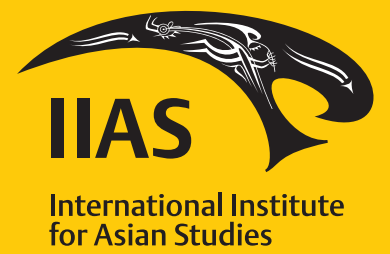


Leonardus Joseph (Leo) Eland, painter of 'Mooi Indie'  
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Cambodian bronze  
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A pavilion for Asian art in the new Rijksmuseum Amsterdam  
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# theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

64  
The ongoing story of Macao



### THE FOCUS

Ordated by poet W. H. Auden in the 1930s as a city where “nothing serious could ever happen”, and whose citizens were described only thirty years ago as “among the most unrepresented, forgotten people in Asia”, Macao is now experiencing a remarkable resurgence. In this edition of the Focus, guest editor Tim Simpson outlines the Macao of yesterday, today and the future.

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## The Focus

### The ongoing story of Macao

**Pages 21-23**

Guest editor Tim Simpson introduces the ongoing story of Macao, the first (and ultimately, the last) European territory in Asia. The tiny city has effectively bookended the global era of the last half millennia, starting with the Portuguese claiming it in 1557, and now continuing to play a rather remarkable role in the circulations of subjects, cultures, and capital.



**Pages 24-25**

Werner Breitung's geographical contribution highlights the territorial ambiguity of Macao. There is a lack of clear historical records regarding the exact administrative agreement forged between the Chinese and Portuguese in relation to Macao, and the territory never clearly belonged exclusively to one or the other power.



**Pages 26-27**

Cathryn Clayton comments on the unique form of shared sovereignty through which both Portugal and China extended limited authority over different dimensions of Macao and its population. Clayton refers to it as Macao's 'sort-of sovereignty'.



**Pages 30-31**

Macao has long been known for tolerating vices forbidden in surrounding territories. Its liminal identity proved useful to various actors; Britain was one such actor with an interest in the enclave – discussed here by historian Rogerio Puga.



**Pages 32-33**

Today the Macanese and Portuguese communities combined comprise only a small percentage of the population of Macao. The Macanese, or 'Sons of the Earth', and their disappearing Patuá, are the subject of the contribution by Elisabela Larrea.



**Page 34**

Sonny Lo presents the challenges of establishing a civil society in Macao. The city's rapid economic development (mainly in casino sector) has led to a disconnected and materialistic middle class that has essentially abandoned political advocacy and democratic struggle.



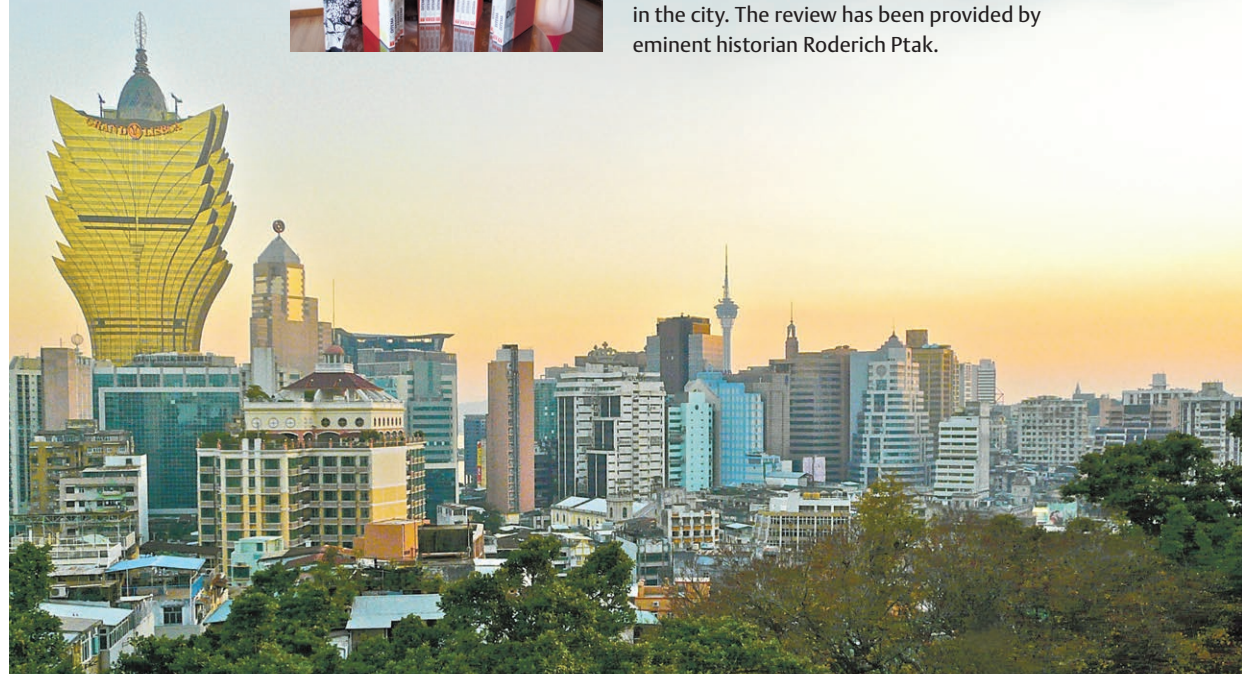
**Page 35**

Andy Fuller also comments on Macao's disconnected population, including the many members who have no enduring civil commitment to the city, and looks at the complexities of establishing normalized everyday urban life for the heterogeneous population.



**Page 36**

The Focus is concluded by a review of a four-volume reference work recently published by the University of Macau, arguably the most comprehensive resource available for Portuguese literate scholars interested in the city. The review has been provided by eminent historian Roderich Ptak.



# Growing up

ICAS 8 in Macau is a landmark event for IAS. It is not just because, as host of the ICAS Secretariat, IAS was privileged to work with colleagues from tens of institutions and hundreds of individual scholars worldwide, including in particular our colleagues from Macau University, our partner for the event. It is also because, on the occasion of ICAS 8, the Institute will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. Since its creation in 1993, IAS has grown to become, let's not be afraid of saying so, *the* global meeting ground and network builder in the field of Asian studies.

Philippe Peycam



WITH ITS PUBLICATION The Newsletter, its website, its fellowship programmes, and with its numerous research projects under the three thematic clusters of Urban Asia, Critical Asian Heritage Studies and Global Asian Connectivities, IAS reaches out to thousands of individual researchers or aspiring ones on all continents and in all world regions. IAS's 'constituency' is thus global, hence the fortunate 'International' in its name. Indeed, headquartered in the historical university city of Leiden, IAS is decidedly and ineluctably a Dutch institution

in both its spirit and its *modus operandi*. Undoubtedly, as a founding member of the European Alliance of Asian Studies, IAS is clearly a committed European institution. But above all, and perhaps because of its origins, IAS stands as the most extravert transnational 'public space' for Asian studies.

For one thing, all its activities are collaborative. Nearly two thirds take place outside Europe, in most cases in Asia. Its fellows come from every region of the world, without discrimination. The Newsletter is the periodical of Asian studies – and not just the institute's mouthpiece. This assumed internationalism has enabled IAS to help develop a number of thematic trans-regional networks, such as its Urban Knowledge Network Asia, and the joint graduate programme in Critical Heritage Studies between Leiden, Gajah Madha and National Taiwan universities; it has also enabled IAS to assist in the establishment of the first pan-African network on Asian studies. This assumed cosmopolitanism is perceptible in the interactions occurring between the IAS fellows, where individuals with the most diverse backgrounds and interests work closely alongside each other, learn from each other and often decide to organize a joint event or write a joint article together.

You will get a glimpse of IAS's healthy inclusiveness in Macao, where the institute, for its twentieth anniversary, is sponsoring or co-sponsoring 10 panels and round-tables. Topics will range from the "Effects of UNESCO Politics on Local Notions of Heritage", "Redefining the Relationship between Sciences and Society in Europe and Asia", "Defining Asian Studies in Africa", or on the social role of Asian artists. These IAS-supported events demonstrate the current vitality of the field of Asian studies, and bear testimony to IAS's undiminished vibrancy as it enters a more mature age.

We look forward to seeing you in Macao!

Philippe Peycam, Director IAS

## Books and Accolades

Paul van der Velde, ICAS Secretary

### The Convention

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is the premier international gathering in the field of Asian Studies. Founded in 1997, ICAS is a platform for representatives of academia and civil society to focus on issues critical to Asia and by implication to the rest of the world. ICAS is an active accelerator of research.

ICAS is organized by local hosts (universities, organizations, and cities) in cooperation with the ICAS Secretariat, which is hosted by the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden (IIAS). IIAS is administered by Leiden University, which itself has a strong century-long tradition in Asian studies.

ICAS offers the local host a unique opportunity to profile itself in the world of Asian studies and the convention itself connects in a dynamic way to the city where it is held. ICAS attracts participants from over 60 countries to engage in global dialogues on Asia that transcend boundaries between academic disciplines and geographic areas.

Since its first convention in 1998, ICAS has brought together more than 15,000 academics at seven conventions. At these meetings, publishers and organizations in the field of Asian studies display their products in the ICAS Exhibition hall, which is open to the public. This space also hosts cultural performances and a documentary festival.

### From Macau to Adelaide

After previous editions in Leiden, Berlin, Singapore, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Daejeon and Honolulu, ICAS 8 will be held in Macao (24-27 June 2013). The local host is the University of Macao and its venue is the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel. The more than four century long interaction between Western and Chinese traditions in Macao, the first and last European colony in Asia, has left the city with a unique blend of cultural diversity, modernity, and cosmopolitanism. A new and special feature of this convention is the publication, in cooperation with the *Macao Daily Times*, of the *ICAS 8 Daily*, which will report daily on what is happening at ICAS 8.

We hope to repeat this feature at ICAS 9, which will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, in Australia, from 5 to 9 July 2015. It will be hosted by an internationally networked team of experts, spearheaded by Adelaide's three leading universities: University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the University of South Australia (see p. 29).

### Fifth edition of the ICAS Book Prize

The fifth edition of the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) will be celebrated at ICAS 8 in Macao, with the awards ceremony taking place on 25 June 2013. Its main sponsor is The Kingdom of the Netherlands. The biennial IBP is a global competition that provides an international focus for publications on Asia, while at the same time increasing their visibility worldwide. The IBP is now established as the premier award for Asian Studies publications. From an initial 'Long List' and subsequent 'Short List', (see p. 28) the Prizes are awarded for the outstanding English-language works in each of the following categories: Humanities, Social Sciences, PhD thesis, in addition to the Colleagues Choice Award.

For this fifth edition no less than 250 books and 100 theses were submitted. Two prizes of 2500 euros each

will be awarded for excellent books in the Humanities and Social Sciences. These academic fields will also recognize two outstanding PhD dissertations. The books and dissertations are assessed by international Reading Committees. Another feature of the IBP is the Colleagues' Choice Award. The academic community is given the opportunity to cast a vote online for their favourite book.

### Reading Committee Accolades

The success of the IBP has, however, meant that the number of works submitted for consideration for the ICAS Book Prize has greatly increased since its inception, making the judging process even more difficult (from 50 submissions in 2005, to 250 in 2013). In view of the overwhelming response to the competition, we have therefore decided to institute a new category: *The Reading Committee Accolades*.

These Reading Committee Accolades stand entirely independent from the established Prizes, and it is thus quite possible that works will receive an Accolade, even though they have not been included on the long or short lists in each prize category. No work in any category will receive more than one award (Prize/Accolade). The authors whose works are selected for these Accolades will be awarded three books of their choice from the IBP list. The Reading Committee Accolades will be awarded during the IBP prize ceremony in Macao.

Reading Committee Accolades for the Humanities and Social Sciences will be given for each of the following categories:

- 1 Publishers Accolade for outstanding production values;
- 2 Most accessible and captivating work for the non-specialist reader Accolade;
- 3 Specialist publication Accolade;
- 4 Teaching tool Accolade;
- 5 Ground-breaking subject matter Accolade;
- 6 Edited volume Accolade.

Reading Committee Accolades for the PhD theses will be given for the following categories:

- 1 Most accessible and captivating work for the non-specialist reader Accolade;
- 2 Specialist publication Accolade;
- 3 Ground-breaking subject matter Accolade.

The Accolades will allow the judging process to recognize notable works in the field that do not, for a variety of reasons, contend for the main prizes. They not only allow the judges to commend other works that are particularly noteworthy, but also honour the efforts of Asia scholars worldwide.

The deadline for submissions for the sixth edition of the IBP is 15 September 2014.

If you are unable to join us at ICAS 8 in Macao, then you will be able to find the IBP winners on our website soon after the awards ceremony (end of June).

Find more information on the ICAS website: [www.icassecretariat.org](http://www.icassecretariat.org)



### The Newsletter and IAS

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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# Norodom Sihanouk and the political agenda of Cambodian music, 1955–1970



True rock and roll in Cambodia began in the 1950s with teenagers from a wealthy family in Phnom Penh, the Mol brothers and their band, *Baksey Chamkrong*, named after a mythical bird. They started out performing at weddings and parties and on the radio, playing traditional Cambodian songs with new instruments like the accordion. Then in the mid 1950s the oldest brother, Mol Kagmol, created a homemade electric guitar after a magazine photograph of a Gibson. The 1961 movie *The Young Ones* (called *Wonderful to Be Young* in the U.S.), starring British rock and roller Cliff Richard, became the impetus for Cambodian rock and roll. After seeing the film, Kagmol, younger brother Kagmach, just thirteen years old, and friend Hong Samley, formed a guitar band, a genre never before seen in Cambodia. They copied Cliff Richard's every movement, from his dancing style to the way he held his guitar.

The combination of Western rock and roll and Cambodian lyrics and music produced a new and unique sound. The traditional high-pitched singing brought an operatic element to rock and roll. These songs have a very upbeat modern rhythm combined with lyrics that describe traditional practices like fattening a pig for a wedding.

Well-known male singers of the time included Eng Nary, Em Yeng, Sos Mat, and Meas Samon. But Sin Sisamouth was known as the 'King of Cambodian Music'. He was part of the energetic modernization of the rock-music scene in Phnom Penh that Khmerized Western sounds like rhythm and blues and rock and roll – very similar to the garage rock that was popular in the U.S. in the mid 1960s. What made Sin Sisamouth an icon was his crooning voice and his capacity to write ballads as well as upbeat rock songs played with a distorted guitar sound.

The beautiful singing of the renowned female vocalists was the final touch that made this Cambodian mix so enticing. Mao Sareth, Ros Serey Sothea, Pen Ron, and Huy Meas, to name only a few, were famous during the country's cultural and musical renaissance. They sang in a variety of genres from romantic ballads to playful up-tempo pieces. Women and men alike gave Khmer lyrics and sounds to popular Western rock songs.

#### Sihanouk's impact on music

Under the French Protectorate no higher education was possible in Cambodia. Now the country was changing on every level, from the infrastructure to the social mobility of the people through the new education system; under Sihanouk the country saw the construction of universities, ministries, and public monuments celebrating its culture and identity. Phnom Penh became known as the 'Pearl of Asia' during this economically prosperous time. The urban elite was open to foreign influences and sought to embrace its new identity as a modern nation.

This modernization of the country was not established through democratic practices of governing. The Sangkum government demonstrated the same authoritarian tendencies as many Cambodian rulers before it. By centralizing all the administrative, political, economic, and cultural functions in Phnom Penh, Sihanouk made it a central capital of the country: "This regime called Sangkum Reastr Niyum leaves, in terms of equipment, an undeniable positive legacy. But this regime, a mixture of paternalism and bloody repression, is led by a leader who does not accept that he is not praised, that he is not liked, let alone that he could be criticized. If it turns Cambodia into one of the most developed countries in Southeast Asia in 1970, on the political level this regime does not evolve."<sup>2</sup>

There was plenty of freedom of speech if one desired to praise the Prince or the government, but there was no platform for those who wished to express any level of disagreement, even if it did not rise to the level of dissent. Criticism was allowed only if sanctioned by the Ministry of Information through approved government newspapers or magazines. Members of the communist party were executed on the grounds that their ideology, according to Sihanouk, constituted a subversive act of treason.

Sihanouk's ruthless side needs to be balanced against his legacy in the arts. He was a man of many talents. He produced and directed 19 films, starring in many of them. He was a gifted musician as an instrumentalist, singer, and songwriter. He took pride in having a father who played many instruments and a mother who was in charge of the royal ballet and who enjoyed listening to the music of Charles Trenet and Edith Piaf. Sihanouk encouraged the modernization of music by staging competitions for singers and musicians. Many famous singers were discovered through these competitions, such as Ros Serey Sothea, Huy Meas, and Pen Ron.

The history of Cambodian popular music from 1950 on is closely linked to the social and political situation of the times. In the second half of the 20th century Cambodia went through many radical political changes in a very short period of time. Those changes are reflected in the changing nature and role of popular music. The lyrics of popular Cambodian songs written under the leadership of Norodom Sihanouk show how this charismatic patron of the arts, himself a song writer and film maker, used popular music as a propaganda tool to advance his political agenda and enhance his image as a popular leader.

LinDa Saphan

**Music during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, under Sihanouk**  
Norodom Sihanouk's strong interest in the arts and his support of modernization of the country inspired Cambodian musicians to bring a new sound to traditional music, including by adopting foreign influences. Enthusiasm for Westernized elements during Sihanouk's time in power can be seen in every field of the arts, from architecture to cinema, literature, and music. But Cambodian artists, architects, novelists, and musicians did more than simply borrow or copy Western art forms; they created a unique mixture of Western and Cambodian culture in innovative modern buildings, moralist novellas, and a new rock and roll sound. Phnom Penh was the think tank of the country as the political leadership encouraged this Westernized influence. In contrast to later political regimes, during the Sangkum era foreign culture was not seen as a threat to traditional culture; indeed it was welcomed.

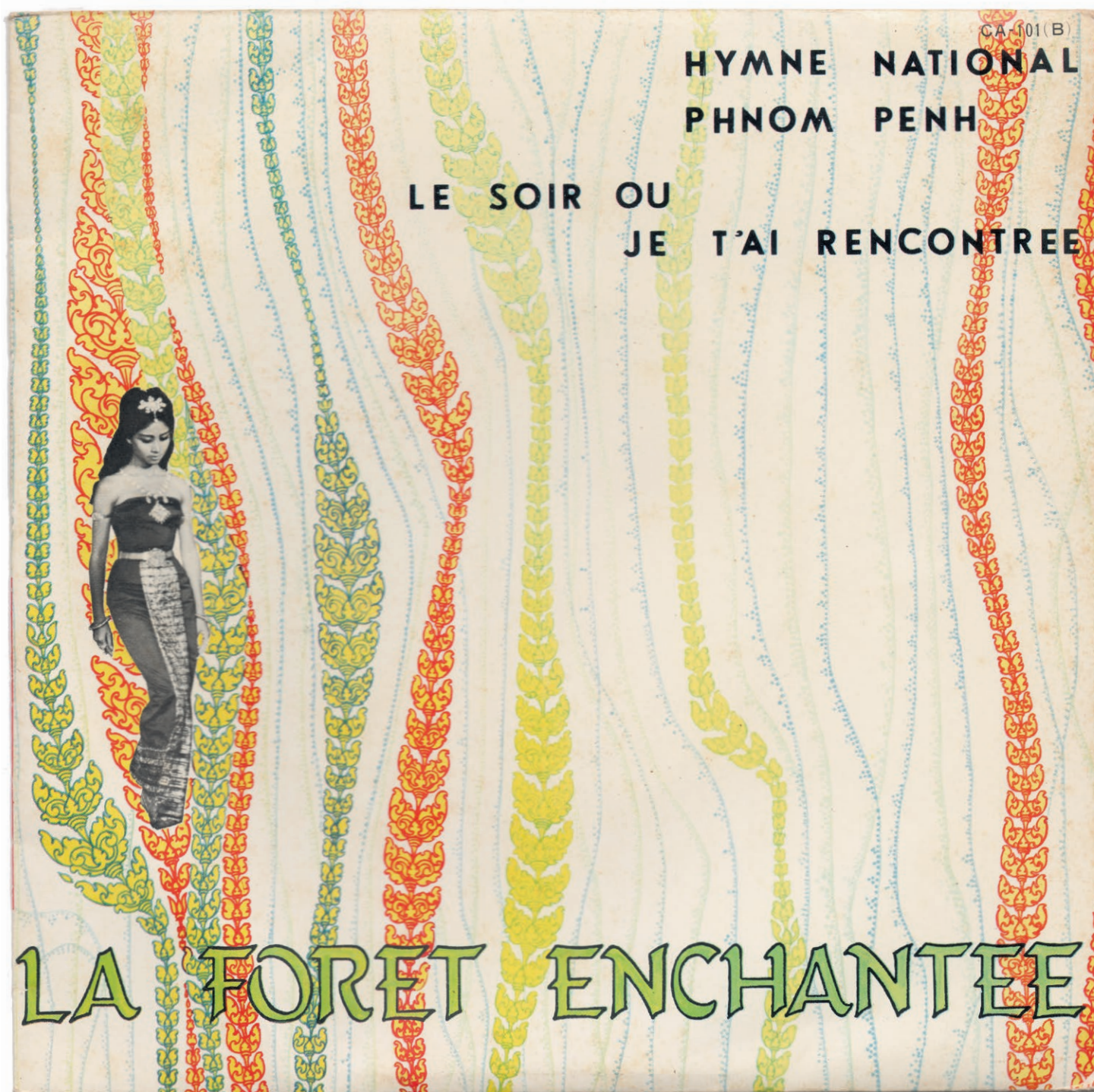
A new trend in Cambodia music under Sihanouk was the introduction of politics into the relationship between musician and audience. Music then became a propaganda

tool with the goal of showing the popularity of the regime in power to the masses. As a newly independent state, Cambodia's leaders wanted to demonstrate their ability to rule without external interference. Sihanouk sought to showcase Cambodia as a modern culture through architecture, cinema, and music. Adorno noted that this use of music had already begun in other parts of the world: "Since the mid-nineteenth century a country's music has become a political ideology by stressing national characteristics, appearing as a representative of the nation and everywhere confirming the national principle."<sup>1</sup>

#### The birth of Cambodian rock and roll

Western influence on Cambodian music was first noted when marching band music from the Philippines was brought to the royal palace in the 1940s. Known as *Phleng Manil* ('Manila music'), this was mainly a horn and brass genre. In the years afterward students and other urban upper-class youth who traveled to Europe brought modern music back with them to Cambodia.

Images courtesy of Batt Sovannet "Nate" Hun.



Sihanouk was a charismatic figure able to inspire and excite his people. He was adept at arousing an emotional response to motivate his followers with his passionate and persuasive speeches. Music was ever present as he toured the provinces. To bolster his image as a modern and popular leader, he traveled with a band with the most popular singers of the time, who entertained the crowd after the Prince's long speeches. As his younger brother, Norodom Sirivudh, told me in an interview in 2009, "Sihanouk was a powerful leader, but you can tell that he was also an artist. Those are the two sides of my brother. My brother had a vision, especially when it came to art and music in particular. The royal military orchestra accompanied him in all his travels." He also strongly encouraged each ministry to have its own musical ensemble.

Sihanouk truly loved the arts and Cambodian culture, and through his support of the arts he promoted Cambodian culture both within and outside the country. He gave his patronage to modern arts whether in films, architecture, or music as part of his plan of overall modernization of the country.

Sihanouk composed and wrote lyrics for many songs throughout his life. Many were love songs dedicated to his wife, Monique Izzi, such as *My Darling*, *Monica*, *Love Star*, and *If I Dare to Love You*. He was very much criticized for marrying her because she was not of royal birth, and it was almost as if he was seeking approval from his people by depicting her in his films, songs, and magazines. He commissioned nostalgic and romantic paintings and photographs of her, which were published in magazines along with his song lyrics.

Sihanouk also wrote songs expressing his love for his country, such as *Flower of Battambang*, *Beauty of Kep City*, *Phnom Kulen*, and *Phnom Penh*. These songs promoted the qualities of each province to people who had never traveled outside their own village, giving Cambodians a sense of national unity and pride in their regional resources. He also wrote songs about neighboring countries like Laos (*Luang Prabang*, and *Flower of Vientiane*), Indonesia (*To Visit Java Again*, and *Good Bye Bogor*), and China (*Nostalgia of China*). Some of Sihanouk's songs had an overt political theme, like one praising Vietnamese hero Ho Chi Minh and giving thanks for the trail with a "glorious name".<sup>3</sup>

There were also songs written by others praising Sihanouk and his accomplishments. This early traditional song, entitled *Cambodia's Hope*, was probably written around the time of Cambodia's independence from France in 1953, while Sihanouk was still King:

*Please remember that Cambodia is prospering because of the King.  
The nation will no longer meet grief,  
We'll be known, and our hopes will be accomplished,  
Because of the King.  
So I pray to all deities, please help our King and Cambodia to be preserved from any disaster and always be in peace.*

The song *Phnom Penh* was written by one of Sihanouk's sons, Norodom Yuvaneath, and sung by Sin Sisamouth and Mao Sareth. Sihanouk had developed Phnom Penh more than any other city in the country, modeling it after the city of Paris. This song depicts the beauty of the capital city, but also the modernity of its infrastructure; it mentions the many roads,

modern people in the streets, and flowers in every season, even ending with the sound of a car honking. Even today this song, by a son praising his father's successful endeavor, gives audiences a sense of beauty and modern development.

There were songs that directly praised Sihanouk, like *King Father*, a name he seemed to particularly cherish, or *Monseigneur Papa*. *Samdech Ev* [King Father] praises Sihanouk's paternal role effusively:

*Cambodia has only one King Father  
We are his children and grandchildren and we live peacefully.  
We built schools and hospitals in the countryside.  
His Majesty has pure virtues, and compassion toward his people.  
His Majesty goes to the openings of buildings for the benefit of the nation and young generations.  
Cambodians work hard to build legacies.  
The whole nation is blessed by the graceful presence of the King Father.*

Under Sihanouk's influence, traditional Cambodian music was mixed with more modern strains to create a very unique sound. For example, many composers, including Sin Sisamouth, were known for their use of rock and roll band instrumentation with guitars and percussion, which was a departure from the traditional ensemble of wind instruments. Latin music also made its appearance, including Sihanouk's song *Phnom Penh*.

Sihanouk not only influenced and shaped popular culture by showcasing musicians in his films as part of the modern life style of the Cambodian people (and encouraging others to do the same), but also through his own compositions and musical experimentation.

#### Conclusion

Sihanouk has been criticized for making films and writing songs for his own personal glorification. He did cast his wife, children, and himself in his films. Nevertheless, those films were part of his efforts to create an image of a popular and modern leader who undertook a new medium to communicate with his people. This staging of his persona as a popular leader required him to use means to reach the average Cambodian, the majority of whom were peasants living in rural villages. Popular music was the best tool for communicating Sihanouk's vision of modernity. Having famous singers perform at his speeches created the impression that they supported his agenda of promoting and preserving culture as well as his foreign affairs policies, including neutrality, which was criticized by some of the urban elite. Sihanouk made sure that he was surrounded by the best artists of the time whether in cinema or in popular music.

Through the use of popular music, including singing and writing himself, Sihanouk provided positive, encouraging words to his people. At a time when few Cambodians had access to radios and even less access to televisions, in order for him to stage himself before the masses, he traveled all over the country and made sure to have a band and famous singers with him.

Samley Hong, of the 1960s band Baksey Chamkrong, told me in an interview that he had wanted to be a singer like his King when he was a little boy. Sihanouk's support of popular culture also created a bond among the people such that music became part of the collective culture, without divisions between high and low culture. Without this royal figure, many artists before the Khmer Rouge era would not have had the support and encouragement to become artists and to attain a place of value in society. With this positive evaluation and confidence from the Prince, Cambodian artists gained a heightened sense of self-esteem. Over time, this array of encouraging factors inevitably resulted in a greater sense of national unity.

Sihanouk did not simply rely on speeches to gain the support of the people. His filmmaking, songwriting, and urban design added to his ability to hold the support of the masses and motivate them to participate in his vision for a modern Cambodia. Whether one shares that vision of modernity or not, it must be agreed that Sihanouk left a lasting legacy of promoting the popular culture of Cambodia.

**LinDa Saphan, College of Mount Saint Vincent (NY), Associate Producer Documentary Film: 'Don't Think I've Forgotten: Cambodia Lost Rock and Roll'.** ([www.saphan.info](http://www.saphan.info))

#### Notes

- Adorno, T. 1962. *Introduction to the sociology of music*. New York: Seabury Press; p.155
- Jennar, R. M. 1997. *Cambodge: une presse sous pression*. Paris: Reporters sans frontières; p.6, my translation.
- The Ho Chi Minh supply trail that ran from North to South Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia.

# The painter Willem Imandt revisited<sup>1</sup>

The so-called *Mooi Indië* (Beautiful Indies) genre of painting has been both wrongfully neglected and scorned. The paintings were mostly dismissed as the inadequate products of artists lacking in classical training. Willem Imandt (1882-1967), about whom little was known until recently, was one of the artists unjustly relegated to this poorly defined and unappreciated genre, which was most unfortunate as only a few years of his artistic development could in fact be categorised as Beautiful Indies. Just a small handful of his paintings found their way into museums, yet many of his pieces have fortunately been preserved in private collections.

Paul van der Velde

## Increasing interest

The number of publications on Dutch East Indies' art<sup>2</sup> reflects the increased interest in foreign painters working in Indonesia. This interest comes mostly from well-to-do Indonesians who have started to appreciate the colonial period paintings by western artists. Add to that number the more than half-a-million strong 'Indo' population of Dutch-Indonesians who fled Indonesia after it became independent in 1949. Auction houses took notice and now conduct auctions for 'Indonesian' art, whilst galleries in the Malay world organise exhibitions of colonial paintings on a regular basis. Dutch museums also became actively involved; their approaches noticeably changed from 'colonial' to 'mutually culturally influential'. The contours of this shift towards a mutual appreciation started appearing at the beginning of the 1960s.

## Renewed appreciation

Said appreciation became clear in the monumental five-volume *Paintings and Statues from the Collection of President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia* (1964) edited by one of the most famous Indies painters, Lee Man Fong. The focus of the book is on the work of Indonesian painters, but western artists are very much present. With five paintings Imandt is well-represented. This publication is likely the reason for the reevaluation of paintings made in/of Indonesia, and the increased interest in them.

In 1967, J.H. Maronier published *Pictures of the Tropics*, which mainly deals with pictorial art in the Dutch Indies. One year later the groundbreaking work by J. de Loos-Haaxman, *Verlaet Rapport Indie*, appeared. She was a curator of the Batavische Kunstkring (Batavian Art Group) and knew Imandt personally. Imandt sits at the top of her list of Dutch artists in Indonesia because his contemporaries considered him to be the most famous artist on Java in the 1920s.



J. Bastin and B. Brommer published their classic, *Nineteenth century prints and illustrated books of Indonesia*, in 1979. Then in 1995, the art dealers L. Haks and G. Maris published the quite handy *Lexicon of foreign artists who visualized Indonesia* (1600-1950), which lists more than 3000 foreign artists active in Indonesia during that period, and holds about 600 illustrations. The publication gives a varied impression of 350 years of painting and illustrating in the archipelago.

## The canon

Three years thereafter *Indië omljst* (1998) appeared, containing an inventory of the 400-plus oil paintings in the Tropenmuseum (Museum of the Tropics, Amsterdam). In the past twenty years a number of monographs, of varying quality, have been published about artists active in The Indies. None of them were Beautiful Indies painters. All subjects belong to the group of classically trained artists, who in the course of time were considered by art historians to belong to the canon; these included Walter Spies, Rudolf Bonnet, Adolf Breetvelt, Pieter Ouburg, Charles Sayers and Isaac Israëls. According to the art historian

Koos van Brakel "[...] they transcended the general conservatism in East Indies painting."<sup>3</sup> Jokingly I refer to them as the 'Not Beautiful Indies painters', to differentiate from the 'Beautiful Indies painters'. Belonging to this latter group – according to Van Brakel – were Ernest Dezentjé, Carel Dake and Leonard Eland.<sup>4</sup> He made no mention of Imandt at that time, nor did he question whether these painters were aware of developments in the European art world, but he suggested they were not.

## Cursed Beautiful Indies

The art critic J. Tielrooy wrote an article in 1930 that is still quoted from today: *The Indies in the art of drawing and painting*. He aimed his venomous arrow at the painter Dezentjé: "Who would not know Dezentjé? [...] He paints paddy-fields, the water is silvery, the little dikes are green and in the background he paints mountains which invariably have a dark blue hue. The coconut tree is omnipresent and on the horizon yearning yellows melt together with poetic reds."<sup>5</sup> Tielrooy's acerbic criticism on the Beautiful Indies painters influences art historians to this very day.

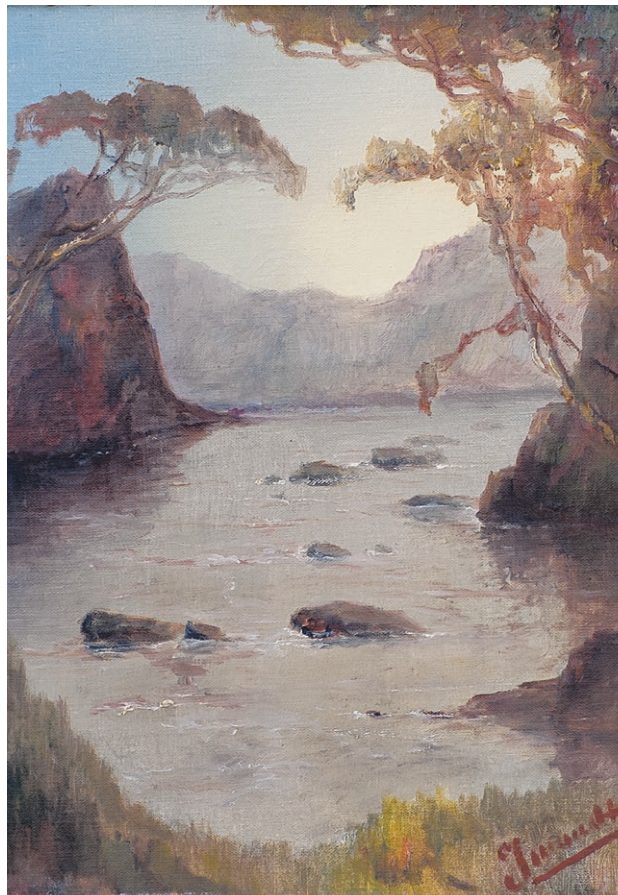
However, that criticism did not diminish the demand for the Beautiful Indies paintings. On the contrary; tourists, expats, wealthy Javanese and Chinese bought their work in vast quantities. In contrast to the academic painters, who only briefly stayed in the Indies, Beautiful Indies painters were much more rooted in the country, either by birth (Eland and Dezentjé) or through their work, such as Imandt. It seems as if the 'Not Beautiful Indies painters' remained in a western frame of mind, painting their cubist or surrealist paintings in The Indies, while the Beautiful Indies painters worked with an Indies frame of mind, taking pleasure from the Javanese subject matter.

## Subject matter

Mostly they painted locals, in particular Javanese and Balinese women with bare breasts, or scantily dressed males. During the first half of the twentieth century nudity was considered 'not done' in bourgeois circles, except when it was set against an exotic background; this namby-pamby kitsch adorned many a Dutch sitting room!

Imandt's paintings are completely devoted to the Indonesian landscape. This landscape fascinated not only the Europeans; both in Buddhism and Hinduism, mountains are considered to be spiritual places enabling contact between the world of the gods and men, mediating between this world and the heavens. Perhaps the Beautiful Indies painters (un)intentionally reflected their spiritual ties with Indonesia in their illustrations.

Imandt made it perfectly clear that he produced the ridiculed paintings purely for practical reasons, although he also admittedly liked to produce works that did not conform to public taste. He was the only painter in Indonesia to ever write a short treatise on painting in Indonesia: "An Indies painting should have paddy-fields and coconut trees.' How we are reproached if we do not include them!! I for my part prefer to paint one giant tree instead of all those coconut trees and paddy-fields. For sure, I have painted a tremendous amount of paddy-fields and coconut trees because a painter has to earn money in order to support one's family."<sup>6</sup>



Above: Willem Imandt, *Lake*, oil on canvas, 30x28cm, c.1918.

Left: Willem Imandt, *Paddy fields in the Preanger, Java*, oil on canvas, 50x70cm, c.1920.

Below: Willem Imandt, *Mountains, Java*, oil on canvas, 40x50cm, c.1920.

## Imandt signs up for the East

Imandt was born the eldest son of a primary school headmaster in the catholic village St. Jansteen, which was notorious for its malaria-infested wetlands and woods. His father played an important role in the budding cultural and sportive life of the village. He was founder of the theatre and brass band, and the ice skating and bicycle societies. At an early age Willem was already showing artistic talents, but it was after his uncle returned from The Indies (where he had been employed as a carpenter), full of stories about 'the Netherlands beyond the horizon', that Willem must have started to dream about volcanoes, mountains and banyan trees, which he would later depict in his paintings.

In 1901 he moved to Amsterdam where he fulfilled his military service, and followed lessons at the Municipal College of Education. He moved in artistic circles, influenced by the so-called Amsterdam School of painting, with famous representatives such as Willem Breitner. In 1904 he returned home and taught at various primary schools, whilst in his spare time managing to obtain his drawing diploma at

the State College of Education in The Hague. At this time he painted his first oil paintings of lakes and woods, which were influenced by the so-called The Hague school – an influence that is evident in his first Indies paintings. After falling in love with singer Eliza Robijns he returned to Amsterdam. In 1908 he applied for a job as primary school teacher for the colonial services, and after getting married, he and Eliza soon departed to the Indies on an ocean liner. The colony provided a favourable economic climate, which offered artists increasing possibilities, further facilitated by an expanding network of art circles.<sup>7</sup>

## De Reflector as Beautiful Indies platform

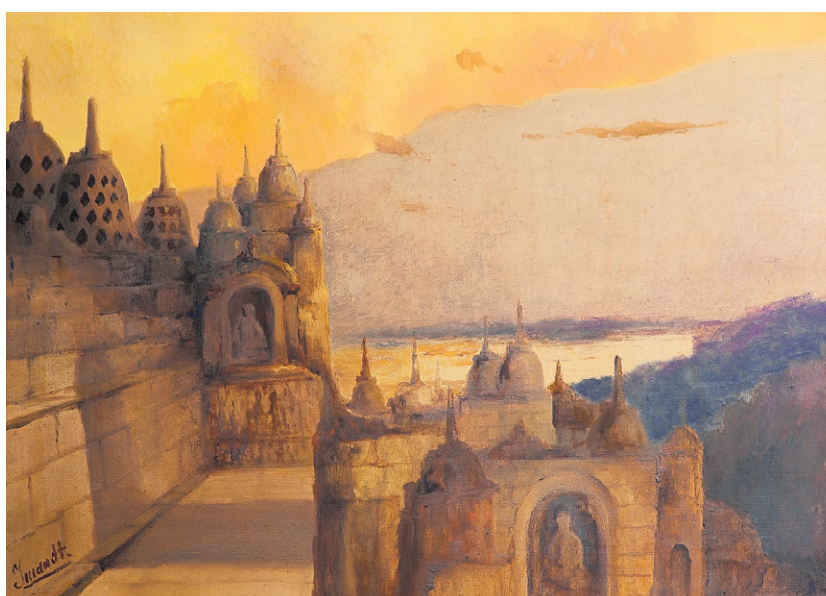
Imandt started painting his first Indies work during his first appointment in the colony (at a public primary school in Sulawesi). Their eldest of five children was born in Makassar in 1910; in the same year he was appointed to the Dutch-Chinese school in Yogyakarta on Java. He left the colonial service in 1916 and from then until he was pensioned in 1929 (aged 47), he was headmaster and drawing teacher at several catholic schools on Java.

In 1916 his paintings depicting lakes, mountains, volcanoes, gorges and ancient structures such as the Borobudur, were on view at the Yogyakarta Art Circle. His working method involved making sketches *in situ*, which he later developed



into paintings in his atelier. At that time his paintings lacked both mastery of composition and colouring; the first review (1917) I was able to trace was by no means laudatory: "The painter Imandt, notorious because of his evening airs and mountains, can be ignored."<sup>8</sup> In 1919 an article was published in the popular magazine *De Reflector*, in its series *Mooi Indië*.<sup>9</sup> From it we cannot only conclude that his work had ripened, but also that he had become a talked-about painter. He was labelled a hard and talented worker who had thoroughly studied the Indies landscape. Imandt himself later confirmed that it indeed required intensive study before one could portray an Indies landscape: "If you want to paint The Indies, you have to live there for a long time."<sup>10</sup>

With its series *Mooi Indië* the editors of *De Reflector* wanted to increase interest for art produced in The Indies itself. The series can be viewed both as a platform and name-giver of the Beautiful Indies painters such as Dake, Dezentjé, Eland, and Imandt, whose works were frequently published in the volumes appearing between 1916 and 1920. Their work showed many resemblances; and though they did not form a school, they were linked through the readers of *De Reflector*. Unfortunately, the positive appreciation of the Beautiful Indies did not last for very long, as mentioned earlier. In the literature these artists are always haphazardly grouped and negatively valued. Seemingly, any painter who did not fit the 'criteria' of the canon were muddled together onto the Beautiful Indies heap. Yet, his early work that already saw him labelled, turned out to be just the start of Imandt's rich development.



*'If you want to paint  
The Indies, you must live  
there for a long time'*

Willem Imandt



#### Imandt the Great Painter here!

A week after the above quoted article appeared in *De Reflector* the art critic who had written the first traceable review of Imandt completely readjusted his opinion about the artist: "Imandt, whose work I reviewed earlier, has tremendously improved. Before his paintings were devoid of strength and pluck, which is now completely the opposite."<sup>11</sup> From this we can conclude that in a very short period he had become an esteemed artist. The height of recognition for an Indies painter was to be invited to the yearly August exhibition of the Art Circle of Batavia, which was founded in 1902. Imandt made his debut at the 1920 exhibition, at which 20 artists exhibited. In addition, his paintings were sold for impressive amounts – a small painting went for 150 guilders and the bigger formats for as much as 450 guilders (a labourer's year income at that time).

In 1922 Imandt met and frequently socialised with famous Dutch impressionist Isaac Israëls, who visited The Indies on and off. In a letter to the painter Willem Witsen, written by Israëls, it was clear that the interactions could occasionally be too much: "Otherwise nobody is here. Sometimes you long to see someone else than 'Imandt the Great Painter here!'"<sup>12</sup> Besides the playful pun (Imandt sounds like the word 'somebody' in Dutch), Israëls' remark also lays bare a certain occupational jealousy; in contrast to Imandt he was a nobody in The Indies.

Top: Willem Imandt, *Borobudur at dusk*, oil on canvas, 60x80cm, c.1925.

Above: Willem Imandt, *Waringin in Solo, Java*, oil on canvas, 85x105cm, 1923.

Imandt was at the height of his fame. The brother-in-law of Queen Wilhelmina, the Duke of Mecklenburg and the Captain of the Chinese in Surabaya, Han, paid a visit to his atelier in 1923 and all commissioned paintings. "We had the opportunity to view and appreciate his highly artistic and colourful work depicting the beautiful nature of the Preanger and elsewhere."<sup>13</sup> In the respected art gallery H. Bos in The Hague, Imandt found an outlet for his work in Europe. Upon his return to patria in 1929, Bos organised a solo exhibition of his work; the show lasted four months and was sold out.<sup>14</sup> By the time Imandt settled with his family in Sint-Gillis-Waas – near his birthplace – he was considered a nabob and one of the most famous painters of The Indies.

#### Final years

He could now fully concentrate on his painterly work. The Indies remained his most preferred topic, but following his later travels around the Mediterranean his work took on an Orientalist aspect. When not travelling he led a secluded life, working on his oeuvre in his glass-domed atelier. Here he reached full maturity and the works he painted during this period are considered his best. He sold his paintings mostly to relatives, but after being 'discovered' by a local journalist, he started selling outside his closest circle of acquaintances. His paintings at this time depicted mostly seascapes of the Mediterranean Sea or the North Sea. These works are overpowering because of their sheer size, but also because of the solitude emanating from them, reminiscent of Casper David Friedrich.

With the impending threat of a new world war, and with his sons already working in The Indies, Imandt decided to return in 1938. He continued to paint and his works still sold, but not at the rate he was used to. The new found idyll was rudely disturbed by the Japanese invasion in 1942. He was interned in a Japanese camp, where he could not work, while his archive of sketches and notes was destroyed. He returned to the Netherlands in 1946, a penniless man. He kept on painting, but interest in Indies paintings had almost completely dried up.

In 1954, aged 72, Imandt was honoured with an exhibition, in the rooms of Hoogovens (a blast-furnace company, presently Tata Steel) in the city of IJmuiden. The main part of the exhibition was devoted to his Indies paintings, and as a painter of volcanoes he could not have wished for a better décor. The reviewer wrote: "It is difficult not to wax poetic when seeing this part of the world, as Imandt depicted it. The typical atmosphere of the tropics and the bright light that brings out a special depth in all colours: the deep blue of the tropical skies, the lively green of the sea. Imandt painted it with great mastery. The East comes alive when we see it through the painterly eyes of Imandt."<sup>15</sup>

#### Revaluation

Imandt died in 1967, when appreciation for paintings originating in the former colony was at its lowest. But the revaluation of those paintings has again shown a spectacular rise in the past twenty years. That unfortunately does not necessarily apply to the Beautiful Indies painters, or those relegated to the miscellaneous heap of leftovers, constructed by art historians. Surprisingly though, van Brakel in his article on Beautiful Indies painting (in the catalogue of the exhibition 'Beyond the Dutch' in the Central Museum in Utrecht) writes: "The Indies art of painting has been neglected for a long time and when something was written about it, it was primarily in a negative way. The Indies art of painting deserves, as part of the colonial history and as shared cultural heritage of the Netherlands and Indonesia, a place in the art of painting in both countries."<sup>16</sup>

But perhaps Indies painting deserves even more than that. As Imandt pointed out: "The Indies palette derives its own cachet from shades and shifts in colour, which simply do not exist in the West."<sup>17</sup> In a future monograph I hope to show how Imandt developed from a Beautiful Indies painter into one with a recognisable signature, not only unsurpassed in the rendering of the magic nature and landscape of Indonesia, but also as a seascape painter in the best Dutch tradition.

**Paul van der Velde is an (art) historian who published widely in the field of East-West relations. He is ICAS Secretary and General Editor of the IIAS Publications Series.**

#### Notes

- 1 This text is based on my 2012 article 'Imandt en Mooi Indië voorbij', *Aziatische Kunst* 42(1):2-14. I thank the editors of *Aziatische Kunst* for their permission to publish this translated and adapted article.
- 2 The term 'The Indies' in this article refers to 'The Dutch East Indies'
- 3 Van Brakel, K. 2004. *Charles Sayers 1901-1943. Pioneer painter in the Dutch East Indies*, Amsterdam: KIT Publications
- 4 See the article about Leonard Eland, written by Louis Zweers, on pages 8-9 of this issue of *The Newsletter*
- 5 [translation by author] Tielrooy, J. 1930. 'Indië in de schilder- en teekenkunst', *Elseviers Geïllustreerd Maandblad* 80, pp.1-10.
- 6 [translation by author] Imandt, W. 1926. 'Schilderen in Indië', *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunsten* 3:338-9.
- 7 Van der Velde, P. 2010. 'Een Steense meester in wording (deel 1). De jeugdijaren, 1882-1901', *Bulletin van de Oudheidkundige Kring "De Vier Ambachten"* 29(1):1-4-17; Van der Velde, P. 2009. 'Een Steense meester in wording (deel 2). Imandt tekent voor de Oost, 1901-1908', *Bulletin van de Oudheidkundige Kring "De Vier Ambachten"* 28(3):7-10.
- 8 *De Taak*, 8 December 1917.
- 9 *De Reflector* 4 (1919) 38:754
- 10 Imandt, *ibid.*
- 11 *Weekblad voor Indië* 16 (1919).
- 12 Koninklijke Bibliotheek. Correspondence W. Witsen, 75C51.
- 13 *Javabode*, 12 April 1923
- 14 *Het Vaderland*, 1 June 1929
- 15 Anonymus. Accompanying text at exhibition.
- 16 van Brakel, K. 2009. 'Mooi Indië -kunst: een koloniaal medium?' in Meta Knol, Remco Raben and Kitty Zijlmans (eds.) *Beyond the Dutch. Indonesie, Nederland en de beeldende kunsten van 1900 tot nu*. Amsterdam and Utrecht: KIT Publishers and Centraal Museum, pp. 50-59.
- 17 Imandt, *ibid.*

# Leonardus Joseph (Leo) Eland, painter of 'Mooi Indie'<sup>1</sup>

The Dutch East Indies painter Leo Eland (1884-1952) was a successful artist in the first half of the twentieth century, initially in the former Dutch East Indies and later in the Netherlands. He is featured in seminal works such as *Indië omlijst* (Indies framed) and *Beyond the Dutch*, but relatively little is known about him.<sup>2</sup>

Louis Zweers

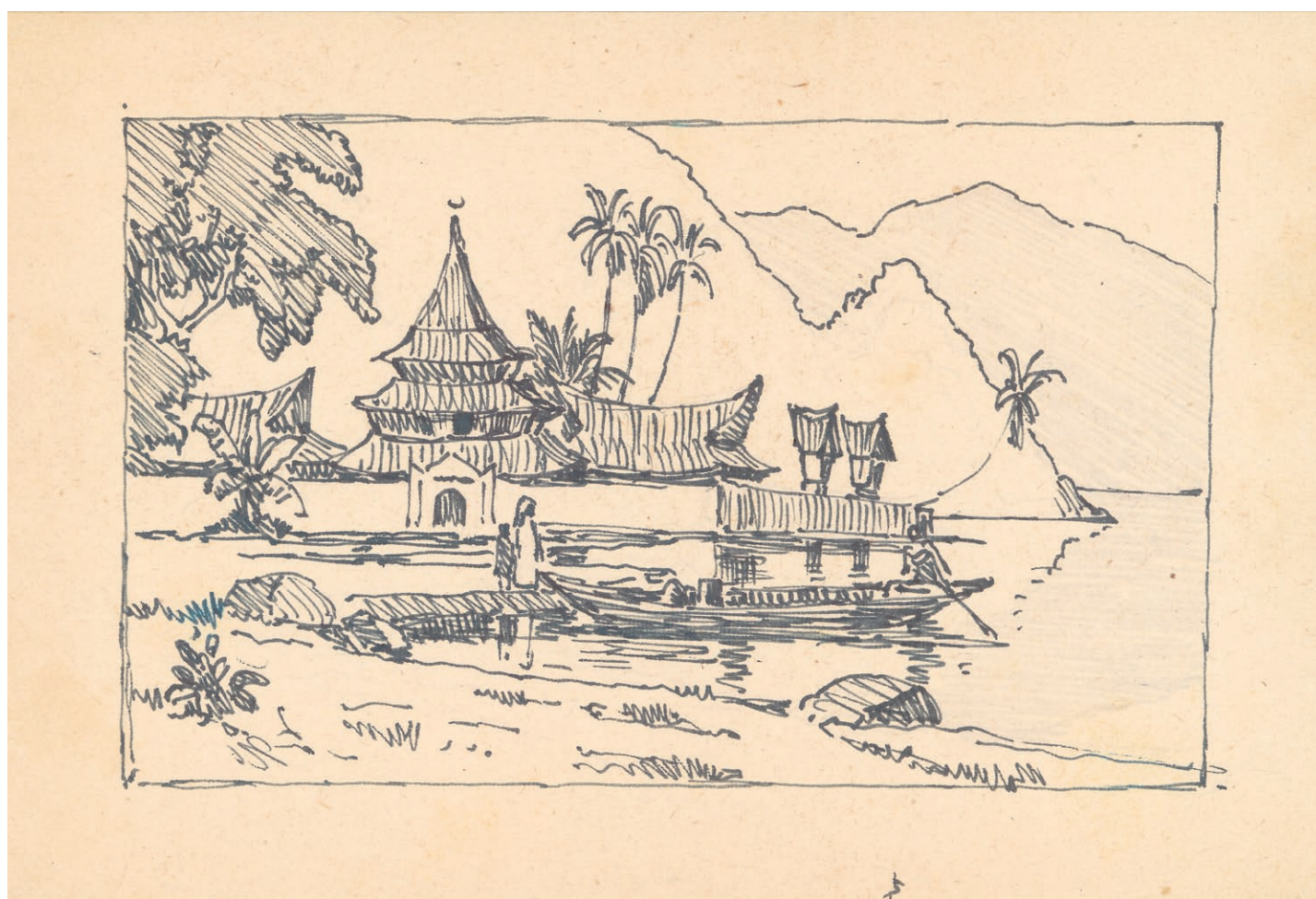
LEO ELAND WAS BORN in Salatiga on Central Java, the son of a Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) officer. His father was a Quartermaster and the family mostly lived in remote outposts. As a young man Leo worked for the Topographic Service in Weltevreden, a suburb of Batavia. He became inspired by his friend, the well-known Indonesian painter Carel Dake junior (1886-1946), son of a professor at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam (Royal Academy of Visual Arts). Despite there being no formal art education in the Dutch East Indies, Eland soon developed a talent for drawing and painting. He visited many places in the archipelago to sketch the Indonesian landscape and nature, to draw with pen and ink, sometimes using watercolours. Later, back in his atelier, he would produce oil paintings by expanding on these often detailed ink drawings. Indeed, his preliminary sketches show many similarities with the final artworks. Eland held his first solo exhibition at the *Bataviasche Kunstkring* (Batavian Art Group) and he participated in touring exhibitions, sponsored by art associations of other large cities on Java and Sumatra, aimed at the upper echelons of colonial society.<sup>3</sup>

He left for the Netherlands at the beginning of the 1920s. There he bought a simple houseboat with an atelier, *de Scarabee* (the Scarab), and he travelled along the Amstel, the Vliet and the Rhine, mooring at exceptional locations to paint the river landscape. The flamboyant artist with his striking face and long hair was quite a sight to behold. In the spring of 1927 he made a tour of North Africa, in particular Morocco. He was struck by the unique light, the warm pastel colours and the Islamic architecture and culture.

