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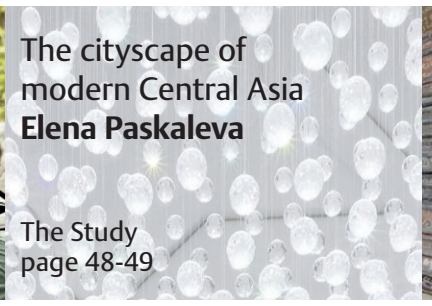

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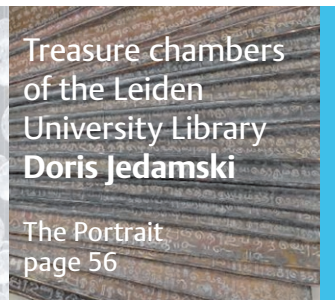

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IIAS
International Institute for Asian Studies

theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

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Sustainable Humanosphere Studies

IIAS Special Issue

Engaging Asia

20 years since 1993

The Focus | Sustainable Humanosphere Studies: Towards new models of socio-economic development
Guest Editor Mario Lopez presents multidisciplinary research from scholars who are engaged in sustainability studies in Southeast Asia. This issue's contributions to the Focus section emphasize the important collaborations that are currently taking place between disciplines to address complex socio-economic transformations in the region.

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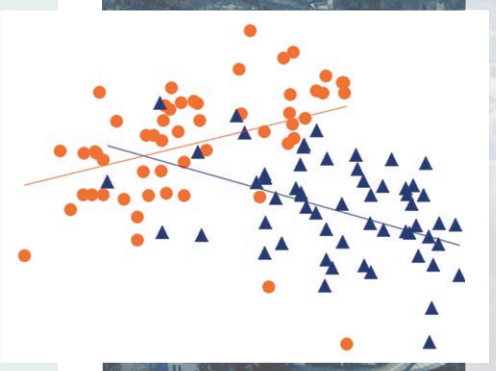

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Guest Editor **Mario Lopez** presents multidisciplinary research from scholars who are engaged in sustainability studies in Southeast Asia. This issue's contributions to the Focus section emphasize the important collaborations that are currently taking place between disciplines to address complex socio-economic transformations in the region.

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Floods are a perennial issue in Southeast Asia and how states have dealt with them vary from country to country. **Loh Kah Seng** historically contextualizes how post-colonial Singapore has created flood control plans and the environmental and political issues that have arisen as a consequence of flooding in the city-state.

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Kaoru Sugihara considers the relationship between industrialization and environmental sustainability by introducing the concept of sustainable humanosphere. He places Southeast Asia's recent developments in the global history of human intervention on the sustainability of the earth.

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Noboru Ishikawa introduces a multidisciplinary research project in Sarawak, Malaysia that examines the transformation of plantation society through collaborative work undertaken by both social and natural scientists.

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Termites are ubiquitously thought of as pests, however, **Kok-Boon Neoh** shows us how they form a fundamental part of the diverse ecosystems and societies in Southeast Asia and how their role as a socioeconomic driver needs to be re-appraised.

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For the past 20 years, the Human Development Index (HDI) has been a yardstick for measuring human societies. **Takahiro Sato** and his research team offer a fundamental reappraisal by introducing a Humanosphere Potentiality Index (HPI), to re-consider development in a broader framework.

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Over the past 20 years, the peat lands of Southeast Asia have undergone vast transformations through unprecedented resources exploitation. **Kosuke Mizuno** introduces a collaborative large-scale project that aims to rehabilitate the degraded peat lands of Bengkalis, Riau in Indonesia.

Celebrating 20 Years of IIAS

IIAS' twentieth anniversary is an occasion to take stock of what has been accomplished, and in particular, to gauge the institute's capacity to evolve from a consortium-grounded national organization with an international reach to a locally embedded institution, member of the newly established area studies platform 'LeidenGlobal', acting as a global clearing house in the field of Asian studies.

Philippe Peycam

THE ELEMENTS OF CONTINUITY should be stressed. More than ever, IIAS remains the network builder and research facilitator that its founders envisioned two decades ago. With a reinforced profile and a more focused programmatic orientation, the institute has gained in visibility and credibility. This has led IIAS to engage in the development of ambitious collaborative projects; not only does the institute serve as an incubator of new research but it is also a facilitator of research-led teaching and public service initiatives. This special issue of The Newsletter will amply demonstrate the diversity of IIAS' accomplishments, and the institute's transformation in the past two decades. For this special occasion, the Editor, Sonja Zweegers asked me to reflect on 'what makes the institute so unique'. It is a challenge I am willing to take on, but with the realization that I may not give full credit to all the interesting aspects of the institute or to the people who have made it what it is today.

Often I am asked by visitors how such a small team of 15 people can manage to accomplish so much and be visible in so many parts of the world? Part of the answer is implied by this question. IIAS is first and foremost a team with a remarkable group spirit and a shared commitment toward the – collective – success of the institute. Behind each of the activities performed – the IIAS fellowships, the website, office and finance management tasks, conferences and events, the cluster activities, ICAS, The Newsletter, the publications, etc. – there is one or sometimes two dedicated people. When one staff member gets really busy, colleagues are always ready to assist. The IIAS staff is not only committed, it is also self-reliant. This has to do with a shared appreciation, I suppose pride, for the unique role and mission of the institute. There is also a Dutch-style combination of refreshing informality with an inclination to deliver concrete results, cutting through unnecessary hierarchies and formalities. It is rare to see such a synergy operate in a workplace among colleagues, all 'comrades in arms'. This is one of the secrets behind the institute's success.

Another characteristic of IIAS is its unique institutional set up. There are few precedents in Asia, Europe or the US, of an organization entirely dedicated to facilitate a field of study: Asia is taken in the most inclusive sense of the term, and with an interdisciplinary and multi-sector mandate, with very few restrictions in terms of nationality, specialization, or bureaucratic constraints. IIAS manages its own budget. It is free to organise events anywhere in the world, or to engage in open collaboration with whichever partner it sees fit. This versatility, and indeed inclusiveness, enables IIAS to serve as a springboard for new research ideas and for new interactions and networks. Needless to say, IIAS' flexible and 'extravert' character ultimately benefits the community of people and institutions it is founded on.

Some people may be surprised, as I was myself at the beginning, to hear from colleagues from Asia or the United States how familiar they feel about IIAS; that they always thought of it as an 'Asian' or an 'American' entity. We feel proud that our institute should somewhat be considered as belonging to everyone in the field. This is, I believe, another mark of IIAS' success.

As for the programmatic offering of the institute, it has been shaped and refined throughout time. I have mentioned, on numerous occasions, how the three thematic clusters of Asian Heritages, Urban Asia and Global Asia, were designed to reinforce IIAS' global intellectual position. IIAS has steadily evolved from primarily a mechanism to facilitate projects, often owned by others, into a structure that shapes its own programmatic agenda along the lines defined by its three clusters. Yet, it is always open to collaborate on new initiatives taken by individual scholars or partner institutions.

With time, many activities have come to be identified as 'IIAS signatures': The Newsletter, the fellowship programme, the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS). Other activities are now fast becoming associated with IIAS: its intensive 'Summer/Winter School' (page 35), its *in-situ* Heritage Roundtables, the numerous collaborative events, etc. The credibility gained by the success of these projects enables IIAS to act as a sharer of expertise, while it concentrates on exploring new grounds and new collaborative ventures. This is true of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA), the joint graduate programme on Critical Heritage studies (page 35), or the institute's support for the African Association of Asian Studies (page 11). One essential point that distinguishes IIAS from many institutes is its fundamentally collaborative character. It neither seeks to build 'enclaves' in Asia, nor does it wish to act on its own without engaging other partners. This collaborative nature is another of IIAS' forces.

These reasons, and probably many other ones, mean that IIAS is succeeding in propelling itself as *the* global institute of Asian studies, at least in the purview of its three thematic clusters. The institute's orientation is a truly global one implying the recognition of multileveled modes of knowledge on/about Asia and the necessary decentering of the field through a diversified distribution of knowledge powerhouses. IIAS is responding to this latter current by, for instance, enabling a 'global' governance model for ICAS.

I would also like to say a few words on the importance of the grant IIAS recently received from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York (page 16). The Mellon Foundation is well known for its unflinching dedication to the Humanities in higher education. The recent grant made to IIAS is intended to assist it in its efforts to operate as a global trans-regional 'broker' with an even more balanced interaction existing between scholars and institutions from Asia, Netherlands /Europe and North America, together with their emerging counterparts in Africa, Latin America and beyond. The project, in the form of five 'forums' and a total of 17 events, seeks to frame alternative realms of knowledge about Asia, while helping us to bring activities of research, teaching and dissemination closer together. This is an experimental undertaking that, I hope, should help IIAS and its partners to move the field of Asian studies forward in today's always more interdependent global knowledge village.

This special issue of The Newsletter celebrates 20 years of IIAS' successes made possible by IIAS Fellows, strategic partners, IIAS staff, research programmes and networks, IIAS and ICAS publications, conferences and workshops, ICAS, outreach projects and annual lectures, The Newsletter, and many more people, activities and initiatives. All 'the Study' articles in this issue have been contributed by former and current IIAS Fellows; 'the Focus' has been compiled by Dr Mario Lopez from the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at Kyoto University, one of IIAS' longstanding partners; 'News from Asia' is provided by our colleagues at ISEAS in Singapore, who generously contribute to each issue of The Newsletter; 'the Review' features contributions made by our faithful reviewers, courtesy of our literature/review website New Asia Books (www.newbooks.asia, page 38); and 'the Portrait' for this issue highlights just one of the many unique benefits of the institute's location.

Furthermore, befitting the celebratory mood we find ourselves in, IIAS is holding a Photo Contest to engage even further with The Newsletter readers and IIAS' friends, colleagues and partners. At IIAS we endorse story-telling by way of pictures – The Newsletter uses an abundance of colourful images, which has become one of its most recognisable features. Our contributors and readers come from all over the world and speak dozens of different languages, so what better medium is there to represent a global language we can all understand? Go to page 7 to see how you too can take part and contribute to our growing image collection.

We would like to thank everyone who has participated in the making of this special issue, and hope that like us, you too are looking forward to the next 20 years of IIAS!

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

The Newsletter and IIAS
The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) is a research and exchange platform based in Leiden, the Netherlands. It encourages the multidisciplinary and comparative study of Asia, and actively promotes national and international co-operation.

The Newsletter is a free quarterly published 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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The International Institute for Asian Studies

Baby Krishna has come of age

At the official opening of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) on 13 October 1993, several authorities in the field of Asian Studies expressed their views on the history, nature and future perspective of various dimensions of Asian Studies. In addition to the keynote address by J.F. Staal, 'Concepts of Science in Europe and Asia', which appeared separately as an IIAS-publication in December 1993, the other speeches given on that day appeared in written form in a supplement to the second issue (spring 1994) of the IIAS Newsletter, under the title 'Asian Studies in global perspective'. This latter publication, comprising 24 newspaper-size pages, could be regarded as the birth document of the International Institute for Asian Studies.

Jan E.M. Houben

IN ADDITION to a document attesting to its birth, we also have for the International Institute for Asian Studies – and this is more rare for institutions and people – a document that marks its initial conception: this is the 'Baby Krishna' report compiled by the Advisory Committee on the 'Small Arts' departments (Kleine Letteren) chaired by J.F. Staal, which appeared in January 1991. The conclusion of the committee, set up in July 1989 by the Minister of Education and Science, contained the recommendation that the possibility be explored of establishing a *European Institute of Asian Studies* "which would organize post-doctoral courses and other meetings, workshops etc. dealing with Asian studies and where fellows who have obtained research support ... could carry out their work and make use of existing library and other support facilities for Asian studies." The committee chaired by Staal was asked to place emphasis on the humanities (especially 'Languages and Cultures') and the social sciences dealing with Asia. As it was felt that the role of the social sciences needed further consideration, a follow-up survey was done by a committee appointed in May 1991 by the Netherlands Royal Academy of Sciences (KNAW). Their report, 'Krishna in the Delta' appeared in October 1991. With a change of name the proposed *European Institute of Asian Studies* became the International Institute for Asian Studies, and the cooperating partners included, apart from KNAW and Leiden University mentioned in the Baby Krishna report, also Amsterdam University (UvA), and the Free University of Amsterdam (VU).

In the two decades of its existence, and under its three successive directors – Wim Stokhof (1993 to 2005), Max Sparreboom (2006 to 2009) and, since 2010, Philippe Peycam – the IIAS has by and large remained faithful to its original objectives. The aim of improving international co-operation, especially in a European context and between Europe and Asia, has been served, for instance, through fellowship programmes and through the organization of numerous international events, with participants from all over the world. In my personal experience I have been familiar with the IIAS from its very beginnings. I belonged to the first batch of fellows of the IIAS in 1993-1994, and even when I was already appointed as Professor of Sanskrit at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, the IIAS accepted me as a visiting fellow in 2009 during which period I could organize a workshop on Indian traditional medicine: 'Ayurveda in Post-classical and Pre-colonial India' (9 July 2009).

The institutional context of the IIAS has changed considerably since the early 1990s, just as the institutional context of Asian Studies and the 'Small Arts' departments in the Netherlands has changed. The earmarked funds for Asian studies, for instance, were abolished at the beginning of this century. At present, not only the small arts departments, but the Humanities at large have reached precarious conditions, as is clear from a recent report by a committee chaired by J. Cohen, *Sustainable Humanities: Report from the Committee on the National Plan for the Future of the Humanities* (Amsterdam, 2009). Although not focused on Asian studies this report contains much that is also relevant for IIAS, especially its engagement with humanities, next to other sciences. At present IIAS is no longer 'taken care of' by four institutions, but only by Leiden University.

It is impossible to fully review here these changes and their implications for IIAS. The main characteristic and functionality of the IIAS as a unique institute stimulating and cherishing institutional cooperation in the domain of Asian Studies has remained intact from the conception and actual birth of IIAS, till the present time. From this brief overview and from the fact that J.F. Staal was a specialist in Panini's Sanskrit grammar and its structure of rules and metarules, one central part of IIAS' success formula is clear and it gave IIAS a remarkable 'flying start'. From the outset it was placed on a meta-level vis-à-vis all other institutes dealing with or touching on Asia in, first of all, the Netherlands, but also Europe and the world. Although relatively small, IIAS contributed to the facilitation of other institutes more absorbed in specific projects and to the communication, cooperation and interaction between them. Even when IIAS started to engage in its own specific projects, the meta-level activities (manifested, for instance, in its internationally distributed *The Newsletter*) remained an intricate aspect to the functioning of IIAS. It is the level at which the grown up Krishna can derive much of its strength, also in the future, as J.F. Staal's "man-of-steel".

Prof. Dr. Jan E.M. Houben, Directeur d'études, Sources et Histoire de la Tradition Sanskrite, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris (jemhouben@gmail.com)

The International Institute for Asian Studies – Celebrating 20 Years

Sandra Dehue (IIAS)

THIS YEAR WE CELEBRATE the birth of our Institute, 20 years ago. Officially opened on 13 October 1993 by the then State Secretary for Education and Science, Dr M.J. Cohen, the establishment of the International Institute for Asian Studies followed the recommendation by two consecutive committees installed by the Ministry of Education and Royal Netherlands Institute for Arts and Sciences (KNAW). While the first committee was asked to come up with proposals on how to assure and/or improve the quality of research in the so called 'Small Arts' (such as 'Oriental Studies') and the social sciences where they have a function for the 'Small Arts', the instruction for the second committee was to advise on the quality of research in the field of Asian studies in the humanities and social sciences. In their reports both committees stressed the importance of the establishment of an institute for Asian Studies as one of the means to strengthen Asian studies in the Netherlands, and as an important step towards its internationalisation.

The Institute's founding agreement was signed in the summer of 1993 by its four founding partners: the Royal Netherlands Institute for Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the Free University of Amsterdam (VU) and Leiden University (LU). Choosing Leiden as its seat, they assigned four goals and activities to the Institute:

1. To set up and execute a post-doctorate programme for Dutch and foreign researchers.
2. The organisation of international scientific gatherings.
3. To act as a national centre for Asian studies to improve international co-operation in the European context.
4. To develop other activities in the field of Asian studies such as the publication of a newsletter.

From its inception, IIAS has committed itself to the fulfilment of these objectives, making the Institute what it is today: a research institute and exchange platform, hosted at Leiden University in the Netherlands, that encourages the multi-disciplinary and comparative study of Asia, and actively promotes (inter)national co-operation. Today, IIAS acts as a national, European and global mediator, bringing together academic and non-academic partners including cultural, social and policy organisations. The Institute operates a fellowship programme (see pages 8-9) and supports high quality joint research projects on topics of common interest to Europe and Asia in close cooperation with national and international partners (see pages 11-18). The IIAS and ICAS publication series are part of our policy to strengthen Asian studies scholarship. Throughout the year IIAS (co-)organises all types of gatherings such as international conferences and seminars, enabling researchers and fellows to discuss work-in-progress and share findings. IIAS furthermore organises and participates in thematic roundtables which act as think-tanks and provide opportunities for free discussion between a diversity of expert scholars and practitioners. In addition IIAS instigates various outreach activities in order to promote greater public understanding of contemporary Asia (see page 22). As a clearinghouse of information and knowledge, IIAS offers a range of communication instruments enabling it to reach out to thousands of academics and professionals worldwide. IIAS has been running its 'Newsletter' right from the start, with the first issue of the 'IIAS Newsletter' (now simply 'The Newsletter') appearing in August 1993 (see page 6). The IIAS website is the institute's core information repository and goes hand in hand with the monthly IIAS Update and other email notifications keeping subscribers informed.

Since 2010, IIAS has organised most of its research and other activities around the three thematic clusters of Asian Cities, Asian Heritages and Global Asia. The purpose of this approach is not to exclude anything or anyone, but to cultivate synergy and coherence between people and projects.

IIAS in Leiden

Sandra Dehue (IIAS)

IIAS IS SITUATED IN the historic centre of the Dutch city of Leiden, a university town that combines modern urban facilities with 17th century charm. The city of Leiden is home to Leiden University, the oldest university in the Netherlands (founded in 1575). The Institute is situated at Rapenburg 59 in one of the mansions along the 'Rapenburg' canal. With a population of around 120,000 Leiden is a friendly and dynamic moderate-sized city located right in between Holland's major cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht. These cities can all be reached by frequent trains within 12 to 40 minutes, and Amsterdam Schiphol Airport within 20.

Site of selected institutes and Museums along with IIAS transposed onto the Map of Leiden by Matthaus Merian, 1646. Image reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of flickr.

Asia in Leiden

Leiden abounds in expertise on and collections from Asia. Dutch relations with Asia go back more than 400 years, and Leiden University has from its beginning concentrated on the cultures and societies of 'the Orient', making it one of the oldest and renowned centres for Asian Studies in the western world. Moreover, this long-standing relationship with Asia is also reflected in the many and unique historical collections from Asia that are present in the university libraries (see p56), Leiden museums, and in other Leiden-based institutes such as the Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV).

At Leiden University a number of institutes in the Humanities and Social Sciences with specific expertise on Asian countries and Asia-related topics stand out. First and foremost, there is of course the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), which comprises the School of Asian Studies (SAS) and the School of Middle Eastern Studies (SMES). Area specialisations in the School of Asian Studies include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South- & Southeast Asian, and Tibetan Studies. Expertise on regions belonging to the Middle East is present not only in SMES but also in the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO). This independent Institute located on the premises of Leiden University also houses several collections that are valuable resources for researchers of, for example, Islam in Asia. Also in the Faculty of Humanities is the Institute for History which, among other areas, has a focus on Asian societies in a global context. Expertise on the art and material culture of East Asia and of South and Southeast Asia is present in the Art History department (and LIAS). Specific Asia expertise is also present in the Social Sciences, where Indonesia is one of the traditional foci of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. This institute also has several researchers specialised in South Asia. The list of research topics of the Institute of Political Science includes Central Asia Politics and Chinese Politics. In the area of Law, the Van Vollenhoven Institute (VVI) collects, produces and disseminates knowledge on the processes of and relationships between law, governance and development, particularly in Asia and Africa.

For the purpose of this short overview of relevant institutes in light of IIAS' mandate, I would like to mention two more outside the Humanities and Social Sciences, namely the Institute of Environmental Sciences (CML) and the Institute of Biology. The first because of its twenty-year research programme in the Philippines, and the second because of its research and programmes in the areas of biodiversity, plant science and natural products, which make use of the extensive plant collections from Asia present in Leiden. From its foundation in 1590, the Leiden Hortus botanicus actively collected (medicinal) plants from Asia, as well as knowledge on the use of these plants. The Leiden herbarium of the National Herbarium Nederland (the NHN is part of the Leiden-based Netherlands Centre for Biodiversity Naturalis) is well-known for its extensive collections from South-East Asia, especially from Indonesia. As the oldest Dutch herbarium, it also contains several historic collections, among which the 17th century 12-volume Hortus Malabaricus, which has been declared a testimony of cultural heritage to both the Netherland and India. Leiden is also home to the Siebold House with collections from Japan, and two national museums that hold collections and have expertise pertaining to Asia: the National Museum of Ethnology and National Museum of Antiquities (RMO).

LeidenGlobal, a new platform for global expertise

A number of the academic and cultural institutions mentioned above have recently brought together their respective and complementary scientific and cultural knowledge in a platform for global expertise called 'LeidenGlobal'. Through LeidenGlobal these institutions wish to connect with local communities, media, government, NGO's and the business world. Besides IIAS, the partners in LeidenGlobal are: Leiden University, The Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asia and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO), African Studies Centre (ASC), the National Museum of Ethnology and the National Museum of Antiquities, and the Roosevelt Study Centre which is a research centre on twentieth-century American history located in Middelburg.

LeidenGlobal was festively launched on 27 November 2013 at the National Museum of Ethnology by the Rector Magnificus of Leiden University and the mayor of the city of Leiden.

Who's who at IIAS

In alphabetical order:

1. Sandra Dehue
Content Manager/Editor: collects information, edits and writes texts about IIAS activities and takes care of the Institute's corporate publications.

2. Mary Lynn van Dijk
CRM/CMS and Publications Assistant: looks after our databases and keeps in touch with our readers, book reviewers, and authors.

3. Adele Esposito
Coordinator Critical Heritage Activities: coordinates the activities in the IIAS Asian Heritages research cluster.

4. Martina van den Haak
Seminars & ICAS: organises every single aspect of IIAS seminars, conferences and roundtables and helps organise the biennial ICAS Conference.

5. Ria van der Holst
Controller: keeps us from overspending our budget and advises on the Institute's proper conduct of business.

6. Sandra van der Horst
Fellowship Coordinator: takes care of all our fellows' needs, including: information, visa, accommodation, finances, access to resources, and many other concerns and needs.

7. Heleen van der Minne
Coordinator Outreach Activities: develops activities for the IIAS Outreach Programme in co-operation with various cultural organisations in the Netherlands.

8. Philippe Peycam
Director: provides strategic direction to the Institute, engages with partners worldwide in the development of new initiatives and networks and contributes his academic expertise to IIAS activities.

9. Paul Rabé
UKNA Coordinator: coordinates the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) and related activities, as well as the activities in the IIAS Asian Cities research cluster.

10. Gien San Tan
UKNA Project Officer: coordinates the exchange of the scholars within the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) and takes care of the programme's administration and reporting to the EC.

11. Paul van der Velde
ICAS Secretary and IIAS Publications Officer: takes care of the overall management of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), is the Secretary of the ICAS Book Prize Series & supervises IIAS' academic publications.

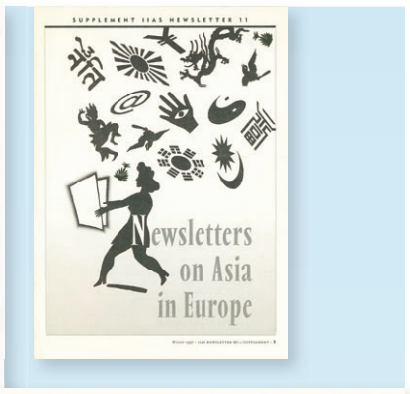
12. Amparo de Vogel
Secretary: keeps IIAS operational in its day-to-day business.

13. Willem Vogelsang
Institute Manager: deals with the Institute's overall management, helps fellows connect with the Leiden community and contributes his academic expertise to IIAS activities.

14. Thomas Voorter
Communication Coordinator and Web Manager: advises on all matters of communication and develops IIAS' websites.

15. Sonja Zweegers
Managing Editor: produces four issues of The Newsletter each year by soliciting and editing contributions from scholars worldwide as well as managing the full publication process.

Evolution of The Newsletter



The IIAS Newsletter, later simply re-named The Newsletter, was created along with the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in 1993 and is an embodiment of the institute's ideals. This is clear from the inaugural issue of The Newsletter, in which its first managing editor, Paul van der Velde, explained how IIAS "was expected to play a stimulating and integrating role in the field of Asian studies in Europe through organizing international workshops, conferences, a database and by publishing a newsletter." IIAS was founded to give coherence to a fragmented Asian Studies world and The Newsletter was to be a partner in that endeavour. It took on that role from its very inception by assimilating the already existing *South Asia Newsletter*, which was in itself a collaborative effort by CASA (Amsterdam) and the Kern Institute (Leiden). The Newsletter was thus from its very initial conception meant to be much more than the dictionary definition of a periodical bulletin of institutional news and events.

Rituparna Roy

Promoting and connecting others

In earlier issues of the IIAS Newsletter, contributions were sorted into three main sections – South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia – each with news about institutes, conference reports, calls for papers, lectures, awards and events. The issues also included a general section on Asian Studies. But in everything it reported on, it was unique. It provided exhaustive information about other institutions rather than exclusively listing its own institutional news. There was a conscious effort to build networks and to sketch the larger picture. Hence, it would frequently profile new, as well as established, institutions devoted to Asian Studies – both nationally and internationally.

While heavy on news, The Newsletter never forgot people. Right from the beginning, along with the reports and agendas, readers were given interviews and profiles of people who contributed to Asian Studies in varying capacities. They included not only scholarly stalwarts, such as Peter J.M. Nas, the Leiden 'godfather' of Urban Studies (issue #7), but also others contributing to research, such as librarian Roger Tol, who established the Malaysian Resource Centre at the KITLV (issue #8).

Supplements

Another interesting feature of The Newsletter are its occasional special supplements – which make the already hefty Newsletter even heftier! An early example is issue #6, which in addition to its 76 pages, had a 16-page Special Supplement on 'Dutch Museums with Asian Collections'. But perhaps the most significant of the early supplements was the one in #11, on 'Newsletters on Asia in Europe', containing the lectures delivered by several editors of comparable newsletters during a conference at IIAS in 1996. It is notable that while some of the newsletters listed in the supplement have regrettably become defunct, The Newsletter has continued – getting bigger and better and more innovative each year.

Redesigns – going full colour!

Issue #6 witnessed the first introduction of colour into the publication, but this concerned only the front and back pages. There were two major redesigns over the course of the next 14 years. In issue #27 (2002), The Newsletter was given a face-lift, and the layout was changed "by dropping the regional designations and categorizing articles according to type". It was also the point at which The Newsletter became fully available online. Prior to that, only the bare text of selected essays were published online. Issue #50 was a big milestone: the publication went from being the 'IIAS Newsletter' to 'The Newsletter'. It also went full colour; and building on the layout changes of the previous years, it was given five distinct sections: 'The Study', 'The Review', 'The Focus', 'The Network' and 'The Portrait'.

'The Study' includes research articles by both IIAS Fellows as well as other Asian scholars. Reviews are an important vehicle for the dissemination of new research, and 'The Review' section covers this aspect in an innovative way. It works in sync with 'New Asia Books', an initiative of IIAS that aims for the greater visibility of new books on Asia worldwide (see page 36 of this issue). 'The Focus' is compiled by a Guest Editor, and consists of various coordinated articles on one theme. 'The Network' includes the pages on all things institutional: fellows and fellowships, alumni, events, reports, grants, call for papers, etc. 'The Portrait' can be found on the back cover of each issue; it is devoted to some aspect of visual culture in/on Asia. This is in addition to the bounty of images found in each issue of The Newsletter; a reflection of a world-wide trend of the increasing importance of the image in publishing. Keeping this reality in mind, and in celebration of its 20 year anniversary, IIAS and The Newsletter will be launching a Photo Contest in January 2014. You are all invited to join in! (see opposite page)

The Internet & The Newsletter

The Internet profoundly affected publishing the world over, and The Newsletter was no exception. IIAS established its website in 1996, which was proudly announced in issue #10. Prior to that, The Newsletter had taken it upon itself to educate its as yet uninitiated audience. In a series of articles in issues #4 to #9, a special correspondent (Annelies de Deugd) gave detailed information and instruction about how to use the internet. Once the internet became more generally accessible The Newsletter confidently reached out to its new online audience. Thanks to the internet, it has a much wider readership than would otherwise have been the case. Its present readership has reached 17,000, of which only 8000 are in hardcopy, as a growing number of readers are digital subscribers. The issues are also always available to everyone on our website.

The future

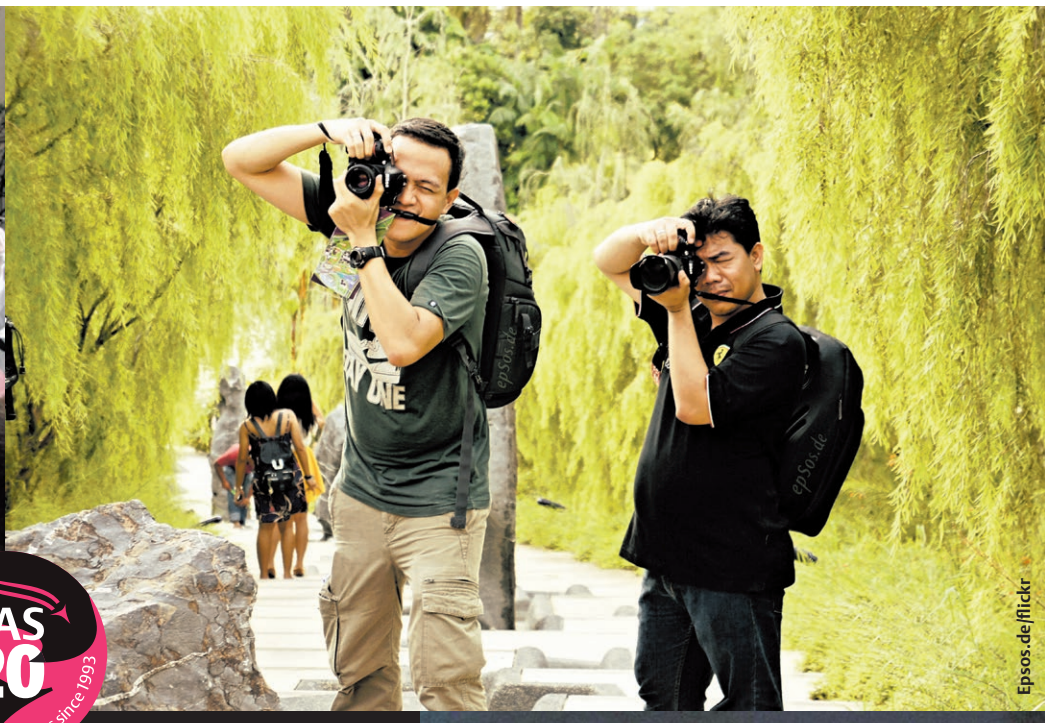
The Newsletter is exploring the possibility of putting together an International Council (similar to ICAS, see p21). This Council would not be an editorial board, but rather function as an advisory council of global members – giving global input in the ever expanding field of Asian Studies. It would reflect the global institutionalisation of IIAS, and reinforce our global networks.

The future looks promising for The Newsletter, but what will be crucial to its ongoing success is the maintenance of the basic principles that it has always worked according to – that of being broad, free and accessible (in the widest sense of the term). Because IIAS is broad (it embraces the study of the whole of Asia and is committed to building networks), The Newsletter also reaches wide in its scope. Its readers come from all over the world, and thus it is important that The Newsletter be accessible, which is only to be achieved with a style of writing that is light on terminology and not research-field specific. It is also accessible to its contributors, and is an encouraging platform for young researchers and established scholars alike. Importantly, The Newsletter has always been available at no cost to its readers – it has remained free for 20 years, even at a time when academic publishing, in general, has become more and more expensive. It will continue to be available to all, and maintain its consummate role of 'encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia'.

Rituparna Roy was a former IIAS Fellow
(see Page 10; rituparna_sandilya@yahoo.co.in)

IIAS Photo Contest 2014: Picturing Asia

Darla Hueska/flickr



Epsos.de/flickr

Len Matthews/flickr

In the celebratory spirit of our 20th anniversary we invite our readers and friends of IIAS to contribute to our growing image collection by entering the IIAS Photo Contest, which will be launched on 1 January 2014 and run until 30 June.

THIS PHOTO CONTEST OFFERS YOU the chance to have your photo published in The Newsletter. We would like to give you the opportunity to tell a visual story, to explore photography's capacity for communication, to capture the unexpected, and to share with us the world you live in. The photos you send will automatically become eligible for publication in The Newsletter (always accredited to you), and thus provide us with an incredible new source of pictorial material. To further reward you for this we are granting a number of prizes, which will be announced on our website and in the next issue of The Newsletter.

Please send us your photographs by using the online form, which can be accessed through the website:

www.iias.nl/photocontest

The rules and regulations can also be found on the webpage above – please read them before entering the contest.

Sabe/flickr

Submit up to 5 photographs per person, for any combination of the following 6 categories:

1 Asian Cities

The rapid growth of Asian cities has tremendous effects on urban culture and communities – show us what you have witnessed.

2 Global Asia

How can we best record the flow of people, goods, capital and ideas from, as well as within, the Asian region?

3 Asian Heritages

Show us Asia's broad diversity of cultural heritage and how it is used to express identity.

4 Asia's Pop Culture

Commercial culture, style and taste of the youth, 'low culture', mass media … ? How do you define pop culture in Asia?

5 Everyday Life in Asia

Take to the streets, record the daily routines, experiences and activities that unite each and every one of us …

6 Asia by Mobile

Be spontaneous – use your phone or tablet to capture the moment. Set your device to its highest resolution!

Daniel Foster/flickr

The Newsletter | No.66 | Winter 2013

IIAS Fellowship Programme

Aiming to further the quality of research on Asia, IIAS is keen to enable talented researchers to develop new research plans. To this end IIAS has developed its (post-doctoral) fellowship programme. Along with the Research Fellows, who are attached to one of the IIAS research programmes, the Institute yearly hosts a large number of visiting researchers (Affiliated Fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, the Institute also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.

Especially for new arrivals, it is easier to connect outside the constraints of the office. Therefore, IIAS makes sure to bring fellows together during informal events such as the yearly IIAS fellows' outing, or for example, during a guided walk along the Leiden City's almshouses (fellows and staff are pictured here gathered in front of the Institute, setting out for the walk). IIAS is also very pleased that fellows take the initiative to organise social events themselves: from cross-cultural potluck dinners, to the screening of films from Asia, to extra research presentations.

Research fellows
As an institute aiming to futher the multi-disciplinary and comparative study of Asia, IIAS has over the years initiated and supported a series of innovative research programmes at an international level in cooperation with important partners in the field of Asian Studies abroad. The coordinating researchers of these programmes attached to IIAS (or of their ensuing networks) are known as Research Fellows.

Affiliated Fellows
The Institite supports the work of individual researchers (Affiliated Fellows) who join us for a period ranging from a few weeks to two years, to work on their own research project. As IIAS aims to stimulate Asian studies with a focus on the humanities and social sciences and their interaction with other sciences, most fellows, although not all, hold a PhD in some branch of learning from the humanities or social sciences. Among these are researchers who have arranged their own finances as well as those who receive financial support from IIAS directly, or from one of our partner institutes in the framework of a formal agreement. Examples of the latter are the joint fellowship programmes with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore (ISEAS), and the African Studies Centre in Leiden (ASC), or the fellowships supported by the Gonda Foundation meant for researchers working on Indology.

"In Leiden through IIAS I found the perfect balance of a congenial space to think and share ideas with a generous scholarly community, and the incentive to explore and engage with innovative academic research from across Asia."

Bernardo Brown
(Cornell University)
Affiliated fellow
1 Oct '13–31 Jul '14

IIAS facilities
Regardless of background or funding, all affiliated fellows can count on the same services and facilities provided by IIAS. IIAS fellows are offered office facilities, while the Institute mediates access to libraries, archives and other Institutes in the Netherlands. In return, fellows are expected to be productive in writing, possibly give a lecture or organise a workshop, and attend activities organised by IIAS.

IIAS not only provides talented researchers from different backgrounds a place to work, but also an opportunity to exchange insights and exchange ideas, with the goal to broaden their horizon and inspire new ideas. One tool to facilitate interactions is the IIAS 'lunch lecture'. During these informal sessions

"IIAS offers a stimulating environment to balance work on my project with interactions amongst a vast network associated with the institute."

Siobhan Campbell
(University of Sydney)
Affiliated fellow
1 Sep '13–1 Feb '14

FELLOWS CURRENTLY AT IIAS

Natsuko Akagawa
Affiliated Fellow
1 Dec 2013–28 Feb 2014

Mehdi Amineh
Research Fellow and Coordinator of the IIAS Energy Programme Asia
Domestic and geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union
1 Sep 2007–1 Apr 2017

Rebecca Bego
Winner 2012 Master's Thesis Prize
Urban activism and cultural politics in Hong Kong
23 Sep 2013–23 Dec 2013

Gregory Bracken
Research Fellow and Coordinator of 'The Postcolonial Global City'
Colonial-era Shanghai as an urban model for the 21st century
1 Sep 2009–1 Sep 2015

Bernardo Brown
Affiliated Fellow
The circulation of Sri Lankan catholic clergy to Europe, transnational religious networks, and global Christianity in South Asia
1 Oct 2013–31 Jul 2014

Siobhan Campbell
Affiliated Fellow
Histories of Balinese art and museum collections
1 Sep 2013–1 Mar 2014

Yung-mau CHAO
Visiting Professor, Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies (BICER)
15 Jan 2014–15 Jul 2014

Mo CHEN
Affiliated Fellow
(IIAS Energy Programme Asia)
Cooperation between Chinese petroleum enterprise and Saudi Arabia and Sudan
7 Sep 2013–7 Oct 2013

Young Chul CHO
Visiting Professor, Korea Studies Chair (Korea Foundation)
(1) Nationalism and cultures of (in)security in East Asia. (2) Indigenous IR theory production in Asia
1 Sep 2013–1 Jul 2014

Ana Dragojlovic
Affiliated Fellow
Indisch genealogy and forms of relatedness: rethinking diaspora and citizenship
26 Nov 2013–26 Jun 2014

Jonathan Duquette
Affiliated Fellow
A study of Śivādvaita Vedānta theology with reference to Appaya Dīkṣita's Śivārkamaṇidīpikā, a subcommentary on Śrīkaṇṭha's Brahmamīmāṃsābhāṣya
1 Sep 2013–1 Mar 2014

Elisabeth L. Engebretsen
Affiliated Fellow
Precarious livelihoods, rising inequalities, and politics of survival in contemporary urban Chinese society
1 Sep 2013–28 Feb 2014

Adele Esposito
Affiliated Fellow
Architectural and urban making in Southeast Asian heritage cities: The art of combining endogenous forms and exogenous Inputs. Hoi An (Vietnam) as a case study
1 Jan 2013–30 Nov 2013

Elisa Ganser
Affiliated Fellow
Drama and dance in medieval India, in the light of the Nāṭyaśāstra and Abhinavagupta's commentary Abhinavabhāratī
27 Sep 2013–31 Mar 2014

Swargajyoti Gohain
Affiliated Fellow
Imagined places: politics and narratives in a disputed Indo-Tibetan borderland
1 Sep 2013–30 Jun 2014

Shelley Ching-yu Hsieh
Visiting Professor, Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies (BICER)
A cross-linguistic study of embodiment expressions
1 Sep 2013–15 Jan 2014

Wang Jian
Affiliated Fellow
Local practice and regional characteristics of folk religion in the Yangtze delta (1368-1911)
16 Jul 2013–17 Oct 2013

Pralay Kanungo
Visiting Professor, India Studies Chair (ICCR)
Indian Politics
1 Sep 2013–30 Aug 2015

Ward Keeler
Affiliated Fellow
Masculinity, autonomy and attachment in Buddhist Burma
1 Nov 2013–31 Apr 2014

David Kloos
Affiliated Fellow
Becoming better Muslims: teligious authority and ethical improvement in Aceh, Indonesia
1 Jul 2013–1 Feb 2014

Retno Kusumaningtyas
Affiliated Fellow
Socio-economically driven internal migration in Indonesia
1 Apr 2013–31 Mar 2014

Viet Le
Affiliated Fellow
Representations of modernization and historical trauma in contemporary Southeast Asian visual cultures (with a focus on Cambodia, Việt Nam and its diasporas)
15 Dec 2013–15 Aug 2014

Doreen Lee
Affiliated Fellow
Pemuda Fever: nationalism, youth and public culture in urban Indonesia
1 Oct 2013–31 Mar 2014

Nina Mirnig
Affiliated Fellow
Early Śaivism in Nepal
1 Oct 2013–31 Jan 2014

Rohit Negi
Affiliated Fellow
1 Mar 2014–30 Jun 2014

Tak-wing Ngo
Extraordinary Chair holder at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Coordinator IIAS Centre for Regulation & Governance
State-market relations and the political economy of development
1 May 2008–30 Apr 2017

Gerard Persoon
Extraordinary Chair at the Leiden University Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology
Environment and Development: indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia
1 Jul 2009–30 Jun 2014

William Peterson
Affiliated Fellow
Community-based performance in the Philippines
12 Aug 2013–30 Nov 2013

Saraju Rath
Research Fellow
Indian Manuscripts in the Netherlands: from forgotten treasures to accessible archives
5 Jan 2004–1 Jan 2015

Albert Tzeng
IIAS-ISEAS Fellow
Framing sociology in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore
20 May 2013–20 Nov 2013

Yi Wang
Affiliated Fellow
Cataloguing the Van Gulik Collection
1 Jun 2013–31 Dec 2013

Lei YUAN
Affiliated Fellow
(IIAS Energy Programme Asia)
Resource-based city development in The Netherlands
1 Nov 2013–30 Nov 2013

Deng Zhituan from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences shares aspects of his ongoing research with other affiliated fellows at IIAS. IIAS attaches great value to constructive dialogue between researchers, to help them formulate research questions and discover new avenues for further research. In addition to the many international seminars and conferences, IIAS organises small-scale and informal sessions such as this one.

our affiliated fellows present aspects of their work in a manner accessible to other researchers who do not necessarily have specialised knowledge of the topic at hand, followed by time for questions, comments and discussion. Lunch is provided by the Institute. The meetings are open to fellows as well as others with an interest in the subject.

"I came to the IIAS because it is one of the rare places that accommodates a large variety of scholarly approaches to the study of Asia – including the historic – and thus constitutes a platform for interdisciplinary exchange that I find very stimulating for my research."

Nina Mirnig
(independent researcher)
Affiliated fellow
1 Nov '13–31 Jan '14

Another often heard reason for researchers to choose IIAS is the access to important resources available in Leiden and the Netherlands. Thanks to its long-time relationship with countries in Asia, the Netherlands is home to many important and sometimes unique historical manuscripts and other collections from Asia, many of which found their way into the 'Special Collections' of the Leiden University Library (see The Portrait on page 56), or which are present at one of the other institutes in Leiden. Owing to the university's long tradition of Asian Studies, specific expertise on a wide variety of Asia-related topics abounds at Leiden University and fellows take the opportunity, with or without the help from IIAS, to talk to the many experts. Other fellows actively use their affiliation with IIAS to become part of the Institute's network, for example, by taking part or contributing to a conference organised by IIAS during or after their official fellowship period.

"IIAS offers an environment in which to meet and connect with scholars from different countries, cultures and research backgrounds who present different approaches to similar research questions, with a potential to work as a catalyst for the exploration of new venues."

WANG Yi
(Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)
Affiliated fellow
1 Jun–31 Dec 2013

Professorial Fellowships
IIAS appoints professors as part of an agreement with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations. These IIAS affiliated professors come to teach at Dutch universities in existing BA and MA programmes in Asian Studies, but may also be engaged in research activities.

IIAS currently supports three Chairs:
- The Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies, co-sponsored by the Department of International and Cross-straight Education of the Taiwanese Ministry of Higher Education and IIAS
- The India Studies Chair, co-sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and IIAS
- The Korean Studies Chair, co-sponsored together with the Korea Foundation in Seoul, South Korea.

IIAS Extraordinary Professors
The IIAS Extraordinary Chairs have been established to stimulate Asian Studies at Dutch universities where Asian Studies is not (yet) a major focus or to stimulate specific fields of study at universities with a well-established reputation in Asian Studies. Presently there are two long-term extraordinary chairs. One at the Leiden University Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Developmental Sociology, and one at the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

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 fellowship.

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, cosmopolitism, *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**

IIAS
International Institute for Asian Studies

The Alumni

A shared experience in Leiden

For the past twenty years, more than a thousand fellows and affiliated scholars have enjoyed the facilities of IIAS in Leiden and have made good use of the many university institutes, museums and libraries in the vicinity. Many of these scholars did not limit their stay in Leiden to just one occasion, but they returned, attracted by the IIAS atmosphere that for many proved so conducive to their research. But even if they did not return to Leiden physically, we have remained in contact with many of our former fellows, of course via our website and The Newsletter, but also by meeting them at roundtables and conferences all over the world. Below is a small selection of alumni who reflect the varied backgrounds and research fields found among fellows at IIAS.

WE HAVE CERTAINLY MANAGED to build an IIAS community, and the shared experience of having worked at IIAS in Leiden has created a bond between the alumni. People find it easy to communicate among themselves, work on joint projects, cooperate in the preparation of edited volumes, or generally, ask for advice. We are very happy to strengthen these bonds, to help people find each other, and to keep everyone aware of what is going on at IIAS. For this to work it is necessary that the alumni out there keep us informed about any changes to (email) addresses and affiliations, and, if you have not already done so, by subscribing to The Newsletter, which as you all know, is distributed free of charge four times a year.

