specific, crude, empirical ‘facts’ of what happened in the past in any coherent and self-contained format, but rather, and more importantly, instructive in their different ways about what these enunciations might mean to contemporary politics in the present, as much as the conditions past and present that make their actions, recollections and re-enactments possible.

2 (below): Three ‘free men’ revisiting the sites and their roles in the 1965 killings, in the city of Medan. Courtesy of the copyright owner who wishes not to be named.



Towards the end of the propaganda?

One can never be fully sure of what the protagonists might wish to achieve from the project. On screen, they all claim that they simply want to “tell history truly as it is” to the world, not just to Indonesia, while critically questioning the truth as presented in *Pengkhianatan G 30 September*. Narratives of this kind can easily slip into making former criminals into sympathetic heroes, as one talk show at the local branch of the state-owned television network has done (shown in *The Act of Killing*), featuring the same characters. But *The Act of Killing* is not a story of repentance. While Oppenheimer is careful not to give the protagonists a chance to become self-appointed heroes, neither does he make them look complete fools or monsters. Apparently fully unscripted, one of the most senior, boastful and brutal executioners was unable to contain his own emotion, or the guilt that belied their machismo, after a series of acting and re-enactments with his fellows, in which they, in rotation, took on the roles of tortured communist captives.

The propaganda about the 1965-1966 killings has outlived the New Order government that authored it. *The Act of Killing* promises that we may soon see the demolition of that sanctified propaganda, if and when a copy of the documentary finds its audience among millions of Indonesians: through youtube on the hourly rented computers at the internet stalls, or on smart phones across the nation, home of one of the world’s largest number of Facebook account holders and one of the world’s largest markets of pirated DVDs.

If and when such events transpire, we will witness the biggest irony that most people from opposing positions in the history of the 1965-1966 killings will have to swallow: that the nation’s biggest and most atrocious deception is being ripped apart not so much through the efforts of some extraordinarily resilient survivors with the most damning testimonies, or by some experts who speak eloquently on their behalf, but by courtesy of a bunch of boastful killers that many of us would love to hate.

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Notes

- This article was prepared when I was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. It is part of a larger work-in-progress, supported by The Australian National University’s College of Asia and the Pacific and the Australian Research Council. I am very grateful to all these institutions for their support, as well as to Joshua Oppenheimer for the privileged access to his film prior to its release.
- Examples include *The Years of Living Dangerously* (1983), *Cie* (2005), and *Sang Penari* [The Dancer] (2011).
- Lembaga Kreativitas Kemanusiaan (LKK) [Institute of Creative Humanity], led by poet-cum-novelist Putu Oka Sukanta, is to date the single largest producer of documentary films that revisit the 1965 violence. Putu and several members of LKK were political prisoners for their active membership of the Institute of People’s Culture [Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, LEKRA], which was affiliated with the PKI. The six titles that LKK has produced are, chronologically, *Menyemai terang dalam kelam* [Sowing light within the darkness] (2006); *Perempuan yang tertuduh* [The accused women] (2007); *Tumbuh dalam badai* [Growing in the storm] (2007); *Seni ditating jaman* [Art that will not die] (2008); *Tjidurian 19*, after the street address of the LEKRA office in Jakarta (2009); and *Plantungan: Potret Derita dan Kekuatan Perempuan* (2011).
- Bunga-tembok* [Flower-wall] (2003); *Kawan tiba senja: Bali seputar 1965* [Friends arriving at dusk: Bali around 1965] (2004); *Kado untuk ibu* [A gift for mother] (2004); *Putih abu-abu: Masa lalu perempuan* [Greyish white: Women’s past] (2006); *Sinenger: Sesuatu yang dirahasiakan* [Sinenger: Something unrevealed] (2007).
- Puisi tak terkuburkan* [Poetry that cannot be buried] (1999); *Djedjak darah: Surat teruntuk adinda* [Bloody Footsteps: Letter to the Beloved] (2004); *Mass grave* (2002).
- They are *The Shadow Play* (2001); *Terlena: Breaking of a nation* (2004); and *40 Years of silence: An Indonesian Tragedy* (2009).
- In 2001, significantly on his personal capacity, President Abdurrahman Wahid offered an apology to survivors and the families of victims of the 1965-1966 killings. His statement provoked an uproar. Early in 2012 there was a news report suggesting that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono intended to make a public apology for state complicity in the past human rights abuses, with no reference to any specific incidents.
- Oppenheimer, J. & M. Uwemedimo. 2009. “Show of force: a cinema-séance of power and violence in Sumatra’s plantation belt”, *Critical Quarterly*, 51(1): 84-110.
- Rytter, L. 1998. “Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto’s Order?”, *Indonesia*, 66 (Oct): 47-73, see pp. 55-56.

Women on the move

In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, NGOs poured into the Indonesian province of Aceh to assist in the recovery effort. The NGO that I worked for, like most others, imported a professional gender expert to ensure that gender issues were properly addressed in its aid programmes. She had never been to Aceh, or even Indonesia before. An Acehnese colleague, a Muslim feminist and social activist, unsurprisingly questioned the wisdom of spending a significant amount of our budget to fly in a foreign gender 'expert'. Aceh's history boasts a legacy of four queens, a female navy commander, and women warriors; in a more recent century, countless Indonesian women have campaigned for a more just and equal society.

Su Lin Lewis



Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (eds.) 2010. *Women's Movements in Asia. Feminisms and Transnational Activism*, New York: Routledge, 288 pages, ISBN: 9780415487023 (hardback)

The hiring of gender experts, usually from Western countries, is common practice in the world of international aid. While they often offer networks and ideas, they tend to have little understanding of the local historical conditions in which gender relations have evolved, and the role that local women have played in changing them. In many ways they are hardly to blame. With the exception of India, there are few rigorous historical studies of the evolution of women's movements in non-Western countries, particularly in Asia.

The appearance of *Women's Movements in Asia*, edited by Mina Roces and Louise Edwards, is thus a welcome overview for scholars as well as practitioners. The book follows a previous collection from the editors, *Women's Suffrage in Asia* (Routledge, 2004). They take their cue from Asian feminist scholar Kumari Jayawardene, whose path-breaking *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (Zed, 1986) sought to decentre the international women's movement from its supposed Western origins.

In both volumes, the editors argue that Asian feminisms must be viewed on a different timeline and context than Western feminisms. While Western women were living in relatively democratic societies, Asian women had to overcome a different set of struggles, including colonialism, authoritarian rule, and a lack of educational opportunities. Asian suffrage campaigns, as the first volume shows, existed in tension with emerging nationalist movements, particularly as many early suffragettes were Western-educated, and the image of 'modern women' often ran counter to national projects to recover an authentic, pre-colonial past. These early activists reinvigorated national conceptions of the feminine, most visibly through dress and deportment. Their struggles were entwined in a transnational realm of activism, as they interacted with Western suffragettes and sometimes inspired each other's national movements.

This edited volume delves further into the second half of the twentieth century, with thirteen authors examining the emergence of Asian feminisms within particular national contexts. Most articles begin with the emergence of early women activists, many of them suffragettes, and track the evolution of women's activism through the decades, up to the groundswell of NGOs emerging in Asia from the 1980s. In her introduction, Roces maps out some of the challenges the authors faced in writing their pieces, including accommodating the plurality of voices within each Asian country.

The authors recognise that the issue of 'Westernisation' and cultural authenticity is one of the major tensions in women's movements. The association of feminism with supposed 'bra-burning' and Western radicalism is something that many

1 (above): Indonesian women in parliament, in 1955. USIA Collection, National Archives.

2 (below): Japanese Suffragettes. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection.

Asian women activists have often tried to distance themselves from, particularly in the face of male critics prone to dismissing feminism as a corrupting Western import. Lenore Lyons argues that Singapore's AWARE has constantly battled stereotypes of feminists as 'man-haters, lesbians' and radicals taking on Western values. In Pakistan, Andrea Fleschenberg notes that women's groups engaging in broad-based social work have been met with accusations of Westernisation, creating divides between Islamist women activists and secular feminists.

Partly to evade charges of Westernisation, Asian women have drawn on the past to contribute to indigenous narratives of patriotism and female empowerment. As Edwards notes, early Chinese reformers drew inspiration from Mulan, who dressed as a man and became a Chinese general. Alessandra Chricosta argues that Au-co, the birdlike folk-heroine associated with the origins of the Vietnamese nation, has contributed to a 'myth of uniqueness' about the high status of Vietnamese women, while the Trung Sisters were repeatedly invoked as 'patriotic women warriors' in the socialist era. Roces observes that Philippine activists replaced images of dutiful, suffering women in their national epic, *Noli Mi Tangere*, with that of the *babaylan*, the pre-Hispanic priestess abolished under Spanish colonial rule. According to Trudy Jacobsen, Cambodian women activists today fight deep-seated perceptions of women as being inferior to men, and of politics being a 'male domain', with reference to the prominent role women played, both in the Angkor period and in rebuilding Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge era.



Coalitions and class

In the last thirty years, the movement of gender and sex to the forefront of public discourse has created a wide agenda for women's movements and the formation of coalitions across racial, ideological and class lines on specific issues, such as the mainstreaming of women in politics, reproductive health, domestic violence, LGBT rights, and prostitution. One of the most successful has been GABRIELA, an umbrella organisation formed in 1984 in the Philippines, which Roces sees as bringing diverse sectors of society together over a wide range of issues with a gender focus, making innovative use of radio, television, and print media. Monica Falk notes that EMPOWER, a Thai NGO, challenges long-standing notions of sex workers as 'bad' women in need of reform and instead advocates for their rights, providing them with language classes, health education, and career workshops.

The issue of class is also addressed briefly in the introduction as an overall theme, and class divides are suggested in many of the contributions. Women's organisations have often been constituted of elite and middle-class women, leading to problems in their claim to 'speak for' all women. The last article by Sumi Madhok, on 'rights discourses' in India, deals with these divides on a loose, theoretical level, but the article is not fully fleshed out in a wholly satisfying manner. What of the role of working-class women? Lyon points to precursors to working-class activism in the associations of female Chinese migrants who came to Singapore as domestic workers in the early 1900s, forming 'anti-marriage sisterhoods' with a focus

on mutual aid, yet the role of working class women disappears in the rest of the article. Seung-Kyung Kim and Kyounghee Kim note the role that Korean women played in the labour movement during the 1970s, but their link with the national women's movements isn't evident. In other articles, the role of women in labour movements is ignored, although countries such as Indonesia have had their share of prominent female labour activists. Are these activists operating on parallel tracks? Though working-class women might identify more with labour movements than self-proclaimed 'women's movements' dominated by elite and middle-class women, they are still campaigning for women's rights in the workplace, and deserve a more prominent place in the story.

The final two contributions on Cambodia and India suggest the need for closer ethnographic studies of the ways in which assumptions about ideal gender roles – by both foreign and local elite/middle class women – are constantly challenged by perceptions on the ground. Jacobsen quotes an elite Cambodian sex worker who

Twice hidden, twice forgotten

Ikeya's study brought lectures of two of my former teachers to mind. A favourite topic of the ethnologist among them was "Why exceptions?", while the then so-called non-western sociologist prompted us to always be alert to 'counterpoints'. However ingenious and plausible, paradigms 'freeze' the object of scrutiny, at the same time that things social are always on the move and never fixed. As a result, the absence of exceptions should evoke our suspicion that something is amiss, or missing at least, at the same time that counterpoints could well be indicators of things to come.

Niels Mulder

Ikeya, Chie. 2011. *Refiguring Women, Colonialism, and Modernity in Burma*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. xiii + 239 pages. ISBN: 9780824834616 (hardback)

IN HER INTRODUCTION, the author draws attention to two dominant themes that provide the blinkers that restrict the common understanding of 20th-century Burmese history and society. The first is the deeply seated image of a society that rejects foreign influences, which was tenaciously kept alive for the fifty years that xenophobic generals ran the country's affairs. This very image tends to hide the late-colonial opening up of those who actively engaged with new and foreign identities, ideas, practices, and institutions, or, in brief, with a modernity that offered alternatives to the either-or choice between westernisation and ethno-nationalism.

Focus on the 'new woman'

To unearth the forgotten or suppressed history of colonial interaction, imagination, and cosmopolitanism spells the broad subject of the study. This history is intertwined with another hidden past that most appropriately details it, viz. that of the 'modern woman' who came into view in the 1920s and 1930s. In this Burma is no exception as the 'new woman' was a world-wide topic of often controversial debates on female education, employment, comportment, political emancipation, etc. Through opening the treasure trove of official and popular Burmese- and English-language documents, plus literary and journalistic media, the book examines what it meant to be or to become modern in colonial Burma. The result is enumerated in separate chapters that focus on the educated young woman, the politicised woman, the consumerist woman, the wives and mistresses of foreign men, and the self-indulgent and often westernised woman. In doing so, our sight is trained on the counterpoints that reveal the unsettling of norms and practices, and that contributed to new social formations and asymmetries.

wonders why Western women want to give her help when she feels control over her own life, being able to enjoy sexual activity with partners she chooses. Madhok quotes a 'grass-roots worker' on a rally in which large groups of citizens mobilized and employed vernacular conceptions of the 'right to work', successfully calling for the government to guarantee employment in vulnerable rural districts. These vignettes, and the collection in general, provide examples of the ways in which the languages women activists employ refract at a number of different levels, from the rural village to the red-light district to the national media, and are harnessed for strategic social change that benefits women's lives.

Activism across borders

One of the book's major, stated contributions is that it moves beyond national frameworks to examine transnational networks and connections. While some articles mention early moments of organisation, specifically the Pan Pacific Women's Conference in 1928 and the 1934 All Asian Women's Conference in Lahore, the more recent examples are highlighted in the introduction. These include Sisters of Islam, founded in Malaysia in 1988, a highly successful transnational organisation that draws on a global community of Muslims to promote women's rights within an Islamic framework, most notably through their re-interpretations of the Qu'ran on issues such as domestic violence and polygamy. Falk looks at campaigns by Buddhist nuns in Thailand, a country that bans their ordination into the *sangha*. A network of Buddhist nuns across Asia, and elsewhere, has played a major role in the movement for ordination as well as actually performing ordinations in Thailand, being outside the *sangha's* control. This serves as an example of the way in which transnational activist networks provide new opportunities for women to fulfil their potential, while states can still continue to pose limitations that are impossible to evade without emigration.

Some issues have had an implicit transnational dimension, requiring mobilisation across borders. The problem of female

As such, the book is an exercise in the *histoire des mentalités* that traces the evolution of thought in an ethnically plural urban colonial environment. In doing so, the author convincingly demonstrates that the analysis of the cosmopolitanism of practices and discourses associated with women is a formidable crowbar to crack the dominant narrative.

As hegemonic national epics, such narratives tend to centre on the historic role of great men while freezing the image of the late colonial period and obscuring its coincident opening to the world. Whereas in such epical accounts women are at best 'inserted' as an afterthought or an indulgent nod to their unavoidable existence, it is precisely through opening up how they experienced themselves, and how they perceived and shaped the political, cultural, and socioeconomic landscape of colonial Burma that a gendered discourse grounded in real life comes to the fore.

John S. Furnivall

Next to the emasculating experience of colonialism, the second dominant theme – that corroborated with the first – grounds in John Furnivall's influential characterisation of colonial Burma as a plural society in which the Burmese lived side by side with the Europeans, Chinese, and Indians that flooded the country and that monopolised the modern sector from which the Buddhist, agrarian natives were largely excluded. In Furnivall's model, the separate groups kept apart and met only in the marketplace.

Whereas Furnivall's theorising is definitely an eye-opener to understanding multiple colonial realities, it bars life in the urban centres from view, especially the capital cities, while it is just there that schools, cosmopolitan communications, the presence of foreigners, and the influx of outlandish fashions and ideas – not to mention nationalism! – thrived. It is there that an interstitial room came into existence where people mixed and came out of the cocoon of their respective styles of life, while learning from each other. Through marrying a Burmese woman, she and Furnivall himself even became bridging figures.

trafficking has resulted in the formation of regional coalitions, like the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and the Development Action Women's Network. The issue of Comfort Women during World War II has brought Korean and Filipino activists into conversation in demanding reparations from the Japanese government, while imploring Japanese women to re-examine the complicity of early Japanese feminists in failing to question their country's aggressive military policies. Meanwhile, foreign domestic workers have lacked adequate representation in the countries they worked. Lyons explains that in Singapore, many middle-class/elite women activists employed foreign domestic workers themselves, but the issue is now being addressed by organisations such as Transient Workers Count Too, an organisation open to Singapore citizens and foreign domestic workers of all nationalities.

Forgotten histories

Although the focus on these more recent moments of transnational organisation are indeed an important contribution, the collection could have been strengthened by situating Asian women's movements within broader historical processes and trends. This is difficult, given that the format of the collection privileges national feminist narratives. Yet one can discern distinct periods of vibrancy and stagnation in Asian women's movements across the board. The 1920s and 1930s were moments of particular openness, in which women took part in national struggles and engaged with Western women, and with each other, on an unprecedented scale. The appearance of emancipated women in global popular culture, the access to new ideas through the press, the exposure of an albeit small number of women to educational opportunities, and the participation of women in anti-colonial struggles all helped to kick-start women's movements in Asia. For many Asian nations, the 1950s was a decade of post-colonial solidarity and political experimentation. The 1955 Bandung conference, which doesn't appear in the book, was an important moment of solidarity across Asian and African nations, to which women's movements in the region appealed. In Indonesia,

The read

In *Refiguring Women* the focus is on such cultural brokers, on women who aspired to be abreast of the times and to participate in wider processes. Be that as it may, it is regrettable that we are left in the dark as to the quantum of such participation. However often we run into the phrase 'women students, journalists, intellectuals, lawmakers, nurses and teachers', their numbers are nowhere accounted for, even as there must be records on school and university enrolments, and public professional careers. So, whereas we run umpteen times into statements about 'Burmese women of the times', such statements remain unqualified while their wording projects the idea of a powerful trend that only in the Conclusion is qualified as confined to the colonial capital Rangoon.

Apart from the lectures of my teachers, the composition of the book brought another admonishment to mind. It was the editorial advice with which I was sent home to rework my first academic monograph: "Mister Mulder, there are four paragraphs to the page". When I protested about this straightjacket, they pointed out that I should have my potential readers in mind. In the present work, two crowded paragraphs a page are the rule, even as these occasionally go on for more than the length of a full page. This makes for tiresome reading. The very exhaustive, often circular and repetitious arguments in those sections are burdensome, too, and retain the character of the dissertation the book once was. The same can be said about the steady surfeit of Burmese words that are supposed to have settled unambiguously in the reader's mind once introduced, but that are out of place if the text is to be of interest – as it is claimed – and accessible to students involved in Southeast Asian-, cultural-, colonial- and postcolonial studies, plus the broad subject of women and gender. Whereas the argument that has been delineated with crystal clarity in the Introduction certainly deserves this extensive audience, said obstacles should have been edited out.

Niels Mulder has retired to the southern slope of the mystically potent Mt. Banáhaw, Philippines, where he stays in touch through <niels_mulder201935@yahoo.com.ph>.

The association of feminism with supposed 'bra-burning' and Western radicalism is something that many Asian women activists have often tried to distance themselves from, particularly in the face of male critics prone to dismissing feminism as a corrupting Western import.

as Susan Blackburn notes, the 1950s saw the birth of socialist feminism under a period of parliamentary democracy. In Pakistan, women lobbied for legal reform over inheritance rights and the restriction of polygamy.

While the 1960s and 1970s are decades most closely associated with the 'second wave' of feminism in the West, this was a period in which the Cold War cast its shadow across Asia, with many countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, falling under authoritarian rule. Roces recognises that these were 'macho regimes' by nature, that clamped down on women's movements across the region. Barely any dynamic women's groups appeared in this period, apart from pockets of student activism in the Philippines. The ousting of dictators coupled with the rise of Asia's 'tiger-economies' in the 1980s was a turning point as a growing and newly confident middle-class stimulated the emergence of a vibrant civil society. It was from this period that women's groups in Asia came into their own and began conversing with each other within and across national borders over a wide range of issues.

Women's movements in Asia have shared many of the same struggles over the past hundred years, and the ability of Asian women to connect with each other across borders has often stemmed from these shared historical experiences. Overall, the book provides a rich collection of dense, critical histories detailing the emergence of women's movements in Asian countries and the particular challenges women activists have had to face. It is essential reading for anyone interested in gender issues in Asia, and, in the hopes of instilling a little humility in the face of a century of Asian women's activism, it should be in the carry-on luggage of any visiting gender specialist to the region.

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Buddhist murals of northeast Thailand

From the classic Stanley Tambiah's 1976 tome that blended cosmological and historical studies with a scientific mind in the application of the 'galactic polity,' through Professor Thongchai Winichakul's widely celebrated *Siam Mapped* (1994), to Kenon Breazeles' globalization of Thai history in *From Japan to Arabia* (1999), the field of Thai studies has remained innovative for at least the past three and a half decades of English language scholarship. This tradition continues with Bonnie Pacala Brereton and Somroay Yencheuy's exploration of *Buddhist murals of northeast Thailand*. However, Brereton and Yencheuy's contribution not only works within this tradition of Thai studies, it also creates a further bridge to the cultural flows between Lao and Thai through an articulation of the visual world of Isan.

William Noseworthy

Brereton, Bonnie Pacala and Yencheuy, Somroay. 2010. *Buddhist Murals of Northeast Thailand: Reflection of the Isan Heartland*. Chiangmai, Thailand: Silkworm Books. xi+83 pages. ISBN 978-616-90053-1-5 (paperback)

ISAN, THE NAME FOR THE 'HEARTLAND' of the Lao people in Thailand, was derived from Sanskrit by the central Thai government in the twentieth century and means simply 'northeast'. Currently Isan is a collection of Thai provinces with a population of predominantly ethnic Lao peoples, and is perhaps best known as rural farmland – although recent happenings suggest that this region could be at the forefront of global developments in sustainable organic rice production and solar energy. Furthermore, as was demonstrated by the twenty-nine year academic career of Achan Pairote, who recognized the unique and often underreported value of Isan village Buddhist murals, the current volume fills a substantial void through an appreciation for the visual culture of Isan.

In the realm of Archeology, Isan is known for one of the oldest sites in Southeast Asia, namely the Korat Plateau, and its location within the field of the Mahayanist Dvaravati culture. However, with the rise of the *mandala* of Lan Xang (derived from an old Sinitic term for 'southern river'), which linked Buddhist authority through a Theravadin Angkorean Queen, the region became more closely tied with the *mandalas* of the Thai, Khmer, and Burmese Theravadin cultures. Thus, the conception of *sima* space as a designation for sacred bounds, was adapted from the Theravadin Pali language tradition into the context of Lao murals, which bound the exterior of ordination halls or *sim*. Incidentally as a sign of the blended influence of Isan culture, Vietnamese built most *sim*. (9)

Amongst the localized images depicted upon the mural walls of Lao *sim*, are the *phi* spirits. These potent local 'gods of the soil' have been explored most recently through John Holt's latest *Spirits of the Place* in Laos, where Holt argued that Spirit cults have survived amongst the lowland Lao Luom (ethnic Lao, in Laos and Isan) through a process of Buddhacization. The presentation of Brereton and Yencheuy's work therefore can be placed in conversation with Holt's. While in Holt's work the locality of Lao culture is the lens to examine the topic of Buddhism, in the work of Brereton and Yencheuy the lens of Buddhism is used to aptly explore localizations of Lao Luom. Amongst this localization of style and form, readers will not only note a detail-driven yet readable explanation of the *Vissantara Jataka*, the *Pha Lak Pha Lam* or *Pha Lam Sadok* (the *Lao Ramayana*), and *Sai Sin* epics (presented in Chapter 5), but also the particularly soothing, earthy indigo and reddish brown tones of the Isan style.

The reddish brown and indigo tones of the Isan-Lao style are perhaps one of the strongest unifying themes throughout this well-organized ten-chapter work. Yet, other themes include the localization of practice and reinterpretation of culture as Isan moved from Lao control to be contested by the French and central Thai in the nineteenth century. At the same time a rise of wandering forest monastics and millenarianism revived a reinvigorated Buddhist practice in the area.

As Brereton and Yencheuy note, local Buddhist practice still enjoys a relatively millenarian slant. Each year, sometime between April and February, the festival begins with a recitation of a local version of the *arhat* (From Pali: an individual in the fourth and final stage of enlightenment; a 'never-returned'). The monk *Phra Malai* journeys to the hell realm and to the *Tavatimsa* heaven to bring back the

admonitions of the Buddha of the future: *Maitreya*. The festival then continues through the fulfillment of a number of these admonitions, one of which is fulfilled as monks recite the *Vassantara Jataka*, not in the scriptural language of Pali, but in Lao. Brereton and Yencheuy argue that this festival is portrayed in murals on thousands of *wats* throughout the Isan region. (48) The veneration of the future Buddha is certainly not uncommon in the Theravadin world. At the same time, the popular conception of *Maitreya* is more often thought of in association to the Mahayanist texts of the Lotus Sutra (VN: *Pháp Hoa kinh*) and the Amitabha Sutra (VN: *A Di Đà Kinh*).

The veneration of *Maitreya*, combined with Brereton and Yencheuy's assertion that Vietnamese workers constructed many of the *sim*, raises the question of long overlooked Vietnamese influence on Isan culture. This question is certainly worth pursuing through further cultural and historical research. Nevertheless, with a marvelous collection of murals depicted in full color photographs, clearly written descriptions, and a fine dedication to Isan-Lao culture, *Buddhist murals of northeast Thailand* represents a fine contribution to the fields of Art History, Thai-Lao Studies, Buddhist Studies, and examinations of localizations within Southeast Asian cultures. As such, *Buddhist murals of northeast Thailand* can be enjoyed by a wide audience of families, K-12 teachers, and academes alike.

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Below: Details from murals discussed in the book.



Pull-out supplement

theFocus



Swiss photographic collections on Asia



Switzerland – a land-locked country and a nation without a colonial past – holds a surprising number of early visual documents on Asia. This Focus section of *The Newsletter* provides a selective overview of collections to be found in the Swiss archives, commenting on their significance to research and cultural heritage, and reflecting on the technical and methodological aspects of building and maintaining such collections.

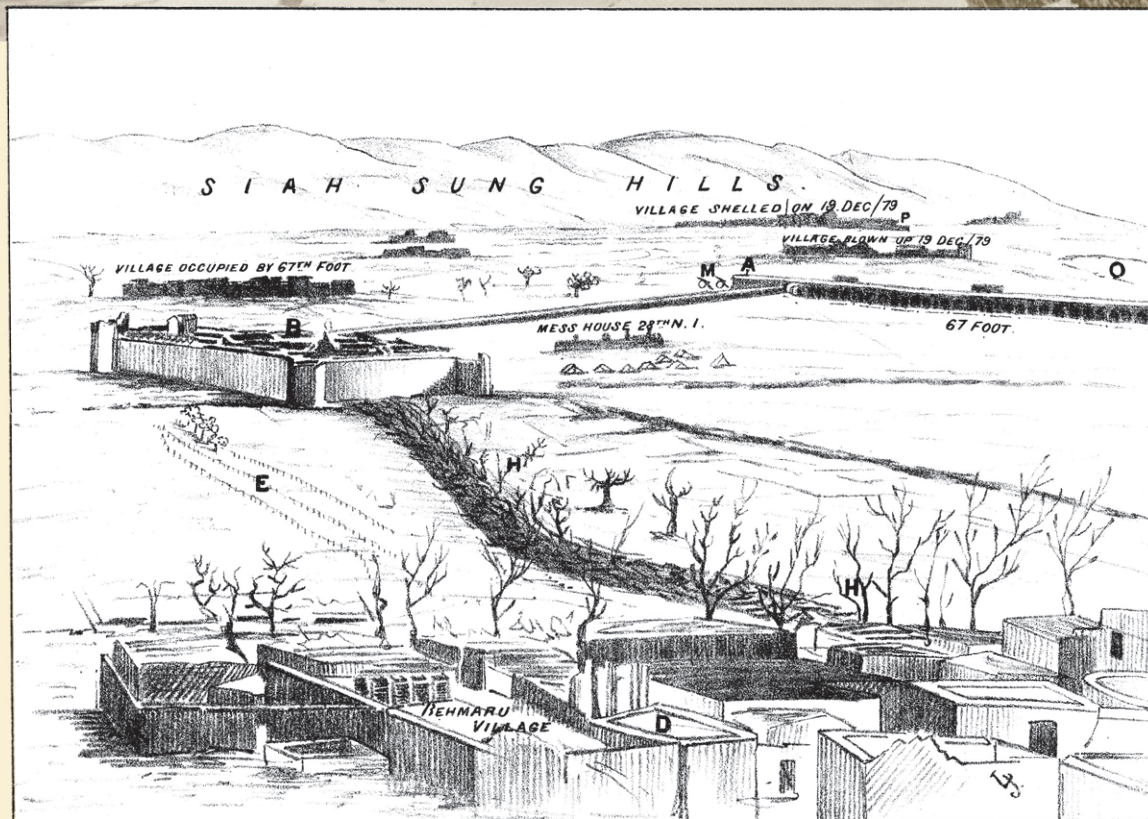


Paul Bucherer-Dietschi and Anke Schürer-Ries



Afghan Day of Independence 1 August 1944 (jashen-e esteqlal) at Baghlan in Northern Afghanistan, showing the traditional Afghan national dance 'Attan' performed by Pashtun men, belonging to the Zadran and Mangal tribes. Photograph by Swiss Architect Rudolf Stuckert. © Phototheca Afghanica.

Photographic collections on Asia in Swiss archives



- A** S.E. corner bastion. F.A., R.H.A., and Mountain guns shelled village from here.
- B** Native Field Hospital. From **A** to **B** wall was very low and incomplete.
- D** Village of Behmaru, completely enfolding **E**, held by "Corps of Guides."
- H H** Barrier of trees and ditch between village and Field Hospital. 6,000 Afghans took off to attack line **E** to **D**, Dec. 23, 1879.
- E** Obstructions of telegraph wire.
- M** Spot outside bastion where Lt. Montanaro, R.A., was mortally wounded, Dec. 19, 1879
- Q** Part of site of Cantonments, 1841.

Preservation and technical development

The preservation of early photographs in Europe was in many cases coincidental and should not be taken for granted. All images fade over the years, but even more often they were lost in times of war; others were disposed of on the occasion of a move or the clearing out of a flat or house after the owner had passed away. Luckily, the awareness of the historical and cultural importance of photographic collections depicting long past times has been growing, and many such collections now find their way into archives of institutions and museums.

In the last 25 years the knowledge concerning necessities and possibilities of preservation of historical photographs has grown considerably. There is, on the one hand, the issue of preserving the original print. On the other hand, and perhaps even more importantly, the advancing technology over the past decade provides possibilities to digitise and digitally improve faded and discoloured pictures.

In Switzerland a group of specialists jointly dedicate themselves to such issues in the framework of the institution 'Memoria' (en.memoria.ch). Its aims include:

- Preservation of and accessibility to Switzerland's photographic heritage.
- Initiation and support of projects: restoration and digitisation of collections, improvement of the accessibility of photographic records.
- Description of the state of Switzerland's photographic archives, in order to formulate a policy for their preservation.
- Heightening of public awareness at special events and exhibitions of collections that have been saved.
- Creation of a competence network, in which restoration and archiving experts tackle the preservation of the photographic cultural heritage of Switzerland.

Photography as cultural documentation

In addition to the historical and technical aspects, photography is increasingly gaining cultural and ethnic meaning and importance. Not only has a growing self-awareness and an improved feeling of national identity among the people of former colonial countries emerged, but so too an increasing interest in the sources of pictorial documents of the past. This is especially the case in our current era of globalisation, in which a growing fear of loss of ethnic and local identity is at hand.

However, this search for identity through historical images needs an additional element: the identification of the historical content of the photograph. Without the knowledge of the circumstances, the place, date and occasion of the taking of the photograph, much of its historical value is lost. These facts need a preservation similar to the conservation of the picture itself.