Eland's sketchbooks reveal his preference for landscapes and eye-catching figures in pencil, sometimes coloured in with pastels or watercolours. A great deal of study material remains from this trip.<sup>4</sup> His later oil paintings are dominated by dilapidated city walls, gatehouses, kasbahs and mosques with minarets. The street scene depicts traditionally veiled women and men dressed in *djellabas* on donkeys. Other works show nomads in a vast desert landscape. Eland felt strongly attracted to this fairytale, Eastern world. In this respect, he had much in common with Dutch Orientalists and painters such as Philippe Zilcken (1857-1930) and Marius Bauer (1867-1932).

At the end of the 1920s, he temporarily went back to the Dutch East Indies. There he painted the forested slopes of volcanoes, the deep blue mountain lakes and the misty mountain landscapes of Java and Sumatra. His oil paintings and dioramas, three-dimensional and detailed views of tea and rubber plantations, the pepper cultivation on Sumatra and the paddy fields on Java, were exhibited at the large Colonial Exposition in the Bois de Vincennes in Paris (1931). Here, the Dutch East Indies was held up as a model colony. At the official opening, Queen Wilhelmina witnessed a great admiration for Eland's impressive dioramas and paintings. Unfortunately, the Dutch pavilion burned down on 28 June 1931 and the exhibited works of the Indonesian painter Leo Eland, as well as those of Hendrik Paulides (1892-1967) and Charles Sayers (1901-1943) were lost.<sup>5</sup>

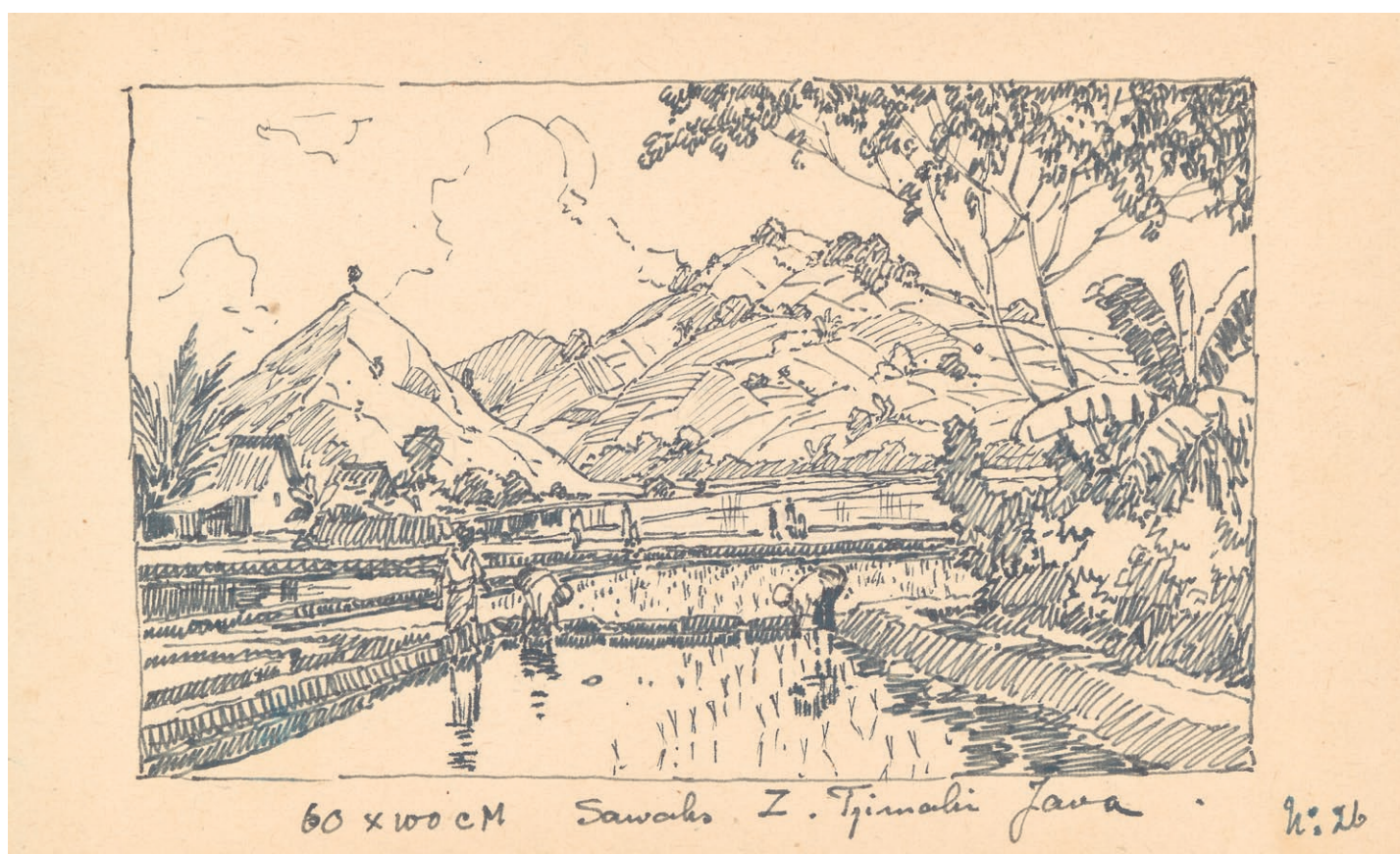
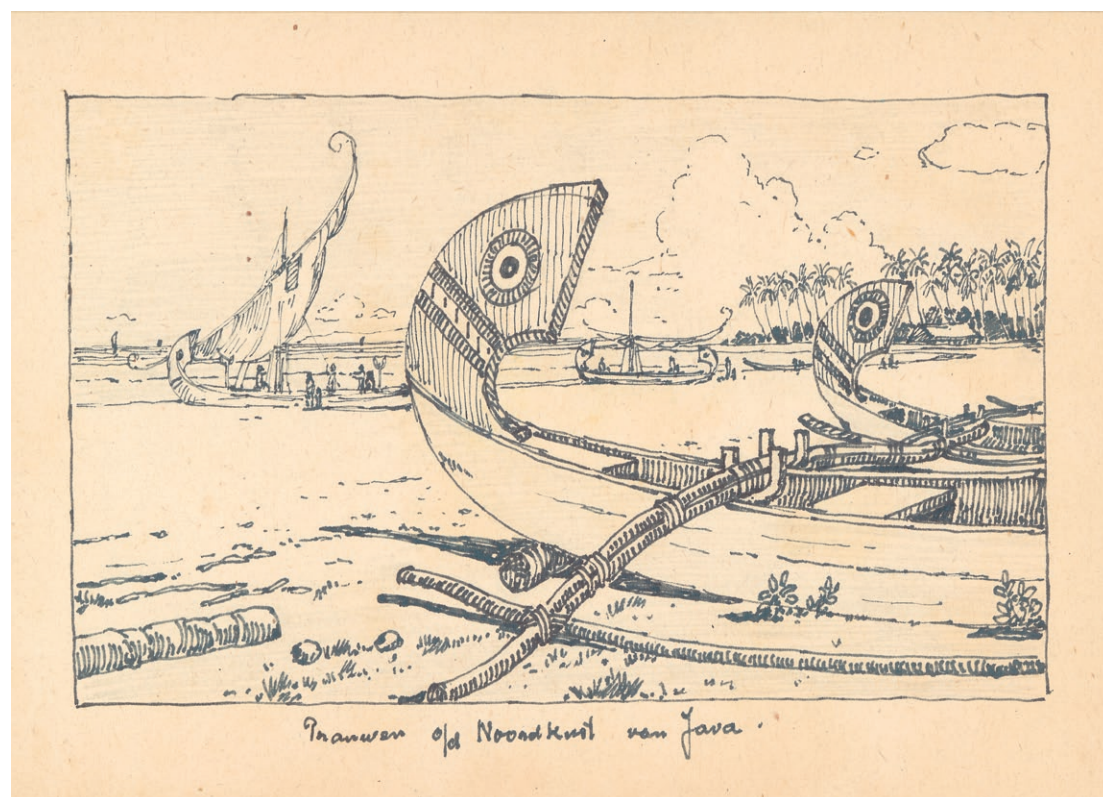
In a short time a new pavilion was built and other Indies artworks installed. A year later, Eland produced an enormous diorama (600m<sup>2</sup>) for the *Indische Koloniale Tentoonstelling* (Colonial Indies Exhibition) in the Westbroekpark in The Hague. It depicted the famous Harau Gorge at Pajakumbuh on West Sumatra with its waterfalls, *sawas* (fields) and *kampongs* (villages). This exhibition was opened in May 1932 by Princess Juliana and attracted almost half a million visitors.<sup>6</sup> In the 1930s his star rose quickly. Indeed, Eland caused quite a stir at the international exhibitions in Brussels, Antwerp, Paris, Milan, Leipzig, and Dresden, as well as at the World Exposition in New York and the *Golden Gate* exhibition in San Francisco (1939).



Top row (painting & sketch):  
Leo Eland, Minangkabau village  
by lake Toba, West Sumatra, 1920.  
Oil painting on canvas, 60 x 90  
cm, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.  
Ibid., undated. Ink drawing,  
16 x 10 cm, author's collection.

Middle row (painting & sketch):  
Leo Eland, Beach with fishing  
boats, North coast of Java, 1920.  
Oil painting on canvas, 50 x 100  
cm, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.  
Ibid., undated. Ink drawing,  
16.5 x 10.5 cm, author's collection.

Bottom row (painting & sketch):  
Leo Eland, Planting rice in the  
sawas, Tjimahi (Cimahi),  
West-Java, 1920. Oil painting  
on canvas, 60 x 100 cm,  
Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.  
Ibid., undated. Ink drawing,  
16 x 10 cm, author's collection.







From the 1930s, Eland was permanently based in The Hague. He owned a gallery with a studio at number 11 Heulstraat where he continued to paint romantic Indies landscapes. Many former Indies expats, civil servants, farmers and people on leave from the colony used to go and eat a *rijsttafel* at the nearby Indonesian Boeatan restaurant, later the famous Garoeda. Afterwards, many would visit Leo Eland's gallery to see, or sometimes to buy, his idyllic *Mooi Indie* (Beautiful Indies) landscapes in oil and watercolours. His artworks were also painted to order.

The bohemian Eland had a rakish charm and was popular with his clientele in the Hague art world. His canvases show not the daily lives of the colonial administrators or the KNIL military, but especial panoramic mountain landscapes with rising volcanoes streaked with sunlight, rushing waterfalls, gurgling mountain streams and indigo-blue crater lakes with steep cliffs. The natives are often miniscule figures in the dominant landscape. His works are usually recognisable topographic renderings of, for example, the Karo Plateau and Toba Lake in North Sumatra; the *Karbowengat* (Ngarai Sianok Canyon) in the Padang Highlands of Sumatra's West coast; the Preanger region and the Tangkuban Prahua volcano at Bandung on West Java; and the Batur Lake and the Gunung Agung on Bali. In addition, there are many atmospheric sunrises and sunsets and silvery moonlit lakes and sea views. Other subjects are limited mostly to *kampongs*, *pasars* (markets), tea plantations with pickers, vast paddy fields with toiling natives, market goers and trucks laden with *gerobaks* (buffalos) on the narrow mountain passes. In the background there are often misty blue mountains.

His work reveals his particular admiration for the Indies landscape and its inhabitants. In his gallery, always busy with visitors, he hung a permanent exhibition of picturesque, almost paradise-like landscapes. His artwork was a response to the prevailing, sometimes rather conservative, tastes of his buyers and clients. He fits in the tradition of his peers and *Mooi Indie* artists, such as Hal Wichers (1893-1968), Ernest Dezentjé (1885-1972) and Carel Dake junior. They used comparable themes and styles.



His oil paintings, along with the sketchbooks, ink drawings, preliminary works and correspondence, give an intriguing image of the method of the artist. He spent the first half of his life in the tropics, and subsequently spent twenty years working on his *Mooi-Indië* paintings in his atelier in The Hague. His impressive oeuvre, now lodged in museum collections and with private collectors, has, in our global age, become a silent witness to a partially vanished world.<sup>7</sup>

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#### Notes

- 1 All of Eland's sketches and ink drawings shown here are part of the author's collection, unless otherwise specified.
- 2 Van Brakel, K., Scalliet, M.O., Van Duuren, D. & J. ten Kate. 1998. *Indië omlijst. Vier eeuwen schilderkunst in Nederlands-Indië*. Amsterdam: KIT/Tropenmuseum; Wijk en Aalburg: Pictures Publishers; pp.114,122-123,147-148,156-157. Knol, M., R. Raben & K. Zijlmans. 2009. *Beyond the Dutch. Indonesië, Nederland en de beeldende kunsten van 1900 tot nu*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers; Utrecht: Centraal Museum; pp.51,59,76.
- 3 Eland had contact with the architect & painter Piet Moojen (1879-1955), a central figure in the Indies cultural life and director of the *Bataviasche Kunstkring*. In addition, he knew Henri van Velthuysen (1881-1954), artist and founder of the *Vereniging van Beeldende Kunstenaars* (Association of Visual Artists) in the Dutch East Indies.
- 4 The sketchbooks with their many pencil drawings, sometimes coloured in, and preliminary works that he made during his 1927 journey through North Africa, are in the author's collection.
- 5 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 6 March 1931, 'De koloniale wereld-expositie'; *De Telegraaf*, 8 May 1931, 'Opening van Nederlands paviljoen te Vincennes'; *De Telegraaf*, 29 June 1931, 'Nederlands paviljoen te Parijs door brand vernield'.
- 6 *Het Vaderland*, 14 May 1932, 'De Indische tentoonstelling. Plechtige opening door Prinses Juliana'; *De Telegraaf*, 14 May 1932, 'Prinses Juliana opent Indische expositie'; *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 15 May 1932, 'De Indische tentoonstelling in de Nederlandse residentie'; *Het Koloniaal Weekblad*, 9 June 1932 (nr. 23), 'De Indische tentoonstelling in Den Haag'.
- 7 Eland's oil paintings (45) can be found in important museum collections, such as the Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam), former Museum Nusantara (Delft) and Museum (The Hague). *Paradise Framed* (1996), a guide to Indonesian paintings and watercolours sold by auction houses such as Christies, Sotheby's, and Glerum, includes 120 works by Leo Eland. The author is currently producing an inventory and research on this oeuvre of Leo Eland, painter of the Dutch East Indies landscape. Private owners of Eland's work are also being approached by the author.



# Epigraphic restorations of Timurid architectural heritage

After its Independence in 1991, Uzbekistan, one of the five<sup>1</sup> post-Soviet Central Asian republics, was looking for a common framework to shape the discourse on nation-building and nation-branding. The great emperor Timur (1336-1405), one of the very few mortals to give their name to an acclaimed architectural style, was branded as the epitome of Uzbek national identity. While the alluring persona of Timur played the role of a symbol, the production of meaning was created by Timurid architectural artefacts. As a result, the surviving Timurid monuments were hastily restored for the celebrations of Timur's 660th birthday in 1996. In the period between the Uzbek Independence in 1991 and 2001, when the architectural centre of Samarqand was put on the UNESCO World Heritage List, some of the Timurid monuments were actually rebuilt, not restored. In this analysis, I discuss the epigraphic additions to two key Timurid monuments in Samarqand. The restorations are treated as a power tool used for the production and acceptance of history.

Elena Paskaleva

## Amir Timur and the Timurid legacy

Timur (rule 1370-1405) was a nomadic conqueror whose empire stretched from Anatolia to India in the late fourteenth century. The architectural monuments of the Timurid empire, situated mainly in present day Uzbekistan, are regarded as masterpieces of medieval Islamic architecture. Throughout his reign, Timur utilised and exploited the cultural and artistic resources of his vast empire for the beautification of his two capitals Samarqand and Shahr-i Sabz.

It was only after 1991, when the Independence of Uzbekistan was proclaimed, that articles and books on Timur started reappearing. After the break with the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan drastically rejected the Marxist-Leninist communist legacy and substituted it with the Timurid cult. In 1993 the horse statue of Amir Timur replaced the monument of Karl Marx in the heart of the Uzbek capital Tashkent. The main square of the New City – Revolution Square – was renamed Amir Timur Square.

Following an initiative of the Uzbek president Karimov, UNESCO took a decision to celebrate the 660th anniversary of Amir Timur in 1996. The celebrations were crowned by the opening of the new yurt-shaped museum of Timur, erected very close to the Amir Timur Square. Further, the international conference *Amir Temur and His Place in World History* took place in Tashkent on 23-26 October 1996. In his opening speech, president Karimov said: "Amir Temur became part of world history not only as an outstanding military leader and statesman who had created a powerful prosperous

state; he transformed his capital – Samarkand – into one of the cultural and scientific centres of the world. Magnificent monuments of architecture, the true pearls of folk arts, craftsmanship and culture, remain to be perfect decorations of our cities and towns."

The powerful personality of Timur and his megalomaniac architectural ambitions, fostering state legitimation, have made him a popular figure among post-Soviet political elites. Following the trend to revise the national historiography in Central Asia, the Timurid cult has likewise been used for new historical identification in the post-Soviet era.

## What happened to the Timurid monuments?

The restorations of Timurid monuments had already begun in the Soviet period. As early as the 1950s Uzbekistan was portrayed as the cradle of cultured socialism across Central Asia. The Timurid architectural legacy was used to sustain these claims during the Khrushchev era (1953-1964) and the Brezhnev era (1964-1982). International delegations and flocks of tourists from neighbouring Soviet republics attested their socialist solidarity by paying tribute to the Timurid heritage until the late 1980s.

The ruins of Timurid mosques, mausoleums and Islamic schools (*madrasas*) in the Uzbek cities of Samarqand, Shahr-i Sabz and Bukhara were extensively studied by the Soviet scholars Ratiia, Voronina, Rempel, Bulatov, Pugachenkova and Mankovskaya, to name a few. Here, I would like to

analyse two examples from Samarqand: the main sanctuary of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (1398-1405), erected as a glorious testimony to Timur's victory over Delhi; and the main portal of the Timurid dynastic mausoleum Gur-i Amir, commissioned by Timur's grandson Ulugh Beg in the 1420s.

The Bibi Khanum Mosque (fig. 1) was the most ambitious architectural project of the Timurid period. The building was conceived as the first Islamic monument with three domed sanctuaries – the main one with the prayer niche (*mihrab*) to the west and two smaller ones to the north and to the south. The Bibi Khanum Mosque was comprehensively studied by Ratiia in the 1940s. Ratiia drew up the first restoration plans based on its ruins and produced reconstruction watercolours in his book published in 1950.<sup>2</sup> According to his drawings, however, the main sanctuary façade stood higher than the dome, which conflicts with Timur's fifteenth century historiographer Yazdi's exclamation:<sup>3</sup> "The dome would rank supreme were it not for the sky itself; and so would the arch of the *iwān*<sup>4</sup> were it not for the Milky Way." Furthermore, in the earliest photographs of Samarqand, taken by Kozlovsky (1890s), Vvedensky (1894-1897) and Prokudin-Gorsky (1907), the latter after the devastating earthquake in 1897, the dome was indeed higher than the arch of the *iwān*. Given the giant proportions of the Bibi Khanum sanctuary, the dome was undoubtedly meant to surpass the height of the smaller side mosques and be visible above all other buildings. However, the restorations undertaken during the Soviet and post-Soviet period dramatically changed this concept.

The renowned Soviet archaeologist and architect Pugachenkova finalised the restoration plans for the Bibi Khanum Mosque at the beginning of the 1950s. Further archaeological research was performed by Mankovskaya in 1967. The subsequent restoration project in the 1990s was led by the architect Krukov; Asanov was the construction engineer. By the end of the 1990s the main sanctuary and the two side mosques had been completely rebuilt and their epigraphic programmes were anew executed. Islamic epigraphic programmes can be regarded as architectural discourses that reflect the contemporary social, political and religious contexts. Unfortunately, during the modern colossal restorations in Samarqand, some epigraphic programmes of key Timurid monuments were completely redesigned. Between 1991-1996, a band of inscriptions, presumably suggested by Ratiia, was added to the main sanctuary *iwān* of the Bibi Khanum Mosque (fig. 2), and additional octagonal segments were placed on the meagre remains of the two framing towers (*guldasta*). These two alterations elongated the overall proportions of the *iwān* and entirely obstructed the view of the rebuilt turquoise dome. The new epigraphic band on the main sanctuary at Bibi Khanum reveals Surat Al-Baqarah (The Cow), Aya 127/128. The text reads:

*And when Abraham, and Ishmael with him, raised up the foundations of the House: 'Our Lord, receive this from us; Thou art the All-hearing, the All-knowing; and, our Lord, make us submissive to Thee, and of our seed a nation submissive to Thee; show us our holy rites, and turn towards us; surely Thou turnest, and art All-compassionate.'*<sup>5</sup>

Fig. 1 (inset): Bibi Khanum Mosque, Samarqand, present view after restorations 1991-1996.

Fig. 2 (main image): Inscription main sanctuary Bibi Khanum Mosque, present view after restorations.

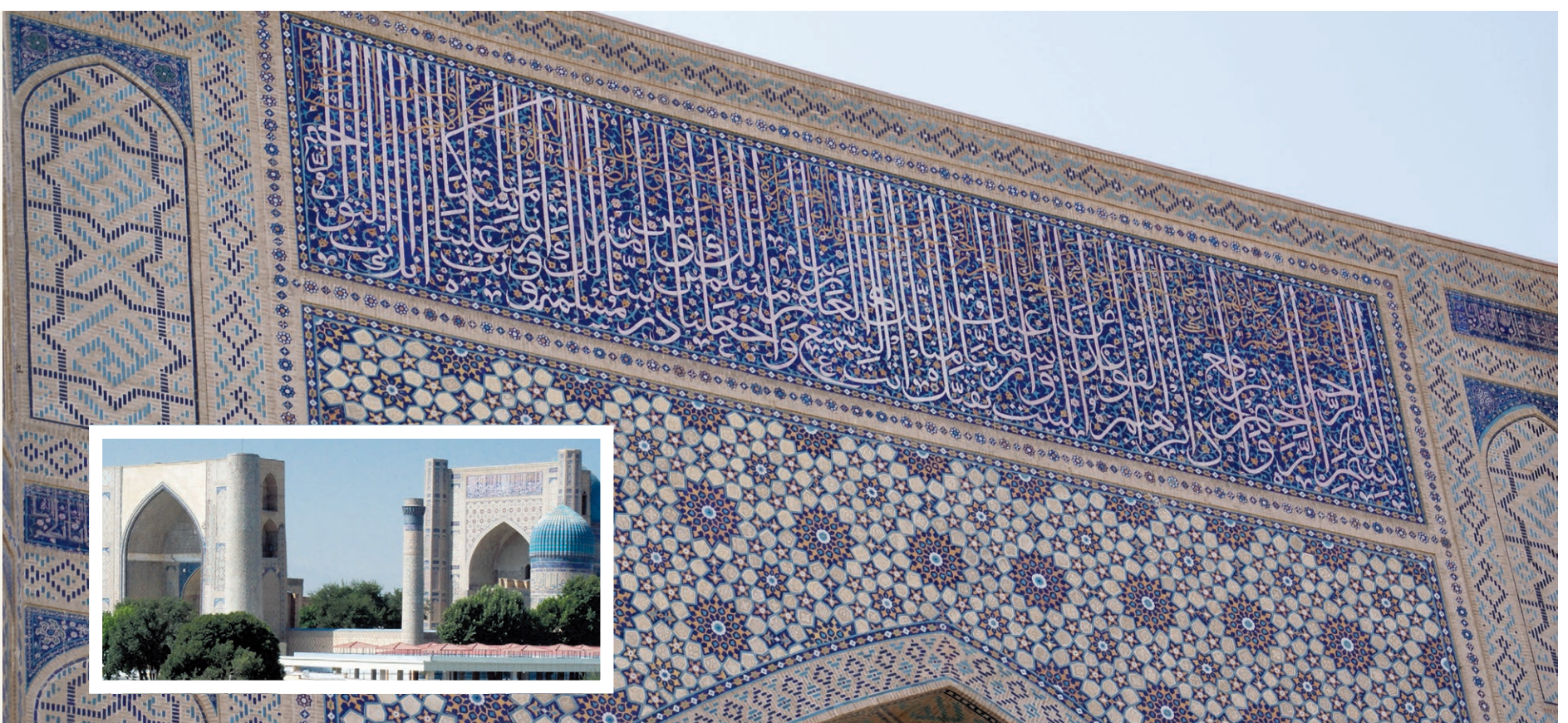




Fig. 3 (left): Sanctuary Kalan Mosque, Bukhara, inscription main sanctuary after restorations.

Fig. 4 (right): Sanctuary Kalan Mosque, Bukhara, main sanctuary prior to epigraphic restorations 1980s. (Aga Khan archive)



It is very interesting to note that exactly the same text can be found above the entrance to the Gok Gunbad Mosque in Shahr-i Sabz, initially commissioned by Timur's grandson Ulugh Beg (1435-1436) and rebuilt after 1980. Another example is the main sanctuary of the Shaybanid Kalan Mosque in Bukhara (completed around 1514); the Surat Al-Baqarah sanctuary inscription was only added after 1987 (fig. 3 and 4). The present Koranic epigraphy of the exterior and interior of Bibi-Khanum, Gok Gunbad and other Timurid monuments, was designed by the Uzbek calligrapher Saliev. It might be possible that during the restoration campaigns similar calligraphic templates were reused for these three completely different monuments stemming from three consecutive centuries.

In analogous restoration campaigns, inscriptions were added to the main entrance of the Timurid dynastic mausoleum Gur-i Amir. Again, the earliest photographs of the gateway by Vvedensky (1894-1897) and Prokudin-Gorsky (1911) (fig. 5) reveal only the damaged *muqarnas*<sup>6</sup> vault. Very detailed drawings of this vault were also published in a lavishly illustrated Russian imperial edition on Gur-i Amir (1905).<sup>7</sup> In 1943 the Uzbek government took a decision to restore the Gur-i Amir ensemble, consisting of Timur's mausoleum to the south, a madrasa to the east and a Sufi lodge (*khanaqah*) to the west. At the beginning of the 1950s the whole courtyard was refurbished under the architectural guidance of Notkin. Although the main efforts went into the preservation of the famous ribbed dome, the entrance portal underwent a complete makeover. Notkin drew up the plans for the stabilization of the tilted left pylon and tried to preserve the contour of the arch. The *iwan* was finished off with yellow brickwork complementing the remains of the *muqarnas* vault.

When I saw the portal for the first time in September 2006, Notkin's 1950s restoration had remained intact (fig. 6). Recently, I was very surprised to see present day photos of the Gur-i Amir entrance (fig. 7), which clearly show that the whole surface has been tiled and an inscription has been added above the archway. The Koranic text depicts Surat 'Ali 'Imran (The House of Imran), Aya 104. The text reads:

*Let there be one nation of you, calling to good, and bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour; Those are the prosperers.*<sup>8</sup>

Almost 20 years after Uzbek Independence, it was perhaps decided that Notkin's bare brickwork was not impressive enough for the international tourists and local pilgrims visiting the site. In the period after the UNESCO listing in 2001, the Gur-i Amir exterior was partially adorned with newly designed Koranic epigraphy.

The two new epigraphic bands at Bibi Khanum and Gur-i Amir are absent from the earliest photographs taken by Prokudin-Gorsky (1870s and 1900s), Friedrich Sarre (published in 1901) and Ernst Cohn-Wiener (published in 1930). Since the architectural fabric of the buildings was considerably damaged by several devastating earthquakes and military activity, it is impossible to reconstruct with absolute certainty the original

architecture of these monuments. Furthermore, there are no surviving plans or drawings that might shed more light on their original design. This is why, the earliest photographs and lithographs, from the second half of the nineteenth century, could be regarded as objective evidence revealing the state of the Timurid monuments prior to their subsequent restorations by the Soviet and post-Soviet elites.

**Why were the inscriptions added?**

I suspect that the artistic reasons were overshadowed by a political move to manifest the process of Uzbek nation-building initiated after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Both texts transcribed above underline the concept of a *nation*. After the Uzbek Independence in 1991, the Timurid myth became the key to the process of Uzbek state formation. The Turkic steppe conqueror Timur, previously 'Uzbekified', became the undisputed national hero. Throughout the last two decades, Timur has enjoyed a mass appeal among the Uzbek general public in a predominantly Muslim nation with nomadic roots. Timurid architecture, in turn, is used to boost the Uzbek population's sense of belonging and pride throughout the construction of an ethno-national identity.

Since Independence, the Uzbek government has been using the Timurid heritage for state-branding. Uzbekistan is presented to the world as the cradle of Timurid civilization and as an important cultural hub along the Silk Road. The Timurid monuments in Samarqand and Shahr-i Sabz are depicted on all state-issued tourist brochures and projected

onto large screens during state-sponsored Uzbek cultural events across Europe and the US. The authenticity of these monuments is not questioned. The legitimacy of their exquisite decoration and epigraphic programmes are branded as perfectly preserved Uzbek architectural heritage.

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**All images taken by the author (2006), unless otherwise specified.**

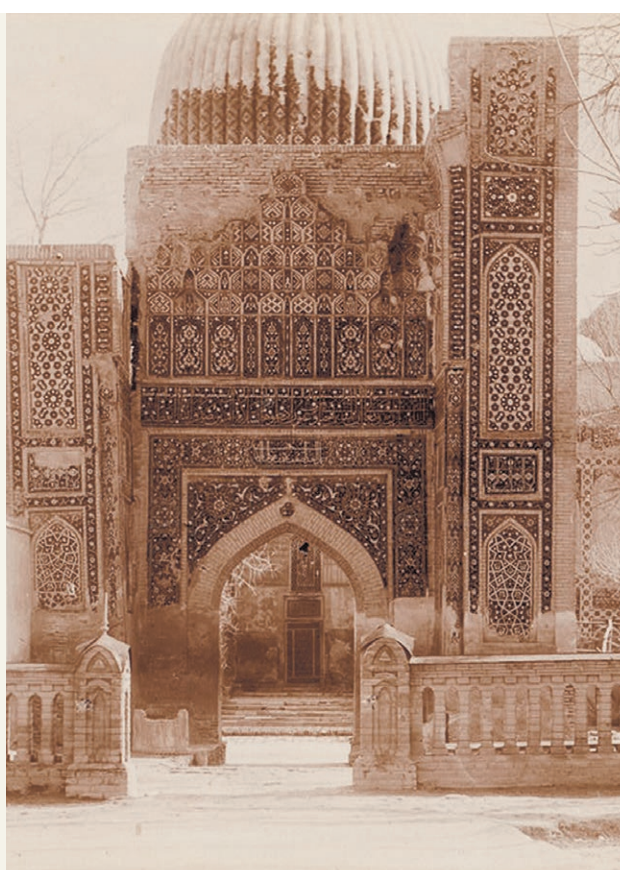
**Notes**

- 1 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.
- 2 Sh. E. Ratiia. 1950. *Mechet Bibi-Khanym*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo arkhitektury i gradostroitelstva.
- 3 In 1426-1427 Yazdi completed the biography of Timur.
- 4 A large vaulted hall with an arch opening on one side, usually overlooking a rectangular courtyard.
- 5 *The Koran*. Translated with an Introduction by Arthur J. Arberry. Oxford: Oxford University Press, reissued 2008, p. 16.
- 6 A system of projecting niches used for zones of transition and for architectural decoration in Islamic architecture.
- 7 *Les mosquées de Samarcande*. Fascicule 1 Gour-Emir. St. Pétersbourg: Commission Impériale Archéologique, 1905.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Fig. 5 (left): Entrance portal Gur-i Amir, photograph by Prokudin-Gorsky 1911. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LOT 10338, no. 92)

Fig. 6 (top right): Entrance portal Gur-i Amir after restorations in the 1950s.

Fig. 7 (below right): Entrance portal Gur-i Amir, after epigraphic restorations. (Courtesy creative commons Flickr)



# Reviving traditions and creating futures

*Katé* is one of the largest festivals and religious gatherings of the Cham people of Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> It is the largest Cham festival in Vietnam, where the Chams have their ancestral homeland.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps due to its popularity that there are two dominant misconceptions regarding *Katé*. The first is that *Katé* is the ‘Cham New Year’. The second is that the festival is limited to the Cham ‘Brahmanist’ population, known as the *Cam Ahier* (or simply *Cam*).<sup>3</sup>

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IN REALITY, the *Katé* festival occurs during the seventh month of the *Cam Ahier* calendar, usually in October, and the participants in the *Katé* festival are not limited to the *Cam Ahier*, but also include *Cam Awal*. The *Cam Awal* are a complex community that may consist of both *Cam Islam* (Sunni) and ‘polythetic’ Bani elements, or may consist of Bani elements only, depending on the source.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the Cham community has recently adapted *Katé* to include other ceremonies and festivals, such as *Katé-Ramawan* and *Katé Cán Giò*, each of which represents a shift toward a transnational frame to redefine communal and cultural identity.

Misconceptions about *Katé* are rooted in the history of the Southeast Asian Cham. Once a classical civilization that stretched along nearly half of the contemporary Vietnamese coastline and deep into the hinterlands of the Annamite Chain, the ‘archipelagic’ territories of the Cham people were slowly annexed by various Vietnamese lords through a process of demographic and administrative expansion that lasted from the eleventh to the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> During this time Cham society changed greatly as the religious makeup of the population shifted from a Hindu-Buddhist society, to a society that was predominantly Muslim and living mostly outside of the Cham homelands.<sup>6</sup> This brings us to the question of the Cham community today and the festival of *Katé*.

Today the largest *Katé* ceremonies and festival is held in Phan Rang (Ninh Thuận province, Vietnam), at the site of the Po Klaong Garai tower (VN: *tháp*; C: *bimong/kalan*). Scholars and travelers alike may encounter many names for *Katé* including: *Mbeng Katé*, *Lễ Hội Katé*, *Katé-Ramawan*, and *Katé Cán Giò*, and the aforementioned, incorrect, ‘Cham New Year’ or even *Tết Katé*. It is safe to assume that any references to ‘New Year’ are not related to the actual practices of *Katé*, but rather to the cultural experience of the Cham in the Vietnamese national context. A lack of widely accessible research on Cham history and culture reproduces this significant misrepresentation. *Tết Katé* conflates the notions of the Vietnamese lunar New Year, more appropriately called *Tết Nguyên Đán*, with *Katé*. Transliterating *Katé* into the Vietnamese pronunciation *Katê* may seem very slight to non-tuned ears, but can be replicated to show differences amongst native speakers of Cham and Vietnamese.

Cham communal leaders generally reject the term *Tết Katé*. Meanwhile *Lễ Hội Katé* demonstrates an additional form of Vietnamization as, not only is *Katé* transliterated, but the additional Vietnamese terms, *Lễ Hội*, apply an understanding of Vietnamese social patterns to the Cham festival of *Katé*. While *Lễ* has a religious connotation meaning ‘ceremony’, *hội* is more social and means ‘gathering’. While Vietnamese social patterns

Above: Ritualistic bathing of Po Klaong Can and his wife, Palei Craok. (Bau Truc, Ninh Thuan, Vietnam)

are sometimes applied (inaccurately) to better understand *Katé*, *Katé* itself has also changed over time. Today the Cham community frequently use *Mbeng Katé*, whereby the term *Mbeng* means ‘to devour’, ‘to gnaw’, or ‘to destroy’, but can also mean ‘to make an offering to the gods’, or even ‘festival’, according to the classic dictionary of Aymonier & Cabaton.<sup>7</sup>

Today *Katé* is a four day festival, with the last two days referred to as *Mbeng Muk Kei* (the festival of the ancestors), and which are centered on ancestral worship and the veneration of the oldest matriarch in each family. To the outside observer these two days may not appear so different from the first two days, but they most certainly are.

**Katé, day by day**

Each Cham family is associated with a hometown (C: *bhum Palei*; VN: *quê hương*), and each hometown is associated with one of the classical Cham creation deities such as the various incarnations of Po Inâ Nâgar or *devarajas* such as Po Romé and Po Klaong Garai; and other ancestral gods such as Po Sah Inâ and Po Klaong Can. On the first day of *Katé* each of these deities is worshiped at individual sites in the hometowns. For example, in *Palei Hamutanran* (VN: *Hũu Đức*) there is a parade that brings ceremonial gifts and clothing to a small figure of Po Inâ Nâgar. Cham *Ahier* priests offer gifts to this goddess of the soil, who according to Cham manuscripts written in the modern Cham script of *Akhar Thrah* was responsible for teaching the Cham community the art of weaving and the technology of lowland rice agriculture.<sup>8</sup>

The second day of *Katé* is the day of ascension to the ‘towers’ (VN: *ngày đi lên tháp*; C: *Katé đi bimong/kalan*). The Cham towers are famous cultural symbols; particularly since the largest tower group at *Mỹ Sơn* was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1999. During the ceremonies and festivals of the Cham calendar (*sakawi Cam*)<sup>9</sup> the Cham towers become sites of active communal worship, gathering, and celebration. Thus, on the second day of *Katé*, members of the Cham community go up to the towers and perform a ceremony to ask permission to open the doors, which is followed by offerings to the ancestral gods.

The third day of *Katé* is usually referred to as *Mbeng Katé Palei* and is the beginning of the ‘*Mbeng*’ gatherings, ceremonies, and celebrations. On this day, Cham families return to their hometown temples for ceremonies and offerings to their local deities. For example, on this day Cham families in *Palei Craok* (Ninh Thuận province), gather at the local temple (*danaok*) of the deity Po Klaong Can, who is said to have taught the Cham people pottery, and the one responsible for granting Po Klaong Garai his royal ‘prowess’ (*ganreh*). The ceremony starts by asking permission to open the doors of the *danaok*. Next, worshippers (mostly women) gather along the inside of the hall, while the priests (mostly men) sit off to the right hand side. As the ceremony reaches its peak, the *On Kadhar* (a specialized priest who is a master in the history of the Cham people, has a deep knowledge of *Akhar Thrah*, and plays the *kanyi*<sup>10</sup>) sings the *Damnuy* or ‘history’ of Po Klaong Can. Meanwhile, priestesses assist in the ritual washing of the figures of Po Klaong Can and his wife. To those familiar with Indic tradition these figures may appear as ‘lingas’ that have had faces painted on them. Finally there is a priestess, known as a *Muk Pajau*, who is responsible for channeling the *Po Yang*, or divine essence of the ancestral deities, in a ritualistic act of spirit possession. As the *Muk Pajau* is possessed by the *Po Yang*, she smokes two cigarettes, performs traditional Cham dances, thrusts her arms

## Reexamining human rights discourse after the Jewish and the Chinese Holocausts

After World War II, considerable efforts were made in the discipline of philosophy to question the validity of Western metaphysics. Surprisingly, human rights discourse has not been the subject of similarly rigorous interrogation.

Sinkwan Cheng

ON THE PRESSING ISSUE of crimes against humanity, no serious efforts have been made in the liberal West to seek alternative preventions or cures outside human rights discourse, which had long existed before Auschwitz, but nonetheless failed to avert it; nor have thinkers and policy makers seriously examined

whether the abstract subject-centered reason grounding human rights discourse has not unwittingly contributed to the problem it seeks to address. As Levinas turns to the Jewish tradition in the aftermath of the Holocaust in order to reprioritize the suffering face of the Other before the philosophizing subject, I turn to the Confucian tradition for an alternative ethics and politics that would foreground the destitution of the Other before abstract legal, political, and philosophical discourse about ‘rights’.

The above is what I undertake in one of my two IAS book projects, entitled *Reexamining Human Rights Discourse after the Jewish and the Chinese Holocausts*. In keeping with the Institute’s spirit of bringing Europe to Asia, and Asia to Europe, both books in progress are devoted to translation, comparative philosophy, and comparative politics. That Levinas and Confucius are brought together in my first project is no coincidence: the Jews and the Chinese sustained the greatest crimes against humanity in World War II.<sup>1</sup> Both cultures provide alternative insights that might help explain how the splendid civilization created by the Enlightenment could dialectically turn into a monstrosity unleashing violence of an unspeakable kind. The significance of Levinas and Confucius in my project is further illuminated as I bring in critiques of rights discourse by Gandhi, and feminists including Scott, Glendon, and Gilligan.

**‘Humanization of man’**

My project originated as a response to an important proposal made by the Chinese representative P.C. Chang (張彭春) at the drafting stage of the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights. Chang recommended that the foremost mission of the Declaration should be the “humanization of man”.<sup>2</sup> For good reason: for the Chinese who had suffered an estimated loss of 10-20 million lives in World War II, crimes against humanity were committed not because of the absence of the concept of ‘rights’ in the world, but because people had lost their humanity and humaneness, as well as their ability to recognize the victims of such crimes as human beings. Chang’s pleading fell on deaf ears.

World history since the adoption of the UDHR by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948 renders it time to reconsider Chang’s proposal. Rights discourse has become ever more elaborate and sophisticated over the past 65 years. Yet the long list of human rights violations, simultaneous with the burgeoning of rights discourse, should command us to reexamine whether ‘rights’ were not yet another abstract notion hypostatized into a monotheistic God, and whether it would not be more to the point to refocus on the ‘human’ in ‘human rights’, and to reprioritize the flesh-and-blood human being before the intangible idea called ‘rights’.

into the air, shouts, sings, and carries with her a hardboiled egg, all the while followed by an additional assistant who makes sure that her body remains safe during the spirit possession. Finally, she hands out the cigarettes and the egg as symbols of good luck for the upcoming calendar year. Following this, several fan dances occur and, as the words of the *On Kadhar* draw to a close, attention turns to the feast, before returning home.<sup>11</sup>

The last day of *Katé* (*Katé dalam sang*) is more intimate than the preceding three ceremonies. On this day each family gathers around the oldest matriarch of their house. The ceremony is still religious in form and involves rituals that are recited by a priest (ideally each house has a priest associated with that family), or a familial equivalent of the *Muk Pajau*. The last day of *Katé* focuses on the building of familial and neighborly relations through partaking in *Mbeng*, and gathering together to enjoy each other's company over food and drink.<sup>12</sup>

#### Katé reimagined

While many *Katé* rites in the Cham community, particularly those associated with the *Mbeng Muk Kei*, can be traced back to pre-Colonial and perhaps even pre-historic rituals, the nature of the Cham community today is changing. *Katé-Ramâwan* and *Katé Càn Giò* are perfect examples of these changes. *Katé-Ramâwan* is a student-led production that ran for its eighth year in 2012. The production is generally held one or two weeks after *Katé*, in Hồ Chí Minh City; it is a musical production that blends dance, song, and traditional music with explanations of *Katé* ceremonies and Cham understanding of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. *Katé Càn Giò* is another relatively new gathering (now in its third year) that emphasizes cultural dialogue amongst Cham populations from both Cambodia and Vietnam. While *Cham Ahier Katé* rites are still performed at *Katé Càn Giò* there is also a greater emphasis at this gathering on bringing together both Islamic and non-Islamic elements of the Cham community in Southeast Asia, to promote inter-faith dialogue amongst the Cham population. It is clear that in the current reinterpretations of the Cham ceremonies of *Katé* there is both an emphasis on staying true to the traditions and history of the Cham people, while at the same time developing a transnational approach that creates a better understanding of the Cham as a Southeast Asia people.

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#### Notes

- 1 The research for this piece was conducted during the Fall of 2012 with the assistance of a field research grant from the University of Wisconsin Madison's Center for Southeast Asian Studies, which was also used to begin research on Cham manuscripts. Additional thanks go to Dr. Dharbhan Po Dam, Dr. Sakaya, Đàng Nam Hòa, Sikhara, the families of Palei Hamu Craok, and many other students and teachers in Baigur (Hồ Chí Minh City).
- 2 Văn Thu Bích. 2004. *Âm Nhạc Trong Nghi Lễ Của Người Chăm Bà La Môn*. Hà Nội: Văn Hóa Dân Tộc, p.35
- 3 "Cham 'Brahmanists'" is a term derived from French colonial Orientalist researchers. However, "Cham Shaivites" might be a more appropriate term as the Cham population has historically been more associated with the worship of Siva than that of Brahma.
- 4 Yoshimoto, Y. 2012. 'A Study of the Hồi giáo Religion in Vietnam: With a Reference to Islamic Religious Practices of Cham Bani', *Southeast Asian Studies* 1(3), Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University
- 5 Taylor, K. 1999. "The Early Kingdoms", in Nicholas Tarling (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* 1(1):153. Cambridge University Press.
- 6 Pérez-Pereiro, A. 2012. 'Historical Imagination, Diasporic Identity and Islamicity among the Chams of Cambodia', Dissertation in Anthropology submitted November 2012, Arizona State University.
- 7 Aymonier, E. & Cabaton, A. 1906. *Dictionnaire Cam-Français*. EFEO: Paris, p.356
- 8 *Dalalak Po Nâgar*. Cham Manuscript written in the modern script of *Akhar Thrah*. Date and Author unknown. From the collection of Dharbhan Po Dam.
- 9 *Sakawi Cam* is a luni-solar calendar that is thought to have been created during the time of Po Romé (r. 1627-1651) through merging the Indic influenced solar *saka* calendar with the Islamic influenced *jawi* calendar. The individual calendars are known as *Sakawi Ahier* and *Sakawi Awal*.
- 10 A two stringed instrument, played with a bow
- 11 Sakaya. 2003. *Lễ hội của người Chăm*, Văn hóa Dân tộc: Hà Nội, pp.135-149
- 12 Sakaya. 2010. *Nghiên Cứu và Phê Bình*, Phụ Nữ: TP Hồ Chí Minh, pp.304-305

It is not surprising that in calling for the humanization of humanity, P.C. Chang drew extensively from Confucian philosophy whose humanism had inspired some *philosophes* in their formulations of rights discourse and their critiques of tyranny (including tyranny of the church and tyranny of absolutism). Chang's 'humanization of man' is an idea taken directly from Confucius' *ren ren* (仁人) – a core idea in Confucian ethics.

The Confucian virtue *ren* (仁) has been variably translated as 'kindness', 'benevolence', 'humanity', etc., none of which really capture the essence of *ren* as human beings in their existential, social, and emotional togetherness. It has been commonly observed that the character *ren* (仁) depicts two human beings, but no explanation has yet been offered as to why the co-existence of two human beings would necessarily entail compassion and kindness rather than hostility and aggressiveness, as Hobbesians and Freudians would argue. In my research I explore the many deep layers of the ethical, social, and political meanings of *ren* (仁), so far neglected in scholarship on Confucianism. The profound contributions that could have been made by *ren* to the UDHR (an opportunity that had regretfully been missed) is elaborated on by engaging Confucius's *ren* in dialogue with Hegelian and Arendtian ideas of love, my rewriting of Mauss' formulation of the gift, and Levinas' "persecuted one for whom I am responsible to the point of being a hostage for him" (*Otherwise than Being*, 58-59).