Alumni, let us know when you have new publications coming out, or when you have found yourself a new position, or are starting a brand new research project. In short, help us to strengthen the IIAS community, so we can even better help you find colleagues and others who share your academic interests.

Edwin Jurriëns

I am a lecturer in Indonesian Studies at the Asia Institute, University of Melbourne. I was a research Fellow at the IIAS in Leiden from January to April 2008, during my sabbatical leave from my previous employer, the University of New South Wales, Canberra. The IIAS offered me a place for undisturbed research and meeting old and new friends in the field of Asian Studies. It gave me the opportunity to finish my book *From Monologue to Dialogue: Radio and Reform in Indonesia,* published by KITLV Press in 2009. During my stay in Leiden, Jeroen de Kloet and myself also launched our co-edited volume *Cosmopatriots: On Distant Belongings and Close Encounters* (Rodopi, 2007). Another highlight was my participation in Dutch artist Wendelien van Oldenborgh's audio-visual project *No False Echoes,* which was exhibited at the Van Abbe Museum in 2008. My current research focuses on contemporary art, grassroots media and media ecology, especially video art and community video. My forthcoming publication will be the co-edited volume *Disaster Relief in the Asia Pacific: Agency and Resilience* (Routledge, 2013), in which I focus on the role of art and alternative media in informing and rebuilding disaster-prone communities.

Dipika Mukherjee

I received my PhD in English, with a major in Linguistics, from Texas A&M, and over the next two decades tried to carve out a dual career for myself as a linguist and creative writer. I have had a nomadic life and taught at academic institutions in the US, India, China, the Netherlands, Malaysia and Singapore. My first novel, *Thunder Demons,* was long listed for the 2009 Man Asian Literary Prize; and my short stories and poems have been published internationally. I currently teach at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and am an Affiliate of the Roberta Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies at Northwestern University. I was an IIAS Affiliated Fellow from January 2007 to 2013. During this time, I co-edited *Language Shifts Among Malaysian Minorities as Effects Of National Language Planning: Speaking in Many Tongues* (AUP: 2011); and published a book chapter in *Multilingual Identities: New Global Perspectives* (Peter Lang: 2013), on the new identity-formation of Surinamese-Indian women in Dutch society. IIAS was a wonderfully open and intellectually stimulating institution to work in, and I am enriched by the continual collaboration with IIAS colleagues in different parts of the world.

Rituparna Roy

I lived most of my life in Kolkata, where I first studied English Literature at the Presidency College and Calcutta University, and later taught the subject at Basantidevi College. I specialized in Indian Writing in English and did my PhD in India with the help of two UGC Fellowships (JRF & FIP). I left my full-time, permanent job as a lecturer in Kolkata to join my husband in the Netherlands in 2007. Since coming here, a teaching job has eluded me – but thanks to IIAS, I could continue as a scholar. During my time at IIAS (Jan 2009 to April 2012), I worked on an independent post-doctoral project, and apart from several journal articles, authored two books – my revised doctoral thesis, *South Asian Partition Fiction in English: From Khushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh* (AUP: 2010); and a co-edited ICAS volume, *Writing India Anew: Indian English Fiction 2000-2010* (AUP: 2013). I now write an occasional column on India for *The Newsletter,* and am honoured to be assisting the editor Sonja Zweegers with this special 20th anniversary issue. IIAS helped me evolve as a person – broadening my mental horizon and enabling me to see myself and my work as part of a much bigger world than I knew before, both in the field of Asian Studies and at large.

Barbara Andaya

As a student at Sydney University in the early 1960s, I could never have foreseen that one day I would be sitting in my office looking out at Honolulu's beautiful Diamond Head, that my passport would be fat with visas from many different countries, and that my network of friends and colleagues would stretch across the globe. I could never have envisaged that I would have embarked on a career as a Southeast Asian historian, which has brought me so much intellectual stimulation and personal pleasure. At Cornell University I met my husband, Leonard Andaya, leading to a marriage that has also been an academic partnership, for we have worked on several projects together, including a history of Malaysia (we are now preparing a third edition). We were both part of the IIAS family in summer 2008, when I was moving from my work on gender and embarking on a new regional project that explores the localization of Christianity in Southeast Asia in a global and comparative context. The time at IIAS enabled me to complete an article on the connections between European economic interests and the spread of Christianity in early modern Southeast Asia. Perhaps more importantly, I was able to enlarge my network of colleagues and friends in an academic atmosphere that was very close to ideal.

Thomas de Bruijn

From 1998 to 2001, I was an IIAS Affiliated Fellow for a research project on contemporary South Asian literature. IIAS proved a very inspiring environment for this project, with the coming and going of researchers in all areas of Asian Studies. After the IIAS fellowship, my professional career took a different turn as I found work in an administrative position at Leiden University. As an independent scholar, I continued to publish from my research on modern Indian literature and to convene seminars in this domain. These activities led to a year of teaching at INALCO, Paris, which brought me into contact with talented researchers in the field. It gave me the impetus to finalize the conversion of my PhD-thesis on pre-modern Indian Sufi poetry into the book *Ruby in the Dust,* published in 2012. It also inspired me to continue being active in the field of modern Indian writing. Currently, I am organizing a Panel on modern Indian literature and cinema for the 23rd EASAS Conference at Zurich in 2014. IIAS was seminal to my present activities as an independent scholar. The entrepreneurial atmosphere that characterized the institute around the end of the 1990s made me both more mature as an intellectual and helped me discover my own place in academia.

Irina Morozova

I earned my PhD in history from the Institute of Asian and African Countries, Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2002. My PhD thesis and later research resulted in two books, *The Comintern and Revolution in Mongolia* (White Horse Press: 2002) and *Socialist Revolutions in Asia. Social History of Mongolia in the 20th century* (Routledge: 2009). I became an IIAS Fellow in 2003 and since then have further developed my knowledge in the social sciences in the academic milieu of Leiden University and the University of Amsterdam. At IIAS, I gained skills of managing international research projects and organizing scientific forums at an advanced level. I was a co-director of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop and editor of 'Towards social stability and democratic governance in Central Eurasia. Challenges to regional security' (IOS Press: 2005). Whilst continuing my lecturing duties at Moscow State University 2006-2010, I became an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the Institute of Middle East Studies, German Institute of Global and Area Studies in Hamburg in 2008. Since 2010, I have been leading the international research project 'The history of perestroika in Central Asia (social transformation in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia, 1982-1991)', sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation at the Seminar for Central Asian Studies, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Humboldt-University Berlin.

Programmes, networks and initiatives

In its aim to promote broad, high quality knowledge on Asia, IIAS supports several thematic research programmes and networks developed and executed by international research teams usually consisting of a programme director, IIAS research fellows, and visiting fellows. To mark the twentieth anniversary of IIAS, this special issue of The Newsletter not only presents our current programmes and initiatives, but also recalls a number of completed programmes that received support from IIAS in the past.

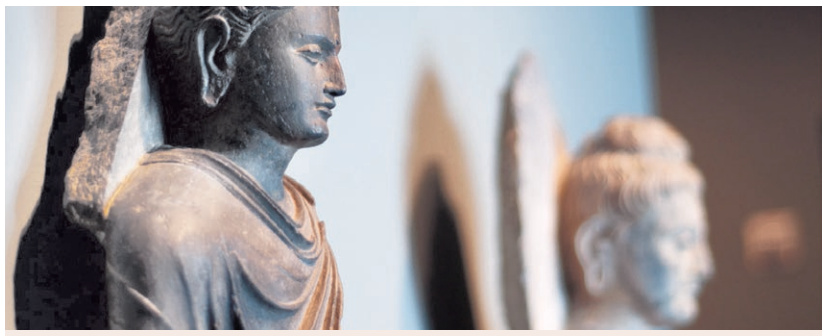
Ageing in East and West
It is projected that by 2050 there will be nearly two billion people aged 60 and over, three-quarters of whom will be living in the developing world. Ageing in Asia is attributable to the marked decline in fertility shown over the last 40 years and the steady increase in life-expectancy. 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. This research programme, in short, sheds light on how both Asian and European nations are reviewing the social contract with their citizens.

Three researchers from Asia, and specialists on the theme of ageing, have visited IIAS during the last few years, and return visits to Leiden have been planned: Professor Mariko Hirose (Tokai University), an expert on policy shifts for the elderly in Japan and the Netherlands; Professor Roma Chatterji (University of Delhi) who conducted an ethnographic study of an ageing institution in the Netherlands; and Dr. Mala Kapur Shankardass (Delhi University), focussing on the theme of 'violence against elders'. For more information on these researchers and their work, see the IIAS website.

From 2003-2008, a four-year research project entitled *Care for the Aged, Gender, Institutional Provisions and Social Security in India, the Netherlands and Sri Lanka,* was carried out with researchers from the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) in Kerala (India), the Marga Research Institute in Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Leiden University (the Netherlands) in cooperation with the ICSSR New Delhi and funded by IDPAD and NWO. During the course of the project several meetings and conferences were hosted by the CDS in Kerala, which ensured the regular exchange of research findings between the participants. The project encompassed a comparison on the basis of statistical data of the ageing scenarios in India, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands. In Sri Lanka, a survey was carried out on institutional provisions and health security in several Sri Lankan provinces, covering elders from the different religious faiths and income levels and highlighting substantial differences on the island. Furthermore, a five-month fieldwork project looked at two Colombo senior homes and another survey was conducted among Colombo private and public senior homes to gain further insight into the vast variation of facilities, funding and scope. The project led to the book *Institutional Provisions and Care for the Aged,* to which two chapters were added on ageing in the Netherlands, as well as to the publication of several articles. For more information on the people and publication in this project, see the IIAS website.

Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l'Age, la Citoyenneté et l'Intégration Socio-économique (REIACTIS). This network currently has representatives and linkages mainly in North European, Latin American and African countries, but welcomes Asian scholars and researchers to participate. (www.reiactis.org)

Coordinator: Carla Risseeuw (c.risseeuw@iias.nl)
www.iias.nl/profiles/Carla-Risseeuw



ABIA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index
The ABIA project is a confederation of institutes co-operating on an online bibliographic database of publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. The project was initiated in 1997 by the IIAS. Main partners abroad are the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi (India) and the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya (Sri Lanka). Presently the IIAS and PGIAR jointly coordinate the project. In March 2013, Brill Publishers in Leiden took on board the ABIA Netherlands office as an in-house digital project in a 1-year feasibility pilot aimed to anchor the ABIA database work in Leiden in a new, corporate setting. This pilot phase receives co-funding from IIAS and the J. Gonda Foundation.

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

Asian Borderlands Research Network
The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, central/east and Southeast Asia. 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.

The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. The fourth conference, organised together with the Southeast Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong will take place from 8-10 December 2014 in Hong Kong, and is entitled: 'Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships'. (see page 17 for the Call for Papers)

Coordinator: Eric de Maaker (maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)
www.asianborderlands.net

Asian Studies in Africa
Since 2010, IIAS and other partners from Africa, Asia and the USA have been working on an initiative to promote the study of and teaching on Asia at African universities and, equally, to promote African Studies in Asia. The rationale behind this initiative is that the present intensification of interaction between the two continents - of capital investments, commerce, political alliances and cultural transfers of knowledge - urgently calls for systematic scholarly engagements with the past and present of Asian and African realities. The initiative constitutes a first attempt to sustain a humanities-informed South-South knowledge platform with connections between other academic centers in Europe and North America, but also Latin-America and Oceania.

In 2012, a roundtable in Chisamba, Zambia, led to the establishment of the pan-African 'Association of Asian Studies in Africa' (A-ASIA). A-ASIA's development is currently headed by a steering committee of scholars, mainly from Africa and Asia. In June 2013, the committee met in Macau during ICAS 8 (the eighth biennial meeting of the International Convention of Asia Scholars). A-ASIA hosted two roundtables, discussing concrete ways to develop and coordinate Asian Studies in Africa. With the Secretary of A-Asia, Professor W. Kalikiti (also a member of the ICAS International Council), ICAS will continue to serve as a platform for A-ASIA in Asia and beyond.

It is also with the logistical support of ICAS that A-ASIA's inaugural (and first biennial) conference will take place from 15-17 January 2015 in Accra, Ghana, under the title: **Asian Studies in Africa: The Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interactions** (see page 17 for the Call for Papers). This will be the first ever pan-African conference on Asian Studies, bringing together a diversified range of scholars and institutions from the continent and the rest of the world with a shared focus on Asia and Asia-Africa intellectual interactions.

Among the strategic partners of IIAS involved in the development of A-ASIA are the University of Zambia, the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Stellenbosch University, SEPHIS (the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development), African Studies Centre (ASC), Doshisha University, the Social Sciences Research Council, Beijing University and many others.

Website: www.iias.nl/asian-studies-africa. Call for Papers: see page 17.

Energy Programme Asia (EPA) *The Transnationalization of China's Oil Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017)*.
A new phase of the IIAS EPA Programme (2002-present) commenced with this new project involving the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS-CASS), other institutes from the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS), and a number of Dutch research institutes. This project will analyse China's increasing involvement in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. 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 will present individual studies in refereed journals such as *Energy Policy* and *China Information,* and as a book volume.

From 2007–2011 EPA and IWAAS-CASS co-managed their first joint research project on energy security. The results were published in two book volumes: *The globalisation of energy: China and the European Union* and *Secure oil and alternative energy: The geopolitics of energy paths of China and the European Union.*

The IIAS EPA programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy supply security on the European Union and main Asian energy-consuming countries and their national strategies for securing supply.

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

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Programmes, networks and initiatives *continued*

Indian Medical Heritage Research Network
The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network aims to stimulate social-cultural and social-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unanitibb, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as a second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook for collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering universal perspectives, interests and backgrounds.

Coordinator: Maarten Bode (m.bode@uva.nl)
www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
Consisting of over 100 researchers from 14 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest global academic network on Asian cities of its kind. UKNA's objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities, and seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. To this aim, the programme hosts a variety of research projects through the exchange of researchers of the participating institutions, focusing on the three research themes (1) Ideas of the city; (2) Cities by and for the people; and (3) Future of the cities. UKNA is funded by a grant awarded by the Marie Curie Actions 'International Research Staff Exchange Scheme' (IRSES) of the EU and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IIAS is the coordinating institute in the network and administrator of the programme.

Coordinators: Paul Rabé (p.e.rabe@iias.nl)
and Gien San Tan (g.s.tan@iias.nl)
www.ukna.asia

Changing Labour Relations in Asia (CLARA)
The international research programme on Changing Labour Relations in Asia (1998-2003) aimed to build a comparative and historical understanding of labour relations in different parts of Asia. The programme focused on five strongly overlapping themes, namely, the labour process, labour mobility, labour consciousness, gendered labour and labour laws and labour movements. The project was aimed at promoting inter-Asian cooperation and the cooperation between Asian and non-Asian institutions. Its main activities were the coordination of workshops and panels at larger conferences, research projects, networking, publications, and the setting up of a database.

CLARA was a 'joint venture' of the International Institute of Social History (ISSH in Amsterdam) and IIAS. The working papers and other publications resulting from the CLARA project are available on the IISH website.

Coordinators: Ratna Saptari (raths1@vuw.leidenuniv.nl)
and Marcel van der Linden (mvl@iisg.nl)
http://socialhistory.org/projects/clara

Gender Migration and Family in East and Southeast Asia
Developed from an earlier research project on inter-mediated cross-border marriages, this completed, three-year comparative project on intra-regional flows of migration in East and Southeast Asia focused on gender and family. It examined the development of the immigration regimes of newly industrialised countries in the region and also looked at experiences of female migrants within this context. This year's research project focused on Taiwan and South Korea as the receiving countries and Vietnam and PRC as the sending countries.

Coordinator: Melody Chia-Wen LU (IIAS)
www.iias.nl/research/gender-migration-and-family-east-and-southeast-asia

Piracy and Robbery in the Asian Seas
This completed research programme encouraged the study on historical and contemporary piracy in Asia and aimed to attract attention to this topic from not only academics but also the corporate sector and national government organisations and politicians in the Netherlands and in Asia. Acts of piracy loom particularly large in Asian waters, with the bulk of all officially reported incidents of maritime piracy occurring in South East Asia during the 1990s. South East Asian waters are particularly risky, a factor which is of serious concern for international shipping, as the sea lanes between East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe pass through South East Asia. During the course of the programme, IIAS and the Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) of the University of Amsterdam organised a series of workshops with international partners, which resulted in several publications in the IIAS-ISEAS Series on Maritime Issues and Piracy in Asia.

Coordinator: Manon Osseweijer (IIAS),
John Kleinen (MARE, Uva)
http://old.iias.asia/research/piracy-and-robbery-asian-seas

Science and History in Asia
This completed project, which ran from 2009-2011, examined the complex links between science and history in Asian civilisations. Five international workshops were organised in Leiden, Cambridge and Paris to address issues such as how Asians used disciplines such as astronomy, now categorised as sciences, for a better understanding of their own past. How did these disciplines gain cultural legitimacy? And how can the sciences be incorporated into the historical narratives of Asian civilisations?

Sponsored by NWO Humanities, Needham Research Institute, Recherches Epistémologiques et Historiques sur les Sciences Exactes et les Insitutions Scientifiques (REHSEIS), the Scaliger Institute at Leiden University, and IIAS.

Coordinators: Christopher Cullen (Needham Research Institute) and Harm Beukers (Scaliger Institute, Leiden University) www.iias.nl/research/science-and-history-asia

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance

THE IIAS CENTRE for Regulation and Governance was launched in 2009 as the first European research centre devoted to the study of regulation and governance in Asia. Through its distinctive research approach and programmes, the Centre sets to achieve the following aims:

- Engage in interdisciplinary and comparative research on the theories and practices of regulation and governance in Asia;
- Stimulate research collaboration between European and Asian scholars in this area of study;
- Serve as a forum of exchange among government regulators, politicians, entrepreneurs, civic organizations, and academics concerning issues of regulatory policies and public governance in Asia;
- Train talented young scholars from Europe and Asia in comparative research on regulation and governance.

In seeking to become a focal point of innovative and concerted research, the Centre's approach distinguishes it from conventional research centres. The uniqueness is reflected in the following:

- It undertakes inquiries on a well-defined subject area with a sharp focus of contemporary relevance: regulation and governance.
- It combines multidisciplinarity with area studies and emphasizes comparative analysis.
- It pursues inquiries from both top-down, state-centred, and practice-oriented perspective (regulation) and bottom-up, society-centred, and political perspective (governance).
- It emphasizes the need to study Asian markets inductively and to develop non-Eurocentric theories of regulation and governance.

Research programmes
A special feature of the Centre is that its research programmes are organised into interlocking projects closely linked to one another, instead of discrete studies undertaken in isolation by individual researchers. Such an interlocking research chain allows research findings to be exchanged and communicated between projects, keeps research fellows in constant dialogue with one another, facilitates the identification of empirical and theoretical gaps, and enables an effective accumulation and building of knowledge. Currently the research projects fall within the following interlocking areas:

State licensing, market closure, and rent seeking
Asian states intervene extensively in their economies. This creates widespread rent seeking, to the extent that a substantial proportion of economic resources are allocated and distributed in the form of rents through the creation and regulation of monopolies and oligopolies. This programme investigates the regulation of market closure, and the creation, allocation, and pursuit of rents.

Regulation of intra-governmental conflicts
In many large Asian countries, the authority below the top of the political system is disjointed. Far from being a unitary decision-making machinery, the state is characterized by bureaucratic fiefdoms, sectional interests, and local protectionism. The formulation and implementation of regulatory policies are predicated upon bureaucratic bargaining and negotiation along vertical hierarchies. This programme investigates the mechanisms of governing intra-state conflicts, and assesses the efficacy of regulatory policies under rival bureaucratic fiefdoms.

State restructuring and rescaling
An important feature of the modern state system during the past few decades is the rise of the sub-national state. Sub-national territorial units have increasingly become the source of growth, competition, and political contention. The national state is under pressure to re-articulate and re-territorialize in relation to both sub- and supra-national scales. This brings about severe competition between sub-national regions when they all aspire to become an epic centre for growth. The programme seeks to analyze the modalities of state rescaling through comparative studies of representative country cases at various spatial scales.

Regulatory governance under institutional void
This programme studies the role of certain actors in fulfilling regulatory functions in the absence of either public institutions or market mechanisms, i.e., under the situation of institutional void. These actors, either public offices performing market functions or market players undertaking regulatory responsibilities, transcend the conventional boundary between public-private and state-market.
The programme set to understand under what circumstances and under which forms of governance will institutional void be filled by what type of actors.

Partnerships and events
The Centre encourages joint research and cross-country cooperation in its research activities. So far it has collaborated with a number of institutions in its research undertakings.

These institutions include:
– Clingendael Institute (the Hague);
– Centre d'études de l'Asie du Sed/EHESS (Paris);
– Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (Rotterdam);
– NUS Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organizations (Singapore);
– Tsinghua Center for Industrial Development and Environmental Governance (Beijing);
– Rotterdam School of Management (Rotterdam);
– University of Macau (China).

During the past few years, a number of international workshops and symposiums have been organized by the Centre. Participants from different continents have taken part in the events. As stated above, the workshops were organized around interlocking themes that allow for the accumulation of knowledge and the deepening of research dialogues. These workshops include:

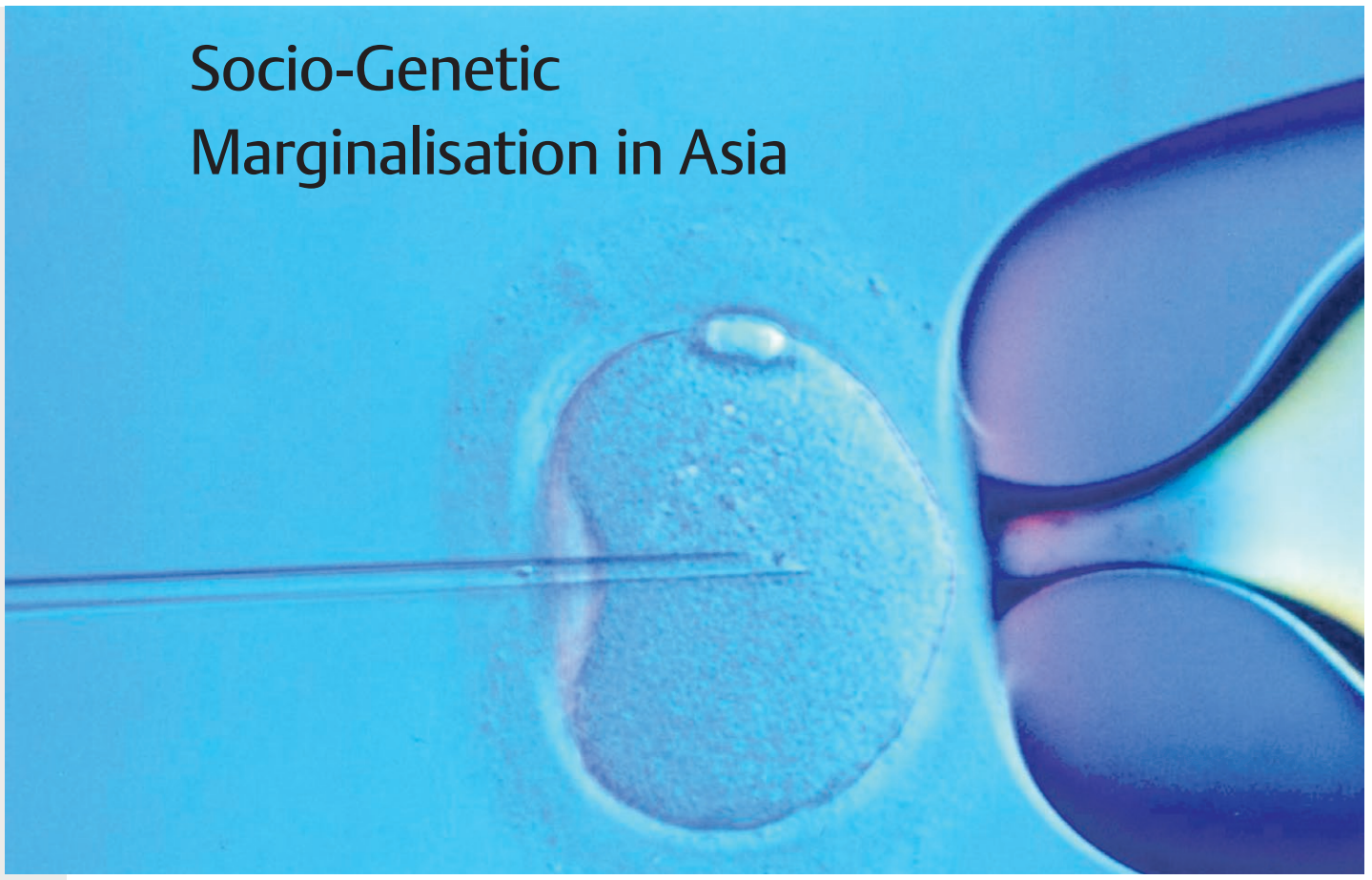
– International Workshop on 'Institutional Voids during State Rescaling', Rotterdam, 6 May 2013.
– International Workshop on 'State Rescaling and Restructuring in Comparative Perspective', Leiden, 3-4 December 2012.
– International Symposium on 'Institutional Voids and the Governance of Developing Economies', Rotterdam, 16 May 2011.
– Young Scholars Workshop on 'Changing Governance in Asia', Leiden, 26-27 November 2009.
– International Symposium on 'Rent Seeking and Industrial Development in China', Beijing, 15-16 May 2009.

In addition to research workshops, the Centre also runs regular seminar series. The first seminar series on 'The State and Economic Development in Asia and Europe' took place in 2011. Another seminar series on 'Subnational and Transnational Actors in a Globalizing World' was organized in 2012. Both series were well attended by government officials, diplomats, business leaders, social activists, and researchers. They served as important forums of exchange between the public and private sectors with regard to issues of regulation and governance.

Edited book series
Finally, the Centre collaborates with NIAS Press (Copenhagen) in disseminating the research findings by editing the book series on 'Governance in Asia'. The book series explores the problem of governance from an Asian perspective, and encourages studies that are sensitive to the autochthony and hybridity of Asian history and development, and which locate the issue of governance within specific meanings of rule and order, structures of political authority, and mobilization of institutional resources distinctive to the Asian context. The series publishes well-researched books that have the cumulative effect of developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Information about the series can be found in the website: www.niaspress.dk

The Centre is headed by Tak-Wing Ngo, IIAS Professor of Asian History at Erasmus University Rotterdam and Professor of Political Science at the University of Macau. Updates about the Centre can be found at: http://crg.iias.asia

Socio-Genetic Marginalisation in Asia



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

Between 2004 and 2009, there was a large scaled research group entitled 'Socio-Genetic Marginalisation in Asia Programme' funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). This team was led by Professor Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner and included three post-doc researchers and Ph.D. students. The team had the three countries India, Japan and China in their scopes. It studied socio-political implications and practices of the development and application of the new biomedical and genetic technologies in Asian religious and secular cultures. It aimed to generate insight into the ways in which the use of, and monopoly over, genetic information shapes and influences population policies, environmental ethics and biomedical and agricultural practices in various cultures.

I was the post-doc researcher looking at Japan, mainly researching into reproductive genetic technologies. How do individuals decide whether or not to use these technologies? What impact do consequences of using such technologies have for an individual's life? How are socio-cultural factors related to these policies, regulations, prices and more? My field research concerned foetus disabilities, and decision-making with regards to termination and genetic testing. I talked with women undergoing infertility treatment, suffering from infertility issues, and those trying to decide whether or not to donate or discard cryo-preserved embryos. Among all, the most important finding is that at all levels, reality does not go as theory teaches us. For example, the principle of self-determination is held high in the field of medicine and bioethics. However, the empirical research, actual conversations between patients and doctors at maternity clinics, taught me that reality does not often allow for patients to practise self-determination. The reality is a lack of time in the diagnosis room, unequal power relations between doctors and patients, as well as an incredible lack of medical knowledge among patients themselves (Kato 2007). Another example is, contrary to a widely held belief that an embryo carries a lighter ethical value of life than those who are already born, or even a foetus, an embryo possesses serious value and meaning for women without children undergoing infertility treatment (Kato and Sleeboom-Faulkner 2011). The value and meaning of an embryo is closely related to cultural concepts of life, which can be understood solely by talking to those directly concerned, and observing their decision-making regarding what to do with cryo-reserved embryos. Moreover, we found out that value and meaning associated to an embryo is not fixed, but alters in the course of the infertility treatment. We concluded that decision-making (whether to discard or donate embryos 'in-surplus') is related to the ethics of motherhood in Japan. But then, why are all these women's perceptions not being heard by society? Another article analyses women's invisible presence in the process of infertility treatment, critically drawing on Marxist feminist theories, which enabled discussions on the production of embryos and ova, reproduction and ownership and gender (Kato and Sleeboom-Faulkner 2013). One of many important conclusions is that infertility problems are not solely an issue of repro-duction, but are deeply rooted in problematic gender relations in society.

The team published extensively in international peer-reviewed academic journals. At present, Professor Sleeboom-Faulkner is publishing the book, *Global morality and life science practices in Asia: Assemblages of Life,* on the final comparisons of findings from this research programme, cross-referencing the cases of China, Japan and India (forthcoming in 2014, Palgrave MacMillan). Having had the privilege to think of genetics and society, genetics and human life before birth, during life and after death, I am now developing the direction of my further research. My interests concern the ways in which nationalism resides in the body, how the genealogy of a population group is practiced in the field of medicine, and international movements concerning bodily parts (e.g., reproductive medical tourism in Asia).

Kato, M. 2007. 'Silence between patients and doctors: the issue of self-determination and amniocentesis in Japan', *Genomics, Society and Policy.* 3(3): 28-41.

Kato, M. and M. Sleeboom-Faulkner. 2011. 'Meanings of the embryo in Japan: Narratives of IVF experience and embryo ownership', *Sociology of Health & Illness*. 33(3): 434-447.

Kato, M. and M. Sleeboom-Faulkner. 2013. 'Ova collection in Japan - Making visible women's experience in male spaces', *Gender, Place and Culture*. 20(6): 737-753.

Masae Kato was an IIAS research fellow from 2005-2009, during which time she conducted a comparative study on socio-genetic marginalization: Japan in 'Asia' in relation to the 'West' as a reference group. She is the author of: *Women's Rights?: The Politics of Eugenic Abortion in Modern Japan.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (2009). Currently Masae is involved with the research project 'Dutch-ness in genes and genealogy: following genetic diversity around science and society'. This project is based at the University of Amsterdam (m.kato@iias.nl)

Notes
1 This opening paragraph is taken from Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner's introduction to The Focus section in The Newsletter issue #52 (Winter 2009), entitled "Genomics in Asia"

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Programmes, networks and initiatives *continued*

Illegal but licit: transnational flows and permissive polities in Asia

TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS are regularly studied in the social sciences 'from above', focusing on the power of states to regulate, facilitate or hinder the movement of people across borders. The research project 'Illegal but Licit', while sharing with other studies an emphasis on the changing role of states in shaping transnational flows, ventured into the exploration of these flows by prioritizing two important points of departure. First, the project treated the state, however important, as just one source of authority among many, to which mobile subjects potentially heed. Second, the project championed ethnographic methods for getting at a better understanding of the aggregated 'big picture' of state authorities and transnational flows.

Conducted over the course of five years, from 2006 to 2011, the project included four case studies of transnational movement in various societies across the vast continent of Asia. Two of the case studies examined a long distance migration: female domestic workers from Kerala to the Gulf States, and male construction workers from rural China to Israel; while two other case studies focused on movement in borderlands: between Bangladesh and Northeast India, and between Afghanistan-Northwest Pakistan. The insights that the 'Illegal but Licit' project generated have benefited, in addition, from close collaboration with many other scholars working in Asia on transnational movement.

The project resulted in a number of journal articles, an edited volume and a doctoral dissertation.[1] It also led to a policy dialogue, held in Katmandu, between academics, civil-society activists and policy makers from different countries in Asia. In what follows, I thematize and highlight some of the project's main empirical findings and analytical perceptivities.

Thinking mobile, thinking multiple

Political order is commonly associated with the regulatory authority of states. This is not surprising in view of the fact that states do their utmost to project an image of exercising full authority within national territories. According to the formal model, states enjoy a monopoly over the use of violence, the right to tax the population and the power to sanction offenders. Staying close to such a formal understanding, it is easy to conceptualise state authority in a binary fashion: either there is state law and order, or there is a lack of authority and thus anarchy.

Our empirical evidence shows that the sway of formal state authority is never complete and, crucially, that we should not understand this as a 'lack' of authority or as being detrimental to the establishment of order. Our findings point to the necessary ubiquity of *multiple* authorities that complement (or compete with) the regulatory authority of states. For example, time-honoured ways of doing things can be more powerful in shaping people's practices than new regulations drafted in a government ministry. Religious, ethnic or commercial elites can exercise as much, or more, regulatory power than state officials. State authority is thus often pitted against a more socially accepted authority among regional or traditional communities.

The real-life states that we have studied bear little resemblance to the 'model state' used in much social theory. Looking at states from the perspective of people involved in (illegal) transnational flows, our findings show that many mobile people do not experience the state as a stable centre of authority. Authoritarian, controlling states (such as China) are not capable of regulating behaviour and eliminating illegal practices any more than permissive, disorganised ones (such as Bangladesh). Our studies have demonstrated that these states suffer from a persistent 'implementation deficiency' – an inability to put their policies into practice. On the one hand, policies are often overambitious and the state lacks the manpower and legitimacy to push them through. On the other hand, officials may actively obstruct policies handed down from higher levels within the state. There are many reasons why they may do so: they may disagree with the policies (a lack of 'political will' within the state), they may feel the policies run counter to their personal interests or career prospects, or they may be out to divert state resources to their own coffers. Our studies show that despite elaborate performances of sovereignty, states are not able to imprint a unified normative project onto every subject, including those manning the state itself.

Fashioning licitness

Millions of mobile people live their lives in the dim interface between legality and illegality. Rather than seeing this as a failure of the state system to assert itself, we advance that the 'failure' is systemic because it is part of ongoing practical negotiations to establish social order. State categories and rules are never straightforward, let alone set in stone. States make many rules only to break (or forget) these, either routinely or in specific circumstances. Examples from states as unique as Israel, Pakistan and India show that we must conceptualise states as entities habitually straddling the legal-illegal divide – a divide of their own making.

Our case studies highlight how transnational flows generate zones of licitness that are located between the realms of state authority (*legal vs. illegal* behaviour) and social regulation (*licit vs. illicit* behaviour). Their creation – not as exceptions or surreptitious hideaways, but as everyday spaces – is predicated on political negotiations for which the state is one partner among others, resulting in state agents being routinely and profitably embedded in wide-ranging networks of informal transnational brokerage. States are often important partners in these networks and active players in the ensuing politics of licitness.

Political organisations such as states and interstate associations need categories and rules. They cannot govern without abstracting the representations of lived realities to create these categories. As our findings show, however, state categories often fail to capture the very phenomena they manifestly aim to order. For example, in both Israel and the Gulf States the category of 'guest workers,' which is supposed to describe a secure relationship of employment under standardised working and living conditions during an agreed period, turns out to be something else entirely. In practice it describes a relationship in which employers enslave workers and which does not provide even basic legal protection against employer violations of signed contracts. For these migrants, paradoxically, legality turns into a liability. Indian domestic workers in Dubai, and Chinese construction workers in Tel Aviv, who deliberately opt to become 'runaway' workers or undocumented labourers, find themselves in a surprising position. They are better off than their 'legal' counterparts who are tied to binding contracts, excessive exploitation and extreme social isolation. Under these circumstances, absconding or fleeing a legal contract becomes a means of 'countering subjugation' rather than 'subjugation itself'.

Permissive borders

Geographic proximity and trade links generate further trans-national regimes of licitness. For example, in the border between India and Bangladesh, customary pathways and historic trade routes may persist in spite of more recently erected state borders. The habitual practices of inhabitants in borderlands lead them to perceive the crossing of state borders, on a daily basis and without formal permits, as unproblematic. State officials, on the other hand, may well consider such practices to be a dangerous subversion of state sovereignty, economic insubordination, or a potential security threat. But formal roles and stereotypical images may be negotiable, for example when state actors become deeply involved in facilitating unauthorised cross-border trade, or when they legalise 'smuggling'.

[...] customary pathways and historic trade routes may persist in spite of more recently erected state borders.

Above: Thai/Lao Border, Chong Mek Courtesy Rich Hintz on flickr. Below: Military checkpoint on the China-Tibet border Courtesy Desmond Kavanagh on flickr. Both images reproduced under a creative commons license.

Our studies advance that borderlands accommodate a vast range of informal flows; for example, in the Bangladesh-India borderland, the gendered nature of the local regime of permissiveness is pronounced. Here women traders and commuters easily navigate the high-security borderland amidst the construction of a new fence and increased patrolling, while men have to purchase a passage. State agents do not consider women traders, and the small quantities of goods that they carry, as a risk to either state. The presence of these women as permissible foreigners, illustrates how certain categories of mobile people may partially escape territorial and exclusionist discourses.

Finally, to people engaged in transnational flows in border-lands and beyond, authority does not radiate outwards from centres of power: strong at the centre and weakening towards the periphery. The findings of our contributors do not support that view. It shows that to mobile people, authority is embedded in persons and objects and therefore is movable. Authority is not restricted to a particular territory and may materialise in unexpected places. For example, there is no necessary link between being territorially peripheral or geographically isolated and being free from state regulation (or, put differently, being excluded from the state). To people who are mobile, regulatory authority appears as a fluid property that can move about, expand and retract.

Barak Kalir is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, and co-director of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies. He was a post-doc researcher and the coordinator of the project "Illegal but licit: transnational flows and permissive polities in Asia"; Willem van Schendel was the director of the program, together with Prof Li Minghuan from Xiamen University, China. Malini Sur was a PhD candidate, and Bindhulakhmi Pattadath and Srafraz Khan were post-doc researchers, at the time of the project (B.Kalir@uva.nl)

Notes

1 Kalir, B & M. Sur. 2012. *Transnational Flows and Permissive Polities: Ethnographies of Human Mobilities in Asia,* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Jatropha: from an iconic biofuel crop to a green-policy parasite

IN LESS THAN A DECADE, a very promising renewable energy source went from being a top policy priority to experiencing 'an extraordinary collapse'. How could that happen, and what can policy makers learn from this short history?

Prior to 2007, *Jatropha curcas Linn.* was promoted as a miracle crop capable of producing biofuel from marginal and degraded lands. Growing jatropha represented a response to both the alarmingly high price of oil and the emerging demand for biofuels that would not harm food security. Jatropha became an icon for a hopeful technocratic narrative seeking to simultaneously address global concerns about climate change, fossil fuel depletion and rural poverty. In 2008, a worldwide survey found 242 jatropha plantations on approximately 900,000 hectares and projected Indonesia as the largest producer in 2015 with 5.2 million hectares. However, many researchers who analyzed such agronomic claims about the crop or the social and environmental impacts in production areas argued that the story was too good to be true. After 2011, 'an extraordinary collapse' was reported from China, India, East Africa and Mozambique. When the results from actual cultivation of the crop failed to fulfill these optimistic expectations, it was assumed that improvement in policies and regulations governing biofuel production would be the best means to improve performance.

Our analysis of the rise and fall of jatropha in Indonesia warns against adopting overly optimistic narratives concerning new technologies as bases for policy making, public budget allocations and investment. An investigation of jatropha's introduction and commoditization as a biofuel crop in Indonesia reveals that despite the enactment of national jatropha biofuel production policies, and intense promotion through awareness creation and the extension of subsidies, jatropha cultivation was only concentrated in short-term 'projects' designed to correspond with government and donor agencies' funding periods. Fieldwork also indicates that researchers, government officials, NGOs and broker companies, rather than farmers or plantation companies, have been the main actors in such projects.

Previous research on agrarian change, state-society relations and local politics in Indonesia, portrays societal change and policy implementation as a product of inter-actions between influential actors who gain mutual benefits within their networks. Such an approach challenges the assumption that policies are implemented in accordance with their normative content and instead acknowledges that the interests of a network of powerful policy entrepreneurs influence the policy process. Our research also describes how the multi-level governance processes that link global energy and climate change discourses to grounded activities in production areas are diverted from their objectives by such policy entrepreneurs at the intermediate levels at which global and local actors interact.

Jatropha in Indonesia

Jatropha development for modern biofuel production in Indonesia started in 1994. At this time, researchers at Bandung Institute of Technology in Bandung attempted to turn the wild plant - commonly used at least since 1907 for making torches and medicine - into a commodity for industrial processing and commercial production. In collaboration with process technicians from the Netherlands (Groningen), the researchers extracted jatropha oil and used it in stationary engines. Their initial success stimulated implementation by their alumni network in domestic energy companies, which began exploring the possibility of cultivating jatropha as an alternative energy source. However, the pioneer companies' experiments in the late 1990s found that jatropha production for plant oil or biodiesel was not commercially viable due to prevailing consumer price subsidies on fossil fuels, a lack of good planting material and the absence of processing facilities or an effective biofuel supply chain.

Government actors became involved in 2003, attracted by positive global biofuel discourse and anticipating blending regulation and production subsidies. A key figure was the director of a historically prominent state-owned agricultural enterprise that had dominated the production of commercial crops such as sugar, tobacco and teak wood. Initially using jatropha oil to reduce the cost of sugar production, this director later published books on the crop's potential, which placed his enterprise at the center of the national jatropha project. Eventually, he became influential in the creation of national energy policy that appointed jatropha as a major source of biodiesel and included mandatory biofuel blending targets.

Our analysis [...] warns against adopting overly optimistic narratives concerning new technologies as bases for policy making, public budget allocations and investment.

Green capital's 'hype'

Word of jatropha's potential spread globally by 2004, encouraged by plant science researchers extrapolating from various trial test results to predict yields. In turn, process technology researchers used these extrapolations to create a narrative that made jatropha appear to be an attractive and environmentally friendly bioenergy crop for agro-ecological zones where oil palm production would not be possible or profitable. The jatropha 'hype' was financialized when the refinery manufacturer D1 Oils raised £11.5 million from their initial public offering on the London Stock Exchange in October 2004, reaching a market capitalization of £72 million in September 2005. The company claimed to have access to millions of hectares of land for potential jatropha cultivation in Africa and Asia. However, the remote locations of these marginal lands made the company's claims difficult to verify.

The extremely positive response of the market to these optimistic scenarios earned jatropha the nickname of 'green gold'. In Indonesia, encouraged by government officials, the promotion of jatropha reached farmers across the vast archipelago. Subsequently, some farmers immediately began cultivating it, using seeds of wild jatropha from their gardens or those distributed during the Ministry of Agriculture's 2005-2006 national jatropha program. Nevertheless, while the national government provided budget support for its cultivation, research and credit subsidies, there was no 'project' for creating a well-functioning marketing channel. When farmers could not sell the harvested jatropha fruit, cultivation eventually halted. Despite this disappointing experience, optimism about jatropha remained so strong that many farmers kept the crop 'hibernating' in their fields in the hope that someday the demand for jatropha would rise.

Hope, opportunity and rent-seeking

D1 Oils' dramatic collapse in the stock market after mid 2007 did not reduce the interest in investing in jatropha projects in Indonesia. However, the definition of 'projects' here is crucial: it is a translation of the Indonesian concept of proyek, a delineated set of activities during a fixed and limited period of time for which there is a budget, usually provided by the government. *Proyek* is commonly associated with opportunities to benefit from mark-ups or with plain corruption. In the case of jatropha, the last opportunity for using large state subsidies was in 2007, when an Indonesian national agribusiness conglomerate owned by the Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs established a company to manage the largest-ever domestic jatropha investment in Indonesia (around US $ 11 million). This company established jatropha nurseries in 15 districts in South Sulawesi and recruited 8000 'out-growers' on 17,040 hectares. Nevertheless, although run with large capital input by a major company, the project never went beyond the nursery stage. A patronage network of politicians, government officials and businessmen had recruited farmers by collecting copies of their land titles or identity cards to make the company's access to land and labor appear secure. In return for acting as gatekeepers to land and labor, specific 'local elites' obtained jobs or money. Most of the investment was spent on company personnel costs, buying properties and a package credit program for farmers, which failed because farmers were reluctant to repay. The company was officially closed down in 2011 after being idle since 2009. The network effectively absorbed the subsidized investment money without leaving a trace in the fields.

However, this closure was not the end of the story. In 2009, claims that the press-cake residue of jatropha oil extraction could be made into high-value cattle feed revived the optimistic narrative. Jatropha would thus be food and fuel, while the remaining waste could be used as organic fertilizer. Broker companies began to use the updated narrative, depicting business schemes in which they would act as a 'managing company' linking green investment to land and labor. A new pattern emerged, involving local project developers offering (foreign) investors their services to provide access to production areas in return for a lavish salary for a year or two. The risks of speculative investment were passed on to green funds and retail investors, who tend to concentrate on future markets and not on actual production. Typically, within a year or two, the jatropha project would be declared a failure – blaming local conditions and population – and the project developer would disappear, leaving shareholders with worthless shares and increasing farmers' and local governments' cynicism regarding agribusiness investors. In less than a decade, jatropha was transformed from a promising and commercially viable biofuel crop into a green-policy parasite, living on subsidies and green investments.

Policy arenas for future innovations

Policy-making for innovative biofuels in a country like Indonesia must improve in at least four arenas. First, research for new technologies would benefit from an ex-ante critical review of societal arguments, in order to curtail excessive optimism. Second, elite national policy makers should begin with 'due diligence' to deter subsidy harvesters. Third, international actors should simplify biofuels sustain-ability criteria to increase compliance. Fourth, the capacity of local government apparatus in 'marginal land' needs to be strengthened. The final point is to warn against the destructive effect of international 'high risk – high profit' (or loss) capital on local agricultural development. National regulations should prohibit such speculative investments.

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Programmes and initiatives – moving forward

Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

A three-year IIAS pilot programme (2014-2016) supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES recently received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, New York, for a three-year pilot programme aimed at strengthening and redirecting Asian Studies as part of the foundation's efforts to reframe area studies in Western universities. The programme is built on a practice of a close interaction between Asian, European and American partners. It aims to foster new humanities-focused research and educational opportunities in the field of Asian Studies on the basis of a trans-regional inter-disciplinary platform. In the process, the programme seeks to shape academic communities around new themes of research, emphasising the inclusion of young and aspiring scholars from the three world-regions, and beyond.