Furthermore, most photographs contain details that were included merely by chance, as they were the most natural things in the world at the time of taking the picture. Nowadays, it is often exactly such an unintended detail, visible only by enlargement, that becomes a very valuable historic or cultural piece of information.

Foundation Bibliotheca Afghanistanica

The initiative to put together such a focus on photographic collections on Asia in Swiss archives came from the Foundation Bibliotheca Afghanistanica, which has been documenting nature, culture and history of Afghanistan since the early 1970s. The recent Afghan history is one of almost 40 years of uninterrupted struggle and warfare. More than 80% of all the Afghans living today were born or brought up in this period. Photographic 'losses' are not only the collateral damages of war, but also the result of two waves of politically and religiously motivated iconoclasm, which saw the destruction of this specific part of Afghan cultural heritage. The project 'Phototheca Afghanistanica', which is supported by the Swiss, Liechtenstein and German governments, tries to revive a feeling of cultural identity to the Afghan youth in providing access to historic images through exhibitions and via the internet. The events in Afghanistan show that the collection of historical photographs at a safe haven in Europe could also be an important contribution to the future maintenance of cultural heritage in other regions of the world.

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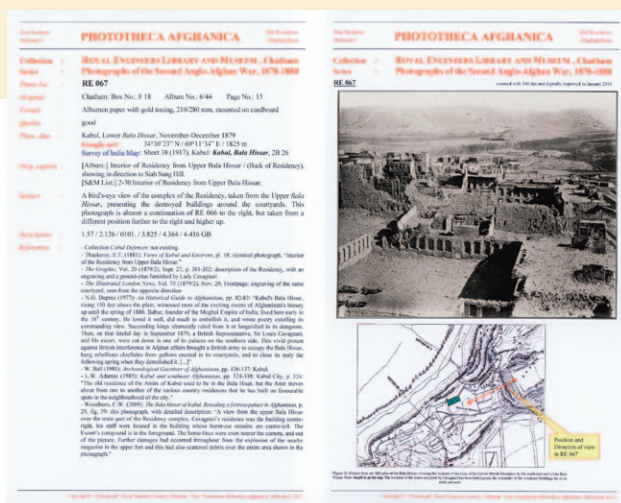
Anke Schürer-Ries is a volunteer at the Afghanistan Institute and Research Assistant Special Collections at Basel Mission Archives. (anke.schuerer-ries@gmx.net)

> Continued from page 21

Photography as a tool of information

Early photographs – approximately up till World War II – are either portraits of people (often taken in studios) or they provide extraordinary views of landscapes or objects, which the photographer intended to document and to make known to a limited or broader public. Few photographers merely wanted to create a work of art. Due to the costs and necessary efforts needed to take a photograph, at a time when you had to place your heavy camera on a tripod and to carry delicate glass-plates, one hesitated to take everyday views – as is common practice today, either with a handy digital camera or even a mobile phone. It was, however, a technical development that provided everybody with the possibility to produce an accurate image within a short period of time, without being a trained artist. This resulted in a loss of artistic expression as early photographs were rarely spontaneous and allowed for very little interpretation. It also omitted the possibility to highlight specific features.

This limitation to extraordinary objects or events is one of the reasons why collections of old photographs have a high historical and cultural value. In the case of photographs taken at that time, a further significant point needs to be made: only a small number of people had the means, the equipment and knowledge to take high quality photographs. In most cases they were European foreigners or visitors, sometimes members of the local ruling elite, but almost never ordinary people – except for some few professional photographers.



1a (top):
Bemaru village,
1879 (RE 077)
1b (middle):
Annotated sketch,
based on fig 1a.

2 (below):
A sample of a
photo-description
as it is done for the
project 'Phototheca
Afghanistanica'.

In the case of photographic collections on Asia in Swiss archives, the photographers were either missionaries, Swiss or German diplomats, owners or representatives of trading companies or early development workers, like experts for road and bridge construction, etc. All of them took photographs in order to show the results of their work – or to demonstrate the difficulties they had to face.

If these Europeans remained in the same area for a while, and got into closer contact with the local population, they also documented outstanding objects, people and events to illustrate their diaries and reports. When departing their exotic fields, the original negatives as well as the prints were, in most cases, brought back to Europe. Few prints remained on the spot, but if they did, then even fewer survived the tropical climatic conditions and inadequate handling.



Queen's Palace in Bagh-e Babur, Kabul.
 3a (above):
 In the 1920s (GV 64).
 3b (middle):
 After destruction, 2002 (PB 2002-631).
 3c (below):
 After reconstruction, 2008 (PB 2008-10).



Securing the past for the future

Benno Widmer

WHEN YOU UNDERSTAND where you come from and the environment around you, you can take the future into your hands and contribute to a better destiny. This environment and its value systems are decisively influenced by the cultural heritage of a particular society. For this reason, the Swiss Federal Office of Culture (FOC) supports the preservation and disseminating of cultural heritage in all its forms as testimonials of human experiences and pursuits for future generations.

To FOC, cultural heritage comprises not only monuments and works of art. This heritage also includes mobile cultural assets, such as the findings of archaeological excavations, objects of ethnological or scientific value, rare manuscripts, rare books, furniture, coins, as well as archives that include audio, photo and film collections. Alongside these tangible objects, the FOC also advocates the preservation of intangible cultural heritage; for example, forms of expression of living cultures, such as legends, dance and theatre, music, rituals, festivities, craftsmanship, knowledge and others. Switzerland boasts a stunning example for a multi-faceted institution for the protection of cultural heritage of one specific country: the Swiss Afghanistan Institute. It has been making a significant contribution to preservation of cultural heritage in different fields. The 'Afghanistan Museum in Exile' in Bubendorf, initiated on the request of several Afghan groups in 1998, was a temporal safe deposit for archaeological and ethnographic cultural assets. In 2007, at the behest of the Afghan authorities and with the approval of UNESCO, 1423 objects, which had been entrusted to and held in trust by the institute, were repatriated to Kabul. The FOC as well as many other institutions and private persons supported this initiative.

Increased awareness for the importance of photographic documentation in the past decade brought about the need to understand its cultural importance. It became obvious that not only the physical preservation to avoid decay and loss of the original photograph itself is important. However, an in-depth understanding and description of its content is necessary in order to transmit contexts and relationships depicted in the photograph to future generations.

Based on this conclusion, the FOC supports the project 'Phototheca Afghanica', of which a first selection will be accessible online from July 2012. The images presented and extensively described are a treasure trove for the mediation of the cultural heritage of the war-torn country and society of Afghanistan. Subsequently, the project can serve as a vessel for the advancement of cultural identity and self-awareness of all Afghans, today and in the future.

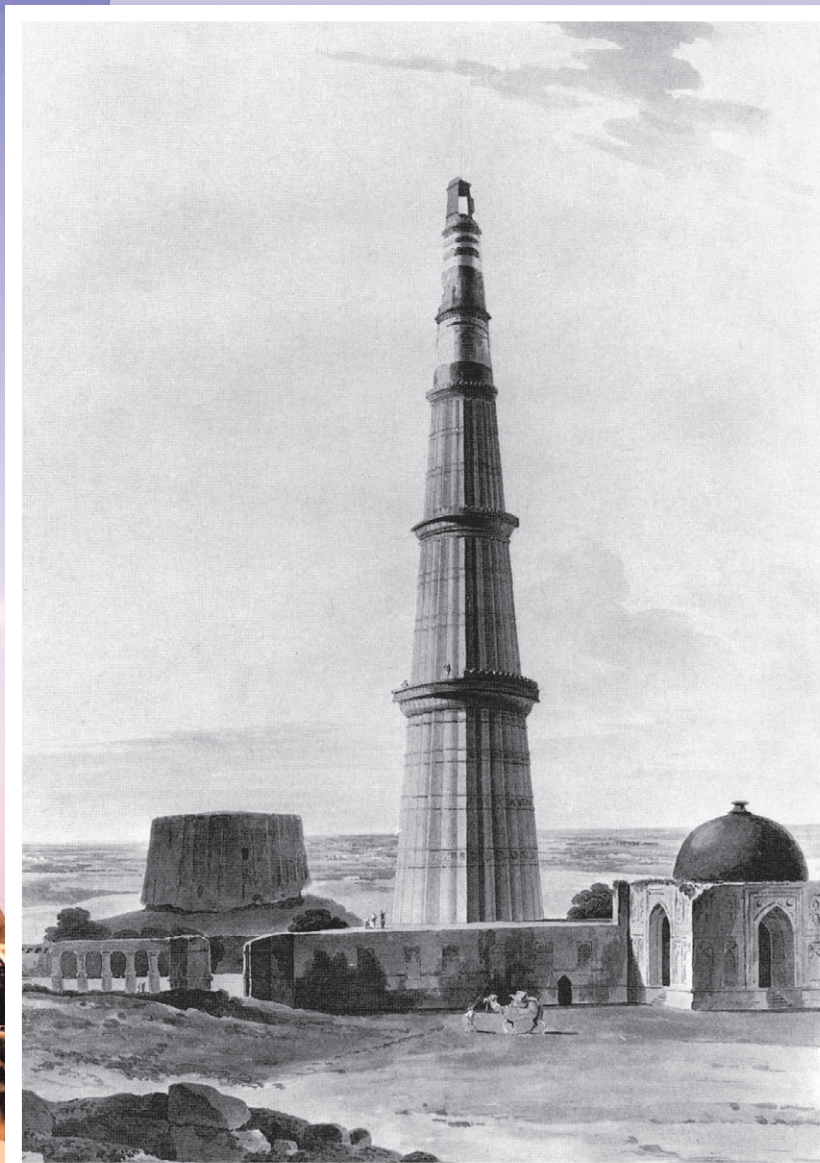
Thanks to the incredible development in digital recording and communication during the last decade, it becomes possible today to provide such images of cultural and historic value not only to the visitors of such collections, but also to the general public, which creates an additional possibility of exchange of cultural assets. Switzerland harbours a number of photographic collections of historical importance concerning Asia. These collections are partially well-preserved, but not yet fully identified and described. Up till now, scientific research of photographs focussed mainly on technical aspects and/or photography as a work of art. Further research on its cultural values and context is a necessity and has still to be developed.

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A picturesque journey through India 1786-1794

Until recently, two large graphic portfolios containing 65 watercolours, each of respectable size, were part of the many unrecovered treasures of the St Gallen ethnographic collections. Their delicately and impressively painted motifs of the Orient, or more specifically, images of India, reflected the romantic style of the time, but the painters' names, the dates of creation and their origins were at first a mystery.

Roland Steffan



1 (left):
Qutb-Minâr, near
Delhi. Watercolour
over pencil and ink
(24 February 1789).
Corresponding
photograph
shows site today.

Due to the fact that the painters had to rely on their Indian counterparts for the exact naming and interpretation of the painted objects, and the fact that learning exotic names wasn't amongst the talents of the English, many of the captions are faulty.

The watercolour collection

Pure coincidence and close scrutiny of the images helped in identifying details. Whilst comparing each of the paintings, it became apparent that there were three distinctly different artistic signatures. Further and more in-depth research brought to light that most of the paintings in the portfolios were by Thomas and William Daniell – uncle (1749-1840) and nephew (1769-1837). Others included paintings of the West Indian rock sanctuaries by the Daniells' mutual friend James Wales (1747-1795) and two South Indian vedutas by a younger contemporary, Henry Salt (1780-1827). It was now possible to attribute the paintings to the last two decades of the eighteenth century, and up to 1804. Unfortunately, it has still been impossible to locate the collector and donor of these valuable watercolours; acquisition dates and the ways in which they became part of the St. Gallen collection, are also unknowns. It is, however, a known fact that both Thomas and William Daniell strictly refused to part with their numerous pencil drawings, washes and watercolours, as they used these as masters for their oil paintings and aquatint prints. Thomas Daniell's collection was only sold off gradually after his death in 1840.

The images of this St. Gallen collection were first shown in the exhibition *Malerische Reise durch Indien 1786-1794* (Painters' journey through India 1786-1794) in 1990/1991. Despite being veiled in mystery, the unidentified collector determined the character of the exhibition in 1990 through his penchant for particular subjects. He (or she) collected only watercolours that were masters for the 144 aquatint prints of the six-volume *Oriental Scenery*, the opus that had a lasting influence on the image of India in Europe. As the collection shows, impressive images of historic Hindu and Muslim monuments seem to have appealed to him. There are only four landscape paintings, and they happen to be amongst the most beautiful of all the images

in the collection. The collection allows for the observer to follow the almost forgotten meanderings of the English painters through India.

India and the arts in the eighteenth century

Thomas Daniell and William Daniell were amongst the first English painters who had enjoyed an education in classical landscape painting, and they had a flair for the Romantic. They travelled through the vast country from 1786 to 1794, partly because of India's particular situation at that time. The East India Company had come to India as a trading company and stayed there until well into the eighteenth century. Administrators and trade adventurers had built forts and established themselves as tradesmen in India by the end of the eighteenth century. England's rise as a trade power went alongside the downfall of the Mogul Empire. As a result, England had not only attained land, but also political powers on the semi-continent. It was thus a time of colonial takeover, but also a time of discovery of the exotic, and it defined how India was seen by painters such as Thomas and William Daniell.

Due to the fact that the painters had to rely on their Indian counterparts for the exact naming and interpretation of the painted objects, and the fact that learning exotic names wasn't amongst the talents of the English, many of the captions are faulty. They tried their very best to identify the objects directly at the sites and then stated the Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian names of places and people in a passably scientific manner, complemented by the more well-known English versions, which were rather misunderstood and mutilated.

A selection of the watercolours

The Qutb-Minâr (image 1) was a visible symbol of Islam victory over the 'non-believers' in North India. The foundations of the

tower were laid down by Qutb al Dîn Aibak in 1199, a former slave who became the founder of the first Muslim dynasty in Delhi. The watercolour was the first image of the Qutb-Minâr and the only image that shows the tower in its original state with the marble replacements of the top two stories, which had been added in 1368 after it had been hit by lightning.

The observatory at Delhi (image 2) was built in 1724, during the reign of Moghul Muhammad Shâh. He was an avid scholar of astronomy and became the creator of 5 observatories in his realm. The Daniells were highly impressed by the 'uniqueness' of the geometrical and cubic structural dimensions of the observatory. The watercolour shows the Brhat-Samrât-Yantra and Misra-Yantra instruments.

The waterfall (image 3) near Courtallam (Kuttralam) is holy to Hindus and the many porticos offer protection and accommodation to the pilgrims. The panorama, and the masses of people flocking towards the water, made an impression on the Daniells. Thomas Daniell allowed his artistic freedom to balance the panorama by changing the dimensions considerably. An oil painting of this scene can be found at the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta.

The portico of the Caitya Hall of Kanherî on the island of Salsette (image 4) was adapted to the large reliefs of Buddhas in the fifth and sixth centuries and the changing ritual needs of the time. The front entrance contains very old reliefs with man-sized couples in a natural and naïve style. The light shines into the inner sections of the place of worship.

Text taken from 'Malerische Reise durch Indien 1786-1794' by Roland Steffan, St Gallen Museum Foundation 1990. Translation and adaptation by Anke Schürer-Ries.

Watercolours by Thomas and William Daniell



2 (above):
The observatory in
Delhi. Watercolour
over pencil and ink
(24 February 1789).

3 (right):
The waterfall at
Courtallam
(Kuttralam), in the
Tinnevely District.
Watercolour over
pencil (July 1792).

4 (below):
The portico of
an excavated
temple on the
island of Salsette.
Watercolour
(ca. July 1793).
Corresponding
photograph
shows site today.



The visual heritage of Afghanistan

Photographs which tell of the times before the turmoil in Afghanistan are practically non-existent. Radical ideologists targeted the cultural roots of the country in the past decades and destroyed millions of images to make space for their own beliefs. Today, after thirty-five years of war, exile, collateral and intentional destruction, the country lacks a visual heritage with which it can display the achievements of the past to younger generations: something which is worth protecting; something on which a positive national identity can be based upon; moments of pride.

Dominic Wirz, Anke Schürer-Ries and Paul Bucherer-Dietschi



1 (left): Mullah in Kandahar, 1907 (K20).

Phototheca Afghanistan (www.phototheca-afghanica.ch)

First, in 1978, communist activists burned all the pre-revolutionary photographs, which were seen as remains of a bourgeois past. Then, from 1996 onwards, religious fundamentalists hunted down all images of living creatures as they considered this sort of representation to be blasphemous. This is why the project *Phototheca Afghanistan*, initiated and maintained by the Swiss Afghanistan Institute, plans to make approximately 5,000 mostly unique historical photographs from Afghanistan publicly accessible in the next few years. The aim of the project is not only the physical safeguarding of old photographs and related documents, but also to create awareness of the rich cultural heritage of the country and to make use of this knowledge for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and its society. For this reason, the photographs and the relevant descriptions have to be accessible for research, as well as for the general public, by exhibitions, publications, via internet or on CD.

The primary source for *Phototheca Afghanistan* is the institution's own image archives which comprise approximately 50,000 photographs. In addition to the visual materials, the archives also contain important written documents that were entrusted to the institute by private persons and other institutions. The oldest available images date from 1869 and document the visit to India by the Afghan Amir of the time. As mentioned above, the pre-1978 photographs have almost all been destroyed in their country of origin. So, even recent photographs stored at the institute in Switzerland are of a similar historic value as old ones. The overall significance of the institute's visual collection cannot be anticipated at present, as many of the collections that have found their way to Switzerland have not yet been catalogued.

The Swiss Afghanistan Institute

The Swiss Afghanistan Institute (SAI), officially registered as *Stiftung Bibliotheca Afghanistanica*, is a politically and religiously neutral institution. Over a period of 35 years, the institute made its mark by systematically researching and documenting Afghan history and culture.

From October 1998 to March 2007, Paul Bucherer, head and founder of the SAI, curated the *Afghanistan Museum in Exile*. The objects for this museum were transferred to Switzerland by the Taliban to be salvaged from al-Qaeda's destructiveness.

Moreover, the SAI is engaged in cultural rebuilding on the spot; old photographs from its archives provide the basis for reconstruction of historic buildings and other structures. For instance, the institute's archive could be of assistance in reconstructing the Giant Buddhas of Bamiyan with the help of the only existing high-definition stereo-photogrammetric shots in the world. Other photographs kept at the SAI were previously used to restore the famous Moghul garden *Bagh-e Babur*, the buildings of the Afghan National Gallery and the Afghan National Museum, and even the oldest parts of the former Royal – now Presidential – Palace.

Due to such references, and international reputation strengthened by years of experience, the Swiss Afghanistan Institute became a rich source of images and photographic collections on Afghanistan. Today, organisations such as the Afghan Ministry of Culture, the Afghan Ministry of Education and the Swiss Department of Culture are numbered among the Institute's most prominent partners and donors.

The aim of the project is not only the physical safeguarding of old photographs and related documents, but also to create awareness of the rich cultural heritage of the country and to make use of this knowledge for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and its society.

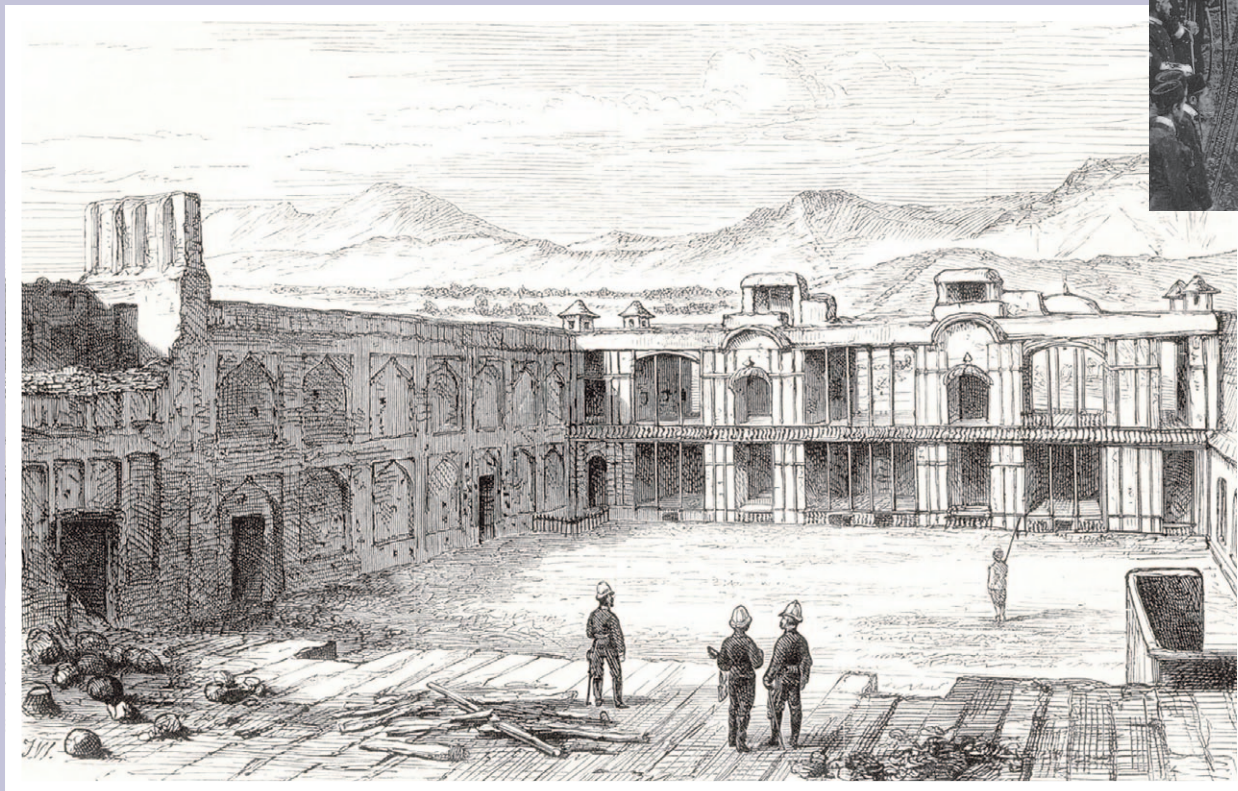
Preservation and identification of the visual materials

So far, selected collections have been scientifically identified, and currently comprise approximately 5,000 photographs. The vast cultural richness in the photographs, as well as the manifold interdisciplinary relations, soon became obvious as the identification proceeded. The visual documents raise questions of historical, cultural and political significance, including questions of media relevance and regarding the history of technological development.

In a first step, the basic archival work includes the conservation of the photographs, the digitisation and long-term preservation. Even more important, the identification done by the Afghanistan Institute serves as a necessary prerequisite to make the above mentioned interpretative connections. The scientific importance of the images lies in the possibility to analyse them according to chronological and geographical criteria, the producer of the images and the subjects and details in the images. It is, however, a major concern of the institute to create a systematic corpus of images as a point of departure for further research questions. For this reason, the *Phototheca Afghanistan* will gradually be made available online. The first 400 images and accompanying data are accessible via an online platform (www.phototheca-afghanica.ch).

The following overview of the preliminary online series highlights the perspectives that could evoke further research and co-operation concerning the photographic collections.

Photographic testimonials between destruction, decay and oblivion



2 (top):
British Residency
1879, b/w print
(RE 068).

3 (middle):
Amir Habibullah
Khan, ca 1910,
b/w print (vH-84).

4 (bottom):
Interior of the
British Residency,
looking south
(ILN 1879-2, p.577).

Sample collection 1: The Second Anglo-Afghan War, 1878–1880

The photographic collection of the British Royal Engineers is an informative example for interdisciplinary research. The Royal Engineers were first given the possibility to photograph military action on Afghan territory during the second Anglo-Afghan war. The photographs – thus the expectations toward the new technology – were intended to supplement the conventional documentary options. Up to this point it had been the officers' duty to draw sketches and plans of important stations of the journey and events. These types of documents were sometimes not very accurate, and so the *Photograph School of the Bengal Sappers & Miners*, instructed by the Royal Engineers, were subsequently given the possibility to prove themselves in 1878.

The Afghanistan Institute processed this photographic collection together with Brigadier Woodburn, he himself a former Royal Engineer. It may be of interest to note that John Burke, a famous professional photographer, had accompanied the expedition too. One could maintain that Burke, already in 1886, was practising 'embedded journalism'. He was able to pursue his photographic work under the protection of the British troops and in return he assisted the Photograph School with creative and technical advice.

While Burke's photographs were commercially successful, the military photographs remained undiscovered in private albums, official documentation or had disappeared into state archives as confidentially classified material. Deprived of their classification, the photographs almost lost their worth as contemporary documents. Often the context needed for an appropriate interpretation of the photographs was missing.

While Burke's photographs were commercially successful, the military photographs remained undiscovered in private albums, official documentation or had disappeared into state archives as confidentially classified material.

Today, due to the work done at the Afghanistan Institute, the photographs can be read as visual documentation of the troop movement again. In co-operation with Brigadier Woodburn, and with the help of military maps and reports, the institute succeeded in recovering a chronological order, naming the places and identifying key personalities shown in the photographs. Now the collection tells us how the army advanced into the embattled country, crossed rivers, received the Amir and his delegation, and coped with the daily challenges that life in a foreign country brought with it. The identification process also made it possible to draw parallels to the reports in the press. An interesting aspect was the comparison of the official military photographs and the exaggerated engravings that were based on the sketches done for *The Illustrated London News* by William Simpson, who accompanied the troops moving toward Kabul as a war correspondent for some time.

However, although some unknowns are being solved, the process has also raised some questions. For example, questions about the technical and aesthetic conditions of war photography of the time, as in the case of the Royal Engineers who were assisted by Burke; or those concerning the social meaning of the photographs for a colonial power such as Britain; and what about the media implications regarding different forms of realisation through photographs, or engravings based on sketches; and of course questions of cultural correlation.

Photographic technology was unknown to the Afghans in 1878. Brought to the colonies from metropolitan Europe, photography was only known by sight in Afghanistan.

The act of taking a photograph reflected to some degree the polarity of domination and subordination. Just as the photographs of the British documented the land and its peoples, it also reflected the colonial gaze.

Sample collection 2: photographs as an expression of Afghan self-representation

The series *Souvenirs d'Afghanistan* gives evidence of an idiosyncratic variation of cultural interdependencies. The series – based on works by Afghan artists only – was composed and edited by the Afghan ambassador in Paris in 1924. In those days, the recently independent Afghanistan was an unknown actor on the diplomatic stage; few governments had established diplomatic ties with the oriental country at the time. Consequently, little was known about the country itself, and therefore the ambassador considered it his duty to introduce Afghanistan to his guests and acquaintances. The *Souvenirs d'Afghanistan* was given away as a keepsake, comprising 51 high-quality prints of Afghan scenes assembled in a booklet, each photograph printed on postcard-paper.

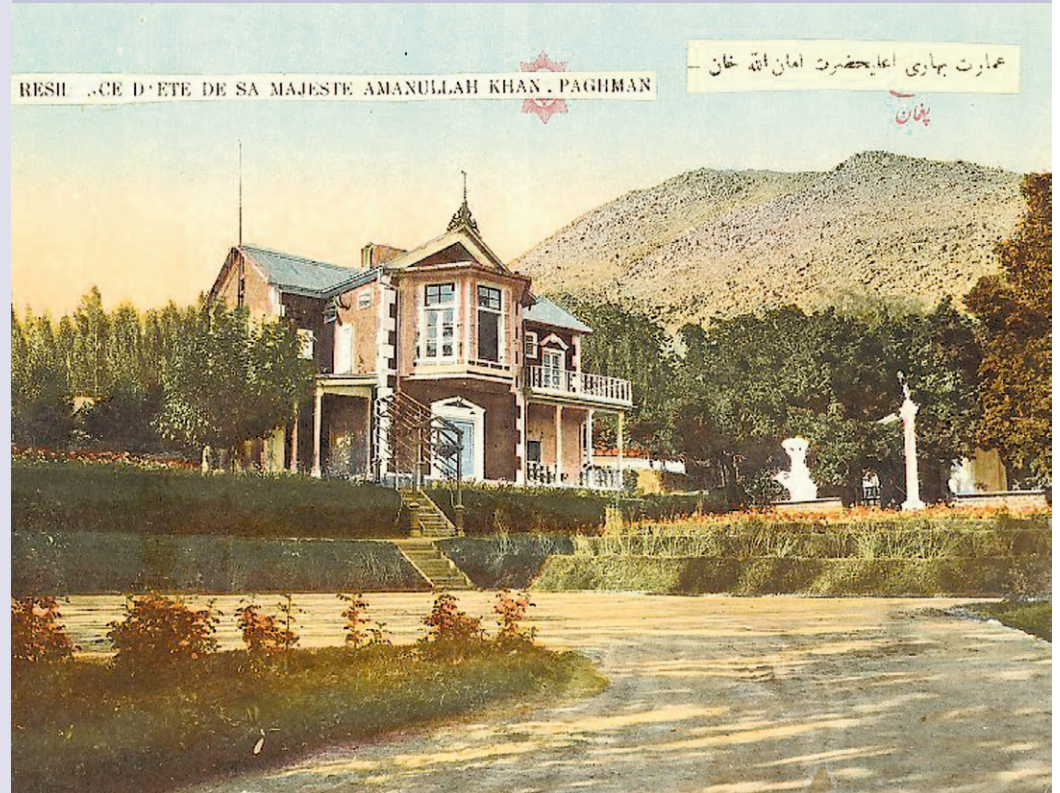
There's no doubt that the editor, the Afghan ambassador, had always born the distribution factor in mind, and that he had anticipated the circumstances of the reception in Europe. To demonstrate the country's status as a modern and up-and-coming nation, photographs corresponding to a European sense of 'modernity' were selected. Interestingly, the propaganda focussed on technological progress. In particular, the collection comprised shots of buildings, cars, and bridges. People were hardly shown, and if so, they belonged to the royal household and were dressed in Western apparel. *Continued on page28 >*

The visual heritage of Afghanistan *continued***Towers of knowledge**

Phototheca Afghanica also aims to reach the Afghan people; images are an important method to convey values, especially in a semi-literate society, as it still exists in Afghanistan. The people's interest in authentic historical images – and thus the need to provide access to further photographs – has been demonstrated by a travelling exhibition called *Towers of Knowledge*. The exhibition consists of five separate units, so-called 'towers', each summarising a particular part of Afghan history. Showing images of former personalities and historic buildings, the travelling exhibition was designed to reach the Afghan public, especially children and young people. Therefore, sixty-eight copies of this exhibition – two for each of the thirty-four provinces of Afghanistan – are currently circulating through 11,000 schools.

The project was commissioned by the Afghan Ministry of Education in 2008 and opened in July 2010 at the German High School in Kabul. It was devised by the Swiss Afghanistan Institute and financed by the governments of Germany, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland. The first exhibition turned out to be a real attraction as students started to take pictures of the historical photographs with their mobile phones. Even President Karzai was deeply moved when he looked at the first prototype of the exhibition.

5 (left): One of the 'Towers of Knowledge' – The photographic collections of the Swiss Afghanistan Institute as a cradle of history (PB 2009-05-689).



6a (above):
Summer residence
of Amanullah
Khan (SdA 3-47).

6b (below):
Summer residence
of Amanullah Khan,
October 1991.

**> Continued from page 27**

As the progressive King Amanullah sought to avoid any impression of a state of underdevelopment, Western fashion was important to him. Historical sources report that it was explicitly forbidden to wear traditional attire at court. Many different photographs bear witness to the Afghan adoption of Western customs.

From this point of view, the collection *Souvenirs d'Afghanistan* serves as a prism, refracting both an Afghan particularity of photo art and an Afghan perception of (Western) 'modernity'. On the one hand, the scientific importance of this collection is manifested in the aesthetic contrast that the Afghan photographs enunciate, in comparison to European images. On the other hand, the photos document former heydays, for instance by showing magnificent buildings that have been reduced to rubble since then. In close co-operation with the French Afghanistan expert May Schinasi, the history of some of these buildings could be retraced, which shows baffling parallels to the facades of British buildings of that time, as observed in photographs from *The Illustrated London News*.