#### The distinctive contributions of Confucianism: ren versus tolerance

*Ren* does not merely require 'tolerating' the Other. The coexistence of two human beings in *ren* refers to their *existential and emotional connectedness*, rather than the mere physical cohabitation of the same space by two disconnected individuals. *Ren* (仁) grounds itself on the premise that both sides are *living human beings* with human feelings and vulnerabilities. Any side being reduced to a mere abstract concept, as in the case of the liberal politics of tolerance, would not qualify as *ren*. The ability to feel for each other as enjoined by *ren* finds one of its powerful expressions in compassion – one of the many meanings of *ren* – a meaning that is also borne out in the etymology of roughly equivalent Western terms such as 'compassion' or *Mitleid* – that is, 'suffering together' or suffering the Other's suffering.

Mencius once admonished rulers by reminding them of the practices of some of their virtuous predecessors: "For Yu, his people's drowning is his own drowning; for Zhi, his people's hunger is his own hunger. Hence their anguish and desperation." Zhi would rather starve than allow his people to starve, as parents would rather give up their own lives than allow their children to suffer any harm. The Jewish proverb articulates well this Confucian sentiment: "The other's material need is my spiritual need". The other's material need concerns my spirituality because, in between choosing my starvation or the Other's starvation, in between choosing my self-preservation and the preservation of the Other, my moral freedom and my being (as a human being) is at stake. The Other's material need is thus infinite – not because the Other's material need is endless, but because my concern for the Other's physical need is infinite, as infinite as my spirituality (or, in Confucian terms, the Other's physical need is as infinite as my humanity).<sup>3</sup>

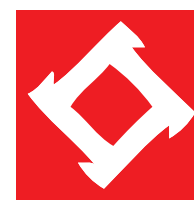
By emphasizing feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, Confucian and Levinasian ethics can help us return from abstract notions of rights to the concrete human in human rights. This has tremendous significance for rethinking human rights. Crimes against humanity are invariably committed when the victims are not recognized as human beings – when they are objectified into numbers or other kinds of abstractions such as targets in a system to be ridden, and when the perpetrators also abstractize themselves into killing machines devoid of the human capacity to feel for the sufferings of the Other.

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#### Notes

- 1 Note that the atrocities against the Chinese was committed by the Japanese after the latter's aggressive adoptions of ideas and institutions from the modern West. Those adoptions were by no means free from reinterpretations and misinterpretations.
- 2 The classical Chinese language is not gendered, and a literal translation of *ren ren* would be 'humanizing human being'. Chang used 'man' to avoid the awkward repetition in favor of the idiomatic English usage of the time.
- 3 My project includes a discussion of the ethical and political divergences between Judaism and Confucianism ensuing from the divergences between the religious dimensions of Jewish spirituality and the thoroughly humanistic character of Confucianism.

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# Exploring inclusive Chineseness: neighbourhoods

## The Opinion



In *Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming*, Biehl and Locke describe life in post-war Sarajevo. According to the authors, the diagnosis of collective trauma overlooks the discontentment about political and economic processes that cause (neo-liberal) deterritorialization of social life. Their approach is inspiring if one considers the consequences of rapid urbanisation in China: the deterritorialization of social and cultural life in entire neighbourhoods is often considered a necessary price for progress, whilst opposite views are judged conservative and unrealistic. Inspired by Deleuze for an ‘anthropology of becoming’, Biehl and Locke see agency in nostalgia, and give a voice to the memory of a less individualistic society.<sup>1</sup>

Wim Haagdorens

### Deterritorialization, nostalgia and inclusiveness

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Chinese government launched the ‘harmonious society’ as a project to balance economic growth and social well-being. In this paper I recount the restructuring of neighbourhoods in Beijing and refer to similar dynamics in Chongqing, Chengdu, Dalian, Shanghai and Lijiang. Bourdieu’s concept of class *habitus* explains how trends can stir an entire society. He also insisted on the way spatial organization governs practices, with the house as privileged locus for the earliest learning processes. I will describe one urban assemblage in Xi’an that I experienced as a harmonious community, and the deterritorialization that disrupted this. I suggest that the very structures and practices that are sacrificed for real estate projects form precious social and cultural capital that can enhance individual well-being and equally, in Putnam’s words, can “improve the efficiency of society.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, I mirror the deterritorialization of neighbourhoods with the project for a harmonious society. Today, Beijing promotes itself with four keywords: “patriotism, innovation, inclusiveness and moral strength”. By sketching a personal interpretation of inclusive Chineseness, I suggest an answer to a perceived loss of Chinese culture and identity.

### Progress and loss – Beijing 北京

The network of *hutongs* in the centre of Beijing contain thousands of quadrangles, where several families live in low houses and share their courtyards. The alleys provide space for markets and restaurants that serve as meeting points. Trees and greenery abound, and due to a chessboard pattern, main roads with subway entrances are at a walking distance and allow for rapid transportation throughout the city, keeping the main road traffic out. These are the green, walkable neighbourhoods, with abundant safe public space for children, which metropolises worldwide long for. Compared to guarded compounds with tower blocks, *hutongs* are assemblages rich in social connectivity and form a unique cultural heritage. But the internal migration towards the cities following economic transformation pushed the prices of real estate to unseen heights. In addition to gentrification,

those *siheyuan* that were considered not valuable enough for restoration were replaced by apartment blocks. Ever since my first visit to the *hutongs* in 1999, I have seen the *chai*-character (拆 ‘demolish’) painted on inhabited houses all over Beijing.

In August 2006, I parked my bicycle at a shop in a *hutong* east of Wangfujing Street. I bought a drink, and struck up a conversation. The aged owner explained his situation: “My house will have to make way for an apartment block. As I own just a few square metres, the financial compensation will never allow me to buy an apartment in this neighbourhood again. The new apartments are much bigger than my original property.” I asked him where he would live then. “I must go to a neighbourhood in the suburbs, where housing is still affordable.” Then he exclaimed: “I am a veteran of the Korean War, and I’ve always been a patriot. How can they do this, force me out of my house, at the end of my life?” His story exemplified the negation of symbolic capital; as a veteran on a modest pension, this was all he had in his defence. After a passerby offered to show me around, it struck me that this was the first time I had heard people emphatically deploring the cultural loss, apart from financial worries.

In August 2009, I visited the redesigned Qing-style Qianmen Street. East of Qianmen Street, a section of *hutongs* was walled-off. Once a neighbourhood with *hutongs* brimming with life, albeit with a number of dilapidated houses too, it now felt like a war zone. I entered a surreal world of crumbled houses, where plants were still kept alive by those inhabitants who hadn’t left (yet). The first person to whom I spoke, a street sweeper stoically performing his job, said that preserving the houses was “too hard”, but didn’t give any further comment. His companions coughed and smiled in response to my questions. After a second attempt, a lady told me she didn’t think anything would be restored. At some point, everybody would have to leave. Apartments at more than 4000 euro per square meter would be impossible to afford. To my question as to where they would go and live, she answered, “here and there, anywhere”.

### Recognition – hope?

In Chongqing, Chengdu, Dalian, Shanghai, there are similar stories. Lijiang is particularly telling: “UNESCO placed old Lijiang on its World Heritage List, but a recent inspection mission attacked over-commercialization and loss of traditional community values.”<sup>3</sup> Discontentment is not only voiced by direct stakeholders and outsiders; it is also expressed at the highest official levels. Xinhuanet reported on an anti-corruption meeting on 5 April 2011, with the former prime minister: “Wen Jiabao stated (...) that some social contradictions have become relatively prominent. In addition to corruption, these problems could threaten the country’s development and stability if not properly handled (...). Unlawful, forced land expropriations and house demolitions are strictly banned, he said, adding that the administrative system needs to be reformed to dilute the power of some government departments.”<sup>4</sup>

Leaders like Wen Jiabao can generate the necessary soft power to mobilize society. Further experiments with grassroots democracy could tap the ‘wisdom of crowds’ by giving a voice to social networks that are rich in social and cultural capital, and thus create a bottom-up dynamic in response to the project for a harmonious society. If there’s agency in nostalgia, it is worth looking at those neighbourhoods that feel, or felt, like harmonious places. There’s a tremendous wealth of practices that can inspire the imaging of harmonious communities.

### Object of nostalgia – inclusive Chineseness in Qinglong Xiaoqu 青龙小区

I lived in Xi’an from August 1999 until July 2001, as a student of Chinese and a teacher of English. At some point, I moved to a ground floor apartment next to the market in Qinglong Xiaoqu, together with two fellow students, historian Filippo Marsili and sociologist Antje Schöne. We gradually came to understand the mode of life that was both traditional and open to novelties. We experienced an inclusive Chineseness in a relatively harmonious community.

The neighbourhood was named after the Qinglong Temple 青龙寺, situated on a southern hill overlooking the city. During the Tang-dynasty, the influential Japanese monk Kukai had stayed here for two years. Recently, the temple had been restored with support from Japan. Filippo was told by a neighbour that the hill itself had been erected, on the order of the first emperor, to block the winds – the place was steeped in history. But this area was not only a place for Buddhist practice or the admiration of cherry blossoms. The meadows around the temple provided space for ever recurring rituals. One day, we went out for a run at 6 a.m., and discovered the world fully awake. Along the paths between the wheat, we passed *taiji* (Tai Chi) practitioners, people walking their dogs, and, in the early sunlight, couples waltzing to the tunes from a portable radio. Most locals started the day early. In the afternoon, some elderly men would sit on foldable chairs and observe their kites, colourful dots in the sky. Couples would come for a stroll, watch the sunset, or listen to the *erhu* player. Apart from the walled temple, there were no boundaries here.

Bonita Ely compares Deleuze's concept of 'rhizome' to Tao. "A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The movement of Tao is to return, the way of Tao is to yield. Though formless and intangible, it gives rise to form. Though vague and illusive, it gives rise to shapes. Though dark and obscure, it is the spirit, the essence, the life-breath of all things."<sup>5</sup> Like *taiji*, life in Qinglong Xiaoqu seemed to breathe the Chinese time-space view, which is typically circular rather than linear.

The market was located in the alley that led from the northern opera house to the southern fields. Every morning there was a supply of food, traditional medicine, clothes, and occasionally there would be a bookstall. The restaurants and stalls provided affordable food. The stalls had no physical separation between cooking space, dinner space, and public space. We usually ate at a noodle stall, where we gradually integrated into the local community. We would often complete our meal with a portion of *kaorou* (grilled meat) from an adjacent stall, which was also the place to have a drink for the locals. And as Monday mornings would start south of the market, in the fields, the sound of the opera in the north called for a final gathering on Sunday evenings.

The Qinqiang 秦腔 opera house, just across the Second Ring Road, was easily accessible by foot. Every Sunday evening at eight o'clock, local musicians played there, if possible outside. Attendance was free. At our first visit we were given low stools in the front row of the square, and were invited to take pictures at will. Musicians would come and go, light each others' cigarettes, and an occasional toddler would crawl amongst the musicians. A late player would first quietly walk his bike across the stage to park it inside the house, and then take up his instrument to join the others. The setting was modest, but the singers performed with conviction. Among the audience, all generations were present. An architecture student told me he didn't always understand the songs in Shaanxi dialect, but he liked listening to them. They were older than Beijing opera. Humorous, with strong female characters, Qinqiang provided entertainment with tongue-in-cheek morality, a reminder of aesthetic and linguistic bonds. The audience wasn't always equally attentive, but there were drinks and warm snacks, so the place was packed until well after ten o'clock. This Sunday evening ritual was like a confirmation of local identity and togetherness. Adults and kids could meet each other there one last time before the start of the new week. But visitors were welcomed too, as we noticed the first time in the winter of 1999, and ever since.

Below: January 2011. Cranes on top of the tower blocks that will provide modern living space to hundreds of families, on the location where used to be the market. Across the Second Ring Road, the opera house had to make way for more apartments and office blocks.



#### Inclusive Chineseness and conflict management

At several instances I experienced an openness towards alternative worldviews, whether it was the *baozi* seller on American fast food, or the retired railway engineer who found me a copy of *Shanghai Baby*, or the many unexpected invitations for a drink and a talk. We had become friendly with the *kaorou*-stall owner too, whom we called *shifu* (master). His waiter was a few years younger than us, and he was like a brother to the younger niece of the *shifu*. One afternoon, they joined Filippo and myself for lunch. The niece asked us what we were doing in Xi'an, and I said jokingly: "we are part time teaching, part time *laowai*" (the term substituted the expected 'student'). *Laowai* is the term with which foreigners are commonly addressed, often with a chuckle. She replied with unexpected seriousness: "To us, you are not *laowai*. We don't call you that anymore. To us, you are two friends."

One evening, Filippo and I were again sitting at the *kaorou*-stall, enjoying dinner. The joyful atmosphere suddenly turned awkward, when some customers, six bullies of the kind that are for hire, started trouble. After verbal insult and complaints about the bill, they became physical, violently pushing around the waiter. He was in no way a match for these big men, but refused to give in. It was hard to tell who the men really wanted to challenge: we were aware that it might be us, the two *laowai*. We were trying to determine the margin of the tolerable, and wondered what to do if it were crossed. A number of bystanders observed the scene, waiting to intervene as well. Suddenly, the *shifu* stood up from behind his barbecue set, reprimanded his waiter, slapped him (gently) in the face, and told him to take care of the barbecue. Then, he sat down at the bullies' table, shared a couple of laughs and invited them for another drink.

What to an outsider could look like a sheepish reaction, was to us an impressive act of self-control. We regretted not having found a way to intervene ourselves, but the *shifu*'s reaction had likely been the best way to protect his waiter and his customers. He had positioned himself as the host, the waiter in a serving position, and the bullies back into their position of guests. Because of their uncle-cousin relationship, rather than boss-waiter, there were no hard feelings. The waiter kept on working there; he hadn't lost face, nor had the owner. But the bullies never came back. Framing this scene by Confucian tradition ties in with Bourdieu's concordance of *habitus*. But as a reaction to drunken misbehaviour, serenely canalizing this bad energy away instead of confronting it, also reminds us of the application of Taoist principles.

#### Destructuring a harmonious community

June 2001, the fields west of the temple are lit up all night. Within weeks, part of the hill is cut away by bulldozers.

July 2007, increased traffic makes direct access from Qinglong Xiaoqu to the opera house impossible. Further down the road, there is a new pedestrian bridge. While dozens of neighbourhoods are levelled, friends point to the Ming-dynasty roofs that are obligatory constructed on all buildings within the city wall to stress the historic importance of Xi'an.

August 2009, the opera house has disappeared. At its previous location, high rise blocks dwarf remaining parts of the neighbourhood. A wall seals off the northern entrance of the market, the southern part has shrunk to just a few meters, while another wall separates the remaining neighbourhood from what are now construction sites. The gatekeeper of my former apartment tells me that most people are living in apartments on the Second Ring Road.

Walking through the remains of Qinglong Xiaoqu, I notice a billboard with ten do's and don'ts for 'civilised citizens'. Love for the motherland, respect for teacher and study, believe in science, protection of public morals, and embellishment of the environment; the don'ts are spitting, swearing, urinating, destruction of greenery and – in the remains of a once walkable neighbourhood – no jaywalking. I wonder whether these guidelines really form the crystallization of Qinglong Xiaoqu's potential. The extortion of the essential through the demand of the insignificant; again Bourdieu comes to mind.<sup>6</sup>

On my way to the temple, where meadows used to be, I see warehouses: 'Western section Restaurant Utensils City' and 'Western Section Furniture City'. Next to the temple, on the one surviving meadow, two *taiji* practitioners seem undisturbed by the trucks that roar

off and on behind them. Machines are destroying the meadow and obscuring the 'desire lines'<sup>7</sup> that year after year had been traced by local farmers, kite-flyers, *erhu*-players, couples, kids. The gatekeeper of the temple tells me about the construction of a park. After our brief conversation, he fills my flask with hot water and says gently, with that same openness that had once embraced us: "You are very close to us. Although you live far away, your heart is very close."

At the intersection of the Second Ring Road and Xingqing Street, hundreds of people are enjoying a warm summer evening on the bicycle lane and the patches of grass next to it. Among them, I recognize a dozen men and women standing in a circle, singing: the musicians of the Qinqiang opera house. I ask them whether they still play together, and they confirm to do so when the weather allows it. I wonder whether they can still give rhythm and structure to their community, that now lives scattered along the ring road.

#### Restore

After the campaign by Wen Jiabao, the warning of former president Hu Jintao in January 2012 against a "strategic plot of Westernizing and dividing China" in "ideological and cultural fields", provides another opportunity for dialogue.<sup>8</sup> If there's a threat from abroad, there's also a strong willingness to share scholarship. China invested massively in museums and archaeological work, but perhaps underestimated the cultural robustness in seemingly insignificant places and ways of life. Research in this field can give a voice to people and highlight practices that generate valuable social and cultural capital. This can contribute to the cohesive, harmonious society, that is so much hoped for.

When I revisited the neighbourhood east of Qianmen Dajie in April 2013, surprisingly, most inhabitants were still there. It seemed that the construction craze had come to a grinding halt. The once omnipresent *chai*-character 拆 (demolish) was nowhere to be seen. When I cycled out of the neighbourhood, I did see one big character on a house: *xiu* 修, meaning 'restore'. There is room now for architects like Wang Shu, who uses traditional techniques and materials to address contemporary challenges in urban planning.

When in the 1980s and 1990s, Confucianism was suggested as an alternative social basis, Jenner saw this "as a symptom of the depth of the crisis"<sup>9</sup> and Tam characterized Confucian discourse as "psychologically and politically repressive."<sup>10</sup> In reaction to cultural essentialism, isn't it instead possible to prize the variety of Chinese value systems, and explore how they can strengthen social cohesion in a pluricultural society? Thick ethnographic description, with knowledge of Chinese value systems, can contribute to dialogue. Biehl and Locke asked how ethnographers can effectively bring their material to technocrats and policy makers. According to Bourdieu, "collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the *habitus* of the mobilizing agents."<sup>11</sup> This assumption also holds for researchers who observe social dynamics and frame the dialogue.

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# Indian federalism: the need to look beyond coalition politics

One of the major changes in Indian politics over the last decade and a half has been the ever rising relevance of certain regional parties – and thus states – in India’s political landscape. Many believe the development has strengthened Indian federalism. The fact that no national party – whether the BJP or Congress – is in a position to form a government on its own, is often cited as the primary reason for such a situation. It has aptly been stated in this context, that “Since 1996, regional parties have become indispensable in the formation of government at the national level. They have been important partners in the coalitions that came to power after 1996. Besides, numerical strength of the regional parties has considerably increased, with a sizable vote share being captured by regional parties.”<sup>1</sup>

Tridivesh Singh Maini

THIS TREND HAS INCREASED even more over the past few years, with many believing that India’s federal character has grown to a degree where there is a serious need to make changes to the Indian Constitution. Those advocating a re-look at the constitution recommend granting greater powers to state governments. Regional satraps, like Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, have been at the forefront in demanding such a reform.<sup>2</sup> This line of thought has been prompted by the fact that state governments have begun to influence decisions even on issues pertaining to foreign policy. There is no doubt that state governments, headed by dynamic leaders, have been carrying out economic diplomacy with foreign governments ever since India embarked upon economic reforms.<sup>3</sup>

No one could ever have imagined a few years ago that an international treaty like the Teesta River Water Treaty, which was to be signed between New Delhi and Dhaka in September 2011, would not go ahead because Trinamool Congress (TMC) Supremo and Chief Minister of West Bengal, the mercurial Mamata Banerjee, threatened to walk out of the Congress-led UPA coalition if the treaty went ahead. A year later, Banerjee did end up walking out of the coalition government, when the Central Government went ahead with the introduction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in retail. Similarly, pressure from Tamil Nadu’s two main parties (the DMK – an ally of the ruling alliance till very recently – and AIADMK) compelled India to vote for a US-sponsored resolution against Sri Lanka at the United Nations in March 2012. The resolution condemned Sri Lanka for its violation of human rights during counterterrorism operations against the LTTE.<sup>4</sup> Recently again, India voted against Colombo, the DMK walked out of the coalition, accusing India of going soft on the latter and tabling a mild resolution in Parliament, while also voting for a watered down US sponsored one.<sup>5</sup> This is especially surprising since the Constitution grants the central government all powers pertaining to foreign policy.<sup>6</sup> The Union List (powers granted to the centre) categorically states: “Entering into treaties and agreements with foreign countries and implementing of treaties, agreements and conventions with foreign countries.”<sup>7</sup>

While some believe that this increasing strength of state government denotes a strengthening of India’s federal character, others argue it has weakened New Delhi, and has the capacity to harm India’s national interests. It has been argued in this context that, “this new spirit of federalism is quite misguided... these states have blocked the Union government from creating the National Counter Terrorism Centre (an issue that affects many states), have interfered in foreign affairs (as members of Parliament from Tamil Nadu and the West Bengal government have done) and have demanded greater fiscal room. These are issues that are beyond their competence.”<sup>8</sup>

In addition to influencing policy decisions within coalition governments, allies even influence party decisions on issues such as the choice of Prime Ministerial candidate. Parties look to select an individual who is ‘acceptable’ to allies. There is no better example than how the BJP is being cautious in its projection of Narendra Modi as the party’s Prime Ministerial candidate for the 2014 elections, precisely due to the fact that certain allies such as the JD (U) are uncomfortable with Modi’s projection. Second, as a consequence of regional parties taking a strong stand on issues of relevance for their respective states, state units within national parties are compelled to do the same, and on many occasions are not on the same page as their leadership in New Delhi. Some strong examples of this point include how all parties in Tamil Nadu banded together to obtain amnesty for the killers of Rajiv Gandhi,<sup>9</sup> and how majority pressure in Andhra Pradesh secured the creation of statehood for Telangana.

#### The focus here

While the above examples show the increasing power of regional leaders and state governments, this article focuses on two important issues that are, during discussions on federalism, most often relegated to the sidelines. Firstly, the text looks at how the numerical strength of a state, and the regional party representing the state, determines its potential impact on national politics. Secondly, while certain cantankerous allies take liberties in their relationships with national parties, states and regions must also at times conform to their senior partners in the coalition.

If one were to look at the first issue, while regional parties like DMK, AIADMK, TMC, SP (UP) and even BSP have a strong voice on most issues (with the first three even influencing issues pertaining to foreign policy), smaller regional parties, especially those from the North-East, carry less clout and are not able to influence issues pertaining to economic policy or foreign policy – unlike those from the Southern states and Bengal. In addition, states with larger numbers have a greater financial influence.<sup>10</sup>

With regards to the second point, national parties often force regional allies to toe the line on specific issues. Two clear examples that emerge are the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and FDI in retail. The Shiromani Akali Dal, a key ally of the NDA, was in favour of both the initiatives; it was forced to back out at the last minute, because of pressure from the BJP.<sup>11</sup>

#### Reactions to the problems above

Firstly, of course, there is a need for greater dialogue between the Prime Minister, other Central Ministers, and Chief Ministers across parties – and to not only focus on the big states. This practice has always helped. For example, the big difference between the handling of the Teesta River Water Treaty, which was scuttled, and the Ganges Treaty, which was successfully signed between India and Bangladesh in 1996, is that in the case of the latter, West Bengal was involved already in the initial stages.<sup>12</sup>

Second, there is a dire need to give greater importance to organisations such as the Inter-State council, which was set up in 1990, for ensuring that differences between the centre and state can be amicably resolved. The last meeting of the council was held in 2006. It has very rightly been pointed out that, “The ISC’s poor status is further reflected in the fact that it does not even have a full-time secretary.”<sup>13</sup> In spite of repeated recommendations to strengthen the ISC and for it to meet more frequently, as a tool for dealing with differences between New Delhi and the states, the government has not paid attention.

Third, Federalism needs to be looked at from a broader perspective than politics. The current Congress-led UPA Government is perhaps to be faulted for not being able to differentiate between genuine federal demands, and unreasonable demands of cantankerous allies, but the BJP too has been no better on this account. It may have spoken of Federalism whilst out of power, but whilst in office its own record was not particularly remarkable. While, along with certain Chief Ministers, the party criticised the UPA Government for the NCTC, it did not consult Chief Ministers while in office. A prominent example being the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).<sup>14</sup> This was one of the reasons for its break up with the DMK, which later joined the UPA. Some suggest that the opposition to NCTC was not out of any deep commitment to federalism, but a mere political calculation.<sup>15</sup>

#### Conclusion

It is imperative for sustained dialogue between the centre and states on economic and political issues that may lead to friction, and to not politicize these differences. Apart from this, it is equally important to not confuse the rise of a few powerful regional satraps, and their tussles with the centre, as the strengthening of federalism. True federalism would involve smaller states with lesser representation also having a voice in policy making, and national parties genuinely understanding the viewpoint of states without the sole purpose of keeping alliances intact. Yet, while national parties need to be more sensitive to regional aspirations, it is important that regional leaders act in a mature manner and do not promote controversial politics with the centre for petty gains.<sup>16</sup>

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#### Notes

(All websites accessed in March 2013)

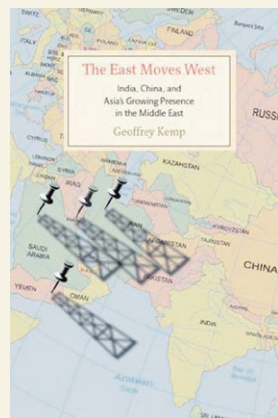
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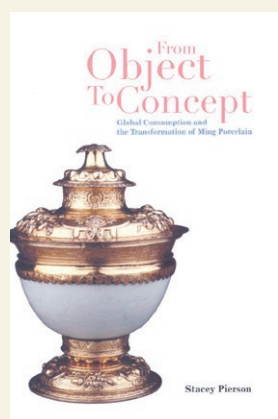


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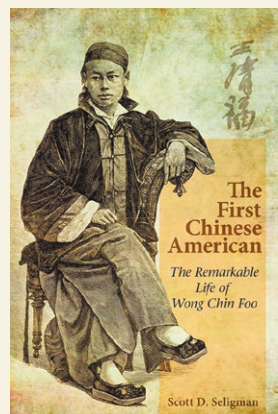
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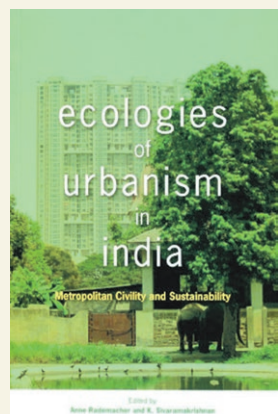
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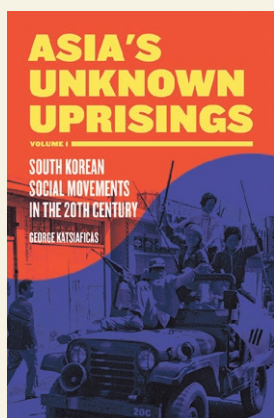
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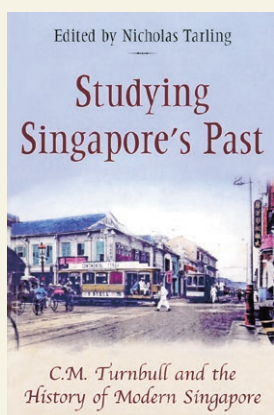


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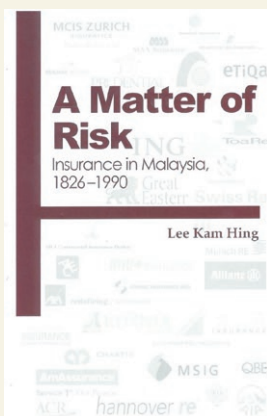
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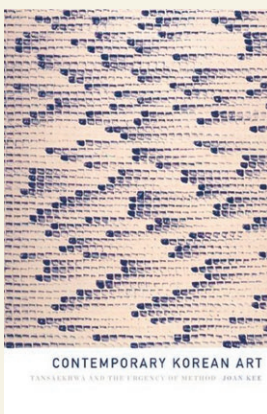
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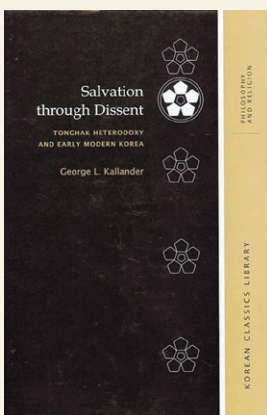


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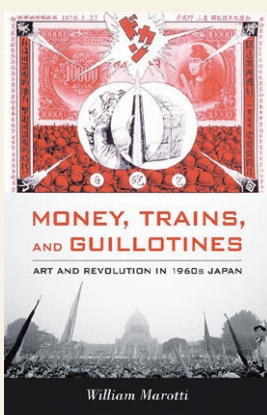


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# Festive festschrift

In German and Austrian ethnology, the idea of Southeast Asia as an area characterised by a striking quantity of socio-cultural commonalities dates back to the early years of the 20th century. At the same time, the imagination of other European and American scholars was captured by the overseas dependencies of their respective states.

Niels Mulder

## Reviewed publication:

Wade, Geoff and Li Tana (eds). 2012. *Anthony Reid and the Study of the Southeast Asian Past*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. xv + 400 pages. ISBN: 978-981-4311-96-0 (paperback)

SUBSEQUENT to the Japanese overwhelming the area in 1942, the Allies established the South-East Asia Command to re-conquer it and ever since Southeast Asia as a particular entity was on the map. As a scholarly invention, it was invigorated at the time of the war in Vietnam when the focus on erstwhile particular colonies became henceforward concentrated in Departments and Institutes of Southeast Asian Studies. Even so, and well into the 1970s, the comparative study of subjects within the Region developed at a slow pace.

As no serious student can break free from the area's baffling diversity, the debate on whether it is more than an accident of geography is with us up to this date. Simultaneously, the works of scholars like Van Leur, Benda, Wertheim, Wolters, Lombard, McVey, Anderson, Evers, Reid, Mulder, King, and Scott, among others, stand out in developing the uniting themes of the various low-land populations of the Region. Among them, Anthony Reid stands out as the prolific, imaginative, and versatile historian.

Whereas the debate on Southeast Asia as a meaningful unit of scholarly investigation will be with us for a long time to come, Reid must be credited with having established the historical reality of pre-colonial Southeast Asia. To succeed in doing this, his persistent focus has been on the 'unmediated' realities of existence in the area and on the experiences and ideas of individual Southeast Asians. Through concentrating on these, he developed Southeast Asian commonalities and points of view that inform the present.

Concurrent with Lombard, Reid identified the pre-colonial Southeast Asian world as an 'Asian Mediterranean' in which the sea both united and divided, and that was richly endowed with commercial, cultural and social interaction. To Reid, Southeast Asia's characteristic diversity was a virtue rather than an obstacle to see the Region as a valid unit of analysis, while giving hope that cultural diversity can coexist with 'globalisation'.

Through persistently pursuing the autonomous approach to Southeast Asian history, the outsiders' gaze on the area's 'Indianisation', 'Sinicisation', 'Islamisation' and 'Westernisation' could be relegated to the wings where it belongs. This latter view of the dominance of outside influences led to gross overstatements and the idea of cultural imitation, and was not helpful to recognise the grafting of external elements on the cultural body of Southeast Asians in their diversity. It was the local genius that captured and domesticated the inputs while shaping them to its own image; it is this own-ness that abundantly dominates. It is Filipino religiosity in Catholic symbols; it is Thai supernaturalism shaping Buddhism; it is Javanese pantheism that enlivens its Islam, etc.

Next to the pragmatic openness to foreign ideas and their localisation, the comparatively favourable position of women in the Region is a persistent theme in Reid's work, even as current technological modernisation imposes restrictions on lower-class women's autonomy.

A third major proposition is the recognition that Southeast Asians have been managing their affairs independent of powerful states and the cultural uniformity imposed by centrist nationalisms. It is these important elements that point to the Region's home-grown potential for generating creative solutions and that give Southeast Asia a special place in global history.

Naturally, Reid's academic excellence prompted in many of us the feeling of being under a—decidedly Southeast Asian—debt of gratitude for raising our awareness and stimulating our thinking. Consequently, as he approached his 'serene seventies', the idea was born to celebrate his sterling achievement with a Festschrift containing fifteen highly readable yet very diverse contributions to the broad field of Southeast Asian Studies.

As may be expected, the first two chapters focus on his life (Wade and Li), and on his scholarship (Cribb). Under "Southeast Asia in the world", we find Lieberman's fascinating historical parallels among the Eurasian rim lands, viz. France, Russia, Japan, and the Southeast Asian polities. Subsequently, Wang Gungwu adjusts the Mediterranean metaphor to the area as 'a two-ocean Mediterranean', which is the right place to introduce Lombard's vision of 'Space and Time' in the archipelagic part of the Region. Following this, Ann Kumar wants to confine herself to its 'Indonesian' sea-farers and their 'Maritime Reach'.

The Part on "Early Modern Southeast Asia" brings together 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China' (Wade), the evolution of boat-building (Manguin), 'Typhoons and the Manila Galleon Trade' (Warren), the Portuguese Topasses in Timor (the Andayas), the Cham diaspora in Ayutthaya (Ishii), and 'Tongkin in the Age of Commerce' (Li).

The last Part, "Modern Southeast Asia" contains a chapter on the influence of the Hadhrami business and religious networks on moulding Southeast Asian identity (Kathirithamby-Wells), 'Islamism's belated, troubled engagement with early Indonesian nationalism' (Elson), and 'power and politics in Chinese communities in Bangkok in the early twentieth century' (Koizumi).

Expectedly, the subject matter of the diverse contributions to this collection is located within the broad expanse of Southeast Asia, even as the bulk of them stand on their own and is not necessarily Reid-ian in their approaches to the Region. It is Lieberman and Wang Gungwu's suggestions and Li Tana's research that connect best with Reid's work. Contrarily, Ann Kumar eloquently argues her reservations to seeing Southeast Asia-wide commonalities because of the absence of cultural and religious, linguistic, and political homogeneity. As a result, she draws the line between the Western Malayo-Polynesian area (Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines) and the highly diversified mainland rest.

Whereas I would have preferred to see more direct connections between Reid's reading of the Southeast Asian past and the work of the various authors, the compilation of their contributions has resulted in a festive, appetising *smörgåsbord* that is still complemented with a 24-page appendix of the publications of the toast of the party—altogether, a most readable Festschrift indeed.

**Niels Mulder recently published *Situating Filipino Civilisation in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Observations* as a print-to-order book (LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, Saarbruecken, 2012). Though retired, he stays in touch through [niels\\_mulder201935@yahoo.com](mailto:niels_mulder201935@yahoo.com) ph**

## Monograph of a Nepalese town



Both images show the temple of Vajra Yogini, Sankhu. (Reproduced under a Creative Commons license, courtesy Flickr)

## Reviewed publication:

Bal Gopal Shrestha. 2012. *The Sacred Town of Sankhu. The Anthropology of Newar Ritual, Religion and Society in Nepal*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. ISBN: 9781443837705

This book, started in 2002 as a PhD thesis at Leiden University, has grown into a voluminous treasure of field data covering history, mythology, ritual geography, caste and religion, *guthi* organisation and socio-economy – all treated in an anthropological framework. It is this holistic approach (reflecting the best traditions of the Leiden school of cultural anthropology) that determines the book's value, and reference to it should henceforward not be lacking in any serious publication, in whatever discipline, on Newar culture.

The core of this study, linking history, mythology, ritual, and social system – and justifying its title – consists of detailed descriptions of two cults: the local Buddhist cult of Vajra Yogini (the goddess residing in the forest temple above Sankhu, believed to be the creator of the kingdom and first king of Sankhu), and the Svasthani cult originating in Sankhu of which David Gellner, in the Foreword of the book, mentions that its fasting practice (*vrata*) "has spread out, not just to other Newar settlements, but (...) to the whole of the Nepali speaking world ... today this includes Nepalis settled in the USA, UK and the Far East". Local and global, inside and outside, closeness and distance, Buddhist and Hindu, Tantric, syncretist Newar and classical Vedic, caste based discrimination and modern democracy contained in this field of study represent oppositions, dilemmas, contradictions, complementarities, dynamic interactions in various respects, presented from different angles. As an inhabitant of Sankhu the author, by experience, has internalized these dynamics himself. Therefore he was well placed to collect inside information from many sources.

In the light of tradition and modernity, there are in increasing measure threats to the socio-ritual fabric that defines Sankhu as a town and as a 'ritual kingdom', both from outside as well as from inside – and this is the case with most Newar towns

This monograph of a Nepalese town or 'ritual kingdom' in the Valley of Kathmandu, covers sixteen centuries – from the 6th century when the Mahayana Gum-vihara in the forest above Sankhu was first mentioned in an inscription, till present-day Sankhu as it appears from a socio-economic survey executed by the author himself. Shrestha has spared neither time nor effort to relate his own meticulously collected fieldwork data to all which is known from archeological, historical, anthropological and religious studies on the religion and culture of the Newar. The end result is a welcome enrichment of all the disciplines mentioned.

Sjoerd Zanen

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in Nepal. Outside factors like land reforms, growing caste consciousness and democratisation have endangered the economical and social foundations (especially *guthis*) on which public rituals, traditional occupations and festivals depend. Inside factors like political oppositions and fragmentation and cultural indifference have led to the disappearance and neglect of much of the traditional heritage. But on the other hand, the opening up of the town, its improved links with Kathmandu (road connection) and the world (telephone and internet connection, foreign anthropologists, donor support, educational facilities) are creating new opportunities that are being increasingly exploited by the inhabitants of Sankhu. Unfortunately, educational and health facilities, and employment have not much improved in Sankhu, which encourages out-migration. Hope to stop this trend is vested in a better road connection with the mountainous hinterland (trade opportunities) and gradual integration of Sankhu in the Kathmandu metropole (public and private investments). Sankhu may have an added value as a future rural 'green' suburb of Kathmandu.

Of particular interest and a great help for scholars are the author's description and explanation of Nepal eras, calendars, (lunar) months, full-moon days, fortnights (bright and dark halves), religiously important days, an inventory of inscriptions, a complete description of all deities and shrines in Sankhu, and the whole Sankhu (multi)annual ritual and festival cycles, a glossary and bibliography. It is also well illustrated with maps and (black and white) photos.

This book is about anthropological facts, structure and system. It is not about feelings and not about stories: the inhabitant's joint excitement and joys, their quarrels and fights, friendship, enmity and jealousy, sorrow and mourning, servitude and rebelliousness. And yet, such facts also characterize the town as a community. In daily life, they criss-cross localities, transcend caste distinctions, political and economical divisions, and transgress conventions. And thus they transcend and transgress the anthropological *structure* but not the anthropological reality. Such issues, completing the story of Sankhu, are to be found in the books by the author's wife Srilaxmi Shrestha, written in Nepal-bhasa. One of these books is translated as *A Cry in the Wilderness*, published in 2011 in Kathmandu by Vajra Publications.

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# Walking on the edge: explorers in China's borderlands

Each of the chapters collected here capture Western and Southwestern China at a time of great flux: the imperial order is ending, the Republican Era is rising, and just over the horizon looms World War II and the Communist takeover. Our explorers, captured in time as they are, know little of this. Instead, they are certain of their place in 'civilization' and convinced that their efforts in recording new places, peoples, flora, and fauna will pave the way for not only the West to continue to grow, but also for the East to rise out of its undeveloped state. As Steven Harrell notes in his introduction to the collection, we are able to better "understand some of the intellectual and political characteristics of an age that already seems very foreign to those of us who tread the same ground only two or three generations later." (p.5)

Jared Phillips

## Reviewed publication:

Denise M. Glover, Stevan Harrell, Charles F. McKhann & Margaret Byrne Swain (eds.) 2011. *Explorers and Scientists in China's Borderlands, 1880-1950*, Seattle: University of Washington. ISBN: 9780295991184 (paperback), 320 pp.

THE WORK IS COMPRISED of eight essays exploring mainly Western figures in Southwest China (predominately located in Yunnan and Sichuan); they illustrate more concretely the intricacies and competitions in this nebulous place that is often overly romanticized by commentators and scholars alike. Connecting the work even more than the subject of explorers are these ideas: notions of modernity, of nationalism, of cultural revival and commodification. While these are not unfamiliar themes to students of exploration and the great shifting of nations in Africa and Asia through the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, we are only just beginning to see them applied to the study of dynastic China, or the Republican and Communist eras. Modernity, never openly defined throughout the collection, is a pervasive theme and is hinged on the clash of American or European notions of civilization that are to be maintained while out in the hinterlands of Southwest China. Contested notions of nationalism, whether imagined or not, emerge as the essays chart the dawning of a new era in China, highlighting the tensions among not just Han groups, but also in the emerging *minzu* groups. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the extent to which most, if not all of the authors in this volume discuss the ways in which their subjects have been or are being used by the current Chinese government (both local and provincial, and in some cases nationally) to resurrect a consumable cultural history.

## Clashing styles: modernity and nationalism

The idea of modernization touched upon throughout the book has little to do with the esoteric debates waged by philosophers and more to do with the day-to-day realities, captured perhaps most in the narratives of Joseph Rock (by Alvin Yoshinga, et. al.) and Paul Vial (by Margaret Swain). In many ways, Rock serves as a trope for the stereotypical explorer – aloof to his Naxi workers, yet friendly when it suited him, capable of extreme largesse (by taking them to Europe or America) or of cultural stinginess, that is, giving of monetary gifts to his employees that were seen as pittance, if not outright insulting. Vial, in a less obvious way, was still intent on modernizing his beloved Sani. While he made enormous contributions to the study of Sani language and culture – contributions still relied upon today – and attempted to at least partially assimilate (wearing similar clothing, eating the local cuisine, etc), he was still firmly rooted in his European cosmology; by showcasing his difference he hoped to bring the Sani up to his level, setting up a microcosm of a French feudal estate with his mission, which for all intents and purposes replaced the previous Chinese landlord with that of the French Catholic Church. Vial was focused, like many missionaries and long-term explorers, on not just reaping some material or spiritual reward for his efforts, but in creating a Francophone place within the wilderness of borderland China. These explorers, which have been loosely characterized by Rock and Vial, were committed to remaking the world through an imagined understanding of how the West (either Europe or America) was ideally operating. While they had a unique appreciation and love for the regions they walked and worked in, they were unable to break free of this dominant view of the last decades of the colonial order.

The second major theme of the work is nationalism, a discussion always fraught with peril. While explorers like Earnest Wilson and the Weiss couple, and even Johan Andersson, were at times critical of the grand style of imperialism that had propelled them to their locations, they were rarely able to dispense with it – setting in place a model to be followed by the growing Chinese Republican and, later, Communist state. While it is difficult to fully agree with Harrell's assessment that these chapters illustrate the creation of a "scientific basis for nationalism", especially in light of Thomas Mullaney's recent work, it is certainly easy to agree that based on the inter-actions Western explorers and missionaries had throughout Yunnan, Sichuan, Hubei, and surrounding provinces that the Chinese state in both its forms was copying the West's propensity for the classification of peoples in order to train them up into a new type of citizenship.<sup>1</sup> And, as recent scholarship has shown, it was indeed to Western modes of classifying minority groups and physical landscapes that the new leaders of China would turn as they attempted to build a state capable of interacting in the new, post-war world.

## The resurgence of cultural commodification

The themes mentioned above are alone enough to recommend this collection, but it is the use to which the explorers discussed have been turned by the current Chinese government that speaks most powerfully to students of post-1945 China. The posthumous fortunes of Western explorers in China's borderlands have been unpredictable at best – initially used to help understand the new nation-state under Mao, then reviled during the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, and now again experiencing a slow revival in the Deng and post-Deng era. This is perhaps no more true than in the story of the American archeologist and missionary David

Crockett Graham, founder of the West China Union University Museum (now Sichuan University Museum) and his works in the Sanxingdui. As Jeff Kyong-McClain (et. al.) and Charles McKhann (et. al.) attest, Graham's work is experiencing a revival as his writings are translated and readily available throughout Sichuan, and the director of the Sichuan University Museum has declared that Graham's contributions "will go down in history" (p.236) This is part of a larger trend throughout China right now; a trend that began during the 1980s and early 1990s, as China has been working to actively commodify both its past and its minority populations (*minzu*) as the profits from national and international tourism have become increasingly apparent.<sup>2</sup> The legacy of the explorers mentioned here have helped to lay the foundation for this ethno- and archeo-tourism boom.

## What about the other borders?

In light of this marvelous examination of the foundations of China's tourist expansion, it is surprising to see two major omissions in the work. By narrowly limiting China's borderlands to the familiar Yunnan-Sichuan corridor, we are left wondering what has happened in Gansu or Qinghai, the great crossroads of Tibetan, Muslim, and Han cultures. Western missionaries and explorers were incredibly active in this region, a region vastly different in culture, geography, and ecology than the lowland regions discussed. The inclusion of these regions – perhaps a study of Robert Ekvall or Victor Plymire – would have presented a more complex and nuanced understanding of a larger contested region, especially with the opening of the railroad into Lhasa. Another region with little mention is the proverbial 'holy grail' for late 19th and early 20th century explorers and missionaries: Tibet. While Tibet's capital city Lhasa does not neatly figure into the direct story of the borderlands, it cannot be denied that many of those moving about Yunnan, Sichuan, and Qinghai from 1880 to 1950 had originally arrived precisely to become the first to penetrate this adventurer's holiest of holies.

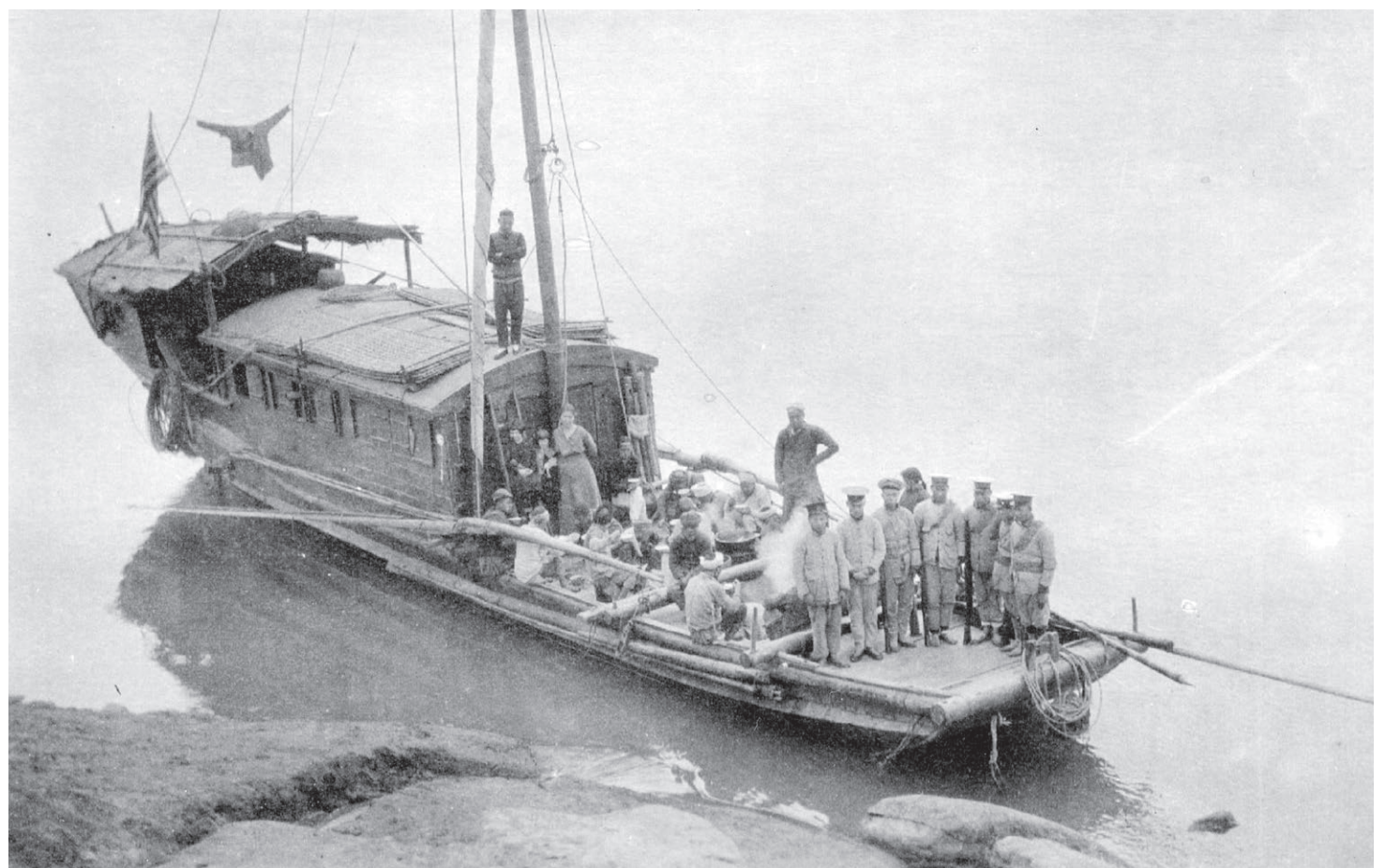
Despite these minor critiques, this work is excellent. By highlighting known and unknown explorers in new and insightful ways it opens a new world of study for experts and interested laymen alike. It successfully blends the histories of missionaries, botanists, and adventure-seekers into the story of multiple peoples and a nation at the precipice of great change. This work is a testament to the growth in interdisciplinary and international studies as scholars from multiple fields and regions give an erudite look at this crucial period of Chinese history. The book is destined to become part of the standard readings for students of modern China.

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## Notes

- 1 See Mullaney, T.S. 2011. *Coming to Terms With the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*, Berkeley: University of California Press
- 2 An excellent look at this is chapter 4 of Gladney, D.C. 2004. *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and other Subaltern Subjects*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Below: The Graham houseboat on the Yangtze River, 1920. (public domain)



Pull-out supplement

# theFocus



The Ruins of St. Paul's Church, Macao. Completed in 1637, it was the biggest Catholic Church in East Asia at that time. The Church caught fire during a typhoon that hit Macao in 1835 leaving only the front façade and the grand stone stairs. (Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy flickr.com)

## The ongoing story of Macao

In the late 15th century, Portugal's age of discoveries inaugurated the contemporary world system that finds its form today in 'globalization', directly contributing to the establishment of mercantile empire, the rise of the nation-state, and the formation of the modern imaginary. In 1557 the Portuguese claimed Macao, the first (and ultimately, the last) European territory in Asia, which would serve mainly as a center for trade and Catholic missions into China. Macao joined the far-flung Portuguese colonies that traced the empire's maritime explorations from the Azores and Madeira, to Senegal, Cape Verde, Guinea, Mozambique, Brazil, India, Malacca, Timor-Leste, and Nagasaki. Macao has effectively bookended the global era of the last half millennia and today the tiny city continues to play a rather remarkable role in the circulations of subjects, cultures, and capital through China.