Both the research orientations and the architecture of the programme are meant to enable participants to think in terms of decentring knowledge about Asia, exploring alternative narratives of Asian history, questioning conventional spatial configurations of 'Asia' through the study of cities, exploring the complexity of the local-global nexus, or suggesting alternative approaches from those developed in Western – or Asian – academia. Much of it is being done with the intention of transcending the frame of the nation-state and its avatars, while bridging the often artificial divide that regularly exists between 'noble' and 'vernacular' knowledge.

The programme is incorporated in the overall research strategy of the IIAS, which focuses on three thematic clusters, namely Asian Cities, Asian Heritages and Global Asia. The pilot initiative will include a range of scholarly activities in five topical areas, or 'forums', that cut across regions and disciplines. In the third year, a Roundtable will be organised, in collaboration with Columbia University, to evaluate the programme's outcomes and discuss a continuation of the initiative.

The five forums are:

Forum 1: 'History and Asian Intellectual Traditions: Modal Epistemology and Theory for AmEurAsia' (META)
The META Forum is based on the understanding that the humanist theories of knowledge often depend on culturally bound European concepts, which may be less universally applicable than generally assumed. The Forum's objective is therefore to uncover the varied ways in which Western and non-Western understandings of humanist concepts diverge or converge and how they construe different epistemological modes. In the context of this Forum, two workshops will be organised that address theoretical, but closely related foci, namely the notions of 'text' and 'source'. In these workshops, non-Western knowledge systems will be represented by scholars of Asian Studies who are specialised, for instance, in Chinese art and literature, classical Indian epistemology, Persian poetry, or Tibetan philosophy and historiography.

Forum 2: 'Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage in Asian Contexts'
This Forum addresses the modalities of cultural heritage production, its management and its reformulation in Asia. It explores the plurality of the notion of 'heritage' and its local variants, some of which depart significantly from European models because of powerful local religious, philosophical, conceptual, and political traditions. Three key questions take prominence: what kind of heritage is preserved, for whom, and through what process? The Forum will focus on vernacular knowledges as they are practiced in mainland Southeast Asia. It will include a Summer School in Chiang Mai, Thailand, at the university of the same name, and a workshop in 2015.

Forum 3: 'Asian Spatialities'
This Forum aims at overcoming the spatial limitations of nations and empires, past and present. It addresses the flows, interactions and community agencies across seas and landmasses of Central, South and Southeast Asia. This Forum is subdivided into three sub-themes, namely:

'The Indian Ocean World – Belonging across the Bay of Bengal'
A sub-project which will focus on contested notions of belonging across the Bay of Bengal. It includes two workshops, 'Belonging across the Bay of Bengal: Migrations, Networks, Circulations', and 'The Bay of Bengal and Area Studies: Space, Scale and Location.' Both workshops will reflect critically on recent efforts to foreground ocean-centred historical geographies of the South and Southeast Asian littoral zones.

'Central Eurasia – New Rulers, New Histories, New Identities'
This sub-project concentrates on the massive landmass of Central and Inner Asia. It includes two workshops. The first is planned to immediately precede the international conference on 'Changing Patterns of Power in Historical and Modern Central and Inner Asia (Ulaanbaatar, 7-9 August 2014, co-organised by IIAS – see opposite page) by addressing 'National and Historical Contexts of Independent Knowledge Production'. The second workshop, 'External Religious and Ideological Influences', planned for the summer of 2015, will discuss the influence of transnational religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam) and ideologies (capitalism, democracy, socialism) on identity formation, national developments and international relations.

'Across Southeast Asian Borderlands'
The third sub-project of the Asian Spatialities Forum builds upon the dynamics initiated by the Asian Borderlands Research Network established by IIAS in 2008. Two workshops in this sub-project will study Southeast Asia on the basis of networks, processes, transitions, polyvalence, and fluidity, in opposition to the concepts of the 'nation-state' or the 'region'. The first workshop, 'Communities in Between: Redefining Social Spaces in Southeast Asian Borderlands', will revisit state-society relations through the perspective of the borderlands as they can be seen as products of a social and political negotiation of space. The second workshop, 'Beyond the State's Reach: Casino Spaces as Enclaves of Development or Lawlessness?' seeks to better understand the 'transitional zones' that have emerged in the wake of the encounter between local communities, new migratory circulations and the global economy.

Forum 4: 'The Idea of the City in Asian Contexts'
This Forum is based on the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA), an IIAS-led and EU co-funded programme of scholars working on Asian cities. Cities constitute distinct domains worth examining in both local and global contexts. They often share more characteristics with one another than with their own hinterland, and, being at the forefront of economic growth, Asian cities are being re-imagined everyday by their residents, commuters, immigrants, civil society groups, planners, politicians, business groups, and visitors. The project will involve three activities, corresponding to the thematic research areas of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA). Two small workshops will be held in 2014, on 'subaltern urbanism' and on the 'public versus private city'. In 2015, a larger Roundtable called 'The Idea of the City' will explore the local/global city.

Forum 5: 'Views of Asia from Africa'
Major changes are underway in the interaction between Asia and Africa, where a massive economic, political and demographic Chinese presence is rapidly transforming the terms of this interregional relationship. This Forum will be prepared together with the Association of Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA) established in 2012 in Lusaka, Zambia. The A-ASIA's maiden conference is planned for February-March, 2015, in Accra, Ghana, and this event will offer the present project the opportunity to situate the Asia-Africa academic axis within the larger realm of the study of Asia, including the role of academic institutions in the North/West, by organising two thematic roundtables. The first meeting, 'De-centring the Discourse on Asian Studies' will discuss the movement of the study of Asia from a Western-centred model to an Africa/global initiative; the second event, 'Creating a Sustainable Model of Asian Studies in Africa,' will discuss existing capacities and perceived gaps and needs to shape a sustainable Asian studies intellectual community on the African continent.

A Roundtable will be organised in the second half of the grant period to discuss the IIAS Mellon initiative in its entirety and consider suggestions for a new humanities-informed framework with which to approach 'Asian Studies'. Inspired by an event organised in November 2011 by IIAS entitled 'Shifting Patterns in Global Interactions and Identities', which investigated new topographies of power in North-South and South-South geopolitics and what these mean for the academic study of Asia, the roundtable will bring together researchers engaged in the five Forums as well as external experts from Asia, Europe, North-America and beyond.

Call for papers

Asian Studies in Africa: the Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interaction

A-ASIA INAUGURAL CONFERENCE,
ACCRA, 15-17 JAN 2015
Call for papers deadline: 1 March 2014
Submission forms: www.iias.nl/aasia-cfp
Contact: Martina van den Haak
(M.C.van.den.Haak@iias.nl)

ASIAN STUDIES IN AFRICA will be the first ever conference held in Africa to bring together a multidisciplinary ensemble of scholars and institutions from the continent and the rest of the world with a shared focus on Asia and Asia-Africa intellectual interactions.

The conference
The 2015 conference is organised by the Association for Asian Studies in Africa (A-Asia) in cooperation with the International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS). The conference, through panels and roundtables, will seek to assess the prospects for Asian Studies in Africa in a global context by addressing a number of theoretical and empirical questions that such an enterprise will raise: How should Asian studies be framed in Africa? Is Asian studies relevant for Africa? What is the current state of capacity (institutional, intellectual, personnel, and so on) for Asian studies in Africa and can this be improved and how? How does (and must it?) Asian studies dovetail into the broader field of 'Area studies', as it has been developed mainly in Western institutions? Are new narratives required for understanding the very visible contemporary presence of Asia in Africa and Africa in Asia?

The call for papers
We invite proposals for (institutional) panels, roundtables, papers and book presentations in the fields of Asian-African interactions studies. Proposals should be in English and be submitted online before 1 March 2014.

The submission forms can be found at: www.iias.nl/aasia-cfp
All (institutional) panel, roundtable, and paper proposals should clearly outline the methodological approach(es) taken and whether they contribute to the theoretical and/or empirical objectives of the conference. Those whose proposals have been accepted will be notified by 15 April 2014. The working languages of the conference will be English, French and Portuguese, but all power point presentations must be in English.

Co-sponsors
Chiang Ching Kuo Foundation (CCKF), Taipei
Africa Studies Centre (ASC), Leiden
International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden
Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC), New York
Doshisha University, Kyoto
Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Programme (SEASREP), Manila
South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS), Rio de Janeiro

Changing patterns of power in historical and modern central and inner Asia

ULAANBAATAR, 7-9 AUG 2014 Call for papers deadline - 9 Jan 2014
For information about participation and how to submit your paper, see www.iias.nl/event/power-central-inner-asia
Contact: Martina van den Haak (M.C.van.den.Haak@iias.nl)

FROM 7-9 AUGUST 2014, the International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies (Ulaanbaatar), with the active support of IIAS, is organising a three-day conference that aims to highlight the current state of research on the history of Central and Inner Asia since the twelfth century until the present day. Taking into account recent developments in historiography questioning any form of epistemological 'centrism' (particularly when centred on the Occident), the conference will contribute to the debate on the role and position of Central and Inner Asia during much of the second millennium.

The conference
In order to achieve the objective of questioning and discussing present knowledge and understanding, the conference wants to discuss socio-historical systems and long-term historical legacies. Understanding various patterns of power in a historical context, including their meanings, concepts and semantics, their competition, appropriation and exchange, as well as institutions and schemes of redistribution, is vital in this respect. The organisers want to address the question of how patterns of power are reflected in the process of social adaptation, how this process allows former elites to retain their privileged access to resources, materials and ideological assets, and how it enables new elite groups to emerge.

The conference stresses the transregional character of communication and exchange of the socio-political concepts and cultures between Central and Inner Asia and other world regions, because patterns of power exercised by the Central and Inner Asian ruling elites have been neither simply imposed by external players, nor generated by the society in isolation.

The conference aims at bringing together representatives of different disciplines researching various periods of historical and modern Central and Inner Asia, including scholars studying contemporary history of the region. The geographical scope of the conference is, understandably, large. We construe Central and Inner Asia as the huge expanse of land from the Urals in the west to beyond Mongolia and deep into modern China in the east. Papers referring to adjoining regions, which shared many of the vicissitudes of Central and Inner Asian history (the Caucasus, Iran, Afghanistan), will also be considered, if they bear relevance to the understanding of Central and Inner Asia.

The organising committee of the Conference includes:
Prof. Jigjidijn Boldbaatar (Ulaanbaatar); Prof. Choi Key Ho (Ulaanbaatar); Dr Robert Cutler (Ottawa/Montreal); Ms Martina van den Haak (Leiden); Prof. Yuki Konagaya (Osaka); Dr Irina Morozova (Berlin); Dr Elena Paskaleva (Leiden); Prof. Morris Rossabi (New York); Ms Ainura Turgangazieva (Bishkek); Dr Tolganai Umbetalieva (Almaty); Dr Willem Vogelsang (Leiden).

The languages of communication are English, Mongolian and Russian (interpreters will be available). The conference will include keynote lectures, forum discussions and parallel sessions with presentations of individual papers (in English, Russian or Mongolian).

Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships

4TH CONFERENCE OF THE ASIAN BORDERLANDS NETWORK, HONG KONG, 8-10 DEC 2014
Call for papers deadline: 1 February 2014
Website: www.asianborderlands.net
Contact: info@asianborderlands.net

ALL OVER ASIA, international borders condition encounters between diverse ethnic, linguistic, economic, religious, and political groups. Recently, many formerly disregarded borders have been 'activated'. Some have become more permeable for people, goods and ideas. By contrast, elsewhere in Asia borders have actively hardened. Such border dynamics (which have a history of centuries) shape cross-border linkages and are shaped by them.

For the 4th Asian Borderlands Research Conference in Hong Kong, we invite submissions that address continuities and transformations along routes and borders in Asia, broadly related to the theme 'Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships'. See the website for further explanation of the theme.

The conference
Since one of the main goals of this conference is to spur collaboration and conversation across diverse fields in the hope of building a more nuanced picture of the intersections and relationships across Asian borderlands, submissions are invited from scholars, writers, policy studies researchers, artists, filmmakers, activists, the media, and others from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. We invite conceptually innovative papers, based on new research, in order to develop new perspectives in the study of Asian Borderlands.

Only a small number of individual papers will be selected. We therefore encourage you to submit a full panel proposal. We will consider proposals for panels and roundtables that have a thematic focus, are of a comparative character, and involve scholars or practitioners affiliated with different institutions.

Organisation
International Institute for Asian Studies, the Netherlands (www.iias.nl)
Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong (www.cityu.edu.hk/searc)
Asian Borderlands Research Network (www.asianborderlands.net)

ONLINE EVENTS CALENDAR

Submit your event to the IIAS Global Agenda

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 and upload your information.

Global Agenda: www.iias.nl/events
Jobs: www.iias.nl/jobs
Grants: www.iias.nl/grants

UKNA Call for Research Contributions

Deadline for abstracts is 15 January 2014.
Deadline for draft papers of selected abstracts is 1 April 2014. Abstracts and questions should be addressed to Ms. Gien San Tan at g.s.tan@iias.nl
Website: www.ukna.asia/call-research-contributions-1

RESEARCHERS are invited to contribute articles and books on the three UKNA themes. The best articles will be selected for publication in special issues of journals and/or in edited volumes. Books will be considered for publication in the new 'Asian Cities' series of the International Institute for Asian Studies, under the auspices of Amsterdam University Press (see page 40). Outputs may also include documentary films, policy papers, blogs, and other projects.

About UKNA
The Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) is an inclusive network that brings together concerned scholars and practitioners engaged in collaborative research on cities in Asia. The overall objective of UKNA is to produce innovative scholarship and other work that contributes to human flourishing in Asian cities. It seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the center of urban governance and development strategies.

UKNA research activities revolve around three substantive themes
– The 'Ideas of the City' research theme explores competing ideas of the contemporary city from historical perspectives to illuminate the continuities and ruptures in the process of city making.
– The 'Cities by and for the People' theme examines the actors and how they interact in the production, shaping, contestation and transformation of the city. It explores the relations between human flourishing and the making of urban space and form, with a particular concern for the rights of residents and users in the process.
– The 'Future of Cities' theme considers the challenges of urban dwellers and users in the areas of land, housing, infrastructure, services, planning and the environment, personal well being (including livelihoods and human capital), and 'life spaces' (comprising culture, urban heritage, public spaces, and associational life).

Application criteria
Those interested in contributing should submit an English-language abstract of approximately 300 words describing their proposed output, plus a brief curriculum vita.

The Newsletter | No.66 | Winter 2013

IIAS Report

The ‘Framing Asian Studies’ conference, and its framing

Albert Tzeng

HOW IS OUR KNOWLEDGE about Asia framed by the geopolitical contexts in which it is found - and how is it produced and disseminated? Which roles do the various knowledge institutions (e.g., foundations, associations, institutes, publishers and archives) play in promoting and directing Asian Studies? And what sorts of power relations can be identified, and critically reflected upon? IIAS, in partnership with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, organized the conference, *Framing Asian Studies: Geopolitics, Institutions and Networks,* to address these questions (18-20 November 2013).

The first day of the conference explored the contested discourse on Asia from the perspective of West and East, and various alternative geographical framings in studying the region. The second day started with reflections on the colonial framing of knowledge on Asia, and then focused on case studies involving various institutions. The last day assembled papers that trace how a particular Asian region (e.g., India, China, Japan, Korea or the Southeast) has been understood by scholarship carried out in another area, in light of the changing bilateral connections.

Conceiving the conference theme

As the recipient of the 2013/2014 IIAS-ISEAS Fellowship, I was given the opportunity to assist in organizing a conference. I proposed a theme derived from my dissertation, *Framing Sociology in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore: Geopolitics, States and Practitioners* (monograph forthcoming, Ashgate). The dissertation basically traces how sociology as a Western discipline was introduced, institutionalized and developed in the three Asian postcolonial societies listed in the title. It seeks to theorize about the observed patterns and to relate them to regional geopolitical factors (e.g., the Chinese Civil War, Cold War and decolonization) and the distinctive contexts of the three countries. Anchored within the broad tradition of ‘sociology of knowledge’, the study started with a review of numerous approaches to theorizing about the social sciences in Asia – Orientalism, Eurocentrism, Postcolonialism, Captive Mind, intellectual imperialism academic dependency theory and some others. These approaches, however, were found to be limited by their built-in dualistic image of East-West dichotomy and the inability to deal with the more sophisticated patterns of multi-site knowledge flow.

To theoretically better accommodate this inquiry, I borrowed the ideas of world system (Wallerstein), network society (Castell), knowledge network (Altbach), and cultural capital (Bourdieu) to propose a *world system of knowledge network* as an overarching conceptual frame for narrating the historical expansion of knowledge enterprise from the medieval European universities to a vast global network of knowledge production and dissemination. The conference, like my dissertation, would thus inquire about the social framing of Asian Studies at large, thereby situating the production and dissemination of knowledge about Asia within a ‘world system of know-ledge network’. I paid special attention to the regional and geopolitical aspects, to a wide array of institutions that include both the state-centric and the transnational, and at the practitioner level, I focussed more on the actors’ networks rather than on the individuals.

Patterns of submissions

The call for paper attracted 140 abstract submissions. Noticeably, the most abstracts were received from Asia, more specifically: India (26), Indonesia (9), and Japan (9). In Europe, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom dominated, each with 9 submissions. The geographical pattern reflects multiple factors that include the size of each country, maturity of academic activities, research agendas and the span of the IIAS-ISEAS scholarly network. But it might not be a coincidence that the three Asian countries with the greatest presence were all at one time linked to the Dutch colonial Empire, and the two European countries with the most submissions happened to be the two major colonial powers that shaped the historical landscape of modern Asia.

Thematically the submissions covered a wide range of topics, but there were a few obvious gaps. First, there were no papers dealing with ‘knowledge about Russia or West Asia’. The few submissions by researchers from this area all focussed on how they studied China, Korea, India or Southeast Asia. Second, we received no proposals wanting to discuss any major Western research institutes that are influential in the field, while we did see some attention paid to their Asian counterparts. Finally, most papers dealt with geopolitical factors, with the role of some institutions discussed, but with very little attention diverted to networks of either institutions or individuals – probably due to the relative abstractness of the category and the technical difficulty in its empirical investigation.

Abstract review and selection

‘Quality’ was of course an essential aspect of consideration used to make the selection, but I identified at least five others, which I like to describe as part of an ‘editorial imagination’; they had more to do with the overall presentation of the conference and its anticipated proceedings.

First, we considered the *potential for dialogue with other papers*. We looked for papers with similar or comparable themes that could be grouped into sessions. Second, we preferred studies about *a geographical unit of greater significance* for an international audience. Papers about hotly discussed countries like India or China had an edge compared to a paper on, for instance, a particular ethnic group on a less-known small Pacific island. Of course, the latter surely had a chance if its theoretical significance could be convincingly argued, but it had a higher threshold to cross.

Third, when in doubt, *the author’s institutional affiliation and publication record* was also considered. The selection committee’s confidence in the author (e.g., could s/he deliver what s/he had promised?) was based on the biographical information. This biographical information, moreover, would namely also shape the degree of confidence of prospective readers. Fourth, authors with different career patterns tend to develop variant *writing styles;* considering communicability and the desired consistency in presentation, we tended to favour abstracts without extreme styles. Finally, we also kept an eye on the *geographical balance* of presenters and topics, but eventually found we didn’t need to make any major adjustments as the shortlist was already geographically diverse.

Normative ends

The above discussion brought light to what had been *preferred* and *excluded* in an international venue like this conference, and certainly has the potential of triggering criticism at the normative level. I hold that these decisions are defendable given the purpose of this conference. An event at this scale has no obligation to take care of the diverse knowledge demands in the world, and any expansion to inclusiveness will only be possible with compromise in its analytical focus and prospect for dialogue. However, it is not my intention to ascribe a prestige to the type of scholarship we looked for.

On the contrary, the involvement in this process only deepened my conviction that there exist too many justifiable forms of knowledge that may not fit in an international venue like this conference. I can clearly see the value of many of the rejected papers to a local audience, and how they deserve a place in their own right. Their failure to be included reflects not their inferior quality, but the constraint of this conference. Hence I cannot agree with the tendency to prioritise anything ‘international’ over the ‘local’, as manifested in the ‘internationalisation’ or ‘globalisation’ discourses embraced in many Asian countries. Those myths only serve to marginalize these local demands, to narrow the scope of intellectual possibilities, and to force scholars to betray their local scholarly or public audiences.

This is where this short note meets the concern behind the conference theme. The reflection of the ‘framing’ of this international conference highlights the indispensability of the local platforms. Similarly, the discussion about how our intellectual enterprise is being framed by geopolitical and institutional factors is aimed to refresh the imagination of our profession, and to invite deliberation on how we as scholars should think and what we should do to bring our practices closer to our ideals. The conference and this note both started with questions that are empirical, but they both have a normative end.

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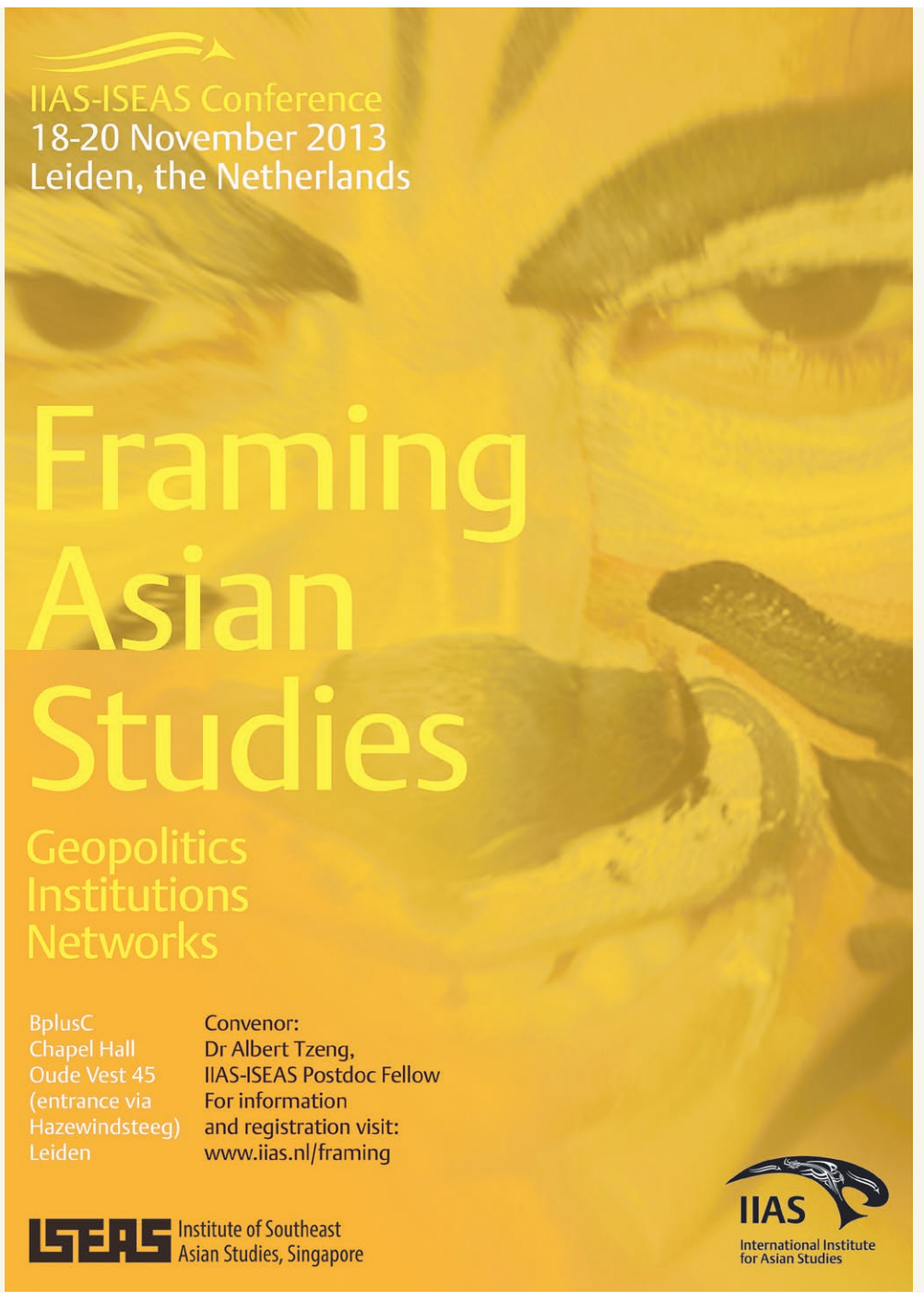


The IIAS Annual Lectures

Exchanging knowledge and forging links

Willem Vogelsang, IIAS Institute Manager

EACH YEAR IIAS ORGANISES an Annual Lecture that is presented by a distinguished international expert on some aspect of Asia and Asian Studies, or the relationship between Asia and Europe. In this way IIAS actively contributes to the exchange of knowledge and scholarship between the Netherlands and the rest of the world. The audiences attending these lectures are always very varied, and certainly not limited to academics. They include diplomats, journalists, representatives of the business community and NGOs, as well as members of the cultural world. The age of the audience is as diverse as the people themselves, from the young to the more mature, which is important for the future of Asian Studies in the Netherlands. It is also attended by the IIAS fellows and graduate and undergraduate students of Leiden University and academic institutions outside of Leiden. It is a unique opportunity for Asia scholars in the Netherlands, and for others with an interest in Asia and Asian affairs, to meet and discuss ongoing issues, especially at the well-attended reception enjoyed after the lecture. It also allows for networking among the participants in general. And networking is an essential core activity of the International Institute for Asian Studies.

In order to gain a wide variety of public, the lectures are widely announced in various places, such as *The Newsletter,* direct mailing, posters, and newspapers, as well as by word of mouth. In the past, some of the Annual Lectures were held in Amsterdam. In more recent years they have taken place in Leiden. For instance, in 2012 the venue was the historic Waag (Weighing House) in the centre of Leiden; in 2013 it took place in the equally historic 'Akademiegebouw' (Academy Building), the oldest building of Leiden University (the university moved into this former convent in 1581!). These locations, which also happen to be within walking distance of the IIAS offices, are always selected to highlight the special character of the Lecture, and to attract as wide an audience as possible.

The annual lectures are intended to intrigue the audience by presenting known, or indeed unknown themes in innovative ways and from new perspectives. They are presented in order to push boundaries, both in the speakers and the audience. The speakers are invited because of their own expertise and field of work. In the past, IIAS has invited speakers from Asia and beyond, academics and non-academics. They included politicians (as for instance Chris Patten, 2001), architects (Rem Koolhaas, 2005), artists (Pramoedya Ananta Toer, 1999), and others whose lectures contributed to a better understanding of Asia and the relationship between Asia and the rest of the world.

Space unfortunately does not permit a list of all the lectures since 1994, and some of the events were also far more than a lecture. One such event was particularly memorable - an evening programme in June 2010 that included a reading by the British historian William Dalrymple from his book, *Nine Lives: In search of the sacred in modern India,* accompanied by music and traditional dance (Paban Das Baul and Susheela Raman).

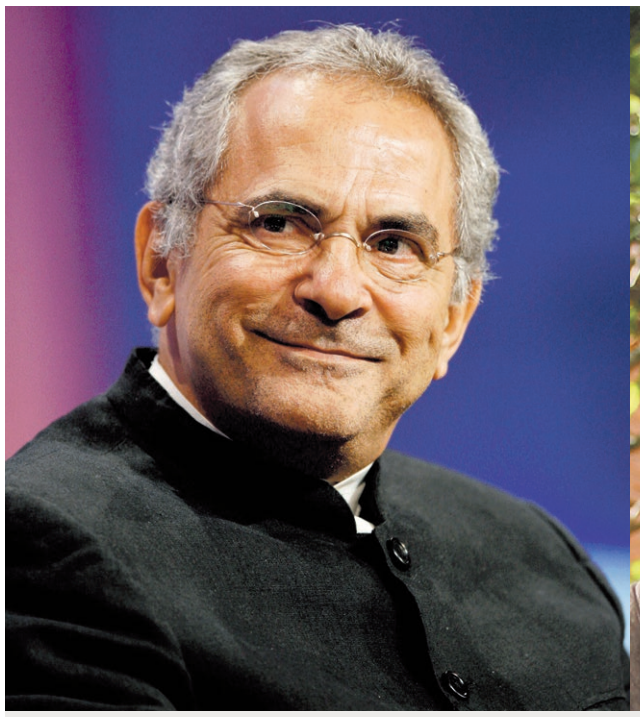
As can be imagined, the Annual Lectures ensure that at the end of the main presentation there are many questions and lively discussions. Sometimes these discussions become quite forceful as different points of view are highlighted, questioned and examined in detail. But the willingness to exchange ideas and gain new insights into known and unknown situations remains an important factor in the role of the IIAS lectures.

The first Annual Lecture, in 1994, was entitled 'De la vertu des aires culturelles et de celle des aires culturelles asiatiques en particulier', by Denys Lombard, former Director of the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales and of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient.* Since then, some of the themes addressed include 'Asia and the pre-modern world economy' (Professor Om Prakash, in 1995); 'Europe and Asia: sustainable relations, sustainable growth' (Mr L.J. Brinkhorst, Netherlands Minister for Economic Affairs, in 2005); 'Al Qaeda in the Asia-Pacific: Origins, capability and threat' (Dr Rohan Gunaratna, from St. Andrews, 2003), and 'Trauma, memory, amnesia' (Ong Keng Sen, Singapore, in 2008).

Sometimes the lecturer represents a university or institute with which IIAS is strengthening relations, and the speaker thus helps to forge closer links between IIAS, the Universities in the Netherlands, and the home organisation of the lecturer. For example, Professor Geir Helgesen gave a very well-attended Annual Lecture in September 2012. His topic was the relationship between North Korea and the West ('A user's manual to North Korea: matters and issues that shape relations between them and us'). However, Professor Helgesen is also the director of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen, which over the years has become an important European partner of IIAS, and, together with IIAS, the driving force behind the European Alliance of Asian Studies.

In September 2013, the Annual Lecture was delivered by Professor Carol Gluck of Columbia University, New York. She talked about the global aspects of Japanese modern and pre-modern history ('Modernity in common: Japan and world history'). But she also represented the University that will be a close partner of IIAS in a new international IIAS programme (2014-2016) that is being sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation entitled 'Rethinking Asian studies in a global context' (see page 16 of this issue).

And what is the future of the Annual IIAS Lectures? Various discussions are taking place to look at the nature of the lectures, how to relate them to the broader plans of IIAS and how to present the lectures to the public. What is certain is that the range of lectures over the next few years will be as varied as the work of IIAS itself. We soon hope to announce the speaker for the 2014 Annual Lecture!



Jose Ramos Horta
As a founding member of FRETILIN – the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor – José Manuel Ramos-Horta spearheaded the East Timorese resistance during the years of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor (1975 to 1999). After East Timor became independent, he served his country in several capacities: as its first foreign minister (2002-2006), then as Prime Minister (2006-2007), and finally as its second President (2007-2012). He was a co-recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, and survived an assassination attempt in 2008. He is currently the UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. In 2001, he visited IIAS to give that year's Annual Lecture. He was then Minister of Foreign Affairs in the East Timorese Transitional Administration (UNTAET), under the aegis of the UN. His mind fully preoccupied with the subject, it was only natural that Horta would speak on 'East Timor: from ashes to nationhood, and its place in the region'. He spoke of both his country's recent past under Indonesian occupation a well as his hopes for its future. He shared his thoughts about rebuilding a viable economy in East Timor, and how the international arena could contribute to the process of reconstruction.

Carol Gluck
This year's Annual Lecture was provided by Professor Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of History and Professor of East Asian Language and Cultures at Columbia University. Professor Gluck writes on modern Japan, twentieth-century international history, World War II, history-writing and public memory in Asia and the West. Her most recent book is *Thinking with the Past: Modern Japan and History* (University of California Press, 2013), and *Past Obsessions: World War II in History and Memory* is forthcoming from Columbia University Press. Professor Gluck's lecture, 'Modernity in common: Japan and world history', was based on the dual assumption that just as one cannot tell the modern history of any society in isolation from the world, the history of the modern world can in fact be grasped from the vantage point of any place on the globe. In this instance, Japan, which has commonalities with other modern societies and, simultaneously, offers the opportunity to develop ideas about the 'modern' based on empirical evidence different from the European experiences that underlay earlier theories of modernity. She examined four questions frequently asked about modern Japanese history, in order to see how they appear when viewed in a global context – in the context of 'modernity in common'.

William Dalrymple
William Dalrymple is an acclaimed travel writer and historian of recent times. His travel books include *In Xanadu: A Quest* (1989), *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* (1993) and *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium* (1997). *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-century India* (2002) marked Dalrymple's shift from travel writing to revisionist history, and he continued in this vein in *The Last Mughal: The Eclipse of a Dynasty, Delhi 1857.* He came back to the travel book in 2009 – but gave it a totally different avatar, by mapping the spiritual traditions of India. Dalrymple's IIAS lecture in June 2010 on South Asia's diverse sacred traditions, and how these manage to cling on in the new India, was based on that 2009 publication, *Nine Lives In Search of the Sacred in Modern India.* It explores nine very personal stories – a Sufi, a possession dancer, a Buddhist monk, a Jain nun, a Tantric, a Baul minstrel, among others – each life representing a different religious path, while revealing the perhaps surprising persistence of faith and ritual in the face of India's commercial boom. In Amsterdam, his lecture and book reading was accompanied by performances of two musical-spiritual traditions that he had written about in *Nine Lives* – Baul Sangit of Bengal, performed by Paban Das Baul and his partner; and Tamil thevaram hymns, sung by the celebrated London-born Tamil vocalist Susheela Raman. The lecture was also the official launch of the Dutch translation of his book by Uitgeverij Atlas.

International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)

IIAS Panels at ICAS 8

To celebrate the Institute's 20th anniversary, and proud to be associated with ICAS and to host its secretariat, IIAS sponsored and co-sponsored 16 panels and roundtables that reflect the vibrancy of IIAS' three thematic clusters: Asian Cities, Asian Heritages and Global Asia.

PANELS ORGANISED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL ASIA CLUSTER

Beyond the Ivory Tower: Re-defining the Relationship between Science and Society in Europe and Asia (Panels 29 and 56) Co-sponsored with the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) in Kyoto, Japan, and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore.
Following an earlier IIAS roundtable in 2011 on the theme of 'Science and nature', these two roundtables explored the question how societal concerns about natural disasters, food security and environmental conservation redefine the role and position of science in Asian and European societies.
Convener: Gerard Persoon, IIAS Extraordinary Professor and holder of IIAS chair for Environment and Development, at the Leiden University Institute of Cultural Anthropology. Gerard was a co-organiser of the 2011 roundtable: 'Science and nature in Europe and Asia, Scientific Traditions and New Technologies'. 'Science and Society' is an ongoing project of the panel sponsors, based on the shared recognition that scientific knowledge is greeted with increased scepticism, distrust and sometimes even hostility in Asia and Europe.

Cooperation in Energy Policy and Sustainability: China and the European Union (Panel 74)
This panel focused on energy security as one of the major global challenges of the 21st century. In particular it discussed the fact that both the European Union and China are dependent on foreign energy supplies, which force both polities to cooperate on energy security affairs and to share ideas how to address common energy challenges.
Convener: Mehdi P. Amineh, an IIAS Research Fellow and the (Dutch-side) coordinator of the IIAS Energy Programme Asia (EPA). This programme recently started its second joint research project 'The transnationalization of China's oil companies' together with Chinese and Dutch partners.

Defining Asian Studies in Africa (Panel 150) and Moving Forward - The Future of Asian Studies in Africa (Panel 177)
These two related roundtables focused on the recently established pan-African 'Association of Asian Studies in Africa' (A-ASIA). It discussed two main issues, namely: (1) defining Asian Studies in Africa, and (2) the future of Asian Studies in Africa. 'Asian Studies in Africa' (ASA) is an IIAS initiative aimed at the promotion of the study of and teaching on Asia at African universities, involving partners in Africa, Asia and the US. The 'Association of Asian Studies in Africa' (A-ASIA) was established during a roundtable held in 2012 in Chisamba, Zambia.
Convener (Panel 150): Llyod Amoah, IIAS alumnus and a specialist on Africa-Asia from Ashesi University College is a member of the A-ASIA Steering Committee.
Convener (Panel 177): Haifang Liu is Associate Professor and General Secretary of Centre for African Studies of Peking University and a member of the A-ASIA Steering Committee.

Embodying Masculinities and Physical Appearance in Everyday Spaces of Work, Home, Consumption, and Leisure across Asia (Panels 190, 217 and 244)
These three panels focused on the embodied practices of masculinities and the way they are given expression by means of the physical male body in everyday spaces of work, leisure, consumption and popular culture across Asia.
Convener: Michiel Baas, project associate for IIAS, and currently a research fellow at Nalanda University (India). Michiel worked at IIAS from 2007 until 2012 as Coordinator of the IIAS Amsterdam branch.

PANELS ORGANISED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER

The Effects of UNESCO Politics on Local Notions of Heritage (panels 26 and 53)
This double roundtable aimed to explore what is preserved as heritage in specific, demonstrably politicized contexts throughout Asia. It tried to contribute to a better understanding of UNESCO's notions of 'heritage', 'safeguarding', or even 'authenticity', and how these notions affect local groups and communities. It also addressed the question of how encounters with tourists, heritage experts and researchers influence these local perceptions and value systems. To move beyond the dominant heritage frame, the roundtable discussed the role of other stakeholders, particularly of local communities and practitioners that are often silenced in these larger contexts.
Convener: Sadiah Boonstra, project associate at IIAS, and currently a Fellow at the 2013 Alliance of Historical Dialogue and Accountability at Columbia University, Institute for the Study of Human Rights.

Asian Artists as Agents of Societal Change at Home and Abroad in the 21st Century (panels 107 and 134) Co-sponsored with the Asian Cultural Council.
These two meetings focused on the position and role of Asian artists as agents of societal change. Among the main themes addressed was the question of how their work is rooted and related to local, regional, national and global contexts. And, if artists are regarded as agents of change, then on whose behalf do they act? For whom do these artists speak? And how do artists view their role themselves both within their community and outside?
Convener: Stanford Makishi is Director of Programs at the Asian Cultural Council., NY.

Cloth, Identity and Power (panels 316 and 343)
These two roundtables were inspired by an earlier IIAS roundtable 'Ikat Weaving as Heritage for Sustainable Development' held in October 2012 in Indonesia. They focused on the role of cloth as a potential instrument for policy recommendations involving stakeholders that include weavers, traders, local-level governmental agencies, politicians, international designers, collectors, development professionals, scholars, and many others.
Convener: Aarti Kawlra, researcher and teacher at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, a social anthropologist and IIAS alumnus. She participated in the 2012 roundtable on Ikat Weaving, and will be one of the conveners of the next IIAS Summer School (2014) on cultural heritage, organised in co-operation with the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development at Chiang Mai University, Thailand (see page 35).

PANELS ORGANISED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASIAN CITIES CLUSTER

Architecture and Image in Asia (Panel 209) Co-sponsored with the Delft School of Design at Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
This panel brought together leading scholars in the field to discuss the theme of architectural heritage in Asia within the context of various urban developments.
Convener: Gregory Bracken, an IIAS Research Fellow and coordinator of the IIAS Postcolonial Global City research programme.

Launching Three Research Themes on Contemporary Asian Cities (Panel 326)
Organised as a working meeting of the IIAS-coordinated Urban Knowledge Network Asia, this roundtable discussed UKNA's three main research themes of (a) The Future of cities; (b) Cities by and for the people; and c) The idea of the city.
Convener: Paul Rabé, the chief coordinator at IIAS of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia, a research and exchange network involving over a hundred researchers from 14 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States.

The 9th International
Convention of Asia Scholars
5 - 9 July 2015
Adelaide, Australia

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ICAS 8 and the Rise of Asia

Tak Wing Ngo

THE RISE OF ASIA has become a defining feature of the 21st century. The impact of Asia can be felt in two respects - material and epistemological. From the outset, the growing economic affluence and political influence of Asia has been changing the historical landscape of our age. This is most observable with the increasing share of Asian markets in the world economy, the development of a multi-polar international order, and the increasing pressure on global environment and resources. Equally far-reaching is the theoretical significance of Asia. The current development of Asia is challenging many of our conventional understandings about political and economic life. Our familiar ideas about the state and market, rule and governance, nation and identity, network and hierarchy, and so on, have shown major limitations in capturing the complexity and hybridity of the Asian cases. There is a need to refine our conceptual lexicons in order to grapple with the idea of Asia.

ICAS as an instrumental forum

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) constitutes a major forum for such an epistemological adventure. It is the premier gathering of scholars on Asian Studies around the world. Since 1998, ICAS has taken place in different parts of the world, including Leiden, Berlin, Singapore, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Daejeon, and Honolulu. Its eighth convention (ICAS 8) was held in Macao in June 2013. Unlike other conferences of Asian Studies where the majority of participants come from the United States and Europe, ICAS is a unique platform with the most diversified cross-continental representation and with the majority of participants coming from Asian countries. New ideas and research findings are exchanged not only among researchers who study Asia, but also among scholars who live in Asia. This is important because, so far, the conceptual lexicons and theoretical tools used in the social sciences and humanities have been derived almost exclusively from the West. Although these theories and methods have been applied throughout the world with considerable success, their limitations are becoming increasingly apparent, especially in a place like Asia with its long indigenous traditions of organizing social relations, its own norms about power and order, and its legacies of implementing rule. As Asian countries emerge to become prominent players in the world, the point has come to recognize that the region has something to offer in the development of social knowledge. In this regard, ICAS plays an instrumental role.

Theoretical significance of Asia

In brief, taking Asia seriously means more than addressing its growing economic and political influence. It also requires us to reconsider the theoretical significance of Asia. The rapid transformation that has taken place in many Asian countries during the last few decades represents not only a radical experimentation with grand reform in human history, but also a living laboratory for social scientists of nearly all disciplines to observe social change and human action from different theoretical perspectives. In this process, even a casual observer will not fail to notice the limitations in our current understanding of Asia. Such limitations, on the one hand, come from the inadequacy of our existing conceptual vocabularies in describing institutional forms and social practices that deviate from Western categories. Examples abound: the blurred boundary between the public and private domains; the overlapping positions and multiple roles assumed by ruling parties, government bureaucrats, and business conglomerates; the ambivalent structures of ownership in enterprises; and the fluid relationship between institutional linkage and personal network. On the other hand, our existing theoretical perspectives also have problems in accounting for numerous paradoxes in Asian polities and societies. For instance, everyday political life in many countries is tightly controlled and yet the electoral regime is open and competitive; nationalism as a unifying ideology runs high in many countries despite the prevalence of strong parochialism and separatism; and market liberalization has been undertaken with great determination amidst the establishment and strengthening of state monopolies.

The Asian case as breeding ground

These deviations and paradoxes have excited and inspired researchers of different disciplines - the overwhelmingly enthusiastic reaction to the call for papers at ICAS 8 was testament to that. The Asian case provides an ideal breeding ground to refine existing theories and to develop new ones. In particular, the time-space compression experienced by countries such as China, India, South Korea, Vietnam, and now Burma, in their radical reforms during the last decades, offers a unique opportunity to study some of the most important issues of our time. These include questions of institutional change, social transformation, market reform, ethnic conflict, environmental hazard, national security, urbanization, migration, political control and resistance, social marginalization, inequality, to name a few. The reform process has been plagued with problems and impasse while at the same time filled with innovative solutions and unexpected consequences.

Macao and ICAS 8

Many of these questions were taken up at the panel discussions during ICAS 8. The mega event took place in Macao on 24-27 June 2013. It was co-hosted by the University of Macau and Macao Foundation. The rich cultural heritage and the strong historical legacies connecting East and West made Macao an ideal place to host ICAS 8.

Macao was the first as well as the last European colony in China. The more than four-century long interaction between the Chinese and Portuguese traditions has left Macao with a unique blend of cultural diversity, modernity, and cosmopolitanism. Altogether more than 1200 participants from 56 countries and 600 higher institutes of learning took part in the event. The importance of the conference for Macao is many-folded. First, it has brought fresh knowledge and perspectives to Macao, through the exchange with researchers in such areas as urban development, migration, and cultural heritage. Second, it underlined the emergence of Macao as a regional hub, by showcasing to the international academic community the relevance of Macao in knowledge creation and dissemination. Third, it helped propagate the cultural richness, economic diversity, and social vibrancy of Macao to the rest of the world.

What is more important was the exchange of new ideas and up-to-date research findings during the panel discussions. More than 250 thematically organized panels took place during ICAS 8. They clustered around such themes as culture and heritage, globalization and transnationalism, migration and connectivity, regionalism and urban development, and social and economic transformation. They were attended not only by academics but also by government officials, museum curators, NGO activists, journalists, business leaders, and members of the general public. It was a rare opportunity during which scholars and practitioners across different continents and regions gathered together to explore local and global problems.

Building new knowledge

Such ideational kindling will be no less provoking than the emergence of an economically powerful Asia. After all, the global order is not only shaped by the rise and decline of material powers, but also by the way we perceive and theorize our political and economic existence. This will be a key challenge for the next generation of scholars in the new epoch. While scholars working in many areas have been searching for a new way forward, it is anything but straightforward. One of the major problems is the limitation set by our own analytical language. We need to be able to communicate and exchange our ideas. At the moment we use English as our common analytical language. The problem is that even the most basic terms such as 'society', 'rights', 'citizen', 'authority', etc., are endowed with layers of meaning derived from European histories. When we use them to analyze other societies, we inevitably import the historical traits hidden behind those terms. Avoiding this trap is tricky, because if we abandon terms like 'power', 'community', and 'enterprise' in our discussion, we will end up with a conceptual void.

This is certainly not an obstacle that can be easily overcome. That is why continuous dialogue among Asia scholars is indispensable. And this underlines the role of ICAS in such dialogues. By hosting ICAS 8, Macao contributed to building new knowledge about Asia and the global order. Over time Asia should be able to develop its own social theories, methodologies, and concepts applicable not just to Asia, but also to the West. In doing so we will have a more nuanced perception of the world, one which is more historically and culturally sensitive. It will also be a more pluralistic and less hegemonic understanding of humanity.