Sample collection 3: A German ambassador behind hostile lines

The collection of the German ambassador, Werner Otto von Hentig, tells a completely different story. In 1915, his expedition to and through Afghanistan ended in "one of the most adventuresome undertakings you have probably ever heard of", as the *Berliner Illustrirte* reported in 1918. Up to this time, the country at the Hindu Kush had been sealed off from the outside world by Great Britain. During

the First World War the German emperor, Wilhelm II, ordered an undercover diplomatic and military expedition to the Afghan Amir Habibullah Khan, suggesting an attack on British India. Therefore, von Hentig travelled to Kabul, keen to learn about the country, and open-minded as a petitioner always has to be.

Meanwhile, photographic technology had made some progress, which allowed von Hentig to take photographs more spontaneously. Von Hentig's collection, however, yields another remarkable difference compared with the British collection: due to von Hentig's good relationship with his Afghan hosts, they provided him with prints from the Amir's own photo studio. The lion's share of the collection originates from this photo studio and was assembled from the archive of Mahmud Tarzi, who was the editor of the first illustrated weekly journal in Afghanistan *Serāj ol-akhbār* (in English, 'The Great Light'). These photographs are among the very earliest Afghan images that have been preserved to date. They embody the Afghans perspective of their own country, expressing the upcoming interdependencies between an Asiatic culture and European technology.

A race against time: few witnesses to history remain

At the age of at least 94, Werner Otto von Hentig personally handed over his archive to the Swiss Afghanistan Institute (SAI). The photographs are considered to be significantly important to Afghan history. Furthermore, the detailed explanations provided by von Hentig's notes and oral anecdotes were an unusual blessing for the researchers when identifying the photographs.

On the other hand, the photos document former heydays, for instance by showing magnificent buildings that have been reduced to rubble since then.

This example illustrates how witnesses to history are crucial for the SAI's work with historical photographs. Destroyed monuments and buildings – as well as personalities – often cannot be identified and localised unless someone is alive who is able to recall what and who is shown in the pictures. The SAI counts on those witnesses to history every time its own archive and its own experience reaches certain limits. In view of a further cultural rebuilding, the preservation of knowledge will be crucial to the re-establishment of Afghanistan's heritage.

Besides the scientific aim to document the visual heritage of Afghan history, at present the photographs provide the young generation with access to the pre-war life of Afghanistan. Each photograph shows a fact, a building, a landscape, or a detail on a piece of clothing; what counts for Afghan people is the fact that an element of the old tradition, a moment of former Afghan life, has survived as a testimony of an otherwise unimaginable world.

This, too, is a reason why the homepage of the *Phototheca Afghanica* is designed not only to meet scientists' needs, but to also provide access for a broader audience interested in its own lost achievements, or its parents' and grandparents' world.

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Visualising history and space in the Basel Mission Archives

Research on historical images and their interdependencies has been well under way for almost three decades. Distinct aspects of the materiality and the relational character of images continue to surface as the role of archives as repositories for these delicate materials is profoundly put to the test.¹ Images, both historical and more recently in digital form, find themselves in a tremendous, perhaps second phase of the pictorial turn, and relevant research is in the eye of the storm. The role of historical, but also modern digitised and born-digital images, has brought about a want for access to, and understanding of, the image as a key icon of cultural heritage.

Guy Thomas & Anke Schürer-Ries



1 (Above): Chinese Christian family, Hong Kong, 1892. (BMA A-30.01.035)

2 (Below): Medical Mission Station Honyen, 1909. (BMA A-31.5,5a)

The earliest images of the Hakka-speaking people in the collection date back to 1897 and most of them show architectural features, landscapes and everyday life. Images of Hakka-speaking Christians depict either people working their fields in traditional dress, or set in European photographic compositions of the time. Moreover, they reflect both European and Chinese hierarchies, and the extent to which indigenous Christians influenced the outcome of the photographic encounter.⁶ Consequently, these images do not merely evoke the standards and attitudes of the missionaries but also various levels of discourse and exchange between the two cultures.

IN THE LIGHT OF sustained discoveries of, and new perspectives on, historical images, the team of the Archives of the Basel Mission has undertaken initial efforts to preserve, and increase accessibility of, the vast image collections in its holdings. The cataloguing and preservation project was initiated in the early 1990s and also included the systematic arrangement and digitisation of a selection of the historical images in the archives with an emphasis on visual sources pre-dating 1914. The overall aim was to reach out both to specialised researchers and a more broadly interested audience worldwide. After a c. 10-year running period of the project involving over 50,000 images with a principle focus on Ghana, Cameroon, South India (mainly Karnataka and Kerala), South China (mainly Hakka-speaking parts of Guangdong Province and Hong Kong) and Kalimantan, some 28,000 items were made available online in 2002.² The online collection was integrated into the International Mission Photography Archives (IMPA) hosted by the University of Southern California Digital Library in 2008. The success of the project fostered awareness of the need to improve accessibility of other sections of the Archives of the Basel Mission. As a result, a five year comprehensive cataloguing and digitisation project, involving the archival finding aids, various databases and the collection of maps, sketches and site plans in the Archives of the Basel Mission commenced in 2007 and is about to be completed and launched online in November 2012.³

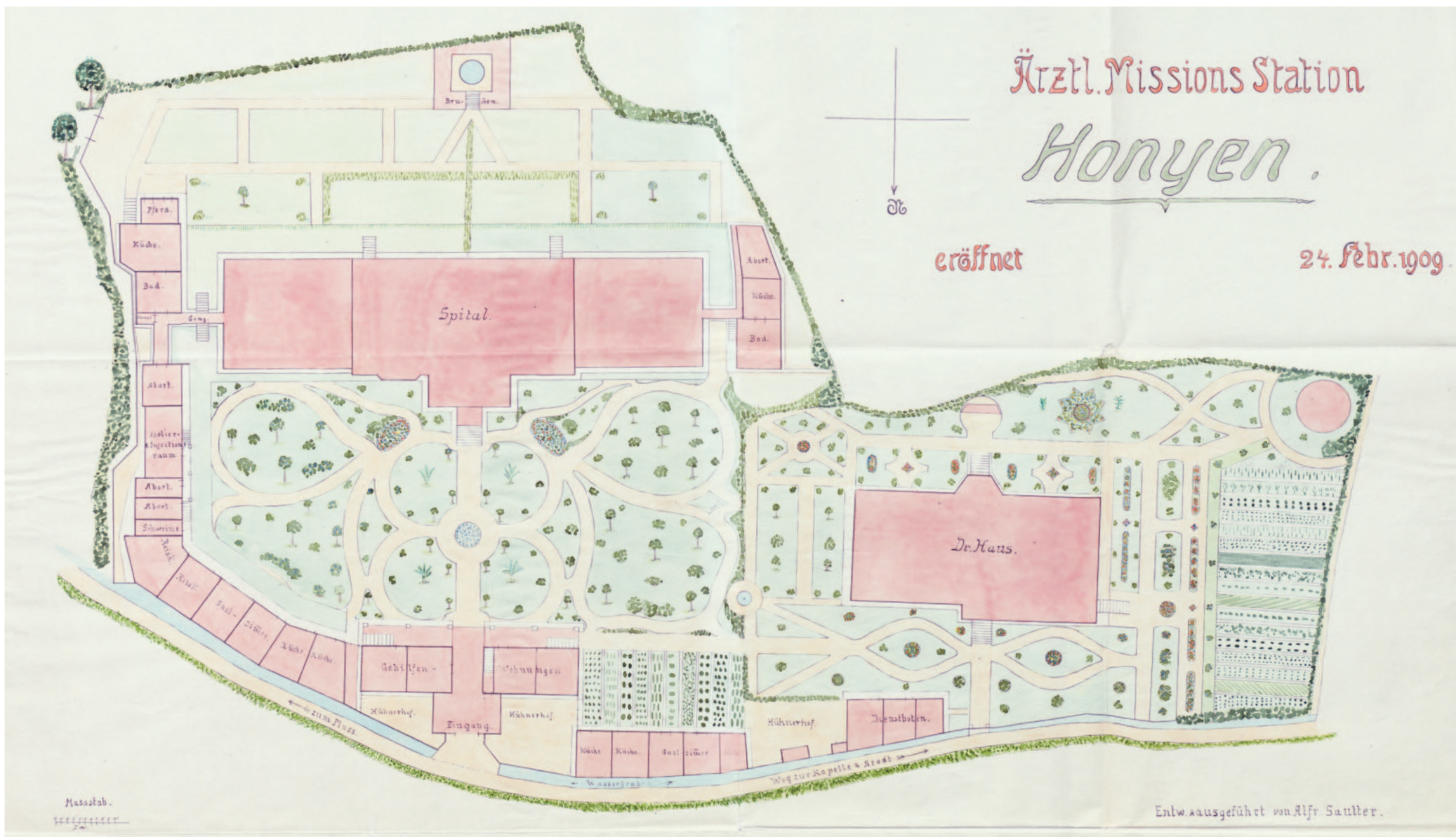
The Basel Mission in China

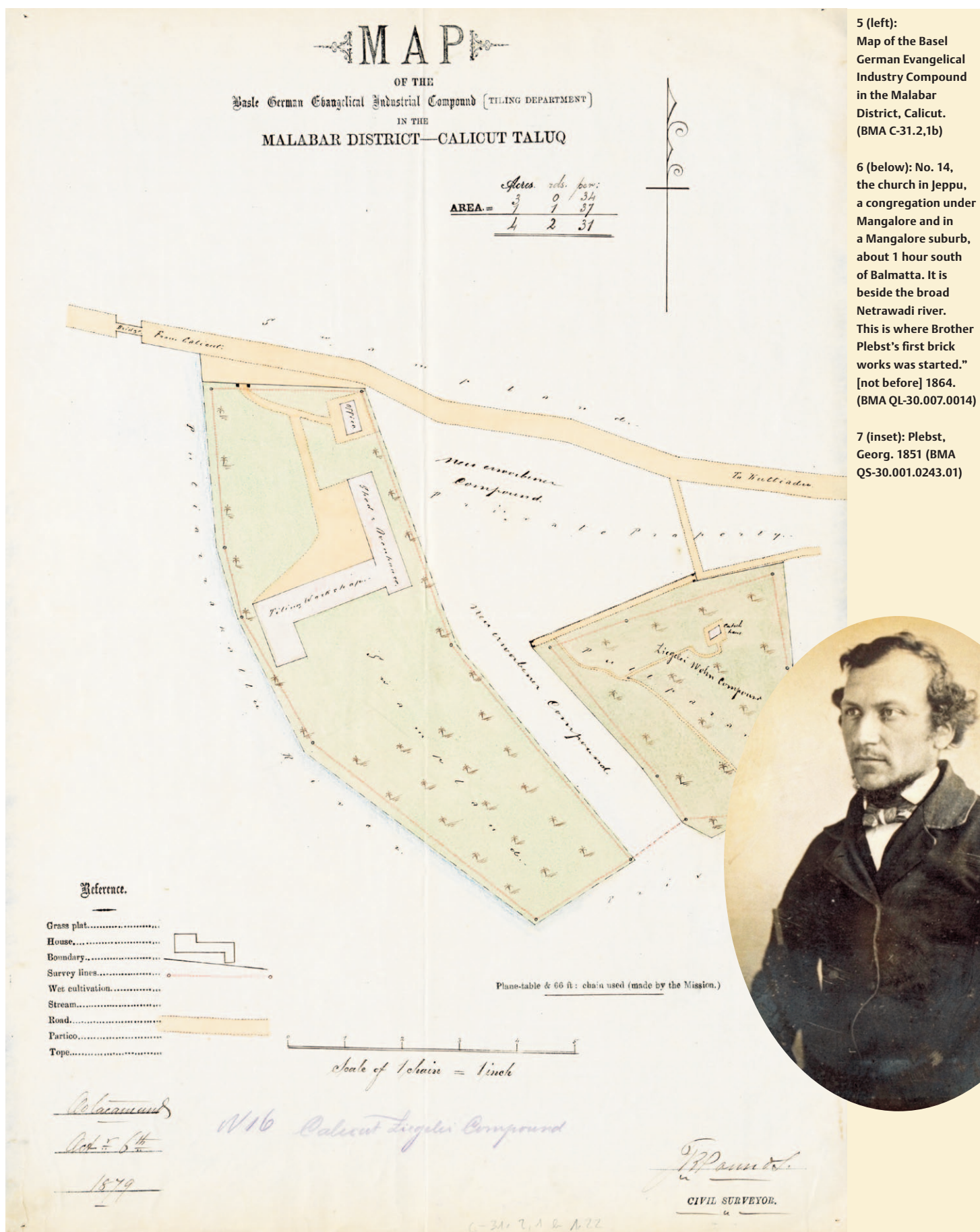
Historical images have become part of a cultural and social experience in China. Based on the quest for visual mnemonics, the images have been allocated a new status, not only because of their materiality as remnants of technical advancement, but also as objects of cultural heritage that form a bridge between mental and physical worlds.⁴

The historical images of the Basel Mission in China increasingly assist and replenish representations of cultures and histories of the country. They express both the dialogue between the missionary as the photographer and/or cartographer, and the mission field in which he was destined to spread the word of God. The main focus of missionary activity by missionaries of the Basel Mission in China was directed to the Hakka in the Guangdong Province, southern China. Missionary Theodor Hamberg began working there in 1846 and was catapulted from the patriarchal structures of education and Pietist values in the mission house in Basel into the unknown realms of one of the mission fields, an experience that gradually brought about the transcultural character of the Basel Mission.⁵ The collision of these multiple sets of values, although not entirely different, created tensions between missionaries and indigenous Christians. European missionaries allegedly remained strictly separated from indigenous Christians, though by contrast numerous images in our collections reflect the reciprocal trends of acculturation between indigenous interlocutors and Western missionaries.

Figure 1 shows the amalgamation of Eurocentric photographic practices and a sample of Chinese adaptation hereof. It is a striking articulation of the traditional European portrayal of the family, reflecting the innate identification of the indigenous Christian family with its own Asian background by wearing traditional clothing. It also constitutes the successful implementation of missionary family values in the Hakka community. The carpet and the setting confirm the constructed contemporary family photograph as was the case for depictions of all missionary families. It is, however, not without tension, as the family's stance allegedly reflects an attempt to incorporate Chinese hierarchies by postulating its own standing in its congregation.⁷ By virtue of the continuous negotiation between Christian and indigenous values, these practices were extended to the congregational spaces such as the mission station.

Continued on page 30 >





5 (left): Map of the Basel German Evangelical Industry Compound in the Malabar District, Calicut. (BMA C-31.2,1b)

6 (below): No. 14, the church in Jeppu, a congregation under Mangalore and in a Mangalore suburb, about 1 hour south of Balmatta. It is beside the broad Netrawadi river. This is where Brother Plebst's first brick works was started." [not before] 1864. (BMA QL-30.007.0014)

7 (inset): Plebst, Georg. 1851 (BMA QS-30.001.0243.01)

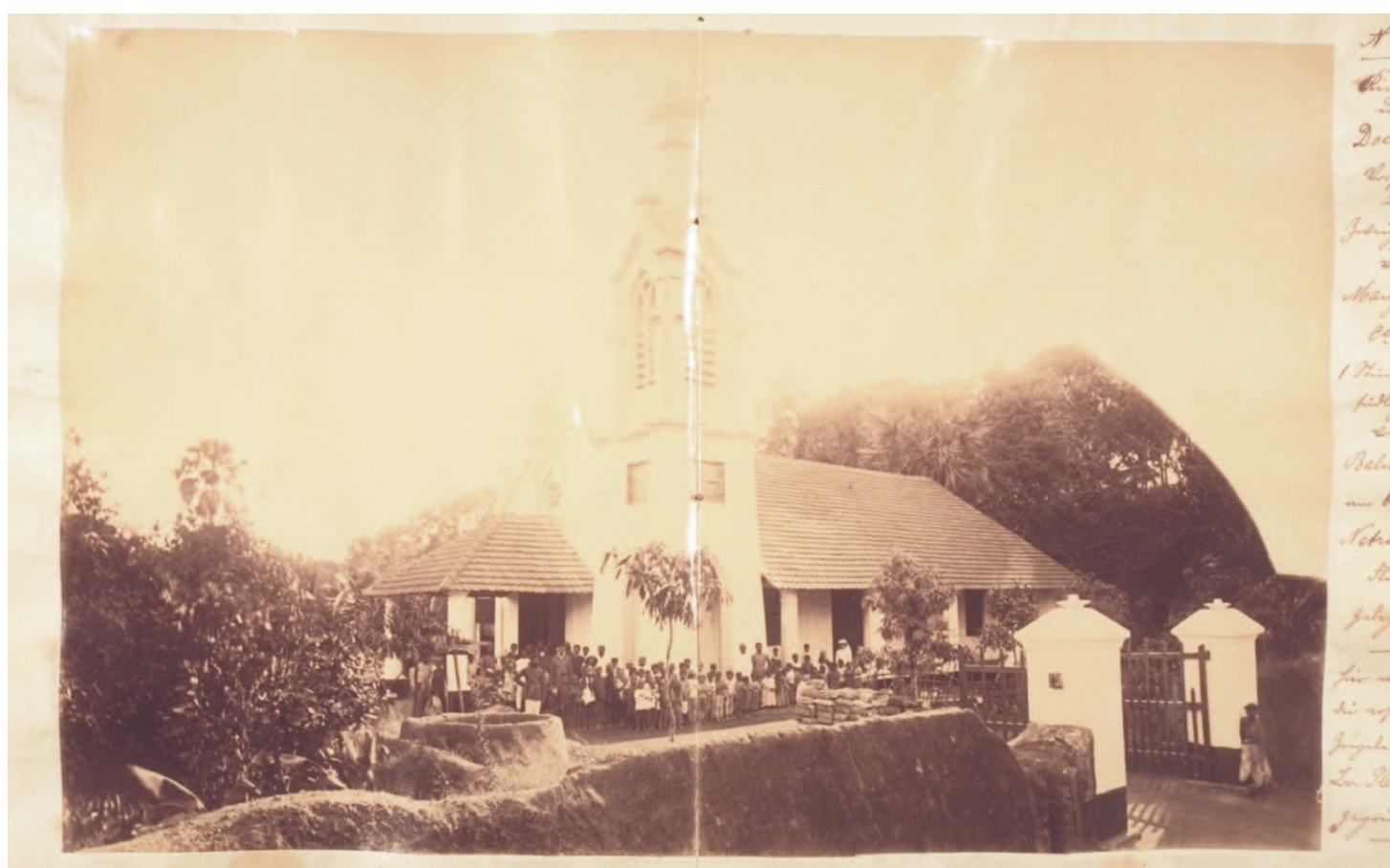
One of the key people involved in setting the Basel Mission tile industry in India in motion was the German missionary Georg Plebst (1823-1888).¹¹ He originally specialised as a mechanic before undergoing four years of training at the Basel Mission's home-based seminary. He arrived in India in 1851 and was put in charge of reforming the printing techniques employed by his predecessors. He was thus chiefly responsible for forging two well-functioning Basel Mission printing presses for the Kannada and Malayalam languages, in the modern Indian states of Karnataka and Kerala respectively. Whilst on home leave from 1861-1863 Plebst acquired prolific skills in firing and glazing clay. Meanwhile, several European factories had conducted experiments with clay samples from the surroundings of Mangalore. Upon his return to India, this experience inspired Plebst to apply his techniques to the manufacturing of tiles. He recorded his initial successful attempts in 1864 and thus laid the foundation for a flourishing new industry.¹² We are reminded of this pioneering step by a faded photograph of the church (fig. 6), standing where Plebst started his tile manufacturing activity. It is an image that equally helps us understand interconnections between mission stations, outstations and industrial sites, as well as the intricate degree of interconnectedness between such symbols of missionary presence and the local populace, which constituted the core of the labour force and of the mission church congregations.

Admiration and respect

We must shift our gaze to the mutually complementary nature of visual – photographic and cartographic – sources and the available written, oral and material records. While it is fairly obvious that both the chronological and narrative strands etched into the abundant written archive cover a wide range of interests deriving from a primarily central European audience, we are just as obviously confronted with a very distinct side of history when we glean snippets of oral tradition surrounding the achievements and *longue durée* of the Basel Mission in south-west India, both as an institution and a medley of extraordinary individuals. Much as critical views are not to be overheard, notably with regard to theological debates and mission hierarchy, considerable admiration and respect come to the fore with regard to individual missionary know-how and inputs. Besides the tile factories and printing presses, many Basel Mission churches, schools and training centres, now under the auspices of the Indian successor church, the Church of South India (CSI), are reminiscent of their origins by the mark of omnipresent tributes to missionaries. This link between the past and the present is repeatedly articulated in the urge among Indian colleagues to obtain access to, and more detailed information about, images and cartographic material in the collections of historical photographs and maps in the Archives of the Basel Mission. Reinserting images into the original settings where they were taken has thus become – and will remain – a prime target of the Archives of the Basel Mission. By exposing single images or series of images to joint readings of, and reflections on, their content will help us move beyond our narrower archival delimitations into 'the field', where a wealth of indigenous knowledge and mnemonic devices is waiting to engage with the meaningful re-contextualisation of visual articulation.



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Visual anthropology as a discipline of words



Paul Hockings' *Principles of Visual Anthropology* opened with Margaret Mead's article 'Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words'. In her prefatory lines Mead lamented that too many research projects "insist on continuing the hopelessly inadequate note-taking of an earlier age."¹ Today, some forty years after the first publication of Mead's text, the opposition of the verbal and the visual still seems to loom over the full acceptance of the visual in cultural anthropology.

Christof Thurnherr

WHILE TRADITIONALISTS seem to lay more stress on the verbal, supporters of technologically more inclusive ways of doing anthropology tend to disproportionately favor the visual. This paper attempts to take a stand for the middle ground by arguing for a joint application of both the verbal and the visual. It calls attention to the fact that one cannot sensibly be of use without the other. Even in visually based research the pencil remains an indispensable tool.

While it seems to be widely acknowledged that certain topics can hardly be studied without using visual instruments, the analysis of visual data is hardly feasible without recourse to auxiliary information. A common scene where the anthropological analysis of visual data occurs – and thereby where the absence of additional information is often just too painfully noticed – is the photographic archive. By analyzing the archival work with photography some guiding principles may be deduced, which may help to structure the contemporary engagement with photography in anthropology.

The text at hand will firstly delineate the theoretical background by situating archival work within the field of visual anthropology. Secondly, an experimental research process in the photographic archive of the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich will be described. The effect of this experience will, thirdly, be applied to a series of contemporary photographs from Afghanistan selected to accompany this article. This practical example could lead to useful conclusions for the treatment of photography in contemporary anthropology.

Anthropology and photography – a strategic alliance

According to a widely accepted definition, the scientific endeavor consists in the answering of questions.² The questions to be asked in anthropology seem only to be limited by the means by which the researcher tries to converge onto a chosen topic. Certain questions can hardly be researched verbally, either because they do not surface by verbal inquiry or because they cannot be grasped and described with words. The first kind might consist of data that surfaces by the visual stimulation of an informant, for example, in the form of photo elicitation where the discussion of a photograph yields answers to questions that the anthropologist would not have asked.³ The second variety might concern data that is not easily discerned or communicated, such as movement, position and posture. In these instances visual tools help to record and communicate data.

Photography can thus be understood as a part of an extended anthropological methodology. Yet, disregarding the relevance as an anthropological method or tool to obtain or record data, photography can play another role in the sense that it can constitute the object of anthropological inquiry. Photography can be seen as the material result of cultural practice; it is not the medium, but the expression of anthropological information.⁴ Any beneficial discussion of photography in anthropology – be they freshly made or drawn from archives – should preferably take these possibilities into account.

Having situated the archival work with photography within the broader confines of visual anthropology it is possible to briefly brush on epistemological debates on the visual in anthropology. Although the scope of the article at hand does not allow us to delve deeply into the matter, the disclosure of some of the constitutive postulates is necessary as a foundation for the subsequent theoretical deductions. The first one concerns the relationship of photography to reality. Many early theoreticians assumed that a photograph is the mechanical reproduction of reality (see e.g., Mead 2003 [1974]). As has been stated convincingly since then, this is not the case.⁵ One of the more obvious explanations for this shift of paradigm is the fact that photographic images involve a considerable amount of interpretation in production, as well as in collection and in analysis. Another reason not to imply that a photograph reveals certain facts is that it will only give the answer to the question being asked, which depends to a high degree on the viewer and his or her research agenda; any viewer can infer different meanings.⁶ Since the receiver of this (visual) communication plays such an important part, the meaning that is transported by visual means can only be controlled by its producer to a certain extent. Furthermore, archivists do not only *collect* data – they also play a constitutive role in the creation of meaning.⁷

Photography in anthropological archives – then and now

Anthropology was quick in valuing the potential of photography. As many an early traveler embraced the new technology almost immediately after its invention, the desire for storage and arrangement of this new form of information could be met by ethnographic collections, which was often collectively operated with a venue for exhibition, namely the museum.

In Zurich, Director of the Ethnographic Museum Prof. Dr Hans Wehrli, as had been done in many other places, seized the opportunity as early as 1917 to complement the ethnographic collection of objects with a library and a photographic archive.⁸

While it seems to be widely acknowledged that certain topics can hardly be studied without using visual instruments, the analysis of visual data is hardly feasible without recourse to auxiliary information.

Today, this early initiative has grown to a collection of more than 40,000 photographs, which are continually being researched. Apart from the vast majority of historical photographs in the collection, the Ethnographic Museum has in the last two decades re-launched the effort to focus on contemporary visual anthropological output. Part of this program is an extended curriculum in visual anthropology which teaches students to research by focusing on, or including, the visual.

One result of this curriculum is my own research in Afghanistan which was conducted between September 2003 and April 2006. It consisted of two fieldtrips totaling ten months.⁹ The photographic collection of this project, the vast majority of which was produced during the first exploratory fieldtrip in September–November 2003, can be described according to different sets of criteria. While a technical description does not seem to lead to considerable problems, any further attempts to give more information about the content of the collection appears more demanding. In order to find out some of the elementary principles guiding the existing material in the photographic archive of the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich, recent research on a similar topic was conducted.

Looking for Afghanistan – to no avail?

A search for the word 'Afghanistan', in the database of the photographic archive of the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich, yields no results. A second attempt searches the word 'Pakistan'. (The neighboring countries Afghanistan and Pakistan share a common border of considerable length whose present-day course is still controversial. Any geographical denomination concerning such disputed areas and unambiguously deciding in favor of one side or the other could be wrong and must therefore be considered with care.) This second search produces six references, which are subsequently analyzed in detail. The preliminary revision of the 246 images shows a total of 242 with landscapes and views or details of immovable constructions (such as towns, buildings, temples, dams and bridges). Although these manmade objects constitute an important part of material culture of a society, in the research at hand they actually help to exclude these photographs; since all of these structures are clearly localized outside of the geographical confines of Afghanistan they lie beyond the region of interest.¹⁰ So, four remaining pictures are seen to be focusing on people. These are set aside in an envelope with the inscription 'Sukkur', but as can be demonstrated, this geographical information does not allow to make definitive statements about their content.

On the importance of the verbal in visual archives



They consist of postcards, two of which show perforation marks on one of the shorter edges, which might imply that they were part of a booklet of postcards from which they were ripped. The first, inscribed with 'Makrani Girls', is the easiest to process. Makran is the coastal area extending across the south of Pakistan, from the border of India in the east, to Iran in the west. The remaining three photos on the other hand leave more room for interpretation. 'A Beggar' shows a man in half profile, in front of buildings, and with features that have apparently been interpreted as 'impoverished' (long, ragged beard; torn, possibly dirty clothes). The second photo, 'A Peasant Woman', shows a woman in flowered dress and headscarf, obviously posing for the camera. The last photo, 'In the Jungle', shows the side view of a packed camel with rider, in front of which four cattle move through low growing bushes in a flat open territory. This last example depicts a nomadic lifestyle, which suggests that the classification of the picture to a clearly defined place has to be called into doubt. Already the earliest descriptions of the peoples of Afghanistan noted the extent of the migratory routes of the pastoral nomads (the Pashto 'Kutchi'), who graze in the cool areas of the central Afghan mountains during the summer and find habitation in the Baloch Plains towards the Arabian Sea in winter.¹¹ The image at hand could therefore depict Afghan nomads. Or else, if, for example, the booklet of postcards was intended to assemble the different types of peoples that can be encountered in the vicinity of Sukkur, it might well be possible that this particular picture was taken somewhere else. The mere possibility that the information depicted is equally valuable for nomadic peoples in Afghanistan, makes the labeling of this specific photograph with 'Pakistan' seem unjust.¹² In other words, other than the only possible location where this picture might have been taken (or where it was acquired) it is impossible to deduce any further analytical insights of scientific value – either from the picture itself or from the available auxiliary information.

One conclusion to be drawn from this brief – and admittedly not overly constructive – research experiment, could be that the analysis of a photograph cannot solely depend on the image and some cursory geographical classification. A scientific valuable analysis of a photograph in anthropology is dependent on additional information, which has to be collected and classified in conjunction with the image. Such auxiliary information could consist in the identity of the researcher as well as his or her research agenda and the social relationship he or she maintains with the subject depicted, including their diverse intentions, as well as the circumstances in which the photograph was produced.¹³

All photos by author, taken during his visit to Afghanistan in 2003, depicting scenes from a 'Pashtu wedding in Kabul'.

Example of an annotated photo essay – a Pashtu wedding in Kabul

The conclusions drawn from this brief archival experiment can now be applied to a small section of the collection of photographs from Afghanistan, to which I add some excerpts of my field notes. During my fieldwork in the fall of 2003 I was working with a local NGO in Kabul. Since I had often explained to my acquaintances that I was especially interested in cultural aspects of life in Kabul, I was invited one day by Dr Abdul Baseer, head and owner of the NGO, to accompany him to a wedding. Dr Baseer was a savvy businessman and fully aware of the trading value of his taking me along. He spoke very good conversational English, and that day he fulfilled multiple roles as companion, informant and translator. We were driven to Kabul's western district Kart-e Seh. After waiting some time outside the confines of the impervious mosaic of single-storied dwellings, the most honored guests (to which I as an exotic foreigner counted naturally) were invited into a meeting room. As was proudly pointed out to me, the room was not only freshly painted and decorated with new carpets, but had actually been built explicitly for this occasion. After some time of drinking tea and being served the common array of sweets (candied almonds and toffees in sparkling wrappers), the young groom, Hashmat, arrived in an obvious state of nervous agitation. From the neighboring backyard, which was hermetically sealed from view, faint music and female chanting were sounding across the high mud walls. These waves of hand-beaten drums and clatters of arm bells were building up the excitement. Upon my request, one of the richly decorated instruments was brought into the room for visual demonstration, during which time the music from beyond came to a sad halt. Questions, both concerning everyday life and politics in Kabul and specifics about marriage, were being exchanged. One of the older men with an impressively long grey beard and a large turban complained about the quality of this particular marriage: "There is no singer. There is no music. There is no dancing. We are not allowed anymore, because of Islamic Law. Obviously the wedding family is very pious...". After about two hours, the group moved to attend the blessing of the food. The subsequent meal took comparably little time, for the room had to be vacated for the less important guests. Some confusion arose as Dr Baseer and one of the more venerable Mullahs discovered that their shoes, left in front of the doorstep, were gone. "Usually, guests should be receiving gifts at weddings and not being robbed", Dr Baseer commented jokingly. Before long, the wedding party scattered into cars and started the trajectory across town towards the home of the bride in the northeastern outskirts of Kabul. During the fast ride some additional excitement was created by the bills of money that

were thrown out of the moving cars and causing many an audacious bystander to leap amongst the closely driving convoy. At the bride's place the extravagant atmosphere came to a remarkable halt. The party gathered in the visiting room, which did not seem to be especially prepared for this event. "For the bridal family, a wedding is not a joyous event because they lose a member of their family", Dr Baseer explained. We left the somewhat stiff reception only after the impenetrably veiled bride had been seated in the white wedding car. The convoy – now even more fervently – rushed back into the city's evening traffic. Back in town, near the Shar-e Now park, I was courteously released, presumably because my foreign presence would have disturbed the further proceedings of this familial event; this suited me well, because such events quite often prove to be rather exhausting experiences.