Tim Simpson

## The ongoing story of Macao *continued*

### Macao's ambiguous territory and sovereignty

Throughout the nearly 450 years that Portugal exercised some claim to Macao the city's sovereign status was opaque, and this strategic ambiguity was opportunistically exploited by both China and Portugal. When the Portuguese first settled in Macao, China did not formally yield power to the Europeans, and "there was no agreement whatsoever specifying the size of the territory and its boundaries".<sup>1</sup> To some extent those unclear boundaries still exist today, especially in regards to the territorial rights to the seas that surround Macao and which are the site of the ongoing expansion of the city through large-scale land reclamation projects. Werner Breitung's geographical contribution to this Focus section highlights this territorial ambiguity. There is a lack of clear historical records regarding the exact administrative agreement forged between the Chinese and Portuguese in relation to Macao, and the territory never clearly belonged exclusively to one or the other power. Indeed what existed in Macao might best be understood as a unique form of shared sovereignty through which both Portugal and China extended limited authority over different dimensions of the city and its population. Cathryn Clayton refers to this status as Macao's "sort-of sovereignty", a designation she explores in her ethnographic contribution to the Focus.

Because of its informal definition, Macao's liminal identity proved useful to various state and non-state actors. Macao served as a conduit for not only commerce between Europe and China, but for China's illicit trade with Japan, which was otherwise forbidden by imperial edict. Not to be outdone, Britain also had interests in the enclave, which are discussed by historian Rogerio Puga in his contribution here.

Macao has been long known for tolerating vices that were forbidden in surrounding territories; such questionable commercial activities included smuggling, gambling, prostitution, opium production, and the coolie trade. Between 1850 and 1875, more than 70% of all Chinese indentured servants were recruited on the mainland and exported around the globe from Macao.<sup>2</sup> After Mao Tse-Tung's ascension to power in the PRC, one of Macao's roles was to function as a business and financial conduit for the Communist Party. The city facilitated various partnerships between the Chinese left and right, the overseas Chinese diaspora and the world beyond the PRC. Due to the economic blockade of China by western powers in the 1950s, Macao became "the conduit for huge quantities of products that were indispensable to the survival of the Maoist regime: petrol, metals, automobiles, chemical products, etc., which were purchased by the People's Republic of China's representative in the territory, the Nam Kwong Consortium".<sup>3</sup>

Macao's post-war role as a gold market likewise exploited the enclave's ambiguous status. Since Portugal refused to sign the post-war Bretton Woods Agreement, which tightly regulated the price of gold on the world market, Macao became a global hub for the gold trade. In 1948, the *Miss Macao*, a small seaplane transporting gold cargo between Hong Kong and Macao, became a historical footnote as the site of the first recorded air hijacking. From 1949 to 1973, 934 tons of gold were legally imported into Macao and presumably smuggled out again (though no official records document this process). "If all that bullion had stayed in Macao," mused Pina-Cabral, "the city would now be paved in gold".<sup>4</sup> Visitors today to Macao's glittering megaresorts might not find that sentiment so far-fetched.



### The contemporary transformation of Macao

Macao's ongoing, dramatic economic transformation is motivated by the expansion of the casino tourism industry. Gambling has been legal in Macao since 1847, and traditionally operated as a monopoly concession granted by the government administration to a private entrepreneur in exchange for a percentage of the revenue. Hong Kong billionaire Stanley Ho held that monopoly for 40 years prior to Portugal's return of the territory to China in 1999. After the handover the government liberalized the casino monopoly and opened it to investment by foreign gaming companies from North America, Australia, and Hong Kong, which have poured billions of dollars into the city. As a result, Macao has become the world's most lucrative site of casino gaming revenue. By 2010 Macao's casino revenue was quadruple that of Las Vegas, and Macao's 2012 gaming revenue totaled \$38 billion, an amount larger than was collectively generated by the entire commercial casino industry in the United States. The local government collects 40% of this revenue in gaming taxes. These enormous profits are driven by tourists; 28 million people visited Macao in 2012 alone, more than half of them from mainland China. When Chinese workers can serve as the engine of such unprecedented economic growth and of fabulous personal wealth for foreign entrepreneurs operating out of a shabby exterior ex-colonial enclave – and do so not as producers but as consumers – we are surely witnessing one of the major “epochal shifts in the constitutive relationship of production to consumption, and hence of labor to capital”.<sup>5</sup> Macao's significance today, in the post-socialist transformation of China, parallels in some ways the city's autochthonous role in global trade.

### Urban phantasmagoria

Transnational investment has created a phantasmagoric cityscape of iconic glass towers and themed casino resorts that sit alongside colonial-era buildings and monuments. Macao is undergoing a period of remarkable development; however, ‘development’ implies temporal progress, and the term obscures how history essentially stands still in Macao. Spatial production, not linear temporal evolution, defines the city. Macao is a palimpsest on whose surface is written the various historical stages of capital development and accumulation, from mercantilist maritime colonial expansion to neoliberal marketization. The spaces of the city have been endlessly reclaimed, reproduced, engineered, and commodified. For example, the same year that the labyrinthine city center of Macao, composed of old Portuguese government buildings, piazzas, and Catholic churches, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, investors broke ground nearby on a huge \$154 million Fisherman's Wharf featuring themed reproductions of a Roman Coliseum, Tang Dynasty Chinese architecture, buildings from Amsterdam, Lisbon, Cape Town, and Miami, and a simulated volcano.

The current construction trend tends towards an interiorized, encapsulated, and air-conditioned urbanity, as massive integrated resorts like Venetian Macao – the second largest building in the world – Sands-Cotai, and City of Dreams, constructed on reclaimed land between the islands of Coloane and Taipa, offer themed pseudo-metropolitan spaces in a completely privatized indoor locale. For its part, the Venetian includes the world's largest casino, 3000 hotel rooms, 350 retail shops, three indoor canals plied by Puccini-singing Filipino gondoliers, a 15000 seat auditorium for concerts by Beyonce and the Black-Eyed Peas, 1.2 million square feet of conference facilities, a large clinic offering a patented form of dental reconstruction surgery, and an off-campus facility of the University of Macau. With residences, shopping, dining, entertainment, a waterway, and medical and educational facilities, the Venetian constitutes a city unto itself, an enclave within an enclave.

### “Nothing serious could ever happen here”?

Ordained by poet W. H. Auden in the 1930s as a city where “nothing serious could ever happen”, and whose citizens were described only thirty years ago as “among the most unrepresented, forgotten people in Asia”,<sup>6</sup> Macao is now experiencing a remarkable resurgence. Nevertheless, today the Macanese and Portuguese communities combined comprise only a small percentage of the population. The Macanese or ‘Sons of the Earth’, those unrepresented indigenous residents of Macao, and their disappearing Patuá (Macao Creole), are the subject of the contribution to this Focus by Elisabela Larrea.

Macao's recent economic development has understandably been the catalyst for rapid growth of the local population, which increased by 27% between 2001 and 2011. With 552,503 people in a land mass of only 26.2 square km, Macao is now the most densely populated territory in the world. Significantly, 59% of the population was born outside of the city, including more than 107,000 non-resident workers currently living in the city on short-term work permits as well as many first-generation immigrants from the mainland. More than half of the local workers are employed in service industries: casinos, hotels, restaurants, and retail. This largely temporary and transient population, with many members who have no enduring civil commitment to the city – along with the significant influence of the ubiquitous gaming industry on local politics – creates challenges for establishing a civil society and normalized everyday urban life for the heterogeneous population. These topics are addressed respectively in the Focus contributions by Sonny Lo and Andy Fuller.

Macao's unique qualities have prompted increased interest from scholars working in a variety of academic disciplines, many of which are represented in this section: History, Anthropology, Political Science, Performance Studies, Geography, Communication and Cultural Studies. Rounding out this Focus on Macao Studies is a contribution by eminent historian Roderich Ptak, who reviews a four-volume reference work recently published by the University of Macau, arguably the most comprehensive resource available for Portuguese literate scholars interested in the city.

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Macao Skyline.  
(Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy flickr.com)



All images in this Focus section are courtesy of Tim Simpson, unless otherwise specified.

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# Macau in the eyes of a border scholar

Places are created by the interplay of people and geographical space. Their identity is shaped by these people and by geographical factors, which determine the opportunities, limitations and conditions for human place-making. Macau as a unique place is mainly defined by two geographical factors: the sea and the border to China. The significance of the sea is most apparent from the fact that about two thirds of the current land surface has been reclaimed from the sea. It is also apparent from the role of fishermen, seafarers and other maritime trades in Macau's history, from the imaginary of the Praia Grande, bridges and the Guia Lighthouse, and from the cultural diversity of a former port city and colonial outpost. Macau has always been a maritime and an international place.

Werner Breitung



AT THE SAME TIME, Macau has also always been a border city and gateway to China. She is mainly built and populated by border-crossers from the Cantonese hinterland and shaped by a multitude of cross-border flows. Her economy and unique culture are derived from the geographical identity as a border city. This notably refers not only to the connecting functions of the border, but also to the counterforce of separation and difference. Macau always benefitted from differences in laws and regulations *vis-à-vis* China, which allowed trade and businesses to flourish when they were banned elsewhere. This is most obvious for the gambling industry, but we could also think of the production of fire crackers. The current back bone of Macau's economy, tourism, is also based on difference – in this case a different culture and heritage, as well as a different gambling legislation. The combination of proximity and difference, of connection and separation is essential for the place identity of border cities in general and of Macau in particular.

As much as the understanding of the border can help us to understand Macau, Macau can also help us in the conceptualisation of borders. The field of border studies has flourished in the past 20 years, when globalisation and the end of the cold war saw the number of independent states and thus also international borders grow, and simultaneously the functions and openness of these borders change.<sup>1</sup> These developments called for a more differentiated account of bordering processes, dynamics of permeability and of the meanings borders have for the state and for border communities. In accordance are the number and diversity of emerging case studies from fields such as anthropology, geography, international politics and economics multiplied, and – more importantly – new theoretical conceptualisations of borders.<sup>2</sup>

The case of Macau is very illustrative for this new, more differentiated understanding of borders. Recent studies of this border city show how the meanings and functions of the border have constantly been constructed and reconstructed, negotiated and renegotiated by local and more distant actors, even if the border has not changed in space. The case of Macau also shows that the old fixation on international borders, as lines between sovereign countries, does not fit the reality of a world with globalised flows and graduated sovereignties. International borders can become localised by everyday practices of border-crossing and petty trade; and local borders can become internationalised when state control is enacted in train stations and airports or when the campus of the University of Macau is surrounded by a quasi-international border. Whether Macau's border is, or ever was, an international border can be answered based on constitutional considerations and inter-state relations, but for the reality and the actual meaning of the border other categories such as permeability and identity are much more important. They can disclose not only the detailed and layered constituents, but also the dynamics of the border.

#### Ambiguity in space and character: history of Macau's borders

When in 1557 the Portuguese were allowed to settle in Macau, it was not meant as a transfer of territory or sovereignty. Therefore, no treaty was signed to specify any boundaries. In practice, the Portuguese settled in the southwest of the Macau Peninsula between Penha Hill and Monte Fortress. Between this settlement and the long and narrow isthmus connecting the peninsula to the mainland were fields and small Chinese settlements.<sup>3</sup> Macau was under the administration of Xiangshan, today Zhongshan,

in Guangdong. While allowing the Portuguese to settle and conduct trade in Macau, the Chinese rulers upheld their claim of sovereignty over the whole area and the jurisdiction over the Chinese living there.<sup>4</sup> The Portuguese had to pay a ground rent and customs taxes, and they were only allowed to exercise jurisdiction over matters within their own community. Based on a close liaison between the local mandarins and Macau's Senate, sovereignty was shared more along ethnic lines than along geographical boundaries.<sup>5</sup>

However, physical boundaries in space have also always existed. The first border structure in Macau was a wooden wall erected by the Portuguese. In 1573, the Chinese built a Barrier Gate, so they could cut off the peninsula from the mainland. In 1605, the Portuguese built a city wall about 2 km south of the Barrier Gate. None of the two structures was intended to demarcate the territory of Macau, but merely to serve practical purposes such as containing crime and controlling access. They were also not fortified. The current Barrier Gate is from 1870, when the Portuguese military destroyed the original gate to replace it with a western style building.<sup>6</sup>

This was the time when other colonial powers, most notably the British, had established their presence in China with better conditions forcibly obtained from the weak Qing Government. In this environment, the Portuguese also raised demands, such as full sovereignty over Macau and territorial expansion. The notorious governor Ferreira do Amaral in the 1840s unilaterally closed the Chinese customs posts in the city, stopped paying the ground rent and levied taxes on the Chinese citizens of Macau. Furthermore, the Portuguese jurisdiction was extended to the whole area up to the Barrier Gate. Ferreira do Amaral is until today remembered by the Chinese as an evil colonialist.

The Macao Barrier Gate (Portas do Cerco) was built in 1870. In 2004 an immigration and customs building (Posto Fronteiriço das Portas do Cerco) was erected during the renovation of the area, and now towers over the nineteenth century gate. (Image courtesy of flickr)



His grand statue had to be removed and returned to Portugal before the handover in 1999. However, the key link between Macau and the border to China, the former isthmus leading to the Barrier Gate, is still called *Istmo de Ferreira do Amaral* in Portuguese, in remembrance of the fact that this was where the governor was beheaded by angry Chinese. This name is acceptable because the Chinese name refers to the Barrier Gate, not to Ferreira do Amaral. Again, the boundary here is not so much territorial, but cultural. Two different, even opposing sets of memory share the same space, divided only by the mutually unfamiliar languages.

Territorial expansion also started during this time. Portugal seized the two islands of Taipa in 1851, Coloane in 1864 and Ilha Verde in 1890, and claimed Montanha (Big Hengqin), Dom João (Small Hengqin) and Lapa (Wanzai), which lie to the west of the Inner Harbour. Their annexation promised to resolve the problem of the divided harbour and provide land, water supply and protection for the port. The Portuguese built houses and even a cemetery on these islands. In Montanha they reportedly also collected taxes.<sup>7</sup> Chinese historians, however, emphasise the resistance by the Chinese on these islands against Portuguese occupation during the Qing dynasty and especially under Kuomintang rule.<sup>8</sup>

Sino-Portuguese negotiations to delineate the border were held in 1862, 1887, 1909 and 1928,<sup>9</sup> but all of them failed. The 1887 agreement included the confirmation of “perpetual occupation and government of Macau by Portugal”, but this treaty has never been ratified by China.<sup>10</sup> In 1979, after the Carnation Revolution, Portugal established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China and, in a secret note, gave up the claim of sovereignty.<sup>11</sup> Both sides agreed to the formula “Chinese territory under Portuguese administration” – basically meaning Portugal did not claim sovereignty and China did not exercise it – but even then definition of territory and demarcation of boundaries were avoided. In the words of Cremer “neither the borders nor the questions of nationality, sovereignty and government have ever been as clearly defined as for other countries. Even the formula of ‘Chinese territory under Portuguese administration’ (...) does not really clarify the status of Macau. Rather this formula confirms that Macau is unique and that it is difficult and perhaps not appropriate to define Macau in familiar legal terms”.<sup>12</sup>

While international relations were often difficult, local interactions with the surrounding Chinese districts were generally less complicated. Macau depended on the China trade and on food and water from the mainland. In 1887, Zhang Zhidong wrote: “merchants from the districts of Nanhai, Panyu, Xiangshan and Shunde, exceeding tens of thousands, come and go between Macau and the province. They frequently set up livelihoods and establish businesses in both places, unrestrained by the borders, which causes excessive lawlessness among the people. Their endless traffic is like the weaving of cloth”.<sup>13</sup> In fact, this description of cross-border flows sounds very familiar from today’s perspective.

Such close interaction later facilitated political infiltration in both directions. Sun Yatsen’s 1911 revolution in China benefitted strongly from contacts and supply from Macau. Sun himself was born in Macau’s hinterland and had close connections to the city. Inversely, during the Cultural Revolution in 1966, violent protests erupted also in Macau. They were met with much less opposition than in neighbouring Hong Kong. During the cold war, Macau was a centre of espionage and the border was a cold-war border, but it did not represent the same ideological divide as the border of Hong Kong or the Iron Curtain in Europe.

#### From conflict to tacit agreement: post 1999 cross-border cooperation

When China retreated from ideology and opened up, cross-border contacts started to flourish. With the establishment of the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone in the 1980s and Macau’s handover in 1999, cross-border contacts and integration have grown further.

Politically, Macau became a Special Administrative Region of China, following the example of Hong Kong. While the sovereignty lies with the People’s Republic of China, a high degree of autonomy is guaranteed. Macau can join international organisations, has an independent judiciary and administration and issues its own currency. All these are actually important aspects of sovereignty, which lie with the Macau government, not with the sovereign in Beijing. The Chinese army has a garrison in Macau but does not recruit soldiers there; the Special Administrative Region does not engage in foreign, but in external affairs – an arguably rather vague difference – and the Central Government is not directly involved in the selection of leading officials, but in reality it determines the outcome. Therefore, sovereignty is uncontested, but it is still de facto shared and not very clear-cut.

Even the boundaries are still not clearly defined. In 1999, the Chinese State Council published a map and related text (Annex to Decree No. 275) to define the territory of Macau. The former, however, does not show any boundary, neither at sea nor at land, and the latter only states: “The area of the Macau SAR includes the Macau peninsula and the islands of Taipa and Coloane. The Northern Zone of the Macau SAR borders on the terrestrial area of Gongbei in the City of Zhuhai in Guangdong province. To the south of the Arch of Barrier Gate the jurisdiction is exercised by the Macau SAR. The form of administration of the land between the front Tower of the Banner of the Gongbei (Zhuhai) Frontier Post and the north of the Arch of Barrier Gate is maintained unchanged. The Macau SAR maintains its jurisdiction over the former Macau maritime area”.<sup>14</sup> This carefully circumvents the two unclear issues: the so-called no-man’s land between the Gongbei Frontier Post and the Barrier Gate, whose administration “is maintained unchanged”, whatever this means, and the so-called traditional waters, which have never been defined.

The issue of the no-man’s land became important with plans for new border control facilities, due to increased demand. A new checkpoint on the Zhuhai side opened in 1999, but the Macau counterpart could not expand without encroaching into the no-man’s land. Only after the handover of Macau could an agreement with the mainland be reached to lease 2.8 ha of land between the two checkpoints. The lease will expire after 50 years.

The issue of the maritime border is even more important in a city that has gained most of its land by reclamation. Macau and the surrounding Chinese islands have grown several times their original size. Maritime space is rapidly turned into land on both sides without any clear agreement as to whom the sea actually belongs. Since the maritime border is fluid in any sense, the solidification of land also means a solidification of territorial claims. Therefore both sides have eagerly reclaimed land vis-à-vis each other, and the distance between them kept shrinking. The most extreme case of this can be observed around Ilha Verde (Green Island), which is now surrounded by reclaimed land of both jurisdictions. It is quite symbolic that this was later the place to turn competition into co-operation and set up a cross-border industrial zone.

Macau officials treated both the agreement on the no-man’s land and the industrial park as trial balloons for the bigger project of jointly developing Zhuhai’s Hengqin Island, which is more than twice the size of Macau. Hengqin, less than 200m away from Macau’s Taipa and Coloane Islands, is closer to Macau than to urban Zhuhai. Macau has always had an eye on Hengqin, but the mainland side did not want to appear as belatedly accepting old Portuguese claims. Other more practical hindrances were military installations on that island, complicated land-use arrangements between Zhuhai and Shunde<sup>15</sup> and unresolved issues of how to control access, how to define the legal status and what exactly to build on this land. Plans and works are now under way to build a business hub at an extremely ambitiously scale, several leisure and tourism facilities and, as the first completed complex, the new campus of the University of Macau. This cross-border university campus symbolises and perpetuates a centuries-old tradition of shared sovereignty in Macau.

Border guardhouse on Hengqin, the mainland PRC island directly adjacent to Macau. (courtesy of Werner Breitung)



#### Permeability and meaning: the view from the ground

Border regimes are determined not only by inter-state relationships, but also by everyday practices of border communities and by the representation of borders in peoples’ minds. Since the early 1980s, the Macau-Zhuhai border became increasingly permeable for Macau residents. Due to the ease of border-crossing, the proximity of Zhuhai to the Macau urban core and existing contacts especially with Zhongshan, border-crossing became a feature of Macau people’s life. In 2002, the average Macau resident crossed the border around 40 times per year. The overall number of border-crossings between Macau and the mainland reached around 30 million in 2000 and then surged to 63 million in 2004.<sup>16</sup> The reason for this accelerated increase was the counter-flow of visitors from the mainland to Macau, which only really started in the early 2000s.

Although the immigration checks on both sides are very strict, the border is not really experienced as a barrier, but merely as an entrance gate. It still has a strong symbolic function. Interviews and surveys by the author<sup>17</sup> have shown a strong sense of difference regarding places and people, which is symbolised by the border and the action of border-crossing. Despite the actual similarity in culture and national self-identification, most respondents would be opposed to the removal of border controls. The most common fears were a loss of security, excessive population growth and a more competitive labour market. Even a Chinese who recently moved to Macau in search of opportunities herself, said: “The security would be bad. Everyone could enter Macau if they want. Many poor Chinese people would come to Macau and search opportunities to become rich.” A recurrent theme in many of the more emotional statements was that of a “crowd of people that would come.” It was often linked with crime, bad behaviour or even diseases. Additionally, many interviewees saw the border as a symbol of Macau’s autonomy, which needs to be preserved: because of differences in identity and culture, because of the better political system or because of economic advantages.<sup>18</sup>

Even though the border is guaranteed to remain in place for 50 years following the handover, and changes in the actual border regime have been very gradual, the meaning and permeability of the border has changed tremendously. The dynamics of change have been driven by both changes on the political level and local agency of border communities. The interplay of these two factors and the related ambiguities throughout the history make Macau an intriguing study field for border studies.

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# Macau's 'sort-of sovereignty'

As you stroll through the exuberantly neon-drenched architectural massifs that line the streets of downtown Macau and Cotai in 2013, the city's history of Portuguese rule may seem like a very distant memory. Fourteen years after the handover to Chinese administration and a decade after a change in the regulatory framework allowed a massive flow of foreign capital into the casino economy, the city's orientation toward mainland China and its affinities with other 'tourist utopias' like Las Vegas and Dubai<sup>1</sup> may seem to have overwhelmed all but the most superficial Iberian influences. But dig a little deeper, listen a little harder, and it is evident that two of the questions that provoked the most anxious debate among Macau residents in the waning years of Portuguese rule still resonate today: What is the nature of Macau's difference from its Chinese neighbors? And to what extent is that difference attributable to the city's history of Portuguese rule?

Cathryn H. Clayton



## Identitarian project

In the mid-1990s, with the knowledge that more than four centuries of Portuguese rule would be coming to a negotiated end in a few short years, the Portuguese administration mounted a massive campaign to convince Macau residents, 95% of whom identified as Chinese, that they could lay proud claim to an identity that made them different from all other Chinese people: an identity that had resulted from the 450-year history not of colonialism, but of a kind of shared sovereignty that was unique in the modern world. This project required a thorough transformation of the dominant image of Macau as a colonial backwater, a seedy, decaying 'city of sin', and of the Portuguese administration's image as a corrupt and inept colonial power that had presided over—and benefited from—this decay.

In the years just prior to the handover, the Portuguese state's project became one of convincing both its own residents and observers around the world that Macau's history and culture should be sources of pride to its current residents. Macau was the earliest and most enduring site of respectful, amicable relations between Chinese and Westerners. It was an exemplar of multicultural tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Its residents were not abjected and corrupted by centuries of collaboration with the forces of European imperialism; instead, their experience of Portuguese rule had made them the bearers of a kind of Chineseness that was at once more rooted and more cosmopolitan than any other. In promoting this identitarian project, the Portuguese government had to cut through powerful anti-colonial nationalist ideologies of the coterminousness of blood, land, language and sovereign power, and create instead a unified Macau identity fashioned around allegiance to the place, Macau, and to a particular understanding of the history that had made that place what it was today.

## Recasting the narrative of Macau history

This attempt to effect a transvaluation of values in terms of how Macau was viewed in the modern world may seem like little more than a colonial government's self-serving attempt to deny its own colonialism and whitewash the otherwise dreary effects of its presence; yet it garnered tacit support from the staunchly anti-imperialist Communist Party of China (CPC) in Beijing. Macau was to be incorporated into the Chinese nation-state under the rubric of the 'one country, two systems' policy, in which both Macau and Hong Kong would maintain the political, economic, social and cultural 'systems' they had evolved under European rule, at precisely the same time that China was gearing up for closer and more formal integration into the global capitalist economy (its bid to join the WTO was successful in 2001). If Macau's 'system' could be defined as a harbinger of China's role in bringing about harmony and prosperity through the civilizing effects of international trade—rather than as the outcome of the exploitation, racism, and 'national humiliation' associated with colonialism—it would not only justify Beijing's decision to effectively exempt two major cities from the policies that applied to the rest of the nation, it would prove to the world that in China, the roots of capitalist globalization ran deep, and thus that China deserved to be treated not as "a problem for world trade",<sup>2</sup> but as a valued partner in the creation of global prosperity.

As a result of this convergence of interests between Lisbon and Beijing, the project of recasting the narrative of Macau history took palpable form in the city. In the last decade of its administration, Macau's Portuguese administration spent millions of dollars creating ten new museums, restoring historical buildings and monuments, and publishing (in Chinese, Portuguese, and English) hundreds of books and magazines dedicated to valorizing the glories of the past, when Macau had been an anchor for trade routes that spanned

the globe from Lisbon to Acapulco and had played host to scholars, poets and playwrights such as Matteo Ricci, Luís de Camões and Tang Xianzu. It sponsored dozens of academic conferences and staged an impressive number of cultural events, all aimed at establishing Macau's historical role as a precursor of globalization and at re-imagining the city as a kind of heroic, subversive alternative to the "Anglophone hegemony"<sup>3</sup> of modernity that had relegated both Portugal and China to its margins.

## Different from all other Chinese

Among the residents it was directed towards, this project had mixed results. Some Macau residents found the celebration of Macau's early cosmopolitan stature to be a refreshing change from the usual view of Macau as a washed-up, second-rate Hong Kong. Others disagreed with the state's views of what Macau's 'true' identity was, but found that the conversation about what made Macau unlike other Chinese places was worth having. And many others, it must be said, dismissed the 'identity' project as the pathetic fiction of a morally bankrupt colonial administration. Yet the sheer volume of ink and concrete that were expended on the goal of convincing Macau residents that they were different from all other Chinese, because of their experience of an *alien rule that was not colonial*, raised real questions about the meaning of sovereignty (what was 'sovereignty', such that Macau's past could be construed as 'not colonial?'), of Chineseness (what was 'Chineseness', such that the Chinese in Macau were 'different?'), and of the intersection between them.

The answer to these questions, and which was promoted in government-sponsored museums and publications, defined sovereignty in terms of military, political, economic and cultural supremacy; by this definition, the Portuguese had not been colonizers because they had never held such supremacy. They had not used force to wrest Macau from Ming control; the Portuguese settlement there had been the result of negotiation and compromise. For three hundred years, they had paid ground rent to the Chinese authorities in return for permission to maintain a settlement on the Macau peninsula; when requested, they had provided valuable military aid to the Ming and Qing governments; their representatives had performed the kowtow to the emperor and had accepted titles indicating that they had been incorporated into the imperial bureaucracy centered in Beijing. For three hundred years, they had governed only themselves, inside the walls of the city, while recognizing their total dependence on the emperor and his subjects for even the barest necessities like water and food. Indeed, on several occasions, at the first sign of Portuguese truculence, the Chinese authorities had ordered all their subjects to evacuate the city, effectively starving the Portuguese into submission.

## A 'half-liberated area'

Yet, the argument went, this did not mean that the Portuguese had been mere vassals of the Chinese empire. Often, the Portuguese crown had acted as if it were supreme ruler of the territory. In 1586, for example, the Viceroy of Goa, acting on the assumption that he, not the Ming emperor, had jurisdiction over Macau, elevated its administrative status from a settlement (*povoação*) to a city (*cidade*). In 1846, Lisbon sent Governor Ferreira do Amaral to unilaterally assert Portugal's formal sovereignty over the entire territory by refusing to recognize the authority of any Qing official within Macau's borders, and claiming jurisdiction over land and people (Chinese as well as Portuguese) far beyond the existing city walls. And in 1887, Qing officials had been compelled to sign the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Friendship and Commerce, which recognized "the perpetual occupation and government of Macau and its dependencies by Portugal". But even then, the argument continued, when Portugal's formal claim to sovereignty over Macau had apparently been recognized by international law, the Portuguese had never imposed their language, religion, political ideologies or educational standards upon the Chinese people under their rule. Thus the history of the Portuguese presence in Macau was presented as one of shared sovereignty, a 'sort-of sovereignty', in which the answer to the question "who's in charge here?" was entirely contextual and often deliberately ambiguous.

This historical narrative and this conception of the nature of Portuguese rule did not go unchallenged during the transition era. Some Macau residents maintained a more common-sense definition of colonialism as simply any foreign occupation of Chinese soil; they pointed to the structure of the city's political system, which consistently advantaged Portuguese people and Portuguese speakers, to argue that the entire history of Portuguese presence had been colonial in nature. Some historians suggested that the 'colonial' period had begun only with the arrival of Ferreira do Amaral in 1846 when, influenced by the example of the British in Hong Kong, Portugal had begun to insist that the existence of a self-governing Portuguese settlement on Chinese soil was itself evidence of Portugal's *de facto* sovereignty over

Above: Neon Macao. (Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of flickr.com)

## ... and the contested meanings of cultural heritage

the territory. Others suggested that, regardless of when it had begun, the colonial period had ended in 1966, when Maoist-inspired demonstrations and boycotts had forced the Portuguese administration to accede to a series of demands that had made Macau, as the saying went, a 'half-liberated area'.

### Hybridity and illegitimacy

But more intense debate surrounded the question of how Macau's past had shaped residents' sense of their own Chineseness. In the government's narrative, this history of 'sort-of sovereignty' had made Macau residents 'sort-of Chinese' – "Latin Chinese", as one publication put it.<sup>4</sup> This transculturation was evident in the hybrid architecture of the buildings they created, the hybrid cuisine they developed, and the notably 'laid-back', tolerant character – and the intimate, small-town feel – of the city they inhabited. During the transition era, Macau's small community of ethnically mixed residents, known as the Macanese, became the symbol par excellence of this hybridity: in phenotypical, linguistic, culinary, religious and genetic terms, they were the ultimate expression of the spirit of peaceful, generative exchange between diverse peoples that the Portuguese administration was trying to claim as its legacy.

At the same time that the government was promoting this image of Macau as a land of peace and tolerance, however, the triad gangs who controlled access to the most lucrative VIP rooms in Macau's ten casinos entered into a turf war that was waged as much in the media as it was on the streets of downtown Macau. In 1997 and 1998, newspaper reports of drive-by shootings in broad daylight, rashes of car and motorcycle bombings, and a mounting homicide rate were matched only by the coverage of Broken Tooth Koi, the flashy and flamboyantly unapologetic lord of Macau's underworld, who gave interviews to *Time Magazine* and produced a thinly veiled autobiographical film featuring some of the best-known artists of Hong Kong action films. As tourists began staying away in droves and Macau's economy came to a stand-still, residents began to measure the Portuguese administration by a standard of sovereign power that was calibrated not just in terms of the monopoly on legitimate force, but in terms of a monopoly on symbolic authority: the government was illegitimate because it could control neither the criminals on its streets nor the way those criminals were represented in the international media.

Broken Tooth's film, like triad lore more broadly, drew on long-standing mythologies of righteous outlaws that mobilize some of the core symbols of Chinese political, religious, and literary culture to portray the triads as reluctant heroes in a corrupt world. The Portuguese state played right into this

Above: Triads' Revenge: in the late 1990s, arson attacks on motorcycles became a common tactic in the triad turf war, and a symbol of a more ruinous interpretation of the effects of Portuguese rule. (Photo by Cathryn Clayton, used by permission)



Below: Leal Senado Square, 1999: the "peaceful coexistence of East and West" took palpable form in the city, as the state spent millions to restore picturesque old buildings. (Photo by Cathryn Clayton, used by permission)



narrative by responding to the street violence with a degree of passivity that most Macau residents found unacceptable. Portuguese officials tried to downplay their inability to stop the violence by suggesting that the triads were an endemic problem in Chinese society that 'outsiders' could do nothing about; they tried to calm the public's nerves by suggesting that law-abiding citizens had nothing to worry about because the triad hit men were professionals who never missed their target. They suggested (only obliquely in public, but quite explicitly in interviews with me) that the surge in violence must be due to gangsters from over the border in China, since Macau's own homegrown thugs were of a more gentlemanly type who would never resort to such ruthlessness. Even though many Macau residents actually agreed with some of these sentiments, the fact that they had been uttered out loud by some of the highest representatives of the state simply confirmed the view that the Portuguese government was an alien and illegitimate regime, and that the 'sort-of sovereignty' it was claiming to have invented was nothing but an excuse for its incompetence, corruption and complete inability to govern.

### A prosperous post-handover future?

In the late 1990s, then, it seemed that in its attempt to make Macau and its history a source of pride for its residents, the Portuguese administration was fighting a losing battle. Many Chinese residents I spoke with did find some aspects of this project meaningful – the representation of Macau's past in the Macau Museum, for example, was remarkably popular, and I spoke with numerous people who worried that if the uniqueness of Macau's 'system' were not clearly defined and defended, the city would lose its autonomy and become little more than an appendage of neighboring Zhuhai. But for the most part, anger and impatience over the triad situation, frustration with the economic stagnation, the surge of nationalist discourse in conjunction with the handover, and uncertainty about the post-handover future combined to make Macau residents singularly unreceptive to the message that they should take pride in their history or in anything Portuguese about their city.

Macau's Portuguese past was not something upon which a prosperous future could be built; it was something that had to be overcome in order for prosperity to arise. Some people hoped, and others feared, that with the departure of the Portuguese, the process of overcoming that past by dismantling all traces of it in the present would commence in earnest. Within a decade, Portuguese observers predicted with despair, Macau would become indistinguishable from any other Chinese city.

Which brings us back to Macau in 2013. What Portuguese observers could not have predicted was that in the decade following the handover, Macau weathered a casino-driven economic boom that has given it not just the highest per capita GDP in Asia, but also corruption scandals, mass protests over imported labor and soaring housing prices, and a near tripling of the number of tourist visits per year (well over 20 million, compared to an average of 7-8 million in the late 1990s). The pace and direction of this change has led to renewed anxiety over the same questions posed by the Portuguese administration in the 1990s: what is it that makes Macau Macau, and is that something under threat of disappearing?

The new administration's answer to these questions bears striking resemblance to the Portuguese discourse of Macau identity. Publications and speeches by representatives of the SAR administration are studded with sentences that could have been lifted verbatim from the writings of the last Portuguese governor, Vasco Rocha Vieira: sentences such as "having experienced the peaceful coexistence of multiple cultures for more than 400 years, Macau has become a melting pot where the Chinese culture and other cultures are mutually accommodating, and the ethics of tolerance, openness, and diligence flourish".<sup>5</sup> As Lam Wai-man points out, the post-handover narrative has a more nationalistic bent, which claims Macau residents as fully and proudly Chinese rather than just "sort-of" Chinese.<sup>6</sup> But the end product – an official discourse on Macau's unique identity that credits the history of non-colonial Portuguese rule for having created a community characterized by cultural hybridity, ethnic diversity, and peaceful coexistence – certainly appears to be a continuation, and thus validation, of the romanticized narrative of Macau history that had fallen on such deaf ears when it was promoted by the Portuguese.

This time, however, the narrative seems to be meeting with more success. A survey done in 2007 showed that some 66% of Macau residents felt proud of being from Macau (compared to just 38% in 1999); the local Chinese-language newspaper, which before the handover had been a vocal critic of all things Portuguese, now runs articles extolling the 'charms of Europe' that can attract both tourists and residents to revitalize the older parts of the city. Now that Beijing has indicated that capitalizing on Macau's ties to the Lusophone world could benefit both the city and the entire Chinese nation; now that the local administration has made public security and well-being a priority; now that the frustrations with Portuguese rule have been replaced with new frustrations and realities; and now that the sleepy, small-town quality of life in Macau becomes increasingly difficult to find, it seems that many Macau residents have found new meaning in the once-discredited vision of how Macau's past could form the foundations for its future.

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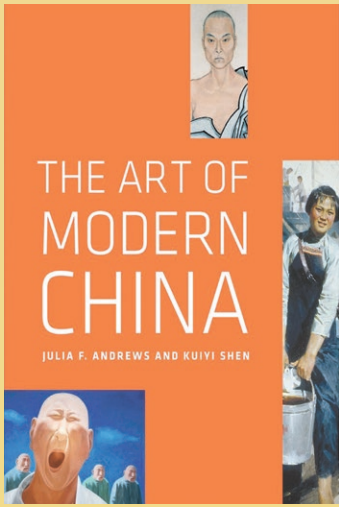
### Notes

- 1 Simpson, Tim. 2012. *Tourist Utopias: Las Vegas, Dubai, Macau*. Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series No. 177, February 2012, [www.ari.nus.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm).
- 2 Rofel, Lisa. 2007. *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, p.178.
- 3 Ptak, Roderich. 1998. 'Macau: China's Window to the Latin World?' Paper presented at the International Symposium on the Culture of Metropolis in Macau, 14-18 Sept. 1998, Macau.
- 4 Direcção dos Serviços de Turismo e Comunicação Social do Governo de Macau. 1979. *Macau: Um Vislumbre de Glória (Macau: A Glimpse of Glory)*. Hong Kong: Ted Thomas.
- 5 Lam, Wai-man. 2010. 'Promoting Hybridity: The Politics of the New Macau Identity.' *China Quarterly* 203:656-674; p.669.
- 6 Ibid., p.670.

# ICAS Book Prize 2013 Shortlists

The Reading Committees for the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) and the Reading Committee for the Best PhD have decided on their shortlists – with 5 books and 3 PhDs in each category. The awards ceremony will be held at ICAS 8 in Macao on 25 June 2013, and the results will be posted online shortly after, on [www.icassecretariat.org](http://www.icassecretariat.org)

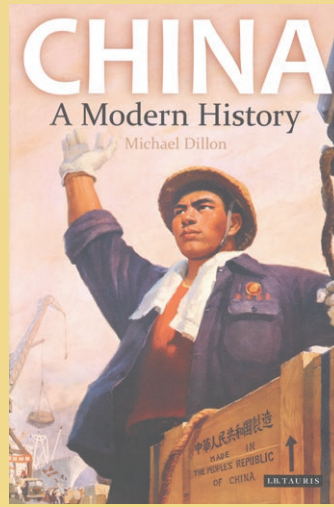
## Humanities



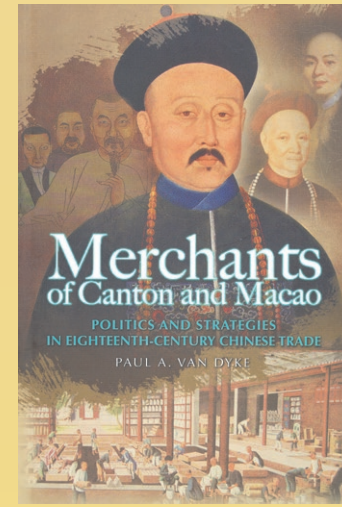
**Julia F. Andrews & Kuiyi Chen. 2012**  
*The Art of Modern China*  
Berkeley/Los Angeles/London:  
University of California Press



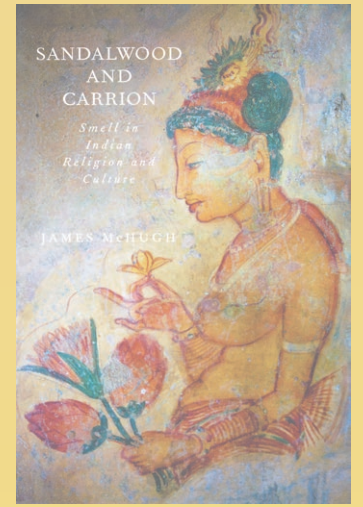
**Jeffrey W. Cody, Nancy S. Steinhardt,  
& Tony Atkin. 2011**  
*Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts*  
Honolulu/Hong Kong:  
University of Hawai'i Press/Hong Kong  
University Press



**Michael Dillon. 2010**  
*China. A Modern History*  
London/New York: I.B.Tauris



**Paul A. van Dyke. 2011**  
*Merchants of Canton and Macao.*  
*Politics and Strategies in*  
*Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*  
Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press



**James McHugh. 2012**  
*Sandalwood and Carrion.*  
*Smell in Indian Religion and Culture*  
Oxford/New York:  
Oxford University Press

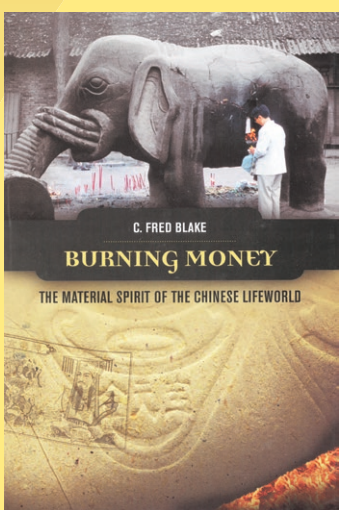
## Best PhD Humanities

**Song Chen**  
Managing the Territories from Afar:  
The Imperial State and the Elites  
in Shichuan, 755-1279  
(2011)

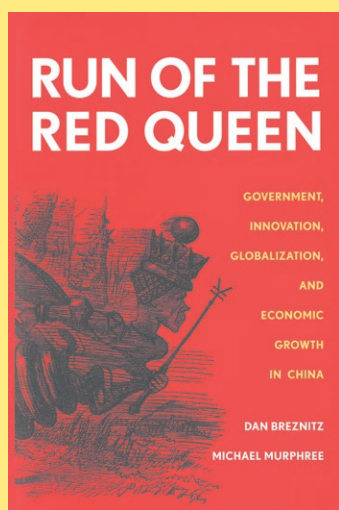
**Ayesha Irani**  
Sacred Biography, Translation, and Conversion:  
The Nabivamsa of Saiyad Sultan and the  
Making of Bengali Islam, 1600-present  
(2011)

**Birgit Magdalena Tremmi**  
When Political Economies Meet:  
Spain, China and Japan in Manila,  
1517-1644  
(2012)

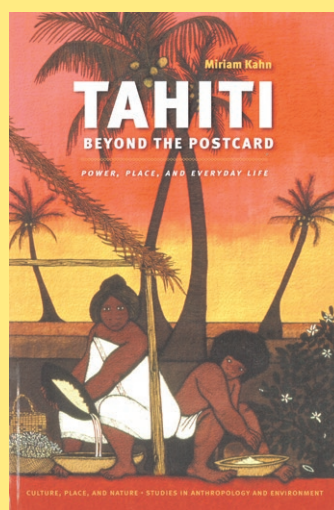
## Social Sciences



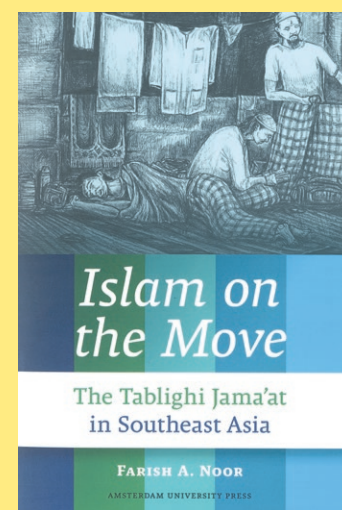
**C. Fred Blake. 2011**  
*Burning Money: The Material  
Spirit of the Chinese Lifeworld*  
Honolulu: University  
of Hawai'i Press



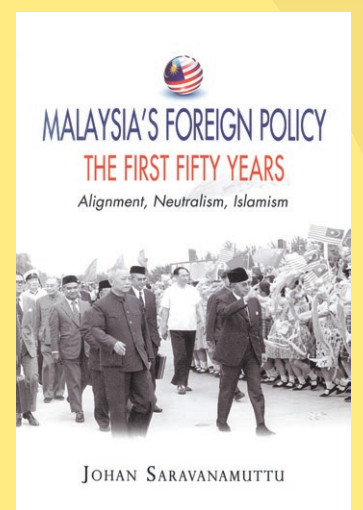
**Dan Breznitz & Michael Murphree. 2011**  
*Run of the Red Queen:*  
*Government, Innovation, Globalization,*  
*and Economic Growth in China*  
New Haven/London:  
Yale University Press



**Miriam Kahn. 2011**  
*Tahiti. Beyond the Postcard.*  
*Power, Place, and Everyday Life*  
Seattle/London: University  
of Washington Press



**Farish A. Noor. 2012**  
*Islam on the Move: The Tablighi  
Jama'at in Southeast Asia*  
Amsterdam: Amsterdam  
University Press



**Johan Saravanamuttu. 2010**  
*Malaysia's Foreign Policy,*  
*the First Fifty Years: Alignment,*  
*Neutralism, Islamism*  
Singapore: ISEAS Publishing

## Best PhD Social Sciences

**Roberto Benedicto**  
Bright Lights, Gay Globality:  
Mobility, Class, and Gay Life in  
Twenty-first Century Manila  
(2010)

**Thomas Cliff**  
Oil and Water: Experiences  
of Being Han in 21st-Century  
Korla, Xinjiang  
(2012)

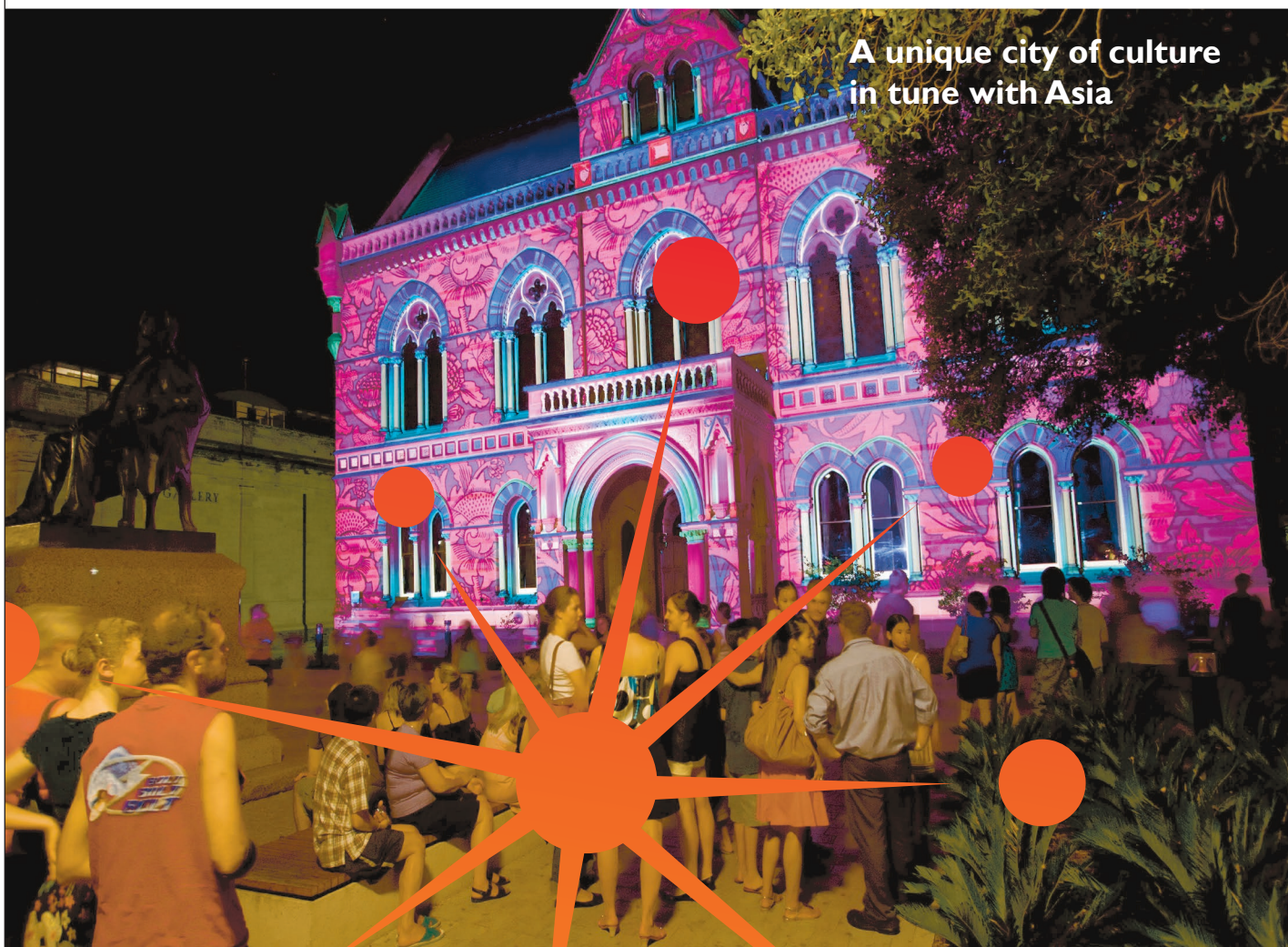
**Aaron Mulvany**  
Flood of Memories:  
Narratives of Water and Loss  
in Tamil South India  
(2011)

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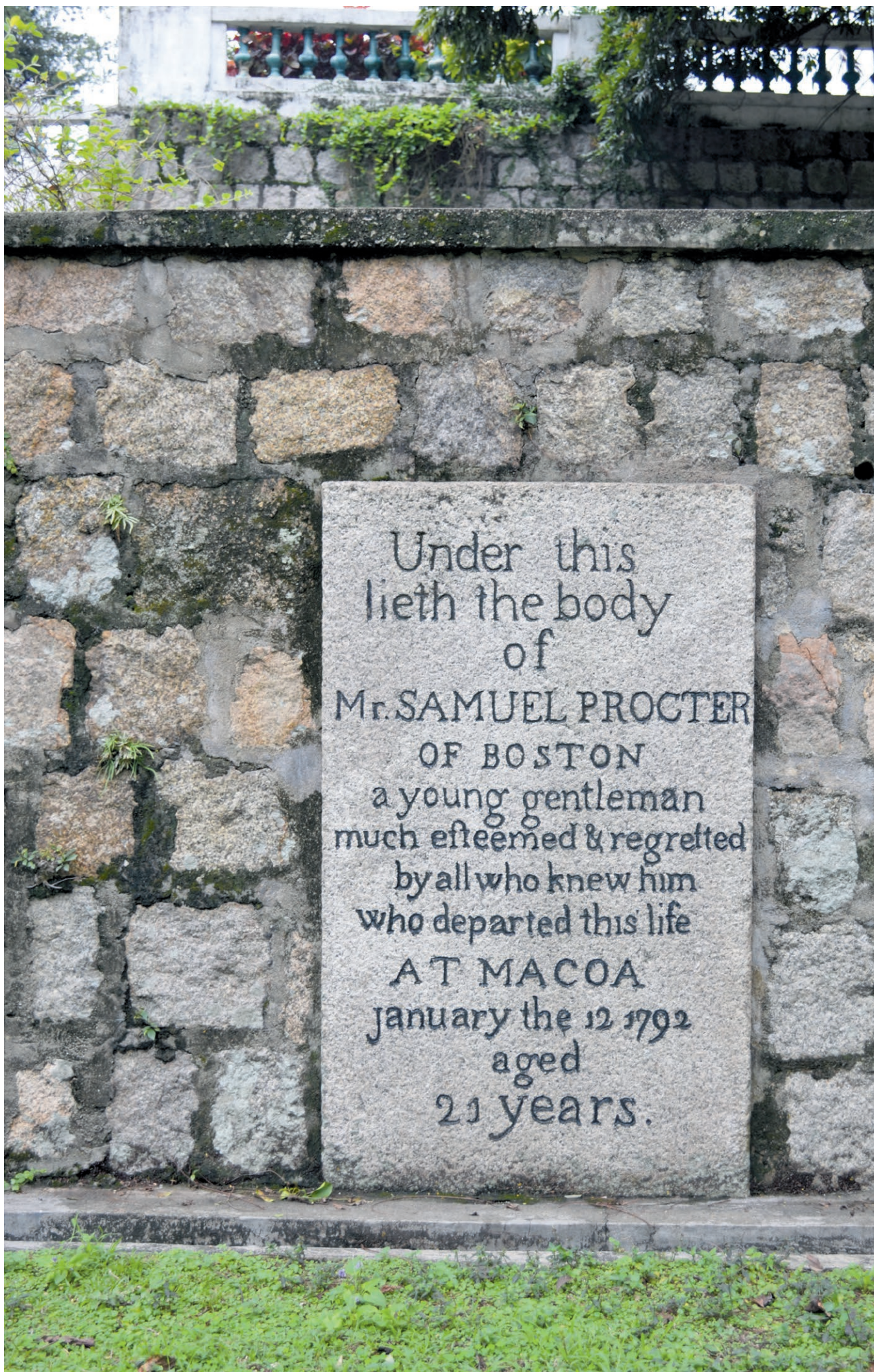
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## The British presence in Macau (1635-1793)

When the Portuguese settled in Macau (c.1557), the enclave became the first western gateway into China. The Portuguese enjoyed a commercial monopoly in China until the East India Company (EIC) established direct commercial relations with China after the voyage of the *Macclesfield* (1700). Macau was also used by the British as their home until the founding of Hong Kong. As trade took place mainly in the factories of Canton during the autumn and winter months, until publication of Paul Van Dyke's *The Canton Trade* (2005) the majority of the studies on the China Trade dealt mainly with Canton, as Macau was seen as a resort for the summer residence between trading seasons. The English trade rapidly surpassed the Portuguese trade, and the temporary residence of the supercargoes became essential to the economy of the city. The European presence in the Macau-Canton circuit gave way to a degree of cultural exchange of which Chinese Pidgin English is a symbol in China, its European 'counterpart' being *chinoiserie*.