Tak-Wing Ngo is Professor of Political Science at the University of Macau. He was one of the local organisers of ICAS 8 and is a member of the ICAS International Council.

Sweet Sixteen

Paul van der Velde, ICAS Secretary

IN ITS 16 YEARS OF EXISTENCE the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), whose Secretariat is hosted by IIAS, has brought together 12.500 academics and other professionals from 70 different countries at eight conventions, where 11.000 papers were presented during 2300 panels and roundtables. Behind these figures lies a world of multiple interactions, across borders and disciplines, which have resulted in new international research initiatives.

Year	Place	Participants	Panels	Papers	Countries	Institutions
1998	Leiden	1000	130	640	40	350
2001	Berlin	800	100	500	35	280
2003	Singapore	1100	250	940	54	400
2005	Shanghai	1200	270	1020	58	420
2007	Kuala Lumpur	1400	350	1400	60	500
2009	Daejeon	850	200	800	53	320
2011	Honolulu*	5000	770	4500	57	2250
2013	Macao	1200	270	1050	56	600

*Together with the Association for Asian Studies (AAS)

Olympics of Asian Studies?

ICAS was officially launched in 1997. Its core idea was to internationalise Asian Studies and increase the involvement of scholars from Asia. The main goals were to transcend the boundaries between disciplines, between nations and regions studied, and between geographic origins of the scholars involved. To a large extent ICAS has been successful in achieving these goals (see Tak Wing Ngo's contribution on this page).

ICAS is a biennial event organised by local hosts in cooperation with the ICAS Secretariat. 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 in which it is held. While reflecting on ICAS, the organiser of ICAS 5 in Kuala Lumpur, Shamsul AB, dubbed ICAS "The Olympics of Asian Studies". Though the comment was made in jest, it is nevertheless true that ICAS has, over the years, become an active accelerator of research, and a platform for representatives of both academia and civil society to focus on issues critical to Asia and, by implication, to the rest of the world.

ICAS International Council

The first meeting of the ICAS International Council took place at ICAS 8 in Macau. It is an advisory body meant to further reinforce ICAS' institutional grounding and visibility in Asia. Concretely, the Council assists ICAS in facilitating collaboration with host partners, linking up with local networks, institutions and funding organisations. It includes prominent scholars in the field of Asian Studies and representatives of regional or big national Asian Studies organisations.

The growth of the ICAS Book Prize

The biennial ICAS Book Prize (IBP) is recognised as the leading award for Asian Studies publications. It was established in 2004 with the aim to increase the worldwide visibility of publications on Asia. The IBP has a remit that covers the whole of Asia and its relations to the rest of the world, and is both a global competition for publications on Asia and a platform for Asian studies.

Since its inception the number of submitted books has risen from 50 in 2005, to 250 in 2013; and the number of submitted dissertations has risen from 10 in 2007, to 100 in 2013. This remarkable increase in submissions has made the judging process even more difficult. Therefore, in addition to the awards for best books and dissertations in the Humanities and Social Sciences categories, and the Colleagues' Choice Award, we decided to institute the new category 'IBP Reading Committee Accolades', which will allow the judges to recognise notable works in the field that are not, for a variety of reasons, in contention for the main prizes. These Accolades allow the judges to recognise works that are particularly noteworthy. More information about the prizes and the submission process can be found on the ICAS website: www.icassecretariat.org

ICAS 9 in Adelaide

ICAS 9 will be held in Adelaide (5-9 July 2015). It will be hosted by an international team of experts, spearheaded by Adelaide's three leading universities – University of Adelaide, Flinders University of South Australia, and the University of South Australia – in cooperation with the Asian Studies Association of Australia. A new element introduced during ICAS 8 in Macao was the ICAS 8 Daily Newsletter. In cooperation with the biggest English-speaking newspaper, the Macao Daily Times, a daily conference supplement was produced highlighting the main events of the previous day and looking forward to the events ahead. It was both a useful tool for the participants and also informed the people of Macao about the event. Plans are afoot to have an ICAS 9 Daily Newsletter in Adelaide as well.

ICAS 9 in Adelaide will also introduce a new initiative by the ICAS Secretariat: the ICAS Book Presentation Carousel. This format will allow Asian scholars at ICAS 9 to present their books published in the period June 2013 to June 2015. Authors will be allotted a one hour time slot to present their publication. There must be at least one commentator who reviews the book, after which there will be a public discussion. At the end of the meeting, the authors will have the opportunity to sign their books. More information about the Carousel will be made available on the ICAS website.

We are looking forward to ICAS 9 in Adelaide and hope to see a lot of old and new faces Down Under. Meanwhile, we are meeting with possible candidates for the organisation of ICAS 10 in 2017.

The Newsletter | No.66 | Winter 2013

IIAS Outreach

IIAS' outreach activities

Heleen van der Minne

IN OUR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY science and arts occupy a relatively separated position. Whether it is just or not, IIAS finds it important to bring these worlds together. IIAS has been organising outreach activities for a number of years now, whereby 'outreach' should be understood as crossing the borders of 'pure' scientific events; reaching out to a diversity of other cultural domains, such as film, literature, dance and other forms of art. In so doing, IIAS is also reaching out to a wider audience, not only to Asia scientists, but also to others with various interests in Asia. Scientists and non-scientists meet, become acquainted with each other's worlds, and broaden their Asian horizons and understanding. Reaching out to other cultural domains is part of IIAS' policy to transcend disciplinary borders. IIAS has the firm conviction that science and arts, both creative processes, are overlapping domains, which can and do inspire and lead to fresh approaches in all disciplines.

Outreach collaborations

Over the years IIAS has been cooperating with outstanding art institutions and organisations such as the Eye Film Institute (the former Filmmuseum), the Dutch Foundation for Literature, the VVAK (Society of Friends of Asian Arts) and the Prince Claus Fund; together we have put together lectures, conferences, publications in the IIAS Newsletter, and other events.

In 2013 IIAS specifically focussed on visual arts, in cooperation with the leading museums in the Netherlands: the Tropical Museum in Amsterdam, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, the Prinsenhof in Delft, the Groninger Museum and the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. Our collaboration with the Museum Het Prinsenhof, the Delftware museum, concerned the exhibition 'Delft-Jingdezhen: The Blue Revolution, 400 Year Exchange'; IIAS supported the exhibition with a lecture held by Christine van der Pijl-Ketel, 'Shipments and Sherds'. She described the varieties of Chinese porcelain produced for the Dutch market and transported by the 17th century VOC. IIAS editor Sandra Dehue wrote an article for The Newsletter about this renewed joint project between Delft and the Chinese city of Jingdezhen, in which contemporary Chinese and Dutch ceramists exchange their expertise on modern ceramics, inspired by the Chinese blue and white porcelain of 400 years ago (issue #64, p.51).

In April 2013 the world famous Rijksmuseum reopened its doors to the public after an extensive multi-year renovation. Its Asian art collection was accommodated in a brand new building, the Asia Pavilion. On this occasion The Newsletter published an article, in which the Asia curators Menno Fitski, Anna Ślączka and William Southworth wrote about the collection's wonderful artefacts hailing from various regions of Asia (issue #64, page 56).

Professor Titus M. Eliëns, Head of Collections at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague wrote The Newsletter article 'DelftWare WonderWare', about the museum's magnificent blue and white Delftware collection, and the history of the Netherlands' most iconic national product, which was initially intended as an imitation of Chinese export porcelain. (issue #63, page 48)

IIAS doesn't focus on only ancient and antique arts; the institute finds it equally important to shed light on modern and avant-garde arts as well. Recently, IIAS organised a lecture, held by professor Jeroen de Kloet, about the limits of critique in Chinese art, within the framework of an exhibition of young Chinese artists, composed by the famous artist and activist Ai Weiwei, at the Groninger Museum. (see the text by Jeroen de Kloet on this page)

IIAS keeps reaching out and kindly invites people and organisations willing to cooperate with our outreach events and/or publications in The Newsletter, to contact us. Please send an e-mail to Heleen van der Minne, coordinator Projects & Events. (h.m.van.der.minne@iias.nl)

Portrait of He Bin. Paper, 16th century
© Nanjing Museum/Nomad Exhibitions

The Beijing Forbidden City. Silk, c. 1400-50 (?)
© Nanjing Museum/Nomad Exhibitions

Upcoming event

On 31 January 2014 IIAS will be hosting a lecture about the fine and applied arts of China's Ming dynasty – to be held by professor Anne Gerritsen – in cooperation with the VVAK and the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, around the exhibition 'Ming, Emperors, Artists and Merchants in Ancient China'

Showing till 2 February 2014
in the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam
www.nieuwekerk.nl/en

Chinese art and the problem of critique

Jeroen de Kloet

IN THE WORK 'ONE METER OF DEMOCRACY' (2010), artist He Yunchang invited his friends over to vote for, or against, cutting a one-meter long and 0.5 cm deep wound in his body. Twelve of his friends voted for, ten against, with three abstentions. Following this democratic procedure, the artist decided to proceed with his plan, and had a long cut made in his body. The documentation of this performance work is on display in The Groninger Museum, as part of Fuck Off 2, a show curated by Ai Weiwei, Feng Boyi and Mark Wilson. The images display the body with a thin bleeding line running from the shoulder to below the knee. The close up, in which the depth of the cut is visible, is particularly disturbing. One cannot help but wonder if this self mutilation is necessary in order to contemplate the violence of democracy? And what does this work signify in a country that lacks democracy? In pointing to the violence that democracy may allow for, or even produce, could it be read as a statement in support of the government? Clearly not for the artist, who writes, "it's a luxury to talk about democracy and art in this country, because we lack a fair and reasonable environment." (catalogue, p.65) The performance is disturbing and abject, and it is tempting to theorise it with the work of Kristeva or Bataille. But somehow, it fails to convince me. Not because of any belatedness, as other artists in and outside China have done similar work (much) earlier – I never quite understand the tyranny of the new and groundbreaking, be it in art or academia. It fails to convince me because its violence disturbs me without inspiring further reflection, doubt or questions.

The title of the show smacks of an equal lack of ambivalence: within the comfort zone of a provincial city in the Netherlands, an artistic protest against the Chinese authorities is unleashed. In the catalogue, it is particularly the text of Feng Boyi that frames the show in a binary opposition between allegedly political, liberating art and an authoritarian government. In his view, the works "uncover the cruelty of the Chinese social crisis: this cruelty is precisely that we live in an environment in which our basic rights are trampled and morality is lost." (catalogue, p.21). Art is celebrated as an aesthetics resisting the vulgar, he claims, "Chinese official, mainstream, base pop culture dominates everything: In China we hear nothing more than vulgar noise…" (p.22). Not only do artists carry, in this narrative, the geopolitical burden of representing Chineseness, they are also warriors against the alleged stupefying powers of popular culture. In effect, Feng, operating in the field of "high art", is reiterating and reproducing a beguiling if not unfruitful opposition between high and low culture.

Back to the works! They resist such generalisations, and while space does not allow me to engage with many, let me pick out a few. The work of Chen Yufan and Chen Yujun takes urbanization, and with it the construction of bizarre buildings that pop up in first- and second-tier cities, as its source of inspiration. For example, the Fangyuan Mansion in Shenyang, a gigantic Chinese coin with the square hole in the middle. The artists rebuild these grotesque architectures, now with carton, and as such comment on unbridled processes of urbanization. Xia Xing takes news photographs as the starting point, and devotes one year to one specific news story, comprising up to 60 oil paintings. We see the Bo Xilai scandal that made world news in 2012, now as a series of oil paintings, all of them copies of news pictures. As such, they instigate reflection upon the mediation of scandals. In turning a spectacle into an artwork, what does this tell us about art? What about the role of media and their intricate ways of constructing a scandalous reality? Finally, the pictures of Ren Hang depict young people, sometimes in rather complicated sexual poses, often injected with a large dose of homoeroticism, and above all, detached and alienated from their environments. As such, his works speak of a general sense of estrangement of the generation that was born in the 1980s – the first generation to witness only progress and very little political turmoil – in a world that seems filled with opportunities.

These are just some glimpses on contemporary art that happens to come from China (which does not make them primarily reflect upon life in China!). When thinking through the possibility of critique for art, be it in China or elsewhere, it would be better to remember Foucault: "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."[1] The second, less often quoted part of the sentence strikes me as urgent: we need to think critique within the parameters set by the system, and only from there can it search for its lines of flight, can it try to provoke a different distribution of the sensible. To think critique as inherently oppositional to and exterior of a political system ignores the multiple ways in which any system penetrates deeply into every aspect of our lives, just as it ignores its global entanglements. When thinking this way, Chinese contemporary art also speaks to our struggles, our anxieties and our doubts.

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Notes

1 Foucault, M. 1978. *The History of Sexuality – An Introduction.* New York: Vintage Books, see p.95

Pull-out supplement

theFocus

Collaborative research in Southeast Asia: towards a sustainable humanosphere

Over the past decade, Southeast Asia as a region has undergone economic integration, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) serving as the hub of region-making at an institutional level. This integration has been accompanied by a reorganization of the region's economy, spurring stronger demands for energy, food and water as well as significant socio-political change. This rapidly changing milieu poses challenges for researchers to keep track of the region at the country level while keeping a larger perspective in focus. As integration proceeds, rising demands and competition for resources have led researchers to investigate trans-boundary issues such as security, environmental degradation/transformation and socio-political change. The complexity of issues have stimulated collaborative research agendas to develop not just micro- and macro-level analyses of changes taking place in the region, but also questions relating to policy formation and recommendations for various stakeholders.

Such issues have compelled the forging of multidisciplinary alliances to produce 'engaged' approaches attuned to the fast-changing dynamics of Southeast Asia. These approaches have been in terms of the dynamic interplay between the environment, technologies, institutions and societies; the examination of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural domains; and the need to incorporate the tropics as a fundamental analytical point of departure to understand the development of human societies in the region. This special Focus of *The Newsletter* looks at how collaborative research in Southeast Asia is addressing the complex challenges of creating new common research languages in tune with the exigencies of the times.

Mario Lopez

Continued from page 23

Integrating research approaches

For over forty years, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) has forged a dedicated integrated approach toward area studies in Southeast Asia and fomented multidisciplinary discussion and dialogue. This hasn't come without serious challenges. It goes without saying that as the natural and social sciences developed in the early 20th century, knowledge underwent an increasing fragmentation that led to the specialization of disciplines, sub-disciplines and the hardening of boundaries. Yet Southeast Asia, a region known for its immense diversity, has always presented challenges to research questions that have inevitably compelled collaboration between and across disciplines. Whether the focus of analysis is social risk, environmental degradation, epidemics, natural disasters, ageing societies, energy procurement or political security, we can no longer rely on approaches from within the confines of academic disciplines we are trained within. However, broadening approaches towards interrelated issues should not be just an academic exercise to destabilize the disciplines we are familiar with. The methodologies we hone can take on a transformational power when taken from the disciplines that created them and employed in new contexts with practical application. One example of this is a collaborative attempt to map the trans-regional spread of food-poisoning bacterial enteric pathogens (found in mollusks) that arise through cultural food practices in a number of Southeast Asian nations by a team of microbiologists, food experts and industries based within the region.[1] Collaborative toolboxes from various disciplines can come to tackle complex trans-boundary issues to improve regional safety practices.

Researchers at CSEAS have sought to foster multidisciplinary dialogues through a series of large-scale projects to push frontier technology related disciplines in addition to fostering specializations. In 2007, with special funding from the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT), a large-scale project entitled "In Search of Sustainable Humanosphere in Asia and Africa" (2007-2011) was initiated.[2] The program adopted a holistic approach to what participating researchers called a 'sustainable humanosphere'. This term refers to both the temporal and spatial dimensions that incorporate the entirety of material and energy circulation of the earth and systems of governance toward its sustainability. The humanosphere is constituted by the geosphere, biosphere and human society. The geosphere constitutes the geological composition of the earth system including the atmosphere, the waters and land. The biosphere involves every form of life on earth, incorporating their reproductive, transformative as well as ongoing evolutionary processes. Over time, human societies have evolved and arisen through their interactions with both of them, leading to specific forms of co-existence. Our human societies as such, can be seen as technical systems where energy, materials and information, flow and circulate among these three domains. In sum, the humanosphere is the *ecological and social environment in which local people live* and it formed an important theoretical background for multidisciplinary investigations across the disciplines into Southeast Asia, East Asia and Equatorial Africa. Through such investigations primarily from the tropics, the project aimed to reconsider and overcome existing paradigms that arose from the temperate zone. Sugihara Kaoru (this issue) grounds this conceptual approach, asking us to think about the experiences of Southeast Asia's development within a broader global context of the humanosphere.

Developing interdisciplinary studies through collaborative dialogue

Fruitful dialogue that took place between researchers from different disciplines on the program resulted in a number of outcomes and new research directions.[3] In terms of deepening the understanding of the specificities of Southeast Asia's abundant and fertile environment, it became clear that the region's biomass plays a pivotal role in any understanding of relations between human societies and environmental management. Historically, biomass societies in tropical Southeast Asia – those with traditionally small populations that were heavily dependent on agro-forestry products for their livelihood needs – were the ones that exhibited resilience, developed sustainable practices and created a web of trans-regional tropical communities. Over the last 50 years, these have been re-organized by nation-states and their development priorities and policies, the imperatives of economic growth, and integration into the global capitalist production system. The 1960s Southeast Asian green revolution to increase rice yields was just a precursor to the rise of large-scale plantations and a re-structuring of industrial production in the region. We now have large tracts of lands being 'bio-refined', in effect a form of 'dispossession', reorganizing entire eco-systems across the region. However, these reorganizations should not be seen purely from the effects of human societies on local environments, but rather how our agency has unleashed unparalleled changes that we might not be able to turn back. Yet, researchers can offer serious solutions to re-integrate areas that have fallen under the imperatives of economic development.

Mizuno Kosuke (this issue) and his research team make clear in their project in Riau, Indonesia, that scientific research can aim to recommend a long-term path of development that is not purely an economically oriented one. They are presently conducting an investigation within the framework of the natural sciences (measuring biomass, assessing levels of bio-diversity and the impacts of industry and agro-forestry). The other facet of this research, within a social sciences framework, examines what people think and how people respond to challenges; its aim is to assess the interactions between various stakeholders such as individuals, companies, local government and the state. Combining the research results from this collaborative investigation allows us to see ways in which we can potentially reconstruct our humanosphere through incorporating messages from tropical forests.

Ishikawa Noboru (this issue) also highlights the potentials that can exist in collaborative research. His project in Sarawak, Malaysia, also shows the pressing need for a multifaceted approach toward an analysis of ecologically transforming landscapes such as those found in insular Southeast Asia. Monoculture cropping and the conversion of tropical forests to agricultural land can have irreversible effects when thresholds are crossed leading to reconfigurations that require observations across the disciplinary spectrum. Both the above projects showcase how synergies between disciplines can create a more holistic approach that brings out a richer picture of what is taking place in parts of Southeast Asia and how it is connected to a broader global economy.

Human interventions and the subsequent replacement of ecosystems are not just superficial, but very much affect life below ground. Biomass – living organisms and matter – is crucial for the maintenance of the soil and the regulation of water flows. Good soil conditions are invaluable for insects and bacteria, which provide immeasurable ecosystem services. Our relations to our environments are deeply connected to species with whom we share geographical space. Human societies have, for example, a tenuous relationship with termites *(Isoptera)* and ants *(f. Formicadae)* which form an important part of terrestrial animal biomass in Southeast Asia. Neoh Kok-Boon (this issue), an entomologist who works on ant communities and their relationship to agricultural production in Southeast Asia, highlights the need to review the ingrained 'commonsensical' view of termites as pests that degrade productivity and infest human habitats. What becomes clear is that policy toward our agro-landscapes needs to factor in changing perceptions of other species' roles in a shared ecological space.

Readers might wonder if the humanities have been sidelined by the synergy that has arisen between the social and natural sciences. Any analysis of environments transformed by the pervasive influence of human societies would be lacking without historical scrutiny of the technological and administrative apparatuses that have arisen with the rise of modern nation states in the region. A theme that underpins all of the articles in this Focus is the crucial need to include historical and cultural analysis. Loh Kah Seng (this issue) offers us this necessary perspective in his discussion of flooding – a perennial issue across the region – and how the Singaporean state's management of floods has its roots in a broader colonial (and transnational) historical context.

Formulating new indices to meet the dynamics of regions

Various indices, such as the Gross Domestic Production (GDP), Gross National Production (GNP) or the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), have existed for some time. Putting aside the criticisms that exist over how accurate indices are at gauging the state of the world, there has still been no concerted attempt to quantify and place human activities within the context of global atmospheric-hydrological circulation and assess sustainability of the geosphere, biosphere and the human realm as an integrated whole. Parts of tropical Southeast Asia are home to some of earth's most diverse and fragile ecosystems. The region possesses immense biomass resources sustained by an abundance of solar power. But can we gauge the potentiality of this region –and those which are found in equatorial Africa and the Amazons – through current indices, which are heavily orientated toward measuring economic growth, sustainability and human development? Sato Takahiro and his team (this issue), working within the framework of tropical agricultural ecology, present an alternative way to assess the interactions between environmental sustainability and the welfare of human societies. Through a comparison of the carrying capacity of temperate and tropical zones, they provide some clues as to which areas are most suited to support future human societies in, what is now, a world restructured by our human-centered needs. Incorporating multiple species, entire eco-systems and solar power into analyses can create meta-level discussions to inform policy makers and prepare future societies for the changes awaiting us.

Nurturing a shared common future

To deliver on our promises to offer solutions that can flexibly deal with regional and global needs – be they geared toward the plural needs of an emerging Southeast Asia or towards developing research frameworks that can pursue these – a clear commitment needs to arise from a spirit of collaboration between the disciplines. This requires more than institutional mandates that foster regional 'oases' of research teams. It ultimately requires a restructuring of the intellectual processes that direct our agendas to prioritize concrete solutions. These can help establish the sustainable use of the environment and its energy sources, foster biomass societies, and push for future energy efficient modes of production in tune with current forms of social development. By attempting to collaborate across and through disciplines in a committed fashion, we widen the range of analytical resolution and incorporate more global players who can influence multilateral policy. This can only be achieved by stepping outside of established frameworks and reformulating our disciplines. To do so will allow us to foster new ideas and researchers who can be prepared for the challenges ahead.

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Notes

1 This was the main subject of two consecutive collaborative research projects dealing with food-borne enteric pathogens spreading internationally that were/are supported by Kakenhi or Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research S (no. 19101010, FY 2007-2011) and A (no. 2429038, FY 2012-2014) from JSPS/ Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, and Technology, Japan.

2 The program mobilized specialists from within Kyoto University, CSEAS, the Graduate School of Asian and African Studies (ASAFAS), the Center for Integrated Studies (CIAS), and the Center for African Area Studies (CAAS). Other institutions that have produced strong results from within the natural and earth sciences also actively participated, mainly the Research Institute of Sustainable Humanosphere (RISH), the Institute of Sustainable Science (ISS), the Graduate School of Agriculture, the Institute for Research in Humanities and the Graduate School of Engineering.

3 The main results of this project were summarized in Sugihara, K., Kawai, S., Kono, Y. and A. Tanabe (eds.) 2010. *Chikyuken, Seimeiken, Ningenken: Jizokuteki na Seizonkiban o Motomete* [Geosphere, Biosphere, Humanosphere: In search of Sustainable Humanosphere]. Kyoto University Press: Kyoto. Six edited volumes in Japanese were published as *Koza Seizon Kiban-ron* [Lectures on Humanosphere] in 2012.

Canals and concrete: floods and the Singapore state

Singapore is at a crossroads. Since the 1990s, the city-state has not only ambitiously tried to transform itself into a global city, but more recently, has declared its excellence in balancing economic, social and environmental priorities. In 2011, Singapore was ranked the 4th most livable city in Asia (51st overall) in the Global Livability index. Five years earlier, its government had adopted the ABC ('Active, Beautiful and Clean') Waters program, where rain gardens and roof gardens would not only store water for use, but also 'beautify urban spaces, create new community focal points and enhance biodiversity.'[1]

Loh Kah Seng

Top right: The colonial state encounters the squatters in a flood prone area, 1954. Photograph by the National Archives of Singapore.

ON THE OTHER HAND, the little island of 700 plus square kilometers in Southeast Asia is facing a backlash for its state-led planning. Supposedly far-sighted leaders had not foreseen the repercussions of a liberal immigration policy meant to propel Singapore into the first tier of the world's cities. Racial consciousness has heightened as locals blame the newcomers for raising the cost of living (housing prices in particular) while, as the Nature Society (Singapore) warned in 2009, urban development is accelerating habitat loss.[2] In the general elections of 2011, the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) saw its share of the popular vote dip to its lowest since 1963. Mass rallies against the immigration policy have become somewhat acceptable in a previously quiescent country.

The 1954 floods and the nadir of colonialism

Floods have affected Singapore in the last 60 years and are a microcosm of its local humanosphere, showing how the state manages economic, social and environmental imperatives. A historical perspective is useful, not least because the PAP has been in power since 1959. It highlights the government's aims and methods in dealing with the floods, and their consequences, and throws light on the nature of state-society relations in the present day.

Floods are not merely about the weather, technology or administration but relate to historical contexts. Singapore is a flood-prone area, subject to tropical storms (particularly during the northeast monsoon between December and March), is low lying and lacks adequate natural drainage. But more important than the natural conditions has been the vicious circle of development and flooding. As in other big cities in Southeast Asia, floods occurred when the volume of stormwater exceeded drainage capacity, which had been much reduced by intensive housing, infrastructural, commercial, and industrial development. After WWII, first the British colonial government and then the PAP government more robustly began to transform a rich but unplanned entrepot into an organized city-state with standardized housing and industrial estates to accommodate a growing population. Despite the attention to planning for orderly urban growth, drainage capacity could not keep up with development.

Below left: Lining a diversion canal with concrete, c.1969. Photograph by the National Archives of Singapore.

Reinforcing the socio-economic changes was the political context. In December 1954, a series of floods caused by heavy rains inundated low-lying rural areas, killing five persons. The floods became politicized, as both the British and their critics wanted to be seen to be doing something about the floods and flood victims. The British response was technical: to plan a drainage system and straighten the flood-prone Bedok River. But this was also about orderly decolonization; it was an important departure from the pre-war laissez faire policy, indicating British responsibility to colonial subjects whom they were preparing for self-government. Conversely, the PAP, then an anti-colonial party, and the Singapore Farmers' Association, an affiliated leftwing group, sought to win mass support against colonialism. They charged the British for failing to maintain drains in rural areas and for moving squatters to an inadequately drained resettlement area in Bedok.[3]

Planning flood control for development

British efforts, however, became an accepted precedent for the PAP once the party assumed the reins of power. The PAP adopted prevailing Western ideas of master planning and zoned development to propel the young nation's industrial growth, focusing on physical planning and effective implementing by the bureaucracy. The goals of flood control were partly economic – to maximize landuse for development – but they were also social. Indicative of a social engineering approach to urban governance, the government sought to persuade people to leave their homes during a flood (rather than stay indoors to protect belongings), to move from flood-prone squatter areas to purportedly flood-free public housing estates, and to exhort people not to discard garbage into canals and rivers.

Concrete was a much loved material as the Drainage Department constructed drains and diversion canals, improved existing drains, erected tidal gates, and dug water retention ponds. In the mid-1960s, the department built two secondary concrete-lined canals to divert stormwater from the heavily developed, but poorly drained, Bukit Timah area. Concrete was not only held to be more effective for drainage than natural canals, but also visually reassuring as a symbol of organized modernity; in 1967, the Public Works Department praised a new outlet drain as having "transformed a muddy and ill-defined creek into a pleasant, easily maintained, well-defined canal."[4]

Still, planned flood control for development did not mean the end of environmental hazards. Serious floods inundated the city in 1969 – the worst in 35 years – affecting 10,000 people in both public housing areas and less organized urban kampongs. A government spokesperson explained that it was difficult to devote much resources to deal with an event that happened only once in 35 years, but this unwittingly provided an insight into why the floods had occurred.[5] The statement also revealed the government's understanding of the floods as a climatic – and thus technical – problem, rather than as processes embedded in the socio-economic policies it was pushing.

A decade later, in December 1978, huge floods again submerged much of Singapore, and seven people perished. This time, the crisis precipitated a mammoth state effort to build new, bigger canals and upgrade existing ones in public housing estates and the few remaining squatter settlements. A canal running through the important commercial district of Orchard Road was widened and deepened; care was taken not to disrupt the shopping activities. This concern contrasted with plenty of disruption elsewhere to people's lives between the 1960s and 1980s, as squatters were resettled into public housing in order to make way for planned canals and drains. In Bukit Timah, the Public Works Department happily announced in 1968 that it had the requisite big machinery to bulldoze unauthorized housing and meet its deadlines for drainage works.[6]

A generation later in 2010 and 2011, shoppers in Orchard Road found to their horror invasive storm waters in the streets, boutique shops and carparks. Again, the government instituted technical measures to raise the level of the area, install flood barriers and improve drainage. By this time, however, top-down responses were not so readily accepted. A state-commissioned panel of international experts urged the government to 'educate and involve the general public proactively' in its anti-flood measures.[7] Singaporeans, especially in the social media, began to murmur about how the lauded dam at Marina Bay in 2008, built by the state to protect low-lying coastal areas, had in effect led to flooding inland.[8] The panel of experts had to explicitly expunge this rumor; in truth, the floods had to do more with climate change (leading to more intense storms) and recent population and urban growth, as in previous decades. Yet, there was clearly something amiss in the government's model of balancing drainage works and development.

Humanosphere

Flood control in Singapore illustrates the state's belief that modern science and engineering can transform both human nature and hazardous nature.[9] The emphasis had been on technical expertise, physical measures and effective implementation; in short, canals and concrete. Singaporeans figured in this policy sphere only as passive citizens to be helped or ignorant people to be berated or evacuated. However, planning flood control ahead of national development has not always accounted for the increased risks of flooding in the future. This was akin to how the state had not predicted the adverse effects of the immigration policy on the costs of living, on locals' unhappiness with policy, or in connection with climatic and environmental change.

The humanosphere concept is an alternative to the Western-centric modernization theory of the immediate postwar period. The idea of the humanosphere rejects the Western notion of linear, universally applicable economic growth based on tech-nical expertise and technology. Instead it posits an appreciation of local knowledge, adaptation and contexts as resources, rather than viewing Southeast Asia as an underdeveloped region. It may be unnecessary to forge binaries between the local and universal, or Western and Southeast Asian. But, a historical study suggests that Singapore's planners need to recognize the limits of engineering solutions to environmental problems that have political dimensions. The difficulty of resolving the perennial haze issue in concert with the Indonesian government is testament to this. The other lesson is the need to move away from an authoritarian planning model and enable the citizenry to play a bigger role in dealing with the city-state's environmental and socio-economic problems.

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Notes

1 Singapore, Public Utilities Board, 'Overview of Singapore's Drainage Management Approach', July 2011, p. 24. Last retrieved 29 August 2013 from http://www.pub.gov.sg/general/Documents/overview_DrainageMgmt.pdf.
2 Nature Society (Singapore) Conservation Committee. 2009. *Feedback for the Inter-Ministerial Committee Project on Sustainable Singapore: A Lively and Liveable City.*
3 People's Action Party, *Petir,* June 1956.
4 Singapore Public Works Department. 1967. *Annual Report,* p. 43.
5 *Straits Times,* 18 December 1969.
6 Singapore Public Works Department. 1968. *Annual Report,* p. 27.
7 Singapore, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, *Report on Key Conclusions and Recommendations of the Expert Panel on Drainage Design and Flood Protection Measures,* January 2012, p. 72 (http://tinyurl.com/oskdlvr). Accessed November 2013.
8 Singapore Government, 'Flood Management: Will the Marina Barrage cause flooding in Orchard Road?', 18 December 2012 (http://tinyurl.com/p4acbzk). Accessed November 2013.
9 Scott, J.C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

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Sustainable humanosphere in global history

How do we place the recent experiences of Southeast Asia into a global context, when considering relationships between industrialization and environmental sustainability over the long run? In this brief essay, I frame this question within the context of a large-scale Global COE program 'In search of Sustainable Humanosphere', which was initiated by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Kyoto University (2007-12). In this research program we use the term 'humanosphere' to refer to the environment in which humans live, and we consider the conditions under which a humanosphere has been sustainable. We define the humanosphere as an integrated whole made up of the geosphere, biosphere and human society (chart opposite). Our interests concern the effects of human interventions on the basic sustainability of the earth, and the extent to which industrialization has been responsible for changes.[1]

Kaoru Sugihara

The evolution of humanosphere

The key assumption here is that the humanosphere is governed by a logic that underpins the three different spheres. The geosphere emerged first, followed by the appearance of the biosphere, and finally human society. This sequence is important in the sense that human society has been dependent on the existence of the preceding spheres. We took the assumption that the logics that drive each sphere are different and largely independent from each other.

Firstly, the earth, especially the tropics, receives heat in the form of energy from the sun, and circulates it to the rest of the earth through atmospheric and hydrologic circulation. This basic logic of the geosphere, which drives the distribution of heat energy, remains unaltered by human intervention. The effects of climate change (the rise of temperature, sea levels, etc.) are perhaps the most obvious man-made disturbances, but their impact has been primarily felt on the biosphere and human society, rather than on the logic of the geosphere itself.

Secondly, the logic of biosphere, centered around the existence of life and its reproduction, has also been at work for a very long period of time, and is an essential ingredient for the sustainability of the humanosphere. Demonstrating the distribution of solar energy, a large amount of biomass is stored in tropical rainforests, which house a rich variety of species. This biodiversity has been increasingly threatened by globalization, but remains the basis of global food chains on which humans depend for their subsistence. It is well known that Southeast Asia is a particularly important testing ground for this aspect of global sustainability.

Finally, the logic of human society, especially the idea that members of society should respect their right *to live and care about and for each other,* has been behind the survival and expansion of human society, in spite of disruption from violence, war and other conflicts, as well as discrimination by race, gender and class. It is expressed in humans' ability to hold and expand a large population under local resource constraints and the constant threat of infectious diseases. Yet on the other hand, human actions are based on subjective judgments and are often accompanied by unintended consequences, and add to the unpredictable nature of environmental sustainability.

Above: Smog over Tokyo. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of flickr.

Components of humanosphere

Historically the humanosphere has served three specific needs. Firstly, the survival of individuals is a fundamental function of the humanosphere. In hunter-gatherer societies the basic survival strategy was to secure food, water and energy (typically biomass), and for people to protect themselves from natural disasters, infectious diseases and other threats (from animals and other human communities). The space that provided such a condition consisted of the humanosphere, and the idea of creating a segregated settlement and a site of production separated from the natural environment (typically arable land), which came later, did not eliminate the significance of individuals' survival against natural and other human threats.

Secondly, humans formed institutions, typically around the household or the family to help the survival of others, which enabled them to give birth and rear children more easily. This was the basis for reproduction and expansion of human society, although the latter was not always intentional. Securing food and caring for the members of families (from children, to the old and the sick; from physical, to mental and social needs) required a systematic and social thinking about how to meet human needs within different stages of the life-cycle. Thus the sharing of social values among communities, such as respecting the presence and dignity of others and caring for them, became important requirements of a sustainable humanosphere.

Thirdly, a separate area of the humanosphere developed where humans secured 'subsistence': food, clothing and habitats. The agricultural revolution, based on the earlier successful domestication of crops and animals, is said to have marked a transition into an era of densely settled human communities. In a settled society both production and consumption became more sophisticated, and both fertility and mortality probably increased as a result of more frequent pregnancies and the emergence of a disease pool within human settlements. Meanwhile, the division of labor within local society developed through the growth of exchange. Power became concentrated in the city, and became increasingly central to the state. The 'economic' and 'political' spheres became spatially larger and more visible. Subsistence, however, consists of only a part of the humanosphere; a sustainable humanosphere is a condition that meets all described components of the logics driving the three separate spheres.

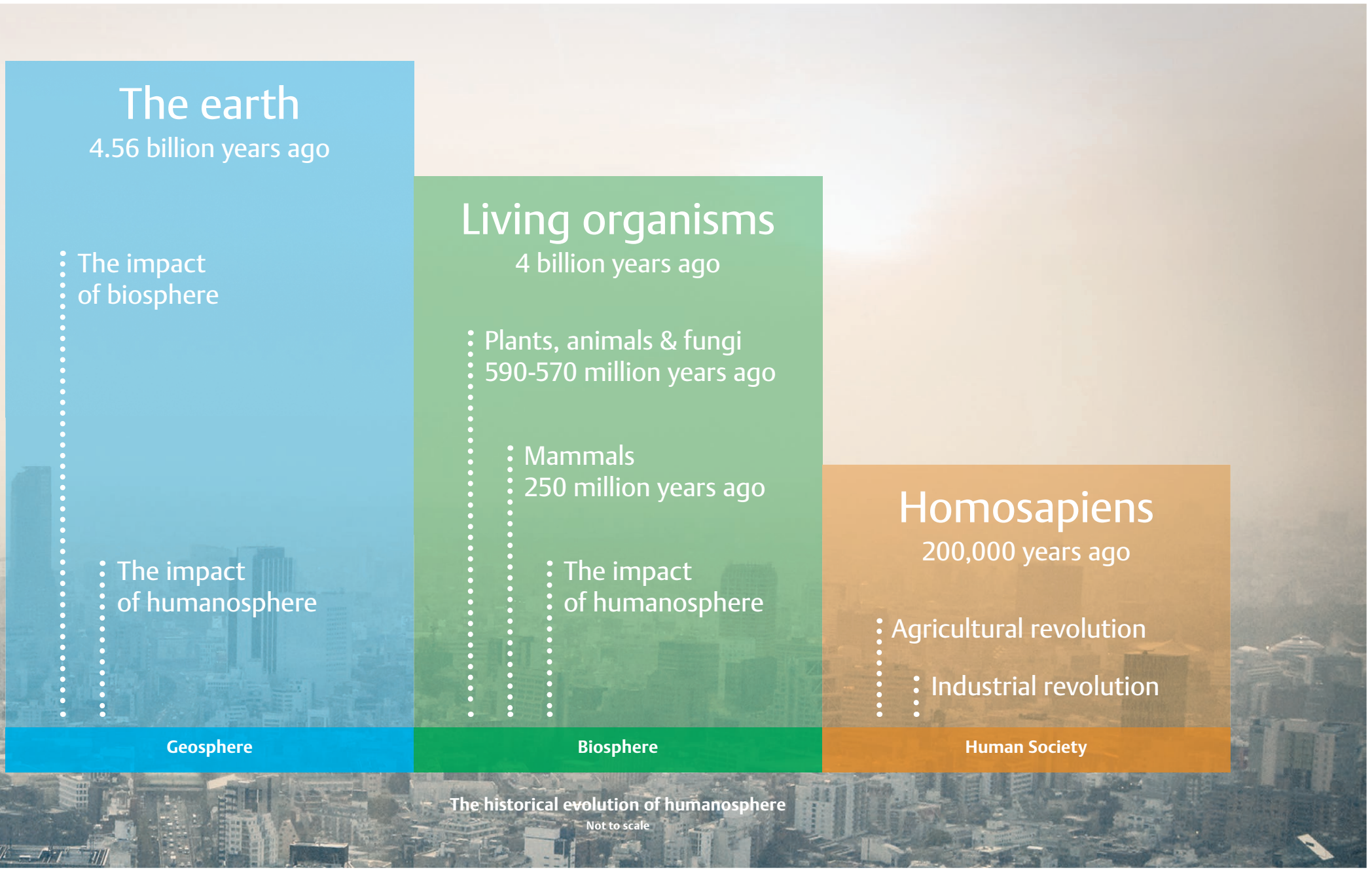
The fossil-fuel-based world economy

Society is 'humanosphere-driven' when the path of economic and political development is consistent with the logic of nature, especially with the logic of the geosphere (energy and material circulation, movement of water and air, etc.) and the logic of the biosphere (the conservation of the eco-system with appropriate food chains and biodiversity).

Until 1800, population growth did not cause major problems for environmental sustainability, if we define it in terms of whether nature was basically governed by the forces of the geosphere (smooth energy and material flows are maintained in accordance with the circulation mechanisms of the earth) and the biosphere (eco-systems and food chains function by incorporating human interventions rather than vice versa). Humans depended on their labor to produce food (on arable land) and energy was derived from biomass (mainly forest-derived), as well as from other humans, animals, water and wind. Burning biomass was the basic technology for heating and lighting, as well as for clearing the land.

However, a massive increase of the use of fossil fuels (especially coal and oil) since the industrial revolution fundamentally altered the relative importance of the geosphere and biosphere, as the balance between geosphere-derived and biosphere-derived energy sources dramatically changed. Capital-intensive industrialization, the use of steam engines and the development of railways and steamships, increased the ability of human society to exploit natural resources and transport them to the centers of industrial production and mass consumption. The emergence of the fossil-fuel-based world economy increasingly demolished geographical and environmental barriers to trade, and plantations and mines were opened up across the non-Western world. Thus the relative autonomy of the local environment, on which local societies had depended for resources, progressively diminished. As world population and GDP grew, this trend persisted leading to deforestation, environmental deterioration and climate change.

Today, the commercial value of land- and forest-derived products in world trade is much less important than that of fossil fuels. Biomass remains an important source of fuel in developing countries (it is often a vital source for local community livelihoods), but it is in relative terms much less valued today than two centuries ago. In this respect, the world economy has become much less organic, more



The historical evolution of humanosphere
Not to scale

urbanized and globally connected through man-made materials, transport and infrastructure. The main agent of this change was global industrialization. Land frontiers were exhausted, and population growth became increasingly dependent on modern industry and services. The long-standing relationship between humans and the biosphere, which had been the basic mechanism of sustaining local populations was broken and replaced by an invisible web of contacts through trade and technological and institutional transfers, without a recognized method of evaluating their environmental consequences.

The great divergence

In this way, the course of human society diverged significantly from the previous pattern of the human-nature interface. The development path changed from humanosphere-driven to productivity-driven. In England and other parts of Western Europe, societies became increasingly concerned with the rise of labor productivity and the improvement of living standards during the early modern period, while in East Asia there emerged a powerful concern for sustaining and raising land productivity to provide for a vast population. But neither the use of coal in England nor extraordinary population growth in China had a decisive impact on global history before the diffusion of industrialization and its effects were felt worldwide. The impact of fossil fuels on the structure of the world economy was so great that the direct interactions between human society and biosphere have become rather peripheral to global resource and energy security issues, as we see them today.

However, this divergence has not been a linear, inevitable course of human history. By the early modern period, in East Asia, land was scarce relative to population, and labor-intensive technology and labor-absorbing institutions developed. When Japan, China and other parts of East and Southeast Asia industrialized a little later than Western Europe did (starting in Japan in the late 19th century and spreading across the region after WWII), the region created a labor-intensive industrialization path.[2] By and large, the region depended on biomass for its energy needs much more than Western Europe did during its period of industrialization. It also had a tendency to choose energy-saving technology and relatively less energy-intensive industries.

The West also eventually directed its attention to energy intensity. Prior to the two Oil Crises of the 1970s, heavy and chemical industrialization (with military industries leading energy-intensive technological innovation), saw a large rise in the energy usage of the leading powers (the United States and the Soviet Union), while many countries under the labor-intensive path maintained steady levels. However, there was a remarkable convergence after the 1970s, through the reduction of intensity in the United States and Western Europe, as well as in China, and eventually the (former) Soviet Union. The traditional distinction between capital-intensive industrialization and labor-intensive industrialization became skewed to some extent, as the focus on energy-saving technology began to dictate the direction of global technological innovation. It is therefore possible to suggest that the global industrialization path began to shift from an energy-intensive one to an energy-saving one. Looking back, the two centuries of an energy-intensive industrialization path as a whole may be seen as a great divergence from a more balanced, environmentally sustainable path.

Of course, the story of energy intensity is only part of a larger narrative of the establishment of a global environmentally-sustainable path. It must include a change in the relative importance between geosphere-derived and biosphere-derived (and clean) energy sources, a fuller respect for the logics of the geosphere and biosphere (e.g., the development of science and technology should be directed more clearly towards sustainability concerns), and the reorganization of human society in accordance with sustainability needs demanded by nature. When such a perspective is established, industrialization will be accepted as a truly positive agent of global history.

Southeast Asia

In 1950, most countries of Southeast Asia were exporters of primary products par excellence. By the end of the 20th century, the ASEAN 4 became exporters of labor-intensive manufactured goods and importers of capital-intensive manufactured goods. Following the lead of South Korea and Taiwan, a rapid shift to export-oriented industrialization took place in the 1970s and especially in the 1980s. The share of their GDP derived from manufacturing output and employment rose rapidly with time lags and variations. Throughout this process, deforestation and other environmental degradation induced by industrialization and globalization have been a serious concern for both local communities and environmentalists. More recently, deforestation has also attracted attention in the context of climate change.

So, to return to the opening question, did Southeast Asia figure badly in comparison to the historical experiences of other regions in these respects? In contrast to advanced Western countries, which used coal for household-use from early on, the ASEAN 4 used a lot of biomass energy for non-commercial use during the process of industrialization, in addition to exporting forest and plantation products. These resources were used, often without concern for environmental sustainability. Meanwhile, the use of commercial energy (coal, oil, natural gas and electricity) increased, but energy efficiency (measured in terms of commercial energy consumption divided by GDP) of the ASEAN 4 and Singapore has on the whole remained reasonable. A combination of these factors, however, was insufficient to meet the rapid growth of energy demands, and Southeast Asia's imports of oil from outside the region have steadily risen. In other words, in energy and resource use terms, the region is becoming less and less self-sufficient.

In none of these respects does Southeast Asia's performance look particularly extraordinary, once the rapid pace of transformation is taken into account. What is unique is that, after all that has happened, the region is still endowed with a remarkably rich biomass and unparalleled biodiversity. Parts of rural Southeast Asia remain humanosphere-driven rather than productivity-driven. Whether or not we can establish the notion that environmental sustainability must be the basis of economic development in the long run is a big challenge both for the region and for the world at large. The answer to this question will determine the future of Southeast Asia, and eventually the shape of human development in the region and the world.

Southeast Asia's resource management will be a vital testing ground for global environmental sustainability.