Concluding remarks

Notwithstanding visual anthropology's ardent emphasis on the value of the visual in anthropological research, my point is that photographs are hardly able to communicate valuable information by themselves. The extent to which valuable information can be read from images is dependent to a considerable degree on additional information, which very often is communicated by means other than visual. The purely visual data would have left the picture incomplete and, therefore, does not exclude the necessity to collect additional information.

Anthropological work with images therefore has to be considered as a work with the verbal and not as opposed to it. Visual anthropology, despite its focus on the visual, remains a discipline of words. On the other hand, no supply of additional information is able to exhaustively reveal the full content of an image. The answer an image gives is highly dependent on the question being asked. This means that the kind of auxiliary information that is useful cannot be decided upon without a determination of the research interest one invests in a picture. Such auxiliary information may concern the context out of which the photographs came to be, as well as the trajectory by which they found their way into an archive. Especially in archival work with visual material, this can be gainfully taken into account.

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Notes

- 1 Mead, Margaret. 2003 [1975]. 'Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words', in Paul Hockings (ed.) *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, p.3-10. Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter (third edition). See page 4.
- 2 Eco, Umberto. 2010 [1977]. *Wie man eine wissenschaftliche Abschlussarbeit schreibt. Doktor-, Diplom- und Magisterarbeit in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften*. UTB-Verlag.
- 3 Collier, John Jr. & Malcolm Collier. 1990. *Visual Anthropology. Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press (Third paperback printing).
- 4 Bourdieu, Pierre. 1981. *Un art moyen. Essais sur les usages sociaux de la photographie*. Paris: MINUIT
- 5 Edwards, Elizabeth. 2011. 'Tracing Photography', in Marcus Banks & Jay Ruby (eds.) *Made to Be Seen*, p.159-189. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. See page 171.
- 6 Suchar, Charles. 1989. 'The Sociological Imagination and Documentary Still Photography: The Interrogatory Stance', in Robert M. Boonzaier Flaes (ed.) *Eyes Across the Water: The Amsterdam Conference on Visual Anthropology and Sociology*, p.51-62. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis. See page 52.
- 7 Sekula, Allan. 1991. 'Reading an Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capital', in Liz Wells (ed.) *The Photography Reader*, p.442-52. London: Routledge. See page 445.
- 8 Donati, Dario. 1997. *Ans Licht geholt. Frühe Fotografien aus dem Archiv des Völkerkundemuseums*. Zürich: Völkerkundemuseum. See page 6.
- 9 Thurnherr, Christof. 2011. 'Mehr als nur ein Augenblick', in *Tsantsa* #16, p.174-192.
- 10 136 glass slides are retained in a wooden box marked with 'Rajputana', the pre-1949 denomination of the Indian state of Rājasthān. The remaining four references lead to collections allocated to 'Sukkur', a town in southeast Pakistan.
- 11 Elphinstone, Monstuart. 1969 [1810]. *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary, and India; comprising a View of the Afghaan Nation, and a History of the Dooraunee Monarchy*. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt. See pages 391 and 495.
- 12 Of course, if available, personal data on the original collector as can be found in travel diaries or biographies would help. As we are here dealing with postcards, such contextual information would have to include information about the original photographer. The availability of such facts is rare.
- 13 Pink, Sarah. 2001. *Doing Visual Ethnography. Images, Media and Representation in Research*. London/Thousand Oaks /New Delhi: SAGE Publications. See pages 20 and 54.

Photographic partners for ethnographic artefacts

Ethnographic artefacts, dating back to the 17th century or even earlier, are commonly found partnered with illustrations to further explain their context and relevance. The earlier techniques of sketching, watercolour, etching, and other hand-produced imagery, were often replaced with photography when the technology was introduced and developed in the 19th century.

Thomas Psota



Artefacts and illustrations

The historical museum in Bern, a foundation supported by the canton, the city of Bern, and the Burgher community of Bern, was opened in 1894. Nevertheless, the extra-European collections are substantially older and date back to the 17th century. It is interesting to note that the first ethnographic collection in Bern was presented in combination with illustrations. This collection originated with a donation by Albrecht Herport to the town's cabinet of curiosities (these 'cabinets' are often considered to have been precursors to museums). His ethnographic objects, from Java and Taiwan, were accompanied by his drawings from South and South-east Asia. Ten etchings based on his drawings were published in 1669, in Herport's book *Eine kurtze Ost-Indianische Reiss-beschreibung*, enriching his collection of extraordinary artefacts.

We again find this connection between objects and illustrations in the collection of John Webber, a draftsman and painter of Bernese origin, who travelled with James Cook during his third voyage. Webber collected ethnographic artefacts, which he later gave to his hometown; in addition, he tirelessly documented the Pacific world by drawing what he encountered. Many of his, over three hundred, paintings and drawings were published in the form of engravings.

Shortly before the technology of photography was established – in the first half of the 19th century – about 450 drawings, paintings and engravings from the New World came to the collection in Bern. Works by Rudolf Friedrich Kurz, Karl Bodmer and Charles Bird King, which documented the North American Indians, were entered into the Bernese collection together with artefacts from these cultures.

Introduction of photography

Photography developed further during the middle of the 19th century, and quickly became an accompaniment to cultural anthropological research, enriching the information collected on many aspects of the material cultures worldwide. Ethnographic collections were more and more complemented by photographic documents; an historical examination of the photographs shows that constant subjects were introduced

in changing forms of representation and are open to interpretation. Landscapes, architecture, portraits, genre scenes, and people in everyday-life situations or during ceremonies, help to enrich the context of the collection artefacts.

In Bern today the ethnographic collection comprises 60,000 inventory numbers; about 13,000 of them are historic-ethnographic photographs from all the continents: Africa constitutes the main part with 58%, followed by Asia with 37%, the Americas with 4% and Oceania with 1%. The photos in Bern's Oriental collection are generally attributed to Asia, including the photos depicting the Balkan in a time when it still formed a part of the declining Ottoman Empire. The photographs pertaining to Asia have a regional divide as follows: Central Asia with 40%, followed by East Asia with 30%, and South Asia and Southeast Asia with 15% each.

The Henri Moser collection

Photographs bequeathed by Henri Moser, the foremost donator to the Bern Oriental collection, form an important and rich part of this collection. The photos are rare early records of inner-Asian centres such as Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva in today's Uzbekistan. Moser's photos were taken by himself as well as by other photographers. Among the negatives there are 250 paper negatives, a technique developed in 1883 by George Eastman. Paper negatives were used instead of glass-plates, especially for travel photography and expeditions, until the late 1880s.

Henri Moser (1844-1923) was the son of an industry-pioneer from Schaffhausen. The family migrated for some time to St. Petersburg, where Henri was born. Crucial in his life were five journeys in Asia; one to Siberia undertaken in the year 1867, and four journeys to Central Asia in the years 1868/69, 1869/70, 1883/84 and 1888/89. He showed a widespread interest in different activities and he gained acknowledgement all over Europe as a specialist of the Orient, thanks to his narratives and photographic documentations of Central Asia and Persia. In a way he was also a photo-pioneer and he experimented with the technical possibilities of early photography. The journals of his expeditions were published in weekly magazines

Photography developed further during the middle of the 19th century, and quickly became an accompaniment to cultural anthropological research, enriching the information collected on many aspects of the material cultures worldwide.

and in scientific periodicals. This resulted in a report about his experiences in Asia, printed in his bestselling book *A travers l'Asie Centrale*, published in 1885 in Paris by E. Plon, and a subsequent German translation *Durch Central-Asien*, published in 1888 in Leipzig by A. Brockhaus.

On his third journey to Central Asia Moser travelled in the company of the governor-general of Russian Turkestan, General Michael Tschernajeff. On his fourth journey to Central Asia he travelled in the company of his wife and the Russian General Annenkoff. Before his third voyage, and the above mentioned publication, Moser had the opportunity to organise the state reception for the Iranian Shahinshah Nasr-Eddin, by order of the Swiss government. This helped him to reach diplomatic recognition.

Exhibitions of oriental objects and curiosities, held in Switzerland, and Islamic art shows in Paris, gave him the opportunity to present his collection and his view of the Islamic world in the context of the orient-enthusiasm of the *fin de siècle*. Already in Moser's travel writings does his affinity for development efforts and technical innovations for Asia become apparent. He very actively spread the idea of an unlimited 'civilisation progress' during his travels through Bosnia and Herzegovina, which he undertook at the behest of Austria's minister of finance, Benjamin von Kállay. As a diplomat of the k. und k. Monarchy he promoted a propagandistic view of these regions for Europe, which led him to become the exhibition-commissioner of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the World's Fair in Brussels (1897) and the famous World's Fair in Paris in 1900. Both events are prominently present in various facets of Moser's photo-documentations.

Photographers in East Asia

When it comes to East Asia, Bern's ethnographic photographic collection focuses mainly on Japan. As Japan opened up to the Western world in the second half of the 19th century, many photographers from Europe and America started to arrive there. Photos taken by Felice Beato (1833-1907) were some of the very first, and a small number found their way into the Bern collection. *Continued on page 36 >*

1 (above): 'Kirgiz family in front of their yurt'. Photo taken by Henri Moser or other photographer in the expedition of 1868, on Moser's first journey to Central Asia.



2 (top left): 'Mosques of Samarkand'. Photo taken by Henri Moser or other photographer on his third journey to Central Asia, in the years 1883/84.

3 (top right): Felice Beato's album, 'Views of Japan; Mr. Shōjirō', about 1868.

4 (below): Paul Ritter collection (Leporello album), 'Korean teacher with four girls'. Photo taken in 1894 by anonymous photographer.



Photographic partners for ethnographic artefacts *continued*

> Continued from page 34

Other East Asian photos in the collection are a little later, dating from around 1880-1910. These photos were collected by Swiss merchants and diplomats travelling to the new commercial spheres. They brought back with them to the Western world scenes and portraits of peoples from Japan, China and Korea, and also views of famous localities and buildings; these were the precursors to the picture postcard.

Paul Ritter (1865–1921), for example, was in the Swiss diplomatic service, posted in Yokohama in 1892–1902, and in Tokyo in 1906–1909. He was responsible for China, Japan and Korea and brought many photographs back to Switzerland. His landscapes and scenes from Japan are of remarkable quality, and his leporello album containing 136 everyday-life scenes in Seoul and studio-portraits of people from Korea in the year 1894, is particularly noteworthy.

Many portraits and genre-scenes were taken in studios and were often illuminated. Series made by the H. Suito studio in Tokyo show the step-by-step process of the two main economically important production activities of Japan in the style of the early 20th century: the cultivation of rice and tea.

Photos depicting China are of the same genre as those from Japan, and document everyday-life and views of landscapes and famous architecture. Portraits and arranged scenes with people are generally taken in studios. The tendency to compare working and upper class people reflect China from a colonial point of view. The activities of the working class are portrayed with mundane daily activities, while the upper class are presented in fine clothes in photos taken in studios or luxury homes.

Depicting reality

Walter Bosshard (1892–1975) exhibited more of a journalistic quality in his photographs of Mongolia and Tibet. He was a member of the German Central-Asia expedition in the years 1927/28 in Turkestan and Tibet. He became a pioneer of modern photojournalism and he worked hard to depict the reality in word and picture. Bosshard also reported from India and his portraits of important personalities of the first half of the 20th century became famous throughout the world.

5 (below inset): Walter Bosshard, 'Caravan in the Takla Makan desert'. Photo taken in 1928 on the German Central Asia expedition.

6 (below): Walter Volz, 'On the way to the gold-mine', about 1900. The picture shows a human group in Southwest-Sumatra where gold was won since old times, and which the Dutch continued above all in the province of Bengkulu.

Another significant part of the Asia collection in Bern are photographs from Southeast Asia. Especially noteworthy are photos documenting the first Dutch Borneo expedition taken by the Swiss Johann Jakob Büttikofer, in the years 1893/94. Büttikofer (1850–1927) was a biologist and head of the zoological garden in Rotterdam and he was a member of the expedition crew. He was experienced in fieldwork in the tropics and his photos chiefly document the contacts between the peoples of inner Borneo and the participants of the Dutch Borneo expedition. Above all, his work shows an insight into a world before the influence of Western colonialism became effective. The expedition went up the Kapus river into the depths of Borneo's forest-world. The initial aim of traversing Borneo from West to East in one journey could not be realised; it was thus followed by successive expeditions on the Mahakam-river to the East coast of Borneo, originally planned to be the second part of the first expedition. The results of the undertakings are published in two volumes by A. W. Niewenhuijs: *Quer durch Borneo, Ergebnisse seiner Reisen in den Jahren 1893–94, 1896–97, 1898–1900*. Büttikofer did not take part in the second and third expeditions and his photographs of the first journey are regrettably not included in Niewenhuijs' published report.

Another Bernese natural scientist in Dutch service was Walter Volz (1875-1907). He was active first in Indonesia, primarily in Sumatra, and later in West Africa (Liberia), as a geologist and zoologist. Whilst conducting research in Liberian villages with the local people, he was shot during a military operation by the French.

Many other photo-documents show scenes and insights into the cultures of the mainland and the many islands of Southeast Asian archipelagos at the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century. Cultural events including rituals, ceremonies and for example the Javanese theatre, are typical for this kind of outdoor documentations. Many photographs of peoples of all social levels and ranks are mostly arranged studio works. Besides Büttikofer and Volz we know only a few names of the photographers active in Southeast Asia at that time, as many were in fact local photographers who presented and sold their work to the many European travellers in countries such as Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. The local photographers offered a large number of photographs, which the travellers brought home, often together with collector items.

The documentation of far-away regions resulted in masses of photographic-documents; they were products of socio-historical and ethnographic research, but they are in all cases simply interpretations of the reality. Standing near the cradle of photography, Charles Baudelaire formulated in his 1859 essay, *The photograph and the modern audience*, a criticism of the acceptance that photography is a simple mirror of the world or a mechanical transfer of reality. Photography is always an interpretation of the reality. The photographic motive is connected to the subject that selects it; it is linked to the things and persons in front and behind the camera. The photographer and the collector transmit this mirror of the world creating a complex relationship between reality, interpreter, observer and beholder.

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Science and technology

In *Science, War and Imperialism*, Jagdish N. Sinha recalls that British rule focused overwhelmingly on India as a colonial possession useful for Britain. Government institutions of higher learning in India were largely practical in nature – concerned with stimulating agriculture, curing disease, or extracting natural resources. The colonial regime deliberately avoided introducing the modernist ethos, according to which practical results would stem from the prosecution of pure science. Over the first part of the century, Indians advocated for modernity – science education and industrialization – in the face of substantial anti-modernist sentiment by revolutionaries like Mohandas Gandhi. The Second World War tipped the balance in favor of science as, indeed, the war accelerated independence.

Lewis Pyenson



Sinha, Jagdish N. 2008. *Science, War and Imperialism: India in the Second World War*. Leiden: Brill, 278 pages, ISBN 9789004166455 (paperback).

WHY WAS MODERN SCIENCE SO LATE in coming to South Asia? Professor Sinha argues in favor of the decisive hand of the British Raj, which, whenever science came up, moved the conversation to technology. Part of this impulse should be attributed to the sensibility of the ruling classes in Britain. Into the twentieth century, Great Britain was struggling with the question of setting up institutions for promoting industrial development. It had nothing comparable to the prestigious and effective technological schools of France and especially Germany, which were, broadly speaking, accessible to students of all social classes and national origins. Until the decisive intervention of Labour well into the twentieth century, science in Britain was a calling for the scions of aristocratic or wealthy families.

Industrialization

In emphasizing the role of the government, Professor Sinha contrasts India to Australia and Canada (p. 167). Yet it can be argued that science was anemic in Australia (until the 1940s Australia lacked research-doctoral programs, for example, cf p. 186), and that science in Canada prospered at private institutions (McGill, Laval, and Dalhousie universities) and regionally-funded institutions (University of Toronto). From the point of view of the advancement of learning in India, a Rubber Production Board and a Directorate General of Shipbuilding and Ship Repairs (both established in 1942) count for little (p. 171); for a fraction of the investment in these nuts-and-bolts operations, India could have had one of the world's premier institutes of mathematics or genetics. The very title of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, created in 1942 to allocate governmental funding, reveals the practical orientation of thinking at the time.

Above: Wind turbines above Bada Bagh Cenotaph, Rajasthan State, India. CC attribution Share Alike courtesy of Patrick Barry/flickr.

The programs for promoting industrial training in India during the Second World War were part of a plan to preserve the British Raj by improving the Indian economy, on the one hand, and to prevent the United States from industrializing India “after the war in an effort to create for itself a market there” (p. 141, referring to the opinion of British Minister of Labour Ernest Bevin), on the other hand. The question concerning nearly everyone was not truth-seeking – what modernity understood as science – but rather industrialization, the implementation of technology. Wherever one looks during the war, there is a confusing pastiche of science and technology. This view extended to A. V. Hill, the 1922 Nobel laureate in physiology, who, after visiting India, penned a report advocating a new emphasis on technical applications there (pp. 156-7). Professor Sinha emphasizes how industrial capitalism overwhelmed traditional Indian economic rhythms and manufactures (pp. 161-3, 182), while at the same time observing the attraction of the Soviet Union and its state-directed industrialization to Jawaharlal Nehru and his advisors. An emphasis on theory in science, whether in physics or biology, could have mitigated the impact of rapacious industrial development; indeed one could imagine significant points of rapport between ‘Western’ theory and ‘Eastern’ philosophy, as the connection was proposed during the 1960s in the United States. Professor Sinha is clear that such a synthesis failed to materialize. European technology overran India, dealing “a fatal blow to the indigenous knowledge and skill and a crippling knock to the indigenous creativity (p. 196).”

A central archive

I wonder how Indian scholars and scientists viewed the matter. *Science, War and Imperialism* prepares the ground for a parallel study, focusing on the non-governmental side of Indian society. It is true that Indian industrialists endowed scientific institutions early in the century. Did the prosecution of science in the private sphere depend on them alone?

In Britain, endowments for science came from the landed gentry as well as from industrial families. I should like to know more about the worldview of Indian aristocrats, people who could well have funded a large private observatory or a cyclotron. It would also be good to learn about the development of research degrees at universities under the British Raj. These points can be recovered from private correspondence and writings, a portion of it no doubt in South Asian languages. Professor Sinha is well-situated for carrying out such a study to complement his fine treatment of the governmental side of science under British rule.

It is time to collect the unpublished papers of twentieth-century South Asian scientists in a central archive. One model is the “Archive for the History of Quantum Physics,” directed by Thomas S. Kuhn in the 1960s. The efforts of Kuhn and his colleagues sensitized scientists to the historical importance of their personal correspondence. The project resulted in the preservation of many thousands of letters providing vital insights into the formulation of quantum mechanics. The project also directly contributed to new standards for historical scholarship, notably in the pages of the periodical *Historical Studies in the Physical Sciences*. It would be wonderful to read intimate and frank thoughts from South Asians about the means and ends of science. By extension, such an archive would help resolve the extent to which science is universal and whether science is bent this way and that by the accident of creed, costume, and cuisine. My guess is that the resulting picture would obviate a great deal of the loose and silly writing of late about the distinctive appropriation of European science by civilizations beyond Europe. It would lend support to Joseph Needham’s affirmation of a universal frame, in the Modern Age, for perceiving the natural world.

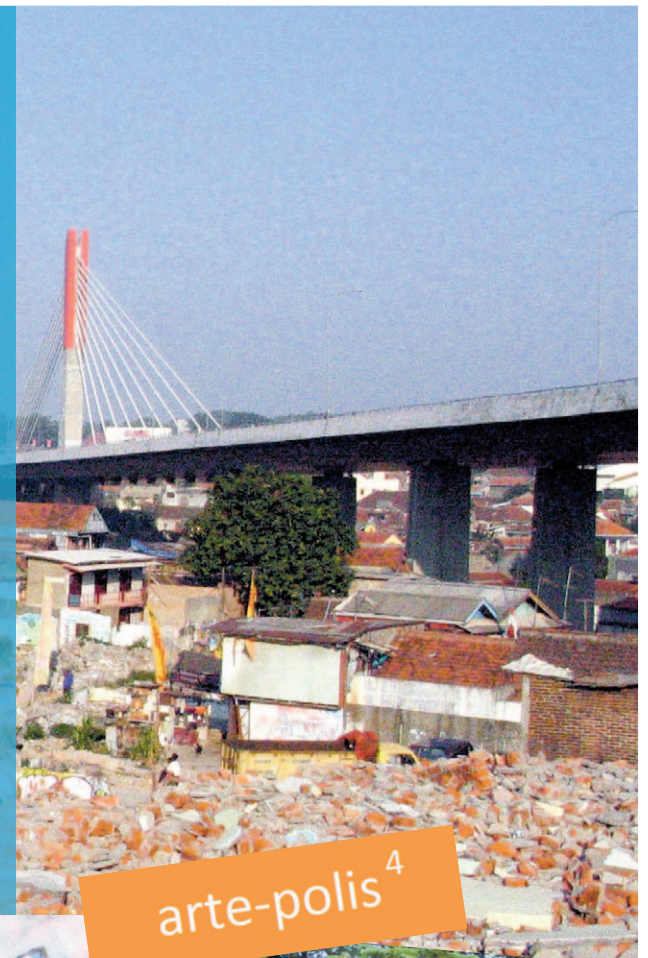
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Creating places and connections

The Place-makers



Spaces and places frame life; furthermore, the ways we use these spaces and places are framed by the ways we talk about them: scientifically, aesthetically, morally, politically, economically, etc. When the stories we tell, and are being told, about our cities gain a sense of inevitability they become oppressing. There always are – and should be – alternative points of view. The last decade or so, the dominant theme has been creativity: the creative city, creative economy or industry



arte-polis⁴

Arte-Polis 4 International Conference and Workshop Creative Connectivity and the Making of Place: Living Smart by Design School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development Institute of Technology Bandung, West Java, Indonesia 5-7 July 2012 (<http://arte-polis.info>)



for example, social behavior and the particularities of the political economy, which is too often overlooked. In the 'third wave' literature, for example, it seems as if transition is an irreversible process from A to B if a country constructs the right institutions.³ In one of my classes I attempted with my students to accomplish the meeting of Indonesia's national political philosophy *Pancasila* and the political theories of John Rawls, Richard Rorty and others.⁴ It was, however, not so

THE GENEALOGY OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY ITB (<http://www.itb.ac.id/en/>) dates back to colonial times and it has some illustrious alumni; for example, the first and third presidents of the Republic of Indonesia – respectively Soekarno (president between the declaration of independence in 1945 and his ousting in 1966) and Habibie (president between the ousting of Soeharto in 1998, to which many ITB students contributed with their protests – and the first post-Soeharto elections in 1999). Many ITB lecturers – who are civil servants if they have a permanent contract – work as consultants to the state and its central and local governments. The Indonesian state has had for decades a strong top-down developmentalist approach to modernize the economy, and the Arte-Polis conferences are an attempt to change this story. It therefore comes as no surprise that ministers are invited to deliver keynote speeches.

Arte-Polis aims "to bring together and to connect practitioners, academics, artists, community leaders, local government officials, policy-makers and other professionals from diverse disciplines and regions around the world concerned with the quality of life and collaborative nature of creative communities [...]. Its objective is to share and learn from international and local experiences regarding current issues, best practices and policy implications of creative connectivity on place-making."²

I should start with a disclaimer though; in 2008, I presented a paper at one of the parallel sessions at Arte-Polis 2. And in 2010, I organized a roundtable discussion on the political nature of, and the role of, artist initiatives in public space at Arte-Polis 3. In 2003, right after my graduation from the University of Amsterdam, I left for Indonesia and I started lecturing political theory at several universities in Jakarta and Bandung, including ITB. Very soon, however, I came to realize that what I had learned and what I was teaching was rather abstract. I am not just saying that we should pay closer attention to the context,

and the creative class. Researcher and consultant Richard Florida has done much to popularize the concept of the creative city.¹ And theirs is a global appeal; Arte-Polis 1 was organized in 2006 by the Department of Architecture, and in 2008, the School of Architecture, Planning and Policy Development (SAPD/SAPPK) at the Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB), Indonesia, took over the organization of the biannual conferences.

Roy Voragen

much the local context I was missing, but the spatial component of public space in the writings of Rawls, Rorty and others. I am not saying that these theorists are too blame for this omission – some things need to be omitted to keep writings readable – but for me it meant a spatial turn, a turn to the writings of urban geographers and architects. So it was only natural for me to gravitate towards ITB's Arte-Polis conferences.

Conference program

The British Council supported the second edition of Arte-Polis, and up to today it still organizes the Young Creative Entrepreneur awards.⁵ The ITB alumnus and architect Ridwan Kamil, founder of Urbane,⁶ was the 2006 winner. Some of the keynote speakers at previous Arte-Polis editions were professor emeritus Alexander Cuthbert from the University of North South Wales (in 2006); former Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs professor Dorodjatun Kuntjoro-Jakti (in 2006); above-mentioned Charles Landry (in 2008); professor Eku Wand from Braunschweig University of Art in Germany, which collaborates with ITB's School of Fine Art and Design (in 2010); and professor Nezar Alsayyad from the University of California in Berkeley, from which Ridwan Kamil is an alumnus (also in 2010).

The danger of flying in well-known speakers from abroad is that their talks can be rather broad with little relationship to Indonesia. While Eku Wand's talk showed in a very entertaining way how interactive design could work, Charles Landry's talk discussed case studies of place-making in the UK from which it was difficult to distillate possible implications for the Indonesian situation.

In 2006, 2008 and 2012, the conference was organized at the ITB campus. In 2010, Arte-Polis 3 was organized in The Asia Africa Conference Museum, this museum commemorates the meeting of newly independent and non-aligned countries from Asia and Africa in 1955. This location was chosen to promote a different side of Bandung, as the center of the city has slowly moved

1 (main image): The Pasupati flyover after the eviction.

2 (Inset): Graffiti and two scavengers under the Pasupati flyover;

3 (Inset): Logo Arte-Polis 4;

4 (Inset): Bandung emerging creative city signage nearby the Pasupati flyover.

All photos by Roy Voragen.

A review of Arte-Polis 4

northwards. Interestingly, when a representative of the museum opened Arte-Polis, no reference was made to the colonial use of the building, this art deco-styled building used to house Sociëteit Concordia, a club for plantation owners.⁷

In 2012, when Arte-Polis moved back to the campus, the conference had around a hundred speakers from over fifteen different countries, which made it smaller than the previous edition, which was a blessing in disguise as there are only so many presentations one can attend. However, if Arte-Polis is about exchanging best experiences then it is unfortunate that previous successful program elements were not repeated this time around; this time there was no art exhibition as was the case in 2006 (ITB has an campus art gallery: Gallery Soemardja); no site-specific projects (in 2008: 'Reclaiming Lost Space' under the Pasupati flyover, which is at walking distance from the campus); and no roundtable discussions (of which I organized one in 2010). The roundtable discussions were particularly missed as these offer an opportunity to interact and discuss on a more fruitful level than a short question and answer session after a presentation can provide.

Smart cities

Every few years or so new buzz words and lingo surfaces. This time around it was 'smart': smart cities, smart design and smart thinking. One of the two workshops was titled Smart Growth Workshop. And the first keynote speaker, professor Ulrich Weinberg from HPI School of Design Thinking (Potsdam, Germany), spoke about smart design and thinking. In his talk, which seemed a bit like a PR pitch to start a franchise of his institute in Indonesia, he explained that smart design and thinking focuses on multidisciplinary collaboration and co-production; he gave Wikipedia as an example.⁸ Due to a generally strong social conformism, Indonesia could perhaps use a more individualistic spirit to achieve new ideas. However, just as with 'creative' cities, how are cities 'smart' – is that not a human attribute?

By far the most inspiring presentation was by the second keynote speaker, Anies Baswedan, the rector of Paramadina University in Jakarta, which was founded by Muslim intellectual Nurcholish Madjid. Anies Baswedan stated that Asia is re-emerging, but that at the very same time there are many social ills that cannot all be solved by a top-down approach, even though it is our natural response to look at the state for action to deal with social problems. He tested this by asking the audience whose responsibility it is to deal with the floods that plague Jakarta. And the general consensus was that it is the state's responsibility. However, it is our garbage that fills up and blocks the sewer system, the rivers and canals. He told us not to wait for the government to step in just because we pay taxes. He continued to speak about a project he founded, *Indonesia Mengajar* ('Indonesia Teaches'), which deals with the very uneven distribution of high-quality teachers.⁹ University graduates who participate in the *Indonesia Mengajar* project are sent to remote areas to teach for a year; it is not considered an alternative career path, as the pay in the private sector is much higher, but it is seen as a rewarding civic duty. This project, Anies Baswedan hopes, is to become a hub of trust (littering and tax evasion are only two of the many signs that social trust has eroded in Indonesia) so that the fifth pillar of *Pancasila* becomes a reality: social justice.

Future urban design

The Indonesian government was represented by two keynote speakers: vice minister at the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Sapta Nirwandar, and Imam S. Ernawi (Ministry of

It should not only benefit one class – the so-called creative class – within these cities. If we speak in terms of class, as Florida does, we also have to speak in terms of class interests, for which members need to recognize themselves as a class to be able to lobby for their interests.

Public Works). The first spoke about connecting tourism with the creative economy to improve the quality of life. He said very little how this is to be done other than the usual city branding through the use of landmarks, such as the Eiffel Tower (but, as professor Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, another keynote speaker, pointed out, most of us don't have a use for a landmark like Marina Bay in Singapore).¹⁰ And he said nothing about whose lives could be qualitatively improved. Moreover, how sustainable can a city be if the focus is on tourism? Since the opening of the Cipularang toll road in May 2005, which connects Jakarta with Bandung, many tourists have been coming from Jakarta to Bandung, which benefits some, but causes problems for all (traffic jams are the most visible issue).

Imam S. Ernawi, the second government representative, spoke about the plans developed by the Ministry of Public Works, but little about their implementation. The next keynote speaker formed, therefore, a good contrast. Professor emeritus and founder of the Center of Urban Design Studies, Mohammad Danisworo, talked about the need to develop a MRT system in Jakarta.¹¹ He has been discussing this topic since 1972, forty years and five presidents later he speaks about it again at Arte-Polis 4 (he mentioned that eighty percent of that time has been lost due to politicking). He hopes that the MRT can be a catalyst to transformative processes. Unfortunately, he didn't mention anything about the overlapping trajectories of the already existing Transjakarta Busway and the to be constructed MRT.¹²

The parallel sessions were conducted in more intimate settings, on average an audience would have twenty or so members. Quite a few of the speakers at parallel sessions had difficulties controlling their nerves and dealing with insufficient English proficiency (with this many speakers it wouldn't work to use translators due to time constraints). Some of these speakers failed to realize that presenting a paper to a live audience is very different than writing one. The energetic presentation by Jeanne M. Lambin, adjunct professor at the University of Florida and guest lecturer at ITB, was a great example though, as she turned it into a mini workshop. She is developing a deck of cards as a playful and low-tech tool to investigate how people use their cities, and she asked us to scribble drawings and keywords on a card we each received (the deck of cards is still a work in progress). One issue that affected nearly all presentations is that speakers talked about their own projects; for some, more critical distance would have been welcome, which was amplified all the more in those presentations by speakers who were wearing two hats: that of the researcher as well as that of the consultant. The pragmatic consultant makes it difficult for the researcher to step back and question the parameters in which they work, the political economy is then taken for granted.