Rogério Miguel Puga



IN 1613 THE EIC ESTABLISHED a factory in Hirado (Japan), from where it tried, in vain, to establish direct trade with China until 1623. When in 1639 all Catholics were expelled from Japan and the Nagasaki trade came to an end, the Portuguese learnt about the dangers brought by their Northern European competitors and tried, at all cost, to maintain their monopoly in China. Up to 1635 the oldest allies in Europe were rivals in Asia, and in that year they joined efforts to fight against the Dutch power. The Portuguese viceroy of Goa and the chief supercargo of the EIC Surat factory signed a peace treaty, the Convention of Goa, and the former freighted the ship *London* from the EIC to take merchandise to Macau and bring back artillery, sailing under the English flag to deceive the Dutch. Once in Macau, the ship's English supercargoes tried in vain to convince the Chinese authorities to give them similar privileges to those of the Portuguese. The latter decided they had to keep the European rivals under strong control and boycott any attempt of the English to trade. In 1637 John Weddell's fleet tried to establish direct contact with Canton and was expelled by the Chinese and the Portuguese authorities, which warned Goa and Lisbon about the great danger of such visits for Macau and the Portuguese interests in China. Up to 1700 several ships tried to establish direct trade with China, but without any success. While eastern EIC factories sent ships to Macau as part of their local strategy, most of the time without the knowledge of the London directors, in Europe the Company used diplomacy to convince Portuguese kings to allow English ships to stop and trade at Macau, a strategy that did not succeed as Lisbon also defended the interests of Macau and its monopoly in China. Episodes such as the one involving the *Centurion*, the first British ship of war to arrive in China (1742), show that the British, like the Portuguese, tried their best to succeed when it came to defending their trade.

### A walled peninsula

By the end of the seventeenth century it became more and more difficult for the English to trade in Amoy and Formosa, so in 1699 the EIC decided to send the *Macclesfield* to Canton. Its crew was the first to be received by the Canton authorities /merchants, who were obviously looking for new commercial partners. This success marked the beginning of a new era for Western trade in China. After 1700 the British no longer needed the Portuguese to contact the Chinese merchants, and the Macau authorities were forced to gradually adapt to a new context: the arrival of Western competitors and the development of the Canton Trade System. If the British trade took place in Canton, the interests of the EIC were also looked after in Macau through the economic relations with local traders and the Portuguese authorities during the spring and summer months. By 1750 half of the ships that arrived at the Pearl River delta were British. Macau was a support platform for and an extension of the Canton market, and from an early stage the Luso-Chinese city had several uses for the British, such as: the only permanent gateway into China where ships would find a pilot to travel to Canton, a linguist and a permission to continue their voyage; a meeting place for crews; a destination of much of the EIC's China correspondence; a place where ships were reloaded and repaired; a place to translate Chinese documents, gather information about Canton, and trade (il)legal merchandise; a 'neutral' refuge while problems in Canton were solved; a place of residence, rest, recovery and learning about the Chinese culture and language(s) for traders, travellers and missionaries.

For the Chinese authorities, Macau – a walled peninsula – was a strategic place to control all foreigners. In case of emergency in Canton, the British would move to the enclave, as happened during the conflicts of the Bombay ship *Lady Hughes* (1784) and the opium crisis in the early 1800s. Besides being a contact space between China and the West, the city served as a neutral place where the Europeans

were confined and solved their own problems, releasing the Chinese authorities from the burden of having to deal with foreigners. A walled city, Macau functioned as a laboratory for the Canton trade, where the Chinese authorities isolated and controlled Westerners while doing business with them. Before the creation of the Canton factories, the Luso-Chinese enclave had an important role when it came to control and keeping barbarians away from mainland China. The Chinese administration allowed the Portuguese to settle in a walled peninsula that could be easily controlled, and later drove the English and other foreigners there to be 'ruled' by the Portuguese. The city was therefore very important for the control of all Westerners between the trading seasons.

**Anglo-Portuguese alliance**

The enclave was vital for the EIC's interests in China. In the second half of the 18th century the conflicts between the supercargoes and the Portuguese authorities increased as the British fought for greater freedom to develop their commercial interests, being forced to respect the Chinese law in Canton, and the Portuguese law in Macau. The British were continuously forced to fight for their interests in China, and Lord Macartney's embassy (1793) was a part of this struggle to conquer better trading conditions. Once again, Britain looked to Macau as a desired territory, and it was also in the city that independent traders such as the Beale brothers and Jardine Matheson settled in the late 1770s to challenge the EIC's monopoly until 1834. The Anglophone community influenced and enriched the social, economic and cultural life of nineteenth-century Macau, while the founding of Hong Kong, the signing of the Nanjing Treaty and the opening of the five Chinese ports transformed the Western way of life in the Sino-Portuguese enclave as well as its regional and international importance. The Anglo-Portuguese alliance, the oldest in the Western world, gradually extended to the Far East, where relations between old allies were shaped by the diplomacy of both Crowns, by the interests of local and Western merchants, and the Portuguese and Chinese laws. Luso-English relations in Macau were also influenced by the imperial policies (edicts), and the Portuguese often used the will and law of the Chinese as an excuse to defend their privileged status in China. Macau also worked as a decompression chamber for Westerners who arrived in China, and for Chinese who left mainland China and had a quick glimpse at how Europeans lived. Therefore, the history of the Gem of the Orient – as Sir John Bowring, one of the first Hong Kong governors, called Macau in his *Sonnet to Macao* – can only be studied based on multi-archival research, both Western and Eastern, and approached like a kaleidoscopic and complex reality, with local, regional and (inter)national dimensions.

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Opposite and above: Grave markers at Macau's Old Protestant Cemetery, established by the British East India Company in 1821.



Middle: Morrison Chapel, built in 1921 and named for Robert Morrison, a missionary from the UK who translated the Bible into Chinese.

Below: Macau's Old Protestant Cemetery, today part of Macau's UNESCO World Heritage Site.



# The voice on the postcolonial stage

Macanese or *Macaense*, regarded as the ‘sunset creole’ people of Macau, comprise a mere 5% of the ex-colony’s population. This article offers insight into the cultural, political and structural changes, within the postcolonial context, of *Dóci Papiáçam di Macau* – the sole theatre group performing in a ‘critically endangered’ creole language: *Patuá*.

Maria Elisabela Larrea Y Eusébio



IN ONE ROOM, a middle-aged and well-dressed man murmurs his lines while animatedly waving his hands in the air. His serious expression portends the determination and importance he invests in his endeavor. In another room, a mirror reflects a brush stroke on an actor’s face, who sits still in her chair while checking carefully that her makeup is applied perfectly. Laughter echoes along the hallway. One can always find a joke around the corner, or someone gulping down a *chilicote*<sup>1</sup> while avoiding the crumbs that fall on his costume. The backstage amplifier transmits an announcement by the director in Portuguese, Cantonese, and English. Representing different generations and ethnicities, the actors and crew speak various languages yet achieve the rapport of an extended family.

The Macanese, an epithet for the mestizo individuals who resulted from intermarriage among the Portuguese colonizers and their ostensible Chinese subjects, are Macau’s indigenous Eurasian residents. However, not quite an ethnic group and not exactly a nationality, the actual definition of Macanese is notoriously ambiguous. Generally having an element of Portuguese heredity, they are a bilingual (or even trilingual) cultural group, fluent mostly in Portuguese, Cantonese and/or English. The Macanese traditionally distinguished themselves from other ethnic communities through their specific combination of religious customs, gastronomy and a Portuguese-based creole language, *Patuá*.

This language of Macao was first borrowed from *papiá cristang* of Malacca and then later influenced by Cantonese, English and Spanish elements, and particularly by the Indian Canarim, a language of Goa.<sup>2</sup> Known also as *lingua nhonha* [women’s language] and *papiá Cristã di Macau* [Christian Language of Macau],<sup>3</sup> learning this language requires some level of group belongingness and knowledge passed down orally across generations. Today spoken fluently by only a handful of people, *Patuá* has been enlisted as a ‘critically endangered’ language by UNESCO.

## The Macanese in Macau

Though the Macanese comprise only 5% of the local Macau population, the overwhelming majority of the Macanese population is actually outside of Macau and scattered around the world, in the United States, Australia, Canada, Portugal and Brazil. Two major *Macanese diaspora* events contributed to this dispersion. The first was the *123 incident* in Macau, a state turmoil in 1966 resulting from a deadly confrontation between Portuguese authorities and Chinese locals that created political instability for the Macanese, and resulted in their emigration. The second diaspora was prompted

by the signing of the Sino-Luso Joint Declaration in 1987, declaring that Macau’s days under Portuguese administration were numbered. Preliminary statistics show that prior to the handover of the territory, the number of Macanese in Macau topped over 11,000, whereas in 2001, the number of residents with Portuguese descent dropped to around 7,000.<sup>4</sup> These two major phases of ethnic identity crisis gave rise to the establishment of a number of *Casas de Macau* (i.e., Macanese associations) around the world. In 1993, the first *Encontro Das Comunidades Macaenses* with over 600 representatives of Macanese clubs and associations worldwide, gathered in Macau with the aim of reinforcing the group’s cultural identity and preparing the Macanese community for the transformation of sovereignty. Since then, the *Encontro* would be held every three years, where the Macanese community members indulge in *Patuá* plays, parties, and traditional cuisine.

Macau, a small territory that initially held just 8 km<sup>2</sup> of land-mass situated at the estuary of the Pearl River at Southern China, has been a site of contact, communication, and controversy between the East and the West for over four centuries; in the past two decades it has been transformed into an international city of glamour and prosperity. With the establishment of the Macau S.A.R. government in 1999, the preference for official languages and cultural manifestations shifted to that of the new administrative powers. Once claimed to be the true ‘sons of Macau’ who aimed to integrate themselves culturally with the colonial population, the Macanese are now facing *cultural infusion* from the ex-colonized. Pushed to the periphery of the public sector and coveted government positions, the Macanese who once sought affiliation with Portugal are now ironically being considered for possible enlisting as the 57th officially-recognized ethnic group of Greater China. Although the Macau S.A.R. government aims to promote Macau as a place of harmony among diverse cultures, national identification and pedagogical strategies have subsequently shifted to more overt identification with People’s Republic of China. Meanwhile, the Macanese have proclaimed the importance of their existence by presenting themselves as the ‘difference’ Macau possesses after the handover, compared to other Chinese cities, through the iconic creole image of their Eurasian culture.

## The revival of Patuá theatre

*Dóci Papiáçam di Macau*, literally the Sweet Language of Macau, is a theatrical company largely composed of amateur thespians from the Macanese community. It is the sole theatre group using this endangered language in theatrical performances, or *recitas*, with themes including social and political criticism, and gossip and folk-tales that circulate throughout the daily

Above: Theatrical piece *Qui Pandalhada*, performed by various generations of Macanese actors, 2011. (Photo courtesy of Leonor Rosário)

discourse of the Macanese community. In 2012, the *Patuá* theatre was included in the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Macau, marking its importance on the global platform.

Having been in the audience of this annual performance since 2001, and a member of the backstage crew of *Dóci Papiáçam di Macau* since 2007, I have been an active participant-observer in the group. My own cultural identity as a Macanese with Chinese, Portuguese, and Basque heritage has facilitated my interest and involvement. The core membership of the group remains restricted to Macanese, yet in recent years, the company has further incorporated the use of Chinese and Portuguese language in their performances, extending their collaboration with local theatrical groups, and performing not only with Macanese amateurs, but also Chinese and Portuguese individuals.

I first watched Dóci’s performances at the Cultural Centre of Macau in 2001 when my parents brought me along to the show. My mother, a fourth-generation Macanese, wanted to savor her childhood memories that these performances evoked – a reminder of her grandmother’s language as well as the colonial era that was filled with Macanese and Portuguese tones. Only at that moment did I realize that I actually understood the language, without having heard it spoken explicitly before. It was then that I came to know certain phrases or words that my Macanese relatives spoke were actually *Patuá* and not formal Portuguese.

I first approached the group as a documentary filmmaker.<sup>5</sup> Though I was greeted with friendly smiles, I knew I was being observed. Finally, the *question* came up in *Patuá*, “Vós sãm fila di quem?” (Who are you the daughter of?). This was the open door allowing me into the group. The ambiguous boundaries that delineate Macanese identity are often formed by tracing the family histories of its members. I immediately identified myself and they were able to connect their family ties to mine. However, it was not until the following year when I became a member of the backstage crew did I receive the ‘family-like’ treatment. Once I joined the group sarcastic comments became more pronounced, since to be one of *us*, one needs to know how to joke around and not take it personally, i.e., like many families do. Alfredo Ritchie, an actor in the theatre group since 2001, recalls his first encounter of *Patuá* at the age of six, characterizing it as “a means of communication between *amigas* [female friends] and it is always about jokes, in a jolly atmosphere and manner, between people that were closely acquainted. But despite that, in those times, *Patuá* was not outspoken.”<sup>6</sup>



## Cultural contexts and functions of the creole theatre

Over the next few years, I realized the importance these performances had on the Macanese community, especially at the time of the transition of sovereignty. Language is a crucial component of identity construction. During the colonial era, many Macanese discarded their creole accents in hopes of aligning themselves with the colonial power. They imagined that speaking pure Portuguese would provide access to a higher social rank and positions of power.

Maria, a fourth-generation descendent of a local-born Macanese, only heard *Patuá* from her grandmother, who passed away when she was 10 years old. She expressed that in her parents' era, i.e., the 1950s, Macanese men needed to serve in the military for two years. The leading military ranks belonged to Portuguese of little education but much influence; thus the Macanese, comparatively 'smarter' as Maria puts it, would be abused and deliberately sneered at if they did not speak perfect Portuguese. "I believe they suffered a lot in that era, thus our generation were forced to abandon *Patuá* and acquire pure Portuguese, to get rid of the creole *sutaque* [accent]. However, now we are desperate, we want to grab back our own creole language. We are no longer under the Portuguese administration, so no one is here to criticize our accents. Although we are now a Chinese special administrative region, we are not Chinese, we are Macanese. And *Patuá* is ours; it belongs to us, Macanese. So we are now joining together, taking every opportunity to learn from each other the little *Patuá* that we recall. We are like kids now, learning a language, our language, the language that belongs to the Macanese, *Patuá*."

The *Patua* thus served as a vital source of identity and community. Miguel de Senna Fernandes, director of the *Dóci Papiçám di Macau*, who co-authored with Alan Baxter the first book that documented the vocabulary and expressions of *Patuá*, said that the creole theatre was originally part of the carnival manifestations, where the hierarchically subordinated language allowed Macanese to entertain and express their dissatisfaction with social issues. "If people wanted to critique the government or sarcastically comment on someone, they would use *Patuá* to do so. The reason is that *Patuá* was spoken by the lower class people, and thus, the criticisms and the contents are from their perspective. [...] This is actually people's voice, to raise the awareness of various social issues."<sup>7</sup>

In my doctoral thesis project, I am interested in the ways the Macanese utilize the theatrical stage as a 'third space' to mediate collective historical memories. The performances of *Dóci Papiçám di Macau* are now incorporated as part of the government-administrated *Macau Arts Festival*. To present Macau as the 'world of difference', the distinct Macanese culture has been commodified to enhance the city's international tourism image. At the same time, the stage still allows the Macanese to express their views about the changes they have confronted after the shift of Macau's sovereignty from Portugal to China. Through the display of their ethnic identity, they redefine themselves, both culturally and socially.

### Theatrical themes

I have transcribed video recordings of some *Patuá* performances: one performance in 1993, prior to the handover, *Olá Písidente* [See the President] and another in 2011, after the handover, *Qui Pandalhada* [What Pandamonium]. These performances offer various insights in the presentational structures, the choice of language used by the master of ceremony, the ratio of creole language to other languages within the performance, the body languages, and in particular, the topics and themes included in the performances.

Although these two performances were highlighted for in-depth analysis, I have also analyzed the emergent themes of all of the performances between 1993 and 2011. In the years prior to the handover, cultural attributes and themes relating to the nation of Portugal are most obvious; for instance *Olá Písidente* (1993) commented on the Portuguese president, Portuguese consulate and Governor of Macau; *Mano Beto Vai Saiong* [Big brother go to Portugal] (1994) dealt with issues of Macanese immigrating to Portugal; and *Saiong Têra Galante* [Portugal, the great land] (1996), is a story set in Portugal that featured Macanese immigrants who, despite their loyalty and longing to the *motherland*, would find themselves estranged by the locals and thus realize that their roots were in Macau. Yet, after the handover, issues concerning the nation of Portugal are absent and stories have been comparatively more localized. Family encounters such as *Pápi tá ferado* [Father is screwed] (2000) and *Mama-sogra Já Chega* [Mother-in-law is arriving] (2003) were prevalent, as well as stories dealing with local social issues including health care, discussed in *Cuza Dotôr* [What's up Doc] (2007); the gambling industry in *Sorti Dóci* [Sweet Luck] (2008); legal and political issues portrayed in *Letrado Chapado* [Right, Mr. Counselor] (2009); and finally the administrative, political and social issues discussed in *Qui Pandalhada* [What Pandamonium] (2011).

In the colonial era, the Macanese were hierarchically subordinate to the Portuguese but enjoyed superior social status when compared with the Chinese. Yet, in the plays of the postcolonial era, the Macanese are portrayed as clearly subordinate to the Chinese. One example would be in *Cuza Dotôr* (2007), set at a fictional hospital in Macau, with Macanese characters who must answer to Chinese authorities who are portrayed in distinct outfits and pronounced accents. Another example would be that of *Qui Pandalhada* (2011), which was set in a fictional casino that uses China's national emblem – the Panda – as their mascot. In one scene, the main characters Duarte, Martinho and Calito were to serve the American CEO of the casino and a Chinese government official, submissively suffering their excessive and abusive demands.

When I analyzed the two respective performances, *Olá Písidente* (1993) and *Qui Pandalhada* (2011), I noticed various shifts of performance patterns. First, there was a change in language patterns. In *Olá Písidente* (1993), 99% of the lines were delivered in *Patuá* whereas only 1% included Cantonese and Portuguese. The difference in the 2011 performance, was pronounced, with 61% of the dialogue in *Patuá*, and the rest in English (26%), Portuguese (2%), Chinese (10%) and others (1%).

Second, the themes or subjects of the plays have also shifted from the inclusion of Portugal to specifically local matters. The fact of decreased positional powers is fundamental to the status quo of the minority in the transitional period, thus in the last years of the colonial era, there were fears of loss of identity and social status. After the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration was signed, many Macanese realized that they 'could claim no collective existence in the law'.<sup>8</sup> The question of national belongingness raised much anxiety and fear. The Macanese sang the Portuguese anthem as their anthem, raised the Portuguese flag as *their* flag, yet they identified Macau as *their* land. Though they were entitled to Portuguese nationality and a Portuguese passport, when the time came, as their land no longer flew *their* flag, fears of *their* future increased. In *Olá Písidente* (1993), the existential problematic of Macanese subjectivity in relation to Portugal was broached:

Actor: "I have a relative who lived in America for 20 years. That day, he went to the Portuguese consulate to renew his passport. That stupid guy from the consulate said to him that he couldn't get it. [...] He told him he's Macau Filo [son of Macau], he said can't. He told him his father and mother had Portuguese names, he said can't. [...] He told him he went to the military to serve Portuguese, he said can't. [...] I really don't understand, for our whole lives, we learnt to admire the red and green flag (Portuguese flag). Sing the national anthem, if we are not Portuguese, not Chinese, then who are we?"<sup>9</sup>

In the postcolonial era, plays concentrated on current local social issues. In *Qui Pandalhada* (2011), themes included civil workers' attitudes, importation of foreign labor by casinos as well as the effects of a new cultural imperialism in Macau. There were also comments about how life for the Macanese was harder today but at the same time, stressing that the Macanese are vital for the continuity of Macau's prosperity as they still serve their traditional role as the 'middleman' or bridge between the East and the West. Negative influences resulting from the drastic increase of numbers of mainland Chinese in Macau were included in the plays as well. One example was the *milk powder scandal*, when Chinese flocked to Macau in the wake of a contaminated baby formula scandal on the mainland to buy imported milk powder in the city, creating a scarce supply for local consumption.

### Patuá in the new millennium

As a creole language, *Patuá*, had various functions in the colonial era. It served as a key to class distinctions, where people who spoke the creole or 'broken Portuguese', were regarded as less educated and lower class. The *recitas*, prior to the establishment of the theatre groups, functioned as a means of expressing discontent and sarcasm that were restricted by social conventions. With the change in Macau's sovereignty, the functions of *Patuá* plays have been diversified and strengthened. They possess historical value and allow the creoles to trace their origins and reinforce their cultural roots. *Patuá* plays also function as an annual reunion site for the community to gather, reinforcing the existence of their creole identity. The theatrical performances also serve as a means of cultural identification for the Macanese community in the new administrative environment, allowing them to present their identity to the other.

*Patuá* and the contents of *recitas* were built upon folktales and daily lives of the Macanese community in the colonial era; however, as globalization leads to dilution of traditional practices, as well as an identity crisis that followed the termination of Portuguese administration, the meanings of *recitas* have evolved to experience, where the importance of the contents are taken over by sentiments and identity reinforcements. But the symbolic value of *Patua* for the Macanese community persists. As Miguel de Senna Fernandes suggests, "The significance of *Patuá* drama is to express Macanese state of mind. For instance, in what language do we think? This is significant to our cultural identity, what we think or speak. If we have to use a language to represent ourselves, it will definitely be *Patuá*, our Creole language."<sup>10</sup>

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Below: Two young Macanese getting ready for their performance of *Sorti Doci*, 2007. (Photo courtesy of Elisabela Larrea)



### Notes

- Chilicote* is a Macanese snack made of minced pork and enclosed with flour wrappers in a half moon shape.
- Amaro, A. 1994. 'Sons and Daughters of the Soil: the first decade of Luso Chinese Diplomacy', *Review of Culture 20* (2nd series English Edition). Instituto Cultural of Macau.
- Senna Fernandes, M. and Baxter, A. 2004. *Maquista Chapado: vocabulary and expressions in Macao's Portuguese Creole*. Macau: Cultural Institution of Macau.
- Larrea, E. 2008. *Macanese in the global network: a study of post-colonial Macanese cultural identity performance*. Master thesis, Department of Communication. University of Macau.
- Between the years 2007-2008, I produced a documentary film illustrating some of the social practices by the Macanese, *Filhos da Terra* (Sons of the Land). This documentary is an attempt to capture festive moments and emotional sentiments of the Macanese in the new millennium.
- Translated by researcher, interview with Alfredo Ritchie, 12-04-2011
- Translated by researcher, interview with Miguel de Senna Fernandes, 15-03-2011
- Clayton, C. 2010. *Sovereignty at the Edge: Macau and the Question of Chineseness*. Harvard University Asia Centre.
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# Reinterpreting Macao's society, politics and economy

Since Macao's administration was returned from Portugal to the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 20 December 1999, little attempt has been made to reinterpret or revisit the triangular relationships between the society, politics and economy of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR). This article reinterprets the MSAR's dialectical processes of both development and underdevelopment.

Sonny Lo

MACAO'S ECONOMY has been developing quickly with tremendous growth in the casino sector. However, this casino-driven economic development has generated a largely dependent (if not materialistic and egoistic) middle class, whose members depend on economic prosperity and social stability to such an extent that they have shied away from political advocacy and democratic struggle. At best, some of them have selected their casino representatives in the direct elections held for the Legislative Assembly. Simultaneously, the MSAR society has seen a contradictory development with not only more pro-government groups supported by the administration, both financially through subsidies and politically through co-optation into various advisory bodies, but also with more young, independent, critical and pro-democracy citizens who abhor the patron-client politics of Macao. The casino capitalism, which has stimulated the worsening income gap between rich and poor, has also propelled the minimal development of the MSAR civil society. Overall, the patronage political system of Macao, where the ruling elites benefit their own friends and supporters through a complex web of pro-government interest groups, including labour unions, women's organizations and neighbourhood associations, has stifled democratic transformations. Although the MSAR government decided to introduce two additional directly elected seats to the legislature in the 2013 elections, Macao has been characterized by political underdevelopment, economic dependency on casino capitalism, and constrained civil society growth.

## The dependent casino capitalism and its impact on politics and society

Macao's dependence on casinos has been obvious since 2002, when the casino franchises were internationalized so that foreign direct investment from Australia, America and Hong Kong would prompt the modernization of the local operators. Although the foreign investors have not participated in local politics and elections, the local Macao casino interest groups have actively participated in the Legislative Assembly's elections since 2005. The Macao casino sector needs to select its representatives into the legislature, articulating its collective and individual operator's interests.

Socially, the dependent casino economy has tremendous implications for social equity, mobility and wealth. The affluent middle class in Macao has stemmed from the flourishing casino industry, which remains beneficial to all its employees, like croupiers and managers, and which has stimulated the rapid growth of other tertiary sectors, including hotel, retail and catering industries. However, the social and economic benefits have influenced mostly the tens of thousands of casino-industry employees, but have not trickled down to the entire working-class, who are confronted daily with the rapid import of foreign and mainland labourers. The gap between rich and poor has widened since 2002 as a result. Although social mobility can be seen among the young and the embryonic middle-class citizens who have been climbing up the social ladder through the casino sector, many other citizens find it difficult to sustain the increasingly high cost of living in Macao. Although the Macao government has relied on the annual distribution of cash subsidies to citizens as a form of safety valve to pre-empt the discontent of the have-nots, the question is whether such 'candies' have to be distributed to citizens annually as a constitutional convention, or as a *de facto* policy, so as to generate a feeling of calmness and satisfaction among the Macao populace. In other words, Macao's casino capitalism has generated aspects of development, notably employment and a general increase in living standards, but it has also triggered the contradictory tendencies of perpetuating social inequity, a wealth gap and the gulf between the social classes.

## Political dependence and patronage perpetuation

While the Macao economy is one-sidedly dependent on casino capitalism, its political elites have to maintain the patronage system in order to maintain stability and legitimacy. This patronage system has been arguably exacerbated by the economic dependence on casino capitalism. Since casino

capitalists have played a crucial role in sustaining Macao's economic growth, they need to secure the cooperation of other capitalists, notably land developers and big business people, so that land development can facilitate casino prosperity. At the same time, the Macao elites have understood the importance of forging an alliance with these powerful capitalists. As a result, the capitalist class can influence the policies of the Macao government through formal and informal channels. Formally, they have been appointed to the top policy-making body, the Executive Council. Informally, they can easily influence the government's policies toward property development, casino growth, transportation, infrastructure projects, the import of labour, and taxation. The phrase 'hegemony of the land developers', which has been used by the leftwing critics of the Hong Kong government since 1 July 1997, can arguably be seen in the MSAR. Macao has perhaps not yet been completely captured by the land developers, but it remains a capitalist city-state where big business, casino operators and land developers are politically influential.

Traditionally, the Macao political system has been characterized by patronage, and it remains the hallmark of politics in the MSAR, where the pro-establishment, pro-Beijing and anti-democracy interest groups are proliferating. Some local commentators have stressed that Macao is like a society made up of interest groups. This statement has to be read carefully, however. Many of these interest groups have overlapping leaders, executive committee members and ordinary members. Most importantly, many of these interest groups have acquired financial support from the Macao government. Their activities, such as social gatherings and dinners, are often not political in nature, but these interest groups can easily mobilize their members in support of electoral forces during election campaigns.

## The interplay among Macao's society, politics and economy

In Macao under the Portuguese rule, the society was "minimally integrated" into the polity, to use the term of sociologist Lau Siu-kai who studied Hong Kong under the British rule. The Portuguese governed Macao with Governors and expatriates, and used the local Macanese as the middlemen between the rulers and the ruled. The outcome was a huge communication gap between the Macao society and polity. This phenomenon has changed gradually since democratization of Macao's legislative elections in the mid-1970s, when the Portuguese revolution promoted some positive political development in Macao. Still, the Macao society was relatively 'alienated' from the polity, although the Chinese community leaders played a crucial role in bridging the communication gap between the Chinese citizens and the Portuguese rulers.

This relatively 'alienated' society of Macao has been contained since the handover of the territory to the PRC in December 1999 by two major measures taken by the new Chinese ruling elites. First and foremost, economics in command has remained the ruling principle of the governing elites, who have relied on casino capitalism to contain any possible social discontent. However, as argued before, casino capitalism does have its negative impacts on the society. Second, the patronage system inherited from the Portuguese rulers has contained the possible 'anger' in the society, especially among the proletariat who is split into pro-establishment and pro-democracy fragments. The pro-establishment working class is backed by the pro-Beijing forces and it enjoys the benefits of receiving governmental subsidies. The pro-democracy proletariat allies with the middle-class liberal democrats, but they are relatively outnumbered and politically

insignificant in street protests and electoral participation. Hence, the society of the MSAR has been largely 'integrated' into the polity since its return to the Chinese administration.

The society of Macao is basically compressed to such an extent that civil society groups independent of the government barely exist. Even when they emerge, these civil society groups have to express their views through unconventional media outlets, notably the Internet and blogs, which perhaps reach the young audience, but in terms of political influence are very limited.

Yet, the socio-political picture is not so pessimistic as conventional wisdom may assume. The younger generation of leaders in the pro-establishment forces is more educated and perhaps more open-minded than their predecessors. However, it is possible that the injection of young blood, together with their new ideas, may eventually bring about the fragmentation of pro-establishment interest groups. Although patronage politics is common and serious in Macao, generational change may lead to more lively internal political discourse and debates within the pro-establishment camp.

## Conclusion

Overall, Macao's dependence on casino capitalism and its accompanied integration of the society into the polity do not bode well for political development in the short run. Casino capitalism has provided more employment for ordinary people, but it has an inherently class nature that benefits the conservative segment of the middle class and enriches the already influential capitalist class, including the land developers, casino operators, and other big business people. Casino capitalism has also sustained the income gap between rich and poor, a phenomenon mitigated by the government's interventionist policy of providing annual subsidies to all the people of Macao. Indeed, the Macao government has taken more social measures, such as improvement of social welfare and acceleration in the building of housing units, so as to contain any possible societal discontent. Still, the compressed nature of the society with minimal political space for the increasing aspirations of the middle-class liberal democrats and the relatively alienated proletariat means that political discontent is only contained, but not tackled at the root causes. Compounding the problem of simmering political discontent is the perpetuation of the patronage system in Macao's politics. The pro-establishment elites remain politically influential. So long as Macao enjoys the fruits of casino capitalism, socio-political stability is maintained at the cost of political underdevelopment. Accountability of the Macao government remains limited as long as the middle-class liberal democrats and the disgruntled proletariat are politically marginalized with voices largely excluded in the policy-making processes. Sadly, under the circumstances of dependent casino capitalism and partially integrated socio-political system, the status quo appears to be the 'best' mode of political development. If economic fluctuations suddenly take place in Macao due to regional or global economic crisis, the socio-political impacts on Macao would perhaps be totally unanticipated. In order to pre-empt any possible socio-political crisis resulting from a sudden economic downturn, the Macao ruling elites may have to ponder a more proactive strategy of economic and political development, including how to minimize their dependence on casino capitalism, how to tilt the imbalance of patronage to embrace the politically deprived middle-class liberal democrats and local proletariat, and how to strike a fine balance between dependent casino capitalism and more social welfare for the people of Macao.

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Below: Political activism in Macau's Leal Senado square.



# Walking in Macao

I look down from the window of my 29th floor apartment and below I see Macau's typical urban density. The rooftops of apartment buildings are in varying degrees of repair: some rusting, some new, some have potted plants and half-hearted attempts at establishing small, green, private spaces. Sometimes, when there are fireworks displays at Macau Tower, occupants hold night-time picnics. On other occasions, the occupants slowly practise their tai chi or casual but systematic stretching and beating of their limbs and torso. Many rooftops have illegal structures that residents have built in order to create additional territory. Occupants claim extra space inch-by-inch; and these structures – cages on balconies or even additional building floors – may affect the integrity of the apartment building's structure.

Andy Fuller

THE APARTMENT BUILDINGS are so densely packed that one barely sees the movements of pedestrians and vehicles on the narrow streets. "The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the thresholds at which visibility begins", writes Michel de Certeau.<sup>1</sup> The streets are home to comic rental shops, Chinese cafes and noodle shops, small retail electronic stores, hairdressers and boiled fish snack bars. The main thoroughfare below, Rua Almirante Sergio, however, has a steady stream of busses, taxis and private vehicles. It's noisy and the street is lined with a variety of shops, restaurants and workspaces. The street's landmarks are a McDonald's restaurant, a ParknShop supermarket and A-Ma temple; and at the other end the large Ponte 16 Casino, which also holds a Sofitel hotel. Along the street are small workshops in which men and women make industrial equipment – long and thick metal cords undulate on concrete floors. There is a welder who has adorned his workshop with metal representations of male and female sexual organs. Loud pop music reverberates from his booming speakers. Abba's catchy disco beats break into the soundscape otherwise dominated by the din of busses, motorbikes and other vehicles. The clarity of the music – the regular beat, the choral singing – provides a welcome relief. This old and hybrid street is indicative of some of the changing patterns in contemporary Macau. The street holds some of its past: its signs, traces, smells and marks. Yet, also shows signs of change, forward movement, cosmopolitan tastes and curiosity for otherness and difference.

Urban experience is created through everyday practices. The everyday is something that is ubiquitous, daily, simple, often subtle and generally unquestioned or unremarkable. The everyday is familiar: full of gestures, movements, styles and accents. The everyday is what one does in order to get by; to facilitate one's work, to facilitate one's recreation; it is what happens on the side. It might be that which exists to serve a greater function or a more clearly delineated goal. For Highmore, it evokes that which is the "most repeated actions" as well as that which has the quality of "everydayness".<sup>2</sup> It is also that which is contradictory: "ordinary and extraordinary, self-evident and opaque, known and unknown, obvious and enigmatic".<sup>3</sup> Certeau delineates the study of everyday life through his use of the concepts 'strategies' and 'tactics'. These terms are aligned with common and easily identifiable dichotomies: official vs. informal, waking vs. dreamlike, plan-ning manual vs. poetry, grammar vs. rhetoric. Others could also be added to the list: general vs. specific, lingua franca vs. vernacular, original vs. appropriation, rules vs. subordination.

Certeau's dichotomies can be clearly applied to Macau's everyday urban life. Looking with a Certeauian gaze aids an analysis of Macau. At a market near Rua Almirante Sergio, there is a small garden arrangement; this is fenced off, and it forms a neat bench for market-goers to rest at, in front of one of the market's entrances. Here Indonesian and Filipino maids congregate, meet and swap stories about their lives in Macau. They are part of the city's foreign workforce that numbers more than 100,000 and comprises nearly 20% of the total population. Temporary workers thus provide a necessary service to Macau's economy and they are an important, but marginalized, part of Macau's complex identity. They are here to do the shopping for their bosses' families, I guess. They may be friends or acquaintances of varying degrees of proximity and familiarity. This empty space in front of the market provides them with an opportunity to network and to gossip. Directions issue from a sign in front of this exit: no waiting, no congregating or some such. The maids apparently should be moved on. The place is designated as a space for shopping, and socializing in the place is to be limited. Nonetheless, the maids keep on meeting there; and they keep on ignoring the sign. The mute visual admonishment of the sign holds little rhetorical power over these women; who prefer to engage with their friends who share the same movements through urban Macau.

Busses in Macau are also marked by the frequent Tagalog chatter, conducted over mobile phones or face to face with friends and other passengers. The bus is a space that takes on a dual function: going somewhere (getting to work) and providing a meeting space, networking opportunity. Passengers console each other and share the pleasures and laughter with one another.

Walking is perhaps the ideal means of practicing one's tactics against the strategies of the city's designers, administrators, and police. Moving through the city on foot allows for the practitioner to divert her route spontaneously, quickly and disorderly – subverting the imposed structure of a city's main thoroughfares. Walking allows for a sensory engagement with urban life: "ah, the neighbours are home and they are cooking"; "ah, such-and-such song is popular here in this home or in this shop". Walking facilitates a break between the outer and public domains of urban life to those of the inner and private spaces, which are breached regularly. The serious walker of urban life is the *flâneur*: a Baudelairean and Benjaminian figure of early 20th century Paris. But the *flâneur* is now ubiquitous and *flânerie* is practiced in numerous ways. Macau is a remarkably mobile locale, a tiny node of intersecting routes and trajectories that hosted 28 million visitors last year. Therefore, Macau's archetypal *flâneur* is perhaps the tourist from mainland China: gawking at the Ruins of Saint Paul, photographing the Grand Lisboa, and 'squeezing' the cards at a baccarat table. But such practices seem of limited critical engagement with the urban environment: routes are pre-determined by flag-waving tour guides. Private busses transport tourists from one casino to another; from one landmark to the next.

A city's strategic sense is shaped by the planners, architects, engineers, and police. In Macau wealthy local developers and transnational gaming companies often directly dictate land-use decisions. Much of the newly-constructed cityscape consists of faux interior neighbourhoods copied from other cities: St. Mark's Square in the Venetian Resort and Lisbon under a glass atrium at MGM. These are privatized spaces with a pseudo-public ambiance. These operations of strategic power that are articulated onto the city's built environment are subject to the tactics of the city's users; those that bring urban life into being. Through walking one writes a path into the city, into the urban infrastructure. Through writing and re-writing one's frequently trodden paths one becomes a local, known to others for no other quality except for the frequency of their use of a particular part of the city. And, 'the city' is made up of these countless fragmentary trajectories, written by each city user, city maker, city walker. Looking down at dense and urban Macau from the curious perspective of a high-rise apartment one feels the pull of an "Icarian fall",<sup>4</sup> a desire to be a part of the crowds below and to walk in the narrow streets where people may be lost and absorbed in the textures, smells and sounds that make up every day urban life.

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Notes

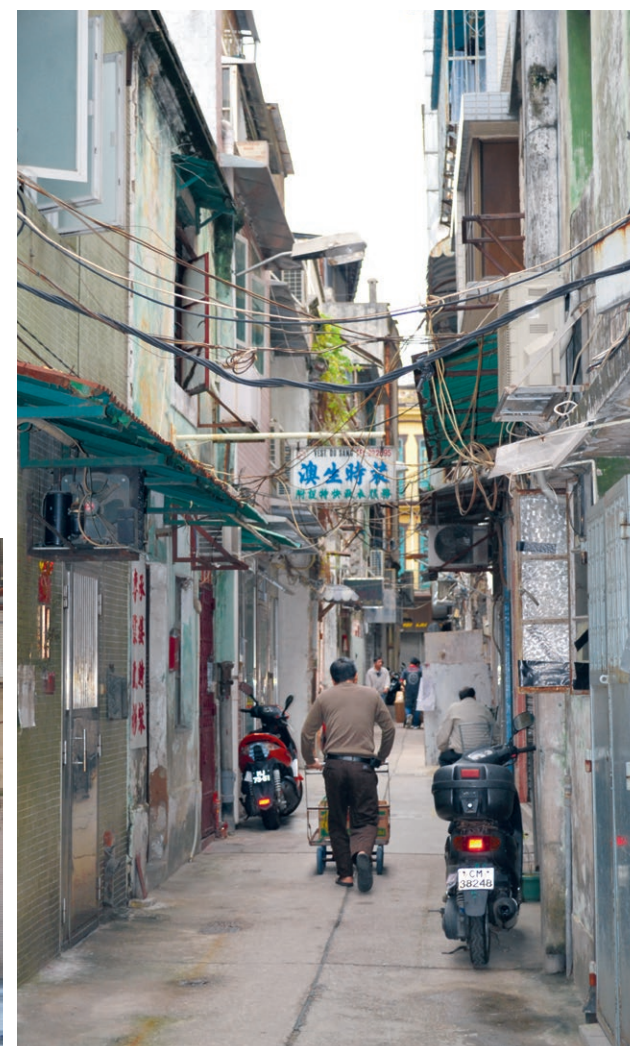
- 1 De Certeau, M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press; p.158
- 2 Highmore, B. 2006. *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture*, London: Continuum; p.1
- 3 Highmore, 2006, p.16
- 4 De Certeau, 1984, p.103



Right: "The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below,' below the thresholds at which visibility begins" (Michel de Certeau).

Left: Macau shop owned by Filipino residents.

Below: A Filipino cybercafé next door to a Chinese shop.



# Dicionário temático de Macau

As a contributor to the *Dicionário temático de Macau* (abbreviated DITEMA), or ‘Thematic Dictionary of Macau’, I should perhaps abstain from commenting on this work, but my entries are limited to five or six short pieces, and thus negligible, while the four volumes, taken together as one set, offer so much information and, indeed, are so important to the field of study now sometimes called ‘Macaology’ that I may hopefully be forgiven for having drafted these few lines.

Roderich Ptak

Maria Antónia Espadinha et. al. (eds.) 2011-2011.  
*Dicionário temático de Macau*.  
Macau: Universidade de Macau, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Departamento de Português;  
4 volumes, with a total of 1547 pages;  
ISBN 979-99937-1-009-1 (vol. 1);  
978-99965-1-028-1 (vol. 2 & vol. 4);  
978-99965-1-027-4 (vol. 3)

In short, this is the first major alphabetically/thematically arranged Portuguese-language compendium on diverse aspects of Macau’s past and present. It carries entries related to local and international institutions, administrative and political themes, international treaties involving the territory, besides articles on Macau’s exchange with other locations, on key enterprises, the biographies of men and women associated with this city, the Catholic Church and other religions, on temples and social institutions, trade and commerce, shipping, port facilities and communication more generally, on other infrastructural issues, geographical phenomena and the adjacent islands/regions around the Macau peninsula, on linguistic, educational and cultural aspects in the broadest sense, on the medical sector and hospitals, on Macau’s tourist industry and services, daily life and ethnic traditions, historical sources, sports, exhibitions, festivities, and dozens of other things. There is a total of circa 800 entries by circa 120 authors. The entries differ in length – from half a column to several tens of pages, depending on the importance of the topic and the weight of the sources consulted in each case. As to the latter, all entries provide lists of relevant modern and primary texts, in diverse languages. Some entries also contain useful illustrations and tables.

## Contributors

Work on the DITEMA started more than a decade ago. Already in 1998, before China took over the administration of Macau, António Rodrigues Baptista pushed the idea of compiling a major dictionary of this kind. The early contributions written at that point were rather short; those added during later years are usually longer. In the course of time several of the original texts had to be translated into Portuguese. All this involved complex editorial questions many of which had to be solved by Leonor Díaz de Seabra who became the chief coordinator of the project in 2000, as Maria Antónia Espadinha (*editora executiva*) explains in her short introduction (vol. 1). Especially during the later stages of the editorial process many entries underwent revision, which was achieved through the assistance of Rui Manuel Loureiro, Wu Zhiliang and others, all specialists in the field of Macau Studies. Eventually publication became possible with the support of many helping hands; the *Fundação para a Cooperação e Desenvolvimento de Macau*, one may add, functioned as ‘patron’ of the DITEMA.

The entry on *Enciclopédias sobre Macau* – this is one of many excellent contributions provided by Jin Guoping – lists several earlier handbooks and thematic dictionaries of a similar kind, yet very different in nature. Such works already began appearing in the 1990s, but they are all in Chinese, with only two exceptions, one in English and one in German. Moreover, most of these encyclopaedic publications do not carry separate bibliographical references under each entry. The Chinese compendia, it is also true, were mostly designed to serve the needs of non-specialized Chinese readers, including politicians and businessmen. They often contain many biographies of Chinese individuals, Chinese firms and Chinese institutions associated with Macau (and/or Hong Kong), while they are less strong and less informative in all matters involving the non-Chinese side. By contrast, the DITEMA mostly seems to address a learned Western (or Iberian) readership and scholars specialized in Macau Studies. This implies a very balanced approach and, where possible, citations from and references to sources in various languages. One other feature of the relevant entries is that they usually list Chinese characters of important names and terms, along with their local Cantonese transcriptions and/or the corresponding Pinyin or Wade-Giles



versions, evidently in accordance with traditional conventions and individual preferences. Not everyone may like this liberal arrangement, but it makes sense from the viewpoint of different academic disciplines which have a share in Macau Studies.

In the context of a short and general review, it would not be very opportune, perhaps even inappropriate, to single out individual entries for an elaborate discussion. Suffice it to say that the quality of most pieces is excellent, that they contain an enormous amount of condensed information, and that what one searches for is usually easily found. There are, for example, long lists of Portuguese and Chinese office holders, which can be located rather quickly under their respective headings. Such information is very valuable for historians, who are not familiar with Chinese language material on Macau’s past. Other entries introduce constitutional and administrative issues that are often difficult to encounter in ‘ordinary’ Western works. The same may be said of certain economic and educational themes.

In many cases contributors to thematic encyclopaedias are known for their publications in a particular field of study. This also applies to the DITEMA. Rogério Miguel Puga, for example, has produced a large number of finely-researched scholarly works on the British and Macau; nearly all related entries in the present compendium bear his signature. Readers interested in such themes will be very grateful for Puga’s insightful articles, although one ought not overemphasize the Anglophone presence in this city, because we all know that both the British and Americans often treated Macau inadequately. Another author who comes out with a set of highly specialized entries is Rui D’Ávila Lourido. Lourido has mostly been working on the earlier history of Macau, trying to base himself on both European and selected Chinese sources; again, this can be seen from his many contributions to the DITEMA. The two long entries entitled *Produtos alimentares* and *Produtos medicinais e aromáticos*, both by Lourido, are particularly rich in information and very useful, indeed. Alfredo Gomes Dias provides several

Above: Part of the team at University of Macau that produced DITEMA. From left, Dr. Isabel Leonor de Seabra, Assistant Professor of Portuguese; Prof. Rui Martins, Vice Rector of Research; Prof. Maria Espadinha, Emeritus Professor of Portuguese; Ms. Cindy Lam, Head of Research and Development Administration Office. (Photo by Rui Martins, used by permission)

entries related to political treaties and different events of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. António Graça de Abreu sketches the life of Manuel Teixeira, one of Macau’s most popular historians. And of course, Abreu has also written the brief entry on D. Frei Alexandre de Gouveia. Anabela Nunes Monteiro should be mentioned as well; there are dozens of articles by her, on various topics, such as Macau’s temples. These are all interesting pieces, just as the many contributions by José Manuel Rosa Madeira. Rui Manuel Loureiro mostly took care of early Luso-Chinese contacts – as expected. But one also encounters some ‘unexpected dimensions’, for example, the entry entitled *Espionagem*, by João V. B. Guedes. Here many additional entries could be cited, each with excellent data and a highly informative character; the general impression of all these short articles, there can be no doubt, is very positive.