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Notes

1 This essay is mainly based on Sugihara, K. 'Nettai Seizonken no Rekishiteki Shatei' [The Tropical Humanosphere in Historical Perspective] and 'Kaseki Shigen Sekai Keizai no Koryu to Baiomasu Shakai no Saihen' [The Emergence of a Fossil-fuel-based World Economy and the Reorganisation of the Biomass Society], both in Sugihara, K., Wakimura K., Fujita K. & A. Tanabe (eds.) 2012. *Koza Seizon Kiban-ron: Vol. 1, Rekishi no Nakano Nettai Seizonken: Ontai Paradaimu o Koete* [Lectures on Humanosphere: Vol. 1, The Tropical Humanosphere in Global History: Beyond the Temperate Zone Paradigm]. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.

2 Austin, G. & K. Sugihara (eds.) 2013. *Labour-intensive Industrialization in Global History.* London: Routledge.

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Formulating new plantation studies

The distinction between what constitutes a social and a natural domain continues to make communication for researchers in these two areas an uneasy task. The current confluence of geosphere, biosphere, and human society under global capitalism, however, is too important to be addressed in any way other than through a trans-disciplinary approach. We can no longer afford to be in isolation and separation when investigating relations between natural and social systems. In this article, I would like to introduce our challenge to conventional anthropocentric perspectives in the social sciences by examining connections and changing relations between nature and non-nature. We do so in one part of Southeast Asia that is under spatial reconfiguration through the dispossession of biomass and land.

Noboru Ishikawa

Above: Logs and oil palm seeds – coming and going. © Noboru Ishikawa 2007.

The logging-plantation nexus in Borneo

Equatorial zones in Southeast Asia possess a high concentration of biomass due to a combination of abundant solar energy and heavy rainfall. Hydrothermal circulation makes tropical rain forests prime fertile grounds for the regeneration and commodification of natural and agricultural resources. From the age of commerce to the present, Borneo's biomass has long been linked to the outside world through numerous commodity chains, i.e., networks of labor and production processes connecting distant peoples and landscapes.

For more than half a century, global commodity chains surrounding Borneo have converged into a couple of distinctive yet symbiotic modes of resource appropriation: logging and plantation. From Sabah in the 1960s, then to Kalimantan and consequently to present day Sarawak, there has been an evolving relationship between logging operations and the rise of the plantation industry. The development of the logging-plantation nexus marked a shift in commodification from the one based on the regeneration of biomass to the other that depends on expansive production of planted vegetation. With the clearance of forests, an irreversible transformation has led to fundamental changes in social formation. The object of appropriation has shifted from biomass on land to land itself.

Multi-species, multi-landscape, and multi-disciplinary research

Sarawak is a final resource frontier in Borneo. It thus provides us with a last opportunity to examine the dynamics of human/nature relations under large-scale ecological transformation. Since 2010, a five-year project has been under way to comprehensively document and understand the process of changes taking place in Bintulu District, northern Sarawak, Malaysia, where 57% of the land (12,166.2 km^2) has been converted to plantation fields as of 2011.[1] We have been investigating a tipping point for determining a critical balance between the geosphere, biosphere and local communities by assessing necessary trade-offs and new synergies for sustainability and survivability.

The project is ambitious in that it involves the collaboration of some 20 researchers who specialize in anthropology, geography, Southeast Asian history, global history, area studies, political ecology, environmental economics, socio-linguistics, plant ecology, animal ecology, forest ecology, hydrology, ichthyology, geomorphology and life-cycle assessment. For these researchers to engage in their own fieldwork as well as collaborative sub-projects, a basin catchment composed of two riverine systems, the Kemena and the Tatau, are selected as a unit of analysis. Ecologically, the basin catchment is a mosaic landscape of oil palm and *Acacia mangium* plantations, logging concession areas, secondary forests, swidden fields and peat land. The basin is also home to numerous social groups: the Malay, Melanau, Vaie Segan, Chinese, Iban, Kayan, Kenyah, Punan Bah, Bekatan, Tatau, Lugat and Penan. Almost all the ethnic groups of Sarawak live side by side, from upstream rivers down to coastal areas.

Conducting fieldwork in this unitary yet inherently heterogeneous socio-ecological space enables us to examine a microcosm of Sarawak, which undergoes immense spatial reconfiguration and concomitant social change. Furthermore, a transdisciplinary and collaborative approach enables the research team to observe multi-species relations and interactions.

The strength of this project thus lies in a strategic combination of field sciences. On one side, the natural sciences deal with material flows such as water, gases and minerals through the physical and biological processes at work in and out of plantations. On the other, the social sciences look into the articulations and disarticulations between natural economy and plantation economy, the effects of road networks linking the interior land to cities as well as hills and plains and the reconfiguration of a local-global relationship through commodity chains.

For instance, the ecological research team analyzes the ecosystems of natural and planted forests in the riverine catchment where heterogeneous landscapes are observable in sequence. Multiple research plots have been selected by animal ecologists in order to map the spatial structure of biodiversity. Hundreds of camera traps have been set to monitor the movements of animals in and out of plantations as well as timber concessions. While ecosystem ecologists focus on the flows of nitrogen and particulate organic matter in the forests and rivers, hydrologists look into the water cycle in the ocean and atmosphere, the forests and the rivers, in several tens of square kilometers at a meso-scale. These researchers are in charge of examining material cycles of nature, where the transfer of chemicals from biological to geological systems, are observable in mixed landscapes.

The socio-cultural research team focuses on transformations from a traditional natural economy (swidden cultivation, hunting and gathering of forest produce) to off-farm wage labor (at timber camps and urban areas), and to agricultural income-generation (oil palm smallholdings). We have conducted a series of household interviews on topics such as functionally and spatially extended kin networks, circular labor migration and the flows of remittances.

In addition to the emerging rural-urban continuum, the nature/non-nature boundary has become increasingly porous and manipulable. We highlight a number of larger questions concerning the political economy of resource utilization. Plantations are endorsed by international systems of certification and finances. Planted forests of oil palm and *Acacia mangium* as a potential energy source are considered to contribute to reduction of carbon emissions. The financial sector thus seeks to create instruments for the securitization of tropical biomass under the newly proposed REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) and REDD Plus initiative. The result is a dynamic process of negotiation within an increasingly complex nature/non-nature threshold.

In the course of planning this research, we have thus created new methodological devices, scales and units of analysis that enable an integrative, cross-disciplinary understanding

Nature/non-nature relations in Borneo

of nature/non-nature relationships. In a sense, we have consciously forced ourselves out of our own comfort zones by talking to colleagues who possess their own terminology, academic backgrounds, methodologies and ways of engaging research topics. In doing so, we formulated several 'meeting places' for researchers from different disciplinary specialties to work together in the field. The following are some of the sub-projects which social and natural scientists are collaboratively engaging in.

Wild boars, fish, swiftlets and oil palm

With the expansion of planted forests, human relations to other animals have changed, albeit in a rather unexpected way. It has become easier for some inland Dayak people to encounter wild boars *(Sus barbatus)* coming into plantations for an abundant supply of oil palm seeds. The locals also frequently spot barking deer *(Muntjac spp.)* in remaining logged-over forests where they feed on pioneer plant species. The preservation of salt licks (a natural mineral deposit where animals in nutrient-poor ecosystems can obtain essential mineral nutrients) in reduced impact logging concession areas is found to lead to the better conservation of animals in forests. To examine the relation between the diversity and number of living species in ecologically disturbed areas, and how the local natural economy (i.e., hunting and gathering) has subsequently transformed, a group of anthropologists and geographers examine an economic portfolio of longhouses. Alongside, animal ecologists set camera traps to capture mammals for the purpose of examining biodiversity. To cross-check such ecological data and evidence, social scientists collect the narratives of local people on the changing nature of their environs.

The number of river fish has declined. Only catfish such as ikan tapah (Wallago leerii) is strong enough to survive water coming out of logging concessions and plantations. Why? Because they are slimy!

The above is a comment that anthropologists on the research team have often heard from upriver longhouse dwellers. To examine the changing relations among geosphere, biosphere, and human communities, an understanding of the effects of plantation development not only on the ecosystem but also on people's foodways is necessary. Ecologists, by taking numerous samples of water along the river on the other hand, clarify the effects of agro-industrial operations on the forest ecosystem. This they do in collaboration with ichthyologists (those who study fish), who conduct a biodiversity assessment of the freshwater community.

Our research project aims at empirically examining how natural systems and social systems articulate and how they have been transformed by the impacts of large-scale land use change.

One of the most valued forests products in the area (with more than 400 years of trading history) are the nests *(sarang burung)* of edible swiftlets *(Aerodramus fuciphagus)*. In fact, the nests constitute an important meeting ground for cultural anthropologists, historians (global history and Chinese history) and bird ecologists, to observe how commodity chains and food webs are being reconfigured with the advent of plantations. In the coastal peat lands at the mouth of the Kemena, we have constructed a swiftlet farmhouse for experimental purposes, collecting basic information on laying, hatching and nesting eggs. The farmhouse enables us to examine droppings for nitrogen isotope ratio, an important task, as it provides data concerning the swiftlets' food webs inside and outside plantations. Anthropologists and historians are also collaborating to trace the commodity chains that link Bintulu to the region and further beyond. This leads us to the busy streets of Shueng Wan, Hong Kong and even Chinatown in New York City.

Oil palm has a very peculiar nature. As an industrial commodity, fresh fruit bunches need to be processed within 24 hours, so as to avoid oxidation which lowers the quality of the product. This oxidation, a micro-change at a molecular level, is in fact a driving force of grand social change in our research site, where the traditional riverine society has been transformed to a land-bound one with road networks for transportation of fruit bunches to processing mills. With the advent of roads, many residents have moved to the roadside, at some distance from their longhouses that are traditionally built along the river. Now a long stretch of temporary huts (*langkau* in the Iban language) can be found, and oil palm cultivation on smallholdings has become common. Specialists in the fields of environmental economics, human geography, cultural anthropology and life-cycle assessment, are paying particular attention to the dynamics of oil palm expansion into inland areas where economic activities and kinship relations are based on riverine social networks.

In search of better articulation of social and natural systems

What is the importance of the points of articulation between material cycles and the movements of capital, humans, technologies, and institutions? What are the consequences of changing connections, not only at local, but also at cross-continental and global scale? How do we locate linkages among non-adjacent and seemingly disconnected locations in nature and society? One of the very challenging endeavors of our research project is to empirically examine how natural systems and social systems articulate and how they have been transformed by the impacts of large-scale land use change.

Both the social and natural sciences have long engaged in the study of connections from within their own disciplinary boundaries: from the community, region and nation-state to empire, or from habitat patches to landscapes. We have scaled and rescaled the units of analysis in time and space to comprehend how constituent parts of systems and distant places are linked. However, such engagements have usually been pursued without connecting ourselves to other disciplinary endeavors. As such, the project aims to not just bring out or confirm these connections, but understand them in the context of the emerging bio-industrial landscapes. To find the formula for the co-existence of planted forests with a sound ecological and socio-economic base for local communities is the most effective and practical approach.

What we see in the transformation of Southeast Asia's high biomass societies are features common among equatorial zones across the world. Research in insular tropical Southeast Asia will serve as an important test site where such a multidisciplinary approach may offer valuable clues. Our primary concern is the resilience of local communities that comprise people, fauna, and flora and produce strategies for responding to the emergent geo-political conditions and their ecological impacts, thereby offering alternative paths toward survival and sustainability.

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Notes

1 The project 'Planted Forests in Equatorial Southeast Asia: Human-nature Interactions in High Biomass Society' is funded by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, under its Integrated Science and Innovative Science Scheme (New multidisciplinary fields) of the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S) No. 22221010.

Below: Forest and plantation converge, Borneo. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of flickr.

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Termites and human society in Southeast Asia

Termites are ubiquitous across the world and have widespread beneficial impacts on ecological communities and ecosystem processes. Crop yields increase parallel to the richness of termite species in any given farmland and this is in no small part through the inestimable services termites offer to ecosystems and the role they play as socioeconomic drivers. Long reciprocal interactions have taken place between human society and termites. Yet how they have fundamentally shaped the integrity of our environments, socioeconomic base, and the livelihoods of millions in Southeast Asia today, tends to be ignored. This short essay introduces their role in the eco-systems of Southeast Asia to argue that they should be appraised in any future policies toward the region's agro-landscape and their invaluable interactions in the humanosphere.

Kok-Boon Neoh

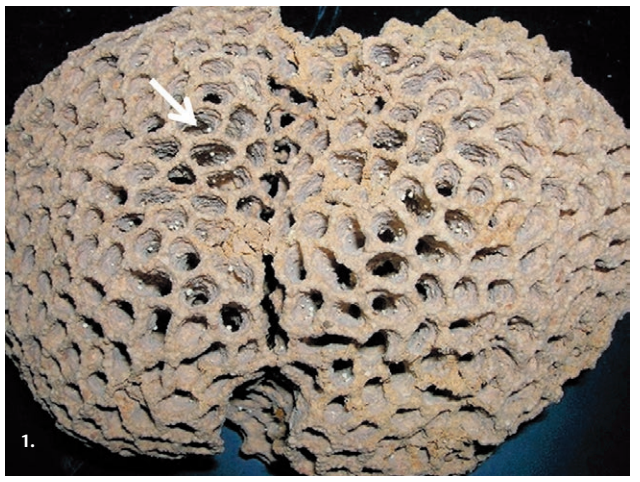

Fig. 1: Termites deposit their food materials as a honeycomb-like structure. The termites cultivate symbiont fungus *(Termitomyces spp.)*, but maintain them in a nodul stage (see arrow). The fungus is essential to degrade plant-derived toxin and provide proteinous nutrient to the young termites.

Fig. 2: The fruiting body of the termite mushroom is well known as a local delicacy in Thailand, Myanmar and Vietnam.

KNOWN AS THE 'WHITE ANT', termites are believed to have existed on the earth long before any other social insects.[1] Studies of fossils in petrified forests in Arizona have suggested that they existed in the Permian period as far back as 220 million years ago. In other words, they are one of the oldest creatures on our planet and witnessed the rise and demise of the dinosaurs. Termites cover 70% of the world's habitable surface and are found predominantly in tropical and sub-tropical regions or areas that are close to the equator.[2] There are over 2,600 described species, comprising a total of 281 genera. Today, the evidence from phylogenetic and morpho-logical studies strongly suggest that termites are eusocial[3] cockroaches and are now classified within the cockroach family *(f. Blattodea)*. This indicates that termites might have evolved from a single 'social cockroach' species, which then diversified into a number of termite families.

Natural ecosystem service providers

Termites are considered to be one of the most beneficial insect groups in natural ecosystems and they are what we can call, typical agro-ecosystem engineers. They are cellulose-based feeders; they feed on a wide array of food ranging from living plant tissue, wood and roots, plant litter and humus in varying degrees of decay. They are essential for the energy flow and recycling of nutrients in the natural environment and are also great modifiers of soil porosity, its water holding capacity, as well as soil water infiltration rates. Termites also enhance soil quality and nutrients such as pH, water content, organic carbon and nitrogen, as well as modifying soil compo-sition via relocating the soil particles during mound construc-tion. Their overall effect in terms of activities influences the composition and spatial arrangement of plant diversity, while their mounds provide a specific microhabitat that enhances the growth and survival of certain tree species. This role can't be emphasized enough in the highly eco-diverse Southeast Asian tropical rain forests. Crucially, through their services to ecosystems, they play a role as socioeconomic drivers for human societies. In other words, there is increasing evidence that shows that *crop yields increase parallel to the richness of termite species in any given farmland.*[4]

Termites and the Southeast Asian food chain

Termites are also a part of our food chain and contain nutrients that are essential to the human diet. They range from queens, soldiers, winged termites and edible termite mushrooms. In other regions, such as Africa and some parts of Latin America, they are an important protein source and Southeast Asia is no exception. Both Thailand and Myanmar are renowned for their wild termite mushrooms *(Termitomyces fuliginosus),* in Thai also known as *Het Khone*. Termites of the family *Macrotermitinae* (macrotermitids) are generally detrivores, i.e., they feed mainly on dead wood, dead grass, dung, and the roots of dead or living plants. By doing so, they turn their food into a fungus comb and cultivate a symbiotic fungus (genus *Termitomyces*) inside their nests. This mushroom serves as a protein source for young termites and helps in degrading the toxic plant-derived compound *(lignin)* in their food. During the monsoon seasons, these mushrooms emerge as a fruiting body in termite nests.[5] In the region, these seasonal mushrooms are appraised as a delicacy and are expensive. During this period, *Yum Hed Khone* (Spicy termite mushroom salad) can cost up to THB 350 (US$12).

If we turn to the southwestern provinces of Vietnam, such as Ben Tre or Tien Giang, the local people roast termite mushrooms with betel leaves. The price of one kilo of termite mushroom in Tien Giang can cost up to 300,000 VND per kg ($15). However, these consumption activities vary within the region. Wild termite mushroom dishes or termites themselves are rarely served in Malaysia, although middle-aged men do have a predilection for queen termites, which are highly sought after. Local indigenous knowledge treats queen termites as an aphrodisiac; they are thought to have special properties similar to that of Viagra and can boost male sexual prowess. Queens are usually swallowed alive before sex to boost performance. Superstitious beliefs can hike the price of queen termites up to an astonishing $1500 based on their color and vitality (doctors reject these effects as nothing more than a placebo effect).

The ritual ant

Aside from their ecological services, nutritional value and perceived aphrodisiacal qualities, termites can have ritual significance in some Southeast Asian societies. In some parts of Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, the culture of worship-ping termite mounds is practiced, especially by local Chinese communities. Mound-building termites, especially species such as *Macrotermes spp.* and *Globitermes spp.*, are widespread across the Malay Archipelago. Their earthen mounds may reach as high as 1.5m in height and 2m in diameter. Once a termite colony dies or becomes inactive, the termite mound can erode over time. In Malaysia, some local people see these inactive termite mounds as structures created by spirits. They believe that a local guardian resides in them, known as 'Keramat' in Malay and 'Datok Kong'(拿督公) in the Hokkien dialect. In fact, in Malaysia, Keramat-worshipping originated from Islamic mysticism and had been practiced in rural areas as far back as the pre-colonial period (1500-1870s). This was soon adopted by Chinese immigrants who believed that local guardian spirits found in nature should be paid respect in order to ensure their overseas security and prosperity.[6]

Fig. 3: Indonesia consists of 22.5 million hectares of peat swamp forest that accounts for 5% of global peat lands. Large peat swamp areas are degraded annually due to improper management and wild fires. Under such conditions, where earthworms are absent from highly acidic and disturbed areas, termites offer valuable ecosystem services.

Fig. 4: A queen termite can become as large as 7 cm in length and contain more than 50% unsaturated fats, proteins, minerals and vitamins that are essential to human health. Superstitious-ly, it is also believed that consuming a raw queen termite can boost male sexual prowess.

Even with urbanization, these species and their earthen mounds can be found relatively easily in residential areas, parks, and along roadsides. Residents in the neighborhood usually shelter inactive termite mounds within small red-painted shrines. Worshippers pray to the 'Datok Kong' for protection, good health, good luck, and on occasion to strike it lucky with the lottery.[7]

Notorious pest status in urban and agro-landscapes

Irrespective of their revered holy status, termites are regarded as a perennial unwelcome pest in both human settlements and farmlands. The annual damage caused by termites in 2005 was estimated to be US$50 billion worldwide, and in Southeast Asia alone, it was estimated to cost approximately US$400 million per year.[8] Unlike in temperate countries, it is common in Southeast Asia to find several termite pest species co-existing and infesting the same buildings, and worse, other termite species can re-infest building structures after previous termite treatments have been successfully carried out. Consequently, intensive and multiple treatments are con-sidered to be the only solution. This poses an uphill challenge to pest control personnel in Southeast Asia. Among oriental termites, the Asian subterranean termite, *Coptotermes gestroi* (Wasmann), is the most economically important and invasive species in Southeast Asia. This species is well adapted to

5.

Fig. 5:
An inactive termite mound is seen as a spiritual-made structure and it is believed that the structure is home to a 'local guardian', a 'Keramat' or 'Datok Kong'.

those environments where human settlements prevail and it attacks mainly wooden structures like cabinets, parquet floors, windows, door frames and roofs. In peninsular Malaysia and Thailand, approximately 85-90% of termite infestations in urban areas are reportedly attributed to this one species alone.[9] Although they are believed to have originated from the Indo-Malayan region, they have spread, mainly through human activities, to the Marquesas Islands, Mauritius and Reunion (Indian Ocean), the New World tropics (Brazil and Barbados), some islands of the West Indies, Southern Mexico, the Southeastern U.S., Taiwan and more recently Sicily, Italy.

Termites are infamous for the damage they do to field crops, such as oil palm, rubber, sugar cane and the coffee tree in Southeast Asia. They attack plants by cutting and destroying the whole root system or hollowing into the root and causing inner damage to the plants. In particular, stressed plants, such as those under disease attack (i.e., fungal attack, microbial infection), insufficient watering or drought, and physical damage (e.g., fire, improper tree branch trimming) are generally the most susceptible to termite attack. We should keep in mind the impact of these small but powerful insects. In Vietnam, other mound-building termites are responsible for *more than* 90% of the collapses of river dykes and reservoir dams.

Public perception

We can see that in Southeast Asia, termites are an everyday part of people's lives in terms of nutrition, ritual practices, and their valuable ecosystem services to the natural environment. However, their pest status *outweighs any other perceived advantage.* Local farmers always view termites as a pest despite their ecological services to farmlands. Employing this soil-dwelling insect as part of a nutrient management strategies is rarely an option because these lack time efficiency and can pose unexpected risks if mishandled. Misconceptions have led to a great neglect of the valuable natural ecosystem services they provide to Southeast Asia's agro-landscape. In fact, there is evidence that indicates the termite attained its pest status from the time of the Asia's Green Revolution in the 1960s.[10] The revolution introduced technologies including agro-chemical fertilizers, pesticides and mono-culturing, which led to a significant distortion in biodiversity balance and ecosystem stability. These practices harmed termites' natural predators after pesticide application, and mono-culturing reduced alternative food sources for them. This created conditions whereby termite populations were forced to attack the only available mono-crops prepared for human consumption.

Yet, promisingly we are starting to see a shift in attitudes as agricultural producing countries start to promote sustainability in their agro-landscapes. Earthworms (soil-dwelling arthropods) are being reappraised for their highly valuable ecosystem services. However, unlike termites, the distribution of earthworms is limited and always absent from areas that are highly acidic and disturbed. We have learnt invaluable lessons from termites' ecosystem services in agro-ecosystems, but these were mainly from arid and afro-tropical regions in other parts of the world. What is now necessary is to look at how knowledge is applicable in a Southeast Asian context, which has a greater diversity of insect communities, complex agro-ecosystem processes and a specific socioeconomic background particular to the region. Only through social research inquiry combined with scientific approaches from biology and ecology on how to harness termites' services, can we reengage with the important and vibrant world teeming under our feet. To do so can potentially improve farmers' socioeconomic needs through promoting practical and practicable models of coexistence between termites and human society. And this will undoubtedly help us rehabilitate and reappraise the role of insects in future models of sustainable economic development in the region.

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Notes

1 As evidenced by the oldest described fossil termite, *Meiatermes bertrani (f. Hodotermitidae)* found in Spain, which dates back to the Cretaceous period 130 million years ago.
2 However, the distribution of some termite species has extended to cooler zones and the global warming is seen to be one of the triggers behind this.
3 Eusocial means they have a high level of social organization.
4 Evans, T., et al. 2011. 'Ants and Termites Increase Crop Yield in a Dry Climate', *Nature Communications* 2, Article number: 262, doi:10.1038/ncomms1257
5 Mainly between the months of September and January.
6 Cheu, H.T. 1997. *Malay Keramat, Chinese Worshippers: the Sinicization of Malay Keramats in Malaysia.* Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore.
7 In contrast, we can also find inactive termite mound worshipping widely practiced in India, but only if a divine snake, the cobra, is found to be living in the mound.
8 Lee, C.Y. 2007. *Perspective in urban insect pest management in Malaysia.* Vector Control Research Unit, Universiti Sains Malaysia. 104 pp.
9 Lee, C.Y., Vongkaluang, C., & M. Lenz. 2007. 'Challenges to Subterranean Termite Management of Multi-genera Faunas in Southeast Asia and Australia', *Sociobiology* 50: 213-221.
10 See Black, H.I.J. & M.J.N. Okwakol. 1997. 'Agricultural Intensification, Soil Biodiversity and Agroecosystem Function in the Tropics: The Role of Termites', *Applied Soil Ecology* 6:37-53; Subhash Chander, et al. 2003. 'Changes in Pest Profiles in Rice-wheat Cropping System in Indo-gangetic Plains', *Annals of Plant Protection Sciences* 11:258-263

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Humanosphere Potentiality Index

Many of the so-called developed countries have narrowly set production and increased productivity as societal goals. Under this production-centric worldview, per capita GDP (or GNP) has long been a *de facto* indicator of the wealth of citizens even though numerous problems have been pointed out.[1] Since the beginning of the 1990s, various organizations have become engaged in efforts to develop indices to take the place of GDP and to evaluate the state of the world from the standpoint of new concepts such as 'sustainability' or 'human development'. However, no index has been developed that attempts to place human activities within the context of global atmospheric-hydrological circulation or the capacities of the world's diverse life forms.

Takahiro Sato, et al

RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT TREND of developing indices and concerned with how to read the state of the world, we have developed a Humanosphere Potentiality Index (HPI), with the aim of addressing the present and future welfare of human societies within a broader context of environmental sustainability. This perspective is derived from the concept of the 'humanosphere', as explained in the introduction of this focus issue, and expresses our dissatisfaction with the limits of measuring the status of human societies through the Human Development Index (HDI).

Humanosphere: an analytical framework to assess humanosphere potentiality

The humanosphere is chronologically made up of three spheres: the geosphere, biosphere and human society. These three spheres have historically interacted with each other and inform our current place in the world, and possess their own inherent logics. The geosphere in terms of 'circulation', the biosphere in terms of 'diversity' and human societies in terms of 'autonomy and empathy' (fig. 1). In working towards a sustainable humanosphere, we believe it is important for human societies to acknowledge two fundamental points: that human societies have developed through their interactions with both the geosphere and biosphere; and that there is a need to *reconstruct our relationships* with them by understanding how their logics influence the sustainable development of human societies.

For the sustainable development of our societies, we need to reconstruct our relationships with the three spheres with respect to their inherent logics.

Our strategic intention has been to offer an alternative to HDI. In 1990, the UNDP announced HDI with the intention to offer an alternative to GDP (GNP) . The index was founded on a theory known as the capability approach – what individuals are capable of – advocated by the economist Amartya K. Sen. HDI is the outcome of a calculation that involves simply averaging three functions of human development: capabilities in health, education and income. We offer a different viewpoint to HDI. HPI is neither a simple attempt to reverse the view of the world as seen through HDI, nor is it merely an 'additional perspective'. Rather, HPI attempts to evaluate the potentiality of the geosphere, biosphere and human societies to support our livelihood through a clearly defined logical framework. As a result, we are expanding the viewpoint of HDI.

If we consider HDI from the perspective of HPI we see that its focus is on an evaluation of the 'autonomic' achievement of 'better' livelihood. HDI is also founded on the idea that it is crucial for individuals to be able to gain access to fundamental services (health, education and income) and collectively create and pursue value in their own lives. The HPI extends the perspective of evaluation to include the potential for sustainable development. This approach was adopted to consider care practices of human societies and their fundamental ability to empathize. Ultimately, it makes an evaluation which acknowledges the core logics of circulation in the geosphere and diversity in the biosphere. As we will show, through considering HDI from this expanded perspective and based on the layered logics, unexpected correlations and differing viewpoints become apparent.

Calculating the Humanosphere Potentiality Index (HPI)

Through a research project that has run for over five years, a team of researchers working in Asia and Africa created the components of HPI (fig. 2). We created nine indices that are expressed as a three by three index to include potentiality indicators, availability indicators, and disturbance indicators in each sphere. Our potentiality indicator refers to the quantitative scale that each sphere possesses, while the availability indicator attempts to present the 'proper' relationships of the elements that compose each sphere. These two indicators are expressed using the value per unit of land area. The disturbance indicator presents human-induced negative effects that arise in the two spheres. We subtract this to adjust the potentiality of each sphere, keeping modern human society in mind. As such, the disturbance indicators are expressed using value per capita, and not value per unit of land area.

To represent the geosphere, we chose three indicators: solar energy, an atmospheric-hydrological circulation index (as a potentiality and availability indicator), and CO2 emissions to express the logic of circulation, which all have established accessible datasets.[2] Likewise, for the biosphere biomass, the biodiversity index and human appropriated net primary production (HANPP)[3] were included to express relations. Biomass is represented by forest biomass per unit area[4] because forests account for almost 90% of the total plant biomass in the world.[5] The biodiversity index estimates the biodiversity of terrestrial ecosystems based on the numbers of species of vascular plants, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.[6] HANPP as a disturbance indicator explains the per capita appropriation of the net primary production of human activities.[7]

To create an index for human society, we adopted population, care relations and total unexpected deaths. These indicators reflect the idea that there are two fundamental logics that characterize human society, namely autonomy and empathy that form a basis to make possible care relations. We chose population[8] as a potentiality indicator as all human societies show tolerance and consideration towards each other. As such, population sizes represent the potential magnitudes of care relations. We have calculated care relations through two elements: the first one is the sharing of abodes,[9] which expresses potential care access in the household, and the female-to-male ratio, which expresses fundamental gender equality in household care relations.[10] Total unexpected deaths are the sum of the number of deaths resulting from the actions of the geosphere (disasters),[11] biosphere (infectious disease),[12] and human society (intentional injuries).[13]

In each sphere, the three figures that express potentiality, availability and disturbance are integrated into a composite index, creating a simple average of three indicators. The HPI is an integrated index averaging these three indices.

Humanosphere Potentiality Index (HPI) and the Human Development Index (HDI)

Figure 3 is a representation of the world from the perspective of HPI. Those countries that have a higher HPI value possess a higher potentiality of sustainable development than countries with lower scores. It shows that the indices for the tropical zones of South East Asia and Latin America are as high as those of South Asia, Central Africa and parts of the Middle East. In the countries with the highest HPI figures, the human society index is above average, in addition to the fact that the

Fig. 1: The logic of the three spheres

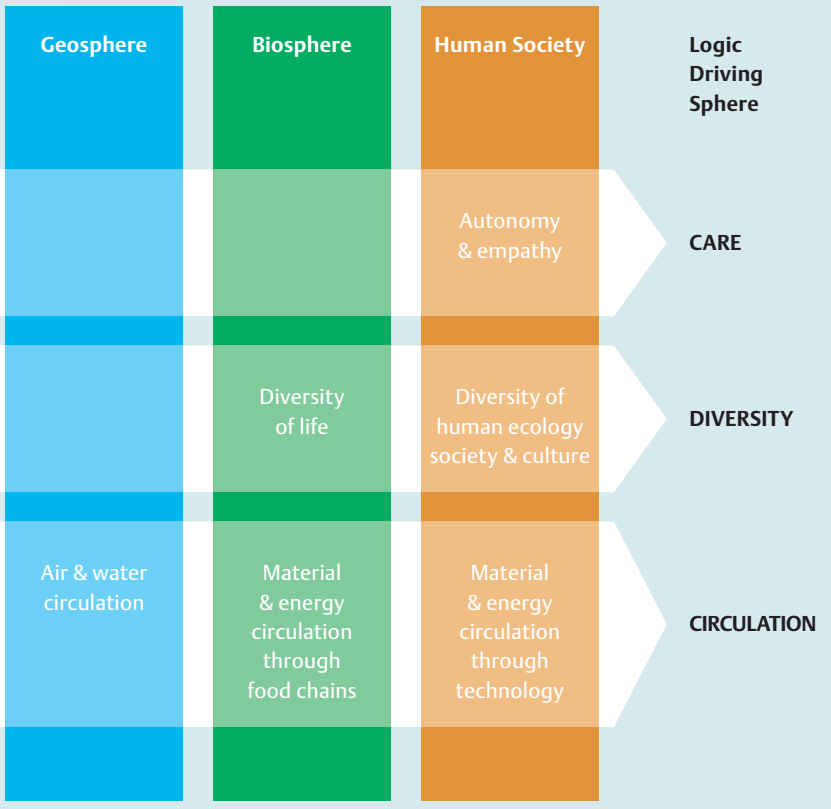

Fig. 2: Structure of the Humanosphere Potentiality Index

Indicators	Geosphere	Biosphere	Human Society
Potentiality Indicators	Solar Energy	Biomass	Population
Availability Indicators	Air & water circulation	Biodiversity	Care relations
Disturbance Indicators	CO_2 emission	Human appropriated net primary production	Unexpected deaths

Understanding the sustainability of geosphere, biosphere and human society

indices for the geosphere and biosphere are also generally high. The human society index is the primary contributor to the high figures of HPI in certain Middle Eastern countries.

Figure 4 shows the world as viewed through HDI. Following HDI for 2005, Sub-Saharan African, South Asian and South East Asian countries are ranked low, while North America, Western Europe, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand – which all display high economic development, long average life expectancy and long schooling years – are ranked high.

Comparing the two figures, there is a visible gap between our HPI and the HDI. In order to examine the relationship between these two indices through categorizing the world (115 countries) into temperate zones (60 countries) and tropical zones (55 countries), let us demonstrate the correlations that exist between HDI in 2005 and HPI (fig. 5). It is clear that there is a significant negative correlation between the two indices across the whole world. Nonetheless, when examining the correlation between HDI and HPI in both tropical and temperate zones, it becomes apparent that tropical zones show a significant positive correlation while the temperate zones indicate a negative correlation significant at the 0.01 level. To put it in plain terms, there are entirely converse correlations evident in these two zones. What does this difference signify? Firstly, with tropical zones – with a positive correlation between the HDI and HPI – we see that amongst the three composite indices there is a strong correlation between the biosphere composite index and the HDI ($r = 0.491^{**}$).[14] And when examining the constituent components individually, it becomes clear that the tropical areas with high HDI are areas that possess an abundance of biomass (0.351^{**}) and biodiversity (0.338^{**}); enough atmospheric-hydrological circulation (0.357^{**}); and produce less CO2 emissions (0.609^{**}). The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, conducted by the United Nations from 2001 to 2005, employed the concept of 'ecosystem services', and the connection between the ecosystem and our well-being was evaluated.[15] The central component of this concept refers to the benefits that we obtain from ecosystems, including such benefits as provisioning services, regulating services, cultural services, and supporting services. The correlation observed between HDI and the constituent components of HPI in the tropical zones reflect these connections described as ecosystem services between the natural environment and human society.

Secondly, the temperate zones demonstrate a vivid negative correlation between HPI and HDI. Among the constituent components of HPI, the negative correlation between the geosphere (-0.582^{**}), the biosphere composite indices (-0.241^{**}) and HDI is significant. Examining the specific components of the composite index individually, the areas of temperate zones that demonstrate a high score of HDI also possess the characteristics of weak solar energy (-0.517^{**}), a low evaluation in biodiversity (-0.250^{*}), high atmospheric-hydrological circulation (0.426^{**}) and an abundance of biomass (0.399^{**}). The zones also have tendencies to display high CO2 emissions (0.612^{**}) and a high HANPP (0.386^{**}), which is indicative of high levels of disturbance in both the geosphere and biosphere.

There is a synchronizing elevated tendency between HPI and HDI in tropical zones but, its disappearance in temperate ones is an interesting finding. Nonetheless, we see a clearly observed correlation in countries between HDI and CO2 emissions in both tropical and temperate zones. Fundamentally, this means that the countries that have achieved a high level on HDI *have been contributing to the deterioration of the environment regardless of where the country is located.*

In search of a sustainable humanosphere

The aim of our work has been to construct and propose the establishment of HPI through the critical incorporation of existing indices such as HDI and others. The most central characteristic of HPI is that it offers a positive evaluation of tropical zones, such as Southeast Asia, where some of the world's richest ecosystems lie. By comparing HDI and HPI, it becomes clear that the evaluation reached for tropical zones stands out in stark contrast. This is derived from a difference of perspective in respective evaluations: HDI evaluates three dimensions that include health, education and income, with a focus on an 'autonomous' achievement of 'better' livelihood (i.e., human development) – while HPI focuses on values for livelihood that incorporate circulation and diversity, autonomy and empathy. With increased material prosperity, we tend to think that countries in the temperate zones, including Western nations and Japan, lead a life of abundance whereas the tropical countries located in South East Asia and Africa, exist in poverty. However, such an ingrained belief can be questioned by asking in what sense do we really have 'satisfying' lives? Will such lives ensure our livelihoods with sustainability? Our HPI casts this into question.

Our index provides only a snapshot of how things have progressed so far. We cannot predict any trend in the decrease of forested areas and we cannot propose or evaluate ideal technologies or specific structures for institutions in different regions to deal with changes. As such, HPI has its limitations in that ultimately, it is a crude index. However, what it enables us to do is to provide an *indication* of the world's current situation in a much more comprehensive manner by presenting an agenda that is neither included nor addressed by HDI.

The HPI underlines the crucial message that we must pay much more attention not only to development but also to our 'potentiality' from the perspective of the humanosphere, in order to promote a sustainable livelihood for all human societies. Ultimately, the world viewed through an index such as HPI, offers us a perspective that makes us rethink human development from within a much broader and deeper context, that of the 'sustainable humanosphere.'

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Notes

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3 HANPP, through the consumption of food, paper, wood and fiber, alters the composition of the atmosphere, levels of biodiversity, energy flows within food webs and the provisioning of important ecosystem services.

4 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2010. *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010* (FRA 2010). Rome: FAO. http://tinyurl.com/kdlxyve (last retrieved 23 February 2012)

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6 Groombridge, B. & M.D. Jenkins. 2002. *World Atlas of Biodiversity: Earth's Living Resources in the 21st Century.* Barkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

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8 United Nations (UN). 2011. *World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision.* http://tinyurl.com/3qrc4g2 (last retrieved 28 January 2013)

9 Worldmapper Team. 2011. http://tinyurl.com/pxq8p6a (last retrieved 5 December 2011)

10 U.N. 2011. ibid.

11 What we mean here is the annual average death toll that occurs from earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, storms and wet/dry mass movement from 1980 to 2011. See: International disaster database Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). 2011. http://www.emdat.be (last retrieved 5 February 2011)

12 WHO. 2004. Mortality rate from HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis. See *The Global Burden of Disease: Disease and Injury Country Estimates.* http://tinyurl.com/cq6yhx (last retrieved 7 June 2011)

13 See WHO. 2004. ibid., for mortality rate from conflicts, homicide and suicides.

14 ** and * indicate the level of significance correlation with 1% and 5%, respectively.

15 See Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis.* Washington: Island Press.

Fig. 3: Humanosphere Potentiality Index

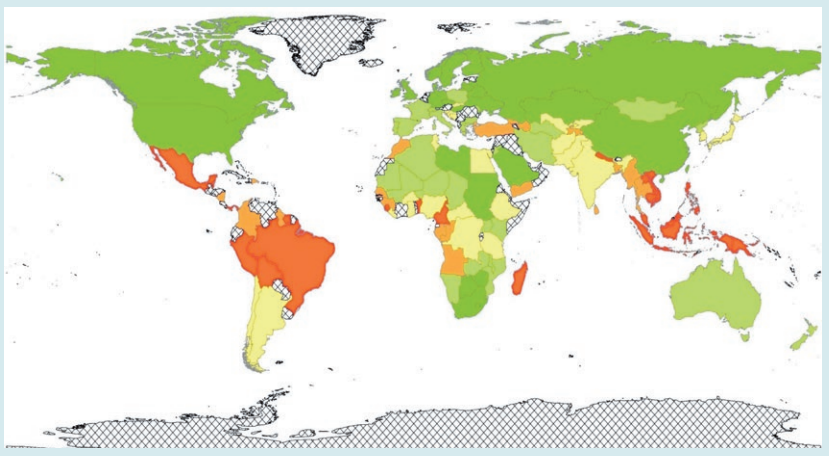
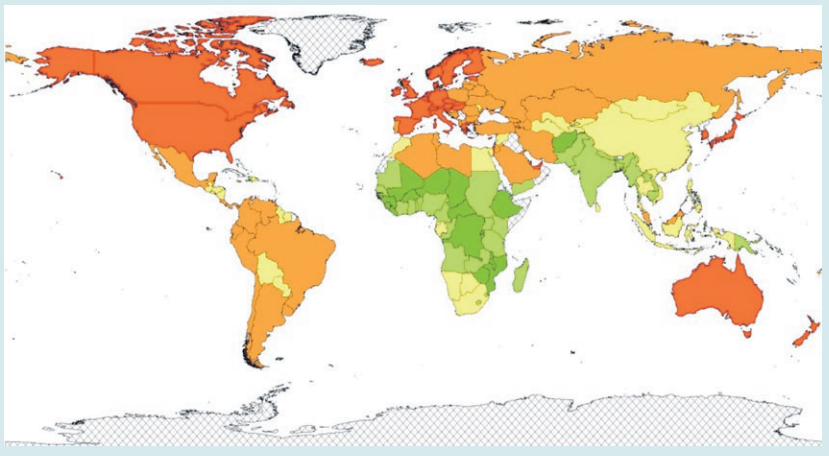


Fig. 4: Human development Index



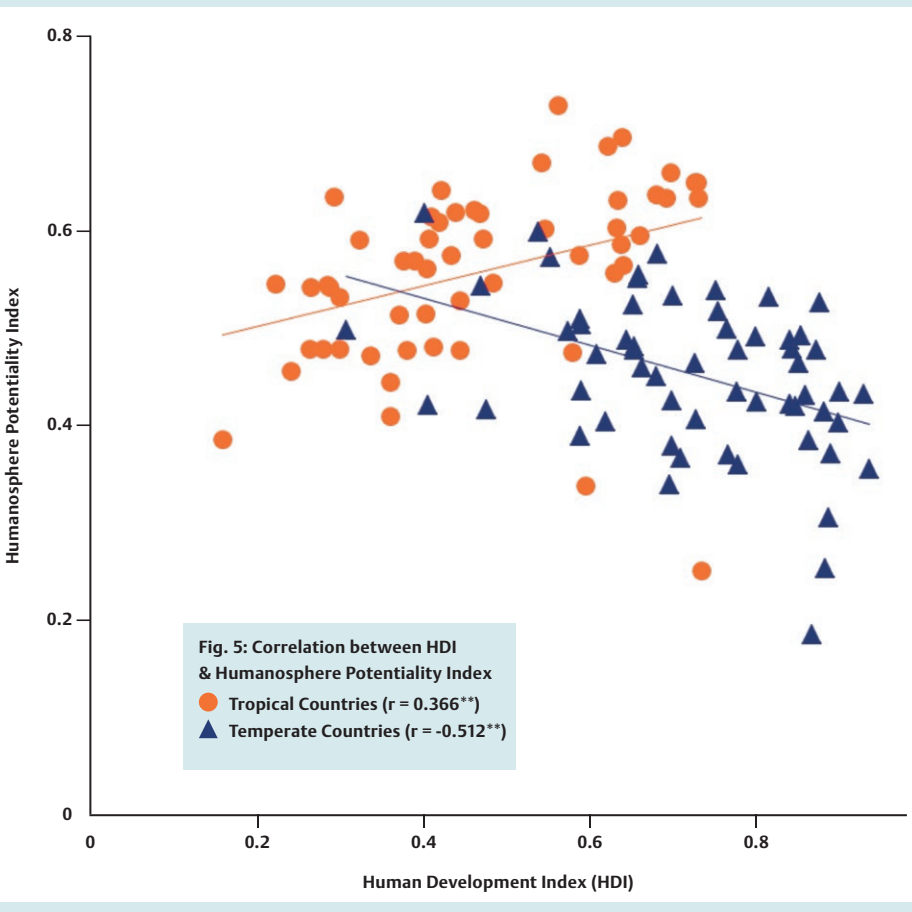


Fig. 5: Correlation between HDI & Humanosphere Potentiality Index

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Toward forest-based management of the peat lands in Riau, Indonesia

In Southeast Asia, wet peat lands are rich in biomass and water resources, but extremely vulnerable to human induced environmental changes. They form a part of tropical forests where decomposed organic matter accumulates over many years, creating carbon-rich soil. Southeast Asia's peat lands account for 11-14% of the total global peat carbon pool.[1] Even though peat lands are not suitable for cultivation, they have been increasingly turned into an economic resource over the past 20 years. They have undergone unprecedented large-scale exploitation, leading to serious degradation, large scale fires, and carbon emissions across the region. Seeking to understand how peat lands are changing, a joint team of researchers from Kyoto (Japan) and Riau (Indonesia) have been undertaking a two-phase multidisciplinary initiative in Bengkalis (Riau) to shed light on forest use. Our research aims at a holistic analysis of forest use in a socio-economic context and an assessment of the ways in which local people can potentially participate in the rehabilitation of degraded peat lands toward long-term improved management.

Kosuke Mizuno

Peat land forests in context

In recent years, our understanding of the role of forests at a local and global level has led advocates to emphasize the importance of conserving remaining peat lands. They have argued for the restoration of degraded peat land hydrological systems and other sustainable vegetation cover, and called for a water management 'master plan' for peat land areas, including plantations.[2] Peat lands need to be recognized as a pan-regional environmental asset, which can be passed on to future generations without blame being laid at the feet of those who misuse them at present.

In Indonesia, as early as the 1930s, research looked at the distribution of peat lands, examining the chemical, physical and biological characteristics of vegetation.[3] Topographical and soil studies have been thoroughly conducted on original peat lands,[4] and after the Kyoto Protocol, studies on peat land carbon emissions greatly increased.[5] Yet, most studies have been conducted by natural scientists, and few have been willing to tackle the social issues that are acutely related to the livelihoods of people who live off tropical peat lands. As such, collaboration with the social sciences is necessary.