Creativity for everyone

Kathleen Azali, from Co2 library in Surabaya and one of the parallel session speakers,¹³ stated: "If the concept [of the creative city] is truly about empowering, unleashing potential, turning problems into potentials," then the concept should not only be applied to a few – the lucky few – cities. And we could add to her plea: it should not only benefit one class – the so-called creative class – within these cities. This brings us back to Richard Florida, his methods, categories and findings have been widely criticized. And yet, the impact of his writings and talks is enormous. If we speak in terms of class, as Florida does, we also have to speak in terms of class interests, for which members need to recognize themselves as a class to be able to lobby for their interests.¹⁴ Florida describes 'creativity as an economic

force',¹⁵ and even if creativity, as Florida understands it, increases GDP and even if government policies to support the creative class (subsidies and easier permits for members of the creative class) help to increase GDP, it doesn't say anything about its distribution. And how sustainable are such policies if it leads to increased inter-city competition? Florida mentions that everyone can be creative and that this potential should be used – who can argue against creativity? – but that contradicts the concept of class. And he also claims – or hopes? – that somehow the gains of creativity will trickle down.

And because every one can potentially be creative, creativity is a great lobby argument. The danger, though, is that policies aimed at the creative class further increases inequality, and not only in terms of wealth distribution, but also in terms of access to space. The danger, then, is that the uncreative people will be evicted to make room for members of the creative class and their interests.¹⁶ Many families were evicted from the center of Bandung, for example, to make room for a shopping mall and the above-mentioned flyover.¹⁷ Once more, I am obviously not against creativity, but that should not warrant another blow to the fragile state of solidarity in Indonesia. And to merely state that the urban poor are capable of creativity and also have the right to the city isn't enough,¹⁸ it will require building bridges as Anies Baswedan would have it.

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Notes

- 1 For Richard Florida's consultancy firm Creative Class Group see: www.creativeclass.com and for Charles Landry: www.charleslandry.com.
- 2 See <http://arte-polis.info> (accessed 15 July 2012).
- 3 Henk Schulte Nordholt. 2003. 'Renegotiating boundaries. Access, agency and identity in post-Suharto Indonesia', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 159:551.
- 4 The five basic principles of Indonesia's state ideology: the belief in one God; just and civilized humanity; the unity of the Republic of Indonesia; democracy guided by the wisdom of representative deliberation; and social justice for all. At first, my students responded with cynicism to my proposal to re-interpret their state philosophy as they have come to see *Pancasila* as a propaganda tool.
- 5 tinyurl.com/cwuh3ap (accessed 15 July 2012).
- 6 www.urbane.co.id.
- 7 Built along the *Groote Postweg* (i.e., Great Postal Road), today called *Jalan Asia-Afrika*.
- 8 A parallel session speaker, Chong Keng Hua, also emphasized this multidisciplinary aspect, which he oddly called crowd sourcing, but a group of a dozen specialists is not a crowd.
- 9 <http://indonesiamengajar.com>.
- 10 Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and her partner Andrés Duany, also a keynote speaker, are proponents of New Urbanism, which is a sociological approach to architecture and urban planning that seeks to end urban sprawl and urban disinvestment. <http://www.dpz.com>.
- 11 <http://psud.web.id>.
- 12 <http://www.transjakarta.co.id>. The Transjakarta Busway is modeled after a similar system in Bogota Colombia, and the first route has been operational since January 2004.
- 13 <http://c2o-library.net/?lang=en>.
- 14 And if we speak in terms of class interests, we also have to speak in terms of class conflicts – which only occurs below the radar in Indonesia, as it became a taboo after the elimination of the communist party in 1965-1966.
- 15 Richard Florida. 2012. 'The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited', *The Atlantic*, 25 June 2012, tinyurl.com/6qz4uhp (accessed 13 July 2012). In the same essay he sweepingly writes: "The Creative Class has become truly global, numbering between one-third to nearly one-half of the workforce in the advanced nations of North America, Europe, Asia, and around the world." That is for sure not the case in Indonesia (but I will use the term creative class for reasons of brevity). Furthermore, he refers to the political scientist Ronald Inglehart and his concept of the 'post-materialist values', but it is highly questionable whether it applies to Indonesia.
- 16 The academic term for this process is gentrification; Belgium artist Reinaart Vanhoe calls this the colonization of the city, which leads to a populist backlash. Reinaart Vanhoe. 2007. 'A Plea for an Uncreative City: About Rotterdam', *Metropolis M*, no.1; tinyurl.com/cnphx5 (accessed 15 July 2012).
- 17 Gustaaf Reerink. 2011. *Tenure security for Indonesia's urban poor, A socio-legal study on land, decentralization and the rule of law in Bandung*. Leiden: Leiden University Press.
- 18 Dr. Tita Larasati and her student Prananda Luffiansyah Malasan presented a project, which they claim, reclaims the street. However, it is one thing to criticize the middle class of spending too much time in shopping malls, it is an altogether different matter to claim that the streets are vacant. <http://keukenbdg.com>.

5 (below): Graffiti by Irwan B. Dharmawan under the Pasupati flyover.



News from Asia

Southeast Asian film archives in focus at the 7th Association for Southeast Asian Cinemas Conference

Adam Knee

THE ASSOCIATION FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN CINEMAS (ASEAC) held its seventh international conference on 19-22 June 2012 at the National Museum of Singapore – in the city that also hosted the inaugural conference back in 2004. Focusing this year on the theme of 'The Politics, Practices, and Poetics of the Archive', the well-attended event was organized in cooperation with the Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the Nanyang Technological University, and included plenary talks, panels with scholars and archivists from around the world, archival film screenings, and visits to archives and galleries in Singapore.

An opening panel on practical issues that arise in film restoration – and in particular on the restoration of the historically significant Indonesian film *Lewat Djam Malam* (After the Curfew, 1953) – was followed by the screening of a newly struck 35mm print of this just-restored work. The first evening of the conference featured an opening address from film historian Thomas Doherty (Brandeis University), who spoke of the importance of archivists for facilitating historical research; Doherty noted how luck and happenstance inevitably bear upon such research, which in his experience has often come to fruition only owing to the alert eyes (and the strong memories) of seasoned archivists with full knowledge of their respective collections (before the days of the computer database).

The second day of the conference began with a special focus on Cambodian archives, with the first panel of the day addressing both the use of Cambodian archival materials in film and the present state of the Cambodian archives themselves. As part of the panel, a talk from Sopheap Chea, a representative of the Bophana Audiovisual Resource Centre in Phnom Penh, introduced those present to an important regional resource for scholarship. The panel was followed by a rare screening of Rithy Panh's *Bophana: A Cambodian Tragedy* (1996), a film which makes use of archival materials to dramatize historical events of the Khmer Rouge years. The Cambodian focus was picked up again on the third day, with a special screening of the new documentary *Golden Slumbers* (2011) – a work which bemoans the absence of archival material from the golden age of Cambodian cinema before the rise of the Khmer Rouge. French-Cambodian filmmaker Davy Chou was also present to discuss his work with a very appreciative audience.

A mid-day break on the second day afforded conference participants the opportunity to join a guided tour of the National Museum of Singapore's newly-refurbished Film and Wayang Gallery. Other highlights of the day included a panel dealing with 'Film as Archives' – that is, with the archival functions films themselves can serve – and a plenary talk from Bliss Cua Lim (University of California at Irvine). Taking the situation of film heritage in the Philippines as its key example, Lim's talk considered practical conundrums and philosophical contradictions posed by the archive; that in preserving some works the archive may paradoxically need to make them less accessible to the public, and may also condemn (by omission) other works that may in some ways be equally significant.

The third day of the conference included panels on the struggles of the Sinematek Indonesia in Jakarta, and on audiovisual archival materials pertaining to Singapore. Such materials were also the subject of a talk from representatives of the Ivan Polunin archive, which included some screening of rare color footage of Singapore filmed in the 1950s by the archive's namesake. The afternoon was given to an event in memory of two important figures for the film archive community: Misbach Yusa Biran, the founder of the Sinematek Indonesia, and Alexis Tioseco, a young Filipino-Canadian critic and advocate of Southeast Asian independent cinema. Short films from Indonesia and the Philippines were screened, accompanied by brief introductions and reminiscences about the two men.

The fourth and final day of the conference featured panels on 'Religion and Film' and on 'Film and Cultural Memory' – both of which demonstrated in differing ways how, in preserving or capturing history, film itself may also be a site of ongoing cultural and religious negotiation and contestation. Also on the final day, some of the conference's fundamental concerns were highlighted at a plenary panel with film archivists from Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, which provided a unique opportunity to take a regional perspective on 'Contemporary Challenges for the Archive'. Panelists spoke of, among other things, potential preservation problems that arise with the

digitizing of audiovisual collections, difficulties in securing funding for the continuation of archives, and practical matters of maintaining enough space for growing collections and providing public access – in particular for audiences who may not have much experience in using archives.

Members of ASEAC were quite pleased with the success of this year's event, which attracted close to one hundred participants (speakers and attendees) and produced quite a few animated discussions between panelists and audience members. The organization intends to continue to build upon the evident interest in scholarship on Southeast Asian film, and is already making plans for its next conference in 2014 at another Southeast Asian city to be determined.

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The articles on these "News from Asia" pages were compiled by our regional editor Caixia Lu at The Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; they cover local stories relevant to Asian studies in general.

If you would like to contribute to this section in a future issue, please contact our new editor at ISEAS, Dr. Lee Hock Guan iias_iseas@iseas.edu.sg



A reappraisal of sources for Asian studies

Rila Mukherjee

THE MEETING 'A REAPPRAISAL OF SOURCES FOR ASIAN STUDIES' was held in Kolkata and Chandernagore (West Bengal, Hooghly) from 5-9 March 2012, with participants from four countries: India, France, the United States and China. The aim of the meeting was to showcase new findings that challenge older scholarship on Asia.

The first day, held in collaboration with the Department of South and South East Asian Studies, Calcutta University (joint coordinator Lipi Ghosh, the Departmental Chair), saw Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (former Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharati University, Santiniketan and former Chairman, Indian Council for Historical Research) delivering the first keynote address on connections versus connectivities. Barun De (former Chairman, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute for Asian Studies, and currently Tagore Fellow, Victoria Memorial) delivered the opening remarks on Asian connections.

Kenneth R. Hall (Ball State University), Jean Francois Salles (formerly of the National Center for Scientific Research, CNRS), Marie Françoise Bousset (University of Lyon and CNRS), and H.S. Vasudevan (former Director, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute for Asian Studies and Professor of the Department of History, Calcutta University) spoke or presented papers on new sources from the archaeological perspective and Greek and Russian material on South Asia. Panels were organized in such a way as to offer plenty of time for discussion.

On the second day, the meeting moved on to Chandernagore, a former French enclave 55 kilometres from Kolkata, where the Institut de Chandernagore, with support from the Hooghly district administration, hosted the deliberations over the next two days. At the second inaugural, at the Institut de Chandernagore, major events included the showing of a short film 'Europe on the Ganges' (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage INTACH), a brief talk by G.M. Kapur (Convenor, West Bengal chapter of INTACH) on the Hooghly heritage zone, and the book releases of S.C. Sen's Chandernagore: From Bondage to Freedom and Radhika Seshan's Trade and Politics on the Coromandel Coast: Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries. Om Prakash

(Emeritus, Delhi School of Economics) delivered the second keynote address on Dutch sources on Asia. This was chaired by B.D. Chattopadhyaya (formerly of Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University) and was followed by an excursion to the Hooghly heritage area of former European colonies of Chandernagore, Chinsurah (Dutch) and Bandel (Portuguese), as well as to the Armenian Church at Chinsurah.

The third day was devoted to a thorough appraisal of sixteenth to eighteenth century sources for Asian studies; here the viability of European factory records for South Asia was discussed by Ruby Maloni (Mumbai), Rila Mukherjee (Director, Institut de Chandernagore and formerly of the University of Hyderabad) and Radhika Seshan (the University of Hyderabad). Ilicia Sprey (United States) and Biao Yang (Shanghai, China) spoke on European literary perspectives on Vietnam and China's changing attitudes to the maritime Silk Route.

The meeting was funded by the West Bengal Higher Education Department, which funds the Institut de Chandernagore. The chief sponsors of the meeting were the Asia Centre, Kolkata (K.P.V. Nair) and the Hooghly District Administration at Chinsurah. Participants then departed for a Sundarbans cruise, sponsored by the Hooghly District Administration, and an informal valedictory on the meeting was held on the country steamer on which the participants stayed for the next two days.

Several useful outcomes emerged from this meeting. It enabled participants to learn about recent archaeological discoveries that challenge many assumptions on the history of South, South East and West Asia and underscored the need to incorporate this new material into recent scholarship. It also offered a new look at China's changing perceptions on its overseas connections, a reappraisal of European literature on East Asia, and above all, the enduring utility of European factory records on South Asia. Resulting publications will emphasize the new paths that the meeting opened up.

History was the dominant discipline at this meeting, but as it was the first in the Asian Connections series launched by the Institut de Chandernagore in 2011, we hope to encourage practitioners from other disciplines to reappraise their source material, archive, or terrain in subsequent meetings.

Professor Rila Mukherjee, Coordinator and Director Institut de Chandernagore. <http://institutedechandernagore.gov.in/>

The state of historical research in Myanmar

Alexey Kirichenko

THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE REFORM PROCESS in Myanmar following parliamentary elections in 2010 and the gradual opening up of the country after more than fifty years of relative isolation is not all about politics and economy. The scope for historical research and the study and preservation of cultural heritage is also changing as international agencies and the academic community engage Myanmar more directly and local institutions seek closer cooperation with the outside world.

Several recent developments are illustrative of this change. In January this year, the Italian government granted €400,000 (about US\$495,000) to a UNESCO project for cultural preservation capacity-building in Myanmar. The project was subsequently launched in March. In February, the Myanmar Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, jointly convened a conference on early Myanmar and its global connections in Bagan. This was the first historical research conference in twenty years to be held in Myanmar that saw joint organization between a local host and a foreign institute. In April, Myanmar launched a process to nominate three Pyu cities (major urban centres dating to the first millennium) for World Heritage status. In June, a high-profile French mission visited Myanmar to discuss initiatives to preserve the country's cultural heritage. All these events showed that the situation had changed dramatically in recent years. More significantly, they draw more attention to the state of historical research in Myanmar and the challenges that lie ahead in terms of building stronger links between the international academic community and local scholars in Myanmar.

Like many other aspects of Myanmar, historical research still bears the significant imprint of the colonial period and the era between 1962 and 1988 when the country was run by the Revolutionary Council and Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). The colonial period saw the inauguration of the Archaeological Survey and Rangoon University as two key institutions involved in the study of the country's past, literature and culture. The Archaeological Survey of Burma, established in 1902, carried out the first excavations and started the collection and inventory of lithic inscriptions and manuscripts. It also produced a number of publications which continue to influence perceptions of early Myanmar, particularly within the country. Becoming the Department of Archaeology under the Ministry of Culture after Myanmar attained independence, it turned its focus to the excavation of Pyu sites, with some limited attention given to Mon and Rakhine sites, inventorying and restoring religious monuments in Bagan, rebuilding royal palaces in Mandalay, Shwebo, Bago, and Bagan, and exploration of Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Age sites located mostly in Upper Myanmar (Letpanchibo, Halin, Nyaunggan, Mogyopyin, Ywahtingon, Hnawgan, Pyawbwe, Kokokahla, etc.).

Rangoon University, established in 1920, hosted the first few generations of scholars who defined the understanding of historic Myanmar and its culture (such as Gordon Luce,

U Pe Maung Tin, U Thein Han (Zawgyi), Bohmu Ba Shin, etc.). Its libraries became the primary location accumulating printed and manuscript materials on the country's history and heritage, vying in this capacity with the National Library (known as the Bernard Free Library during the colonial period). Rangoon University also served as a basis for the Myanmar Historical Commission formed in 1955. The Universities Historical Research Centre, established in 1991, also became a key hub where resources were accumulated and research on various aspects of Myanmar history was conducted.

State domination during and even after the socialist period resulted in a situation whereby most of the research was done by government institutions. Activities such as the study of material culture, excavations, preservation and restoration of ancient monuments were carried out almost exclusively by the Department of Archaeology, running a network of branches and sections located in Yangon, Bago, Mrauk U, Pyay, Taungdwingyi, Magwe, Bagan, Pakhangyi, Mandalay, Sagaing, Shwebo and Tagaung. Among these, branches in Bagan, Yangon, Mandalay, and Pyay have the most personnel and go beyond routine operations. A field school of archaeology was established in Pyay in 2005 with the aim of promoting archaeology in Myanmar and training prospective recruits for the department. It runs a one-year postgraduate diploma course in applied archaeology.

The reorganisation of the Universities Historical Research Centre into the Department of Historical Research and its transfer from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Culture in 2007 helped consolidate the ministry's position as the primary agent in understanding Myanmar history and setting priorities for what should be studied and how. The position of the Department of Archaeology was also augmented by its assuming control over the National Library and National Museum, two repositories of rare historic and cultural items.

At present, research conducted under the aegis of the Ministry of Education is done by students and researchers based in the University of Yangon, University of Mandalay (former Mandalay University of Arts and Science), University of Yadanabon (also based in Mandalay) and a host of regional universities established in the last twenty years. Until very recently, universities in Burma did not award Ph.D. degrees and those wishing to do postgraduate research had to go abroad. Thus, a great deal of pioneering and interesting theses were submitted at the M.A. level and not pursued further. Massive expansion and diffusion of educational facilities in the 1990s significantly increased the number of degrees awarded without changing a lasting feature of higher education in Myanmar – most university graduates are never employed in the field that they have studied. Hence, most of the theses submitted are not converted into book publications and remain inaccessible for a broader academic community beyond Myanmar, though many of them are now in English and thus pose no huge language barriers to wider distribution.

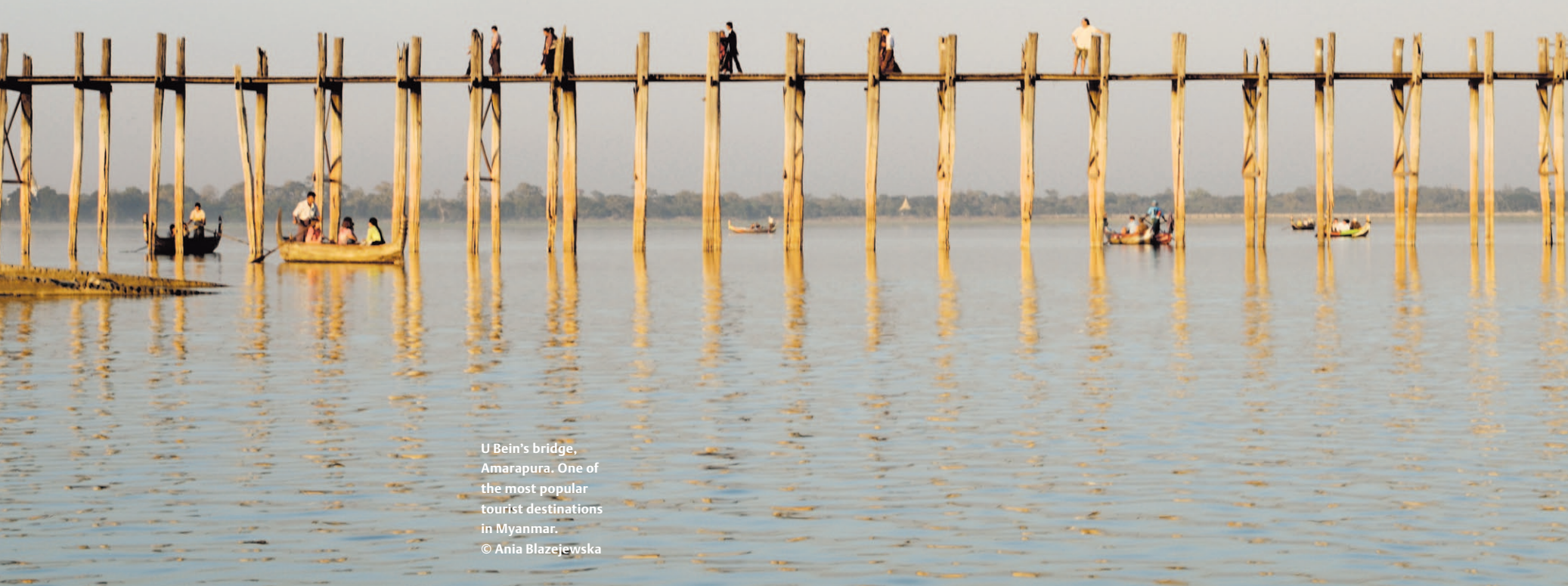
Research into local and regional history that was very limited before the 1990s received a major boost with the development of regional universities but such research and their theses rarely go beyond the walls of these institutions. Accordingly, results achieved in studying local history have almost no impact on the writing and understanding of national history in Myanmar, which is still being written only from the state's perspective. Besides government-run educational institutions, local history is also a subject of interest for local amateur scholars who publish almost exclusively in local journals and commemorative volumes and are thus totally unknown to outside audiences.

Autarkic policies pursued by the BSPP government resulted in most of Myanmar's historical research being approached from a domestic perspective with little effort to integrate it with research on Southeast, South and East Asia. The opening up of Myanmar and its membership in ASEAN started to change this situation and led to greater cooperation with researchers from neighbouring countries, particularly Thailand. A number of Burmese sources on Thailand were published and there were student and staff exchanges between major universities. However, much remains to be done to make Myanmar history better known beyond its borders and to align it with the history of a larger world which it is a part of.

Long-term research initiatives running for decades are uncommon. It is difficult to find a theme or subject that has enjoyed stable and sustained interest of several generations of scholars. Under the Department of Archaeology, research in Pyu sites took off rapidly in the late 1950s and continued into the 1960s, but had almost waned by the 1980s. The 1980s and 1990s saw a concentration of efforts on Bagan while little new research on that city was done in the subsequent decade except for reconstruction and renovation. The excavations of Bronze and Iron Age sites have become the fixation since the late 1990s and there still needs to be a balance in research priorities.

Thus, for international actors seeking to broaden their commitment to Myanmar and initiate joint projects, it is important not only to provide the essential funds and training, but also to ensure the continuity of sponsored projects so that they would not be abandoned after initial interest. It is equally important to create more research opportunities for younger researchers and stimulate the study of neglected aspects such as material culture and archaeology of post-Bagan periods, among others. Last but not least, they should also promote active dissemination of knowledge created in Myanmar both locally and globally.

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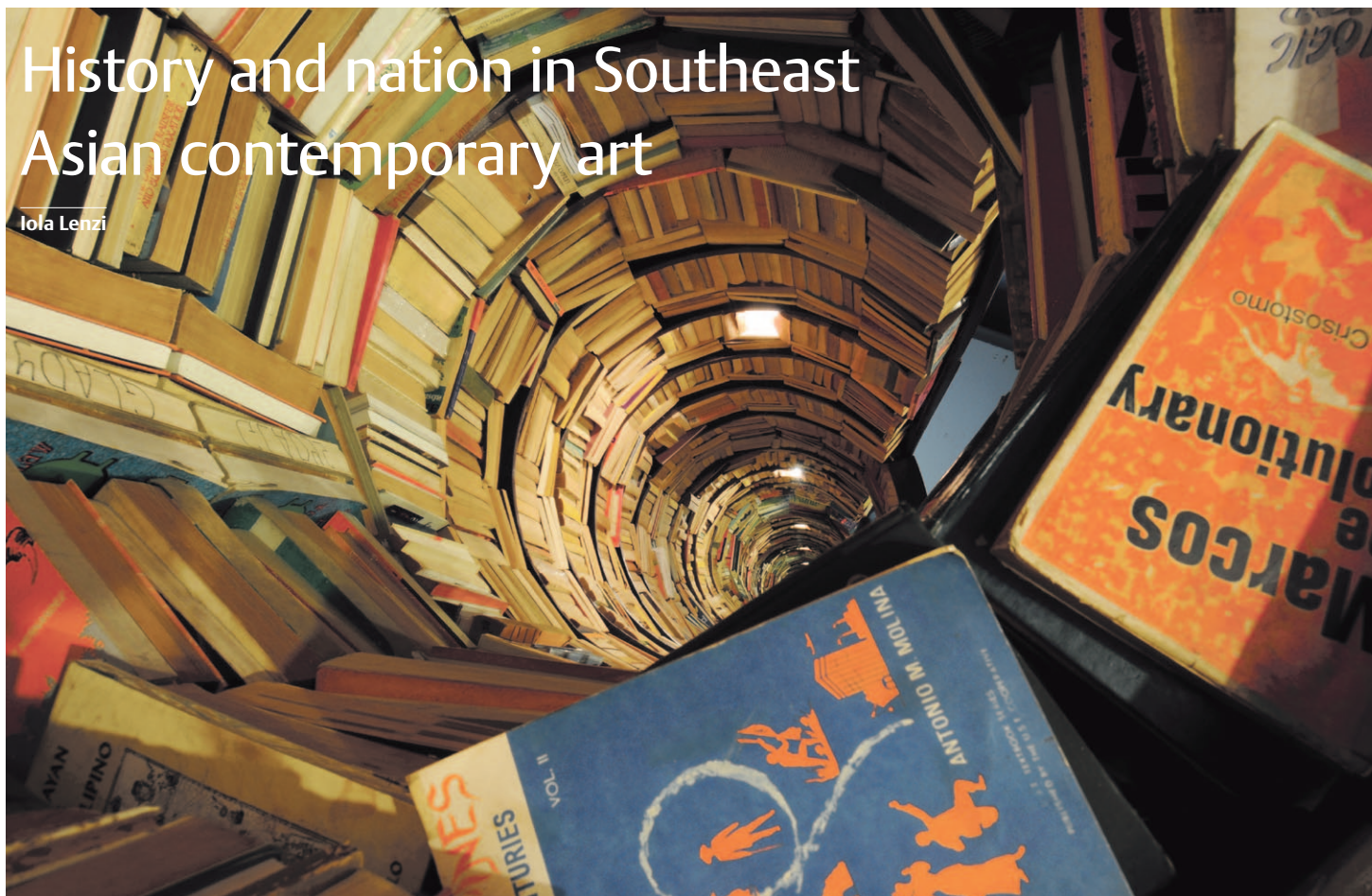


U Bein's bridge, Amarapura. One of the most popular tourist destinations in Myanmar.
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News from Asia *continued*

History and nation in Southeast Asian contemporary art

Iola Lenzi



Negotiating Home, History and Nation: two decades of contemporary art in Southeast Asia 1991-2011, installed at the Singapore Art Museum in March 2011, spanned two decades and six-countries and is the largest ever curated exhibition devoted exclusively to regional contemporary art. Its aim, beyond celebrating the visual and conceptual brilliance of Southeast Asian art of recent decades, was to demonstrate the existence of Southeast Asia in art by mounting a formal and thematic conversation among works from Southeast Asian countries Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. The grouping of pieces along national lines was scrupulously avoided and the more than 70 pieces of predominantly installation, video, and photographic works did not labour to speak to one another in the galleries. The exhibition functioned on visual and ideological fronts; the connections between artworks were often plural, and a curatorial presentation referencing local histories and geographies made it broadly legible.

Besides seeking to prove the existence of Southeast Asian contemporary art, the show had art historical ambitions. Set up as a loose narrative of big regional themes, the latter operated to bind *Home, History and Nation*, while also proposing themselves as a framework for recent art history. Approaching Southeast Asian art from regional perspectives that transcended nationalist ones, the exhibition sought to illuminate ties between certain currents of regional art. These included aesthetic, discursive and conceptual strategies, a taste for narrative, communitarian outlook, materiality, figuration, and a series of specific thematic interests. Of these, history and nationalism were prominent. Singled out in the exhibition title, they figured for their importance in unfolding regional art history and for being central in the works of many Southeast Asian artists.

Home, History and Nation, through its art selection and the accompanying catalogue's curatorial essay arguing the works' seminal place in regional discourse, set out to establish some defining traits of regional contemporary art history. History featured both in the exhibits and the show's structure. Regional history providing a frame was unsurprising: Southeast Asian countries, particularly those featured in the exhibition, are linked by numerous commonalities and these in turn underpin the artists' contemporary practice. Their indigenous cultures, with residual strands of Chinese and Indian influence, a syncretistic attitude towards arriving faiths, spiritual tendencies, capacity for conceptual thinking, and acceptance toward women as social actors, have, in various guises, coloured local contemporary art. The region's pre-colonial maritime trade routes, trade-induced outward-looking ethos, population transfers, colonisation, and 20th century nation-building, have also inflected today's visual practices.

These shared historical threads explain why art from insular and mainland Southeast Asia lends itself to fruitful comparison and analysis. Further, by exerting a continuing fascination, these themes rooted in regional history form the basis for Southeast Asian artists' query of new social, political, and cultural paradigms at the turn of the 21st century.

As the 1990s dawned in Southeast Asia, social landscapes evolved. Economic expansion was brought on variously by globalisation, capitalistic strategies of authoritarian regimes, growing middle classes spurred by advances in public education, and other factors such as the end of cold war polarities. Increased, if unevenly shared, prosperity fostered a degree of social progress as well as questioning and dissent.

With this assurance, a fresh social voice emerged at the individual level. Artists across the region increasingly began to use their work to explore inequality, corruption, environmental rape, and authoritarianism. In Singapore, the socially vocal Artists Village collective was formed in 1988. In conservative Thailand, shockingly anti-establishment activist-artist Vasan Sitthiket put up his incisive 1995 'I Love Thai Culture' at Bangkok's National Gallery. In Jogjakarta, artists produced street art and performances to stir the masses, while FX Harsono and Dadang Christanto communicated the oppression suffered by the Indonesian people in the waning years of the Suharto period. In Communist Vietnam, some abandoned the mainstream as their paintings, performances and installations ran afoul of the censors, choosing to assault the status quo through the evocation of individualism, sexuality, and urban decadence constituted as oblique political critique. In Muslim Malaysia, Zulkifli Yusoff created the provocatively *louche* Ahmad character, who already sullied by his dog, is depicted contracting HIV on his travels abroad.

Revisiting the strong relationship between art and social function that had always characterised regional expression, artists now moved beyond social realism's didactic bent, abandoning the literal style of previous decades. Answering unprecedented socio-political realities with conceptually and formally nuanced creative methodologies that mirrored the complexities of the times, these new practices were activist in the sense that they invited reaction, as opposed to passive reception.

Thus, by the 1990s, Southeast Asian artists were offering critiques of, and sometimes alternatives to, current power structures. In countries without democracy, visual art was a potent and, in the case of Indonesia, a very real vehicle of popular empowerment.

This challenging of national power structures and their offshoots – institutional corruption, cronyism, abuse of power, the biases of racial policies, uncontested monolithic systems, and in Thailand organised religion and the monarchy – is often coupled with an investigation of evolving personal and cultural identities, quite new in societies where individualism is still suspect. The search for empowerment at a civil-society level is never far from the quest for self, with engaged works of art being the positive response to the faint whiff of freedom permeating Southeast Asia from the 1990s.

1 (above): Briccio Santos, *Heritage Tunnel*, 2009.

Books, mirror, wood; 244 x 99 x 99 cm. Singapore Art Museum Collection.

2 (below): Sutee Kunavichayanont, *History Class* (Thanon Ratchadamnoen), 2000. Carved wooden children's desks, chairs, 13 pairs; Variable dimensions. Singapore Art Museum Collection.

Nationalisms and nation-building discourses nurtured in the wake of mid 20th century decolonisation are recurring targets of critique, perceived to be enlisted by the state to justify authoritarianism and social conservatism. With their work, many artists question monolithic state structures, their ambush of nation overlaid with commentary about memory and history as official interpretations or misrepresentations of history conveniently justify abuse of power.