## Treasure box

Notwithstanding, a dictionary of this calibre is never totally free of formal errors, wrong spellings, and certain contradictions. But it would not be elegant to publish a list of such shortcomings, or to point out what might be missing in terms of separate articles and themes. Rather, one should congratulate the editors and the University of Macau for bringing out this ambitious collection after so many years of investigation. The DITEMA, I may say in conclusion, is a remarkable treasure box full of valuable deposits, a wonderful academic tool that many scholars and teachers will enjoy consulting. Or, to put it differently, it is a work that libraries with a focus on the Far East, as well as private individuals interested in South China and Euro-Chinese relations more generally, should have on their shelves.

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# Sikhism

While many of the world's major religions have been subjected to scholarly scrutiny, Sikhism, the world's fifth largest religion, was not brought into discussion on a global scale until quite recently. The book *Sikhism* by Doris Jakobsh is, therefore, a timely and welcome addition to the literature on world religions.

Karuna Sharma

## Reviewed publication:

Jakobsh, D.R. 2012. *Sikhism*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, ISBN: 9780824836016 (paperback)

IN A RAPIDLY GLOBALISING WORLD, world religions and their followers are confronted with a variety of challenges. Relocation of people, issues related with cultural values and practices and assertion of religious identities in the diasporas around the world, and the growing inter-connectedness between the home and abroad have rendered the articulation and practice of religions more complex than ever before. Internet and cyberspace have generated and made accessible an enormous amount of information of various sorts on religious ideas and practices. The online literature, mostly created in the diasporas by people far removed from places where their faiths originated, adds to the complexities in understanding the nature and characteristics of religions. Under such circumstances, studying religions in their historical political and economic contexts assumes considerable significance.

In the book, which is a part of the Dimensions of Asian Spirituality series of the University of Hawai'i Press, the author traces the origin and development of the Sikh religion from the fifteenth century to the present. She analyses the aspects of the Sikh religious tradition and social formation in India and abroad. The book underscores the heterogeneity of tradition and ideology within Sikhism and challenges the scholarship that views Sikhism as a homogeneous religion. The author says that the lived realities of the Sikhs in India are quite different from the representations of a homogeneous Sikhism in the literature.

## Sikhism: ideologies and attributes

In a brief introduction, the author narrates how her interest in Sikhism developed and illustrates this by citing episodes from her personal encounters with Sikhism and the Sikh community in India. Her experiences of an ideologically and socially heterogeneous Sikh community and the harmonious relationship that existed among its various components as well as between them and the others, such as Hindus and Muslims, notwithstanding some occasional conflicts and clashes, forms the context of this study. The following six chapters deal with various sets of issues related with the Sikh religion and community.

Chapter one discusses the variety of written primary texts, highlights the richness of information they contain, and also questions the reliability of some primary texts, such as *janamsakhis* or the collections of hagiographic anecdotes on the lives of the gurus, as sources for historical reconstruction of the Sikh religion and community. The author, nevertheless, makes use of this genre of primary texts. In chapter two, the author describes the historical development of Sikhism in India from the time of Guru Nanak to the present day and underscores certain institutional changes that took place over the period of time. The author shows how various branches of Sikhism evolved from a creed based on love and devotion to the formless *Akal Purakh* (eternal being) to the Sikh *Khalsa* with militaristic attributes and emphasis on five Ks (*kesh*: uncut hair; *kangha*: comb; *kachh*: short breeches; *kara*: steel bracelet; and *kirpan*: dagger) as markers of Sikh identity. The author also discusses the internal contestations and the ensuing development of various sects and sub-sects within Sikhism.

In chapter three, the author discusses Sikh beliefs, institutions, and rituals that govern human lives from birth to death and cremation. Monotheism is central to Sikh philosophy and obtaining liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth is the ultimate objective of every Sikh no matter which school of thought he or she belonged to. The gurus prescribed a direct path of liberation through the discipline of *nam simran*. Like Hinduism, in the Sikh philosophy/mythology human life is divided into five stages. The gurus, especially Nanak, emphasized that the salvation is to be achieved while living the life of a householder and not of an ascetic. Gurdwara played a significant role in the daily lives of the Sikhs and it was central to the religious, social, and even political activities. Attempts were also made in the early twentieth century to organize and control the gurdwaras through the institutions of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal (political outfits) and much emphasis was given to initiation into the Khalsa order and the maintenance of Sikh identity.

The author then turns to examine the norms of society in chapter four. The issues of equality so central to Sikh teachings are analysed with particular reference to gender and caste roles. The author highlights the ambiguity with regard to the role of women in the development of Sikh tradition as well as their position in an otherwise egalitarian tradition. Caste, similarly, is an anathema to Sikhism. Despite all exhortations against the caste system, the Hindu caste rules such as endogamy and not

sharing meals with lower caste groups have somewhat continued in Sikhism until even today. The gurus, according to the author, opposed the spiritual ramifications of caste, but accepted it as a form of social organization. The Mazhabi (sweeper) and Ravidasi (skinners and tanners) Sikhs have experienced and continue to experience the worst prejudice and in many cases are not even permitted to enter the gurdwaras. Caste distinction continues to inform social hierarchies in the diasporic communities as well, and caste rules regarding marriage and meals are followed in the Sikh diasporas around the world.

In chapter five, the author examines the contexts and stages in the formation of Sikh diasporas in the UK, Canada, and the US. Here, she examines the challenges of migration in the performance of rituals and practices. Gurdwaras play a variegated role as a centre of communal worship, as schools for Punjabi language and religious learning, and as meeting places for elderly Sikhs, or women and youth groups.

## A heterogeneous tradition

The diversity of Sikh religious tradition and multiplicity of sects within Sikhism are discussed in chapter six. Here the author describes the Nirankaris, who believed in the formless eternal being. They were critical of the Sikh Khalsa assuming the political character. The Namdhari Sikhs believed in the continuation of the guru lineage and embraced the Khalsa ideals as propounded by Guru Gobind Singh. They are strict vegetarians and do not consume alcohol. Besides these major groups, the author also briefly describes the belief system and practices of the Nihangs, Nanaksar Sikhs, and Akand Kirtani Jatha. The book concludes with a brief analysis of the nature of the Sikh tradition in the age of internet and the problems of representation of the religion in online media accessible to public.

Jakobsh' *Sikhism* is a major study of a world religion from a global perspective. It offers a fine analysis of the internal contestations within the Sikh religious tradition and offers a perspective that contradicts the view that considers Sikhism as a monolithic religion and Sikhs as an egalitarian homogenous community. The book has a strong message and will stimulate further investigation of its various ideological, social and political dimensions and, I am sure, it will be useful for both academic and students of world religions.

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Sikh-festival in  
Southampton, UK  
(courtesy of flickr)



## Between two worlds: women from *pesantren* appropriating private and public spaces

The history of women's emancipation in Indonesia has come a long way. In fact young underprivileged women have already had a taste of education since the early 1900s with the first established school for girls set up in Central Java by Kartini. Most Indonesians are well aware of the struggle of this women's rights champion in the midst of the patriarchal world around her. Brought up by a feudal aristocratic family,<sup>1</sup> Kartini managed to break down the wall that hindered young women to empower themselves with formal education and to escape from their fate of entering into an arranged marriage in their early teen years. However, not many know what is going on inside the gates of *pesantrens* in Java where young girls and female teachers negotiate their public persona amidst their conservative notions of women's roles.

Hanny Savitri Hartono

### Reviewed publication:

Eka Srimulyani. 2012. *Women from Traditional Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia: Negotiating Public Spaces*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, ISBN: 978-90-8964-421-3 (paperback)

IT IS IN THIS LIGHT that this book serves its purpose. Eka Srimulyani seeks to fill a void of knowledge on how Muslim women, especially *nyais* (the wife or daughter of a *kiai*, the head of a *pesantren*) empower themselves with education, Islamic as well as mainstream, and as a consequence move between two worlds – private and public. This is not to say that they encounter no obstacles along the way, but these women have achieved tremendous milestones which could never have happened prior to Kartini's era.

Based on her fieldwork in Jombang, East Java between 2003 and 2004, Srimulyani starts her narrative with a brief account of *pesantren*, traditional Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, particularly those in Java. She purposely frames her research within the agency of the *nyais* due to the lack of studies focusing on women in *pesantren*. Most of the studies on Islamic educational institutions thus far have been devoted to enquire about *kiais*, their leadership, traditions and intellectual transmission. Women from *pesantren* tend to be absent from the academic discourse although they play a significant part in this establishment and beyond. Srimulyani concludes that this trend to a large extent is influenced by "the patriarchal nature of *pesantren* leadership" in which a male descendant is the most likely replacement for a *kiai* when he passes away or is no longer in power. This is especially true not only in Java and Aceh but also in different parts of the Islamic world. The contribution made by the *nyais* in empowering young girls through education and leadership in *pesantrens* seemed trivial and insignificant, thus not worth investigating. However, with the recent social change in women's engagement in the public arena,

Srimulyani is inspired to investigate how these women deal with the issue of negotiating public spaces amidst the domestically bound Javanese traditional women's roles. She points out that the social life of women who live, study and work in a *pesantren* cannot be compared to other Muslim women in Indonesia who live outside this institution, due to the unique cultural norms and principles embodied by the establishment and its members. Hence such study is necessary and long overdue.

This ethnographic text reveals the history, journeys and both the public and private lives of three chosen *nyais* from different generations by tracing back their paths. Srimulyani intentionally selected these women to cover a span of history from the early 1900s to the present. Her core argument is that despite the fact that patriarchal traditions are learned through *kitab kuning* and practised in the *pesantren*, these women can transcend the boundaries of the institution and assume public responsibilities not only in their *pesantren* but also in their community.

Srimulyani introduces the concept of *santri ibuisim*, which derives from the notions of *priyayization* and *ibuisim*, to describe the status of *nyais*. *Priyayization* pertains to a process in which Javanese women from a privileged middle-class background, assume power in the Western sense because of their class status. In this manner a woman embodies power because of her husband's status. Her social standing within the household and outside the home is greatly determined by her husband's notability. Whereas *ibuisim* applies to a situation in which a woman accepts her role as a mother who takes care of her family, group members and country without expecting any reward, power or prestige in return. These Javanese ideals of womanhood were embraced and promoted by Suharto's New Order regime without any consideration of the existing vast diversity of cultures within the country. Srimulyani sees that these concepts are embedded in the *nyais* as they are mothers of their own children, 'mothers' for their pupils in

Below: Girls at a *pesantren* in Jakarta, at an assembly to meet U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Kristen Bauer. (Photo reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy flickr.com)

the *pesantren* and they can also exercise their power to manage the boarding school, especially in matters that relate to their female students, through their engagement as a *pesantren* leader in their own right and/or as a *kiai's* wife.

What strikes a chord in this body of knowledge is the reality of having *kitab kuning* as the moral compass and teaching material used in the majority of *pesantren* under the wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama (the biggest traditionalist Muslim organisation in Indonesia). These textbooks contain interpretations of Islam not only from the Qur'an and the *hadiths*, but they are also fully charged with local cultural and traditional understandings that lead them to separate women's and men's roles in two very separate boxes, and place public and private spheres in the opposite continuum. Hence it is not too much to say that these *nyais* deserve all the credit since these women have weathered the predicaments they faced.

The value of this book lies in the richness of its narratives describing the history and private and public lives of the female leaders of traditional Islamic institutions in East Java that have barely been touched before. As a female Muslim of Indonesian descent who has no *pesantren* background, the book opens my eyes and provides me with a deeper understanding on what is going on behind the 'closed doors' of *pesantren* in East Java. One thing makes me wonder though. Will the future female leaders of *pesantrens* encounter fewer frictions since there has been a new movement to critically analyse and improve the *kitab kuning* for its patriarchal notions?

Hanny Savitri Hartono. (Vitri\_ui@yahoo.com)

### Notes

1 For a detailed account of Kartini's life, dreams and struggles, see Raden Ajeng Kartini. 1921. *Letters from a Javanese princess* (A. L. Symmers, Trans). London: Duckworth & Co. Available from Project Gutenberg.



# Cambodian bronze



In 2006, a woman digging in her garden unearthed seven ancient Buddhist bronzes in Sdaeung Chey village, Cheung Prey district, Kampong Cham Province in Cambodia. Rather than selling them on the black market, she did the proper thing and gave them to the Cambodian National Museum. They appeared to date back to the sixth and seventh centuries and although they displayed different styles and seemed to have come from different backgrounds they formed a unique group that had been in the same spot in the ground for centuries. They are by no means the only ancient bronze artifacts still to be found in the ground, or that have been unearthed in recent times, but needless to say, they do not all end up in the museum in Phnom Penh or other public venues.

Dick van der Meij

## Reviewed publication:

Louise Allison Cort and Paul Jett (eds.) 2010. *Gods of Angkor: Bronzes from the National Museum of Cambodia*, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, distributed by University of Washington Press and Silksworm Books, ISBN: 978-0934686-17-4

THESE OBJECTS usually enter collections silently and are seldom, if ever, shown to a wider audience. The well-intended UNESCO conventions on the prohibition and prevention of illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property, may well be one of the reasons for objects 'going underground', never to see the light of day again. Connoisseurs and art collectors are now forced to find illicit ways to acquire their beloved objects, as it is otherwise impossible to procure them. In this way the objects are kept out of sight and cannot be enjoyed by wider audiences, or be studied. This is not an exclusively Cambodian problem, of course, as can also be seen in the article by John N. Miksic on the riverbeds of Sumatra, the latest target of treasure hunters (The Newsletter #59, p.47).

## Cooperation

The National Museum in Cambodia was a victim of the Khmer Rouge atrocities and only after the cessation of hostilities in 1992 did restoration of the Museum begin, with enthusiastic foreign help. This aid was provided not only for the bronze collection, but was also made available for the ceramics collection. Conserving, cataloguing and presenting Cambodia's Khmer bronzes has been the aim of a long-standing cooperation project between the Cambodian National Museum, the Australian National Gallery, the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution. The present book was published to accompany an exhibition of 36 bronze masterpieces in Washington DC in 2010 and Los Angeles in 2011, entitled *Gods of Angkor. Bronzes from the National Museum of Cambodia*.

The book and the exhibition aim to show that Khmer metalworkers perfected their craft over two millennia. It also wishes to point out that, although limited in number compared to their stone counterparts, bronze sculptures also played an "important role aesthetically and ritually in Khmer temples and private shrines". (p. 10) The book contains four essays written by Ian C. Glover from London, Hiram Woodward from Baltimore, Paul Jett from Washington, and John Guy from New York.

## Bronzes from the early metal age in Southeast Asia

In the first chapter Ian C. Glover discusses bronze drums, urns, and bells from the early metal age of Southeast Asia. These objects found their way all over mainland and insular Southeast Asia. The first to mention the existence of a bronze drum was Georg Rumph (Rumphius) who, as early as 1705, mentioned the famous 'Moon of Pejeng', now in the Pura Penataran Asih temple near Ubud in Central Bali. These drums apparently triggered interest to such an extent that "The literature on these drums in multiple languages probably exceeds that of all other aspects of Southeast Asian prehistoric archaeology put together". (p. 20) They are not only aesthetically appealing, but provide much information on numerous aspects of the life and surroundings of the people who made them, and their research-worthiness therefore comes as no surprise. The archaeological source of these drums remained a mystery until 1924 when a fisherman found a number of these bronzes in the Dong Song village, which gave these drums their future name. Romantic, scholarly and political backgrounds were subsequently responsible for the explanations offered on the history, use, and spread of these fascinating objects. Ian Glover states that the drums probably served many roles (p. 20) – a statement I greatly enjoy because we are so often lured into thinking in singular roles for things from the past. The National Museum of Cambodia has several drums although none originate from Cambodia itself.

The article continues with a photo of a rather large group of beautifully decorated urns. What the objects really are and what their use(s) were is still unknown, although the name given to them – 'urn' – which conjures images of vessels for the ashes of the deceased, makes me suspect that the researchers had an underlying notion of what they were. Frederik Bosch discovered an urn in 1922 in Kerinci, Sumatra, Indonesia (not portrayed in the book – but for those interested, it is portrayed in another exhibition catalogue: *Sumatra. Crossroads of Cultures*, edited by Francine Brinkgreve and Retno Sulistaningsih, Leiden: KITLV Press 2009:33). At present, the author knows of 15 of these urns, while most recent finds are in private collections in Switzerland, Thailand, the United States, and Belgium. Although also dubbed Dong Song drums, they do not

belong to the Dong Song culture proper, especially since none have been excavated in the wider Dong Song area. The author makes the interesting observation that the urns are found in relatively 'drum-free' areas (p.26).

In conclusion, the author is of the opinion that more research is needed to the archaeological context of these objects and their dating. For me, here comes the importance of the fight against looting as looters have little patience (literally) with scholarly mapping and the description of archaeological sites and thus they destroy the sources of crucial information for wider understanding.

## Bronze sculptures of ancient Cambodia

This second chapter by Hiram Woodward pays attention to the relationships between bronze and stone images, including the "degree to which the inherent properties of the two media are lost in the quest for ideal form". (p.31) The question is "whether bronzes were 'reflections' of stone images or whether there were established iconographic types that had no counterparts in stone". (p.31) Another issue is the "nature of Cambodia's connections with the world outside". In effect, the first issue relates to craftsmanship and mastery of the basic materials. Of course, the few pages this issue could be afforded in this book did not give the author the room to elaborate much, but the idea is fascinating. The second issue is important as it touches on Cambodia's position as a site of the confluence of Indian culture eastwards and Chinese culture westwards.

## A technical study of the Kampong Cham figure group

This third chapter in the book is by the hand of Paul Jett and gives the reader some insight into the results of the thermoluminescence dating for bronzes. It uses the seven bronzes found in 2006 mentioned above. These bronzes were made using the technique of lost wax casting. The thermoluminescence dating system was used "[b]ecause TL reveals the last time the clay core was heated to a high temperature, it sometimes indicates when a bronze was cast, although it frequently gives only a rough estimate of the date". (p.79) The author makes a side-remark, which is however crucial in this context, in that the pieces had been "lightly cleaned since entering the museum". (p.79) In view of the dating mechanism it would appear that cleaning should be done under guidance and under strict conditions ensuring that the accrued waste (the clay necessary used in the manufacturing process and now used for dating) is not discarded. Many questions remain on how, when and why these seven objects that originate from three distinct (Khmer, Thai, and Chinese) cultures came to be preserved together. Here again we see that the archaeological context is crucial.

## Angkorian metalwork in the temple setting

The final contribution to the book is elegantly written by John Guy. Presenting translations of ancient historical sources the author gives a vivid picture of the metal religious imagery of Angkor and what happened to many of these images when looted by one king after another. He also provides us with descriptions and pictures relating the different sizes of the objects, from tiny pieces of jewelry to a giant 6 meter sleeping Vishnu on the serpent Ananta, excavated from the island temple West Mebon. This contribution shows that in the old days Angkor was indeed a golden city.

The book ends with a catalogue of the objects exhibited, providing information on the image, measurements, provenance and National Museum catalogue numbers. Each object is portrayed again.

## Conclusion

The book is lavishly illustrated with color photographs of every object in the exhibition. The objects have been presented more than once and show them from various sides enabling the reader to gain a much better idea of the objects' features than when only one photo had been provided. It is a good thing that the measurements of all the objects have been provided as the presentation of the book might sometimes give us a wrong impression. Because of the prominent place of the bronze Ganesha that adorns the front and back cover of the book, and which is portrayed no less than six times more, I was fooled into believing that it was much larger than the 26 centimeters it in fact is. Because the book is an accompaniment to exhibitions, it is of course not exhaustive on the subject matter it deals with. This is not a problem as it gives readers sufficient information to whet their appetites.

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# Consuming empire in wartime Japan

Kenneth Ruoff has chosen a fascinating motif to study how the Japanese consumed empire, how they collaborated with their leadership in solidifying imperial myths, and how this contributed to justifying domestic order as well as expansion abroad. The celebration in 1940, of the 2600th anniversary of the mythical founding of Japan, undoubtedly represents a peak of imperial propaganda but has not been studied much. This “climactic moment for the ‘unbroken imperial line’ (*bansei ikkei*) ideology” (p.1), as Ruoff puts it, is one of those numerous events of tremendous significance in history that in post-war scholarship of Japan’s modern history have been overshadowed by the major political events of this era: the founding of Manchukuo in 1932, the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45), the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, etc. We owe much to Ruoff for studying this event and the spectacle that was created to celebrate the anniversary of the assumed enthronement of Emperor Jimmu in 660 BC.

Torsten Weber

## Reviewed publication:

Ruoff, K.J. 2010. *Imperial Japan at its Zenith. The Wartime Celebration of the Empire's 2,600th Anniversary*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 236 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8014-4866-9 (hardback)

BUT RUOFF does much more than this. His analysis of the ideological cum societal impact of the celebrations – with a clear focus on the latter – provide new insights into how these myths were infused with life and put into practice on different levels of society. Using four topical examples (historiography, mass culture, tourism, diaspora) and stretching the spatial range from Japan proper to Korea, Manchuria, and Japanese communities in the Americas, Ruoff manages to base his study on an unusually rich body of sources; they include political essays, maps, postcards, guidebooks, flags, songs and other materials that do not often feature in conventional works of historiography.

## Touring empire, serving the throne

Ruoff clarifies early on his distance to the core message of imperial mythmaking, namely the historicity of the mythical emperor Jimmu who, as he puts it plainly “never existed” (p.1). It is only fair to admit that the military and political leadership did not invent this myth in the 1930s or 1940s, but merely activated and instrumentalized traditional beliefs and ideas on the given occasion. Many of the ideological ingredients of the imperial anniversary celebration of 1940 had in fact been around for several decades as national myths and most have been studied by Carol Gluck in her seminal book on Meiji ideology more than 25 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Ruoff’s study, however, is less concerned with the politico-intellectual history of imperial mythmaking and ideology than with analysing its practice. His preferred term is ‘consumption’, by which he means nothing more than the active and willing participation of ordinary Japanese in the commodification of imperial Japan’s central myth of *bansei ikkei*. Ruoff identifies pilgrimages to assumedly holy sites of the Japanese nation as central to this endeavour and it is therefore unsurprising that ‘tourism’ features as the most prominent way of consuming empire in his well-researched study. In fact, the actual anniversary celebrations are dealt with by the author in a few pages whereas three out of six chapters focus on Japanese traveling to and at ‘sacred sites’.



The first chapter studies how historians collaborated in the preparation of the anniversary celebrations and thereby helped to scholarly legitimize an otherwise rather obviously political project. While a number of studies of prominent Japanese historians

involved in different wartime projects have appeared in English over the past decades,<sup>2</sup> Ruoff is more interested in popular bestsellers and the mutually enforcing and dependent relationship between ideology and capitalism. “Wartime nationalism”, he writes, “intensified consumerism, which in turn hyped nationalism.” (p.4) The following chapter studies volunteer labour service which mobilized millions of Japanese ‘volunteers’ in preparation of the anniversary celebrations. This chapter is the key to Ruoff’s claim that the anniversary was no unilateral top-down propaganda event, but in fact a series of activities stretching over some years ahead of 1940 and involving mass participation, most of which was voluntary, as Ruoff claims.

Chapters three to five then shift the focus to what Ruoff calls “imperial tourism”, with foci on heritage sites in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria. On the one hand, Ruoff emphasizes that the massive success of wartime tourism suggests that wartime Japan was no “dark valley” of continuous and widespread suffering for most Japanese people, on the other hand, however, he sees “authoritarianism/militarism/fascism” (p.7) as the driving force behind the promotion of traveling as “self-administered citizenship training” (pp.12, 145). To what extent “imperial tourism”, often promoted and organized by the still existing Japan Tourism Bureau (JTB), was in fact coerced remains unclear. Ruoff’s implied similarities with Italian *Dopolavoro* and German *Kraft durch Freude* programmes – which themselves differed quite fundamentally<sup>3</sup> – reveal the disparity rather than commonality of the three cases. Not the least of these differences appears to be linkages with welfare programmes in the European cases compared to the Japanese case in which commercial aspects seem to have outplayed the potential ideological character of tourism. The closing chapter then turns to the inclusion of Japanese diaspora and the anniversary celebrations of the Congress of Overseas Brethren in November 1940.

## The axis of comparison: how fascist was Japan?

The width and diversity of the materials Ruoff managed to uncover is impressive and his skilful interweaving of historiographical argumentation and anecdotal evidence makes his book a very pleasant read. His basic thesis of stressing a mutually enforcing relationship between imperial propaganda, tourism, and consumption is convincing. However, there are also some problems; for example, when he frequently transcends the scope of Japanese history to place his findings in a larger context of assumed commonalities between Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and wartime Japan. Although Ruoff explicitly states that “[t]he value of the book does not rest on proving that fascism trumps all other concepts for understanding wartime Japan” (p.20), it is in fact this very analogy that Ruoff returns to throughout his study – with rather limited success. The parallels he likes to draw between German Nazism, Italian Fascism, and Japanese imperial propaganda surrounding the celebrations of 1940 appear constructed and misleading, at best, and are sometimes faulty. His consistent mistakes with German names and organisations (Leni Riefenstahl, not Reifenstahl; Heinrich, not Henrich Himmler; Bund Deutscher Mädel, not Madchen), which contrast unfavourably to his command over the Japanese materials, help little to strengthen his argument.

The main problems in this comparison are, however, not spelling mistakes. Apart from a very brief reference to the intellectual historian Maruyama Masao (who is only one of many Japanese scholars who have worked extensively on the problem of comparative fascism), there is no serious engagement with theoretical literature on fascism in a Japanese or global perspective.<sup>4</sup> Is it sufficient to discover a few – assumed – parallels in mass movement activism and organisation between the Nazis and the Japanese to employ the label fascism? And what exactly does this label tell us? Are all organized mass movements fascist *per se*? How do democratic or non-fascist totalitarian regimes influence, organise, or manipulate masses?<sup>5</sup>

Ruoff’s case could have been more convincing had he either devoted some more space to discussing fascism as a potentially meaningful analytical concept or to studying events of similar size and significance as the 2600th Japanese imperial anniversary

in Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy. Only, as far as we know, there were none. And this, in fact, points at a unique feature of ‘fascist’ Japan that Ruoff, contrary to his own claims, accidentally discloses in a rather compelling way. In his conclusion, Ruoff correctly states that “[in Japan] there has been no explicit, official attempt to repudiate the imperial myths, contrivances that were employed during the past century and a half toward racist, imperialist, and sexist ends.” (p.188) This discomforting observation provides an important lead to seeing differences between the three experiences beyond the oft-quoted problem of “coming to terms with the past”, namely the past itself. By the time the Nazis came to power, Japan’s empire was already stable; it had long annexed territory, possessed colonies, and secured a strong foothold on the Chinese mainland including the puppet-state of Manchukuo.



In other words, in the years leading up to the anniversary in 1940, the Japanese had experienced several decades of imperial propaganda, the usage of imperial myths, and mass activation for the sake of empire. Imperial symbolism and mass mobilization was not new and could, relatively easily, be stimulated. Unlike the German and Italian cases, it was not failed political figures and convicted criminals who transformed the state into a fascist prison. In Japan, it was military leaders who had won wars and had ‘successfully’ contributed to the expansion of the empire – victors, not losers. All these differences, not assumed fascist commonality, appear more relevant to understanding why and how imperial myths worked in Japan, and why they peaked when they did.

A practical inconvenience for the reader of this stimulating and important study is the publisher’s decision not to include a bibliography, not even a select bibliography. Maybe Ruoff was persuaded to agree to this deal as a trade-off for including more than a dozen full-colour prints of imperial propaganda materials that impressively visualize how the government, military, but also companies, tried to exploit the anniversary for their own purposes. They add to the pleasure of reading this insightful study that, as Ruoff’s previous monograph, has also appeared in Japanese translation. Despite the above-mentioned caveats, both versions deserve many readers.

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## Notes

- 1 Gluck, C. 1985. *Japan's Modern Myths. Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- 2 For example Tanaka, S. 1993. *Japan's Orient. Rendering Pasts into History*, Berkeley: University of California Press; and Brownlee, John S. 1997. *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, Vancouver: UBC Press.
- 3 See De Grazia, V. 1981. *The culture of consent: mass organization of leisure in fascist Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 4 Maruyama, M. 1963. *Thought and behaviour in modern Japanese politics*, Ivan Morris (ed.), London: Oxford University Press, contains the classical study, while Tansman, A. (ed.) 2009. *The culture of Japanese fascism*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, provides insights into recent debates.
- 5 A promising case study for comparison would be the promotion of tourism in post-1949 China. See <http://chineseposters.net/themes/tourism.php>



2600th year of Japanese Imperial Calendar stamps. Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of Japan. (Wikimedia Commons)



# China experiments

Post-Mao China has long been viewed by many as a case of economic development without political liberalization. While more than three decades' market-oriented economic reforms have transformed China into the second largest economy in the world, the process of political democratization has never seemed to fully take off. In *China Experiments*, Florini, Lai, and Tan challenge this conventional wisdom by treating China's political trajectory as a slow-motion, bumpy transformation of authoritarianism – regulated, and often led, by the Communist Party of China (CPC) since 1978. Arguing that political change in China is much deeper and more extensive than is commonly recognized, the authors decide not to focus on policies and political initiatives from Beijing, but rather to look for hints from the myriad of local experiments.

Junpeng Li

## Reviewed publication:

Florini, A., H. Lai & Y. Tan. 2012. *China Experiments: From Local Innovations to National Reform*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press. 216 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8157-2200-7 (paperback)

SINCE 2000, the China Center for Comparative Politics and Economics at the CPC's Central Compilation and Translation Bureau, Center for the Comparative Study of World Political Parties at the Central Party School, and the Center for Chinese Government Innovations (CCGI) at Peking University, had administered a biennial awards program for best practice in local governance innovation (the award has been solely administered by the CCGI since 2009). This book largely draws its empirical evidence from the cases of the winners.

There have been a large number of inquiries into the democratic future of China, which can be categorized into four speculative directions, as summarized by the authors: authoritarian resilience, collapse, democratic evolution, and trapped transition. Readers will be disappointed if they look for a definitive answer, prediction, or endorsement. Instead, the book is intended as a roadmap that describes China's changing local political landscape. It identifies the respective progress and obstacles of each governance innovation, and points out its divergent likely trajectories. As the authors insist, China's political future is unpredictable; the emergence of contemporary China is an unprecedented phenomenon, with the blend of rapid economic growth and political authoritarianism in a large polity, its unique and continuous culture, its deliberate experimentalist approach to governance, or so-called "crossing the river by feeling the stones", and the complex international environment it is facing. Therefore, they find the existing predictions on China's democratic future unconvincing, and in turn take a bottom-up approach by examining what local actors are doing and their implications for China's national rules. As they reveal, with the notable exception of the sacrosanct one-party rule, China has been undergoing a wide range of local experiments involving and entailing the competition between various interests, which often have national repercussions, and the corresponding implications are more reliable than the grandiose conjectures.

More specifically, the book investigates four key areas of political reform: administration, elections, civil society, and transparency. Since the late 1990s, China has undergone a prolonged process of streamlining its bureaucratic structure, first by simplifying administrative procedures within some local authorities, and later by promoting the reform agenda beyond the selected localities. The authors present two interesting cases, one in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, the other in Xiaguan District, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. For the first case, beginning in 1997, Shenzhen took a series of initiatives to downsize its administrative approval procedures, cutting the items in need of administrative approval first by 42 percent, and later by a further 38 percent. The municipal authorities soon realized, however, that many government agencies were not following the improved procedures, at least not efficiently. To fix this problem, in 2005, after a two-month trial operation, the Shenzhen government implemented an electronic supervision system to monitor

relevant license-granting activities and processes. As the authors claim, the system has greatly reduced the abuse of bureaucratic power, and has been imitated in at least ten other localities. In the second case, Xiaguan moved most of the scattered administrative and bureaucratic agencies to one single location, the so-called governmental affairs 'supermarket'. The one-stop government building provides more than fifty types of public services, and has smoothed the administrative process.

Open and competitive elections are the sine qua non of democracy. While the CPC has been very cautious in introducing a full-scale electoral mechanism into China, in recent years it has allowed for and experimented with 'semi-competitive elections', namely elections with candidates, but without organized groups or campaigns. The CPC itself has promoted intra-party democracy by bringing voting mechanisms into the party, although in a highly controlled and secretive manner. Indeed, Xi Jinping, China's presumptive next top leader, emerged from a vote by hundreds of high-ranking party officials in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Three local election experiments are examined by the authors. In the early 2000s, the local leaders in the county of Rushan, Shandong Province, attempted to increase the participation of party members in the decision-making process by regularizing the meetings of the party congress. To improve the accountability of local officials to the residents, the leaders have adopted opinion polls at the annual party congress – those who consistently receive unfavorable votes will be removed from their positions. Furthermore, the local government has introduced semi-competitive elections for the representatives to a few township party congresses. In Ya'an, Sichuan Province, two counties were selected to conduct pilot experiments for semi-competitive elections for representatives to the county party congresses in 2003, and quite a few incumbent leaders lost the elections. In Qianxi County, Hebei Province, the Women's Federation set up direct elections to the Women's Congress, which opened up new channels for women to play a role in the political process.

As a check and balance to state power, civil society organizations have grown slowly in China under tight state control. However, after examining the ways in which local governments are engaging with those organizations, the authors reveal a fluid space for negotiation and partnership. In Shanghai, the government realized that it could no longer provide social services all by itself and needed to collaborate with local NGOs. The Changzhou Road Municipal Office of Putuo District set up an NGO service center, which walks a fine line among providing assistance to NGOs, purchasing services from the NGOs, and making sure that these organizations operate under its watch. Traditionally, government organized

non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) have functioned as a branch of the government to govern, rather than serve, their constituencies. The situation is subtly changing in China, as shown in the cases of the Quanzhou City Federation of Trade Unions in Fujian Province and the Yiwu City Legal Rights Defense Association in Zhejiang Province. For the former, the GONGO worked with private sector workers, improved their living standards, and increased their political participation. For the latter, the GONGO aimed at working with the government to defend the workers' rights.

After a close look at the local experiments, the authors devote a chapter to the implementation of similar policies at the national stage. Based on the discussion of the case of the national regulations on 'Open Government Information', the authors discuss the difficulties in the scaling-up efforts, such as the tension between openness and secrecy, the lack of citizen awareness, the lack of truly autonomous civic organizations, and weak enforcement. While significant progress does exist in certain arenas, the resistance makes China's democratic transition a daunting task.

Probably due to its co-authorship, there is a bit of repetition throughout the text. Some cases, such as environmental NGOs, could have been explored with more depth. Statements like "[the] trade unions have also received the government's financial support and are thus better equipped to protect the rights and interests of workers" (p. 113) left me confused. My biggest complaint, in fact, is the book's lack of deeper analysis. While the authors make it very clear that they are not interested in predicting China's political future, it did frustrate me to keep reading statements such as "[it is] unclear what might happen in the future" (p. 159) and "all of the predictions for China's political future have a degree of plausibility" (pp. 168-169). The analysis typically stops here without digging deeper to compare and decipher the possible paths forward.

While warning that the local experiments may have a spillover effect, the authors fail to tell us the likelihood of such an effect, under what conditions the effect would be significant, and what the unintended consequences would mean for China and the world. They tell us that thus far the CPC has done a fairly good job at "absorbing politics by administration", but I wonder how sustainable the strategy will be and whether administration can entirely replace politics, which are both left underexplored. In addition, with the exception of the first chapter, the book rarely engages with the existing literature, which may contribute to its thin analysis. Notwithstanding the drawbacks, overall, this is still a highly informative and well-written book, and without a doubt provides many insights into the thorny issue of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. Filled with illuminating cases, this original and provocative book will become an essential resource for those working in the field of Chinese politics.

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## Notes

1 This review was written in 2012 – prior to Xi Jinping becoming the President of China.

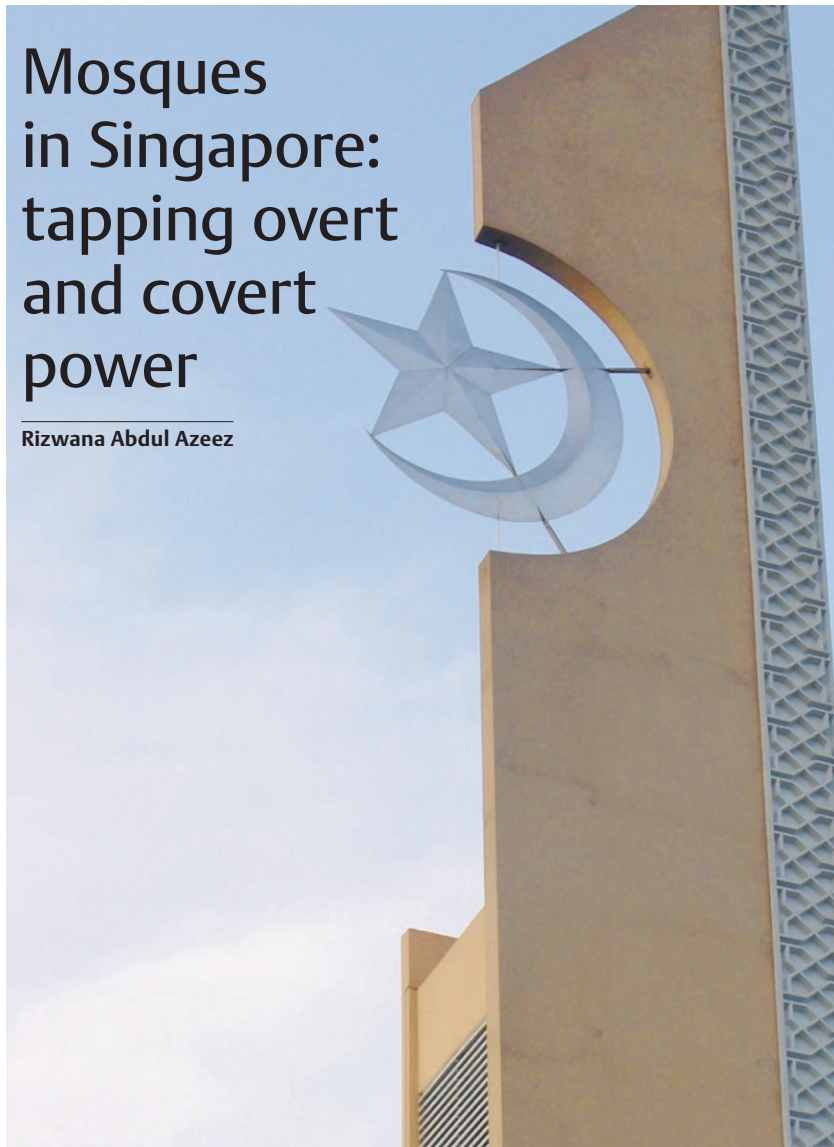
Local Government Buildings Nanshan Shenzhen China. (Photo reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy Flickr.com)



# News from Asia

## Mosques in Singapore: tapping overt and covert power

Rizwana Abdul Azeez



### 'Place' and power

Places can be sites of power contestation, exemplifying agents' power relations vis-à-vis each other, especially when contenders view sites as means to disseminate desired ideologies to target audiences. 'Place' refers to institutions that are modern in so far as agents – state representatives, for example – exert energy on amorphous, undefined spaces yet to be shaped by human agency, to transform them into specific goal-oriented places, for example, capital cities or other specialised zones of activity. In Singapore, since 2005, state-associated Muslim bureaucrats began shaping mosques to be, other than places of worship, places where Muslim youths can be socially engineered into accepting particular modern attitudes. These youths were envisioned to be state-friendly, or "productive" and "successful" members of Singapore society.

I will present anthropological observations on Singapore's Muslims' modernity-embracing strategies of power, specifically focusing on the officials associated with Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), Singapore's highest official Islamic organisation, and their social engineering targets—youths and teachers. I argue that where these officials have approached the mosque as a place to apply modernity's overt strategies of power, they have attempted to dominate others. Such overt strategies, however, do not necessarily confer long-lasting success as the second and contrasting ethnographic account shows. Where the same moderns have turned their attention to covert spaces in mosques and their accompanying covert power, differences between modern viewpoints and those of their detractors, including traditionalists, have been smoothened.

The two accounts below, of the attempts by MUIS to instil modern attitudes and practices amongst Muslims, are a part of the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI) programme launched in 2003. The state wishes to educate Muslims to accept 'correct' readings of Islam – to be 'progressive', and 'rid[e] the modernisation wave', amongst other imperatives.<sup>1</sup>

The articles in the 'News from Asia' pages were compiled and edited by Lee Hock Guan and Ten Leu-Jiun, from our partner institution, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

If you would like to contribute to this section in a future issue, please send your submission to [iias\\_iseas@iseas.edu.sg](mailto:iias_iseas@iseas.edu.sg)



In 2001, Singapore's Internal Security Department arrested Singaporean Muslims involved in the regional terrorist organisation, Jemaah Islamiyah, which state politicians considered a very serious threat to the country's security and its multicultural orientations.<sup>2</sup> The SMI project followed thereafter.

### Overt institutions and overt power: mosques as youth development agencies

Here, I discuss how MUIS officials executed power successfully, but not without limitations, in their role as mosque administrators working to shape mosques into youth development agencies. Youths have been targeted for change because they comprise a large base amongst Singapore Malays, a community which the state considers to present challenges to its nation-building and economic development programmes.<sup>3</sup> Most Muslims in Singapore are Malays. MUIS has turned to the Young Muslim Wings in mosques to implement its vision for youths. Through these avenues, which are themselves overt "fixed and official jurisdictional areas"<sup>4</sup> within the larger mosque structure, MUIS reported the need to craft various detailed programmes to shape young people. It outlined various "Roles and Responsibilities of Youth Workers":<sup>5</sup> To plan, coordinate and conduct outreach programmes to out-of-mosque youths, e.g., connecting with and befriending youths found at neighbourhood street soccer courts, in void decks, coffee shops and other areas in the vicinity of the mosques. To manage, and where necessary, conduct training and development programmes for in-mosque youths to produce the multiplier effect so that more could be involved in youth outreach work. These include leadership, management and organizational skills development training.

MUIS defined 'out-of-mosque' youths as those who do not wish to attend mosque programmes and those, such as delinquents, who need 'intervention programmes'. 'In-mosque Muslims', however, are 'mosque customers' or those already tapping mosque facilities and participating in their programmes, volunteers and activists.<sup>6</sup> Thus, MUIS officers were in effect presenting mosque officials with a set of labels to sort young Malays into different overt categories, introducing a differentiated hierarchy to be applied depending on the attitudes and actions that the targets for change displayed. Foucault has argued that those who create (modern) definitions entrench their power position as experts.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, MUIS earned itself a measure of success in teaching young Muslims state-friendly behaviour. In 2010, the Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs revealed that mosques have evolved from being places of worship into places that offer social programmes and services. Dr Yaacob Ibrahim announced that "[w]ith MUIS' assistance, 31 mosques have created family prayer rooms and special spaces for youth activities." He thanked mosque leaders and volunteers "for sharing MUIS's vision of mosques ... [to] benefit Singapore as a whole".<sup>8</sup> However, this assessment of success was not shared by all Muslim community leaders. One influential teacher warned, first in 2008 and then in 2009, that mosques are "borrowing heavily from corporate culture" and that "they resemble ... community centres or social clubs...". He also alleged that "[some Muslims] even dare to compromise [principles of Islam], just to be accepted as being 'progressive & modern'",<sup>9</sup> alluding to the SMI project. He re-introduced these comments on his Facebook page in 2013. Thus, MUIS's strategies of bureaucratising mosques have seen only a partial success. Modernity's power, exercised through overt means, privileges domination, goal-orientedness and a quantitative assessment of success that invites opposition from those with different visions. Overt strategies of power can limit success.

### Covert power: exercising a more balanced power distribution

In the contrasting ethnographic presentation below, I illustrate how moderns can still operate within modern institutions like mosques, but draw covert power from them. They are then better able to accommodate their detractors and to work towards consensus. Dewi, a MUIS-appointed educator, accommodated the traditional orientations of her trainee teachers, but without sacrificing her modern goal of implementing English as the new medium of instruction in MUIS administered part-time Islamic schools.

In 2004, MUIS introduced its new a.L.I.V.E. (Learning Islamic Values Everyday) education syllabus into its Islamic schools. Controversially, English became the new and predominant medium of instruction, replacing Malay. Malay, in contrast to English, has generally shown itself to carry more traditional rather than modern worldviews in Singapore's Islamic education scene. However, most of the teachers had learnt Islam in Malay and were more comfortable teaching in it. They also found the new syllabus challenging as it was a marked departure from the old one. Singapore Muslims have a high regard for Islamic education teachers as they

are regarded as moral guardians of Islam, and so MUIS made concessions to allow Malay to be used in a.L.I.V.E. classrooms. Nonetheless, English remains the preferred choice. For example, a.L.I.V.E. textbooks are available only in English. During a training session of a.L.I.V.E. teachers held at a mosque, Dewi turned to its covert spaces of power to help turn the teachers' dissent against English, into consent. She attempted to fulfil MUIS's vision of teaching modern Islamic values while accommodating the traditional teachers' wish to teach in Malay.

Dewi and the teachers had gathered at the Ar-Rahman mosque for a.L.I.V.E. content training and group work. My focus falls on the unsaid aspects of power the mosque carried and which aided in consensus-building. Being a place of worship, Dewi and the teachers had to uphold Islamic values and norms of behaviour there. The mosque setting provided constraints on how one should dress and what could be said, which everyone abided by. These norms were not spelt out, but they were covertly present. The effect was that the distance and roles between Dewi and her trainees became reduced. All the trainees, who were female, came dressed according to Islamic requirements for women: they wore long-sleeved tops and covered themselves to the ankles and also wore the headscarf. There was an orderliness, with participants not speaking anything more than was required of them. It was a serious, action-oriented environment, with everyone behaving politely and respectfully towards each other. When the *azan* (call to prayer) was made for *zohor* and *asar* (second and third prayers of the day respectively), the trainer and participants were aligned in terms of needing to perform their religious duties. Thus, the status of the trainer and the teachers as fellow Muslims were important covert bonds that downplayed any curriculum differences that existed.

### Conclusion: mosques and their covert power potential

A place, which is a physical structure, can be overtly shaped to reflect desired ideologies; it can also covertly shape the thoughts and actions of people. The design of religious buildings can evoke or enhance feelings described as religious, just as the engravings, colours, orientations and shapes therein are able to do so.<sup>10</sup> Mosques in particular, especially in secular Singapore, still radiate covert power which can help to unify oppositional parties. Dewi allowed the covert to 'speak', helping to forge a balance between the rights and obligations of all involved. She did not discuss the rights of the parties concerned in an outright and explicit manner but turned to covertness, which as Asmah notes, is a sign of being refined amongst Malays.<sup>11</sup> The covert, however, is not easily visible; moderns tend to bypass its power in favour of overt, output-measuring hierarchical strategies. Where moderns have an egalitarian disposition and are perceptive enough to be aware of the potential of covert spaces for consensus-seeking, they can move towards more equitable power outcomes for contending parties, which last longer.

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### Notes

- 1 Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura. 2006. *Risalah for Building a Singapore Muslim Community of Excellence*. 2nd Edition. Singapore: Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, p. i
- 2 Mohamed Ali. 2009. *Why They Became Terrorists: The Case Study of JI in Singapore*; <http://tinyurl.com/ca6rsgs> (accessed on 8 May 2013). See also, Singapore Parliament. *Maintenance of Religious Harmony* (White Paper). 1989. Cmd. G1 21 of 1989.
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# Shipwrecked

John N. Miksic



Review of Krahl, R. et al. (eds.) 2010. *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*. Washington D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; Singapore: National Heritage Board, Singapore Tourism Board.

THE BOOK TELLS THE STORY of one of the greatest archaeological discoveries ever made in Southeast Asia: a ship that sank in the Gelasa Strait between Bangka and Belitung Island, Indonesia, the gateway to the Java Sea. The ship, sometimes called the Batu Hitam, probably sank sometime between 830 and 840. It is one of the oldest shipwrecks yet found in Southeast Asia, but this is not the reason that this discovery has made an enormous impact on our understanding of ancient history. The site's importance stems from two factors, one obvious, the other more subtle but no less revolutionary. The aspect of the discovery that needs no expertise to appreciate is the extraordinary richness of the ship's cargo, whether evaluated in monetary or aesthetic terms. The fact that has aroused the greatest interest among historians is that the ship was built somewhere in the northwestern Indian Ocean.

The shipwreck was found in 1998 and excavated over the next two years. Some artefacts from the site were exhibited in Singapore's Asian Civilisations Museum in 2005. In February 2011 an exhibition jointly curated by Singapore's National Heritage Board and the Smithsonian Institution opened at the ArtScience Museum, at which time this book was issued.

Controversy has arisen over this project due to the fact that the excavation was done by a private firm under license from the Indonesian government. A UNESCO convention calls upon signatory countries to forbid private financing of underwater heritage research, based on the assumption that such funding inevitably means that scholarly procedures will be neglected. Others point out the fact that without private funding, the shipwreck would have been looted and the vessel destroyed. The Asian Civilisations Museum of Singapore sponsored a conference on maritime archaeology in June 2011, attended by representatives of private companies and Southeast Asian government archaeologists, to air these issues; the proceedings have been published.

The volume that is the subject of this review presents a wide range of scholarship on the ship, its cargo, and its historical context. *Shipwrecked* contains essays showing how much information has been gleaned from the site, which would not have been acquired had the site been salvaged by methods associated with treasure hunters, which are rightly condemned. The most stunning items in the ship from an artistic viewpoint are Chinese-made gold artefacts of imperial quality and style. These were no ordinary trade items. They must have been meant as diplomatic gifts for a king. The vast bulk of the cargo, however, was probably not meant for royalty; Chinese ceramics constituted almost 99% of 60,000 items recovered from the site, of which 55,000 are mass-produced bowls from kilns near Changsha. This statistic has made a major impact on our understanding of the past. It requires that the history of mass production be rewritten.