In Sumatra, two main groups of people make use of peat swamp forests. The first are the Malay people and their 'culture of transit'. Tropical soils are quickly depleted by intensive cultivation, but the Malay people have preserved them by engaging in sporadic swidden agriculture, fishery, and trade – selectively felling noble aromatic trees, collecting useful products and strategically creating swidden parcels.[6] Through these activities, they have left great swathes of forests intact. The other group includes immigrants such as the Javanese, who have moved in and used the peat land tidal forests on a large scale in order to produce rice. Over the years, they have become permanents residents in the areas they have settled in.[7]

The traditional practices of the Malays in Sumatra have a limited ecological footprint and are ecologically compatible with the peat land's natural resource functions. Yet since 1965, new imperatives aimed at economic growth have seen peat swamps subjected to repeated rapid land-use change. Degradation has resulted from transmigration (both spontaneous and official), large-scale logging (legal and illegal), oil palm plantations, and the short-rotation of timber plantations to supply pulp and paper industries and fires. Shockingly, by 1988, over 93% of the peat swamp forests of Sumatra and Kalimantan were degraded, leaving only a few areas in a primary state.[8]

Rehabilitation through collaboration

Over the past few years, we have studied these degraded peat lands in Riau in collaboration with local people whose livelihoods depend on the health, regeneration and sustainable management of peat lands, with the aim of developing 'forests for people'. Through a group of experts whose fields include economics, anthropology, hydrology, soil analysis and ecology, we have holistically approached the peat lands. Any comprehension of the bio-diversity of peat lands must factor in the plant diversity as well as the role of birds and mammals, water flows, and human transformations of the environment. And yet, we have to also bear in mind the different degrees of conservation taking place in natural forests, timber plantations, oil palm estates and local communities. The wise use of peat land will relate to crucial issues such as water management and plant use. As such, plant diversity studies can help us to understand how we can sustainably introduce plants that are crucial to land use.

Biomass studies – those that look at key issues of biomass society such as production, land use, natural forests, timber plantation, oil palm estate, and local community interactions – are also necessary to understand the specific biomass production processes, peat land conditions, their productivity and material cycling. Biomass production flows are closely related to profit maximization; however, the stock of biomass production is closely related to conservation.

Multidisciplinary studies such as ours that depend on the active involvement of people who live in and around forests, and the local knowledge they possess to preserve it, can allow us to clearly pinpoint causes of degradation. How human societies and their subsequent needs shape them must be included in any form of people-oriented sustainable forest management and the revitalization of their place in our world.

Gradual land transformation in Riau

Until the early 1980s, the local Bengkalis society (Riau) maintained features of balanced peat land society. That is, the population was small and people made use of peat lands through traditional means, such as fishery activities, small-scale logging and trade in jungle rubber, without drastically altering their landscape. However, fast-paced production changes occurred in the 1990s and 2000s, radically transforming the area. Large-scale logging commenced in 1998 and led to oil palm cultivation. Subsequently, over a fifteen-year period, the exploration and opening of timber plantations as well as the oil palm estates led to an influx of people and the further degradation of peat lands. People in the area are enthusiastic for oil palm cultivation, but such cultivation has not lived up to everyone's economic expectations as productivity has been far below national or provincial standards and exposed to fire risks, in spite of the continued use of fertilizers and agricultural chemicals. Lands have become increasingly less fertile and there are frequent fires.

However, we find that people continue to hold multiple occupations and do not rely solely on income from peat land cultivation; they also earn from fishery, trade, public services, construction, grocery stores and cooperatives. Jungle rubber, for example, is a stable source of income; it is something that people inherit, and it has not noticeably changed the peat land landscape. Although its productivity is low compared to national standards, it provides a fairly good income as cultivation expenses are minimal. The past fifteen years have seen people's survival strategies make the most of available opportunities presented by the cultivation of palm oil, employment at timber companies and a subsequent rise in large-scale illegal logging and smuggling.

Although people have inherited good use practices that intensively relied on peat land, large-scale timber plantations, logging, deforestation and oil palm cultivation, have changed them and made them vulnerable to fire. As a result, land has suffered severe degradation, and finally become barren or abandoned, much to the unfortunate expense of people's livelihoods and the environment's carrying capacity.

Toward the rehabilitation of degraded peat lands

Our research has now reached the second stage: to rehabilitate and conserve the degraded peat lands based on the information gathered in our study. By far the biggest threat is posed by fires so to rehabilitate the landscape we aim to reintroduce and replant original swamp forest species such as *Bintangur* [*Calophyllum lowii*], *Ramin* [*Gonystylus bancanus*], *Meranti bunga* [*Shorea teysamanniana*], or *Jelutung* [*Dyera lowii*] on abandoned peat land. These trees can grow quickly (within eight to ten years) and can be cut and sold on domestic and international timber markets. The goal is to rehabilitate dried degraded land, convert it to wet and plant covered land and create conditions that can generate income for local people. We expect that forestry that includes the needs of the people will enhance the function of conservation, while also securing income as part of a survival strategy driven by small farms. Environmental conservation can be promoted by local people if they feel benefits from this conservation oriented program. In effect, this is a win-win solution from the perspective of both conservation and survival strategies.

We hope that companies will make use of the idea of a 'people's forest' to enhance the protection zone among *Hutan Tanaman Industri* (HTI) (Industrial Timber Estate) forests. Ultimately, we hope for a production growth path that does not compromise survival strategies (i.e., the household economy) and conservation factors (i.e., the rehabilitation of peat land). This path brings together multiple actors, interests and business needs and works as a bottom-up model of sustainable forest management that integrates multidisciplinary efforts to revitalize our environmental heritage for present and future generations.

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Notes

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5 Page, S., et al. 2002. 'The Amount of Carbon Released from Peat and Forest Fires in Indonesia during 1997', *Nature,* vol. 420: 62-66
6 Furukawa. 1992. op.cit.
7 ibid.
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Right top: Harvesting oil palm.

Right below: Collection of raw rubber by the middleman.

Encouraging young talent

IIAS Masterclasses and Summer/Winter Schools

SINCE 1996 IIAS has been organising masterclasses and Summer Schools to enable talented graduate and PhD students or young postdocs from both Asia and Europe to have intensive intellectual interaction with leading figures in Asian Studies.

Since 2011 the format has changed somewhat. IIAS now organises an annual Summer (or Winter) School, consisting of a four-day masterclass, intended for excellent PhD students and led by renowned scholars in their field. The Summer/Winter Schools aim to contribute to the nurturing of a multidisciplinary community of young Asia experts, and address topics pertaining to one of IIAS' three clusters: Asian Cities, Global Asia and Asian Heritages.

The 2013 Macau Winter School: Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age
Co-organised with the University of Macau, the Macau Winter School (16-20 December 2013) welcomed participants from Europe, America, Asia and Australia, and was run by three world-renowned scholars in the fields of Asian post-colonial hybridity: Prof. Akhil Gupta (UCLA), Prof. Engseng Ho (Duke University) and Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University).

2014 Summer School in Chiang Mai, Thailand
The 2014 IIAS Summer School, 'Reading Craft: Itineraries of Culture, Knowledge and Power in the Global Ecumene', will be held at Chiang Mai University from 18-22 August 2014. It will explore the theoretical issue of the knowledge and practice of culture, against the backdrop of historically contingent case studies featuring transnational circulations of craft.

Discussions will revolve around critical reflections on crafts in Asian contexts. Academic Directors: Prof. Pamela Smith (Columbia University), Prof. Francoise Vergès (Center for Cultural Studies, London/Collège d'études mondiales, Paris) and Dr Aarti Kawlra (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi).

Application Deadline:
Friday 14 February 2014, 9.00 am CET
For more information see www.masterclasses.asia

To help secure the future of Asian Studies, IIAS stimulates involvement starting from the graduate level by means of different measures and activities. Examples are the IIAS masterclasses and Summer/Winter Schools and the National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies.

IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies

EACH YEAR, IIAS awards a prize for the best master's thesis in the broad field of Asian Studies in the humanities or social sciences, written at a Dutch university. The Prize consists of the honorary title 'Best Master's Thesis in Asian Studies' and a three month IIAS fellowship to write a PhD project proposal or a research article.

In total 16 excellent theses competed for the 2013 award, covering a wide academic field ranging from architecture, to history, philosophy, anthropology, political science and other fields. During the award ceremony on 3 December 2013, chairman of the IIAS Board, Professor Henk Schulte Nordholt, said that all submitted theses revealed a productive combination of disciplinary rigor and in depth regional knowledge, calling this a "happy marriage between disciplines and area studies".

This year's prize went to Tabitha Speelman from Leiden University, for her thesis: 'Fast and forward? High-speed rail reform in China and what it costs to whom.'

This thesis contrasts perspectives of the state with its top down blueprints and the lived experiences of travellers and ordinary people on the ground. In doing so, the author uncovers the weakness in an ideologically driven development model that is exclusively geared towards success. Intended to speed up national integration, the fast train also creates new inequalities by leaving behind marginalized areas and lower classes. As such the train – and the risks it involves – is a telling metaphor of China's overheated development.
Henk Schulte Nordholt

For more information on the shortlisted theses and next year's Thesis Prize, see: www.iias.nl/master's-thesis-prize

MA courses on Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

OVER THE LAST YEARS, IIAS has been intensively engaged with Leiden University and targeted Asian partners in the development of a programme to complete two interrelated Master's in heritage studies, at Leiden University and an Asian partner university, consecutively. This has already resulted in the option to focus on critical heritage studies within the Leiden MA in Asian Studies.

Leiden
As of September 2013 it became possible for students to opt for the focus on *Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe* within the History, Arts and Culture of Asia specialisation of the Leiden University MA in Asian Studies. The curriculum includes courses in critical approaches to heritage studies and heritage and policy making, as well as a number of electives that focus on heritage management, specific subjects/regions of Asia, and/or the study of Asian languages. Inspired and supported by the IIAS Asian Heritages research cluster, the curriculum allows students to explore the contested character of all representations of culture, the plurality of notions of heritage in Asian and European contexts, and the way distinct and conflicting values of indigenous, local communities and official state discourses are negotiated.

Asia
In the foreseeable future the successful completion of the programme at Leiden University will give access to a second one-year MA programme in heritage studies at an Asian partner university (including Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia, the National Taiwan University, or Yonsei University in South Korea). After completing both programmes, graduates will, in addition to the two separate degrees from both universities, also receive a certificate for the combined programme in Critical Heritage Studies.

Information and application
For information see: http://tinyurl.com/masters-in-leiden. When applying for admission, please add "Critical Heritage Studies" to the application form. On a case-by-case assessment, it is possible for students to enroll in the programme starting from the second semester of this academic year (2013-2014).

The *Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe* focus is supervised by Dr Adele Esposito from IIAS and the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) (a.esposito.2@umail.leidenuniv.nl)

IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize 2014

IIAS offers an annual award for the best national master's thesis in the field of Asian Studies, in the Netherlands.

Photo © Ania Blazejewska

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

Criteria
- The master's thesis should be in the broad field of Asian Studies, in the humanities or social sciences
- The thesis must have been written at a Dutch university
- Only master's theses which have been graded with an 8 or higher are eligible
- The thesis must have been evaluated in the period 1 October 2013 – 30 September 2014
- Both students and their supervisors can apply

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

Deadline
1 October 2014, 9.00 am
Submissions should be sent to:
Secretariat
International Institute
for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9500
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
iias@iias.nl

The Newsletter | No.66 | Winter 2013

News from Asia

Rohingya or Bengali? Revisiting the politics of labelling

Su-Ann Oh

THE SECTARIAN VIOLENCE that erupted in Rakhine (Arakan) state in Myanmar has prompted heated discussions over ethnicity, citizenship and belonging. Subsequently, in an effort to determine accurate numbers, a fortnight-long registration exercise was conducted by government authorities in Pauktaw Township in Rakhine state in November 2012.

However, the Rohingya reportedly refused to register because the authorities erased the term 'Rohingya' from completed forms and replaced it with 'Bengali'. The Rohingya fear that, once registered as 'Bengali', they would be declared illegal immigrants by the authorities and summarily deported from the country. The Rohingya's claim to being a bona fide ethnic group of Myanmar, and hence their claim to citizenship, is steeped in controversy. They assert that they have been living in Rakhine state for thousands of years, even before the Burmans conquered the Arakan kingdom in 1748. This is disputed by the government and certain sectors of Myanmar society who assert that the Rohingya are, in fact, illegal migrants from Chittagong in Bangladesh who crossed into Burma in the nineteenth century.

The classification of ethnicity in the registration exercise may be inaccurate, but it is not accidental. The Rohingya's refusal to being labelled 'Bengali' highlights their acute awareness of the politics of labelling, and is a way of resisting state-imposed definitions and manipulations of ethnicity, and thus criteria of belonging.

While we may believe that a rose by any other name is still a rose, in the politics of ethnicity and citizenship, the stakes are high for those who are labelled to their disadvantage or, indeed, not labelled at all. The census does not include the ethnic group 'Rohingya', thereby erasing them from the official register. This effectively means statelessness for the Rohingya – with its attendant aggravations, discrimination and persecution. As a result, countless Rohingya men – and more recently, women and children – have taken to the seas in search of employment possibilities in other countries.

One may argue that the registration exercise is just that, a way of counting the number of people in a specific location. However, this comes up against two stumbling blocks: first, ethnic classification is a flawed and inconsistent science and second, labels are not created or used in a social vacuum.

Ethnicity instead of race

How do we decide if someone is Rohingya, Karen or Kachin? Do we use 'objective' criteria and indicators, as colonial administrators did based on nineteenth century paradigms of race – size of nose and head, colour of skin, curliness of hair – and /or other less physical characteristics such as language, religion, political allegiance, beliefs? Or do we use self-identification provided by those who subscribe to a particular group identity? The term 'ethnicity' is often used to refer to selected cultural, social and physical characteristics of groups of people. It is broader than 'race', which refers to subspecies and derives from paradigms of biology. But 'race', which has fallen out of popular use and has mostly been replaced by 'ethnicity', also at one time included the social and cultural characteristics of a population. For example, the British, who carried out extensive censuses in their colonies, based racial classification on both physical and cultural markers. However, the indigenous diversity in their colonies combined with a myriad of immigrant groups confounded their neat categories of race.

The difficulty stemmed from the underlying assumptions of nineteenth-century European paradigms, that fixed and mutually exclusive boundaries could be set up around each race, and that racial identity was the only significant factor in determining political allegiance. This ran counter to how group identification actually operated in the colonies, particularly Burma. Instead of mutually exclusive ethnic and geographical demarcations, polities in Burma were characterised by interpenetrating zones of power and influence, as argued by Edmund Leach. In addition, while studying the Kachin, he showed that ethnic categories can usefully be regarded as roles vis-à-vis other groups. Moreover, ethnic identity is often defined in contradistinction to other groups. Ronald Renard notes that there are almost no references to the Karen before the nineteenth century, and that the term was originally a Mon-Burmese one referring to various 'forest peoples' often at war with each other. However, the Karen now define themselves as an ethnic group, and are recognised as such by the Burmese state. It has also been argued that conflict generates ethnicity, in that community divisions, the struggle for control of natural resources, the interventions of foreign governments and de-contextualised media descriptions of war, combine to ethnicise socio-political issues. Yezid Sayigh takes this a step further, arguing that conflict and acts of armed struggle actually contributed to the formation of Palestinian identity.

One IDP camp near Sittwe can only be accessed by sea with boats transporting vital aid supplies such as rice and cooking oil. Rakhine State, Myanmar, September 2013. Photograph reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Mathias Eick, EU/ECHO on flickr.

Criteria are diverse

Edmund Leach contended that what set people apart had less to do with their language and culture than their framework of political ideas and this was greatly influenced by the altitude they lived at and hence the hold that the state (and its political and cultural influences) had over them. This gives credence to the observation that ethnic identification may be subscribed to despite diversity in language, religion and political affiliation. The different ethnic groups in Myanmar are composed of subgroups of people with diverse religious, cultural, geographical and even language backgrounds, subscribing to a myriad of political allegiances. Given the great variation in intra-group characteristics, the maintenance of ethnic boundaries often depends on whether the physical and cultural markers attributed to an ethnic group are aligned with other ideological, social, and economic divisions in society. For instance, religion and language can be especially strong factors in maintaining divisions that reinforce cultural definitions of ethnicity.

In the case of the Rohingya, their religion (Islam) and darker skin (derogatory terms such as 'Kalaa', meaning Indian, are used by the media and some sectors of society to describe them) are employed as markers to emphasise their difference in a predominantly Buddhist country. Nonetheless, even these indicators of difference are subject to change. For example, after the end of Dutch rule in Malacca in the early nineteenth century, the Dutch (Protestant) Eurasian community had converted to Catholicism and been absorbed into the larger Portuguese Eurasian population within a few generations. The fact is that there are no universally agreed classifications of ethnicity. Physical and cultural markers that are used to differentiate one population from another can be ambiguous and are subject to change across time. Moreover, characteristics that are considered major signifiers of ethnicity in one society may be considered minor ones in others. Thus, ethnic classifications are best understood as fixed and simplified descriptors which help us to make sense of a world that is often messy, dynamic and indefinable.

Labels have a life of their own

The act of ethnic categorisation inscribes labels in our social world, and is the process by which a certain view of the world comes to be socially established as 'reality'. In a census, individuals find themselves firmly fixed as members of a particular dimension and substance. In time the new ordering of society created by the census acts to reshape that which the census sought merely to describe. This phenomenon was demonstrated by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson who conducted an experiment in a school in 1960s America. They labelled one class slow learners and the other fast learners. The teachers were also informed of the label given to each class. By the end of the year, the students' test results showed that they had performed in accordance with the label applied to them, even though they had all been randomly allocated to their classes at the beginning of the year.

Labels also assume politicised meanings and may compel us to act in accordance with them, particularly when they determine our eligibility for and access to resources. Research on deviance has shown that once labelled as criminals or mentally ill, people are placed in circumstances that make it more difficult for them to continue with 'normal' life and may provoke them to turn to 'abnormal' actions, such as when a prison record makes it difficult for people to get a legal job and they subsequently turn to illegal ones.

In short, labelling has the power to change how we view and respond to the world. Charles Keyes has noted that almost every theory of ethnic relations points to the importance of political and economic structures in the creation and maintenance of ethnic inequality and ideology. Dominant groups may 'create' or negate ethnic labels and ideologies to justify political power or economic exploitation. Thus, the group with the authority to create and impose ethnic categories, and to decide who fits into these categories, (re)constructs reality. As the incident in Pauktaw Township showed, both the Myanmar authorities and the Rohingya are keenly aware of the power of labels. However, the Rohingya have decided that, for now, it is better to remain unlabelled than unfavourably labelled, an understanding borne out of bitter experience and prudent intuition.

Su-Ann Oh is a Visiting Research Fellow at ISEAS

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

Ethnic insurgencies and peacemaking in Myanmar

Tin Maung Maung Than

MYANMAR is a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious society. Officially, there are 135 sub-national (ethnic) groups under eight major ethnic communities. Population estimates (the last census was in 1983) indicate that the majority Bamar (formerly called Burman) ethnic group constitutes over 60 per cent, while seven major ethnic groups and non-native (mainly of Chinese and Indian origin) groups making up the rest of the population.

British colonial rule, which separated 'Burma proper' from the frontier areas (populated by non-Bamar), had far-reaching implications for the subsequent creation of an independent Myanmar state. Myanmar nationalists, especially the Bamar majority who advocate a unitary state, accused the British 'divide-and-rule' policy of preventing the indigenous nationalities from developing a sense of belonging and bonding that could culminate in an 'imagined community'.

Consequently, nation-state building in Myanmar became a contentious exercise with many ethnic 'nations' challenging the unitary concept of the ruling elites and resorting to armed struggle. Civil war erupted soon after independence and the government had to fight a multi-front war against a multitude of ideological and ethnic insurgencies, some of which are still continuing.[1]

Ethnic groups challenge the state

The seeds of rebellion among ethnic groups were sown under colonial rule and World War II, with the latter availing them the opportunity for stockpiling weapons and mastering the art of armed conflict. Traditionally, the British recruited the 'martial races', identified as Chins, Kachins and Kayins (Karens), into military service, while very few Bamars were in uniform.

World War II brought ethnic tensions between Bamars and indigenous minorities into the open as some of them who were loyal to the British crown found themselves at odds with the Bamar nationalist allies of the Japanese invaders. Heavy-handed behaviour by inexperienced nationalist commanders added insult to injury and fostered resentment among some indigenous minorities. Such experiences under Japanese occupation "revived and intensified" the minorities' "ancient antagonisms" against Bamars for their perceived hegemony. The anti-fascist resistance movement that followed (in March 1945) also had differential impacts on different ethnic communities, which affected ethnic perceptions of majority-minority relations.

The most contentious issues among the ethnic groups were the alleged Bamar dominance over indigenous minorities, the interpretation of 'autonomy' and 'rights and privileges' guaranteed by the Panlong Agreement and the right to secede (after ten years) guaranteed by the 1947 Constitution. Thus, separatist tendencies toward an independent 'ethnic nation' with its distinctive 'identity' led to armed rebellion by all major ethnic groups during the first decade of independence, as non-state armed groups (NSAG) proliferated throughout the Myanmar countryside.[2]

The Kayin insurgency in January 1949 by the armed wing of the Karen National Union (KNU) then known as Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO; now Karen National Liberation Army or KNLA) was the first of dozens of uprisings by ethnic NSAGs. The Mons first joined the KNDO cause and then morphed into its own revolt and formed the New Mons State Party (NMSP) in 1962. The Karenni or Kayah rose up against the government in 1957 and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) was later formed to lead its independence movement. Later, a pro-communist faction split to form the Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) in 1980. The Shan independence struggle began with the armed uprising by the *Noom Suk Harn* (Brave Young Warriors) that later evolved, in 1964, into the Shan State Army (SSA) led by the Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP). The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) was formed in February 1961 with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) as its military wing. The Rakhine (Arakan) "liberation" movement was formed in 1968 while the Chin insurgency came late in 1988. By the late 1980s, virtually all the ethnic insurgencies had shifted their primary objective from secession and independence to 'self-determination' and greater 'autonomy'.

Ceasefires, dissent and defiance

The first round of ceasefires resulted from the initiative of the Directorate of Defence Service Intelligence (DDSI), not long after the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took over state power on 18 September 1988. Exploiting the split in the Burma Communist Party (BCP) in which its ethnic units (Wa and Kokang) rebelled against their Bamar leaders, the DDSI managed to secure ceasefires with three main former communist factions in the first half of 1989. The winning formula seemed to be premised on three points: the right to remain armed; the right to administer their own demarcated territory; and to conduct cross-border commercial activities.

Later, these ceasefire groups (CFG) were allowed to participate in the National Convention that was organized to formulate the fundamental principles of the new 'democratic' Constitution. Altogether 17 NSAGs entered into ceasefire arrangements with the ruling military junta represented by the DDSI; all were verbal agreements, except for the one with the KIO. Between 31 March 1989 and 6 April 1997, seventeen ethnic armed groups were officially recognized by the military junta as CFGs. With the advent of the 2008 Constitution that instituted a multi-party electoral system with provisions for autonomy and a continuing role in political governance for the military, the status quo of quasi-autonomous CFGs became untenable. The constitutional provision (article 338) that was meant to anoint the Myanmar Defence Services (MDS), also known as the Tatmadaw, as the sole armed organization, created a security dilemma for the junta with respect to the CFGs' armed wings.

In accordance with the Constitutional rule forbidding independent armed forces, the junta insisted in early 2009 that the CFGs be put under MDS control, either as a border guard force (BGF) with reduced strength and capability, or a local militia. The CFGs repeatedly expressed their preference to keep their forces intact and negotiate terms and conditions for demobilization with the new government after the 2010 elections. On the other hand, the junta (which restructured itself as the State Peace and Development Council, or SPDC. in November 1997) refused to negotiate with the CFGs regarding the BGF scheme. Tensions exacerbated between major CFGs and the military when the MDS subdued the defiant Kokang group in August 2009 by supporting an internal revolt following violent clashes with the MDS. The pro-junta leaders who came to power then decided to join the BGF scheme. The New Mon State Party (NMSP) also declined the military's offer to transform its military wing into a smaller BGF.

Up to five deadlines, beginning with October 2009, passed and the impasse continued after the 2010 elections and the coming into force of the Constitution in January 2011. Meanwhile, five CFGs (KIO, NMSP, SSA-North, KNPP, CNF) who had rejected the BGF scheme together with the KNU and five smaller NSAGs (representing the Lahu, Arakan, Pa-O, Palaung and a splinter Wa group) formed the 11-member coalition named the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) in February 2011 to collectively work for a federal solution to the problem of ethnic conflict. However, the government did not recognize it as a representative organization for its members.

Making peace

After the elections in November 2010, the military indicated that the ceasefire agreements had lapsed, but still did not move against the armed ethnic groups who refused to comply with the BGF scheme. After assuming power in March 2011, the elected Union Government announced, on 18 August 2011, an offer to all armed ethnic groups to enter into peace talks based on a two-step process. Though initially sceptical toward the government's peace overture, altogether 13 NSAGs eventually entered into ceasefire talks at both provincial and Union levels.

To further institutionalize the peace process, the 11-member Union Peace-making Central Committee was established on 3 May 2012. This high-level body in turn delegated the implementation tasks to the 52-member Union Peace-making Work Committee (UPWC). Confidence-building measures with the armed ethnic groups were stepped up under the government's new peace initiative and as a result even the non-CFGs, Karen National Union (KNU) and Restoration Council for the Shan States (RCSS), entered into ceasefire negotiations with the central and provincial governments.

Despite tangible progress in ceasefire agreements and an enhanced level of trust and confidence between the central government and most of the armed ethnic groups, the latter are still highly suspicious of the MDS' motives as the fighting continues in the Shan and Kachin states. Much of the dispute and discord has to do with lack of political dialogue, and military encroachment into CFG territory. The government's sequencing of 'ceasefire first' has been unacceptable to the KIO/KIA, which had been fighting since June 2011. The President's instruction to the MDS in December 2011 to take only defensive action towards KIA, and eleven preliminary meetings at both State (provincial) and Union levels, did not yield any ceasefire agreement. Instead, towards the end of December 2012, the fighting escalated with the KIA.

Concluding remarks

While the UPWC has been relentlessly engaging with the new CFGs and other NSAGs to consolidate the ceasefires and move towards political dialogue, the continued violent resistance of the KIO/KIA is a vexing issue for the reformist government of President U Thein Sein. The government has also been accused of a dual-track policy of talking while fighting and some even questioned the President's ability to control the military and enforce his instructions. In the international media front, the MDS has been vilified and subjected to condemnations by ethnic activists and human rights organizations, some of whom are lobbying for a unilateral ceasefire. The military's top leaders need to handle these predicaments with finesse and patience and perhaps embrace a new security mindset to enable the MDS to become part of the solution in the peace process rather than a problem as portrayed by its detractors.

Tin Maung Maung Than is a Senior Research Fellow at ISEAS.

Notes

1 See, e.g., chapter 5, in Callahan, M.P. 2003. *Making Enemies; War and State Building in Burma.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. In fact, the country's capital was under siege and almost fell to Kayin ethnic insurgent army in early 1949. That bitter experience left an indelible mark in the psyche of the military leaders and state managers of the day.

2 For a comprehensive account, see Smith, M. 1991. *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity.* London: Zed Books.

Kachin Rangers, armed resistance against Japanese invaders, funded and coordinated by the American military. Photograph reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of flickr.

A redesign for New Asia Books

After almost 7 years of serving the worldwide Asian Studies community, we thought it was time to elevate the popular New Asia Books site to current web standards. With a redesign also comes a new address: www.newbooks.asia (but rest assured, the old address www.newasiabooks.org still works). We listened to our site users and as a result changed a few structural elements without touching too much of its textual design. A major improvement is that the site now responds to the visitor's screen size. No matter on which device you are browsing, the content is always clearly readable. (fig.1)

Thomas Voorter

THE INITIAL PURPOSE of New Asia Books remains: to help busy scholars keep track of the vast array of Asian Studies books that are published every month, and to free them from time-consuming and potentially unproductive searches for new material. A book search on a site such as Amazon will throw up a long list of responses relating to books published several years ago – books that an experienced academic will either already have read or have made an active decision not to read. New Asia Books presents you with only exactly what is necessary: a list of current publications in your field of expertise.

1.

Content

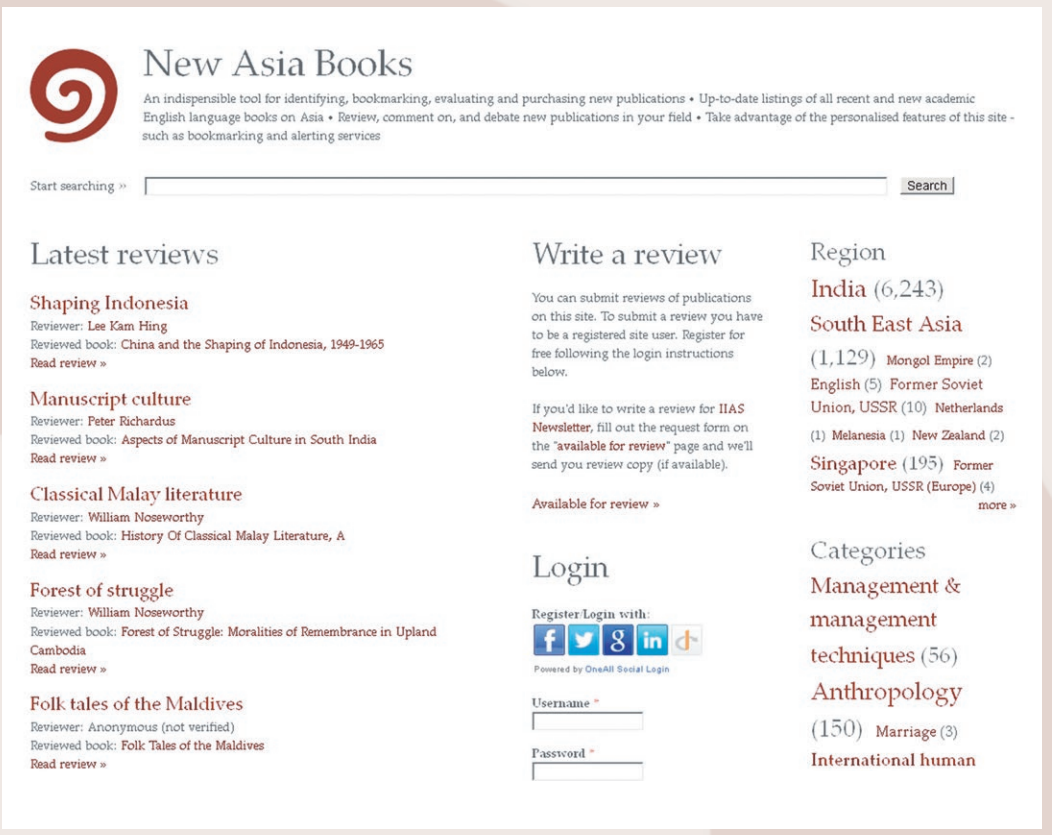
Although an ongoing and never-ending endeavour, we aim to include only current and recent titles on the site, weeding out not yet published (NYP) titles, and older titles. The books are presented with factual information such as author(s), editor(s), publication date, ISBN, and – where available – a jacket image, detailed description, table of contents, and biographical information. Following the Book Industry Communication (BIC) classification schemes, each publication is tagged according to regional and disciplinary categories (mainly within the Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts).

The website receives new bibliographic data every month from Nielsen BookData, a major bibliographic data provider. However, we also encourage publishers to maintain their lists of publications on the site through their Partner Account (see below) and inform us of any new titles that have become available for review. Many publishers are already in direct contact with our reviews coordinator – those who are not, are encouraged to do so.

Search and find

You can benefit fully from the site by using the faceted search function, prominently at the top of the page. On the search results page, you can narrow down your results by checking the categories. (Fig. 2) The site also helps you to automatically find titles with similar content. On every book page there is an easy way to bookmark what you've found or to send the information to your favourite social media account or email address. For some site features – like bookmarking or submitting a review – you first need to login. We have simplified the login procedure by also allowing you to use your existing Facebook, Twitter, Google or LinkedIn account, without having to create an extra account for New Asia Books.

2.



3.

Write a review

New Asia Books is the place to go for the latest book reviews, many of which are also published in The Newsletter. New Asia Books reviews cover the very latest publications from a wide variety of publishers. You'll find high quality, critical essays and not just short marketing blurbs.

4.

All users of the site are able to directly post reviews of books they have read and evaluated, but users can also request a review copy if they do not yet have the book in their possession. To identify which book you would like to review, follow the instructions in the <Write a review> section and continue to <Available for review>. (Fig. 3) You will be presented with a list of books available for review. The <Request review copy> link below each title will lead you to the appropriate request form. (Fig. 4) The reviews coordinator will inform you whether your request has been approved, and how to proceed from there.

The Newsletter is published by IIAS (Leiden, the Netherlands) four times a year. It prints a number of reviews in each issue – reviews that are generated by the New Asia Books website. The Newsletter editor is also the reviews coordinator; the coordinator keeps track of all new titles available for review, hardcopies sent out, review submissions, and makes a selection of reviews for each issue. However, all submitted reviews are published online on the New Asia Books website.

Partner Accounts – for publishers

Publishers of books pertaining to Asia and Asian Studies are invited to join as New Asia Books partners. Partners have password protected access to the site, enabling them to update and add content to the New Asia Books database. Each partner has a profile page where all contact and direct ordering information can be listed (or links to online book sellers/distributors). Partners are encouraged to list all their current titles and to inform the reviews coordinator of any new titles that become available for review. Upon a request from one of our reviewers, the publisher will be contacted and asked to send out a review copy. The ensuing reviews are published on the New Asia Books website – and a select few are also printed in The Newsletter (see pages 41-44).

Learn more

You are most welcome to contact the site administrator and the reviews coordinator with any queries or suggestions you may have, or for guidance through the registration process to become a User or a Partner. Also, please do get in touch with any questions about requesting review copies or criteria for writing a review.

Site developer/administrator,
Thomas Voorter: t.j.h.voorter@iias.nl
Reviews coordinator/The Newsletter editor,
Sonja Zweegers: s.i.zweegers@iias.nl

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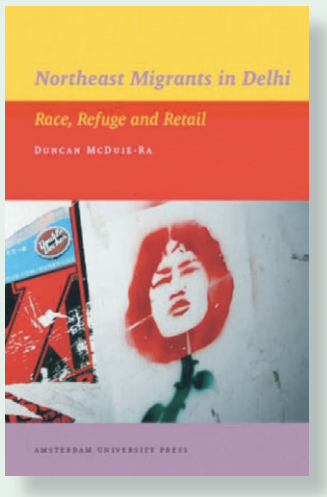
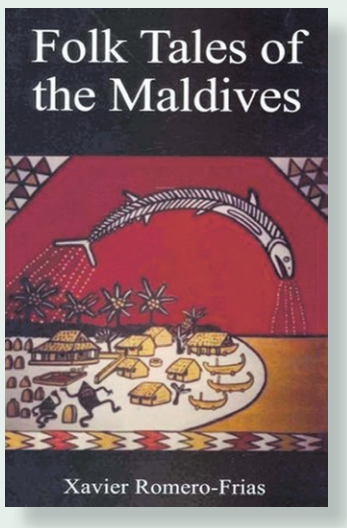
In addition to the reviews published in this issue of The Newsletter, you will find that the reviews listed below have also recently been added to the New Asia Books website.

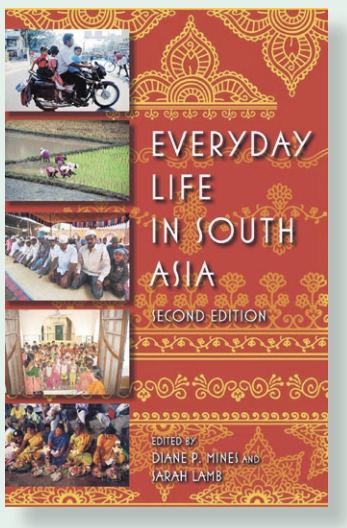


Northeast migrants in Delhi | Reviewer: Shrawan Kumar Acharya.
Reviewed publication: Duncan McDuie-Ra. 2012. *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge and Retail.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 203 pp. ISBN 9789089644220



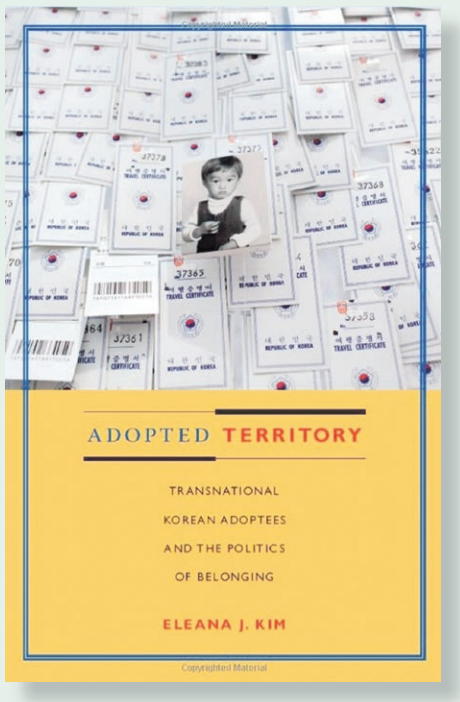
Folktales of the Maldives | Reviewer: Scott Morrison
Reviewed publication: Romero-Frias, Xavier. 2012. *Folk Tales of the Maldives,* Copenhagen: NIAS Press. 300 pp. ISBN 9788776941055 (pb)

In search of basic theory | Reviewer: Niels Mulder
Reviewed publication: Gibson, T. and K. Sillander (eds). 2011. *Anarchic Solidarity; Autonomy, Equality, and Fellowship in Southeast Asia.* New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies (Monograph 60). ix + 310 pp. ISBN 9780938692942 (pb)

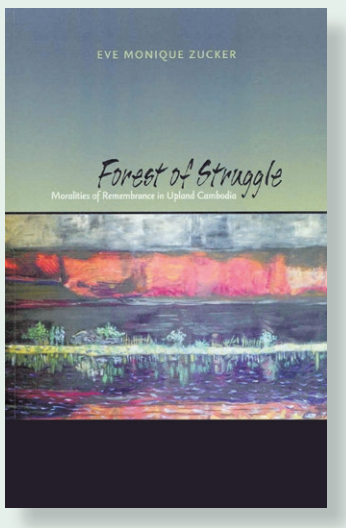


All walks of life | Reviewer: Aaron Mulvany
Reviewed publication: Mines, D.P. and Sarah Lamb. 2010. *Everyday Life in South Asia, 2nd Edition.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 566pp + viii, ISBN: 9780253221940 (pb)

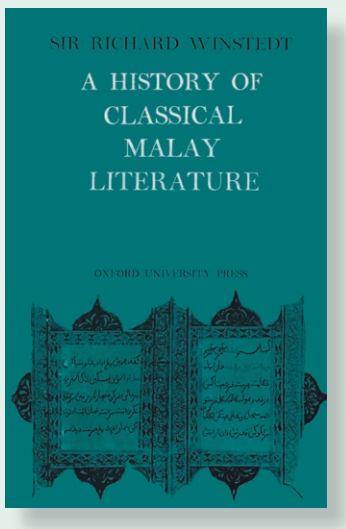
Cross-border governance in Asia | Reviewer: Kai Chen
Reviewed publication: G. Shabbir Cheema, Christopher A. McNally & Vesselin Popovski. 2011. *Cross-border governance in Asia: regional issues and mechanisms,* Tokyo; New York: United Nations University Press, 322 pp. ISBN 9789280811933



Adopted territory | Reviewer: Bala Raju Nikku
Reviewed Publication: Kim, E.J. 2010. *Adopted Territory: Transnational Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging,* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 320pp. ISBN: 9780822346951 (pb)



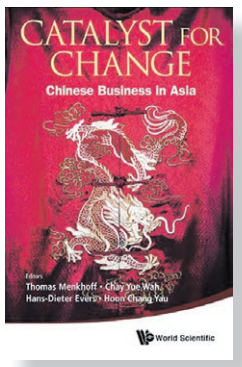
Forest of struggle | Reviewer: William Noseworthy
Reviewed publication: Zucker, E. M. 2013. *Forest of Struggle: Moralities of Remembrance in Upland Cambodia.* Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press. 233 pp. ISBN: 9780824838058.



Classical Malay literature | Reviewer: William Noseworthy
Reviewed publication: Liaw Yock Fang. 2013. *A History of Classical Malay Literature.* Translated by Razif Bahari and Harry Aveling. Singapore: ISEAS Press. ISBN: 9789814459884

Popular Translations of Nationalism | Reviewer: Nitin Sinha
Reviewed publication: Lata Singh. 2012. *Popular Translations of Nationalism: Bihar, 1920-1922.* New Delhi: Primus Books. ISBN: 9789380607139

New titles available for review



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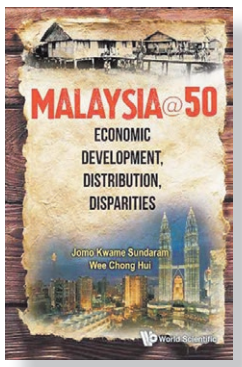

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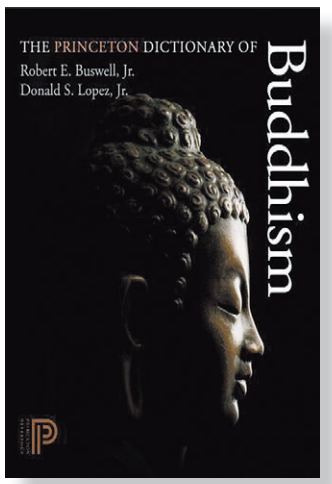
Malaysia@50: Economic Development, Distribution and Disparities,
Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, ISBN: 9789814571388 (hb)



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Leiden: Brill, ISBN: 9789004256095 (hb)

Tran Ngoc Angie. 2013.
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Durham, NC: Duke University Press, ISBN: 9780822355311 (pb)

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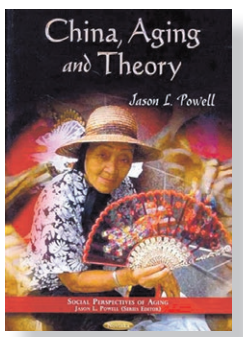

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Hauppauge NY: Nova Science Publishers, ISBN: 9781621009153 (pb)

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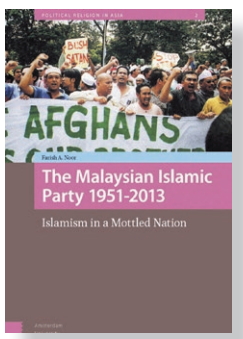
Hauppauge NY: Nova Science Publishers, ISBN: 9781619428553 (hb)



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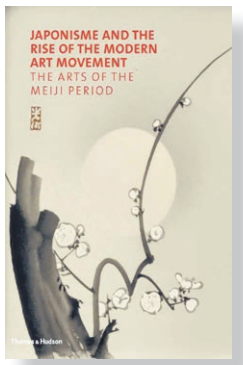

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New York: Thames and Hudson, ISBN: 9780500239131 (hb)

IIAS Publishing

20 years of publishing at IIAS: from in-house distribution to publishing with a global reach

Paul van der Velde

THE FIRST PUBLICATION of the IIAS was the IIAS Newsletter (renamed *The Newsletter* in 2009; see page 6 of this issue for 'The Evolution of The Newsletter'). While The Newsletter became our most visible publication in Asian Studies, we also, in the early years, published two Yearbooks in 1994 and 1995, which included numerous research articles by IIAS fellows; four Working Papers Series based on the outcome of IIAS conferences and seminars (1993-1996); and the IIAS Lecture Series based on the texts of the IIAS Annual Lectures (1993-1998).

The above-mentioned publications could all be considered in-house publications since no external publisher was involved. That changed in 1996 when the 'Studies from the International Institute for Asian Studies' series was started in cooperation with the publisher Kegan Paul International (1996-1999), which gave the series a global distribution. For the publication of the *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe* (1998) we engaged Curzon Press; it was the first of the Curzon-IIAS Studies Series (1998-2002), reflecting the scope of studies at the Institute. After the turn of the millennium IIAS started two series with ISEAS in Singapore (2002-2010) and subsidized multiple books with publishers worldwide.

In 2007, all IIAS' efforts were concentrated in the two series: the IIAS and ICAS Publications Series published by Amsterdam University Press (AUP). While the former series was to promote interdisciplinary studies on Asia and comparative research on Asia and Europe, the latter wanted to stimulate dialogue among scholars and civil society groups at the local, regional, and international levels. In all, nearly 50 monographs and edited volumes were published in these two series.

In 2013, in order to bring its publications more in line with the IIAS research agenda, it was decided to discontinue both series. This streamlining coincides with the restructuring of AUP's publishing strategy. In view of the volume of books in the IIAS/ICAS Series, AUP agreed to turn Asia into one of its five foci. It will start 5 to 10 new series on Asia with the aim of publishing approximately 50-75 books a year on Asia, thus becoming one of the main publishers in the field worldwide. Needless to say, this will reinforce the visibility of the IIAS series and the titles published by AUP itself.

IIAS will start three new series with AUP: Global Asia, Asian Cities and Asian Heritages. *Global Asia* addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region itself, as well as Asia's projection into the world through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies and so forth.

Asian Cities aims to explore the long-standing Asian urban 'tradition' by discussing the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia, and by linking the various elements of city cultures and societies, from ancient to modern (colonial and post-colonial) times.

Asian Heritages explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested distinctions of 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in framing and creating various forms of identity. In Asia, the notion is often associated with the construction of post-independence nation-state models, the definition of national 'traditions' and 'authenticity' and the idea of pre/post-colonial historical national continuity.

While I will remain in charge of the series, Series Editors are in the process of being appointed and Editorial Boards are being put into place for each of the series. The Series Editor for the Asian Heritages Series has already been selected: Adèle Esposito (Institute Parisien de Recherche Architecture Urbanisitique Societé, IPRAUS), former IIAS fellow and current lecturer at Leiden University and coordinator of the MA program 'Critical Heritage Studies' (IIAS/Leiden University). The Editorial Board for this series will include, among others, Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University).

On a personal note I would like to thank all the publishers, authors, editors, contributors and members of the editorial boards who collectively enabled the publication of the fruits of our research, at IIAS and other institutes around the world in the past 20 years.

Paul van der Velde, IIAS Publications Officer

Amsterdam University Press – Asian Studies

Saskia Gieling, publisher at AUP

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS (AUP) supports and stimulates scholarship through its high quality peer reviewed academic publications. AUP is characterised by a critical, creative and international environment, an open atmosphere and a strong commitment to the academic community.

AUP has a well-established list in Asian Studies in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities, and is renowned for its publication of solid source-based scholarship in the history, religion, politics, migration and culture of the peoples and states of East and Southeast Asia. The Asian Studies programme is strengthened through our partnership with IIAS.