In Thailand, Vasan Sitthiket, Sutee Kunavichayanont, Manit Swriwanichpoom, and Ing K. are particularly articulate on the themes of history, memory and nation, mounting several exhibitions at the turn of the century that prod their audiences to remember historical events deleted from official curricula. Manit's 2001 manipulated photographic series *Horror in Pink*, Sutee's *History Class* series of engraved children's school desks, and Vasan's *Blue October* paintings, using different expressive languages, all appropriate graphic press images of the October 1976 Thammasat University student massacre instigated by the rightist military regime. Through various conceptual and narrative devices, and as a counter to repeating atrocities, with their art the trio makes these events relevant to a new generation of Thais ignorant of incidents revised or erased from the nation's history books. They not only recall a key episode of modern political history, but shine a spotlight on the question of the disputed ownership and writing of history.

In Malaysia, with its Bumiputra policy favouring the ethnic majority, the critique of nationalism is often taken up by non-Malay artists such as Bayu Utomo Radjkin, Yee I-Lann, and Wong Hoy Cheong. Wong's works from the 1990s investigate history and the shifting nature of inclusion and exclusion from gender, ethnic, and national vantage points. As an ethnic Chinese within a Malay/Muslim majority, Wong's viewpoint is laden with historical baggage. His 2005 minaret installation, erected on the roof of the Guangdong Museum of Art during the second Guangzhou Triennale, is a study of the perennially-moving cultural framework that characterises the region. For while Wong is a minority Chinese in Malaysia, he is a Malaysian-Chinese in Guangzhou (an ancient Muslim enclave in China) reminding the PRC Chinese of their Muslim minority's heritage. Concept, sign and history are elegantly entwined to produce a cogent work of art. Wong was commissioned to produce a second minaret installation crowning the Singapore Art Museum for *Home, History and Nation*. Singapore, like China, has a Chinese-majority population while ethnic Malays constitute the minority. Like Malaysia, Singapore experienced racial tensions in the late 1960s and racial and religious issues are still taboo in the city-state. Indeed, had the proposed minaret been erected (the museum vetoed the commission), the project would have provided an extra layer of meaning because the building housing the art museum was once a Christian boys' school, possibly problematic for the socially-conservative Christians who are an emerging political force in Singapore.

In Indonesia, critique of nation by artists changed considerably following the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998 and the transition to democracy. Concerns about the cohesion of the state, the role of the citizen in a budding democracy, and the effect of newfound empowerment and expression of pluralistic personal identities, all influenced visual art at the beginning of the 21st century. Commenting on history-in-the-making, Indonesia's FX Harsono produced his 1998 performance-video *Burned Victims* even as riots continued around Java in the wake of Suharto's fall from power. In Heri Dono's 2000 *Wayang Legenda: Indonesia Baru*, wayang (theatre) puppets represent islands of Indonesia as the nation threatens to implode as a result of the break-down of centralised power. The installation alludes to uncertainty about a less cohesive nation, tinged with a sense of personal angst relating to identity politics in an Indonesia polarised by a newly-surfaced communitarianism.

More recently, Jompet Kuswidananto's 2008 installation *Java's Machine* comments on the underlying tensions associated with cultural hybridity in democratising Indonesia. Through sound,





video, and kinetics, it combines references to Indonesian pre-modern, colonial, and post-colonial history, pointing to the past to explain the current malaise in the archipelago.

The country with the longest colonial history in the region, the Philippines, was also the first to discover a modern national consciousness, with history and nation apprehended through social realism throughout the 20th century. In recent years, works elliptically exploring the intersection of history, power, and personal identity have appeared. Dissecting Filipino history since the 1990s, Alwin Reamillo's multiple-work *Grand Piano Project* of the last decade, autobiographical and densely referential in terms of national identity, is compelling for its invitation to audiences to sit down and play, suggesting all are owners and active agents of history.

Briccio Santos's 2009 *Heritage Tunnel* is a metaphor for the illusory certainty of history. Visually poetic in its infinite display of stacked books, the tunnel alludes to the tussle over the ownership and definition of history in the context of post-colonial Philippines, and by extension, Southeast Asia and beyond. Brenda Fajardo's graphically refined 14-part paper sequence Tarot Card Series from 1997 offers a critical view of Pinoy history through the ages. Narrated through the medium of tarot cards, the artist's seemingly literal description of events is subtly tempered by ideas of chance, choice and play, suggesting the fickleness of historical readings. Roberto Feleo's 2007 narrative wall installation *Ang Retablo Ng Bantaoay* cryptically connects colonial history, church power, and indigenous pagan beliefs as a means of examining the nation. Subverting the standard altar configuration by inverting it, and shrouding some of his historical protagonists and inverting others, he too raises questions about the monolithic interpretation of history. Moving beyond national histories in Hanoi, Vietnam, Tran Luong's 2006-2009 *Moving Forward and Backwards* dissects recent Vietnamese-Cambodian history by offering a metaphoric cleansing of the two countries' post-Khmer Rouge tensions.

History is a site of contestation for many Southeast Asian artists, its writing and ownership connected with the search for political voice and identity beyond the nationalist discourse. Works referencing history also challenge Southeast Asia's collective amnesia. Claiming it, and prodding its distortions and relationship with present and future, regional practitioners show history to be a commanding theme of Southeast Asian visual art's developing contemporary canon.

Iola Lenzi is a curator, critic, and lecturer in the Asian Art Histories MA programme at Lasalle College, Singapore. She was guest-curator of the exhibition *Negotiating Home, History, and Nation: two decades of art in Southeast Asia 1991-2011*. (iolalenzi7@gmail.com)

3 (above): Manit Sriwanichpoom, *Horror in Pink #1* (6 October 1976 Rightwing fanatics' massacre of democracy protesters), 2001. Singapore Art Museum Collection. Image courtesy of the artist.

4 (below): Heri Dono, *Wayang Legenda Indonesia Baru*, 2000. Cardboard, acrylic paint, bamboo, 12 pieces; Variable dimension. Artist Collection.



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Critical heritage studies: IIAS summer school revisited

From 5-8 June 2012, over 500 renowned scholars, researchers, students, and heritage professionals from all over the globe gathered in Gothenburg, Sweden, to participate in the inaugural conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS). The organizers wanted to launch the ACHS and, in cooperation with the International Journal of Heritage Studies, establish an extensive network of scholars across the globe in order to debate and discuss cutting edge research in the field of heritage studies.

Sadih Boonstra

CRITICAL HERITAGE STUDIES is based on a developing interdisciplinary synthesis. This synthesis is leading to a deconstruction of what until now is referred to as museum and heritage studies as insights from memory studies, public history, tourism research, anthropology, sociology, geography and cultural studies are combined in all sorts of new ways. New forms of conceptualizing heritage – for which old definitions based on traditional material culture are abandoned – that describe heritage as a cultural process of meaning-making are of crucial importance to understand the cultural, social and political context in which heritage is at play. The aim of the conference was to re-theorize the field of heritage and to develop current theoretical debates to make sense of the nature and meaning of heritage.

IIAS summer school

The inaugural conference seemed to be the perfect opportunity to present and develop the insights of the first IIAS summer school 'Heritage Conserved and Contested: Asian and European Perspectives', which took place last year in Leiden, the Netherlands. A working group of alumni, Eva Ambos (University of Heidelberg), Non Arkaraprasertkul (Harvard University), Sadih Boonstra (VU University), Adèle

We should first and foremost focus on the analysis of the context in which the idea of heritage is created, used and defined.

Esposito (Parisian Institute of Research Architecture Urbanism and Society) and Shu-Li Wang (University College London), teamed up and put a panel together entitled 'Conflicting values, negotiating heritage. The politics of heritage in Asia'.

The panel of the 2011 IIAS summer school focused on the contrastive analysis of Asian and European approaches and sought an alternative understanding of heritage that demanded a more contextualized, flexible and inclusive approach capable of reflecting specifically local social and cultural dynamics. Drawing on historical, anthropological, architectural, and ethnographic material, speakers discussed the instrumentality of cultural performance in interethnic conflict in Sri Lanka; the meaning of current wayang performances informed by contrasted colonial and postcolonial pasts in Indonesia; the relation between local archaeological sites and large state projects in China; and the construction of a past at Angkor that ignores the present-day values and past composition of Cambodian society. Dr Philippe Peycam (director of IIAS) and Professor Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) who directed the 2011 summer school, contributed to the panel as discussants. Dr Peycam also opened the session outlining the context of the panel and its objectives.

The summer school panel

Eva Ambos started with her presentation on 'The Politics of Heritage in Sri Lanka'. She argued that purity is the main value around which heritage politics in Sri Lanka are centered and further discussed a shift in heritage politics from a multicultural to a transcultural approach. From her extensive fieldwork in Sri Lanka she used the *kohombā kankāriya* village healing ritual as an example to demonstrate that purity is localized as it embraces notions of a revitalized national Buddhism that excludes pre-Buddhist aspects, and elements of Tamil Hindu culture. She turned to the low caste performers to look beyond the official, national readings of *kohombā kankāriya*, and found that because of their marginal position they are able to escape the purity of nationalism to a certain extent. Although the low caste performers use the code of purity, they subvert it by essentializing a pure and authentic lineage, instead of national heritage.

'Destroying or innovating tradition? The politics of authenticity in the Indonesian wayang puppet theatre', by Sadih Boonstra, demonstrated how standards of authentic, linked to boundaries of heritage, are fluid and constantly negotiated. Sadih discussed how the innovations of one particular *dalang* (wayang puppeteer), Ki [The Honourable] Enthus Susmono (b. 1966), led to condemnation by many who applied a standard containing an invisible essence of wayang. Innovation produces 'discomfort' for these viewers and leads them to claim that Enthus Susmono crosses the line; but the instant success of Enthus Susmono's newest creation *Wayang Santri* demonstrates that boundaries are interpreted differently by various audiences and that they are fluid and constantly negotiated.

Adele Esposito's paper, 'The construction of heritage values in contemporary Cambodia: the case of Siem Reap', dealt with archeological forms, such as dwellings, and commercial buildings. Since the listing of Angkor as a World Heritage Site in 1992, foreign experts working in Cambodia produced representations of these forms of heritage and designed conservation projects and management tools. Although the way of operating perpetuated foreign interference in heritage matters – also typical of the French regime – their projects had little impact on local spatial transformations. Measures

The construction of heritage values in contemporary Cambodia: the case of Siem Reap

Adele Esposito



SINCE THE COLONIAL TIME, heritage construction in Cambodia has been dominated by the celebration of the outstanding value of Angkor. I focus on forms that are in the shadow of the archaeological site: dwellings, commercial buildings, public facilities and urban shapes, which are part of the contemporary landscape of Cambodian towns. In the years following the listing of Angkor as a World Heritage Site (1992), foreign experts working in Cambodia, in the context of bilateral cooperation agreements, have produced representations of these forms of heritage and have designed conservation projects and

management tools. Not only were these representations influenced by the cultural inheritance disseminated during the colonial domination, but their way of operating perpetuated the foreign interference in heritage matters that was typical of the French regimes. However, their projects had little impact on spatial transformations.

I challenge this operational inconsistency because it has questioned the position of Cambodian national and local authorities as interlocutors of the foreign experts. How do

they receive and react to these imported materials? Does the failure of heritage planning mean that the Cambodian authorities lack power? My analysis focuses on the case of Siem Reap province where the archaeological site of Angkor is located, but I also mention programs and projects designed for other Cambodian cities, such as Battambang, Phnom Penh and Kèp.

I argue that the measures aiming at conserving inherited buildings through inventory, listing and urban regulations have never been implemented in Cambodian towns. In contrast, the production of knowledge concerning wooden houses and villages, to which both foreign experts and Cambodian agents contribute, has stronger consequences. This knowledge describes architectural models and spatial organizations and shows the technical and cultural reasons of these shapes. It does not aim to justify the conservation of existing villages, but to serve as a source of inspiration for creating new architecture and neighbourhoods. Heritage is conceived as a permanent model that can be represented and redeployed into new creations. It also nourishes an idea of the cultural identity of the Khmer people based on the purity of its rural origins.

While architectural magazines base the design of new types of houses on these models, national authorities used this knowledge for planning the relocation of a part of the population living in the protected park of Angkor on the site of Run Ta Ek. Unlike previously unsuccessful attempts in the field of urban heritage and management, Cambodian authorities were able to implement this relocation project. So, they displayed their power to act, while they had been deaf to the solicitations by the experts who had proposed conservation models.

This evidence challenges the actual power of exogenous concepts and tools as well as the pretended dependence of Cambodian agents on colonial paradigms; the conception of heritage as a model, more than as a collection of material remains, seems to be more familiar to the local culture according to which the destruction and replacement of inherited buildings is not a source of guilt. In this way, Cambodian authorities show their capacity to receive and reject external contributions according to their own interests.

Adele Esposito, Institut Parisien de Recherche Architecture Urbanistique Société (IPRAUS).

Above:
The main gate
of Wat Bo pagoda
in Siem Reap;
photo taken by
author in 2005.

aiming at conserving inherited buildings through inventory, listing, and urban regulations were never implemented in Cambodian towns. In contrast, the production of knowledge concerning wooden houses and villages has had a stronger impact, and serves as a source of inspiration for creating new architecture and neighborhoods. In this way, Cambodian authorities receive and reject external contributions according to their own interests.

Shu-Li Wang presented three national archaeological parks in China. As the heritage industry has expanded alongside the rise of cultural tourism, the Chinese state nominated twelve archaeological parks. These sites face dilemmas regarding the conservation of heritage and the presentation of the past, such as how to visualize archaeological knowledge. Studies of nationalism in China generally take Chinese nationalism and cultural uniformity as monolithic, and China is often portrayed as a nation with a majority voice. Shu-Li argues against this assumption, and suggests that what constitutes 'Han' is in a constant state of flux. By analyzing the staging of three national parks, she demonstrates how pasts are utilized as resources in various settings in response to the state's project. Based on her fieldwork Shu-Li argues there is need to re-think Han Chinese as a set of diversified, uneven and heterogeneous entities.

Analyzing the social cultural context

After the presentations of individual papers, Michael Herzfeld pointed out four recurring themes: the complexities of motives and effects; the tension between desire for display and engagement of critical self-knowledge; social poetics of heritage production; and heritage boundaries and the defining of purities. The idea of representing the entirety of e.g., the Han Chinese patrimony is variegated and contested and shows a tension among the local, regional, national and international level. But to understand changes in the meaning of heritage over time, or between places, we should pay attention to the social poetical context. According to Herzfeld, a critical study of heritage always means an analysis of the social cultural context. We should first and foremost focus on the analysis of the context in which the idea of heritage is created, used and defined.

One dimension of this dynamic is the postcolonial condition. As the western colonial powers defined and spread a set of social values around the world and tried to reify those as the ultimate good, much at work we see today represent attempts by various countries to live up to standards thereby created. Although not all of those standards were created in the West, the fact remains that western values have dominated this discourse, sometimes in the hands of Asian or non-European actors, because they were postcolonial and had learned the arts of self-definition from their colonial masters and perpetuated some of these models. In the case of Siem Reap a conflict takes place, among different levels, which is animated by reified assumptions that were generated by colonial discourses and reinforced by the continuing involvement of the erstwhile colonial powers in the management of the postcolonial situation. Even in countries that were not technically colonized we see the same kinds of effect.

With his second point about cultural intimacy Herzfeld argues that heritage discourse as a contested space is always about the tension between that which is presented to the world (self-display), and what is happening on the inside; dirty jokes, and a nasty sense of humor in the case of Enthus Susmono. With the social poetics of heritage production Herzfeld refers to the notion that when producing heritage, one is playing games with existing categories. Etymologically speaking, the word 'invention' comes from the Latin root for 'to discover'. To Herzfeld, invention is a mastery of conventional form such that you are able to get away with breaking out of it, and by getting away with breaking out of it, you start to change the rules of the game, as illustrated by the case of Enthus Susmono. Social poetics is revealed in stretching innovation, but not crossing the lines.

Discussions about convention involves the concept of purity, such as in the case of the healing ritual *kohombā kankāriya*. Herzfeld points out that behind the creation of a 'pure' tradition, 'pure' national heritage etc., lies a battle, a contest, a desire to specify boundaries. By the same token, the definition of heritage also has boundaries – with the recognition and rejection of heritage – that are constantly negotiated. A temporal process is shown in Siem Reap where various versions of the postcolonial regime of truth succeeded one another, all designed to, as Johannes Fabian put it, keep the population in a 'state of anachronism', to make sure it did not become part of the modern world. Heritage, as is tolerance, is a form of keeping people in a manageable situation; people are allowed to have traditions, temples, that can be framed.

Critical heritage studies are essential

Herzfeld concludes by instructing the audience to have a critical eye for all claims of benign ideology, to always ask the crucial questions by who these ideas of heritage are performed, under what conditions, and for whom. In this respect, Herzfeld is of the opinion that critical heritage studies are absolutely essential. Governments may become increasingly uneasy, and perhaps obstruct research that argues against monolithic forms of rules.

We should not let governments or any other institutional form tell us what heritage is. We might end up by saying more about what heritage isn't or what it shouldn't be or what it is in danger of becoming. We should analyze what has already happened in discourses of heritage in various degrees of totalitarian control, ranging from a relatively open and democratic system in Indonesia, to various forms of ethnic closure in Sri Lanka and China, and a very strong Khmer political dimension. Herzfeld closed with the appeal to keep complexity in full view and celebrate it. If we talk about how heritage happens, Herzfeld hopes that heritage studies might have the kind of political weight in the world it can and should have.

Sadiah Boonstra is a PhD candidate at the VU University Amsterdam. (s.n.boonstra@vu.nl)

Destroying or innovating tradition? The politics of authenticity in the Indonesian wayang puppet theatre.

Sadiah Boonstra



Left: Ki Enthus Susmono and his puppet image. Photo by Sadiah Boonstra

THE WAYANG PUPPET THEATRE OF INDONESIA was proclaimed as UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity on 7 November 2003. The UNESCO Proclamation confirms implicit standards for the wayang tradition, referred to as the 'normative expectation' by Richard Schechner in 2010, by describing it and framing it in the international heritage discourse. Such standards are informed by ideas of authenticity and urge critics to condemn *dalang* (wayang puppeteers), who do not meet these standards. However, audience appreciation of these *dalang* shows that these standards are fluid. To examine how standards of wayang are negotiated I focus on the *dalang*, Ki [The Honourable] Enthus Susmono (b. 1966), who is widely regarded by both friend and foe as a radical innovator. He is a particularly interesting case as wayang standards have prompted critics to refer to Enthus Susmono as *Perusak* (Destroyer) of wayang, but cause his fans to fondly refer to him as *Crazy Dalang*. By 'othering' Enthus Susmono's innovations to an implicit standard of wayang, the standard is actually reinforced and emphasized.



Drawing on 13 months of fieldwork in Indonesia, I will describe how Enthus Susmono innovates in the field of his puppet creations, the musical compositions he uses, his performance style, the language he uses, his person or personality, the incorporation of Islamic elements in his work, and spectacular attractions (*atraksi*). These manifestations of innovation reflect Enthus Susmono's overall approach of wayang. He told me several times that he is always searching for ways to *buka pasar* – open up new markets – as he calls it, and to reach new audiences. His newest creation is the genre of *Wayang Santri*, which became wildly popular straight after the first performance in August 2010. Enthus Susmono explained that the stories in his new repertoire are locally situated and deal with Muslim daily life and are not derived from the wayang repertoire. In an obvious Islamic context he alternates Islamic chants with crude jokes, and a drunk puppet. Despite my own initial reservations when watching *Wayang Santri* for the first time, nobody in the audience seemed insulted. On the contrary, the crowd screamed with laughter, took pictures and recorded the actions on their mobile phones. Of course, not everyone approves of this new form of wayang. Some in this camp are actively involved in the preservation of wayang, including policy makers in the field of heritage management. Other people think that Islam should not be incorporated in wayang at all, but as far as the general audience is concerned, wayang and Islam are inextricably linked.

The case of Enthus Susmono demonstrates that performers and viewers inevitably identify the standard – and thus authenticity – differently, resulting in contrasting uses. Cultural policy makers and wayang aficionados in Jakarta identify a standard containing an invisible essence of wayang. Innovation produces 'discomfort' for these viewers. They expect something from the performer that appeals to their idea of wayang. The spectator's expectations must be catered to, leading to an inbuilt conservatism as to how the performers can and should present themselves. Enthus Susmono, with almost unrestrained creativity, is not afraid to stretch his innovation to the limit and searches for the boundaries of this conservatism. In this, he is as creatively adventurous as economically minded. Critics claim he crosses the line, but the instant success of Enthus Susmono's *Wayang Santri* demonstrates that the boundaries are interpreted differently by various audiences and that the boundaries of wayang are fluid and constantly negotiated.

Left: Wayang kulit puppet representing George Bush, by Ki Enthus Susmono. Courtesy of Tropenmuseum inv. nr. 6330-22.

Critical heritage studies *continued*



From multiculturalism to transculturality: the politics of heritage in Sri Lanka

Eva Ambos

AFTER THE OFFICIAL END OF THE CIVIL WAR between the separatist LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and government security forces in May 2009, a number of heritagized rituals took place in Sri Lanka. I discuss these heritage politics in Sri Lanka by drawing on my fieldwork with performer lineages. Through the analysis of a ritual to mark the 2nd term presidency of Mahinda Rajapakse, I argue that purity is the main value around which heritage politics in Sri Lanka are centred. I further discuss a shift in heritage politics, from a multicultural to a transcultural approach in scrutinizing the independence day celebrations in February 2010.

With my first example, I show that purity as a value is localized through the performance of heritagized culture in a village healing ritual, carried out by low caste ritual practitioners. A ritual from the region around the hill town Kandy – a *kohombā kankāriya* – was chosen to honour a president who originates from the low country, the coastal area of the South and West with its distinctive ritual traditions, and who never tires of underlining this, because Kandyan culture in general is associated with authentic culture and purity, with the latter serving as an axiomatic value and being part of a code, which conveys a dominant interpretation and masks alternative readings. It embraces in the case of the *kohombā kankāriya* notions of a revitalized national Buddhism, that excludes pre-Buddhist aspects and elements of Tamil Hindu culture, which are characteristic for Sinhalese Buddhism as a localized, syncretistic adaption of Theravada Buddhism. The related

emergence of an idealized image of ‘Buddhism proper’, informed by middle class values, requires the purging from ‘non-Buddhist’ elements, which eventually leads also to a rejection of rural practices, often characterized by syncretism.

To step beyond the official, nationalist readings of the *kohombā kankāriya* under discussion, I turn to the performers who due to their seemingly marginal position ‘at the edge’ of this Sinhalese Buddhist nation owing to their low caste and their rural background, are able to escape – at least partly – this tight corset out of tradition, purity and nationalism. Purity as an axiomatic value linked to the *kohombā kankāriya*, imbued with elitist notions, appears to push the low caste and rural performers to the margins of society. But they use the code of purity in an alternative way, which subverts its dominant usage. While they embrace purity as a value as well, they essentialize a pure and authentic lineage *tradition*, instead of national *heritage*.

Looking at purity as a value in relation to interethnic and interreligious boundaries, I argue that the 2010 independence day celebrations reveal a shift in heritage politics from a multicultural to a transcultural paradigm, whereas both embrace purity as a value. Transculturality here should be thought of in a double sense: Firstly, as transcending culture, whereby an official image of a religious and ethnic neutral nation state is developed; and secondly, as an appropriation of the Other. While the multicultural paradigm consists of ideologies which exclude everything that is interpreted as ‘Other’ as invading and corrupting Sinhalese-Buddhist culture to keep it pure, the transcultural one is to absorb the ‘Other’, to incorporate it into a hegemonic Buddhist-Sinhalese framework and to redefine it in relying on purity as a value.

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Politics of displaying landscape: staging China’s three national archaeological parks

WANG Shu-Li

I PRESENT THE STAGING of three Bronze Age archaeological sites in China, as a point of departure in exploring how archaeological materials are re-interpreted in constructing local identities, and incorporated into the state’s grand narrative in post-Mao China. In China, the heritage industry has expanded alongside the rise of cultural tourism, resulting in the Chinese state’s nomination in 2010 of twelve National Archaeological Parks. In the Yinxu archaeological site (ca. 1400-1046 BC) there has been a debate over issues regarding conservation of heritage and the presentation of the past, such as how to visualize archaeological knowledge; notions of authenticity (should a site be more like a museum or a theme park?); national history (Han vs. non-Han Chinese culture); and archaeological interpretation. Two other sites, Shaxingdui (ca. 2800-1000 BC.) and Jinsha (ca. 1200-900 BC.) in Sichuan province are facing similar dilemmas.

Studies of nationalism in China generally take Chinese nationalism and cultural uniformity as monolithic; China is often portrayed as a nation with a majority voice (Gladney 2004). I suggest that what constitutes ‘Han’ is in a constant state of flux. There is need to rethink Han Chinese as a set of diversified, uneven and heterogeneous entities. I would like to de-territorialize the boundary of Chinese empires and deconstruct the identity of Chinese-ness in terms of the oppositions between the national vs. local and central vs. marginal perspectives. What is the contemporary narration of these urban spaces with the country’s rich archaeological heritage unearthed in terms of global vs. local and central vs. marginal perspectives? I take exception to ideas of Han Chinese as singular, unified, and heterogeneous entities in terms of place-making. I explore how place-based identity developed and how the identities of multiple locales have been formulated. Drawing on one year’s worth of ethnographical research, I examine the staging of China’s three national archaeological parks, focusing on how ancient pasts are utilized as resources in various local settings in response to the state’s project, and how the presentation of the sites is a possible means of achieving urban development.

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Announcements

Archaeology of the southern Taklamakan: Hedin and Stein's legacy and new explorations

Lukas Nickel and Susan Whitfield



1.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE organised by the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) at the British Library, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology. Supported by the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, the Sino-British Fellowship Trust and the Arts & Humanities Research Council. This conference will take place from 8-10 November, as part of Asian Art in London 2012 (1-10 November).

The conference

Over the past three decades there have been systematic archaeological excavations of sites belonging to the ancient kingdoms of Khotan in the western Taklamakan and Kroraina in the eastern Taklamakan and Lop Desert, in modern-day western China. These have been carried out by Chinese archaeologists, some in conjunction with Japanese and French teams.

The exploration of these kingdoms, however, began much earlier. Early in the 20th century Sven Hedin and Aurel Stein uncovered significant archaeological remains and archives and brought the importance of these cultures to the attention of an international scholarly public. The materials they excavated are now in various collections all over the world, and they have had a significant influence on modern understanding of Central Asian history and society.

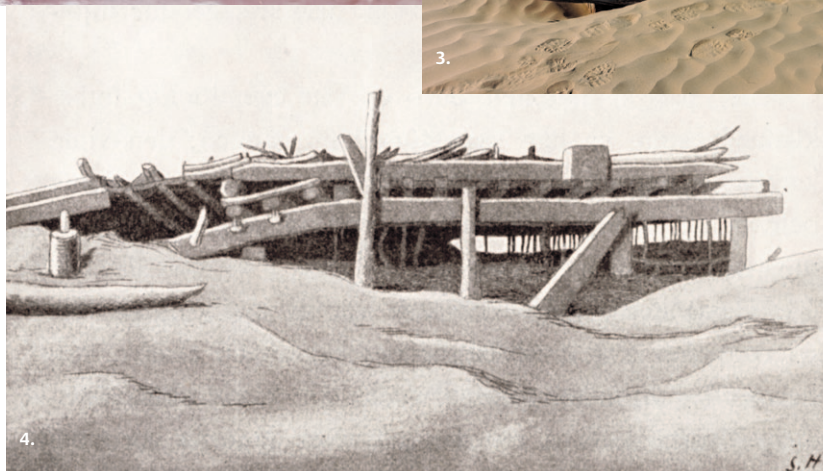
The conference will set the sites in context by looking at the historical geography and environment, the transmitted and excavated historical records, and archaeological archives in China and Europe. It will bring together an interdisciplinary group of scholars, including field archaeologists from the Chinese, Sino-Japanese and Sino-French excavations of recent decades; archivists, curators and historians working on the Hedin and Stein collections; and historical geographers, art historians, and historians from universities with a strong research record in this area. This is the first conference on this topic.

Background

The beginnings of trade through the Taklamakan go back deep into prehistory. Possibly the earliest evidence for trade infrastructure is jade that was brought from Khotan into China. During the 2nd century BC, at the time when China began to focus its attention on Central Asia and began its westward expansion into the Taklamakan, important trade routes along the southern edge of the desert were already in use. This vast area was ruled by the kingdom of Khotan in the west and its neighbour, the kingdom of Kroraina, with its heart in the Lop Desert, to the east. Local societies were strongly influenced by a changing climate and environment. It is hypothesized that a change to a more moderate climate over the first centuries AD allowed agriculture along the southern Taklamakan to expand and the settlements to develop and prosper.

Transmitted historical evidence

Most references to and descriptions of both these kingdoms come from transmitted Chinese dynastic histories. A second crucial source of information is the travel accounts of Buddhist monks. In their search for scriptures, holy images and relics from the area where the religion originated, these monks often rested in monasteries and palaces in the oasis towns en route to India and provided vivid descriptions of their observations.



4.

It was the reports of the 7th century monk Xuanzang that steered the attention of the scholar of Indo-Iranian studies, Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943), towards Khotan in the late 19th century. He had also read the account of the Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin (1865-1952), who first went to the Taklamakan in 1895. This was the start of a period of extensive archaeology in the region that opened up a whole new field of research.

Early archaeology

Until the late 19th century, travel in this region had been difficult because of the political situation; unrest in Xinjiang and clashes between the British and Russian empires in Central Asia. A series of treaties between Western powers and China as well as the establishment of a Russian consulate and a British representation office in Kashgar opened opportunities for exploration by European researchers. The Chinese Qing empire, after ousting the Tajik rebel Yakub Beg (1820-77), had to turn its attention to Central China. It tolerated Western interest in the Taklamakan and granted permissions for foreign teams to survey and excavate.

Sven Hedin was the pioneer of modern research and stayed longest in this area. In his initial travels between 1895-6 he visited the Khotan sites of Dandan-Uliq and Karadong, although did not carry out any systematic excavations. On his second expedition (1899-1902) he surveyed the area of the Lop Desert, uncovering remains of the 2nd-4th century kingdom of Kroraina, with links to the Kushan empire and later occupation under the Tibetans. His return to the Taklamakan in 1927 was as part of a Sino-Swedish team, including not only archaeologists, but geologists, botanists and astronomers that continued over several years.

In 1934 he revisited the Lop Desert and one member of his team, Folke Bergman (1902-1946), with the help of a local hunter, located the bronze-age burial site of Xiaohe. Another member of the Sino-Swedish team was the Chinese archaeologist, Huang Wenbi (1893-1966), one of the first Chinese scholars to make a name in archaeology. Finds from these expeditions were distributed between various institutions in Sweden and China, the latter in the National Museum in Beijing (formerly the History Museum).

Stein read Hedin's early accounts and believed that Khotan would present an interesting fusion of Indian, Iranian and Chinese influences. He was not disappointed. On his first



2.



3.

expedition, in 1900-01, he travelled from Kashgar eastwards along the southern edge of the Taklamakan with Xuanzang's travel accounts in hand, eager to identify the towns and landmarks described over a thousand years previously. He also relied on Hedin's maps and accounts. His excavations at sites such as Dandan-Uliq, Rawak and Mazar Tagh revealed what he called "a kingdom of remarkable diversity", which thrived under different imperial powers for over a thousand years. Further east he excavated at Niya, Endere and, moving into the Lop Desert, at Miran and Loulan. His finds were transported to the UK and thereafter divided between the British Museum and India, his two sponsors.

This was the first of three major expeditions by Stein to this region (second and third were in 1906-08 and 1913-16). Although he is perhaps best known now for his acquisitions at Dunhuang, all of his expeditions concentrated on the southern routes and Khotan and Kroraina. His work on these sites is at least as important as that on Dunhuang, but has received far less attention.