The Jewel of Muscat, exhibited at the Maritime Experiential Museum, Singapore. (Photo reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy Flickr.com)

Ceramics of this type are rarely found in China; they were made for export. They could have been meant for delivery to a king who intended to redistribute them as presents to favoured subjects. Changsha bowls have been found near several great ninth century religious monuments in Java, suggesting that they were often presented to religious communities. A few Southeast Asian artefacts were also aboard the ship, including an Indonesian gold coin, aromatic resin (probably from Southeast Asia), and a box made of wood from the jackfruit tree or a similar variety, from South or Southeast Asia.

The ship itself is a dhow, made in a fashion traditionally employed over a broad swath of coastal territory from Oman to western India. Artefacts found on the ship originating in Southeast Asia outnumber those from the Indian Ocean. The ship seems to have been relatively old; it had been refitted, with materials that can be found in the Singapore area. Chinese ships going to Arab lands in the twelfth century usually repaired their ships in Palembang;<sup>1</sup> these materials would certainly have been available there.

All the important facts that can be gathered from the remains of the ship are summarized by Michael Flecker, embellished with superb colour photographs. Tom Vosmer adds a chapter on the design and construction of a replica of the ship, complete with excellent technical drawings. This ship, the *Jewel of Muscat*, sailed to Singapore in 2010 and is now on display in the Maritime Experiential Museum on Sentosa Island, Singapore.

The dating of the ship's sinking is based on several considerations. Radiocarbon dates were obtained: 680-780; 670-890; 710-890. This wide range of possible dates is not particularly satisfactory. Coins on board cannot be dated any more precisely than to the period between 758 and 845. The Changsha wares on the other hand can be dated to 828, based on a painted inscription on one bowl. Regina Krahl argues that some greenwares on the ship date from the decade of the 840s, but this suggests that the Changsha bowls were 10 years old when they were exported. In any case, wherever Chinese wares are found in secure archaeological contexts of the past one thousand years, they are the most precise and reliable dating method available.

Professor Wang Gungwu in his *Introduction: Ships in the Nanhai*, argues against the theory that Chinese sources prove Persian ships sailed to China before the Tang Dynasty by showing that these reports deal with overland tributary exchanges, not sea trade. He holds out the possibility that Chinese ships of the Tang may still be found in Southeast Asia, although neither historical nor archaeological evidence for this eventuality exists.

Where was the ship bound? One theory is that it was returning to the western Indian Ocean, possibly to Oman.<sup>2</sup> The shipwreck's location, however, was not on the normal route to the Indian Ocean from the South China Sea. If the ship were heading for the Indian Ocean, she would have had to enter it via the Sunda Strait, and there is "no reliable evidence that the Sunda Straits were ever used in early times."<sup>3</sup> This was

the period of the great Javanese kingdom of Mataram, which constructed such major monuments as Borobudur. It can be argued that the ship was heading for a Javanese port. This discovery underlines the fact that the northwest Indian Ocean, Indonesia, and China were closely linked by an ancient network of trade and communication by the ninth century.

John Guy, curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and an expert on ancient Chinese ceramics, summarizes in his chapter important points regarding the range of Chinese ceramic types found on the ship, which encompasses wares from Zhejiang, Guangzhou, Hebei, and Henan. He theorizes that the ship was probably on its way to the north Java coast to get Indonesian spices to take to Sri Lanka and the Arabian Sea. This would explain its location in the Gelasa Strait, while preserving the notion that its ultimate destination lay in West Asia. Jessica Hallett illustrates that the motifs painted in cobalt blue on three of the dishes are derived from the palm fronds found on bowls from Basra. This could be taken as evidence that the ceramics were designed to appeal to the Arabo-Persian market.

Regina Krahl adds important information on two inscribed Gongxian ceramics in the cargo. One bears the character *ying* [surplus], "believed to be an abbreviation of *da ying ku* or *bai bao da ying ku*, great surplus storehouse [of a hundred treasures]"; this was the treasury containing items used at the Tang court. An inscription on a dish reading *jinfeng* [respectfully offered as tribute], indicates that it was probably offered by the pottery-making enterprise to the court, which then gave it to a foreign embassy (p. 52). Both these texts reinforce the impression that some of the rarer ceramics on the ship were intimately connected with the very highest level of government in China.

One of the most interesting chapters in the volume is that by François Louis on "Metal objects on the Belitung shipwreck". He notes several salient points about the gold and silver items, including the fact that this is the first such assemblage found outside China. Several dozen lead ingots were recovered, but the vast majority numbering perhaps 2,000 and weighing 10 tonnes were left on the seabed. Many were stowed above the ceramics, which is another enigma. Louis's chapter demonstrates that despite the extraordinary quantity and quality of the gold and silver on board, it is not possible to conclude definitively that the ship was on an official mission. Officials in China engaged in illicit private trade with Southeast Asia, and "easily could have equipped the Belitung ship with extravagant gold and silver vessels in order to give the supercargo the means to ease trade in Southeast Asia" (p. 90). Frequent missions from Java arrived in China in the period between 813 and 839. On the subject of the dhow's destination, he comes down in favour of Java.

Chinese archaeologist Hsieh Ming-liang on the other hand concludes that the ship was headed for Siraf in the Persian Gulf. His chapter contains important information about excavations at the port of Hangzhou, including rare information about ceramic finds from habitation sites there. More than 30,000 sherds found at Wenhua Gong include examples of all types found on the Belitung wreck except for Guangdong wares; this combination has not yet been found at any other Chinese sites of the Tang period. This chapter is followed by excellent discussions of specific types of ceramics: white wares with green décor, Changsha ceramics, and green Yue-type wares. A final chapter contains scientific analysis of the rare green-splashed white ware, which hints strongly at Gongxian as their place of origin.

This volume is the standard reference for this extremely important archaeological site. There are still materials from the shipwreck that have not been studied. These include various types of organic remains. Some metal items are in fragmentary condition and await conservation and restoration. Many more years of work are necessary before the full archaeological story of this assemblage can be told. This volume can, however, stand as an excellent summary of the data in our current state of knowledge. The impact of this discovery will continue to reverberate as scholars from disciplines such as history begin to explore its meanings.

**John Miksic is Head of the Archaeology Unit, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.**

## Notes

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News from Asia *continued*

## Sex selection and family patterns across Vietnam

Valentine Becquet and Christophe Z Guilmoto

IN GENERAL, while there are many local explanations for the emergence of prenatal sex selection, a more solid interpretative framework points to the combination of three factors: supply, demand and fertility decline. The supply dimension pertains to the introduction of affordable prenatal diagnosis technologies such as ultrasound, which allow parents to opt for abortion according to the gender of the foetus. The demand factor corresponds to the biased gender valuation system, usually manifested by a strong preference for sons over daughters. The preference for male offspring is clearly linked to the preponderance of the patrilineal kinship system and to living arrangements, farm labour, inheritance systems, and support to the elderly. The third factor pertains to the declining fertility level since the proportion of parents with no son automatically increases when the average number of children reduces.<sup>1</sup>

In Vietnam, it was only after the diffusion of the modern ultrasound technology in the country in 2005 that there was a rise in the sex ratio at birth – from 105 male births per 100 female births, to 112 today. As it is elsewhere, the sex ratio at birth in Vietnam tends to be higher among the higher socioeconomic groups and for higher order births. But what is more striking in Vietnam is the very unequal distribution of birth masculinity across the country: some regions such as the Central Highlands still have sex ratio levels close to normal, while the masculinity of birth is more pronounced in the Red River Delta (Table 1). In fact, some rural areas of the Red River Delta exhibit elevated levels of sex ratios at birth, above 120 male births per 100 female births.

**A preference for sons**

What is the exact influence of the 'demand factor', i.e., the intensity of the preference for sons across Vietnam? The actual need for sons might be an important determinant of observed regional differentials in sex ratios. In the minority-inhabited mountainous areas, the frequency of sex selective abortions may have been inhibited because fertility is slightly higher and modern technology less accessible. In contrast, the lowland areas near the border with China and the Mekong delta region have relatively moderate fertility levels and a dense network of small towns and cities with many private healthcare clinics. As such, in these areas the supply factor and fertility decline may not explain much of the observed variations in prenatal sex selection. Son preference, which has been noted by anthropological studies of gender arrangements in Vietnamese families and by demographic surveys about the ideal Vietnamese family composition, is probably the main cause for these differentials. However, anthropological studies cannot provide a complete and measurable picture of the situation across the country

because the studies are based on provinces close to Hanoi, an area much more influenced by Chinese Confucian traditions than the rest of the country.<sup>2</sup> There are almost no comparable anthropological studies on gender systems in other parts of Vietnam. More generally, qualitative studies fail to provide any measurable indicator of the actual *intensity* of son preference.

**Absence of a son**

For this reason, we decided to closely examine the fertility behaviour of Vietnamese couples and to look in particular at the impact of the absence of a son on family formation. The rich sample from the 2009 census (3.7 million households) provides an adequate dataset for exploring several dimensions of family systems. We observed that families that failed to have a son after two live births were indeed more likely to have a third child than families that already had a son. This variation is a clear testimony to the desire for a male offspring felt by many Vietnamese couples. Looking at estimates of son preference (see table below), we can confirm that the absence of a son has a sizeable impact on reproductive behaviour: it increases on average the probability of having another child by almost 60% in Vietnam. Yet, this son preference appears significantly larger in the Red River Delta, where sonless women are 2.6 times more likely to go for another pregnancy than other women.

How is the preference for son linked to family patterns and the strength of 'patriarchal' values? If we follow David Haines's hypothesis,<sup>3</sup> which stressed the unique position of kinship in Vietnam as a mixture of influences, we should expect to see traces of both East and Southeast Asian patterns. Using the same 2009 census dataset, we examined the post-marriage arrangements of children in order to differentiate between strictly patrilineal systems – when married sons and their wives often co-reside with their parents for a few years or more after marriage – and more bilateral or uxorilocal systems – in which married daughters and their husbands may also stay with their parents. The proportion of sons among co-residing married children served as a simple indicator of the strength of patrilineal and patrilocal practices (see table below). This analysis leads us to realize the vast gap between the strictly patrilineal North and the rest of Vietnam. Some provinces in Central Vietnam are even characterized by an equal share of sons and daughters residing with their parents after marriage. This is a typical 'Southeast Asian' feature, but it remains mostly undocumented by most anthropological research on contemporary Vietnam.

**The Cham bias towards girls**

The Cham people in Ninh Thuận province in central Vietnam is an interesting example of a mix influence kinship pattern.

The Cham now represents only 12% of the population in this area, but it used to be the dominant group till the beginning of the 19th century. The majority of the Cham practice the *Bani* religion, which combines Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist influences. In their villages, most of the newlywed couples reside with the wife's family until they can afford to build new houses. According to the elders, "the tradition here is that the woman gets married to the man, not the other way around". It is the future bride's parents who initiate the marriage proposals. "If the family accepts, they bring him home to celebrate the wedding, and then he stays. He becomes a member of his wife's family clan." In addition, the youngest daughter in Cham families takes on the same responsibilities as the eldest son in Kinh families of the Red River Delta region. Commonly, youngest daughters and their husbands will reside with their parents to take care of them until they die and then inherit the 'main house', where the family altar is, to take responsibility for ancestor worship. In such situations, the last daughter will therefore inherit most of the family properties: house, animals, possessions, and farming lands.

Thus, we find in this area, marked features of gender preference, but biased this time towards girls. For instance, it is considered essential to have at least one daughter, preferably as the first child. It is seen as an 'insurance' and it reduces the pressure on the gender of future children. Interviewed mothers and fathers with only sons attest to being teased by friends and family during parties for not having daughters. However, many mentioned a solution to the absence of a female offspring: adopting a girl – usually a niece from the wife's family clan – who "can inherit property and take care of [them]." These daughters are either legally adopted and raised by the couple, or designated in a testament as recipient of the main house for worshipping. "I have many nieces, so now I don't have a concrete plan, but when I get older, I will consider whom I will give everything to", explained the father of 3 sons in An Phước village.

Another interesting feature of this society relates to the terminology used to designate grandparents and grandchildren in the Vietnamese language: 'n i' means interior/domestic and 'ngo i' means exterior. For the Kinh people, 'ông bà nội' and 'cháu nội' refer respectively to paternal grandparents and grandchildren. But among Chams, these terms are used to name maternal grandparents and grand children instead. These are clear signs of a matriarchal kinship system. Yet, they are offset by several patrilineal practices. For instance, the family name is only transmitted from father to son, clan leaders are exclusively men and while ancestor worship is performed for family members in the wife's lineage, it is the husband who is in fact in charge of the rituals.

**Gender and family systems**

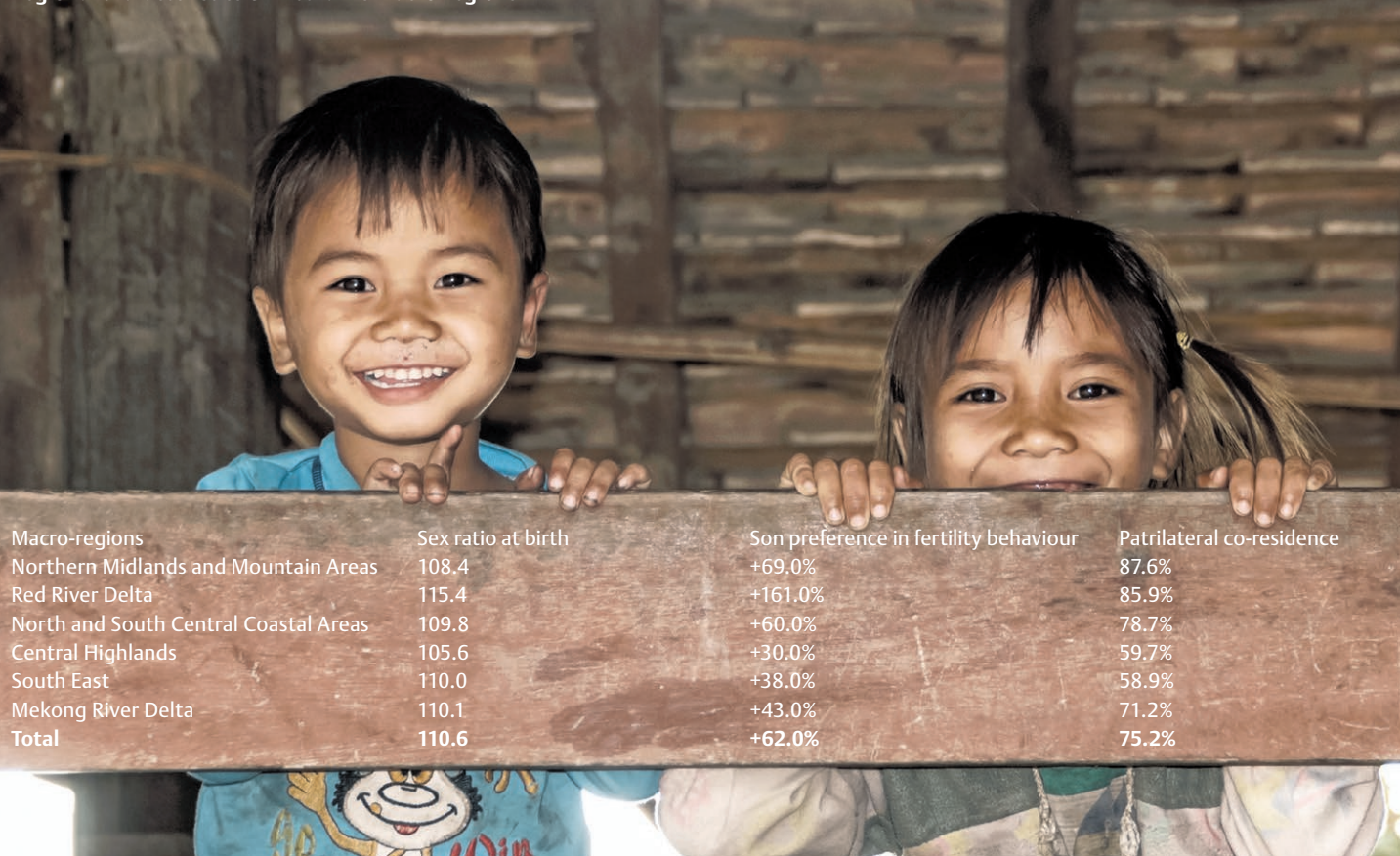
This brief exploration of Vietnam's situation has many implications. First, from a strictly methodological viewpoint, it shows that demographic information in the form of census micro-data can be exploited for in-depth analysis of gender and family systems, complementing anthropological sources and providing a somewhat unique systematic mapping of regional differentials. Second, son preference is indeed not at all uniform in its manifestation across Vietnam as the situation in Ninh Thuận illustrates. The close correspondence between kinship patterns, gender systems and sex imbalances demonstrates the deep-rooted character of sex selection, and could suggest that there may be other patrilineal societies where prenatal sex selection may emerge in the future when other conditions are met, especially after a decline in fertility.

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Christophe Z. Guilmoto is senior fellow in Demography at IRD/CEPED in Paris and currently at the National University of Singapore.

**Notes**

- UNFPA. 2012. *Sex Imbalances at Birth. Trends, Differentials and Policy Implications*, United Nations Fund for Population, Bangkok; <http://tinyurl.com/c3vmmar>
- UNFPA. 2011. *Son Preference in Viet Nam: Ancient Desires, Advancing Technologies. Qualitative Research Report to Better Understand the Rapidly Rising Sex Ratio at Birth in Viet Nam*, United Nations Fund for Population, Ha Noi; <http://tinyurl.com/cugvk8a>
- Haines, D. W. 2006. *The Limits of Kinship: South Vietnamese Households (1954–1975)*, Northern Illinois University: Southeast Asia Publications
- Guilmoto C. Z. 2012. 'Son preference and kinship structures in Viet Nam', *Population and Development Review*, 38(1): 31-54

Regional characteristics of Vietnam's macro-regions<sup>4</sup>


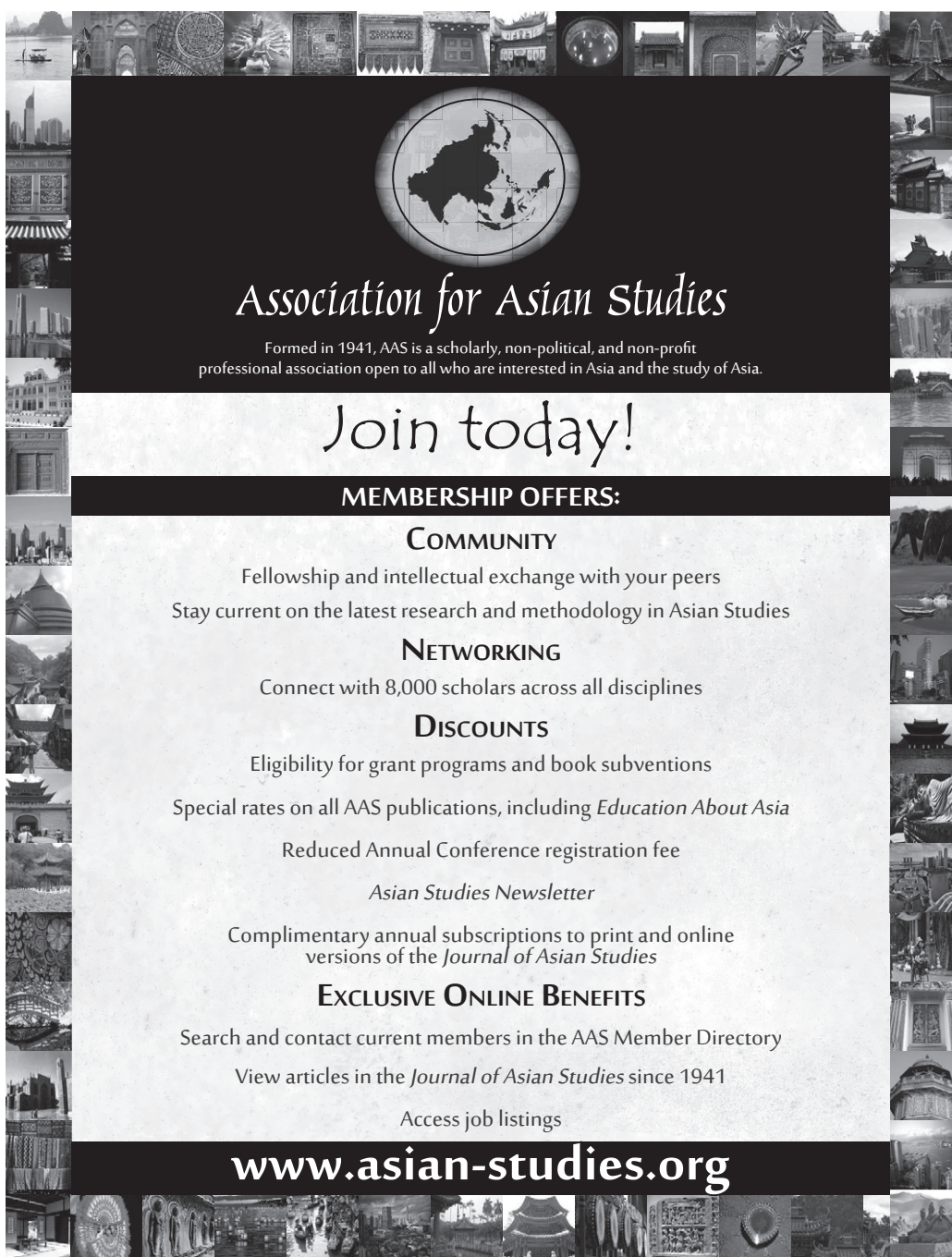
Macro-regions	Sex ratio at birth	Son preference in fertility behaviour	Patrilateral co-residence
Northern Midlands and Mountain Areas	108.4	+69.0%	87.6%
Red River Delta	115.4	+161.0%	85.9%
North and South Central Coastal Areas	109.8	+60.0%	78.7%
Central Highlands	105.6	+30.0%	59.7%
South East	110.0	+38.0%	58.9%
Mekong River Delta	110.1	+43.0%	71.2%
Total	110.6	+62.0%	75.2%


Sex ratio at birth: male births per 100 female births (2009 census). The normal level should be close to 105.

Son preference in fertility behaviour: the impact of the absence of a son on subsequent fertility (average effect at various birth orders measured on 2009 census data).

For instance, +69% means that parents without a son are 69% more likely to have another child than parents who already have a son.

Patrilateral co-residence: percentage of sons among married children co-residing with their parents (measured on 2009 census data). In bilateral kinship systems, this percentage is close to 50%.





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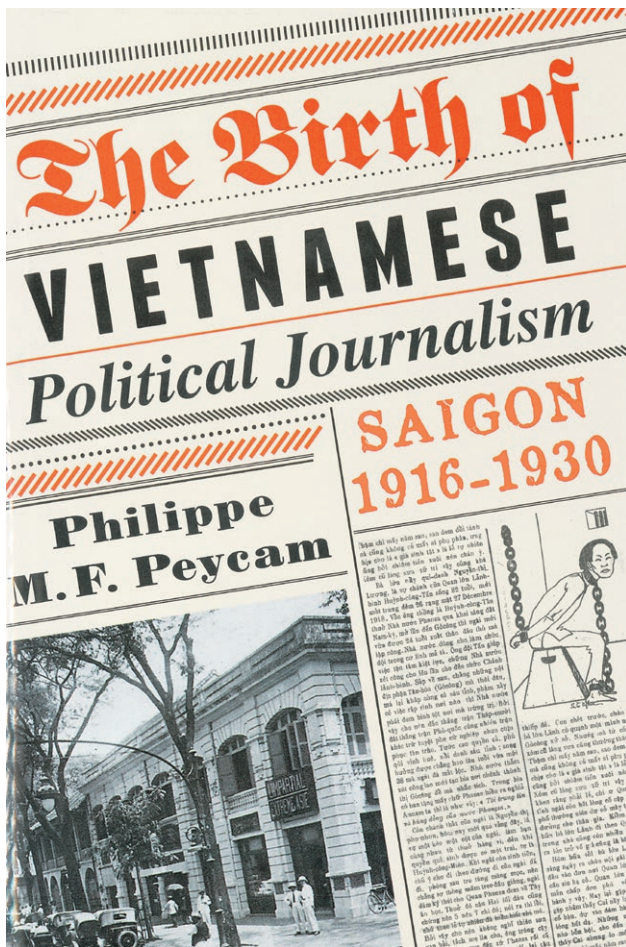
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# IIAS new publications

## Urban métissage in 1920s Saigon –or the origins of Vietnam’s public culture of contestation

Philippe Peycam



IN APRIL 2013 PHILIPPE PEYCAM presented his new book *The Birth of Vietnamese Political Journalism: Saigon 1916-30* at a 'Leiden Southeast Asia Seminar', a cooperation of the KITLV, IIAS, Van Vollenhoven Institute, the Programme in South and Southeast Asian Languages and Cultures, and the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University.

Colonial urbanism as represented by Saigon in the first decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of new socially, economically and culturally determined categories among the Vietnamese, a pre-condition for the development of an original culture of public political diversity. The new forces brought about by French colonization are well known: the imposition of a Western-style centralized state apparatus, the introduction of French/Western education, the opening of southern Vietnamese society to the global commercial economy – all converging in Saigon, the colonial metropolis. Shaped into a contradictory maze of restrictions and opportunities, hierarchies and discourses of representations in the colonial city, new forms of individual consciousness arose among many urbanized Vietnamese, and with it, new practices of collective socialization, particularly with the development of voluntary associations and fraternities (*hiệp hội*). This latter development amounted to the final sociological stage conditioning the burgeoning of an original culture of public political contestation founded on the practice of open rational enquiry, somewhat comparable to eighteenth century's Europe as described by Habermas.<sup>1</sup> Through these new modes of collective socialization, Vietnamese living in the metropolis became conversant in Western modes of public expression including print political journalism.

This practice was facilitated by an unprecedented charm offensive orchestrated by the colonial authorities in the wake of World War One, aimed at drawing at least part of the Vietnamese intelligentsia into a 'renovated' colonial pact with the French *Métropole*. The policy of 'French-Vietnamese collaboration' (*Pháp-Việt Đê Huê*) brought forward by Governor General Albert Sarraut prefigured what was later described as 'colonial humanism' as it was performed by European colonial states between the two wars.<sup>2</sup> For their part, Vietnamese could draw their own political references from local initiatives led by early 'modernists' either members of the powerful Sino-Vietnamese bourgeoisie or early (Catholic) cultural mediators and their intellectual successors, the promoters of modern education and vernacular writing in the Romanized script (*quốc ngữ*). Many pondered over new political orientations, with the seemingly

contradictory options taken by patriotic figures in exile: French-style republican modernism with Phan Châu Trinh or Japan-style enlightened authoritarian monarchism with Phan Bội Châu. The fast changing world order, even before the European conflict broke out, promised new perspectives for Vietnam.

With the beginning of the 1920s, a hybrid public political sphere thus emerged in Saigon. Shaped by the republican legal framework prevailing in southern Vietnam, it was centered on the new figure of the 'bourgeois-modernist' who chose print journalism as his main mode of action. Vietnam's first example of 'modern' public politics took thereafter the form of feverishly produced newspapers, sometimes by one or a handful of individuals – the 'activist-journalists' (*Nhà Báo*) often operating on a shoestring.

The subsequent developments of Saigon's political public sphere through newspapers or *Làng báo chí* ('newspaper village') are the steps taken toward an autonomous political force. If in the beginning of the decade, legal restrictions created an artificial duality between a free press in French and one subjected to censorship in Vietnamese, five years later, two initiatives – of the southern intellectual Nguyễn An Ninh in *La Cloche Fêlée* [*Broken Bell*] in 1923-24, and the northerner Trần Huy Liệu in the *Đông Pháp Thời Báo* [*Indochina Times*] in 1924-25 – effectively liberated the political debate and a shared sense of agency among journalists. The Vietnamese press was in fact responsible for the first open demonstration of anti-colonial opposition: on 4 April 1926, 70000 people marched across Saigon on the occasion of the funeral of the recently returned Phan Châu Trinh, as an act of peaceful defiance against the authorities. Toward the end of the decade, a real political spectrum had emerged, ranging from partisans of accommodation with the French (the 'Constitutionalists') to a radical Marxist-leaning or nationalist opposition to colonial occupation. The newspaper became the main instrument of political information contributing to shape a Vietnamese national worldview and to mobilize an increasingly diverse audience.

Yet, it was when Saigon's *Làng báo chí* was completing its mutation that a number of young journalist-activists, including the two men mentioned above, began to question its capacity to effectively change the political *status quo*. Some of them sought to reduce the role of newspapers to that of instruments of mass mobilization serving objectives beyond public politics. This choice, privileging collective liberation at the expense of individual ('bourgeois') free expression, has since been invoked by post-revolutionary Communist rulers and historians of Vietnam to justify the subsequent political grip on the Vietnamese population by one-party rule. Indeed, the 1920s ended with the concomitant affirmation of a (still) vibrant urban public political sphere and one fought underground for the mobilization of a mainly rural population. This latter trend was first experienced in southern Vietnam after 1926, with the sudden rise of the politico-religious Cao Đài phenomenon, a prelude to the implantation of Communist bases a couple of years later. Eventually, these developments condemned Saigon's public political diversity to its marginalization and its final suppression in 1975.

**Philippe Peycam is Director of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the author of 'The Birth of Vietnamese Political Journalism: Saigon 1916-30', Columbia University Press, 2012, ISBN: 9780231158503 (hardcover)**

**Notes**

- 1 Habermas, J. 1989. *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.
- 2 'Colonial humanism' is described as an attempt to link the objective interests of the colonized and the colonizers in a progressive evolution directed by an enlightened and partially accountable, technocratic, colonial state. See Wilder, G. 2005. *The French Imperial Nation-State, Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. On the definition of 'colonial humanism', see also Girardet, R. 1972. *L'idée coloniale en France de 1781 à 1962*, Paris: Table Ronde.

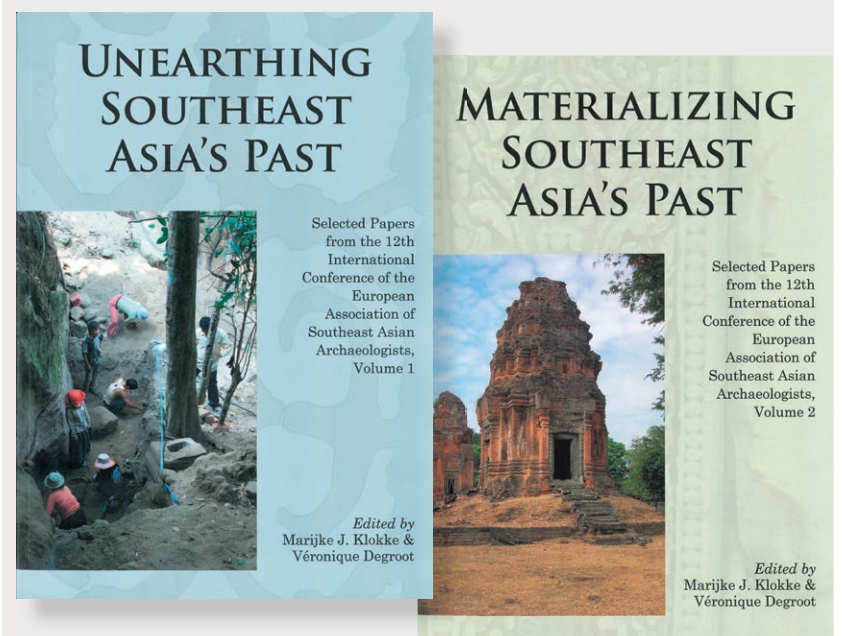
## Southeast Asia's Past

Two new volumes have been published by NUS Press (Singapore), in association with IIAS (Leiden), each containing 20 papers presented at the 12th international Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists (EurASEAA), held in Leiden in 2008. The volumes were edited by Marijke J. Klokke, Professor of Art and Material Culture of South and Southeast Asia (Leiden University Institute for Areas Studies and Museum of Ethnology in Leiden), and Véronique Degroot, archaeologist at the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in Jakarta.

Volume 1, *Unearthing Southeast Asia's Past*, deals with the development of complex societies in Southeast Asia from the Neolithic until the later historic period. The authors present data from recent excavations as well as new analyses of previous finds, with a focus on cultural exchange and interactions with the natural environment.

Volume 2, *Materializing Southeast Asia's Past*, contains articles on historical and anthropological archaeology, epigraphy and art history. The interpretations of art and material culture offer new understandings of classical Hindu and Buddhist cultures of Southeast Asia and their relationship to the region's medieval cultures.

For more information, or to purchase the titles, go to [www.nus.edu.sg/nuspress](http://www.nus.edu.sg/nuspress). To review a copy of both or either volume, email [iiasnews@iias.nl](mailto:iiasnews@iias.nl)



## The Shanghai Alleyway House A Vanishing Urban Vernacular

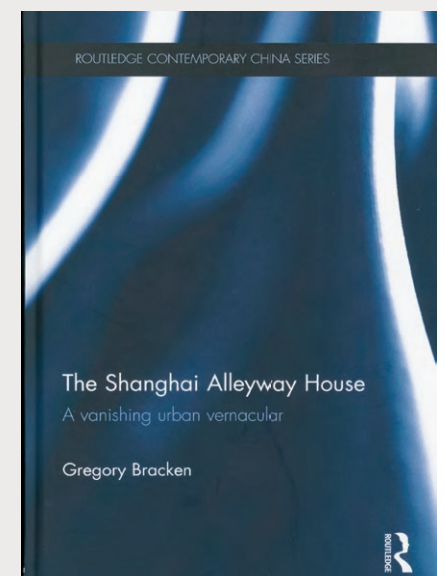
On 28 March 2013, Dr Gregory Bracken presented his recently published book, *The Shanghai Alleyway House. A Vanishing Urban Vernacular* Taylor & Francis Ltd, ISBN: 9780415640718

As a nineteenth-century commercial development, the alleyway house was a hybrid of the traditional Chinese courtyard house and the Western terraced one. Unique to Shanghai, the alleyway house was a space where the blurring of the boundaries of public and private life created a vibrant social community. In recent years, however, the city's rapid redevelopment has meant that the alleyway house is being destroyed. This book seeks to understand the house in terms of the lifestyle it engendered for those who called it home, whilst also looking to the future of the alleyway house.

Based on groundwork research, this book examines the Shanghai alleyway house in light of the complex history of the city, especially during the colonial era. It also explores the history of urban form (and governance) in China in order to question how the Eastern and Western traditions combined in Shanghai to produce a unique and dynamic housing typology. Construction techniques and different alleyway house sub-genres are examined, as is the way of life they enabled, including some of the side-effects of alleyway house life, such as the literature it inspired, both foreign and local, as well as the portrayal of life in the laneways as seen in films set in the city.

The book ends by posing the question: what next for the alleyway house? Does it even have a future, and if so, what lies ahead for this rapidly vanishing typology? This interdisciplinary book will be welcomed by students and scholars of Chinese studies, architecture and urban development, as well as history and literature.

**Gregory Bracken is an Instructor and Researcher at the Delft School of Design and a Research Fellow at the International Institute of Asian Studies, both in the Netherlands.**



# Announcements

NEW JOURNAL

## The Challenge of Studying Digital Asia An Introduction to *Asiascape: Digital Asia*

Florian Schneider

IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2012, the Internet was awash with Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese discussions over a set of islands in the East China Sea that the governments of all three nations lay claim to. The dispute has been a recurring issue in East Asian regional relations, but over the past decade more and more people have become 'switched into' this seemingly classic-realist international relations topic through new information and communication technologies (ICTs).

As millions of bloggers and 'tweople' followed the actions of activists and politicians, and as nationalist protests spilled into the streets in China and Japan, one post on the Chinese micro-blogging service Weibo inspired particularly heated discussions. Yet the post did not come from a politician or from an activist. It did not call for the burning of more flags, for boycotts of foreign goods, or for decisive military intervention. The post was a calligraphy that promoted the friendship between the people of China and Japan, and it had been sent by the Japanese porn star Sola Aoi.

With the speed that arguably only digital communication allows, the calligraphy travelled across the region, reaching over 13 million people. It received more than 140,000 comments - many derogatory, but many also critically discussing the conflict, as well as the meaning of national identity in 21st century East Asia.

This example is symptomatic of the challenges that established academic disciplines face as they explore developments in an increasingly interlinked region such as Asia. The ubiquity of digital ICT fuels processes that have always been complex and dynamic, but it has arguably never before facilitated and shaped politics, economics, culture, and society to such a degree as today.

Other examples from the region abound: In South Korea, online computer games have become so popular that individual matches are broadcasted on TV. In South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, election campaigns are accompanied by online activism in the form of twitter and blogging, which in turn has inspired Taiwanese and South-Korean politicians to integrate new media content into their campaigns. In India, the government is building a controversial digital biometric database that will include personal information on more than a billion citizens, allowing for unprecedented experiments in e-governance. The People's Republic of China now has more 'netizens' than the European Union has citizens, prompting Chinese companies to create native search engines, social networking sites, micro-blogging services, and even

operating systems - always within the restrictions that the authorities impose on the highly regulated Chinese net. Meanwhile, smart phones are quickly gaining popularity in Southeast Asia, and may well overtake broadband internet as the main means by which citizens from Myanmar to Indonesia link up with each other and with global information networks. Many politicians and public figures now maintain their own digital networks with constituents and fans, and ICT companies are eagerly looking to these growing markets to test technological innovations.

What is needed to understand these processes is innovative, transdisciplinary research that has the courage to take the complexity of the information age seriously, and that does not shy away from exploring the diverse realities in which this complexity plays out. *Asiascape: Digital Asia* provides a forum for such research. Its contributions examine what impact new technologies, new channels of communication, and the unprecedented convergence of media formats have in the Asian context.

### New Journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* - Call for Manuscripts

With its peer-reviewed in-depth analyses, *Asiascape: Digital Asia* will keep readers abreast of such developments in the cyber cultures and digital networks of Asia. It will further provide book reviews, specifically aiming to introduce non-Asian related works and scholars to the area-studies community, and research on Asia to the larger field of digital media and communication studies. In addition, *Asiascape: Digital Asia* reviews relevant conferences, and includes a digital media review, which focuses on digital platforms and media products from Asia, such as blog and twitter services, social media websites, video sharing services, games, digital tools, etc.

If you are a scholar conducting research on the digital processes that shape Asia, and if your focus lies with the social sciences, arts, media and communication studies, information and computer sciences, or area studies, then we invite you to consider *Asiascape: Digital Asia* as the outlet for your work. The journal will launch in early 2014, and will be published bi-annually. More information is available in our call-for-papers downloadable from our website: [www.asiascape.org/resources/dias/DIAS---Call-for-Papers.pdf](http://www.asiascape.org/resources/dias/DIAS---Call-for-Papers.pdf)

**A version of this article first appeared as a blog-post on [www.asiascape.org/dias.html](http://www.asiascape.org/dias.html) on 25 March 2013. The online version gives access to a large number of web links to further information.**

### First issue 2014

Launching in early 2014, the bi-annual academic journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* explores the political, social, and cultural impact of digital media in Asia. Bringing together inter- and multi-disciplinary research in the social sciences, arts, media and communication studies, information and computer sciences, and area studies, the journal examines the role that information, communication, and digital technologies play in Asian societies, as well as in intra-regional and transnational dynamics.

### Editor

Florian Schneider  
Leiden University  
The Netherlands

### Reviews Editor

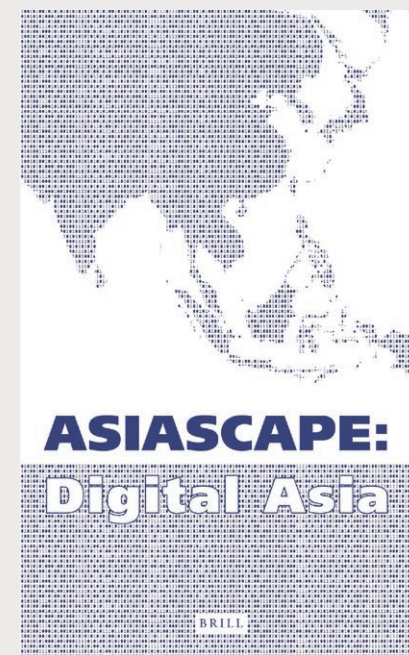
Éric Sautedé  
University of Saint Joseph  
Macau

### About *Asiascape*

Established in October 2007 by Prof. Chris Goto-Jones, *Asiascape* aims to build a new international research coalition in the rapidly emerging fields of cyberculture (New Media, Convergence Culture, Video Games and other related media, such as fan-culture) and animanga (Anime and Manga), especially as they relate to (or originate from) East Asia. *Asiascape* sponsors a series of 'state of the field' events (lectures, conferences, competitions, exhibitions) and disseminates research using new and old media, including our website [www.asiascape.org](http://www.asiascape.org)

***Asiascape* is linked to Leiden University, the Netherlands.**

First Issue  
Available  
Feb 2014



ASIA-PACIFIC JOURNAL: JAPAN FOCUS

## Free Downloadable Course Readers

Laura E. Hein

The *Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* announces the start of a new initiative: volume-length e-book compilations of essays on selected topics with explanatory introductions by scholars.

These volumes are designed to make it easier for teachers and students to use the *Asia-Pacific Journal* archive. The volume editors have chosen articles from the archive that lend themselves particularly well to classroom use and work well as a set. All volumes have been peer-reviewed, in addition to the initial review process each article went through when it was originally posted.

The readers are designed to be especially convenient for students; the readers are available any time of day, are storable on a computer, searchable, and cost nothing to them. The readers can also be highlighted, annotated, or printed, and they include convenient bookmarks to navigate to the beginning of each article.

### Available and upcoming

Eight readers are currently available on the following topics: *War and Visual Culture* edited by Hong Kal and Jooyeon Rhee, *Environmental History* edited by Eiko Maruko Siniawer, *War in Japanese Popular Culture* edited by Matthew Penney,

*Women and Japan's Political Economy* edited by Valerie Barske, *Japan's 'Abandoned People' in the Wake of Fukushima* edited by Brian Earl, *Public Opinion on Nuclear Power in Japan after the Fukushima Disaster* edited by Brian Earl, *The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia* edited by Sven Saaler and Justin Aukema, *The Japanese Empire: Colonial Lives and Postcolonial Struggle* edited by Kirsten Ziomek.

The topics of other volumes currently in preparation include: Japan and the American-led Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Ethnic Minorities and Japan, Globalization and Japanese Popular Culture: Mixing It Up, Japanese Intellectual Currents of the Twentieth Century, Putting Okinawa at the Center.

### To download a volume

The volumes are downloadable from the *Asia-Pacific Journal* website ([www.japanfocus.org](http://www.japanfocus.org)) as searchable PDFs. From the home page, please click on the button marked Course Readers at the top and center of the page, or simply go to [www.japanfocus.org/course\\_readers](http://www.japanfocus.org/course_readers). Interested viewers may download a copy of any reader by clicking on the appropriate link at the course readers home page and entering their email address. In addition, viewers may download the table of contents of any course reader for a preview of the volume.

### The Board

The Editorial Board for this project consists of Mark Caprio, Rikkyo University; Lonny Carlile, University of Hawai'i; Parks Coble, University of Nebraska; Sabine Früstück, UC-Santa Barbara; A. Tom Grunfeld, Empire State College; Laura Hein, Northwestern University; James Huffman, Wittenberg University; Jeffrey Kingston, Temple University-Japan; Susan Long, John Carroll University; Laura Miller, University of Missouri, St. Louis; Mark Ravinia, Emory University; Mark Selden, APJ-Japan Focus; Stephen Vlastos, University of Iowa.

### Contributions

If you are interested in creating a volume yourself, wish to participate as a reviewer and editor, have suggestions for new topics, or want to discuss another aspect of this project, please contact Laura Hein at [l-hein@northwestern.edu](mailto:l-hein@northwestern.edu).

Although the course readers are free, we welcome donations to support the Journal and this initiative; to contribute, please note the red button 'Sustaining APJ' on the left side of the APJ homepage ([www.japanfocus.org](http://www.japanfocus.org)).

**Laura E. Hein (Northwestern University, PhD Wisconsin, 1986) specializes in the history of Japan in the 20th century and its international relations. She also has a strong interest in problems of remembrance and public memory. ([l-hein@northwestern.edu](mailto:l-hein@northwestern.edu))**



The Japanese Empire: Colonial Lives and Postcolonial Struggles  
Kirsten Ziomek  
Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus  
Course Reader no. 8  
2013



## Announcements *continued*

IIAS WINTER PROGRAMME IN ASIAN STUDIES

### Macau Winter School: Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age A PhD masterclass organised by IIAS and the University of Macau

INTENDED FOR OUTSTANDING PHD STUDENTS and led by renowned scholars in their field, the masterclass aims to contribute to the nurturing of a multidisciplinary community of young Asia experts.

The Macau Winter School is the third such programme in Asian Studies run by IIAS. The Institute has been organising these annual masterclasses for PhD students since 2011, all of which have addressed topics pertaining to one of IIAS's three research clusters: Asian Cities, Global Asia and Asian Heritages.

In 2011 and 2012 the masterclasses were part of the IIAS Summer Programme in Asian Studies, consisting of four days masterclass followed by a two-day international conference. This year, the masterclass will be run as a Winter School. The programme will be co-organised with the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Macau, and will take place in the historic Chinese port-city of Macau from 16-20 December 2013.

#### The 2013 Winter School

The Macau Winter School will elicit and interrogate new theoretical paradigms of postcolonial urban hybridity that are informed by experiences emanating from various contexts in Asia and beyond.

It will be led by three world-renowned scholars in the fields of Asian postcolonial hybridity: Prof. Akhil Gupta (UCLA), Prof. Engseng Ho (Duke University) and Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University). Research specialists from various academic backgrounds will provide the participants with an intensive and interactive experience.

The programme will focus on two interrelated themes: the theoretical issue of postcolonial hybridity and the descriptive /analytical problems presented by Asian cities. The first theme has been applied to the analysis of the nation-state by Akhil Gupta and others, while Michael Herzfeld has addressed some of the lived experiences of postcolonial and crypto-colonial societies using a comparative approach to urban communities

in Asia and Europe. Historian and Anthropologist Engseng Ho has, for his part, reflected on interstitial connections between imperial and diasporic formations, as they are found in maritime port-cities like Macau.

The five days of interactive training will follow the lines of former IIAS Summer Schools. The invited participants will be asked to critically assess their individual work through discussions led by the co-conveners. The session will close with a one-day conference, when selected participants will present their revised papers. The event will also feature outside scholars in the fields of postcolonial hybridity and Macau studies.

For more information on this and other IIAS Masterclasses: [www.iias.nl/masterclass/urban-hybridity-post-colonial-age](http://www.iias.nl/masterclass/urban-hybridity-post-colonial-age) or [www.masterclasses.asia](http://www.masterclasses.asia)

#### NETWORK

### IIAS PhD platform and discussion group at LinkedIn

IIAS FACILITATES a national PhD discussion group on LinkedIn to help PhD researchers in Asian Studies and their supervisors in the Netherlands to establish contact, start discussions, as well as to disseminate information about relevant courses, lectures or, for example, international visitors (research fellows, visiting professors), etc.

The IIAS PhD discussion group forms part of the 'National Platform for Asia Related PhD Research in The Netherlands'. In January 2012, 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. Most striking, 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 at 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. This has prompted IIAS to set up the LinkedIn PhD platform with the aim to facilitate and stimulate contacts and interaction between researchers in Asian Studies.

#### Please join

We welcome all comments and recommendations, posted on this site, that will help to build the platform into a useful tool for anyone conducting PhD research in Asian Studies in the Netherlands.

Go to [www.iias.nl/phdplatform](http://www.iias.nl/phdplatform) or visit [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and enter 'IIAS PhD Platform' in the search box. A comparable Facebook discussion site has been set up at: [www.facebook.com/phdplatform](http://www.facebook.com/phdplatform)

#### CONFERENCE

### Framing 'Asian Studies': Geopolitics, Institutions and Networks

Date: 18-19 Nov 2013, Venue: Leiden, The Netherlands

IIAS and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS, Singapore) will be organising a conference in Leiden that aims to examine and critically reflect on the 'social framing' of Asian studies. The conference is being prepared by IIAS/ISEAS fellow Dr. Albert Tzeng. Selected papers from the conference will be published in a joint IIAS-ISEAS volume.

Asian studies, whether broadly defined as the production and dissemination of scholarly knowledge about Asia, or narrowly limited to the institutionalised field of study labeled as such, has constantly been framed by a changing geopolitical context. The colonial roots of 'Oriental' or Asiatic scholarship, the war-driven migration of Asian scholars and the dispersion of their expertise, and the Cold War American investment in both social sciences in East Asia and Asian studies at home, are just a few examples. In recent decades, we further witnessed the rising scholarly interest on Japan, China and India following their growing political-economic significance, as well as the emergence of various 'alternative discourses' and 'inter-Asia dialogue' as attempts of intellectual decolonization.

The conference will focus on four main themes:

- The influence of geopolitical factors on how knowledge about Asia is produced and disseminated;
- The role of various institutions in promoting and directing Asian studies;
- The outlook of various knowledge networks;
- Critiques on the power structure underlying the observed patterns of knowledge production and dissemination of Asian studies.

The call for papers is closed. Limited seats are available for attendees. Registration is required. Please contact Martina van den Haak if you would like to attend: [M.C.van.den.Haak@iias.nl](mailto:M.C.van.den.Haak@iias.nl)

#### WEBSITE

### 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](http://www.iias.nl/events) and upload your information to our Global Agenda.





## IIAS PRESENTS

## IIAS Annual Lecture Modernity in Common: Japan and World History

Guest speaker:  
Professor Carol Gluck,  
Columbia University

Date: 19 Sep 2013, 16.00 hrs.  
Venue: Leiden University Academy Building  
(small auditorium) Rapenburg 73, Leiden, The Netherlands

THE 2013 IIAS ANNUAL LECTURE will be delivered by Professor Carol Gluck from Columbia University, New York, USA. The lecture also marks the 20th anniversary of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), and will be followed by a reception.

### Lecture

Professor Gluck will examine four questions always asked about modern Japanese history, to see what they look like in a global context – or in the context of ‘modernity in common.’

This lecture is based on the dual assumptions that the modern history of any society is inextricably linked to the rest of the world, and that the history of the modern world can be grasped from the vantage point of any place on the globe.