Together with specialists in the field, AUP has developed a list of series on niche topics, related to diverse aspects of modern Asia, which deserve more academic attention. Each series has an editorial board, consisting of internationally renowned scholars, who oversee the academic quality of the publications.

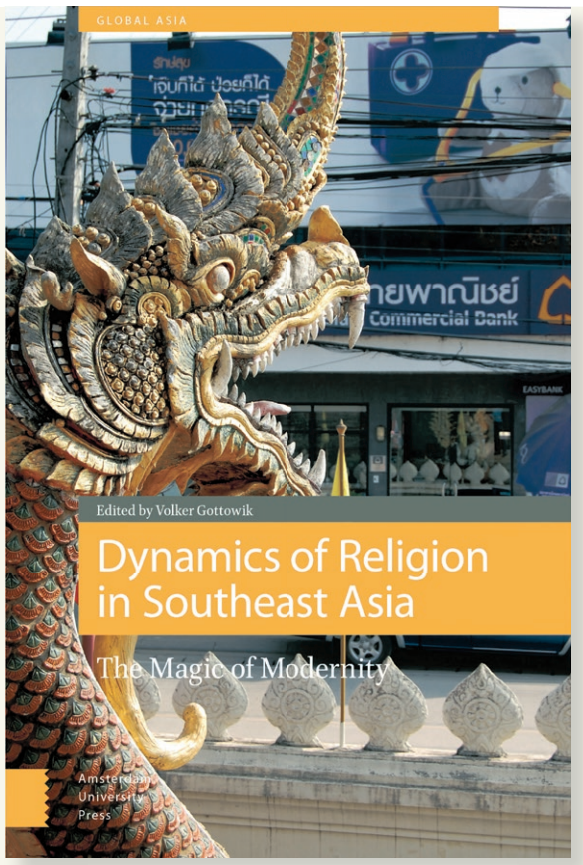
An example is the recently established series 'New Mobilities in Asia', on the profound transformations of migration from, to and within Asia. The series focuses on the longstanding transformations of Asian societies and their relationship to the world – with respect to the impact on national identities and the establishment of new migration policy regimes, modes of transnational politics, consumption practices, and ideas of modernity. The series will, for the first time, bring together studies by historians, anthropologists, geographers, and political scientists that systematically explore these changes. The members of the editorial board are Pal Nyiri, Free University, Amsterdam; Tim Winter, Deakin University, Australia; Aihwa Ong, University of California, Berkeley; Joy Hendry and Biao Xiang, Oxford University; Johan Lindquist, Stockholm University; Tim Oakes, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Other series within the programme are: Political Religion in Contemporary Asia; China's Environment and Welfare; Consumption and Sustainability in Asia; Social Histories of Work in Asia (in cooperation with the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam); Emerging Asia; Borderlands; Popular Culture; Contested Nations. The three series Global Asia, Asian Cities, and Asian Heritages are published in cooperation with IIAS.

AUP has agreed to establish a series in cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and its publisher, China Social Sciences Press. The series, entitled 'China on China: Humanities and Social Sciences' consists of works by members of the Chinese Academy, selected by an international board of China scholars.

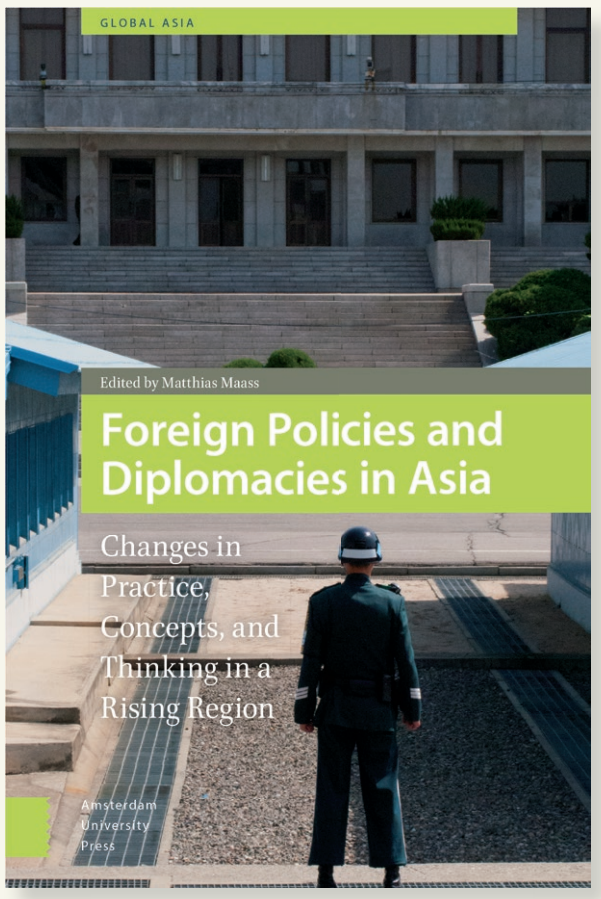
More series will be established in the coming year.

Please visit www.aup.nl for more details about our Asian Studies list. If interested in publishing in one of our Asian Studies series or in setting up a series, please contact Saskia Gieling (s.gieling@aup.nl)



Gottowik, V. 2014
Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia
Amsterdam: AUP

DRAWING ON RECENT ethnographic research in Southeast Asia, the authors demonstrate how religious concepts contribute to meeting the challenges of modernity. Modernity is surrounded by an almost magic aura that casts a spell over people all over the world. In fourteen chapters, the authors demonstrate how religious concepts and magic practices contribute to meeting the challenges of modernity. Against this background, religion and modernity are no longer perceived to be in contradiction: rather, it is argued that a revision of the western notion of religion is required to understand the complexity of 'multiple modernities' in a globalized world.



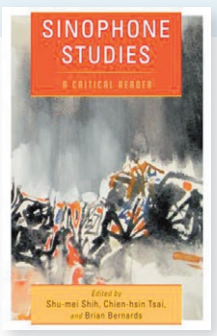
Maass, M. 2014
Foreign Policies and Diplomacies in Asia
Amsterdam: AUP

THE OBSERVATION of a rising Asia and of rapidly growing economic powerhouses in the region has become a truism. Nonetheless, the impressive economic development stories in the region provide the backbone for the growing political strength and assertiveness of Asian countries. Asia's economic prowess is rapidly being transferred onto the diplomatic stage. In light of these larger developments, the authors of this volume investigate the regional and international implications of a rising Asia and problematize critical developments.

The Sinophone: not from China, but in Chinese

A decade ago Sinophone studies emerged as a new academic field within the humanities, with several scholars from North America, Europe as well as Asia engaging in research on Sinitic-language cultural production through the lens of this novel and multi-disciplinary mode of inquiry. For those who are interested in the study of Sinitic-language cultures from beyond the borders of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as well as in the production of non-*Han* artists from within the PRC who express themselves in a Sinitic language, this critical reader edited by Shu-mei Shi, together with Chien-hsin Tsai and Brian Bernards, represents a milestone in the systematization of the Sinophone.

Antonio Paoliello



Reviewed publication:
Shih, S., Chien-hsin Tsai and Brian Bernards, eds. 2013. *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader.* New York: Columbia University Press. 472 pp.
ISBN 978-0-231-15751-3 (paperback)

Above: Chinatown, Liverpool, UK. Image reproduced under a creative commons license by Pete Hunt on Flickr.

Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader is a well-conceived and thought-provoking anthology made up of three interconnected sections. Penned by Shu-mei Shih, the introduction to the volume represents a useful overview of what is meant with the phrase 'Sinophone studies' and the issues that this young field of inquiry is mainly concerned with. In an academic realm where Chinese studies is often a synonym of China studies and where Sinitic-language societies and cultures outside the PRC are often considered peripheral at best, the Sinophone represents an important attempt in providing an alternative discourse, a powerful theoretical tool to analyze, reposition and give voice as well as visibility to cultural actors and products from beyond *Han* China. As Shih clearly explains, "Sinophone studies takes as its object of study the Sinitic-language communities and cultures outside China as well as ethnic minority communities and cultures within China where Mandarin is adopted or imposed" (11).

Issues and controversies

Despite the novelty of the Sinophone as a field of study, scholarly concern with the theorization of Sinitic cultures and communities at the margins of China had already resulted in several essays, many of which have challenged well-established paradigms and viewpoints on China and Chineseness. The first section of the volume, 'Issues and Controversies' contains a useful introduction by editor Chien-hsin Tsai and six essays. Apart from reprinting (in full or in part) four seminal works by four renowned scholars that focus on issues such as diaspora, identities, languages and ethnicity, it additionally presents one article by Shu-mei Shih based on her previous theoretical works on the Sinophone as well as one previously unpublished article by Ha Jin. While Shu-mei Shih's chapter is "a broad, programmatic piece to parse out a space for Sinophone studies" (25), the following chapter is a modified and reprinted version of Rey Chow's theoretical article 'On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem' first published in 1998. This essay, together with Ien Ang's ground-breaking 'Can One Say No to Chineseness?' (1998) also present in the volume, urges the reader to think critically and theoretically about the very notion of Chineseness. Kim Chew Ng, a Chinese Malaysian scholar and fiction writer based in Taiwan, contributed a brilliant essay that explores language(s) from a Sinophone Malaysian perspective (i.e., vis-à-vis China's *Putonghua,* but also in relation to *Bahasa Malaysia,* the national language of Malaysia), an issue both complex and fascinating. The following chapter by David Der-wei Wang focuses on loyalism and loyalist discourse in Sinophone writing from Taiwan. Both Ng and Wang's articles were originally published in Chinese and are presented to the Anglophone readership for the first time, thanks to Brian Bernards' skillful translations. 'Exiled in English', Ha Jin's highly personal and beautifully-written piece on issues of geographic exile and linguistic self-exile seems the perfect choice to close the section. Strictly speaking, Ha Jin who produces all his works in English and is, therefore, an Anglophone Chinese American writer, has chosen not to belong to the Sinophone realm. The "voluntary banishment of Mandarin in his stories" (22), however, compels us to take into serious consideration one of the natural possibilities of evolution of the Sinophone: Ha Jin's choice is a reminder that "diaspora has an expiration date, and the vanishing of the Sinophone in various communities is part of the historical process of localization." (22)

Discrepant perspectives

'Discrepant Perspectives', the second section of the volume collects essays originally published in the 1990s, thus well before the Sinophone was theorized as such. However, this critical reader would seem somewhat incomplete had these chapters not been incorporated into the anthology. In fact, "they in many ways lay the groundwork for the emergence of Sinophone studies in the twenty-first century," as rightfully stated by Brian Bernards in his introduction to this second part of the volume (125). The authors of the four essays reprinted here all propose sound theoretical bases for the exploration of the diverse identities and possibilities that ethnic Chinese people outside China have at their disposal. 'Chineseness: The Dilemmas of Place and Practice' (1999) by renowned Singaporean scholar Gungwu Wang befittingly opens the section. The chapter not only deals with issues of flimsy terminology such as the now rather outdated definition of 'overseas Chinese', but it also explores one of the main concerns of the Sinophone, namely, the multiplicity of responses by Chinese communities to local place and practice. Therefore, by taking Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore and San Francisco as cases in point, Wang attempts to give an answer to the question of "[h]ow have the different communities of the diaspora changed in response to the demands of their adopted countries?" (131) and challenges the idea that there is only one way of conceptualizing, understanding and practicing Chinese identity. Wei-ming Tu, author of 'Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center' (1991), shares with Wang a concern with correct terminology (he focuses his attention of the ambiguities of the term 'Chinese') as well as the role and position of Chinese communities outside China vis-à-vis the Chinese center. Famous for his theorization of a 'cultural China' which encompasses Greater China, Chinese communities across the globe and everyone who tries "to understand China intellectually and bring their conception of China to their own linguistic communities" (148), Tu wishes to draw our attention away from the purely political dimension of the relationship with the Chinese center, by reminding us that the meaning of being Chinese is ultimately "a human concern pregnant with ethical-religious implications" (155). In his 'On the Margins of the Chinese discourse' (1991), Leo Ou-fan Lee introduces the reader to the figure of the "Wandering Chinese", by taking a close look at three major Sinophone writers' North American literary production: Nieh Hua-ling, Yuh Li-hua and Pai Hsien-yung. The chapter that closes the section, 'The Structure of Dual Domination' (1995) by Ling-chi Wang, is also centered on Chinese America. In his essay, Wang attempts to "construct an alternative paradigm for the Chinese diaspora in the United States" (175), and calls for the inclusion of Chinese American viewpoints and voices in this new paradigm in order to "fully understand the structure of dual domination" (178) shaped by the equally-manipulative American assimilationist discourse on the one hand and the Chinese loyalist one on the other.

Sites and articulations

'Sites and Articulations', the third and longest section of the volume, is probably also the most interesting for the reader, since it "cover[s] polyphonic voices that constitute the major chorus of the Sinophone" (183). With an introduction jointly penned by editors Brian Bernards and Chien-hsin Tsai and eighteen short chapters focusing on literature, the section centers on the practical use of Sinophone studies as a mode of academic investigation in the analysis of Sinophone literary texts and/or writers. The variety of texts and literary figures explored through the lens of the Sinophone is impressive and it includes production from all continents, with the exception of Africa. The section opens with two chapters, one by Mirana May Szeto and one by Rey Chow, both devoted to Sinophone Hong Kong Literature and its relationship with Mandarin as well as the local Sinitic language, Cantonese. Following, the reader will find four chapters focusing on several aspects of literary practice in Taiwan ranging from Japanophone fiction during Japanese colonial rule (Chien-Chung Chen) to Sinitic-language literature by indigenous Taiwanese (Hsinya Huang) to so-called 'Mainlander' female writers (Pei-Yin Lin) to Hakka writer Zhong Lihe, whose life story bespeaks the history of Hakka migrations (Chien-hsin Tsai). Patricia Schiaffini and Carlo Rojas contributed two articles on the section of the Sinophone world that writes from within the political borders of China. While Schiaffini's essay acquaints the reader with Sinophone Tibetan literature and the ways in which ethnically Tibetan authors use the language of the colonizer as a tool to affirm their Tibetan identity, the chapter by Rojas explores the issues of language and nationalism in the production of Sinophone Tibetan writer Alai. Three chapters in the volume explore Sinophone literary production in Southeast Asia, home to sizeable Chinese communities. The essay by Kim Tong Tee, a Chinese Malaysian scholar based in Taiwan, is a brilliant and much-needed English-language overview of Sinophone Malaysian literature, a literary system which is able to reach a wide Sinophone readership, through publication in Taiwan, while being marginalized at home, due to officially-endorsed pro-Malay policies. In his essay, Bernards investigates the fiction of Sinophone Malaysian writer Chang Kuei-hsing (who is now a resident of Taiwan) and its contribution to "the formation of a 'South Seas' postcolonial discourse" (325). The multicultural and multilingual postcolonial experience in Singapore is at the center of E.K. Tan's chapter, which offers an insight into *Mama Looking for Her Cat,* a controversial play by Kuo Pao Kun on the limitations of Singapore's multiracial policies. The remaining chapters explore several aspects of Sinophone literary figures writing from geographic and cultural environments as diverse as New Zealand, Europe, and the U.S. or from a double periphery. Carles Prado-Fonts, for instance, offers a new interpretation of renowned author Lao She who was, at different times, a Sinophone writer in England and a Manchu writer in China. In the chapter rounding up the third section and this comprehensive volume, Ignacio López-Calvo, professor of Latin American literature, draws the reader's attention to a geographic area where Sinophone academic research is still in its infancy: Latin America and the Caribbean. In his informative and highly-enjoyable essay, while sharing his knowledge of Hispanophone Sino-Latin American writers and the issues they deal with, López-Calvo opens up an exciting field of study for those who are interested in exploring the Chinese experience in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Latin America.

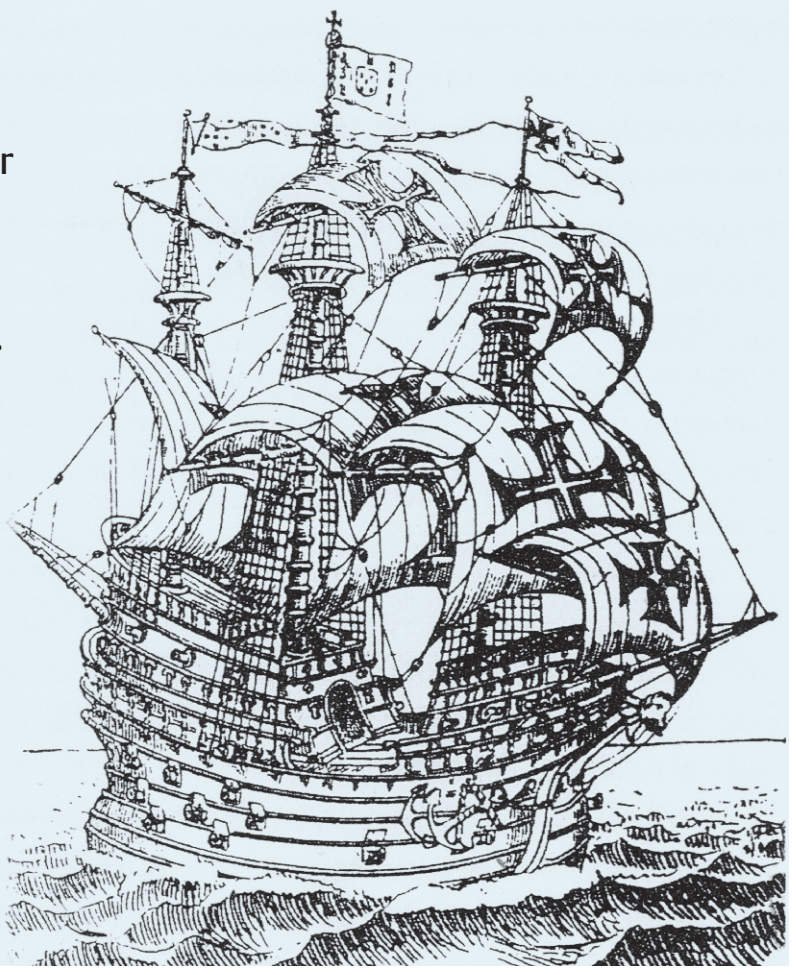
With its three cleverly-designed sections, its theoretical chapters and its essays on specific Sinophone authors and texts, *Sinophone Studies* is an outstanding volume that challenges existing ideas and paradigms in fields such as Chinese, diaspora, ethnic, postcolonial and area studies. An invaluable introduction to a novel and exciting field, this is a multi-authored work that will change the way both students and scholars look at ethnic Chinese communities and cultural actors around the world.

Antonio Paoliello is a teaching fellow in Chinese Studies at the Department of Asian Studies, the University of Edinburgh (antonio.paoliello@gmail.com)

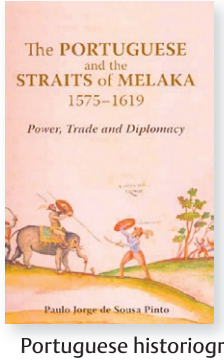
Melaka revisited

Based on a wide range of unexplored contemporary Portuguese sources, this ambitious study aims to reconsider and to expound the Portuguese expansion at the heart of political, social and economic structures in Asia. In doing so, it expects to open new paths in the study of contact between civilisations that began at the end of the 15th century. This is all the more promising as the fog of ideologies and of the nagging aftermath of colonialism has, according to Pinto, been dispelled (xxii).

Niels Mulder



Under Afonso de Albuquerque's orders, the Flor do Mar supported the conquest of Malacca in 1511.



Reviewed publication:
Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto. 2012.
The Portuguese and the Straits of Melaka 1575-1619; Power, Trade and Diplomacy.
Singapore: NUS Press. xxx + 375 pages.
ISBN: 9789971695705 (paperback)

IN VIEW OF THE WORKS OF HISTORIANS of Southeast Asia, we are in dire need of integrating the scattered studies and source materials, as up to now, Portuguese historiography appears to be ignorant of Malay, Dutch and other regional sources (Chinese, Japanese, Acehnese, Gujarati, Thai, etc.), at the same time that most historians are equally ignorant of Portuguese sources. Consequently, the history of the area prior to the arrival of northern Europeans is lacunary at best and basically remains *terra incognita.*
As a researcher and lecturer of Oriental Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal, the author hopes that his effort at integrating important historiography as well as a wide range of published and unpublished Portuguese sources will result in a more cosmopolitan historical view of the area; the current translation of his work is expected to be a major step in that direction.

The author approaches his subject through the analysis of the geopolitics of Melaka since it fell into the orbit of the Portuguese Estado da Índia and the local structures, especially Johor and Aceh, with which it interacted. The period in focus spans the half century from the lifting of the siege by Aceh and the loss of Ternate as the centre of the spice trade in 1575, and the founding of Dutch Batavia that spelled the rupture of Portuguese influence in the Straits. The analysis concentrates upon the political and geopolitical aspect to the detriment of an economic approach, even as trade, monopoly and profit were the driving force behind Portuguese and competing explorations, conquests and subsequent exploits.

Contents
The historical survey proper is divided into five substantive chapters that deal with (1) the economy of Melaka in its global context as part of the Estado da Índia, and its gradual decline, or exhaustion of the Portuguese imperial ambitions. (2) Then, in the same context, the political and military frameworks, their tensions, changes and erosion, are described. (3) Follows the relation of the regional context of the western part of the Archipelago, which is subsequently (4) deepened by the dynamics of the precarious equilibrium between the rival powers Aceh, Johor and Portuguese Melaka. (5) The last substantive chapter expands upon the city of Melaka itself, tracing its population and society, its centres of power in the persons of its captains, bishops and resident Portuguese *(casados),* and its fortifications and resources. It is also the sad story of Melaka's metamorphosis from a cosmopolitan city to a ghetto-city during the period in question.

The substantive chapters are rounded off with Annexes that dwell on the genealogical questions and problems raised by the historical sources – local and Portuguese – on Johor and Aceh. To me, the interest of this query lies in the conflict between the occidental and the local (Malay) ideas of the writing of history to which I was introduced by my mentor, the javanist C. C. Berg, who liked to talk about 'projective' or 'predictive history'. The purpose of the local histories *(babad, silsilah, sejarah, hikayat)* are not to provide the reader-reciter with 'objective' facts, but such works were commissioned to legitimate rulers with respectable genealogies, with prosperous realms, while seeking to praise them with noble character and great deeds. Whereas verifiable data occur in the stories, it will take the skill of a seasoned historian to skim the narratives of 'facts'.

Following addenda list the Captains of Melaka (1567-1620), the Viceroys and Governors of India (1564-1622), present relevant maps, an appendix of documents and a glossary, of which the 60 pages of translated letters to the king, reports, opinions, advices and suchlike give us fascinating insights in the mentality and preoccupations of the age and the writers concerned.

The read
Even as this is a translation of an original text, the narrative would have been enhanced through competent, professional editing. The text as it stands is jumpy – painlessly going up and down historical sequences; we are presented with trees and more trees, but the integration of the forest often remains nebulous. This may have to do with what the author calls his analysis in concentric circles – an idea that I failed to grasp. Things would have been much clearer had an extensive synchronical table visualised and summarised the data on the main players, i.e., Johor, Melaka, Aceh, and some peripheral others who at least traded with these three. Because of the meticulous method of the author, the latter are often in separate foci, and so the same data are endlessly rehashed.

Whereas the reading is vexing, it is well worth doing it as we are presented with a treasure trove of documentary evidence. It opens the perspective on further explorations, and will hopefully stimulate the integration of Southeast Asian studies that has so far been missing.

Niels Mulder retired to the southern slope of the mystically potent Mt. Banáhaw, Philippines, where he concluded his swan song, *Situating Filipino Civilisation in Southeast Asia: Reflections and observations.* Saarbruecken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012 (print-to-order ed., ISBN 9783659130830) (niels_mulder201935@yahoo.com.ph)

Shaping Indonesia

This well-researched and cogently presented study shows how images of an idealized China came to occupy a central place in Indonesia's post-independence political discourse. Indonesian leaders during the Sukarno era, Liu contends, admired Mao's China and sought from it "conceptual and practical inspiration" for their nation-building efforts.

Lee Kam Hing

Reviewed publication:
Hong Liu, *China and the shaping of Indonesia, 1949-1965,*
Singapore: NUS Press /Kyoto Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 2011

TO BE SURE, China did not lend itself easily to favourable representation. Even with expanding Sino-Indonesia ties in the period of study, unease remained among Indonesians towards a rising Chinese power set against historical memory of past invasion of Java by Mongol-ruled China. This was compounded by the presence of an economically strong Chinese minority in their midst. It was a wariness arising also out of the scars of the communist-led 1948 Madiun rebellion and of a resurgent Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). There was also a struggle for power among political forces, including the PKI and anti-communists. And, in an Indonesia which was a functional democracy there were intellectuals critical of China's authoritarian system and the lack of freedom in Chinese society.

Nation building
Liu argues that to Indonesians during the Sukarno years, China became more than just another nation-state. China, through multiple and sometimes conflicting images, featured in their many intense nation-building debates. Although Indonesia and China emerged as modern states at the same time in 1949, Indonesian intellectuals asked how China could achieve so much in such a short time while their country continued to be plagued by economic stagnation and internal political problems. Liu suggests that the China image when considered by Indonesian leaders alongside their competing visions and aspirations was transformed into what he called 'the China metaphor'. The metaphor in reflecting the disappointments of Indonesians also served as a model to realize what they aspired for in their country.

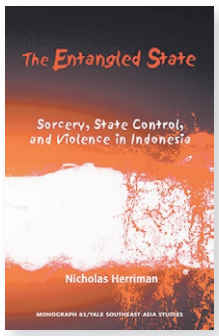
To capture Indonesia's China images, Liu who is one of China's leading scholars on Southeast Asia and presently Professor at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, went through what had been written about China by some sixty prominent Indonesians of the period. Some of the leaders were members of the PKI who, not surprisingly, viewed China favourably. Others were non-communists, among whom Sutan Sjahrir, a former Prime Minister, and Mohd Hatta who served as Vice-president. It was Indonesia's founding President Sukarno and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, its best-known novelist, who among all seemed most impressed by developments taking place in China.

For such a study, some may ask whether a sufficiently broad spectrum of views representative of important segments of society had been obtained and if these were drawn evenly from across the time period looked at. In this book, Indonesian writings cited came mainly from the 1950s with few references from Indonesia's Guided Democracy period when China featured strongly in Indonesian political consciousness and was itself encountering internal stresses. There is also no reference to the powerful Indonesian military whose views on China particularly those leading up to the 1965 PKI-linked Coup must have been pertinent to the China metaphor.

Social control from below

In *The Entangled State: Sorcery, State Control, and Violence in Indonesia,* Nicholas Herriman draws on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in East Java and as a result calls into question the common scholarly understanding of the Indonesian state.

Megan Brankley Abbas



Reviewed publication:
Herriman, N. 2012. *The Entangled State: Sorcery, State Control, and Violence in Indonesia,* New Haven: Council on Southeast Asia Studies at Yale University. 172 pages.
ISBN: 9780938692980 (paperback)

SPECIFICALLY, HERRIMAN INVESTIGATES community-instigated killings of alleged sorcerers in the East Javanese regency of Banyuwangi, a region which, in the wake of Suharto's fall, witnessed an outbreak of sorcerer murders. Herriman conducted participant observation fieldwork in one Banyuwangi village and complemented this in-depth research with scores of interviews throughout the regency on sorcery cases from 1998, as well as from past decades. From this material, he is able to paint a fascinating, textured picture of sorcery accusations and killings in contemporary East Java. Rather than attributing this sorcery-related violence to yet another form of state terror, Herriman positions sorcery as an ideal window into the multi-faceted and often times contradictory ways that the Indonesian state manifests itself at the level of the village. Looking at village officials in particular, Herriman elucidates how local state representatives faced an intractable dilemma between communal demands for (often violent) action against alleged sorcerers and a state logic of legality, rationality, and order.

Locally planned and popular violence

Herriman argues that village-level state officials are not only representatives of the Indonesian state but are also residents of their respective villages and are therefore deeply embedded within the social networks and norms of the community. As a result, these village officials are often sympathetic themselves to retributive actions against alleged sorcerers or subject to substantial communal pressure to allow such violence to occur. In attempting to navigate these village demands against the state imperative to maintain order, Herriman finds that local officials usually deploy one of three options: ignore the problem of sorcery altogether; seek to balance community demands with protection of the accused through re-location or protective custody; or openly side with perpetrators of retributive violence. In a majority of the cases he studied, Herriman notes that local officials "cave in to pressure from below" and therefore, to varying degrees, compromise the state's absolute control over violence (99). For Herriman, this phenomenon of "social control from below" exemplifies the entangled nature of the state. In Herriman's words, "such entanglement produces a hybrid society in which local residents seek the state, rather than avoid it, adopting it into their lives on their own terms. In other words, the state is appropriated to local needs" (2). Therefore, the state is not separate and opposed to civil society; rather, the two are mutually constitutive with overlapping interests and claims to power.

Although Herriman grounds his analysis in the specific case of East Javanese sorcery killings, his concept of the 'entangled state' has broad implications for how to understand governance in modern Indonesian history. In this sense, the book serves as a welcome challenge to dominant academic accounts of the New Order as a violent, authoritarian state capable of terror and control at nearly every level of Indonesian life. Herriman criticizes such depictions of the New Order for being largely unsubstantiated and overly simplistic. Instead, he underscores the persistence of local participation and even initiative in *Reformasi*-era violence (from the East Javanese sorcery killings anti-sorcery to riots in Jakarta) as well as in the 1965-66 anti-communist massacres. While not denying oppressive behaviors on the part of the Indonesian state in either period, Herriman exposes locally planned and popular violence, thereby breaking down the false dichotomy between the immoral, authoritarian state and innocent, passive Indonesians. He therefore rejects the "overly sentimental" moral outrage which many academics have directed against the Indonesian state in exchange for a democratization of violence. On the sorcery killings in particular, Herriman writes: "my research indicates that local residents were not passive and peaceful Indonesians provoked into violence. They were not 'faced' with horror or 'living' with 'large armed groups dragging their neighbors away' or 'gripped by fear' at the 'bizarre and menacing' murders. Rather, they were actively involved in and leading these groups and were relieved to finally be rid of the 'accursed sorcerer' when they had finally killed them" (145). In this more democratic landscape of violence, ordinary Indonesians possess the agency to commit their own acts of terror. They are thus entangled in both collective violence and in the Indonesian state.

Discretion of the state

For the most part, *The Entangled State* is a convincing and much needed correction to prevailing depictions of the Indonesian state and of the New Order in particular. Nonetheless, there were moments when Herriman's argument would have benefited from a more extended discussion of the legal role of the state in cases of sorcerer killings. Specifically, in which contexts were the killers of alleged sorcerers arrested and brought to trial? Who within the Indonesian state initiated these proceedings, and to what extent were representatives of the state divided over the legality and ethics of such cases? Moreover, the purported arbitrariness by which Indonesian state officials sought to prevent or, after the fact, to adjudicate the killings of alleged sorcerers perhaps points to an unexamined source of state power: discretion. Did the specter of potential prosecution for retributive violence against sorcerers exact any control over villagers? Over village officials? In order to make his argument about 'the entangled state' more persuasive, the book calls for a more detailed exploration of the mechanisms by which state power did exert itself, especially in the legal realm, in relationship to sorcery.

In his engaging examination of 'the entangled state', Herriman concludes that "local communities thus exert control over local state representatives, resulting in a breakdown of state control at the local level" (147). However, what exactly constitutes the local for Herriman? The book's fifth chapter provides a brief sketch of local village officials who reside in their constituencies versus 'supralocal' career bureaucrats who reside in towns; but, beyond the implication that villages are synonymous with the local, Herriman does not explicate the wider meaning of the term. Indeed, Herriman treats the local as a self-evident category – a problematic move given the significance of a 'local' perspective on the Indonesian state for the book's overall argument. At the core of this argument is Herriman's contention that local state officials are inextricably part of their local communities and therefore suffer from a dual loyalty to local concerns and state logics. Yet, are these aspects of 'local state representatives' confined only to villages? If so, then are mayors of small towns, provincial-level bureaucrats, or even ministry officials who work in Jakarta therefore *not* embedded in their own communities? Are they not subject to the demands of kin and neighbors? By extension, are the town, city, province, and nation then still governed by a self-contained and authoritarian state? By taking the category of the local as self-evident, Herriman continues to attribute state control to some undefined 'center' (for example, pg. 99), without taking the next logical step and questioning the autonomy of higher levels of state bureaucracy as well. In other words, how high up the ladder of state authority does the entangled-ness of the state go? Without a more critical discussion of the local as a category, Herriman allows the question to linger.

Despite the abovementioned critique, Nicholas Herriman's ethnographic study of sorcery in East Java provides both a nuanced glimpse into a fascinating moment in recent Indonesian history and contributes an important voice to the on-going scholarly discussion over state power in Indonesia. Filled with intriguing details of village politics, it thereby enriches our understanding of contemporary East Java, of sorcery, and of the relationship between violence and the Indonesian state.

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Liu describes how leading Indonesians during the Sukarno years were invited to China as part of Beijing's efforts to win Indonesia's friendship amidst heightening Cold War tension in the region. These Indonesians returned with generally positive accounts of the country they saw. They found among the Chinese a sense of purposefulness, discipline and willingness to make sacrifices for the new nation. They saw cities that were clean and public services that worked. And entering China from Hong Kong, Indonesian visitors encountered a way of life they judged as less decadent. Liu sums up that China, to admiring Indonesians, was a nation undergoing economic growth with equitable sharing of wealth, of a populist regime supported by the people, and of intellectuals actively participating in nation-building.

For Pramoedya, it was universal humanism expressed by Chinese intellectuals that attracted his attention and on this he had much to share during his two trips to China in the late 1950s. Pramoedya was impressed too by the productive output of intellectuals and the higher rewards and status they were accorded compared to those in Indonesia.

Idealized image

Liu suggests that Indonesia's idealized image of China differed greatly from Western observers who viewed the country as a repressive, totalitarian communist state. Indonesians disassociated the China they admired from its communist ideology and instead credited the creation of a disciplined, cohesive and harmonious society to Chinese nationalism and the new democracy. Sukarno saw no incompatibilities between the ideas driving China and his own views, and his interpretation of China's political experience served as a key rationale for the introduction of Guided Democracy that greatly concentrated power in the president's hands. Disenchanted with Western-style democracy, China as a model appealed to Sukarno.

In setting the discussion of the China metaphor within Indonesia's efforts at nation-building, Liu invites a relook at modernity theories beyond those that are Western-dominant. Elaborating on S.N Eisenstadt's reference to "multiple modernities" Liu asserted that a transnational and intranational flow of ideas and people encouraged the articulation of the idea of 'Asianism' and consequently the search for modernity in the Asian context. It was this two-way flow of ideas that led to an appreciation among Indonesia's political elite of another path to modernity which was Chinese in nature.

The Chinese metaphor in Indonesia's search for an alternative modernity route is a fascinating proposition by Liu. Nevertheless, in the wider Indonesian society deeply rooted in Islam and Javanese culture, one is reminded that there had always been competing sources of inspirations and strategies to overcome the country's economic and political challenges. That the Chinese model was most positively appreciated, as Liu noted, simply underlined "the complex characteristics and ambivalent nature" of Indonesia's intellectuals and politicians as well as of the political mood of the period.

More nuanced understanding

Indonesia's contemplation of the China route ended abruptly following the failed PKI-inspired coup in 1965 and the overthrow of Sukarno. The China that captured the imagination of Indonesian leaders itself went through political convulsions during the Cultural Revolution.

Diplomatic relations between Jakarta and Beijing were restored only in 1990. But it is a different China that Indonesians today encounter. China has abandoned many of the features that once impressed visiting Indonesians and Beijing has since 1978 embarked on reforms and a more open economy. It is not world revolution that propels China's return to Indonesia but markets and natural resources. Indonesia too has changed to a politically freer and more competitive environment. Indonesian leaders, like those who preceded them, recognize the progress and potential of an emerging China.

Liu Hong's study draws together very complex sets of perceptions and perspectives into a coherent narrative. This is timely and helpful in enabling an understanding not only of evolving relations between China and Indonesia, but also how Indonesians view their country's development both in the past and the present. It brings new research approaches, drawing upon extensive and little used Indonesian and Chinese sources including recently opened records of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, to achieve a richer and more nuanced understanding not only of Indonesia's turbulent Constitutional and Guided Democracy years but also of a society's self- criticism amidst competing aspirations.

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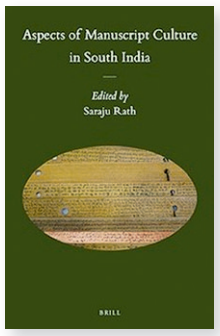
Aspects of manuscript culture in South India

Our knowledge of South Indian texts, including those aged more than a millennium, is based on manuscripts that are generally speaking seldom older than 3 or 4 centuries. These texts did however set forth a tradition that significantly influenced Asian scholarship and culture. In order to advance our expertise with reference to these manuscripts as text sources it is of great importance to research their historical origins, production, distribution and acquisition, both in the past and present.

Peter Richardus



Reviewed publication:
Saraju Rath (ed.) 2012.
Aspects of Manuscript Culture in South India. Leiden: Brill.
320 pages, ISBN: 9789004219007

MANUSCRIPT CULTURE, oral transmission and the traditions of South India include multifaceted phenomena that are yet to be fully fathomed. This volume marks an important advancement in the research into South Indian manuscripts. Jan E.M. Houben and Saraju Rath introduce the various aspects of (South) Indian manuscript culture by seeking answers to the following questions: "When and how did it start and develop?" and "When and how did it end?" The outcome of this quest results in two, until now, somewhat unconsidered temporal contours of Indian manuscript culture. The authors argue that the significant parameter here is the equilibrium between (1) manuscript culture and (2) orality and memory culture. They conclude their in-depth overview with a Timeline Manuscript Culture in 'India' representing the temporal contours and the main parameters of competing means of textual transmission.

In Chapter 2 Saraju Rath discusses not only the origins of M.A.J. van Manen's Sanskrit palm manuscripts collection but also how and why they were acquired from c.1928 onwards. Their arrival in Leiden was the result of a collaboration between Johan van Manen (the then General Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal) and Prof. J. Ph. Vogel, the founder of the Indological Institute Kern (Leiden, 1925). The author sketches the life and work of van Manen and gives us an interesting survey of the European context with regard to the Johan van Manen Collection. The 588 South Indian palm leaf manuscripts dating from the 16th or 17th century include texts on Vedic ritual, philosophical texts, epics, and even information on medical topics. A complete list of titles is available through www.iias.nl/profile/saraju-rath. These texts will be assessed in a forthcoming publication.

Establishment of well known manuscript collections
In Chapter 3, G. Colas examines manuscripts that the French Jesuits had sent from South Indian to Europe at the start of the 18th century. The author describes the acquisition of some of the earliest collections of Sanskrit manuscripts outside India. They later proved to be of great importance for the development of Indology in Europe.

P. Perumal, in Chapter 8, deals with the production (processing, writing on, and the preservation) of palm leaves with regard to the Sanskrit manuscripts in Tamil Nadu with a focus on the Thanjavur Sarasvati Mahal Library. It is one of the oldest medieval libraries in the world; and is playing its modern role by assisting the Government of India in its 'National Mission for Manuscripts', which aims to identify, document, preserve and digitize rare manuscripts.

In Chapter 13, Kenneth G. Zysk gives a brief survey of manuscript collections in India and abroad; and illustrates how cataloguing Sanskrit manuscripts can enhance the regional and general intellectual history of India.

On relatively small manuscripts collections
In Chapter 5, Masato Fujii discusses the research concerning the Jaiminīya Sāmaveda traditions and the role played by the manuscripts on the Sāmaveda (the third of the four Vedas) in the past and at present. The rare Jaiminīya version of the Sāmaveda is found only in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Extensive field work resulted in a historical and geographical survey of the Jaiminīya traditions whereby significant information on the brahminical erudition and manuscript culture at the level of South Indian villages was revealed.

Sreeramula R. Sarma reports, in Chapter 11, how he saved the palm leaf manuscripts from his grandfather's book chest to then deal with the way they were preserved and how they may have been acquired. We are also informed in which manner the family tradition linked to these manuscripts evolved through time, their age and orthography. The nine manuscripts and six palm leaf rolls discussed in this essay had been produced to serve either Brahmins or members of their family.

Dominik Wujastyk (Chapter 12) describes the manuscript library established by Ramasubba Sastrigal in c.1900. Even today his descendants strive to uphold the intellectual exchanges initiated by King Sahaji of Thanjavur (South India) in c.1693. The Brahmin villagers are still able to recall in which dwellings the seventeenth-century scholars once lived and how they came together in order to discuss intellectual issues. The author's field photographs taken in 2005 depict locations and individuals, thus throwing a captivating light on this unique pocket of time-honoured tradition.

Determination of the date
Three contributions deal with issues concerning the dates of manuscripts. Firstly the various characteristics of the South Indian drama manuscripts are discussed by Anna Aurelio Esposito (Chapter 4). She examines the text flow, punctuation, verses, stage directions, scribal errors, variant endings and the abbreviation of sentences. By comparing these phenomena, one can establish a chronology, perhaps even an approximate date, for undated manuscripts.

Secondly, in Chapter 9, Kim Plofker states that despite the useful contents of colophons of Sanskrit texts dealing with exact sciences (mathematical astronomy/astrology) the academic study of these texts often discards any example of mathematical scholarship. Having argued that a preliminary indication of the influence of astronomy, mathematics and astrology on the production and description of Sanskrit manuscripts must be established, the author concludes that the awareness of the science of timekeeping as well as of chronological data acquired by means of horoscopes and calendric techniques lead us up an important path to enhance our insight into the production and history of Sanskrit manuscripts in India.

Top: Manuscript showing *grantha-vaṭṭeluttu* variety. Courtesy: Vaidika Samshodhana Mandal, Pune.

Below: Manuscript showing *grantha-malayalam* variety. Courtesy: Vaidika Samshodhana Mandal, Pune. Pictures by Saraju Rath.

Thirdly, Saraju Rath (Chapter 10) deals with a specialized script in which Sanskrit and Vedic texts are written. Grantha shows regional variation and relatively clear stages of development from c.500 A.D. up to the present day. She discusses its varieties, the geographical differentiation and developments over time in order to clarify distinctive characteristics and stages based on text-characters taken directly from manuscripts found in various locations and periods. The parameters presented here can be used when determining the dates of grantha scripts in manuscripts and their places of origin.

The case study presented by Cezary Galewicz in Chapter 6 concerns a highly regarded text, the Yāmalāṣṭakatantra. Its fragmented history is transmitted in the circle of Rigvedic pundits where it is orally reproduced. This has consequences with regard to the problems of identifying a specific text in manuscripts carrying the above name. The author argues that, in order to solve this problem, it is necessary to cross disciplinary boundaries and come up with new methodologies.

Heike Moser introduces the 'Bhāsa Research Group' in Chapter 7. This project carries out research into the numerous aspects of Mahābhārata plays. It may be added here that the UNESCO awarded an example of this tradition, Kutiyattam, with the title "Masterpiece of the Oral and Tangible Heritage of Humanity". The accumulated documentation with a reference to this Sanskrit theatre tradition includes c.300 hours of footage and thousands of photographs. For the most recent status of this research group visit: www.indologie.uniwurzburg.de/bhasa/rahmen.

The publication
The Editor of *Aspects of Manuscript Culture in South India* has indeed achieved the following objectives: (a) researching the production, distribution and collection of palm leaf manuscripts in the past and present, (b) enhancing the quality and quantity of data on the rich history of manuscripts to be found in various present-day collections both within and outside India and (c) exploring the background of the Johan van Manen Collection.

Brill's Indological Library Volume 40 presents us with a state-of-the-art publication that includes an innovation: a selection of the b/w illustrations (including folios from manuscripts, field photographs, and maps) first inserted in their respective chapters return in the final section of the book, but now in full colour. The research under review here is the outcome of an international workshop organized at the International Institute for Asian Studies (Leiden) in 2007. It will be of interest to scholars and to students active in the fields of indology, manuscriptology, paleography, the cultural-cum-intellectual history of South Asia, oral traditions and memory culture. The fact that it is dedicated to the Dutch orientalist Johan van Manen (1887-1943) is therefore all the more appropriate.

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Tides of *tagunggu*. Of Sama Dilaut lifeworlds, gongs, and plastic bottles

The so-called gong-chime belt of Southeast Asia is home to a great cultural diversity. Different cultural groups, sometimes occupying borderland areas and stretching over several sides of today's national borders, are connected with one another across this territory through their practice of different, yet recognizably related, styles of gong playing. Attempts to relate to one another musically, and how gong ensemble repertoire is a favored means to do so, can be observed on the occasion of the many cultural festivals held recurrently in the region. Here, cultural groups musically situate themselves in the larger region while at the same time emphasizing their usually localized musical uniqueness in order to firmly affirm their place within their wider cultural context.

Birgit Abels

HOWEVER, LOCALE IS NOT NECESSARILY a primary reference for identity construction. For the Sama Dilaut, for instance, inhabiting a heartland of the gong-chime belt, the Southeast Asian island world, the transformation of musical meaning is dependent on movement much more than on place: even more, through moving music, they make sense of their world. One of the Sama (or Sinama) speaking maritime peoples making up one of the most widespread cultural groups within Southeast Asia, they are also referred to as the 'Bajau Laut', especially in Borneo's Sabah: 'Sea Sama'. While other Sama communities characteristically identify with specific shoreline settlements of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, the so-called sea-nomadic Sama Dilaut feel at home in a territory that for them is defined by a set of sacred locations, kinship networks, and historical sites. The Sama Dilaut lifeworld stretches from the Southern Philippines to Eastern Borneo, with several small groups extending farther East and West. Customarily, the Sama Dilaut have been living on house-boats, scouring the Sulu and Celebes Seas for rich fishing grounds and continuously following their staple food's natural movement.

Today, this hotly contested region is affected by the politics of the nation states drawing their borders through the area across which the Sama Dilaut customarily move, Malaysia and the Philippines. In addition, the group's relationship with the shore communities, on which they depend economically, has been difficult. They face open discrimination and economic exploitation from their sedentary neighboring communities. This is one more reason for many Sama Dilaut to treasure their maritime mobility literally as an emergency exit open to them at all times, should they need to escape from violence. Integrating and negotiating categories that, for their neighbors, are incommensurable, the Sama Dilaut make sense of the world not by means of maps, historiographies, and status quo, but by means of itineraries, relationship networks, chains of events—and the performing arts, which enable them to carve out temporary musical niches of stability and belonging.