Stein's fourth expedition (1930-31), funded by Harvard, was cut short by the Chinese authorities and the excavated finds remained in Kashgar. Stein was not welcome in China again and it was Hedin who led the way for a new era of a series of Sino-Swedish excavations. The finds from Stein's expeditions are in Britain and India; those from Hedin in Sweden and China.

Both sets of expeditions resulted in detailed expedition reports and maps, informed by copious archives, consisting of letters, diaries, site plans and over ten thousand photographs. Unknown languages, such as Khotanese, were discovered and deciphered. But, despite these collections, scholarly attention in Europe moved away from this region and the finds remained largely unstudied, with philological studies being a notable exception.

Chinese archaeology

Archaeology continued in the Republican Period and under the People's Republic of China with Huang Wenbi, a member of the newly founded Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, leading several missions to this region. The results of this and other archaeology were brought together in 1983 in a volume published by the Archaeological Research Institute of the Xinjiang Academy of Sciences, heralding the start of more extensive work that continues to the present.

This period has also seen new international collaborations, the first occurring throughout the 1990s, by a Sino-Japanese team working at the sites of Niya and Dandan Uiliq, and another working at Xiaohe. A Sino-French team worked at Keriya Darya, on the eastern edge of Khotan, and a Sino-Swedish team have been on an exploratory tour between Niya and Endere.

Cross disciplinary research

At the same time as archaeological focus in China increased in the Taklamakan, historians in Europe and China returned their attention to 'the Silk Road'. Expeditions and publications at first concentrated on Dunhuang material but, over the past decade, more work has started to be done on the Taklamakan kingdoms. Khotan and Kroraina were both part of the 2004 British Library Silk Road exhibition, curated by one of the conference organisers, and there have been numerous other exhibitions on this theme throughout Europe, America and Asia. Several historians are now publishing in this area and the first monograph devoted to the Taklamakan kingdoms is due to be published in 2012 by Valerie Hansen, one of the participants.

This is an area where archaeologists, art historians and historians cannot work in isolation; they need to understand each other's sources to make sense of their own. The desert conditions also mean that climate, environmental history and historical geography are also important factors to consider in any study – it is an area suited to landscape archaeology.

The southern Taklamakan, stretching into the Lop Desert and comprising the kingdoms of Khotan and Kroraina, is a cohesive area of study, distinctive from the northern routes and kingdoms. It is also an area extremely well-studied and documented by Stein and Hedin. The recent archaeology has uncovered many finds that throw new light on these kingdoms and extensive publications reporting these have ensured that the results are available for all. This has triggered a renewed interest in this area among the scholarly community, while the increased access to the finds and archives of the early archaeologists through IDP have made it possible, for the first time, to consider both sets of data in any research. The potential is vast. This conference is intended to enable focused discussion that will lead to many scholarly advances and much greater understanding of this region.

Further information: idp.bl.uk/conference/index.html

Contact: idpevents@bl.uk

Lukas Nickel (SOAS, University of London) and Susan Whitfield (IDP, The British Library)

1: Group at Niya, N.XLVI., 1906. Photographer: M. Aurel Stein. Photo 392/27(97) The British Library.

2: The Sven Hedin expedition 1933-35. Sven Hedin and Folke Bergman in camp number 70 by the river Kum Darya, Xinkiang. 28/4 1934 The Sven Hedin Foundation, Sweden.

3: Niya, N.XXIV, standing posts and beams on south wall of room iv., looking northwest, 12 November 2011. Photographer: John Falconer. Photo 1235/1(344).

4: The gate to the caravanserai at Karadong, sketched by Sven Hedin in 1896. The Sven Hedin Foundation, The Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm, Sweden.

IIAS Announcements

Institutional Voids during State Re-scaling International workshop – call for papers

13 May 2013
Rotterdam

THE NATIONAL STATE has been under increasing pressure to re-articulate and re-territorialize in relation to both sub- and supra-national scales. A strategic response, often formulated in conjunction with mobilized business and other interest groups, involves adapting institutional, regulatory, and spatial configurations to meet the demands of transnational investments, cross-country financial operations, internal and international migrations, and so on (Friedmann 1995, Brenner 2004). This sets off a highly contentious process that hinges upon a redefinition of state-market relations as well as a redistribution of state power between the national administration and the other levels of authorities. It also brings about severe competition between sub-national regions when they all aspire to become an epicentre for growth (Brenner 1998). New alliances between local authorities, domestic producers, and international investors are being forged, which in some cases has set in motion a counter-movement among forces opposed to these alliances and to globalization forces generally.

During this contentious process, the boundaries of the political are redrawn, and economic and political scales redefined. Many countries have experienced institutional voids with regard to the new challenges posed by state re-scaling. The current financial crisis in the Euro zone is a case in point. This also applies to the management of cross-border water and natural resources, the coordination of regional developments, the regulation of human and capital flows, and so on. Existing scholarship has long studied societies where the absence or weakness of particular institutions inhibits social and economic development. Yet until more recently insufficient attention was paid to the questions of how, and under what circumstances, institutional can voids be filled. Whereas a growing number of studies (eg., Khanna and Palepu 1997) have documented intriguing cases where entrepreneurial actors – public and private, organizational and individual – have trespassed on the boundaries of formal rules and institutions to create new space of governance that performs important coordinating functions, there is still a dearth of evidence concerning the problems of void-filling during state re-scaling. This workshop seeks to address this gap in the existing scholarship.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop is the third event in a series of joint symposiums and workshops. The first symposium on Institutional Voids and the Governance of Developing Economies took place on 16 May 2011. The second workshop on State Restructuring and Rescaling in Comparative Perspective will be held on 3-4 Dec 2012. The fourth workshop is planned to take place in Dec 2013.

The current workshop aims to combine the insights and findings from the two previous workshops on institutional voids and state re-scaling respectively. The goal is to look at the crisscrossing between these two frontiers of research so as to generate new research questions and scholarly agenda.

Specifically, the workshop seeks to address the following issues:

- 1) examination of empirical cases about the process of state restructuring and re-scaling in a globalizing world;
- 2) identification of institutional voids as a result of scaling up or scaling down during the re-territorialization of the national state;
- 3) analysis of the social, political, coalitional, and economic contexts that facilitate the filling of voids by the creation of alternative forms of governance and the consequences;
- 4) reflection upon existing theories of the state, sub-national and supra-national politics, and institutional change, as well as conventional concepts about the national-international division, public-private boundary, and the state-market dichotomy.

Submission instructions

An abstract of no more than 500 words together with a short CV should be submitted in digital format before 1 Nov 2012. Authors of selected abstracts will be notified before 30 Nov 2012. The full paper should be sent in digital format before 15 April 2013.

The organizer will provide hotel accommodation for two nights (12 and 13 May 2013). Participants are expected to take care of their own travel expenses.

For enquiries about the workshop and submission of abstracts, please contact: Martina van den Haak, (m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl)

Asia-Europe encounters: intellectual and cultural exchanges, 1900-1950

7-8 December 2012
Singapore

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE co-organised by the International Institute of Asian Studies (Leiden), the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, ISEAS (Singapore), the Asia-Europe Foundation and the Asian Civilisations Museum (Singapore).

The international conference, Asia-Europe Encounters: Intellectual and Cultural Exchanges, 1900-1950, will explore the intellectual and cultural flows between Asia and Europe that occurred during, and in part were formative of, the political and social changes over the first half of the 20th century. It will be an exploration of the intellectual and cultural currents of this age and an investigation into how the two ends of Eurasia interacted in these spheres through (new) cosmopolitanism and other novel ideologies that affected both European and Asian societies. The aspects to be explored include the forms, venues, mediums, and actors of such encounters, which took place among others in the spheres of politics, culture, education, arts and religion.

The call for papers is now closed and yielded 200 applications. A public forum on the topic will be organised at the Asian Civilisations Museum (pictured below).

The conference programme and registration information will be made available at: www.iias.nl/events-iias



IIAS PhD platform and discussion group

THE IIAS PHD DISCUSSION GROUP on LinkedIn (www.iias.nl/linkedin-phd) forms part of our 'National Platform for Asia Related PhD Research in the Netherlands'. The PhD platform was recently set up by IIAS as a tool to support PhD students and their supervisors in the Netherlands in their research.

In January 2012, the IIAS conducted a review of PhD research on Asia in the Netherlands (with a humanities and social sciences focus) and this led to the identification of more than 250 projects being carried out all over the country. What struck us most, was the enormous range of subjects studied, and the large number of Dutch universities, research schools and institutes involved. Subsequent discussions indicated that PhD researchers in the field of Asian studies, linked to different organisations, rarely know of each other's work, even when the respective PhD subjects cover a similar region and/or discipline and co-operation could benefit both parties.

IIAS therefore decided to set up a national PhD platform to help PhD researchers (and their supervisors) in the Netherlands to establish contact, as well as to disseminate information about relevant courses, lectures or,

for example, international visitors (research fellows, visiting professors), etc. The platform may also function as a tool to encourage groups of PhD researchers to initiate workshops, or to invite national and/or international scholars for lectures and seminars, etc.

Join the PhD platform on LinkedIn
To develop the platform, PhD researchers in Asian studies in the Netherlands, and their supervisors, are invited to join the LinkedIn group 'IIAS PhD Platform'. We welcome all comments and recommendations posted to the site, which will help to develop the platform into a useful tool for anyone conducting PhD research in Asian studies in the Netherlands, and who would like to share information and experiences with fellow researchers.

A comparable Facebook discussion site has been set up at: [facebook.com/PhdPlatform](https://www.facebook.com/PhdPlatform). We hope you will enjoy the discussions and find the information on the platforms useful.

**Willem Vogelsang & Michiel Baas
International Institute for Asian
Studies, Leiden**



Asian borderlands: connections, corridors and communities

11-13 October 2012
Singapore

THE 3RD CONFERENCE of the Asian Borderlands Research Network will be hosted by the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore and the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).

Extensive land and maritime networks have crisscrossed Asia for centuries, providing the basis for encounters between diverse ethnic, linguistic, economic, religious, and political groups. Today, developments such as new infrastructural projects, an increase in media access, and renewed interest in shaping cross-border cultural identities serve to both underscore these long-standing linkages and create new forms of connections across Asia. During the 3rd Asian Borderlands Research Conference in Singapore, presentations will address continuities

and ruptures along routes and borders in Asia, broadly related to the theme: Connections, Corridors, and Communities.

Convenors:
Prof. Prasenjit Duara
Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore;
Prof. Tansen Sen
Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies;
Dr. Tina Harris
University of Amsterdam;
Prof. Willem van Schendel
University of Amsterdam;
Dr. Erik de Maaker
Leiden University

More information on the programme, fees, registration and accommodation can be found on:
www.asianborderlands.net
or www.iias.nl/asianborderlands

1st Annual UKNA Roundtable: Urban heritage policies

4-7 November 2012
Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands

THE DELFT ROUNDTABLE will be the first of four major, annual events bringing together all partner institutes of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia. The roundtable has the dual objective of:

- Discussing the future vision and strategic direction of the UKNA
- Focusing on one of the three main themes of UKNA's research: urban heritage.

The first day of the roundtable (November 5) will be devoted to internal discussions among the UKNA partners. Personal and institutional introductions in the morning will be followed by discussions on the position of UKNA and the format and quality of UKNA's research outputs in the afternoon.

On the second day (November 6) deliberations will center on the position of urban heritage, both built as well as intangible, within urban planning and redevelopment. The case study for the discussion will be the city of Delft. Lessons from planning approaches related to heritage in Delft, and more widely, the Netherlands and Western Europe, will be critically compared and contrasted with experiences in Asian cities. In the morning, the heritage

department of Delft University of Technology's Architecture Faculty will join hands with the Municipality of Delft to organise an excursion of urban redevelopment projects in the city of Delft. In the afternoon, a roundtable discussion, open to a wider audience of policymakers, academics, researchers and civil society representatives, will take place. The following questions will be debated:

- What is the position of heritage within modern urban planning?
- How do current policies and approaches in the Netherlands and Europe differ from those in major Asian (particularly Chinese and Indian) cities?
- How can the two learn from each other?
- On the final day (November 7), participants will attempt to come up with lessons from the discussions for research on urban heritage and development policy.

For the full programme and registration information see: www.ukna.asia/events.

To register email info@ukna.asia

Consisting of over 100 researchers from 13 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest international academic network on Asian cities. UKNA is funded by the European Union and its secretariat is hosted by IIAS.

ukna | URBAN KNOWLEDGE NETWORK ASIA

Workshop: Harnessing counter-culture to construct identity: mapping Dalit cultural heritage in contemporary India

7-8 December 2012
Leiden University, the Netherlands, Lipsius Building, room 148

CULTURAL HERITAGE is fast emerging as a politically contested site where the hitherto marginalised and socially excluded Dalit communities are learning to deploy it as a viable agency in their identity formation process. This workshop will focus on the various dimensions of the Dalit cultural heritage and the ways it impacts the identity formation process among the Dalits in contemporary India.

Convenor:
Prof. Ronki Ram
Holder of the India Studies Chair at Leiden University, co-sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) & International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

For more information on the workshop go to: www.iias.nl/dalit-workshop

Annual Report 2011 now available

THE IIAS ANNUAL REPORT 2011 is now available in print and by download from the IIAS website - www.iias.nl/annualreport

The report places particular emphasis on the three IIAS research clusters Asian Cities, Asian Heritages, and Global Asia. The illustrative theme of the report is 'Dress and Identity'.



IIAS Global Agenda: Submit your event to our online events calendar

IIAS OFFERS THIRD PARTIES the opportunity to disseminate information about their own Asia-related events, research fellowships, grants or job opportunities through the IIAS website.

We invite you to create your own account at www.iias.nl/events and upload your information to our Global Agenda.



Photo © Ania Blazejewska



National Master's Thesis Prize 2012

The International Institute for Asian Studies offers an annual award for the best national master's thesis in the field of Asian Studies

The Award
- The honorary title of 'Best Master's Thesis' in Asian studies
- A maximum three month stipend (€ 1,500 per month) to work at IIAS, in order to write a PhD project proposal or a research article

Criteria
- The master's thesis should be in the broad field of Asian Studies, in the humanities or social sciences
- The thesis must have been written at a Dutch university
- Only master's theses which have been graded with an 8 or higher are eligible
- The thesis must have been evaluated in the period 1 November 2011 - 1 October 2012
- Both students and their supervisors can apply

Submission
Please submit four hard copies of the master's thesis and a cover letter including the grade awarded and your contact details

Deadline
1 October 2012, 9.00 am
Submissions should be sent to:
Secretariat
International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9500
2300 RA Leiden
iias@iias.nl

IIAS Outreach

Hortus Malabaricus in the year 2012

Introduced and compiled by Sandra Dehue, IIAS editor

In the context of the IIAS outreach programme, intended to promote greater public understanding of Asia, a lecture on *Hortus Malabaricus* [The Garden of Malabar] was organised on 27 June 2012, in the Hortus botanicus Leiden [botanical gardens]. Three distinguished speakers discussed the present-day value of this stunning and insightful 12-volume work, printed in Amsterdam between 1678-1693, containing approximately 700 illustrations of medicinal plants and the explanations of their workings.

THE BOOK WAS THE PRODUCT of a remarkable collaboration between the former governor of Malabar, Hendrik van Rheede, and a large number of Ayurvedic doctors, botanists, translators and artisans from India and the Netherlands. This unique testimony of India's immaterial cultural heritage remains significant today as an authentic and important source of traditional Indian knowledge of indigenous plants and their medicinal workings. 325 years after its first edition, *Hortus Malabaricus* has become topical once again, on account of its recent translation into English and Malayalam, by Prof. K.S. Manilal.

The former director of the Dutch National Herbarium, Prof. Pieter Baas, started the afternoon with an inspiring bio-historical lecture about the context and history of *Hortus Malabaricus*. Renée Ridgway, a visual artist based in Amsterdam, took over to speak about her interest in the subject on the basis of two exhibitions in the Netherlands and India, and also introduced a new online community platform (hortusmalabaricus.net). Lastly, Dr. Maarten Bode, medical anthropologist at the University of Amsterdam and the Institute for Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine in Bangalore, India, spoke about the practice,

commercialisation, professionalisation and scientific approach of traditional Indian medicine, such as Ayurveda.

The afternoon was held at the Hortus botanicus Leiden. The Hortus works closely with the National Herbarium of the Netherlands (NHN), which houses original Latin and Dutch editions of, respectively, *Hortus Malabaricus* and *De Malabaarse Kruidhof*. The NHN recently merged with the Naturalis Biodiversity Center in Leiden (www.naturalis.nl/en); with 5.5 million dried plant specimens, Naturalis BC houses one of the largest herbarium collections in the world.

Illustrations above and below: Coconuts – Prints from the *Hortus Malabaricus*. The entire publication, including illustrations, can be accessed through www.botanicus.org.



A bio-historical lecture

Professor Pieter Baas

GIVING THANKS TO HANS HENIGER¹ for his excellent thesis as the source of information on the hero of the story, Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee, Pieter Baas shared with us the exciting history of *Hortus Malabaricus*.

During the 16th century, the quality of the serious study of plants in Europe was given a huge impetus by Lucca Ghini's invention of the 'herbarium method': the pressing of plants between two sheets of paper so that they could be preserved in dry form. This signified a huge breakthrough, as it enabled easy comparison of plants found in different locations. It also led to the creation of 'herbaria' –collections, in book form, of dried plants and drawings –some of the earliest of which found their way into the collections of the National Herbarium of the Netherlands.

The VOC and botanical inventory

In 1602, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was established in Amsterdam, and was the world's first joint-stock limited liability company and commercial multinational. Carolus Clusius, renowned botanist and prefect of the Leiden Hortus botanicus, immediately recognised this as an important opportunity to expand the plant collection of the Hortus and of the existing knowledge of the plant world. Through his influential contacts he was able to persuade the central administration of the VOC, the Lords XVII, to send surgeons and pharmacists on its ships to Southeast Asia, to collect "laid between pieces of paper, twigs with their leaves and flowers". With an enormous shopping list of plants he wanted to be collected, along with records of their usages by the local population, Clusius factually dictated the botanical research agenda of the VOC.

The VOC also had a direct interest, namely the health of its employees in the East. The medicines that were sent from Amsterdam, mostly consisting of exotic and expensive products from Arabia, were highly susceptible to mould, and moreover, ineffective against the tropical diseases encountered in Asia. In 1671, VOC chief physician Clever, having learned from his colleague Padbrugge about the successful treatment of tropical diseases with indigenous medicinal plants in Ceylon, urged the VOC to give more attention to indigenous plants for the treatment of its own sick employees. In 1672, the German

VOC physician Paul Hermann put together an enormous herbarium of plants from Ceylon. Hermann would later also advise Van Rhee on the compilation of *Hortus Malabaricus*.

Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee

In 1656, at age twenty, Hendrik Adriaan Van Rhee joined the VOC and assisted Admiral Rijcklof van Goens in his campaigns against the Portuguese, mostly in Ceylon. In 1670, Van Rhee was appointed Governor of Malabar on India's west coast. Here, he became fascinated by the enormous plant biodiversity, by what people knew about the plants and how they used them. Against the wishes of his patrons in Ceylon, Van Rhee set up a laboratory in Cochin for the extraction of plants and the running of tests. Then he met the 'Discalced Carmelite', Mattheus of St. Joseph, who had already produced a large collection of drawings and watercolours of medicinal plants. Together they agreed to compile an inventory of the most important plants of Malabar.

When, in 1677, the High Council of the VOC declared Malabar independent from Ceylon, Rijcklof van Goens became a jealous rival. Faced with constant opposition, Van Rhee finally resigned and returned to Amsterdam where he continued to work on the *Hortus Malabaricus*. The first volume was printed in 1678, in Amsterdam, and Van Goens was furious; surely the VOC realised that, as demonstrated by Hermann, the best medicines came from Ceylon! The Lords XVII, however, were extremely pleased, and with their support and the help from botanists from Amsterdam and Utrecht, the final volume was completed in 1693.

Without doubt, Van Rhee was the driving force behind *Hortus Malabaricus*, but the creation of the book was the result of true teamwork. He was assisted by an advisory board of Brahmins, his own staff and soldiers, a board of local physicians, his assistant Itthy Achuden (who came from a family of Ayurvedic doctors), local coconut tree climbers, the already mentioned Carmelite, two translators, and in Holland by professional botanists from Amsterdam and Utrecht, and various artists and Latin translators. The result was a 12-volume treatise with detailed copper plate engravings and descriptions of 690 plant species, named in four languages (Latin, Malayalam, Arabic and Kolkani). It was recently established that 689 of these 690 species are still found in the contemporary flora of Malabar, and that they are accurately described in the book (one turned out to be a fantasy plant, probably based on a drawing of mixed flowers, fruits and leaves).



Above: Henricus Adriaan Van Rhee; Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee tot Drakenstein (1636-1691).

Inset: Manilal's English translation of *Hortus Malabaricus*.

Translation into English and Malayalam

325 years later, and the work has finally become available in English and Malayalam, the language spoken by over 30 million people in the state of Kerala, thanks to 30 years of arduous work by Prof. K.S. Manilal from Calicut University. Manilal saw the huge importance of *Hortus Malabaricus* as an authentic source of traditional Indian knowledge, of which all other sources had been lost to time. As a well-deserved tribute to his scholarship, on 1 May 2012, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands presented Manilal with the highest Dutch civilian award, 'Officer of the Order of Orange Nassau'.

Notes

1 Heniger, J. 1986. *Hendrik Adriaan van Reede tot Drakenstein (1636-1691) and Hortus Malabaricus. A contribution to the history of Dutch colonial botany.*

Flower Power

Renée Ridgway

IN MY WORK AS A VISUAL ARTIST I use the VOC and WIC (Dutch East and West India Companies) as a conceptual paradigm in which to map and address specific traces of colonial encounters still visible today.

I arrived in Fort Cochin on the Malabar coast, in 2007, to investigate the remnants of Dutch colonial history, but also for my own wellbeing; to obtain a cure and to investigate more about herbal plants. The curative properties of these plants were first introduced to me in Amsterdam by my Ayurvedic doctor from Kerala, Thomas Punnen. While residing at Kashi Art Gallery in Mattancherry I met with owner, Anoop Scaria, and it was he who first told me about *Hortus Malabaricus*.

Hortus Malabaricus

This extraordinary book, *Hortus Malabaricus*, is the earliest comprehensive work on the flora of Malabar, illustrating around 740 indigenous plants that explain their medicinal properties, with captions in 4 languages (Latin, Malayalam, Arabic, Kolkani). The former governor of Dutch Malabar, Hendrik van Rhee, collaborated with local physicians, botanists, translators, illustrators, engravers and clergymen to produce the publication. Yet, unlike many 17th century documents, the local contributors of this knowledge – the vaidyas Itthy Achudan, RangaBhat, AppuBhat, Vinayaka Pandit – do not remain unnamed, but instead have contributed sworn and signed statements of their collaboration.

Upon returning to the Netherlands I went to visit the Herbarium in Leiden, which housed an original Latin version of *Hortus Malabaricus*. I became enchanted by its spectacular, detailed renderings of Malabar plants made from copper engravings based on original watercolours. Flowers, fruits, petals, seeds and even roots were

magnificently detailed. Besides that, what makes this 17th century compendium so special is that it is perhaps one of the first documents archiving East-West collaboration,¹ along with its manifold functions: an illustrated botanical garden, taxonomy of named plants, a medicinal bible, a translator's dictionary, or to some, such as myself, an object d'art.

The Wanted Land: investigating motive and meaning

I decided to explore Hendrik van Rhee's motivation that drove him to produce such a book. Together with documentary filmmaker Rick van Amersfoort I interviewed experts and local people about their opinions, anecdotes and documents. The more I filmed the more conflicting stories surfaced about the content of the book. Whose knowledge was it? Were the medicinal workings still valid in 2012? Were the botanical drawings accurate? What would be the contemporary use, or value, of such a 17th century book of spices?

The outcome of these questions were the exhibitions 'The Unwanted Land', a group show at Museum Beelden aan Zee in the Netherlands (22 October 2011-14 February 2012) and my solo exhibition 'The Wanted Land' (15-22 February 2012) at David Hall, in Fort Cochin, India – the exact location where historians believe *Hortus Malabaricus* was originally produced. The exhibition consisted of 3 videos, each addressing different aspects of *Hortus Malabaricus*.

The video *The Wanted Land* examines the VOC's taking, undertakings and un-doings that still form a part of Fort Cochin's contemporary landscape. It gathers family genealogies, storytelling, and exchange of information as a re-viewing of history that favors oral traditions, participation and *vox populi* perspectives over the official written narrative of historians, social scientists, anthropologists and sociologists. The multi-channel video installation *Commodore Odata a.k.a. Hendrik van Reede tot Drakenstein* raises questions about the legacy of *Hortus Malabaricus* in 2012: what is the contemporary value of the knowledge contained in this book, how and why was it produced, and what were the incentives for this nobleman?

The third video *A study into (un)becoming Dutch part I* exposes various aspects of Dutch bureaucracy faced by my Ayurvedic doctor and his decision to return to the country of origin. *Part II* addresses the treatment of my migration trauma, the cure being obtained through Ayurveda massage, which uses many of the herbs and plants from *Hortus Malabaricus*. Also on display were approximately 150 indigenous plants contributed by the local community, which are also found within *Hortus Malabaricus*. A copy of the original Latin edition and the recent (2008) Malayalam version were available for visitors to peruse the beautiful engravings and to view the first printing of the Malayalam language.



Above: website homepage.

HortusMalabaricus.net

All research and interviews not only culminated in the two exhibitions, but also led to the creation of the online community platform 'hortusmalabaricus.net'. This interactive website explores the creation of *Hortus Malabaricus* and extends its historical (oral/archival), artistic, medicinal, botanical, linguistic and political importance. It attempts to collate all information about

Hortus Malabaricus, enabling diverse perspectives, visions, histories, personal research, etc., to be shared in one virtual space.

Project participants, and anyone else who would like to share their knowledge, are invited to upload personal texts, archives, images, videos and remarks to the site and comment on the texts and contributions of others.

Notes

1 Manilal K.S., D.H. Nicolson, & C.R. Suresh. 1988. *An Interpretation of Van Rhee's Hortus Malabaricus*. Konigstein: Koeltz Scientific Books

IIAS Outreach *continued*

Ayurveda in contemporary India¹

Dr. Maarten Bode

IN THE THIRD LECTURE OF THE DAY, Maarten Bode discussed ayurveda's contemporary face. He began with the remark that middleclass urban Indians use ayurveda as a back-up when modern (bio)medicine fails to provide a solution to their ailments. For 30-40% of Indians, who live on one Euro per day, however, ayurveda is often the first option when one falls ill. Research suggests that the cultivation and use of just ten medical plants can reduce the health costs of this section of Indian society by 60%.² This is significant because disease is the second largest cause of debt among India's financially poor.

According to Bode, contemporary ayurveda is shaped by a large ayurvedic manufacturing industry, the struggle for scientific respectability, and a diverse range of clinical practices. Even though ayurveda originally provided people with a regimen for the perfection of body, psyche and soul, in modern times the emphasis is on ayurvedic medicines. And where the ayurvedic industry puts forth medical curative claims for its products, learned ayurvedic practitioners favour food and behavioural regimens to medication. According to them, food is medicine and medicine is food; medicine is no use without food and lifestyle prescriptions, and medicine is not needed when people adhere to the prescribed course of therapy.



Health products
To show the contemporary relevance of the *Hortus Malbaricus*, Bode focussed on *amla* or *amalaki* (*Emblia officinalis*, *Phylantis emblica*). In part I of the *Hortus Malbaricus* this Indian gooseberry is portrayed and described on pp. 69-70. The berry is also the main ingredient of *chyawanprash*, India's best-selling ayurvedic health product. In 2002 the

sales were estimated at \$70 million, almost one tenth of the total sales of ayurvedic health and beauty products at that time. Dabur India Ltd. is its largest producer and holds 60% of the market share of *chyawanprash*. Dabur has popularised the formula's indications of use and converted the tonic into a daily necessity as an important source of vitamin C and as an 'immunity booster' for fighting 'the stress and strain of modern city life'. Health products like *chyawanprash* promise to make users effectively modern, e.g., successful in India's competitive job market and as a spouse and parent. Another example of such a product is the liver booster *Livotrit* from the Mumbai based manufacturer Zandu – like Dabur one of the largest ayurvedic manufacturers. These modern *rasayanas* ('promotive treatments'; as one of the ayurvedic eight sub disciplines, increasing the self-healing potential of the human body is an important objective of ayurveda) are marketed as products that fight the toxins of modernisation such as stress, a westernised lifestyle marked by the consumption of modern medicines and alcohol, and environmental degradation.

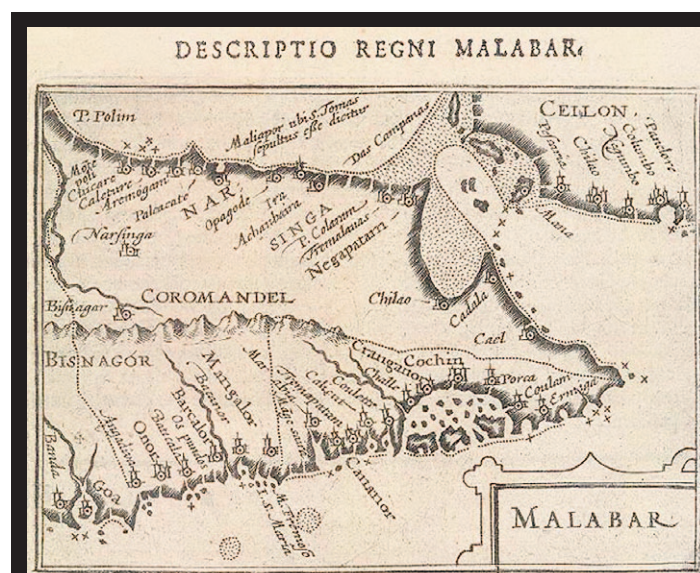
Pharmaceuticalisation and scientisation

Nowadays there is a focus on Evidence Based Medicine (EBM). Bode feels that, in general, we must conclude that there is not much modern pharmacological proof for the efficacy of ayurvedic medicines and treatments. On the other hand there is also no research that shows that ayurvedic treatments do not work and most western biomedical medicines and treatments are still not evidence-based either. There are three reasons for this lack of scientific proof: heavy underinvestment in research on efficacy, the lack of organised scepticism in the form of an ayurvedic research community, and the absence of treatment and research protocols that do justice to ayurvedic logic. Modern research models do not accommodate ayurveda's therapeutic aims, such as building strong bodily tissues, cleaning channels, taking away blockages, 'cooking' food and expelling 'poison' (*ama*). Modern pharmacology does provide some evidence, though meagre, that supports the medical worth of *amalaki*, *chyawanprash*'s main ingredient. *Chyawanprash* and *amalaki* have both been in use in India for centuries and their biological and physiological effects have been empirically tested by many patients.

Practitioners

There are practitioners belonging to an ayurvedic oral tradition and those who are very scholarly and base their treatments upon a corpus of Sanskrit medical texts. There are those who practise at the margins of legitimacy and those who hold a college or university degree. At the moment India has approximately 600,000 college and university educated ayurvedic practitioners. Most of them, roughly 70%, use their ayurvedic degree as a backdoor into biomedical practice. A second large group of ayurvedic graduates are in government service – approximately 120,000 practitioners. The third category of ayurvedic practitioners consists of about 60,000 graduates; even though they sell ayurvedic medicines to their patients, they do not accompany these with strict regimens regulating food and lifestyle. Their patients usually expect their ayurvedic medicines to do the same job as biomedical pharmaceuticals, but without the harmful side-effects ascribed to the latter. Only a small majority of ayurvedic degree holders – probably no more than 10,000 – practise in an authentic way. These authentic ayurvedic practitioners have been trained in colleges and universities, but have importantly also taken an apprenticeship with a practitioner (often) belonging to a prestigious family line of traditional healers.³

In addition to those holding a degree, there are approximately one million part-time ayurvedic practitioners, including half a million Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), who, besides delivering babies, mainly treat the health problems of women and children. Then there are hundred-thousands of herbal healers who treat a range of common ailments and chronic conditions. There are also many specialists who treat ailments of the eyes, ears, skin, as well as muscular and nervous disorders. Others attend to emergencies such as snakebites and other cases of poisoning. Some manage broken bones and deformities of the legs, ankles and feet. And there are those knowledgeable housewives, who practise folk medicine for the benefit of family members and neighbours. They are often the first line of defence in the treatment of common and chronic ailments.