In this case, the place is Japan, which because of the commonalities and connections among all modern societies, is one of the ‘globeful of modernities’ that now offer the opportunity to think about the modern on empirical bases, different from the European experiences that underlay earlier theories of modernity.

Please register via the IIAS website: [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)



**Professor Carol Gluck**

Carol Gluck is George Sansom Professor of History in the Department of History and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of Columbia University. Professor Gluck writes on modern Japan, twentieth-century international history, World War II, and history-writing and public memory in Asia and the West. Her most recent book is *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon*, co-edited with Anna Tsing (Duke University Press, 2009). *Thinking with the Past: Modern Japan and History*, will be published by the University of California Press in 2013, and *Past Obsessions: World War II in History and Memory* is forthcoming from Columbia University Press.

## CONFERENCE

## Patterns of Early Asian Urbanism

Date: 11-13 Nov 2013,  
Venue: National Museum of Antiquities,  
Leiden, The Netherlands

IIAS, the Leiden University Faculty of Archaeology and the Archaeology Unit of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS, Singapore), will be hosting an international conference, bringing together leading scholars from around the world to explore the theme of ‘Early Urbanism’ of pre-modern Asian cities, within the much broader context of urban studies, ancient and modern.

The conference aims to examine Asian pre-modern cities through three major thematic strands, covering a wide geographic expanse throughout Asia (from Pakistan to Japan) and a time depth of cultural development across five millennia (from the Bronze Age through 14th century Angkor to 18th century East Asia).

The three main themes to be explored are: a) processes of urban development; b) urban economy; and c) social fabric of the city (more information on the IIAS website).

The conference provides a multi-disciplinary forum, and includes lectures by key note speakers and parallel sessions on specific themes.

The provisional list of key note speakers:

**Professor John Bintliff**

Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University

**Professor Roland Fletcher**

Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney

**Professor Jacques Gaucher**

Directeur de la Mission Archéologique Française à Angkor Thom (EFEO)

**Professor John Miksic**

Head Archaeology Unit, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre,  
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore

**Professor Norman Yoffee**

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University

**Information and registration:**

[www.iias.nl/event/patterns-early-asian-urbanism](http://www.iias.nl/event/patterns-early-asian-urbanism)

**Attendance**  
Registration is required for attendance at all sessions.

**Conference fees**  
Including coffee, tea, lunches, one dinner and a conference package:

**Early bird € 100**  
Open until 16 Aug '13

**Regular € 125**  
Open until 16 Oct '13

**On-site € 150**

**Discount for PhD students: € 25**



Universiteit Leiden



## NEW RESEARCH CENTRE

## New Fudan European Centre for Modern and Comparative China at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark

ON 15 AND 16 APRIL the Fudan European Centre for Modern and Comparative China Studies was inaugurated at the University of Copenhagen. The first of its kind in Europe, the Centre will focus on researching the interaction between China and Europe and will aim to strengthen the cooperation between the two with research in areas such as welfare, environment, governance and government, politics and economy.

The Centre is located at NIAS - Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Department of Political Science at University of Copenhagen's Social Science Campus. NIAS Director Geir Helgesen will be director of the Centre, while Fudan University has appointed Professor Liu Chunrong as Deputy Director.

### Two-way research

According to Geir Helgesen, the foundation of the Centre is the very notion of two-way research and an important part of the collaboration is for the Centre to advance projects that compare developments in China and Europe. The emphasis of the research will initially be within the Social Sciences with a bridge to the Humanities, although there are already incipient links with colleagues within the Natural Sciences.

Commenting on the inauguration of the Centre, Professor Ralf Hemmingsen, Rector of the University of Copenhagen, says: “At University of Copenhagen, we have focused strategically on Asia research for several years. The new Centre will strengthen the University's research considerably and give us a prominent position in Europe on this large and highly important field. Danish research has a good position in China, but China is expanding fast and we need to be able to keep up and to develop new initiatives within areas including the Social Sciences and Humanities.”



### Conference and opening ceremony

The inauguration was marked and celebrated over two days, starting with a one-day conference entitled ‘Creative spaces – Seeking the Dynamics of China's Development’. At the conference renowned scholars from Fudan University and the University of Copenhagen presented their research on China's well known and urgent challenges. Also present was Dr. Paul Rabé from the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), who participated in the conference as a discussant.

On the second day the official opening ceremony was held with speeches by the Danish Minister for Research, Innovation and Higher Education, Morten Østergaard, the Ambassador of China to Denmark, Mr. Li Ruiyu, Vice-President of Fudan University, Prof. Lin Shangli, and the Rector of the University of Copenhagen, Prof. Ralf Hemmingsen. Present was also the new Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Dagfinn Høibråten, who has deep interests in China, as well as representatives from Danish and international academia, media and business environment.

IIAS and NIAS recently cemented their long-standing relationship by signing a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at the strengthening of contacts and cooperation.

More information can be found at <http://nias.ku.dk/>

Chinese ambassador  
Li Ruiyu at the opening  
of the Centre

# IIAS reports

IIAS-TU DELFT SEMINAR

## Asian Cities: Colonial to Global

Leiden, 23-25 April 2013

Gregory Bracken

THE 'ASIAN CITIES: COLONIAL TO GLOBAL' seminar took place in Leiden in April this year. It was the fifth annual seminar organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Architecture Faculty at the Technical University of Delft. Part of the IIAS's 'Postcolonial Global City' research programme, this seminar examined how some of the cities of South and East Asia have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right.

The seminar received an unusually high number of applicants. Originally intended as a two-day event (with about 16 papers), it had to be increased to three days, and 27 papers. Due to the usual attrition, some of those selected were unable to attend, but their papers are still being considered for the publication that is planned as an outcome of the event.

The standard of the papers was high, and, even more excitingly, the bringing together of different disciplines resulted in a very dynamic interaction. There were a number of architects and urbanists, of course, but also papers by geographers, political scientists and those affiliated with the arts, all of whom sought to examine conditions on the ground in Asia's cities to see how networks laid down during the era of nineteenth-century colonial expansion (and earlier) have given certain cities in the region a global edge.

The papers were clustered together under a number of themes, namely, Postcolonialism, Networks (transport and history), Architecture, and Urban Governance, and they covered a wide range of territory – from Mumbai in India to New Songdo City in Korea. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Burma/Myanmar were also featured, as were Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and China. China was particularly well represented with papers dealing with Hong Kong, Macau, and Shanghai, as well as places we are beginning to hear more about, like Shenzhen and Dongguan, and even some about which we hear relatively little, such as Qingdao.

The seminar was structured so that there was plenty of time for participants and audience members to discuss the various presentations. As an inter-disciplinary snapshot of ongoing research this event is invaluable in bringing people up to date with cutting-edge research. What is most valuable about this interaction is also the fact that people from different disciplines gain insight into their own work from seeing how other disciplines are dealing with the same or related topics.

### Book publication

The seminar culminated in a plenary session, where the various strands of the papers were drawn together, the better to make them fit with one another for the next stage of the project: the book publication. The themes and sub-themes that emerged over the course of the three days, as well as the resonances that can be discerned across many of the papers, have all been brought together into what has become, in effect, a first peer review, and this should help the participants rework their papers to better fit the book's research trajectory. Judging by the two-year turnaround we have been able to achieve for previous publications, we are in hopes that these fascinating findings will be available to the reading public in the spring of 2015.

In the meantime, there is next year's seminar to look forward to. This will take place in the spring of 2014, at the Architecture Faculty of TU Delft, and will examine the topic of Tropical Modernism in architecture. Even more importantly, it will seek to explore how this movement has influenced the postcolonial world.

For further information on this and all Postcolonial Global City events, visit the IIAS website.



**Publication:**  
'Aspects of Urbanization in China: Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou', the 2012 publication was a result of the second seminar in the series.



## The Postcolonial Global City

THE 2013 SEMINAR 'Asian Cities: Colonial to Global' fits into the Postcolonial Global City's wider research programme, which focuses on city design and city governance, and its investigations into institutions of governance, rule of law, and the role of language, as well as issues of environmentalism and sustainability. This research also includes non-Western models of social and commercial organisation, e.g., *tongs* versus *hongs*,<sup>1</sup> as well as how bazaar or native economies can exist alongside the more dominant Western commercial models, and looks at illegal networks and informal economies (e.g., the triads), which also touches on issues of race and the effects multi-culturalism, juxtaposition and hybridity can have on city life.

One of the most important factors in all of this research is architectural typology. How architecture's role in the city can create ethos and identity (e.g., colonial railway stations, port facilities, post offices, courthouses, grand hotels, etc.) 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 urban fabric.

One of the most important architectural typologies is, of course, the house, and it is one of the research programme's central topics. Everything from the luxury villas of the erstwhile colonists, to the, now rapidly vanishing, alleyway houses of Shanghai and the shophouses of Southeast Asia where the vast majority of these cities' inhabitants lived and worked. One of the key questions in all of this is what role can there be for these typologies in the future?

### Seminar series

Intended as an inter-disciplinary research endeavour, the Postcolonial Global City has, thanks to events such as its seminars and lectures, brought together not just architects and urbanists, but also people from other disciplines, such as geographers, sociologists and political scientists, as well as historians, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of Asian studies.

The Postcolonial Global City research programme organises a seminar every spring. This began back in 2009 when a number of the committee members invited to attend Gregory Bracken's Ph.D. defence were asked to present some of their own research work on Asia's urban environment. This also included a number of Dr Bracken's TU Delft masters students' work.

The second seminar, which also took place at TU Delft's Architecture Faculty, in May 2010, was called 'The Postcolonial Global City in Asia' and resulted in a book featuring a selection of the papers dealing specifically with China. *Aspects of Urbanization in China: Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou* was published by the University of Amsterdam Press in 2012, and has received excellent reviews.

Seminar number three was organised as a joint effort with Hong Kong University's Architecture Department, and held in the HKU Shanghai Study Centre (in the old post office building on Suzhou Creek, Shanghai). Jonathan D. Solomon was co-convenor of this event. The seminar's title was 'The City and Public Space in Asia' and a selection of the best papers have been gathered to produce a special issue of *Footprint* journal (the TU Delft Architecture Faculty's publication dedicated to issues of architectural theory). Issue 12, entitled 'Future Publics: Politics and Space in East Asia's Cities', is due to appear in mid-2013.

The fourth seminar, which took place in May 2012 and was called 'Urban Asia', was more of an opportunity to present some of the work being done by people connected to the IIAS. These included, among others, Henco Bekkering, a professor of urbanism at TU Delft and IIAS board member, and Simone Bijlard, a recently graduated Master of Architecture student from TU Delft, who is the assistant co-ordinator of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA).

The next seminar will take place in the spring of 2014 in the Architecture Faculty of TU Delft, and will examine the topic of Tropical Modernism in architecture.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Hong*: name for a trading company, usually large, in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century China.  
*Tong*: Chinese organized crime gang.

# IIAS outreach

## HISTORICAL CONNECTION

### Delft – Jingdezhen

THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION between Delft and Jingdezhen can be traced back to the beginning of the VOC trade in Asia, when Chinese blue and white porcelain started to appear in Holland, following an incident in the Strait of Malacca some 400 years ago.

At that time, the city of Jingdezhen in the southern Chinese province Jiangxi had already for more than 200 years been the purveyor of the highest quality of Chinese blue and white porcelain to the imperial court. In Delft, the city's extensive pottery industry was just taking shape, following the immigration of a number of Antwerp potters who were fleeing Spanish rule in their own country at the end of the 16th century.

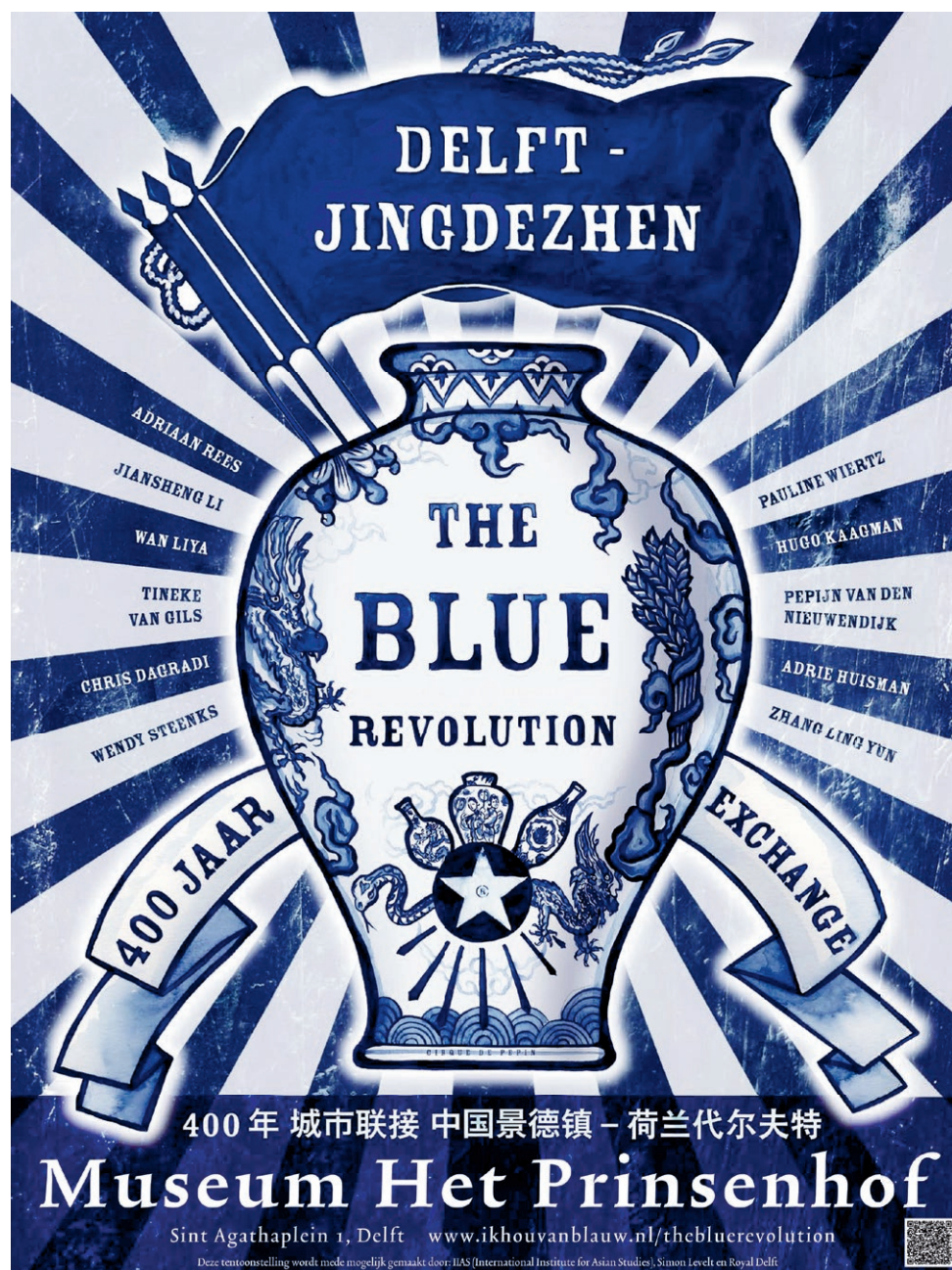
On 25 February 1603 at the entrance to the Strait of Malacca, a Dutch ship conquered the Portuguese carrack (a type of sailing ship), the *Santa Catharina*, and seized its cargo, consisting in part of large quantities of blue and white porcelain from China. These wares were sold at high prices upon their arrival in the Netherlands, and launched the large-scaled Dutch import of porcelain from China.



Ceramics artist Jianshen Li from Jingdezhen works on a portrait on porcelain during the opening of the exhibition in Delft.

The Delft pottery industry was suddenly faced with a formidable competitor. Although the Delft earthenware was a popular product, due to the application of a tin glaze that sealed the otherwise porous earthenware, it was no match for the much lighter and visually more appealing porcelain from China. In order to survive, the Delft potters soon started to copy the blue and white Chinese motifs to make their products more attractive. Visa versa, Dutch demand influenced the Chinese production of porcelain for the Dutch market. On the VOC's request, the Chinese potters copied examples of Dutch earthen- and silverware shipped out to them, resulting in a large array of different types of porcelain tableware, some of them completely in Delft style and decorated with Dutch scenes.

Owing to the dedication and expertise of a number of 17th century Delft masters, 'Delft Blue' soon became very popular and a global brand. It was widely exported in Europe and even reached China and Japan.



On display in the Museum Het Prinsenhof in the Dutch city of Delft is a remarkable exhibition, entitled 'Delft-Jingdezhen: The Blue Revolution, 400 Year Exchange' (20 May - 1 Sept 2013). As a joint project between Delft and the Chinese city of Jingdezhen, it will be on view again in the Imperial Porcelain Museum in Jingdezhen in the fall of this year. IIAS supports this exhibition in the framework of the Institute's Outreach Programme, which aims to bring a wider public into contact with Asian cultures and societies.

Sandra DeHue

IN 2006, THE TWO CITIES ENGAGED in the joint programme: 'Delft Jingdezhen 400-year cultural exchange'. Since then, there has been frequent contact between both cities, including the *Artists in Residence* programme, and visits by city officials. The cities have signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' aimed at further cultural, educational and economic exchanges. *The Blue Revolution* exhibition shows an overview of the results of the *Artists in Residence* programme. Featuring blue and white ceramic art works by contemporary Dutch and Chinese artists, the exhibition gives the visitor a view into the historical background linking the porcelain arts and crafts, and the 'past and present', of the two cities.

For more information go to [www.prinsenhof-delft.nl](http://www.prinsenhof-delft.nl) and [ikhouvanblauw.nl](http://ikhouvanblauw.nl)

## RENEWED CONTACT

### The 'Delft Jingdezhen 400-year cultural exchange' programme

THE RECENT RENEWAL of contact and cooperation between Delft and Jingdezhen is largely due to the efforts of the Dutch artist Adriaan Rees. This independent artist and sculptor, trained at the renowned Gerrit Rietveld Academie (Rietveld School of Art & Design), currently lives in Jingdezhen.

Adriaan Rees: "For the past fourteen years I have been visiting Jingdezhen in China. During that time the dynamics of the city and its people took hold of me. Nowadays I even live in Jingdezhen and for the past seven years I have run my own studio there. At the request of the Government of Jingdezhen, in 2006 I made my first attempt to initiate contact with the city of Delft in the Netherlands. In the years that followed I made connections between mayors, City Council Members, civil servants and artists and designers in Jingdezhen and Delft. In 2010 both cities signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU) for future cooperation and after that they officially became Sister Cities. I now work for the city of Delft as the project leader for the *Artists in Residence* project and the Museum Exchange.

In my own art the relationship between man and his surroundings are of primary importance. It is a necessity for me to travel and to work in new places all over the world. In these circumstances it is essential to work with other visual artists and artists working in other disciplines. The *Artists in Residence* project between Delft and Jingdezhen fits perfectly into this picture. Through the exchange of artists, designers and knowledge, a renewal and innovation could take place in the ceramics in both cities. Approximately 400 years ago the first contact took place between Jingdezhen and Delft. Because of the exchange programme the contact has been renewed. Artists and designers like Jiansheng Li, Pepijn van den Nieuwendijk, Wan Li Ya, Pauline Wiertz, Tineke van Gils, Chris Dagradi, Hugo Kaagman, Adrie Huisman, Wendy Steenks en Zhang Ling Yun made wonderful works and proposals during their work period in Jingdezhen and Delft, with great result and impact.

And it is just a beginning. More artists will follow and more collaboration will be made between the museums and the educational institutes in both cities. It is now up to everyone to develop these contacts and also reap its benefits!"

For more information go to [www.adriaanrees.nl](http://www.adriaanrees.nl)



'The Road Home' by Adriaan Rees (painted porcelain, made in his own studio in Jingdezhen). Photo taken by Ron Zijlstra at the exhibition 'The Blue Revolution'.

## UPCOMING LECTURES

### 'Shipments and Sherds' and 'Carrack Porcelain from Jingdezhen'

IN THE CONTEXT of the exhibition, two lectures are scheduled for Saturday 6 July 2013. In her lecture 'Shipments and Sherds', Christine van der Pijl-Ketel will give an overview of the types of porcelain that

were produced for the Dutch market and how these were transported by the VOC to the Netherlands at the beginning of the 17th century. The second lecture on carrack porcelain from Jingdezhen will be delivered by Professor Jiang Jian Xin (Associate Director and Researcher of Jingdezhen Municipal Ceramics and the Jingdezhen Ceramic Archaeological Research Institute).

Christine van der Pijl-Ketel conducted research on the Chinese porcelains salvaged from a Dutch VOC shipwreck, and was editor of *The Ceramic Load of the 'Witte Leeuw', sunk in 1613 at St. Helena*, published by the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. She is currently researching the Chinese export porcelain known as 'kraak ware', exported at the beginning of the 17th century, and is presently working on her PhD at the Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University.

# Reframing my memory of visiting IAS

## The Alumnus



characteristics of the great works by Johannes Vermeer, Rembrandt, Van Gogh and other artists and sensed the differences between the Dutch paintings and the Chinese ink paintings. Isn't it also an interesting topic to compare the oriental artistic traditions with the European traditions on the study of cultural heritage?

The Netherlands is a country famous for its water – canals, maritime, navigation technology. According to the philosophy of *Zhouyi*, 'water' is the imagery of 'flowing', which contains the abstract meaning of 'time', 'changes' and 'danger'. Combining these meanings we can deduce a new metaphorical meaning: 'chances'. This implies the promotion from an old status to a new level of life. Life is full of miracles, and my visit to IAS at Leiden University in the Netherlands was no doubt a unique one. I hope someday I will have the chance to revisit IAS, and to contribute my research outcomes, especially on the study of culture and cultural heritage.

**Professor Cheng Kat Hung Dennis taught at the National Taiwan University for 26 years. Since recently he is Professor of Cultural History at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. He was appointed 'European Chair of Chinese Studies' at Leiden University (2010-2011), 'Senior Visiting Research Fellow' at the National University of Singapore (2007-2008), and was Visiting Scholar at the University of Washington (at Seattle, 1994-1995). He served as the principal investigator of Excellent Projects supported by the Ministry of Education, and conducted collaborative research projects with international scholars from East Asia and North America. He has published 5 books, 12 edited volumes and more than 50 journal articles. (dkhcheng@ied.edu.hk)**

My visit to IAS in Leiden, from August 2010 to August 2011, was based on the cooperation signed by IAS and the Taiwanese Ministry of Education many years ago. I was told by Manon Osseweijer, the previous Deputy Director of IAS, that I had been the last 'European Chair of Chinese Studies'; as of 2011 the position became known as the 'Taiwan Chair of Chinese Studies'.

Dennis Cheng

I HAD VISITED EUROPE a few times previously – Italy, Germany and Hungary – but never the Netherlands. This was the second time I had visited an international academic institution focusing on Asian studies; the first had been ARI (Asia Research Institute) at the National University of Singapore, where I served as a senior visiting research fellow from 2007-2008. Following the terms of the contract, the Taiwan MoE provided me a stipend, while IAS provided me a quiet and favorable environment for research, as well as adequate material support in every aspect.

Serving as an international research hub for academic exchanges, IAS recruits new visitors and research fellows from time to time. It was very fruitful for me to know different people from different places through various activities, including brown bag lectures, seminars, drinks and lunch gatherings. By the time I arrived, Professor Philippe Peycam had just reported to duty to serve as the Director of IAS, and I learnt from the Institute's webpage and Newsletters that IAS would start concentrating on the research and promotion of the study of cultural heritage under the leadership of Philippe. Being an expert on *Zhouyi* (*Yijing*, The Book of Changes), which is an ancient Chinese political and philosophical Scripture, as well as a fundamental and theoretical classic for Chinese cultures and religions, I understood that this was what I could contribute to the study on Asian cultural heritage in terms of both material and immaterial aspects.

In my presentation at the 'IAS Fellow Seminar' I gave a brief introduction on "Two types of cosmology in ancient Chinese thought: philosophies of the 'Taiyi shengshui' and the *Yijing*." Obviously my talk was rather new to most of the fellows at the Institute, but provided an interesting perspective on looking back to the ancient spiritual tradition in Asia.

I also offered two courses at Leiden University and organized one workshop on behalf of IAS. To echo the research program of the Institute, I focused my courses on *Zhouyi* and the Asian intellectual tradition. The workshop was entitled "Reading matters: Chinese and Western traditions of interpreting the classics" and extended into the arena of 'hermeneutics'.

My purpose was to build a bridge between the German and the French hermeneutic traditions and the Chinese tradition from a global view. I admired IAS's academic orientation in the field of cultural heritage, focusing more on issues like urbanization, policy and governance, preservation of heritages and education. Obviously emphasizing the long existence of Asian spiritual traditions and working more into the historical and philosophical aspects should be something I could specifically contribute to IAS. I hope my efforts were somewhat useful in providing IAS a certain uniqueness on the study of cultural heritage.

The IAS visit gave me chances to acquire a lot from personal exchanges, and I am glad that until now I am still in close contact with a few scholars (say Professor Funayama Toru from Kyoto University who is a renowned scholar on Buddhism in Medieval Age Asia) and the PhD students I met at IAS. I even had a chance to successfully recommend the student Mr. Rens Krijgsman of Leiden University during his application to the PhD studentship at Oxford University. In Chinese we use the term *yuanfen* [fate, destiny] to describe the occasional yet meaningful gathering of people, and for sure all kinds of gatherings need an instigator (either a person or an institution) to bring people together, to create new outcomes, and this is exactly what IAS successfully achieved. Quite different from the disciplines of natural sciences, in humanities and social sciences, conference rooms and discussion panels are our 'laboratories', while all the chemical changes happen in the minds of the attendants. What can be more helpful and meaningful to visitors than to create an active and friendly atmosphere for research and discussions?

My one year visit in Leiden also provided me a chance to know the Netherlands. Visiting Museums with the Annual Museum Card was my most enjoyable pastime during my visit. The Mauritshuis, the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum are among my favorites. Before my visit, I had not yet had a chance to taste the European paintings and observe the subtle techniques, as well as the fantastic thoughts embedded within the materials. One by one I carefully looked into the details of these paintings; I started to recognize the creative

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# 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 aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities ‘in context’ and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

## 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 are addressed. The cluster aims to expand the understanding of the process of globalisation by considering the various ways Asian and other world regions are interconnected within a long-term historical framework. Acknowledging the central role of Asia as an agent of global transformations, it challenges western perspectives that underlie much of the current literature on the subject and explores new forms of non-hegemonic intellectual interactions in the form of ‘south-south-north’ and ‘east-west’ dialogue models. In principle, any research dealing with Asian global interactions is of interest. 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.

## 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 defining one’s own identity or identities vis-à-vis those of others. The cluster addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for social agency. 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

#### 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. Intended as an interdisciplinary research endeavour, the Postcolonial Global City has, thanks to events such as its seminars and lectures, brought together not just architects and urbanists, but also people from other disciplines, such as 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 post-colonial 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. The research programme organises a seminar every spring. The 2013 seminar Asian Cities: Colonial to Global fits into the Postcolonial Global City’s wider research which focuses on city design and city governance, and its investigations into institutions of governance, rule of law, and the role of language, as well as issues of environmentalism and sustainability.

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

#### Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)

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 academic international network on Asian cities. UKNA’s objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities. This will be achieved via research staff exchanges and targeted case study based research, focusing on three key areas: heritage, housing and the environment. The programme is funded by a grant awarded by the EU, and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IIAS is the coordinating partner institute in the network and administrator of the programme.

#### Partners are:

Ambedkar University; Beijing University of Technology’s College of Architecture and Urban Planning; CEPT University; China Academy of Urban Planning and Design; TU Delft Faculty of Architecture; Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture Paris-Belleville; Hong Kong University’s Architecture Department; Indian Institute for Human Settlements; International Institute for Asian Studies; Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences’ Centre for Urban and Regional Studies; Tianjin University’s School of Architecture; University College London’s Development Planning Unit; University of Macau’s Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities; University of Southern California’s Sol Price School of Public Policy.

Strategic partners are: Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore and the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning (NTUBP) of National Taiwan University.

**Coordinators: Paul Rabé (p.e.rabe@iias.nl)**

**& Simone Bijlard (s.f.bijlard@iias.nl)**



### 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**

#### Energy Programme Asia – EPA

The EPA-research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. The New Joint Research Project is called *The Transnationalization of China’s Oil Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017)*. Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this new joint comparative research project of the Energy Programme Asia will analyse China’s increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil. It seeks to determine patterns of interaction between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects, and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economies.

A core team of principal authors will present individual studies on various aspects and different countries. The resulting studies will be published in refereed journals such as *Energy Policy*, *Social Aspects of Energy* [Elsevier], *China Information*, and a book volume. This project is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS.

**Coordinators: M. Amineh, Programme Director EPA-IIAS (m.p.amineh@uva.nl or m.p.amineh@iias.nl), Y. Guang, Programme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa**

#### 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 multidisciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the Centre facilitates projects on State Licensing, Market Closure, and Rent Seeking; Regulation of Intra-governmental Conflict; Social Costs, Externalities and Innovation; Regulatory Governance under Institutional Void; and Governance in Areas of Contested Territoriality and Sovereignty.

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

#### Jatropha Research & 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)**

#### 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 1941-1945. **Coordinator: Jan Bongenaar (ijas@iias.nl)**

### 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)**



Reclining Buddha, Dambulla Cave Temple, Sri Lanka.

#### 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. 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](http://www.abia.net). Extracts are available as a series of bibliographies, published by Brill. In December 2012 IIAS and Brill Publishers agreed that Brill will take on the ABIA Netherlands office as an in-house digital bibliographic project, starting from 15 March 2013. The first year will be a pilot year for anchoring the ABIA work in Leiden in a new setting. This phase will continue to receive co-funding from IIAS and the J. Gonda Foundation.

**Coordinators: Ellen Raven (e.m.raven@iias.nl) Gerda Theuns-de Boer (g.a.m.theuns@iias.nl)**

## Open Cluster

### PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

#### Ageing in Asia and Europe

During the 21st century it is projected that there will be more than one billion people aged 60 and over, with this figure climbing to nearly two billion by 2050, three-quarters of whom will live in the developing world. 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 Risseeuw (c.risseeuw@iias.nl)**

# IIAS fellows

IIAS hosts a large number of affiliated fellows (independent post-doctoral 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.

## FULL LIST OF THE FELLOWS CURRENTLY AT IIAS

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*Africa/Brazil, India and China relations: understanding Africa's interests & agency*  
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### Gregory Bracken

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1 Sep 2009 – 1 Sep 2013

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### Takako Kondo

*Translating (Japanese) contemporary art*  
1 Sep 2009 – 31 Aug 2013

### Shuyu Kong

*1) Popular media and cultural public sphere in contemporary China 2) Discreet screening of the foreign film in 1970s & 1980s China*  
6 May 2013 – 30 Jun 2013

### Ulrich Timme Kragh

*An Asian philosophy of history & cultural heritage*  
1 Jul 2012 – 31 Aug 2013

### Retno Kusumaningtyas

*Socio-economically driven internal migration in Indonesia*  
1 Apr 2013 – 31 Mar 2014

### Tak-wing Ngo

*State-market relations & the political economy of development*  
1 May 2008 – 1 May 2016

### Takeharu Okubo

*The influence of Dutch jurisprudence in late 19th century Japan*  
1 Apr 2011 – 1 Apr 2013

### Elena Paskaleva

*Reading the architecture of Paradise: the Timurid Kosh*  
1 Sep 2012 – 1 Sep 2013

### Gerard Persoon

*Extraordinary chair at the Leiden University Institute of Cultural Anthropology & Developmental Sociology*  
1 Jul 2009 – 1 Jul 2014

### Karl Praust

*Bṛhaspati, the 'Great Lord' of the Rigveda*  
15 Aug 2012 – 15 Jun 2013

### Ronki Ram

*Dalit cultural heritage in contemporary India*  
1 Sep 2011 – 1 Sep 2013

### Saraju Rath

*Indian manuscripts in the Netherlands: from forgotten treasures to accessible archives*  
5 Jan 2004 – 1 Aug 2013

### Florinda de Simini

*A study of the Nepalese transmission of the Śivadharmottara, aimed at establishing a critical edition of its second chapter, 'On the Gift of Knowledge' (vidyādānādhyāya), with introduction & English translation*  
1 Feb 2013 – 1 Aug 2013

### Alexander Stolyarov

*North Indian early mediaeval land grants of the 4th-13th centuries as a kind of historical source*  
17 Jun 2013 – 12 Jul 2013

### Fenneke Sysling

*Seeing Southeast Asia through Indian eyes. Physical anthropology & travel experience in the Dutch Indies, ca. 1880-1940*  
1 Sep 2012 – 31 May 2013

### Danielle Tan

*From Golden Triangle to Economic Quadrangle: connections, corridors, and reconfiguration of a transnational space in the upper Mekong borderlands*  
1 Feb 2013 – 30 Jul 2013

### Albert Tzeng

*Framing sociology in Taiwan, Hong Kong & Singapore*  
20 May 2013 – 20 Nov 2013

### Ping Wang

*Zhuangzi, Guo Xiang & Daoism*  
1 Aug 2012 – 1 May 2013

### Vazira F.Y. Zamindar

*A land in ruins: Gandhara, archaeology & the making of Indian civilization*  
1 Jan 2013 – 1 Jul 2013

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Lloyd G. Adu Amoah

*Africa/Brazil, India and China relations: understanding Africa's interests and agency*



MY PRESENCE in Leiden and the IIAS has some serendipity about it. I was originally planning to do my fellowship at the African Studies Center (where I am a fellow) down at Wassenaarseweg 52, which is just a spitting distance from IIAS's perch on Rapenburg 59. A roundtable at an idyllic game resort in Lusaka (Zambia), which led to the setting up of the Association of Asian Studies in Africa (AASIA), changed my research fellowship trajectory. In Lusaka I met Philippe Peycam, the energetic director of IIAS. I was convinced the IIAS was custom tooled for the demands of my specific research interest. The rest as they say is history. I turn to my specific research interest then while at the IIAS, in the canal-strewn very-European city of Leiden.

In earlier works I have analyzed, for example, the ways in which China constructs her soft hegemonic power in Africa via architecture and construction; the expressions of African agency in Africa-China relations through migratory flows from the continent; the ideational import of China's success for public policy theorizing for developing polities, and the strategic questions that the rise of new powers (Brazil, India and China) raises for African polities. My considered view is that at this key juncture in Africa's history, in which the makings of a multi-polar world is in palpable evidence, it is crucial that some critical light is shed on the underlying reasons (beyond the stylized narratives) and forms (especially

institutional) by which the emerging powers Brazil, China and India are interacting with Africa and on Africa's role in shaping such interactions –and what all this portends for the future of the world.

My research at the IIAS is directed at producing a book that will attempt to link all of my earlier works and reflections into a longer, denser narrative focused on understanding Africa's place and future in the grand schemes of these emergent powers, Africa's own strategic maneuvers and the geo-political, economic and strategic import for the world. The book will be engaged with empirico-theoretical questions set within a critical multidisciplinary framework. For example, is the claim made in the literature, that China is a new imperial power solely seeking her interests in Africa as opposed to the other view that China is in Africa as a friend, an accurate way to understand Africa-China relations? Can Africa-China relations be theorized differently based on the empirics of this ever-evolving relationship? What defines Africa-India relations? Is Brazil Africa's reluctant or partially engaged partner?

The energy at the IIAS is infectious. I am looking forward to a long mutually rewarding relationship while I contemplate the surfeit of bicycles, narrow streets and the almost eerie quiet of my street Rijnsbergerweg in the university city of Leiden!

### Danielle Tan

*From Golden Triangle to Economic Quadrangle: connections, corridors, and reconfiguration of a transnational space in the upper Mekong borderlands*



My fellowship at IIAS provides me with the opportunity to rewrite my dissertation into a book publication. This step is all the more important as French scholarship on former Indochina is little known to the Anglo-Saxon academia because of the language barrier. Originally, my PhD dissertation in political science entitled *From communism to neoliberalism: the role of Chinese networks in the transformation of the state in Laos*, shed light on how globalization has transformed the practices and modes of exercising power in Laos, since the country has engaged in a process of economic liberalization in the late 1980s. My research focused on the mountainous borderlands of northern Laos, which crystallize all the challenges the country is currently facing. Since the end of the Cold War, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) –a regional integration process supported by the Asian Development Bank –has witnessed the revival of the ancient caravan trade routes and networks that once traversed the region. In the proximate uplands, where Burma, Thailand and Laos intersect in the junctures of the notorious Golden Triangle, massive Chinese investment and migration have reshaped local political economies.

The book will particularly explore the ways in which the world's second largest drug producing area has been restructured into a series of tourism and casino hubs under the banner of the GMS' special economic zones (SEZs). Frequently viewed as Chinese enclaves and lawless domains, I argue that this borderlands

region is in fact a site of fervent local state activity and intentionality, key planks in state efforts at consolidating lowland rule and extending state sovereignty. I will demonstrate how local lowland states strategically leverage Chinese presence and activity in the borderland SEZs in order to discipline their peripheral subjects.

IIAS also offers a vibrant academic environment as well as tremendous resources and networks that are beneficial to develop new research projects. To name a few, I am currently co-editing with Pál Nyíri (VU Amsterdam) a volume gathering the most recent academic research findings on the ways in which China's rise has been profoundly affecting the socio-political and economic background in the Southeast Asian region. To initiate a comparative analysis on this topic with other areas, I will be organizing a joint seminar with Jessica Achberger, currently Research Fellow at the African Studies Centre (ASC). Lloyd G. Adu Amoah, a new Research Fellow at IIAS, specialized on contemporary Africa-China-India-Brazil relations will actively be engaged in the discussion. This workshop reflects the IIAS initiative to develop Asian studies in Africa. At last, during the ICAS conference in Macau, I will discuss a new collaboration with the University of Macau, the National University of Singapore (ARI), and Institut d'Asie Orientale (Institute of East Asian Studies - IAO-CNRS, France) to investigate the nexus between 'Casino and Development' in Southeast Asia, China and beyond.

**Tom Hoogervorst**  
Challenging notions  
of pre-modern cultural  
contact across the  
Bay of Bengal



SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA have been intermittently in contact for the past three millennia. My present research at the IIAS, facilitated by a Gonda Foundation grant, enables me to explore new perspectives on interethnic relations between these two regions. More specifically, I am investigating the extent to which historical linguistics is able to challenge our perspectives on the so-called 'Indianisation' of Southeast Asia, a now-controversial term shaped by paradigms of civilisational hierarchy and other trends of colonial thought. By moving beyond the oft-described role of Sanskrit as a vehicle of Indian culture, I focus on the poorly understood function of vernacular South Asian languages – both Indo-Aryan and Dravidian – and their associated speech communities in the complex social events that led to the transmission of Indian culture to ancient Southeast Asia. The lexical data that form the basis of this study are analysed in conjunction with the latest insights from archaeology and history.

These interdisciplinary ambitions inevitably entail keeping track of multiple academic disciplines, all entitled to their own conventions and methodologies. In this regard, the dynamic academic environment of IIAS has enabled me to pursue my goals much more efficiently. What is the quickest way to separate 'pure' Sanskrit words from ungrammatical forms (*apabhramśa*)? Put the words on a list and email it to my colleague who examines Nepalese Śaiva manuscripts. What is the best place to obtain much-needed insights in Indo-Aryan historical phonology? At the coffee machine, while having a chat with a fellow Gonda-scholar who specialises in several ancient Indo-European languages whose very names elude all but an arcane few. How can we make linguistic technicalities more palatable to an audience of non-linguists? Discuss the topic with the researcher-next-door who studies cultural heritage and textile artisanship.

Due in part to these considerable advantages, my research at the IIAS has thus far enabled me to detect an ancient non-Sanskrit substrate in the languages of insular Southeast Asia. Unlike the better known Sanskrit element in this region – mostly restricted to 'high' cultural contexts such as religion, architecture and literature – the encountered loanwords often refer to practical matters in the domains of agriculture, metallurgy and trade. Other insights gained through my focus on language as a tool to reconstruct cultural contact fall beyond the pre-modern scope of the present study. That being said, serendipitous encounters of New Indo-Aryan (Hindi, Bengali, etc.) and especially Tamil loanwords into Malay, Javanese and related languages beg for a renewed interest in the more recent role of the Bay of Bengal as a zone of interaction. The trans-Asiatic networks that form the core of my research persisted into the colonial epoch of Indian Ocean history, influenced it, and eventually outlived it.

# IIAS Postdoctoral Fellowships



The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to work on a relevant 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

This cluster concentrates on the critical investigation of the politics of cultural heritage, and explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a Europe-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values.

#### Global Asia

The Global Asia cluster addresses Asia's role in the various globalisation 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 are addressed.

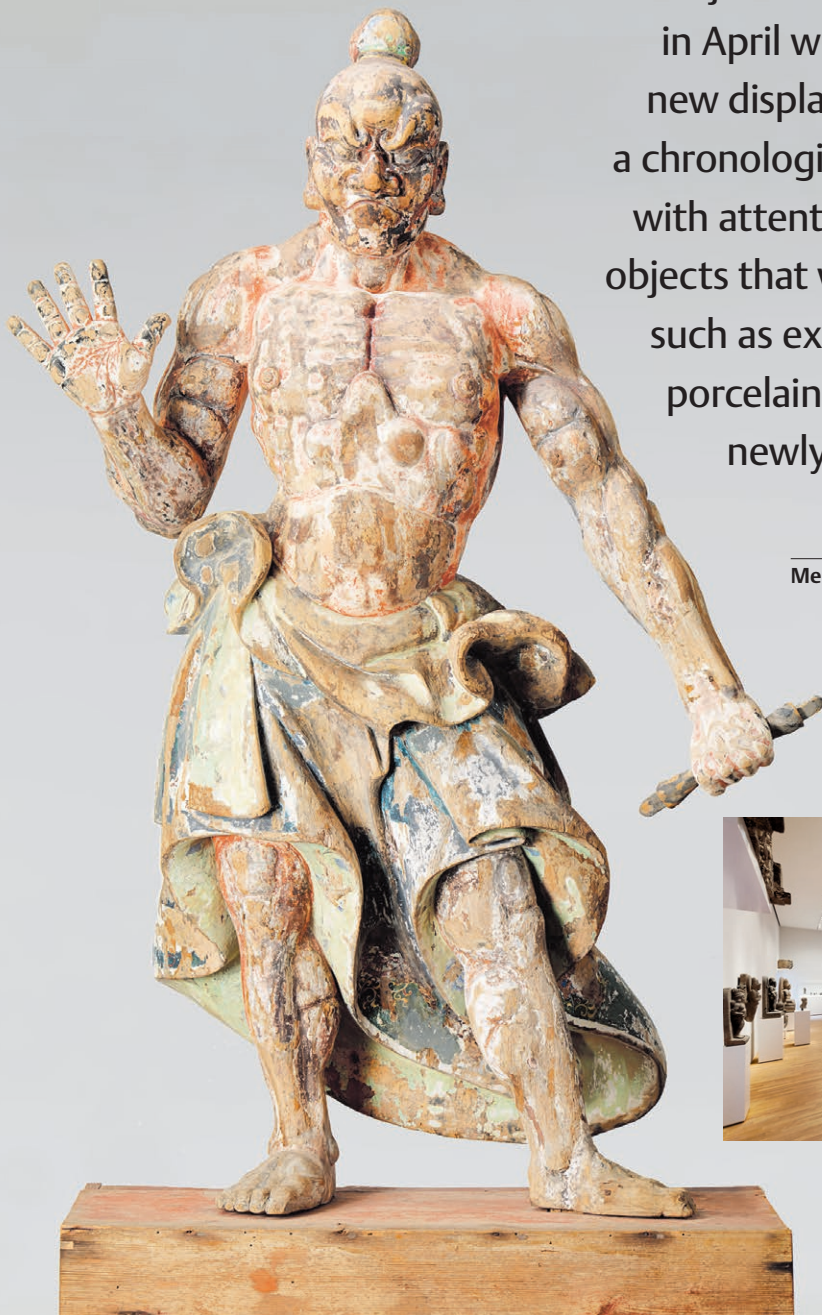
Research projects that can contribute to new, historically contextualised, multidisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged.

For information on the research clusters and application form go to: [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)

# A pavilion for Asian art in the new Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

After a prolonged period of extensive renovation, the Rijksmuseum reopened its doors to the public in April with a redesigned interior and brand new displays. The main building now presents a chronological overview of Dutch art and history, with attention being paid at various intervals to objects that were produced for international trade, such as export lacquer ware or Delftware and porcelain from China and Japan. A separate, newly built pavilion houses the main collection of Asian art.

Menno Fitski, Anna Slaczka & William Southworth



SPANISH ARCHITECTS Cruz y Ortiz have created an original structure whose playful lines contrast with the straight and majestic walls of the main museum building (inset image right). Both the architecture and the interior fittings have been designed by the same architects, so that the pavilion forms an entity that is consistent in style and is notably different from that of the main building and galleries. In this way, the visitor's transition from one to the other is marked by a change in surroundings. The atmosphere is one of simplicity and clarity (inset image left), contiguous with the vision of the architects and the nature of the Asian art collection.

Many of the objects on display were collected by the Society of Friends of Asian Art, founded in 1918, and are on long term loan to the Rijksmuseum.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the Society was not to try and create a full overview of Asian art, but rather to focus on the acquisition of a select group of objects that exemplified a particular region, style, type or period. As a result, the collection may well include only a single, but particularly fine, example of a certain object type. Thus, rather than arranging objects thematically, an order based on place of origin allows the visitor to get an impression of the aesthetics and stylistic elements that are relevant to the various regions of Asia.

## India and Indonesia

The Indian and Indonesian collections are displayed on the upper floor of the two-tiered pavilion. This section of the pavilion is provided with windows that allow daylight to enter. This choice was a natural one, as the artefacts primarily consist of bronze and stone statues that benefit from being viewed in natural light.

Almost all the sculptures displayed here have a religious function and significance: they are either cult images made to be used in worship at a temple or domestic shrine, or are architectural fragments that formed part of a religious monument. By displaying Indian and Indonesian art together we hope to show some of the ways in which Hindu-Buddhist art developed and transformed when these religions, originating from the Indian subcontinent, travelled east to other parts of Asia. Several motifs, such as the *makara* or water monster, deities and mythological stories, can be observed in both their Indian and Indonesian versions.

A good example of a myth travelling east is the story of the goddess Durga killing the buffalo demon (Durga Mahishasuramardini), represented in the pavilion by an image from Bengal and another from East Java.

A number of true masterpieces were already bought during the first twenty years of the Society. Among them, the monumental dancing Shiva (h. 154 cm; ca. 1100 CE), purchased in 1935 from the Paris dealer C.T. Loo. One of the largest Chola bronzes ever made, it is now displayed as the centrepiece of the upper floor gallery. Also worth mentioning is the stone sculpture of a celestial nymph (*apsaras*), originating from the well-known Lakshmana temple in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh (consecrated 954 CE), which was bought in 1934. The window behind allows sunlight to play on the lacework-like details of the sculpture.

The Indonesia section is dominated by a stone sculpture from Central Java (ca. 800-930), comprising perhaps the finest collection of this region and date in the Netherlands and perhaps in any museum outside Indonesia. The display includes five monumental sculptures carved freely from volcanic stone: two *kala* or monster heads, placed high above the doorway and window overlooking the stairs; two *makara*; and a statue of the *bodhisattva* Manjushri. These sculptures were sent to the Society in 1931 from the former Archaeological Service of the Netherlands East Indies and are a testament to the close personal ties between the two institutions and the involvement of several key members of the society in the restoration and reconstruction of Hindu-Buddhist temple remains on Java.

Other important statues and artefacts from Indonesia have been gradually added to this collection as a result of private donations and purchases. Foremost among these are a series of statuettes made of bronze, silver and gold, including a superb silver image of the Buddhist deity Vajrasattva. The South Indian art collection was recently enriched with the purchase of a bronze Somaskanda group (late Chola period, ca. 1100). This composition highlights another aspect of Shiva, one that contrasts with that of the violent dancer. Shiva is shown surrounded by his family: his wife Uma and their child Skanda, the god of war. Fine decorative arts in ivory, gold and glass also flourished in South and Southeast Asia. These, together with a number of ritual objects, can be seen among the artefacts from China and Japan in the 'treasure room' downstairs.

## China and Japan

The natural focal point that the Shiva provides for the Indian collection is absent for the selection of Japanese sculptures. Although it counted some fine pieces, the existing group was one of tranquil Buddhas and bodhisattvas with serene expressions and poses – the characteristics that tend to dominate the wider audience's view of Japanese Buddhist sculpture. More dynamic deities were very much under-represented and a 2007 purchase set out to remedy this

with the purchase of a pair of 14th-century temple guardian figures, which now form one of the highlights of the display on the lower floor section of the Pavilion (main image above). A line of sculpture accentuates a long display case that during the opening months houses a selection of kimono. Over the past years, various acquisitions have thus complemented existing groups within the collection. Some additions, however, have opened up new, unrepresented areas. One such field was early-20th century Japanese art and the Rijksmuseum has been extremely fortunate to be the beneficiary of a most generous gift from two collectors of that period. Jan Dees and René van der Star have donated over 130 pieces of exquisite Taisho-period textiles that give a comprehensive overview of the various techniques, types and styles.

In the Chinese section, the visitor is met by many pieces that may be familiar to long-standing visitors to the museum. Meeting 'old friends' surely must be one of the joys of recurring museum visits and the display tries to present those pieces with a fresh outlook, such as the group of Tang-period figures of horses and camels, which were previously shown as a parade, evoking a caravan travelling the Silk Route. Now, they are arranged in formation, more akin to the way they are found in burial sites. Research has led to the conclusion that the group was not produced using moulds, but were modelled by hand around a nucleus of plant material (straw) that was strengthened by iron strips to support the legs. The presence of metal within an object of fired clay was a remarkable outcome and the possibility to carry out such important research on the collection has been one of the advantages of the long renovation process of the museum. Satisfying as this may be for research, these past ten years have separated the public from the objects – now the real purpose and pleasure begins.

Menno Fitski is Curator of East Asian Art;  
Anna Slaczka is Curator of South Asian Art;  
William Southworth is Curator for Southeast Asian Art.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Rosalien van der Poel, 'The Asian Arts Society in the Netherlands', *The Newsletter* No. 55, Autumn-Winter 2010, p.48.