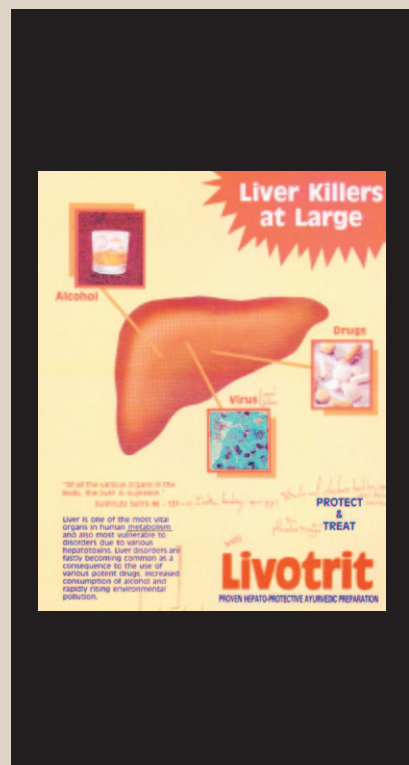
Malabar

Renee Ridgway

DURING THE 17TH CENTURY, the Dutch captured many Portuguese-held command posts along the eastern (Coromandel) and western (Malabar) coasts of India, including Fort Cochin where they set up their own trading post within the territory that became known as Dutch Malabar, extending along the southwestern coast of modern day Kerala.

Above: 1602 map by Petrus Bertius showing south India with Malabar region in the far south-east (delineated by dotted line).

This is still one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world, with a tropical climate that supports an extensive variety of spice, medicinal herbs and other valuable plants. It was this bio-diversity that made the area so desirable to traders since ancient times. In particular the Dutch attempted to impose a monopoly on the black pepper from the region, still known today as 'Malabar Gold'. Although 'spices' lured European merchants to the Malabar, in these so-called colonies they encountered unfamiliar diseases and sicknesses all the while remarking in their travel notes how healthy and thriving the local population lived and prospered. Thus the impetus for well-being and survival in a strange environment inspired their determination to procure knowledge of medicinal plants.



A recent initiative by the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) promotes a unique programme for assessing and accrediting the knowledge and skills of these folk practitioners. This accreditation project also offers clinical training. It is expected that training and accreditation will eventually boost the skills, the prestige and the morale of local healers. Further professionalisation is much needed to sift the wheat from the chaff.

Above left: Bone setting clinic in South India (folk healers).

Left: Advert for an ayurvedic liver tonic: 'taking away the toxins of modernity'.

Near left: Ayurvedic degree holder (BAMS) in his clinic.

Notes

- 1 The full article on which this lecture was based, can be downloaded from the IIAS website: www.iias.nl/event/hortus-malbaricus-anno-2012
- 2 Bodeker, Gerry & Gemma Burford (eds.). 2007. *Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Policy and Public Health Perspectives*. London: Imperial College Press.
- 3 Bode, Maarten. 2012. 'Ayurveda in the 21st Century: Logic, Practice, and Ethics', in Leena Abraham & V. Sujatha (eds) *Medical Pluralism in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, pp. 59-76.



Amsterdam sojourns

OOI Keat Gin is an award-winning author whose scholarly works have been published by internationally renowned publishers. He has held fellowships at institutions in the UK, Europe, and Australia. Elected as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (London), Dr Ooi's fields of interest are the socio-cultural and socio-economic history of South-east Asia with particular preoccupation on Borneo. He has had several reference works commissioned by British and American publishers, including bibliographies and historical dictionaries. Presently he is professor of modern history and coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Research Unit (APRU) (www.hum.usm.my/APRU) in the School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and founder-editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies (IJAPS) (www.usm.my/ijaps). He is series editor of the APRU-USM Asia Pacific Studies Publication Series (AAPSPS).

OOI Keat Gin

IIAS WAS HONOURED TO WELCOME OOI Keat Gin as an affiliate fellow in 2002-2004 at our Amsterdam branch, and so we invited him to tell our readers a bit about his experiences in the Netherlands, and at IIAS.

Meeting Amsterdam

Amsterdam conjures pleasant images for me. It has been more than a decade since I was first beholden with the picturesque canals and assortment of bicycles and cyclists whizzing through the cobbled, narrow streets of this enchanting city. The 'red-light' district was undoubtedly an attraction equal to the art museums showcasing the Dutch Grand Masters and the irrepressible Van Gogh that bestowed to the world indeed an indelible 'Impression'. Regardless of all the intriguing, memorable, and delightful sideline distractions and attractions, the real aim of my initial visit and subsequent sojourns were of an intellectual nature, relating to research, study, and writing. This intellectual preoccupation has led me to return to Amsterdam on an almost annual basis, and to maintain an off-and-on relationship with this Dutch city.

My first short-stay in Amsterdam, more of a village than a city, was in 2000 when I was on an exploratory visit. My intention was then to survey the ground – the archives and libraries – for the possibility of embarking on work relating to the Pacific War (1941-5), on what was then termed Dutch Borneo. Having spent close to half a decade examining the war years in Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo (present-day Sabah), it was only logical and inevitable that I moved onto the vast southern and eastern portions of the island, comprising Indonesia Kalimantan. I visited both the library of *Universiteit van Amsterdam* (University of Amsterdam) and the archives of the *Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (NIOD, Netherlands Institute for War Documentation). My first impressions were comical and daunting; I was initially not able to even find the bookshelves at the former, while overwhelmed by the collections at the latter.

My next visit was late November 2001. It was auspicious, as well as a little traumatic because I lost my passport. It was a great honour to be an invited speaker at the conference 'The Asia-Pacific War: Experiences and Reflections', jointly organized by three Dutch institutions, viz. NIOD, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), and The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV). The venue was split between Amsterdam and Leiden. Dr Elly Touwen-Bousma of NIOD, who had invited me, requested that I deliver two papers for the conference; one in Amsterdam, and another in Leiden. It was during this trip that I met up with Dr Remco Raben who was instrumental in my return to the Netherlands.

Meeting IIAS

Between 2002 and 2004 I was an IIAS Affiliate Fellow. Dr Remco Raben certainly had a hand in my appointment. I opted to be at the IIAS Amsterdam Branch Office – which was unfortunately closed at the end of 2011 – to allow the convenience of my research, largely at NIOD. At the same time I also made repeated visits to the *Nederlands Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken* (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives), and *Algemeen Rijksarchief* (National Archives)

in The Hague. My research sojourns ranged from three to four months allowing me to celebrate Queen's Day and savour *loempia* (Vietnamese eggroll) during Amsterdam's spring months. It was then that I had the acquaintance of a most helpful 'angel' in Heleen van der Minne, then secretary at IIAS Amsterdam Branch Office. Professor Mario Rutten was branch director in those years; he on his part introduced me to the paraphernalia and excitement of Dutch football.

Life as an Affiliate Fellow was rather pleasant and privileged with an office with most of the usual facilities including an internet-accessed PC, a comfortable chair, and plenty of space to 'arrange' books and files. Quietness was what I remembered best in my office, literally 'hear-a-pin-drop' scenario. I was indeed grateful for this serenity where contemplation and deep reflection could make one productive. The small but comfortable studio I was accommodated in was literally on the edge, or perhaps part of Amsterdam's 'red-light' district. Initially the cacophony of conversations, laughter, and shouting from the establishment (night club?) across the narrow street extended my waking hours past midnight; however, as I adapted, I slept soundly thereafter from the disruptions of the first few nights. I was equally productive in the cosy studio as I was in the spartan office. Breaks from the latter took me over to the main office to share coffee, a cookie or two, and conversations with Heleen. Fortunate or unfortunate I did not seem to be able to meet up with other Fellows; only occasional brief encounters in the corridor. I supposed everybody was preoccupied and socializing was perhaps the least of their priorities.

During my 2002 stay in Amsterdam, Dr Sikko Visscher paid me a visit that subsequently led me to organize a workshop for the 'Brokers of Capital and Knowledge' research group at the Centre for Asian Studies Amsterdam, Amsterdam School for Social Science Research (CASA/ASSR), *Universiteit van Amsterdam*, led by Professor Otto van den Muijzenberg. As coordinator of the Asia Pacific Research Unit (APRU), School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, I played host to these Dutch scholars and their colleagues from various countries. In a sense, through them I reconnected to Amsterdam and the Netherlands.

Back east again, over dinner at a hilltop restaurant in tropical Singapore, a gentleman guest to my right inquired of my current project. I was then in the preliminary stages of editing a three-volume reference work on Southeast Asian history. He immediately offered to launch this work upon its completion; not in Leiden where he was then based, but suggested Amsterdam, that according to him was more to my temper and taste. This was Professor Wim Stokhof, then IIAS director, who kept his word when he later invited me to Amsterdam in mid-November 2004 to attend the IIAS-launching of my *Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia, from Angkor Wat to East Timor*, 3 volumes (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004). The ceremony was held at the historic hall where the *Heeren Zeventien* (literally: The Gentlemen Seventeen, who comprised the board of directors of the VOC) had once discussed the affairs of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC, [Dutch] United East India Company), from the early seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century. Earlier in the morning of that auspicious day I chaired an



IIAS roundtable seminar themed 'Southeast Asian Studies in Europe: Reflections and New Directions'. Thanks indeed to Heleen in securing the historic venue for a historic occasion in my annals. Wim kept his promise and I am ever grateful to him for his faith, confidence and recognition of my labours.

Further sojourns

My involvement in the 'Indonesia in the Pacific War Project', headed by Dr Peter Post led to my appointment as Visiting Research Fellow (2006) of NIOD. I reconnected with Remco whose desk was in the same room as mine. In the early part of my three-month stay, Amsterdam was wet and cold, but towards the last fortnight the weather turned hot and steamy. Window shopping along the Kalverstraat and browsing through bookshops were my Saturday afternoon delights.

I returned to Amsterdam in late May 2007 to deliver a public lecture at the International Information Centre and Archives of the Women's Movement (IIAV), organized by the Asian Studies in Amsterdam (ASiA) in cooperation with IIAV. It was Sikko, then at ASiA, who liaised with IIAV to realize this occasion. I was visibly impressed with the enormous collection of materials housed at IIAV. Three years later in August 2010 I was again in Amsterdam as an invited participant of the 21st International Congress of Historical Sciences (ICHS). On both occasions I presented work related to female domestic labour.

In my more than a decade-long connecting and re-connecting with Amsterdam, the comings and goings of researchers at NIOD was as baffling as the continuous shifting of premises of the IIAS Amsterdam Branch Office. This mobility and change fortunately did not affect Amsterdam itself as *de wallen* remained as they had been since my first arrival and Van Gogh's masterpieces could still be admired. The never-ending renovations and/or numerous facelifts to *Centraal Station* were an enduring feature throughout my intermittent visits.

My Amsterdam sojourns in no small measure contributed to two of my book-length works, namely *The Japanese Occupation of Borneo, 1941-1945* (London: Routledge, 2011), and *Post-war Borneo, 1945-1950: Nationalism, Empire, and State-building* (London: Routledge, forthcoming). And through the years there were numerous other journal publications here and there, in between Schiphol and Penang.

On reflection, being an IIAS affiliate fellow, based in its branch office in Amsterdam, I could access immense opportunities to tap the resources beneficial for my research. This affiliation certainly 'opened' doors with institutions throughout the Netherlands. This affiliated fellowship allowed me to 'refresh' myself intellectually each year between 2002 and 2004, away from my home campus routine back in Penang. I am indeed grateful for this experience. And as an IIAS alumnus the *Newsletter* certainly keeps me 'connected', kudos to those whose efforts are greatly appreciated.

I am scheduled to return to the Netherlands for a sojourn in Leiden, during the second half of 2013. I will be based at the Department of History, Leiden University, but I shall certainly visit IIAS to hopefully reconnect with its many exciting and thought-provoking talks and seminars, and if opportunity arises, I might deliver a paper or two. Amsterdam certainly will be on my itinerary; it is where Swee Im, my wife and I spent wonderful and memorable times in the past. Did I also mention the succulent duck bought from Amsterdam's Chinatown with which we home-cooked a most agreeable curry? For that, and the fresh salmon at the Albert Cuyp Market, another visit is more than worth it. *Dank u wel.*

OOI Keat Gin, School of Humanities,
Universiti Sains Malaysia.

IIAS Research projects

IIAS research is carried out within a number of thematic clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents – all built around the notion of social agency. The aim of this approach is to cultivate synergies and coherence between people and projects and to generate more interaction with Asian societies. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics.

Asian Cities

WITH A SPECIAL EYE on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longstanding Asian urban “tradition”, by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia and linking the various elements of city cultures and societies, from ancient to modern (colonial and post-colonial) times. Through an international knowledge-network of experts, cities and research institutes it seeks to encourage social scientists and scholars in the humanities to interact with contemporary actors including artists, activists, planners and architects, educators, and policy makers. By bringing together science and practice, IIAS wishes to initiate a productive dialogue where each participant can contribute his or her own expertise, with the potential to evolve into a broad multi-disciplinary corpus contributing to the actual development of Asian cities today.

PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

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. 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)



Shanghai skyline. Photo Courtesy Flickr.

Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested distinctions of “tangible” and “intangible” heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in framing and creating various forms of identity. The cluster will address the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for determining who benefits or suffers from their implementation. It aims to engage with a broad range of concepts including the issues of “authenticity,” “national heritage,” and “shared heritage”, and, more generally, issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. It will also critically address the dangers involved in the commodification of perceived endangered local cultures/heritages, including languages, religious practices, crafts and art forms, as well as material vernacular heritage.

PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

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)

ABIA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index

The ABIA project is a global network of scholars co-operating on a bibliographic database of publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. It was re-launched in 1997 at the initiative of IIAS in collaboration with international scholars and Asian academic institutes. Partners are the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, India, and the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. The database is freely accessible at www.abia.net. Extracts are available as a series of bibliographies, published by Brill. The project receives scientific support from UNESCO and is sponsored by J. Gonda Foundation.

Coordinators:
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Global Asia

THE GLOBAL ASIA CLUSTER addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region as well as Asia’s projection into the world, through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies and so forth. Past and present trends will be addressed. The cluster wishes to contribute to a better academic understanding of the phenomenon by challenging the Euro-centricity of much of its current literature, acknowledging the central role of Asia as an agent of global transformations. It also wishes to explore new forms of non-hegemonic intellectual interaction in the form of South-South and East-West dialogue models. By multi-polarizing the field of Asian studies, an enriched comparative understanding of globalization processes and the role of Asia in both time and space will be possible.

PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

Asian Borderlands Research Network

The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. A conference is organised every two years in one of these border regions, in co-operation with a local partner. The concerns of the Asian Borderlands Research Network are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns.

www.asianborderlands.net



Thai/Myanmar border.
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Energy Programme Asia – EPA

The EPA-research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy supply security on the European Union and main Asian energy consuming countries, and their national strategies for securing supply. Part of EPA was the joint research programme Domestic and Geopolitical Challenges to Energy Security of China and the European Union (2007- 2011) between EPA and the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS) of the Chinese Academy of the Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing, in collaboration with three other CASS research centres and four Dutch universities. The objectives were to analyse the (a) geopolitical and (b) domestic aspects of energy security challenges for the European Union (EU) and China, and their impact on energy security policy. The geopolitical aspects involved the effects of competition for access to oil and gas resources, and the security of energy supply, among the main global consumer countries in the EU and China. The domestic aspects involve national energy demand and supply, energy efficiency policies, and the deployment of renewable energy resources. Supported by: KNAW Chinese Exchange Programme, CASS, and IIAS.

The results of the joint research project have been published in two book volumes: *The Globalisation of Energy: China and the European Union* and *Secure Oil and Alternative Energy: The geopolitics of energy paths of China and the European Union*.

Preparations are being made for a second joint programme under the title ‘China’s growing role in energy producing countries: company strategies, project embedment and relations with institutions and stakeholders’.

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

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 – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary 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
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Jatropha 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)

Open Cluster

PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

Senshi Soshō

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

Coordinator:
Jan Bongenaar
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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. 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 healthcare, 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. Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l’Age, la Citoyenneté et l’Intégration Socio-économique (REIACTIS) Sponsored by: IIAS.

Coordinator:
Carla Risseuw
(c.risseuw@iias.nl)

IIAS Fellows

IIAS hosts a large number of affiliated fellows (independent postdoctoral scholars), IIAS research fellows (PhD/postdoctoral scholars working on an IIAS research project), and fellows nominated and supported by partner institutions. Fellows are selected by an academic committee on the basis of merit, quality, and available resources. For extensive information on IIAS fellowships and current fellows please refer to the IIAS website.



Marina Marouda
Imperial pasts in post-socialist presents: ritual engagements with royal dead in contemporary Viet Nam

THE CHANGING HISTORICAL trajectory of the city of *Huế* and its inhabitants, from imperial capital to a post-socialist tourist marketplace, via the horrors of the battlefield, are intrinsically connected to the fluctuating posthumous fates of the *Nguyễn* kings who ruled the country for more than a century (1802-1945). Previously forming the sacred core of the polity, the *Nguyễn* kings were subsequently pushed aside by the rising tide of the revolution that banned their public commemoration. Today the *Nguyễn* kings are ritually recognised as formidable past sovereigns, extraordinary ancestors and potent spirits. As a result, the citadel, the royal tombs and many temple complexes in and around *Huế* have been transformed into sites where a multitude of actors are drawn together to partake in rejuvenated ritual acts. Royal descendants are re-discovering 'traditional' forms of worship, local pilgrims are engaging in searches of blessings, and droves of foreign tourists explore the country's glorious imperial past. The state has also taken an active role in this process by sponsoring the restoration of royal complexes and seeking to appropriate and domesticate the imperial past.

My research investigates the complexities, intricacies, and ambiguities involved in the imperial restoration project by

focusing primarily on two issues. First, it investigates how previously neglected royalty are fast becoming re-instated as potent ancestral figures and the significance this re-discovery has in a changing economic and political environment. Secondly, I examine the resurgence of the royal cult in the context of tourism and the commodification of social memory.

The research fills a significant gap in our knowledge about *Việt Nam* by providing the first ethnographic account on rituals pertaining to former royalty and the current reformulation of the royal past. The research is part of a broader investigation into ritual practices as enacted in contemporary *Việt Nam*, whereby I explore the importance of the dead for the articulation of kinship and the ongoing making of the state, charting the significance of the dead in the affective lives of ordinary peoples in their capacities as kin and citizens. In this context, relations between the living and the dead are an integral part not only in the social process but also a central concern for the establishment and perpetuation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as becomes apparent in the state-sponsored cult of *Hồ Chí Minh*, who is promoted as the 'uncle' of the nation and the revered founder of the

state. Looking into the reinvigoration of rituals pertaining to former royalty in the city of *Huế* aims to deepen our understanding of the state cult of the dead as a historically contingent project that is both disrupted and perpetuated by past and current practices regarding royal commemoration.

I greatly appreciate being awarded a six month fellowship at IIAS that enables me to prepare this research for publication. The International Institute for Asian Studies provides a most suitable working environment and facilitates discussions and exchange of ideas with international visiting scholars from a range of disciplines. While in Leiden, I will benefit from engagement with the other IIAS fellows working on similar issues in locales across Asia as well as with experts at Leiden University. Ongoing research at IIAS on historic urban landscapes and heritage sites in East and Southeast Asia links up well with my research pursuits and I look forward to contributing to relevant debates. Issues on cultural heritage have recently emerged as a critical site of enquiry in the humanities and social sciences and I am hoping to further add to this area of research by means of organising an international workshop on UNESCO-inscribed heritage sites in Asia.



Melissa Crouch
'Faith in the law?'

CONTROVERSY OVER the relationship between state and religion continues to emerge in debates worldwide. My research focuses on the dynamics of state-religion relations and the regulation of religious affairs, particularly in Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority democracy in the world. Indonesia has a history of conflict between Muslims and Christians. Between 1998 and 2001, violence between these two communities increased across the archipelago. Some radical Islamists continue to wage sporadic campaigns against Christian religious activities, centred on the allegation that Christians are attempting to convert Muslims to Christianity, referred to as 'Christianisation'.

As a postdoctoral fellow at IIAS, I am working on updating my thesis as a book manuscript, provisionally entitled 'Faith in the Law? Proselytisation, Muslim-Christian Relations and the Courts in Indonesia'. This research examines how and why Muslim opposition to Christian proselytisation, real and perceived, has intensified since 1998 and the transition to democracy. It also questions the extent to which this has affected the resolution of disputes between Muslims and Christians through legal processes in an era of decentralisation. The research explores the greater democratic

freedoms and opportunities that have opened up for religious communities to influence law reforms, combined with the effect of a competitive local political environment in a decentralised Indonesia. Hostility towards Christian proselytisation is partly responsible for many of the emerging legal disputes between Muslims and Christians in democratic Indonesia. These disputes have raised questions about whether religious communities, particularly minorities, can have faith and trust in legal mechanisms and institutions. Muslim opposition to Christian proselytisation therefore remains a key to understanding and addressing the escalation of legal disputes between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia.

In order to complete this research project, Leiden is an obvious choice of location, due to the wealth of library resources available on Indonesia and the concentration of academics on Asian studies. This fellowship provides me with the unique chance to consult with experts in the field and to receive valuable input and feedback on my research. This experience will be of great benefit to my research and has given me valuable time to focus on my manuscript. It also provides a crucial opportunity to build networks for future collaboration research projects.



Karuna Sharma
Family and support structures of Indo-Surinamese community in the Netherlands

MY PROJECT aims to contribute to existing research on informal care and exchanges of support at the family level in the Netherlands. I have chosen to research support practices among the Surinamese community of Indian ethnic origin, descended from the Indian contractual labourers who migrated to Suriname in the 19th century. It was the political independence of Suriname and the ensuing political instability and the complex relationships with other communities that prompted this community's migration to the Netherlands, where as an ethnic group they are widely recognized as Indian, but well-integrated within the Dutch society (particularly on account of their linguistic competency; Dutch was already their language in Suriname).

Today they form one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the country. This community is several generations removed from its origins in India, but its members lead a lifestyle that is mostly rooted in Indian cultural beliefs. This group has deployed unique cultural resources to establish its distinct identity, and my present project is an attempt to explore such resources in the context of the organization of their family lives. In the context of family relations and structures, the Indian diaspora shows a sense of filial piety regardless of the country of emigration, but their perspectives and experiences

have been found to be different. For the present study, I will use a qualitative approach to study their support practices, as support is central to understanding family lives and social ties. My project is a step in the direction of understanding this group's support structures that has bearing upon old age security for older adults. Given that the Dutch population of older people is ethnically diverse, it is important to be attentive to their special needs; thus my findings will have policy and practice implications.

Leiden and IIAS both are special to me personally and professionally. My association with the IIAS goes back to 2004 when I first became affiliated with the institute as a research fellow. I benefited immensely from the academic environment at the institute. My own interest in ageing studies developed out of my association with colleagues who were part of the IIAS research cluster 'Ageing in East and West'. My current project aims at bringing to fore the issues that will have bearing upon old age security for older adults in the Netherlands. During my stay in Leiden, I have had the opportunity to get acquainted with scholars at the Leyden Academy on Vitality and Ageing (LAVA), a premier institution that supports research on ageing and its related issues. I am fortunate that the IIAS and LAVA support my research project.

IIAS Fellowships

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 deadlines for applications are 1 April and 1 October.

WE ARE PARTICULARLY interested in researchers focusing on one of the Institute's three thematic clusters: 'Asian Cities', 'Asian Heritages', 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, *métissage* 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.

Asian Heritages 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, multidisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged. For information on the research clusters and application form please see: www.iias.nl

A palace of eternity: a Chu King's tomb in Beidongshan

Considered to be the 'classic era' in Chinese history, the Han Dynasty was the first longstanding imperial power in China, spanning four centuries (206 BC -AD 220). My own research on Han Dynasty material cultures has taken me to the major royal tombs in eastern China. These tombs were dug horizontally into mountains and divided into several different functional chambers. Despite their fortifications, the majority of Han tombs had been looted in antiquity and so they were excavated in the 1980s and 1990s in an effort to protect the remaining objects.

James Lin



The Search for Immortality: Tomb Treasures of Han China

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England
Showing until 11 November 2012
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

THE MOST INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT AREA in eastern China for the tombs of the Han Dynasty is Xuzhou, where numerous large tombs and rich materials have survived. Xuzhou is a small city in north Jiangsu province, located about halfway between Shanghai and Beijing, and was a strategic point during the Civil War between the Kuomintang and communists in the early 20th century. However, not many people, even the Chinese themselves, realise that it was a very important city 2000 years ago.

The founder of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), Liu Bang, was originally from this region. After he became emperor and founded the capital in Xi'an, his half-brother, Liu Jiao, was appointed as the first king of the Chu Kingdom in Xuzhou. Each king of Chu was buried in their own hill or mountain, with his spouse and family members nearby. Although most of the tombs have been looted, the number of surviving jade plaques across the tombs suggests that the majority may have contained jade suits, the most unique burial object in Chinese history.

The most complicated of all the kings' tombs in Xuzhou was unearthed in 1986 in Beidongshan. The tomb was dug into the side of a hill with a 56m long and 3-4m wide tomb passage. Halfway along the passage are two mounds of earth representing the watch towers at the entrance of a palace. The northern end of the passage was sealed with huge blocking stones, each weighing around 8,000kg. The main tomb structure resembles the residential section of a royal palace, consisting of two chambers, two side-chambers, a corridor, an antechamber, a main burial chamber and two privies. The whole tomb was painted with cinnabar, a red-coloured ore of mercury sulphide (HgS) that can be used as a preservative and disinfectant.

Although the tomb had been plundered several times in the past, a great number of objects survived intact. These finds included 224 earthenware tomb guardians, painted in red, black and purple, approximately 70,000 *banliang* coins, and 73 fish scale-shaped jade plaques that were part of a jade suit. A jade suit on average comprised approximately 2,000 pieces (depending on the size of the body). The finest jade suit ever found was discovered at Shizishan, and is composed of 4,248 jade plaques, sewn with 1,576 grams of gold thread. The 73 surviving jade plaques from Beidongshan were scattered in the main chamber and tomb passages after incursions by local farmers in 1954, resulting in damage and theft. Judging from the quality and the craftsmanship of these unusual fish scale plaques, it would have been an even more impressive jade suit than the one from Shizishan.

The Beidongshan tomb is not open to the public, in part because it is a fair distance outside the city centre, but mainly because the area lacks a proper power supply. I had tried to visit this tomb several times, and finally succeeded in 2006. By special arrangement a guard came to unlock the gate for me and Professor Li, the Director of Xuzhou Museum. A strange thing happened during this visit. Soon after we walked down the tomb passage past the tomb guardians, the power went off and we were plunged into complete darkness. Everyone fell silent, expecting that something might happen. There was a deathly chill in the air, and the eerie silence made it all the worse. The guard tried to switch the lights back on several times, but nothing happened. We had no choice but to feel our way back up and along the damp, slippery walls of the passage and give up our journey to the underground palace. It made me appreciate how daring the tomb robbers had been, to break in without knowing the danger below. No wonder it sometimes cost them their lives.

My determination to visit the tomb took me back in 2010, this time with two colleagues from the Fitzwilliam Museum to measure the objects in the museum for our 2012 exhibition *The Search for Immortality: Tomb Treasures of Han China*. This time we entered the tomb successfully. After passing



the remaining huge blocking stones that have been pulled out by the tomb robbers, there is a very steep set of stairs leading to a lower level with a large entertainment room, arsenal, kitchen, well, lavatory, storage chamber and ice cellar. It was a place designed for eternal happiness – eating, drinking and dancing without end.

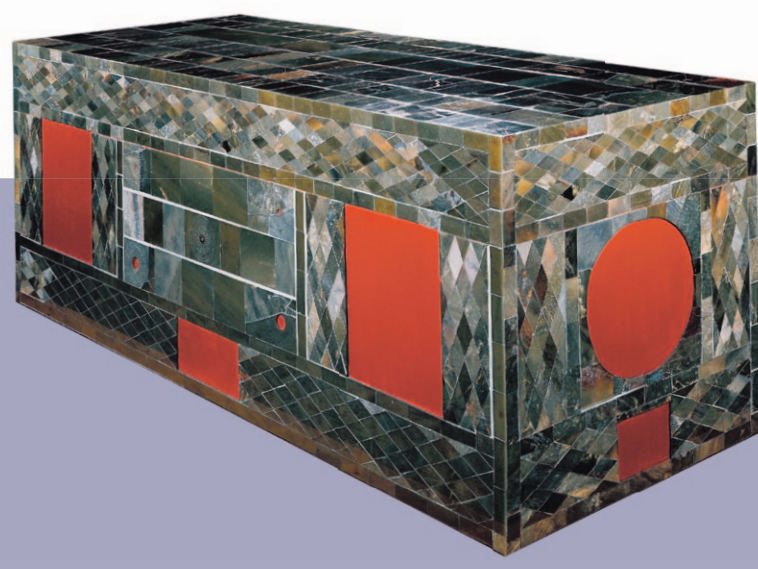
Unfortunately, on the ground floor rear chamber only a few personal belongings had survived, including an unusually designed jade pendant

in the shape of an archer's ring and a jade bear used as a mat weight. There is no concrete evidence to identify the owner of this tomb, but the seals and coins help to date the tomb to between 175 and 128 BC.

I am delighted that a large number of the exceptional finds from the Beidongshan have gone on display in our exhibition on the tombs of the Han Dynasty, *The Search for Immortality: Tomb Treasures of Han China*, at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. More than 350 objects from Xuzhou, and tombs from Nanyue in Southern China, have been displayed in four galleries, which are arranged in a tomb layout with the objects placed according to their functions.

Unfortunately for the Chu kings, their worldly power was not to last. After twelve successive Chu kings, Wang Mang – an official who seized power from the Han imperial family – founded the Xin Dynasty, which lasted for fifteen years, until he was overthrown in 23 AD. However, the Han Dynasty was resilient, and was re-established in 25 AD. Even though Chu kings had gone out of existence, thankfully for history, their tombs and much of the great treasures locked within did not.

James Lin, Senior Assistant Keeper of Applied Art in the Fitzwilliam Museum, responsible for the Asian art collection. (jcs13@cam.ac.uk)



1: Jade suit
2nd century BC,
Western Han Dynasty.
Length: 175 cm;
width: 68 cm.
Unearthed at
Shizishan in 1994-5
Xuzhou Museum,
Jiangsu Province.

2: Pottery musician
2nd century BC,
Western Han Dynasty.
Height: 33 cm.
Unearthed from
Tuolanshan King of
Chu tomb in 1989
Xuzhou Museum,
Jiangsu Province.

3: Jade ornament
with an animal mask
2nd century BC,
Western Han Dynasty.
Length: 16.7 cm;
width: 13.8 cm.
Unearthed at Xiang-
gangshan in 1983
The Museum of the
King of Nanyue,
Guangdong Province.

4: Jade coffin
2nd century BC,
Western Han Dynasty.
Length 280 cm;
width: 110 cm;
height: 108 cm.
Unearthed at
Shizishan in 1994-5
Xuzhou Museum,
Jiangsu Province.

5: Excavation
– Nanyue 3
The King's Coffin
Chamber. Site
excavated in 1983.
Photo courtesy of
The Museum of the
King of Nanyue.