Cultural identity

In the construction of their cultural identity, therefore, music and dance play an important role. In this, *tagunggu* holds a special position, being the gong music that creates a space for the contemporary lifeworld of the Sama Dilaut to be negotiated and acted out sonically. Music and dance are central to Sama Dilaut identity negotiation and maintenance of cultural memory: they have always moved with the Sama Dilaut and they continue to do so, encountering, challenging, generating, and (re-)constructing meaning along the way. For the Sama Dilaut, specific situations require the performance of specific repertoires, which are usually tagunggu music (listen to sound example 1).[1] With their life-ways continuously changing, tagunggu has also become a concept: tagunggu may at times be performed by two musicians each playing a *kulintangan* (gong) part on the same keyboard synthesizer, as they would when performing on a gong set, and the traditional drum *tambul;* in fact the kulintangan may even be replaced by empty plastic bottles if no instrument is around, as is often the case in the tiny communities living largely outside the wage labor system – for instance on boats or very small islets (listen to sound example 2). By broadening the concept of tagunggu to include a wider range of musical realizations of the repertoire, the Sama Dilaut are capable of keeping their transforming lifeworld and their traditional worldview integrated; in this way firmly situating themselves in the larger cultural context. Bridging individuals, groups, and the various spaces and places across which Sama Dilaut life unfolds, musical concepts such as specific melodic movements and rhythmic patterns may take on meanings that renew the old ones as well as the newly encountered ones.

Sama Dilaut cultural identity is floating, a metaphorical description that not only emphasizes its relationship to space, but also is in accordance with the role of the sea in the Sama Dilaut lifeworlds. Sama Dilaut identity is continually reconstructed in a mode of negotiation that finds its most relevant reference in a continuous movement, in a space that is intrinsically mobile. Music and dance are direct conduits for the expression of these reconstructions that localize the Self 'in-between' rather than 'here' or 'there'—as primarily ever-moving and secondarily interstitial, that is. Here, musical meaning, which is at the same time always musical meaning-in-the-making, is in this sense not found primarily in musical roots, but in musical routes, to paraphrase Paul Gilroy. In the case of the Sama Dilaut, it is not so much the stops on the way that make the 'route', but the experience of moving through perpetually changing interstices.

The musical meaning of tagunggu

This importance given to movement across interstices as the primary space in which cultural change takes place makes the Sama Dilaut performing arts a particularly suitable case study to sound out the usefulness of spatial theory in the analysis of musical transformation. In moving across interstices, the musical meaning of tagunggu is constantly being reconfigured, which is why tagunggu, perhaps more than any other Sama Dilaut cultural practice, makes audibly barely noticed, but nonetheless vital statements about 'who' the Sama Dilaut, at a given moment and place, feel they are. In linking the performative dynamics of cultural identity construction with traditional Sama Dilaut aesthetics of sound and movement (which are rooted in the sensory experience of traveling and making music) at sea, the sense-scape that they create by musicking and dancing reverberates with an alternative reality; a distinctly Sama Dilaut alternative reality. This, I argue, is based on a partly physical sensibility that is fundamental to an experiential truth which, for the Sama Dilaut, goes way beyond a contestation of public space. Not only is this reflected in music and dance; rather, music and dance serve as a means to perform Sama Dilaut cultural identity beyond geographical frames of reference.

At the same time, Sama Dilaut music continues to be very much alive. Melody-playing on gong instruments, and indeed tonal space in general, continues to be conceptualized and described in spatial terms: "Don't think about which gong you should be hitting, think about how your hands should be moving", a Sama Dilaut woman whom I call Sammaria told me. Then again, starting with the introduction of the keyboard synthesizer in the second half of the 20th century, the diatonic tonal system has become common in those genres of vocal music that are accompanied with it. But Sama Dilaut tend to appreciate pitch in terms of pitch spectrums rather than distinct pitches, which makes perfect sense when you conceive of melodic movement as based on the spatial hand movements afforded by gong instruments; the diatonic tonal system is easily accommodated within such traditional ways of structuring pitch.

What is more important than the intervallic implications of using a keyboard synthesizer though, in the case of Sama Dilaut music-making, is actual playing practice: usually, two musicians will be standing behind the keyboard, each playing with one finger of each hand, imitating the hand movement typical for tagunggu playing. Playing the synthesizer, in this way, becomes a performative evocation of both a traditional musical practice and Sama Dilaut alternative spatiality. This detail firmly contextualizes contemporary musicking, both musically and spatially, as distinctly Sama Dilaut—no matter whether you're playing on a carefully crafted kulintangan, a keyboard synthesizer, or that old plastic bottle. Tagunggu may be a musical genre, but perhaps more importantly, for the Sama Dilaut, it is a way of commingling with, and making sense of, the world.

Below: *Kulintangan* (row gong). Photo: Birgit Abels.

Birgit Abels was an IIAS Affiliated Fellow, sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, from October 2007 to February 2010 (iias.nl/profiles/birgit-abels). At the third ICAS Book Prize (2009), Birgit was awarded the 'Best PhD Humanities' prize, for her dissertation: 'Sounds of Articulating Identity: Tradition and Transition in the Music of Pulau'; consequently she was a member of the Reading Committee for the 2011 and 2013 ICAS Book Prizes. Birgit Abels is a cultural musicologist, and current Director of the Department of Musicology, at the University of Göttingen in Germany, where she is also the editor-in-chief of the journal 'The World of Music'. (birgit.abels@phil.uni-goettingen.de)

Note

1 The two sound samples can be accessed from the online version of this article.

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Alternative modernity: re-imagining Asia and Africa

The Maharaja of Baroda (Western India), Sayajirao Gaekwad III (1875-1939), was an active art collector, and lender to colonial exhibitions. His collecting practices represented high artists, artisans and institutional projects, which in turn articulated ideas of a highly original, alternative modernism. This modern art project subsequently also shaped ideas of nation-building. As a research fellow at IIAS, I set about to expand our understanding of princely India's stellar contribution to discourses of modernization and nationalism through art collecting.

Priya Maholay-Jaradi

BARBARA RAMUSACK'S work[1] helped me realise how the story of princely India in these discourses was underplayed; her emphasis on augmentation of archival research gave me the added confidence to carry the Baroda story further with data laboriously collected from provincial archives. Alongside this academic work, I tasked myself to explore Leiden on foot, see its many museums and experience the European summer in this 'quaint university town', a picture impressed upon me by Wikipedia and Lonely Planet. The first batch of materials in my hand, even before Ramusack's book, was a folder handed out by the accommodation office – emergency numbers, manuals and the Leiden city guide were part of it. I spotted and short-listed *Fetish Modernity (FM)* an exhibition showing at the Museum Volkenkunde as a must-do. From here began my journey to position 'alternative modernity' along the twinned axes of colonial India/Asia (through my post-doctoral work) and contemporary Europe (through the exhibition).

An evolving provenance

This article summarises my two trajectories: on the one hand I profile my protagonist, a Maharaja of colonial India, representing the idea of a peripheral modernity by becoming an active lender to colonial exhibitions across Europe; on the other, the article reviews *FM* to assess a post-colonial situation in which European museums are engaging with a re-imagination of their colonial-ethnographic collections to appreciate the fact that Europe was never the sole centre for modernism. Modern conditions existed in Asia and Africa too; moreover, these peripheral geographies absorbed and/or countered Eurocentric modernism in their own creative ways.

So in effect, both the Maharaja of Baroda and the curators of *FM* map locations of modernity outside Europe and bring forth a diverse range of modern objects on the international trail of exhibitions. Sayajirao, for his part, expanded his private collecting practice such that it shaped the course of institutional projects in Baroda State. The Maharaja actively collaborated with the society portraitist, Raja Ravi Varma, to produce India's own home-grown variety of history painting, which was appraised as a new national art. All the same, Baroda's workshops and polytechnics included artisans in new mechanized processes of production. Furthermore, Sayajirao's loans to exhibitions consisted of high art specimens such as Varma's works, alongside handicrafts from far afield in Baroda State, as well as new workshop products such as furniture and lacquerware. This practice reflects the Maharaja's commitment to showcase Baroda/India not so much as a pavilion of traditional art, but as a constantly evolving provenance; a provenance that represented experiment and modernization in its art and craft production. Several works from the Baroda pavilion were donated to museums, sold to private clients and even acquired by European institutions, such as ethnographic museums.
As was the obsession then to classify these objects, the acquisitions were quickly designated as the 'oriental', 'colonial', 'exotic' and 'decorative'. The Maharaja's aspiration towards the 'modern' and 'national' was missed altogether, and with that the original context of production was also lost.

Re-imagining the collections

Today, as the relevance of these acquisitions is questioned, and ethnographic museums, seen as mere colonial projects, fall victim to budget-cuts in the European Union, twelve curators across the continent have come together in a moment of "introspection", informs Laura Van Broekhoven, curator at the Museum Volkenkunde and co-curator of the travelling exhibition, *FM*. *FM* re-imagines its collections in new configurations. Every object and artwork is liberated from its conventional category and taxonomy to be viewed afresh, thereby allowing multiple, alternative readings. *FM* also searches the original meaning and modes of consumption of objects while charting changes in their physical form. The accompanying catalogue offers expanded discussions on select exhibits such as the Wahgi shields of the people of Papua New Guinea. New shields produced in the money-economy of the 1970s redeploy logos and text from Western advertisements. The usage of the words 'Cambridge Cup' signifies the sponsorship of rugby matches by Cambridge cigarettes; the rival Wahgi clans that engage in warfare become analogous to the competing rugby teams.[2]

In stark contrast to this appropriation of western culture, *FM* addresses the long-standing tension created by the 'borrowing' of indigenous design by European practitioners. Italian architect Matteo Thun's striking orange 'designer' stool offers ample scope to reflect on the emulation of stools produced for the past 300 years by the Asante people in Ghana. If, as Wilhelm Ostberg tells us, Matteo Thun's permission is required to reproduce the stool's picture in the catalogue, does Thun not need to acquire consent from the Asante?[3] Or do indigenous designs not merit copyrighting and patenting? Partha Mitter explains the same phenomenon in the high arts as the Picasso-Manque syndrome: Picasso's usage of African sources was an inspired discovery of ethnographic art; whereas Gaganendranath Tagore's usage of cubist principles was derivative and compromising.[4]

If FM is to be read in conjunction with these contemporary writings on art history, it is clear that the western construct of modernity has not only denied the non-west its innovative moments, but has instead rectified its own industrial experiments on the strength of superior African and Asian (art)works. To redress this hitherto inverse relationship between modernity and the non-west, *FM* includes plural voices, locations, moments and materials. Its video loops record interpretations of community members on what modernity means to them. Likewise, contemporary practitioners are invited to comment on the discourse of modernity through their artworks.

Breaking from convention

While I had made my way to the Museum Volkenkunde to see FM, my friend came to see *A House filled with Indonesia,* showing in the adjacent gallery. The latter exhibition showed objects from the 1000-strong personal collection of Frits Liefkes, curator at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. After a walk through this display, which had a neat one-way circumambulatory path, my friend complained about the "hard-to-navigate" nature of *FM* and its texts. Indeed this fetish with A-Z routes and A-Z text panels, has for long groomed museum-going audiences. To break away from the conventional layout of exhibitions is a risqué choice, but in the case of *FM* – with its unconventional, multi-media display – it complements this open-ended exhibition that pushes its viewers to make alternative assessments of given objects and cultures. My friend thought FM should have occupied a specially designated floor in the museum to allow time for a complete re-orientation on the part of the visitor; however, I saw a meaningful contrast in its juxtaposition with Liefkes' collection. Perhaps I was over-reading into this arrangement: the European collector Liefkes visited Indonesia only once in his lifetime; he bought artefacts from auctions and the European art market. Considering he was a curator, he may have researched enough about the field and the original locations of his collectibles, yet the rigueur of fieldwork per se was missing in his career. Liefkes in some ways paints a perfect picture of the collector who builds a worthy collection, but is always removed from the original context of his objects. At the same time Liefkes held the view that the world outside his mansion had little clue about art and exhibitions. And next door, *FM* was silently urging a revisit to search for original contexts of objects, their creators and ideas; most importantly, *FM* treated its audience as knowing-enough to be able to interpret. Together, these exhibitions made a compelling narrative of the lacuna in art history and museums and some of the aspirations which seek to fill these gaps.

Added to the aspirations of the twelve curators is my own, to augment research on alternative modernities through art history (read my predilection for collection studies). If curatorial projects such as *Fetish Modernity* are allowed to grow, issues of decolonization, Asian-African modernities, Europe-Asia-Africa dialogues would become realities in the post-colony. The efforts launched by the protagonist of my thesis, Maharaja Sayajirao, to reveal peripheral modernities as simultaneous to European modernities would finally bear fruit. And finally, the fact that this exhibition leads up to the establishment of INEM (International Network of Ethnography Museums) means that the re-imagination of plural modernities will not die with the dismounting of this exhibition.

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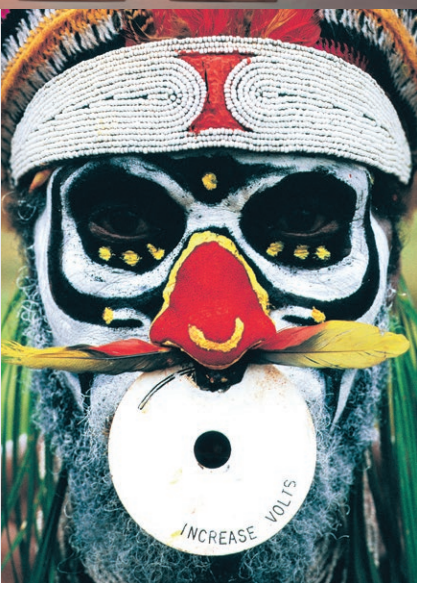
***Fetish Modernity* is a travelling exhibition, supported by the Culture Programme of the European Union, as a part of the project 'Ethnography Museums and World Cultures RIME'. FM has travelled over three years to Tervuren, Madrid, Prague, Vienna, Leiden and will show until March 2014 at the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm (www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/etnografiskamuseet). It is accompanied by a copiously illustrated book, which can be ordered for free from the Museum Volkenkunde, or one of the other participating museums.**

Notes

1 Ramusack, B. 2004. *The New Cambridge History of India: The Indian Princes and Their States,* Volume III.6, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
2 O'Hanlon, M. 2011. 'Consuming Shields', in Bouttiaux, A.M. & A. Seiderer (eds.) 2011. *Fetish Modernity,* Belgium: RIME Partners & Royal Museum for Central Africa, pp.141-145
3 Ostberg, W. 2011. 'Asante Goes Italian: Global Inspiration or Appropriation of Intellectual Property', ibid., p.139
4 Mitter, P. 2008. 'Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery', *The Art Bulletin,* 90(4): 531-548, pp.534-537.



Above:
This stool was designed by the Italian designer Matteo Thun. He was clearly inspired by the wooden stools made by the Asante in Ghana. So, is this stool Italian or Ghanaian?

Below left:
In the south of Ghana coffins are custom made according to the wishes of the deceased; the designs often refer to his or her profession or social status. Although a relatively new practice of perhaps 100 years, it is already regarded as an established tradition. This particular coffin, in the form of a mobile phone, was made specially for this exhibition and will not be put underground (Ghana).

Below right:
A native Papua man in Mount Hagen wears a CD as nose decoration (Papua New Guinea).

Travelling words and their lessons on the 'Indianisation' of Southeast Asia

The author's research aims to cast a new light on the oft-neglected vernacular dimension of pre-modern contact between India and Southeast Asia. The nature of interaction between these two culturally diverse regions is reconstructed from historical linguistics, lexical borrowing and the distribution of biological, cultural and technological items designated by the 'travelling' loanwords under comparison. Doing so inevitably involves a departure from the traditional focus on the culture of the upper class, shaped by Sanskrit-speaking elites, towards a fuller appreciation of the roles played by sailors, merchants and craftsmen in the introduction of Indian concepts into Southeast Asia.

Tom Hoogervorst

Dealing with colonial paradigms

At present, the countries of Southeast Asia face substantial gaps of knowledge regarding their earliest history. Located between the powerhouses of China and India and demarcated by colonial-era borders, the region has obtained its conceptual validity due mostly to 20th-century geopolitical developments, although Southeast Asianists can rightfully defend the analytical legitimacy of their field by emphasizing shared cultural practices, agricultural systems, historical developments and contemporary transnational phenomena. As regards the pre-colonial situation, many scholars have called attention to Southeast Asia's susceptibility to external influence, especially from India, as a feature defining the region's pre-modern history. That being said, our understanding of the dynamics underlying the sociological process of 'Indianisation' – itself a controversial term – is still in its infancy. It is the aim of my research to demonstrate the contributions historical linguistics could make to it.

European understandings of Asian antiquity have served as strong advocacy tools to justify the 'pacification' of large parts of the continent. In India's case, the subcontinent's pre-Islamic civilisation stood on par with Graeco-Roman antiquity in the hierarchical taxonomies of colonial thought. It had not gone unnoticed that Cambodia, Java and other parts of Southeast Asia boasted a cultural substrate with Indian affinities, witnessed in Indic-derived epigraphy, religious practices, architecture and socio-political structures. Consequently, British, French and Dutch scholars – with Indian nationalists in their pursuit – have long perceived the lands and archipelagos east of the Gaṅgā River as little more than obscure outliers of the great Indian Civilisation, giving rise to such epithets as 'Further India', 'Indochina', 'the East Indies' and indeed 'Indonesia'. Increased scholarly attention to Southeast Asia's prehistory eventually shifted the discursive paradigm from 'Greater India' to 'Indianisation', until that concept, too, became untenable. Able to benefit from technological developments in identification and dating methods, a new generation of archaeologists have revealed ancient local traditions in Southeast Asian crop cultivation, arboriculture, maritime technology and copper metallurgy. These insights are gradually starting to facilitate a more balanced view of cultural contact across the Bay of Bengal.

Elite and vernacular transmissions

Lacking a purely indigenous written tradition, most descriptions of pre-modern Southeast Asia came from outsiders. The earliest written sources on the region mention kings, kingdoms and dynasties with Indian names. The impression to be gained from these textual accounts and other philological studies was that (Brahmanical) Hinduism and Sanskrit played a key role at the courts of Southeast Asia. This, in combination with temple excavations conducted by Europe's prolific oriental institutes, firmly placed the traditional focus of research on the elite aspects of Indian culture. It was observed that this dispersal of 'high' culture was mirrored by the linguistic situation; the lexicons of Malay, Javanese and other Southeast Asian languages – especially the literary registers – display a profound Sanskrit influence in the semantic domains of architecture, political organisation, mythology, rites, art and scholarship. This led many scholars to believe that the transmission of Indian culture could not have been carried out by warriors *(kṣatriyas)* or merchants *(vaiśyas)*, leaving Brahmins as the most likely agents of 'Indianisation'.

These insights, which administered the *coup de grâce* to the 'Greater India' narrative of eastward colonisation through military means, gave rise to new questions. Could not the process of 'Indianisation' have been initiated by Southeast Asians who visited India, rather than the other way around? Did Indian experts on religion, art and craftsmanship take the initiative to settle at the Southeast Asian courts, or were they invited by local rulers? On the one hand, Brahmins are widely believed to have maintained strong taboos against sea travel. On the other, Chinese and Sanskrit texts document them in high numbers at the ancient Southeast Asian courts, suggesting that actual practice considerably diverged from religious prescriptions. Recent archaeological research has further fine-tuned our understanding of pre-modern contact between India and Southeast Asia. The findings of Indian pottery, beads and other artefacts in a late first millennium BCE Southeast Asian context established beyond doubt that the introduction of 'high' culture was preceded by several centuries of vernacular or 'low' culture in the form of commercial contacts. While it was often assumed that the paucity, if not absence, of vernacular (i.e., non-Sanskrit) Indian loanwords in Southeast Asian languages disqualified merchants as the carriers of Indian culture, such linguistic inferences are problematic on various levels. Few scholars have seriously looked at the role of Middle Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages and their possible impact on the speech communities of Southeast Asia. In the orientalist tradition, European scholars were rigorously trained in Sanskrit and Arabic, but knowledge of other languages remained incidental. It is not surprising, then, that vernacular influence was simply not detected.

This is where historical linguistics comes in. Knowledge of regular phonological innovations can reveal not only whether certain Indic loanwords belong to colloquial languages ('Prakrits') rather than Sanskrit, but also at which stage of language development they were transmitted into the recipient speech communities. My research calls attention to a large and previously overlooked quantity of Middle Indo-Aryan loanwords. The following well-known Malay words are among these tentative 'Prakrit' borrowings: *bəndahara* 'treasurer', *bəniaga* 'to trade', *biku* 'Buddhist monk', *cuka* 'vinegar', *labu* 'gourd', *pəlana* 'saddle', *puasa* 'to fast', *təlaga* 'lake', *təmbaga* 'copper' and *tiga* 'three'. South Dravidian languages, especially Tamil, also played a role. Early Tamil loans into Malay include *cəməti* 'whip', *cəpu* 'little box', *kati* 'a weight unit', *panai* 'earthen vessel' and *pərisai* 'shield'. In both cases, the words borrowed from vernacular languages (Tamil in Southeast Asia, although present in some medieval inscriptions, never obtained the literary prestige accorded to Sanskrit) tend to denote items related to trade, technology, plants, animals and other aspects of everyday life, marking a clear contrast to the more abstract concepts, scholarly terms and luxury loans for which people preferred to draw upon Sanskrit.

'Indianisation' versus 'Malayisation'

With this new-found focus on vernacular agency and active Southeast Asian participation in the eastward exchange of commodities, we may also begin to revise cultural transmissions in the opposite direction. The spice trade remains the best known example of a large-scale transnational enterprise of chiefly westward directionality. Due to specific requirements in terms of soil, climate and harvesting methods, parts of Southeast Asia gained global importance through the export of cloves, nutmeg, pepper varieties, camphor and other aromatic resins. In addition, recent phylogenetic studies have confirmed a Southeast Asian origin of numerous widespread Indo-Pacific plant cultigens, including the banana tree, the areca palm, ginger, certain tubers, limes and various other types of fruits. Maritime archaeology, especially the study of early Southeast Asian shipwrecks, reveals not only that the Indonesian archipelago is home to one of the world's oldest continuous seafaring traditions, but also that several of its ship-building techniques have spread westwards across the Indian Ocean World. The famous outrigger vessels rigged with spritsails, which can be found from East Africa and Sri Lanka to the remote Pacific, in all likelihood originate from insular Southeast Asia, as do the traditional lash-lugged plank-boats of the Maldives and South India. In fact, the advanced nautical skills that emerged in pre-modern Southeast Asia support a scenario in which local products and commodities were actively propagated into the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

The linguistic record strongly suggests that speakers of Malay played a key role in these interethnic transmissions. It has long been known that this language was instrumental in the dispersal of Indian and Middle Eastern loanwords across much of insular Southeast Asia; influence from Sanskrit, Arabic and other Indian Ocean languages spread as far as the Philippines, East Indonesia and even Madagascar through Malay-speaking intermediaries. Upon re-examining the available lexical data, we can discern similar patterns with words that travelled in the opposite direction. Several Southeast Asian commodities entered the Indian Ocean – and thence the rest of the world – under their Malay name. While many of Southeast Asia's early kingdoms were Malay-speaking, the main reason for the transnational success of this language was its susceptibility to external influence. Up to this date, Malay both gives and takes vocabulary from languages in contact and is used as a *lingua franca* between people of various ethno-linguistic backgrounds. Examples of widespread Malay loanwords include *damar* 'dammar (tree resin)', *durian, jung* 'junk (ship)', *kakaktua* 'cockatoo', *kapur* 'camphor', *kəris* 'kris (dagger)', *limau* 'lime (fruit)', *nuri* 'lory (parrot)' and *sagu* 'sago'. More research on the literary traditions of the Indian Ocean may help us to determine at which point in time these words started to travel outside the Malay World.

Re-appreciating Southeast Asia's antiquity

The study of pre-colonial history and archaeology is gradually gaining ground in Southeast Asia. While ancient heritage has been used since independence to bolster nation-building and tourism, new developments in democratisation, stability, economic growth, political integration and travelling opportunities have provided Southeast Asians with an increased awareness of their shared regional history. This issue is starting to resonate in Southeast Asian academia, at the expense of the myopically nationalistic discourse that has shaped the thoughts of yesterday's generation. More research on the pre-colonial situation and contacts with India will hopefully provide a solid footing to the region's past and its position in global history. In doing so, the field of historical linguistics has the potential to provide important clues to cultural contact, especially when textual evidence is absent or chiefly preoccupied with the exploits of the elite. A study of vocabulary, after all, is one of the most efficient ways to learn what common people – all too often neglected in mainstream history – cultivated, ate, bought, sold, used and did in a pre-literate society.

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The cityscape of modern Central Asia

At present, no expense is spared for the regeneration of the Uzbek capital; national and international resources are being used to create the skyline of modern Tashkent. Importantly, Timurid (14th century) and Shaybanid (16th century) architectural styles have been used to construct a modern Uzbek identity. Although Samarkand was the main Timurid capital and Bukhara the Shaybanid stronghold, Tashkent has become the emblem of everything that is new and modern in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Like an architectural palimpsest, the Timurid and Shaybanid past is used to define the present political and religious agenda of independent Uzbekistan.

Elena Paskaleva

1.

The independent boom

During the second half of the 19th century, the New City of Tashkent was founded to the east of the Anhor canal. The urban plan of this rapidly expanding city was determined by the Tsarist Russian administration, which was ruling Turkestan at the time. The New Tashkent had a fan-shaped layout with wide avenues organised around a nucleus, known today as the Amir Timur Square (fig.1). The square has become the ideological centre of the city. Ever since this major addition to the urban layout of Tashkent, the metropolis has remained divided into the Old City and the New City. The two parts differ in their architecture, urban plan and amenities and have never functioned as a whole.

With the independence of Uzbekistan, proclaimed on 1 September 1991, the skyline of Tashkent changed dramatically. The most characteristic feature of the present architectural boom is that the majority of the buildings draw inspiration from the glorious Timurid and Shaybanid past. Two major sites, recently built, are the Palace of International Forums (2009) situated in the New City, and the Khazrat Imam Complex (2007) in the Old City. Their symbolism is evident. On the one hand, the Palace facing the horse statue of Timur underlines his status as the great national hero. The Khazrat Imam Complex, on the other hand, reflects the respect for Islam as the state religion.

The Khazrat Imam Complex

In January 2007 the International Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)[1] declared Tashkent one of the four capitals of Islamic culture. The Khazrat Imam Complex - the oldest and holiest site in Tashkent - was chosen to commemorate the occasion. The new building activity transformed the image of the Old City and created a large-scale pilgrimage site in what used to be a remote area, off the beaten track, amidst narrow streets of mud-brick housing. The most important construction within the complex was the new Khazrat Imam Mosque built by the Uzbek president Islam Karimov (fig.2).

With the Khazrat Imam Complex, Karimov created a centre for the Old City, which no other urban planner before him had managed to achieve. By drastically modernising the Old City, especially its most religious and sacred kern, a new tolerance towards Islam was availed, which had probably been unthinkable during the early years of Uzbek independence. Furthermore, the building project was characterised by direct citations of Timurid and Shaybanid iconography and urban planning.

2.

3.

4.

The Khazrat Imam Complex evolved around the mausoleum of Kaffel Shashi (d. 976/77), one of the first imams of the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam. During the sixteenth century, when Tashkent gained cultural and commercial importance under the Shaybanid dynasty, a new mausoleum for Kaffel Shashi was built in 1541-42, known at present as the Khazrat Imam (fig.3). The mausoleum of Sujunidz Khan (d. 1525), the first Shaybanid ruler of Tashkent, was erected in the cemetery that evolved to the south of the Kaffel Shashi burial site. The Barak Khan Madrasa was built around the mausoleum of Sujunidz Khan in the period 1530-1550. The Muslim Board of Uzbekistan and the seat of the *mufti*[2] were housed in the Barak Khan Madrasa from 1950 to 2007.

The Khazrat Imam Mosque was created exactly in the main axis of the sixteenth-century royal Shaybanid madrasa. Within a remarkably short period of four months in 2007, the Barak Khan Madrasa was adorned with three turquoise pseudo-Timurid cupolas on high drums. It seems that the Barak Khan Madrasa was redesigned according to the greatest surviving Timurid model. The only building in present-day Uzbekistan with three cupolas forming one ensemble is the Bibi Khanum Mosque (1398-1405), which Timur erected in Samarkand as the greatest architectural achievement of his reign (fig.4). The mosque was conceived as the flagstone of Timurid craftsmanship and architectural ingenuity. The addition of the three domes to the Barak Khan Madrasa makes a very clear architectural reference to the Bibi Khanum Mosque. Furthermore, the two domes above the vestibule also refer iconographically to the Shaybanid Mir Arab Madrasa (1535-1536) in Bukhara. The two side domes, characteristic of the Mir Arab Madrasa, are repeated on the main façade of the Barak Khan Madrasa and on the main façade of the new Khazrat Imam Mosque. By utilising architectural elements of previous key monuments of the Timurid and Shaybanid dynasty, the modern Uzbek artistic elite aspires to the status of powerful leaders, creating artefacts on the same grand-scale as their predecessors.

As architectural emblems of the former capitals of Bukhara and Samarkand, these monuments are reused in an attempt to legitimise the political and religious power in Tashkent, the capital of modern Uzbekistan. This process can be defined as architectural palimpsest. The outcome is a mix of Timurid, Shaybanid and modern Uzbek iconography, meant to unify national traditions. The popular Khazrat Imam Mosque is visited both by local people and by governmental officials on state visits. The Khazrat Imam Complex was the key architectural achievement of modern Uzbek architecture in 2007.

The politics of urban renewal in Tashkent

Its success and popularity with the local population proved to be a determinant in the presidential elections in December of that same year. With the Khazrat Imam Complex the long-anticipated centre of the Old City was finally created.

The Palace of International Forums 'Uzbekistan'

The present Amir Timur Square has been regarded as the ideological centre of Tashkent ever since 1882. The site was chosen at the crossing point of the Moscow and Kaufman avenues, which followed the trading routes of the Silk Road. The Moscow avenue followed the caravan route to Kashgar and further to China, and the Kaufman avenue was laid out along the road to Kokand, situated in the Ferghana valley. The square was regarded as the centre of Russian rule in the nineteenth century. In 1913 the monument of the Turkestan governor Kaufman was marked with a plaque reading: "General Kaufman and the Army that Conquered Central Asia". Then, following the October Socialist Revolution in 1917, the Kaufman monument was dismantled (1919). In 1930 a bust of Lenin was erected on the square for a short time, which was subsequently replaced by a statue of Stalin at the end of the 1940s. After considerable Soviet reconstruction during the 1950s, a monument of Karl Marx was instituted in 1968. The Karl Marx monument was dismantled in 1993 as it did not represent the ideology of the new Uzbek state. In 1993, celebrating the anniversary of the Uzbek independence, the bronze horse statue of Amir Timur was revealed and the square adopted its present name. Amir Timur was proclaimed the symbol of Uzbek national identity. Once the pro-Timurid direction of cultural production and activities in modern Uzbekistan became manifest, the Amir Timur Square was adorned with the Timurid Museum (1996) and the Palace of International Forums in 2009.

The Palace of International Forums 'Uzbekistan' was completed in an exceptionally short timeframe of only six months. Its doors opened on 2 September 2009 to coincide with the celebrations of the Uzbek Independence Day on 1 September, and with Tashkent's 2200th anniversary. The client of the project was the 'Republic of Uzbekistan'. The country's most important representative building is designed for congresses, conferences and cultural events. Commissioned in March 2009, the German architectural bureau Ippolito Fleitz Group[3] created a contemporary interior while incorporating elements from traditional Uzbek architecture. Their interior design won the 'Best Architects 11 Award'.[4]

Fig.1 (left): Amir Timur Square.

Fig.2 (left): Khazrat Imam Mosque.

Fig.3 (left): Khazrat Imam.

Fig.4 (left): Bibi Khanum Mosque.

Fig. 5 (above): Congress Centre, Tashkent, Usbekistan. Designed by the Ippolito fleitz Group, 2009.Photography © Zooey Braun.

Footnote image: Detail Sun Face.

All photographs by author (2013), unless otherwise specified.

The exterior of the building is colossal and robust. The glazed façade is decorated with white columns of Thassos marble with traditional Uzbek capitals. The massive, semi-circular corners remind one of the gigantic *guldasta* (corner towers) of the Timurid Yasawi Shrine (14th century). An elaborate cornice executed in white marble finishes off the exterior wall. A Shaybanid architectural quotation comes in the form of the solar detail (below) taken from the tympanum of the Shir-Dar Madrasa in Samarkand, and is used here on two rectangular niches on the façade facing the Amir Timur Square.

The surface area of the palace measures 40,000 square metres, spread across four levels. Millions of Swarovski crystals were used for the chandeliers, precious metals were incorporated into the design, and 850 eight-pointed marble stars were inlayed in 18 natural stone formats. The most characteristic design feature of the foyer is the massive twenty-three metres long chandelier executed in 1,1 million Swarovski crystals. Another eight spherical chandeliers decorate the gallery (fig.5).

Protruding into the gallery, the exterior of the auditorium with 1,850 seats forms an organic counterpart to the strict geometrical design of the façade and the sixteen-meter high window axes. The seats are upholstered in turquoise blue. This is a metaphor for the lapis lazuli, a colour that has become indigenous to Timurid architecture and has been widely used for glazed tiles and ribbed domes in Samarkand. The carpets are hand-woven, referring to the century-old carpet industry of Uzbekistan. The palace is a masterpiece of white marble. The magnitude of the project, the choice of the most expensive materials and the global character of the project logistics only testify that no expense was spared throughout the construction.

Conclusion

This sketch is a modest attempt to shed more light on the building activities in Tashkent during the last decade. It stresses the importance of the Timurid and Shaybanid heritage for the formation of the architectural landscape of Tashkent. The new constructions range from complex religious compounds to public buildings. The style is eclectic. While the majority of the earlier renovations were carried out by local artisans and architects, there is a tendency in the last couple of years to open the state commissions to foreign companies. As a result, new architectural gems have been created by using the latest technology. Obviously, the state assets are used for creating the new image of independent Uzbekistan as a reliable business partner on a global scale.

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Notes

1 *ISESCO* was established by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in May 1979. ISESCO is one of the largest international Islamic organizations specialising in the fields of education, science & culture. Its headquarters are in Rabat, Morocco.

2 Uzbekistan's highest religious leader.

3 The information in this article is based on the Ippolito Fleitz Group's press release on the Palace of International Forums. The reproduced pictures are free press images as defined by the Ippolito Fleitz Group.

4 Architectural award for the best and most interesting project of German/Austrian/Swiss architects. For more information, please refer to the award website at: http://bestarchitects.de/de/award/info.html

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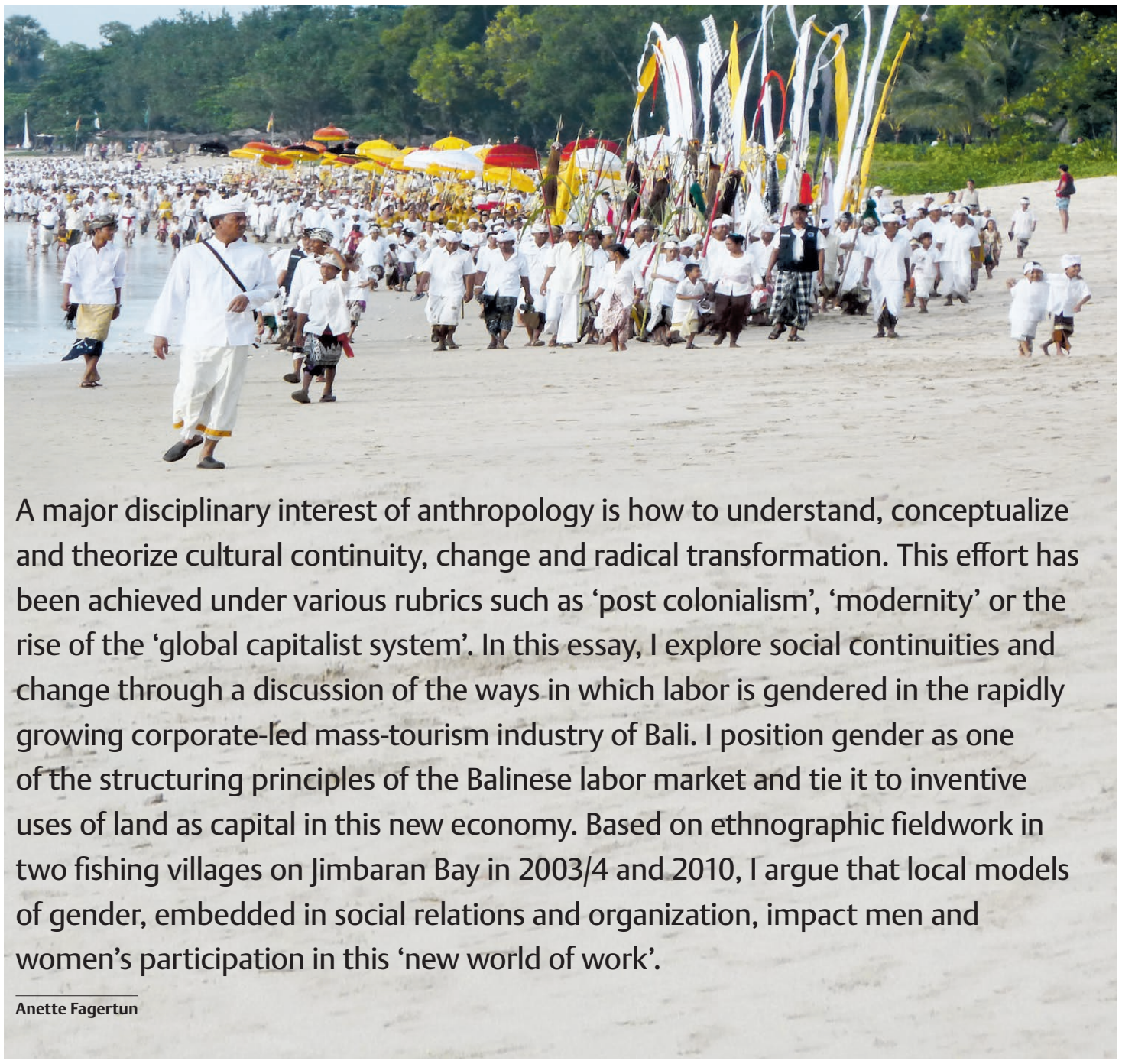
Gendered labor in 'Paradise': tourism as an engine of change in Bali



A major disciplinary interest of anthropology is how to understand, conceptualize and theorize cultural continuity, change and radical transformation. This effort has been achieved under various rubrics such as 'post colonialism', 'modernity' or the rise of the 'global capitalist system'. In this essay, I explore social continuities and change through a discussion of the ways in which labor is gendered in the rapidly growing corporate-led mass-tourism industry of Bali. I position gender as one of the structuring principles of the Balinese labor market and tie it to inventive uses of land as capital in this new economy. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in two fishing villages on Jimbaran Bay in 2003/4 and 2010, I argue that local models of gender, embedded in social relations and organization, impact men and women's participation in this 'new world of work'.

Anette Fagertun

PARTICIPATION in the rapidly growing economy can open new paths for social mobility in this Hindu-Balinese caste based society. Access to the new labor market, and a position within 'the social space of differences',[1] is structured by a range of factors. Because labor is embedded in local social relations, moralities and institutions, some groups are marginalized while others are granted access. ILO figures show an increase in poverty among workers in the formal sector of Indonesia; but conditions in the informal sector – estimated as double the size of the formal – are even worse, as workers here are not unionized and the majority are women working as housemaids, servants or helpers in family business.

Tourism as an agent of change

Today the travel and tourism industry is amongst the world's largest industries, and the Asia-Pacific region is the world's fastest growing tourist destination. Tourism as an 'economic engine' has become an alternative source for growth, contributing substantially to developing economies in the global south. It is also a labor intensive industry, which in Bali has been encouraged and justified for its potential to increase employment opportunities and thus develop the island economy. Bali's rapid economic growth since the mid-1980s is mainly the result of mass-tourism. In Bali, a small island with a population of about 3.9 million, tourism accounts for about half the economy and employs more than half of the workforce. Labor migrants account for about ten percent of the population, and about two and a half million tourists from all over the world visit the island every year. The tourism and service sector is a composite industry involving transport, accommodation, catering, entertainment, natural resources as well as other facilities and services like shopping malls, golf courses, parks, etc.

Tourism began in Bali with the Dutch colonization of the island in 1908, but it was during the *New Order* period of President Suharto (1966-1998) that it really developed. Bali was viewed by Dutch orientalists as a 'living museum' of the Hindu-Javanese civilization that had been swept away from Java by the coming of Islam, a view which informed the colonial policy of the preservation of this cultural heritage *(Balisering)*. The island of Bali has been conceived ever since as 'the Island of the Gods' and the 'Paradise Island'. However, where culture is 'heritage' to be preserved, it is also a major capital to exploit for profit.[2] While the Balinese people try to make a livelihood by turning cultural practices into commodities for tourists, these practices might in the end become indigenized as 'tradition' and 'authentic culture' and form the basis for asserting a new cultural identity and new cultural practices. When local communities develop as a result of tourism, one will see traditions, culture and the past continuously reinvented in order to uphold the image created through the visitor's gaze; simultaneously, material culture, people and places undergo commodification for the purpose of the global market.

Above: Village ceremony - the Bali-Hindu ceremonial life is elaborate and intensive.

The new 'world of work'

Of course, 'culture' is not the only thing being commodified, or the only 'object' exploited for profit, in the new economy. A general shift from subsistence economy to wage labor on the island, as in rural Southeast Asia in general, has led to the commodification of labor – labor in the abstract, as something that people 'own' and can choose to sell for a wage. With the tourist-boom in Bali, and the consequent expansion of the formal and informal service sectors of the economy, a range of new types of labor emerged and labor migrants from all over Indonesia started to arrive in large numbers. The level of employment in these sectors is indeed high, yet in Bali it is also highly structured according to gender, caste and class. While we do see that social mobility is increased through the emergence of new ways to earn a living, thus providing many Balinese with the base for participation as consumers of 'modern' goods and lifestyles, we also witness an increased social stratification among local communities. The competition for work in the tourism industry is fierce, and the majority of local villagers tend to compete with unskilled migrants for unskilled, menial and low-paying jobs , in informal sectors such as construction, laundry, gardening or maintenance at hotels, in restaurants or in the spa and tour guide sector, while the well-paying positions in the formal/service sector are filled by skilled migrants and expatriates.

Gender and land

Within this process land has become capital that can be exploited for profit. In Bali, agricultural land is rapidly converted into tourist facilities; people sell their land to investment companies, hotel chains, and foreigners who seek business opportunities or who are looking for a holiday home. The massive conversion of land into 'concrete forests' is a way to accommodate the rapidly expanding tourism industry in this 'global tourist resort', but it is also a substantial increase in income for some Balinese villagers.

Such land conversions may have many and deep implications for local people's lives. For one, the ownership and rights to land are being contested, something that has already created serious situations of land deprivation for local villagers and spurred deep conflicts between family members and villagers. Originally it was only 'wasteland' that was being sold off to the tourism industry; but these days all types, including agricultural and grazing land, and even forests, are being sold or leased. Selling land has become a good business – for men. Land is traditionally owned by men and men inherit land through their fathers, in accordance with the Balinese patrilineal kinship system. However, married women can access land through their husbands/brothers/fathers and on Jimbaran Bay, a new form of land use has turned into a good business for some village women.

Unskilled labor migrants from all over Indonesia arrive in Bali in large numbers. Most of these migrants cannot afford to buy land or a house, but still need food and a place to live. This has become a new niche for many village women. They build boarding-houses *(kost)* on their compound land and rent out rooms to migrants, profiting from their housing needs. These women are thus self-employed in the informal sector of the new economy; they have found a 'micro-niche' based on their access to attractive land, which provides them with a steady monthly income and a secure future. This reality gives them opportunities to participate as consumers in the new economy and climb the social ladder.

The gender of labor

While women tend to engage in labor within the domestic sphere – as landladies, maids, running small shops close to the house – men tend to monopolize jobs that involve greater spatial and temporal mobility, such as fishermen, taxi drivers, guides or gardeners. In Bali this is closely tied to local configurations of gender, imbued with sexual double-standards, which make women particularly vulnerable to sexual insinuation and gossip through their association with the tourism industry. Local women, especially those who are married, are therefore reluctant to take on employment in the tourist sector and are doubly – as women and 'unskilled' – restricted from participation in the formal sector of the new economy. Women's work often takes on a 'flexible form', which accomodates all their (other) work-duties in the household, and is culturally construed as 'helping out others'. This flexibility is conditioned by the principle of gender, which informs the division of labor between the sexes – where women's roles have primarily been inside the household, and men's outside the household.

Even as more women are engaging in waged labor nowadays, the aspect of 'helping out others' still continues. This might be conceived as representing continuity in gender models in a situation of rapid transformation in people's everyday labor situation. A common way for local women to justify their income and having remunerative employment, is their wish to 'help their husbands'. The husbands are fishermen, taxi drivers or guides, who in the low season might struggle to make ends meet. Men agree that their wives' employment is a help to them; it is not neccesary, but it is welcome. Men's and women's jobs are not always different – we find, for example, that both men and women can wait tables or work in laundries – however, as Strathern put it: "...what is contrasted are the ends to which the labour is put".[3] Arguably, it is not only the form of work in itself, but the *gendered moralities of work, through which work is organized and ascribed meaning, that form women's flexible work situation.* Moreover, and perhaps as a consequence, women are invested with what I have elsewhere termed 'encompassed agency': women's wage work is considered of lesser value than that of men and is limited to 'helping' by the imperative status of the work of men as 'providers'.

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Notes

1 Bourdieu, P. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power,* Cambridge: Polity Press.
2 Picard, M. 1990. ' "Cultural tourism" in Bali: cultural performances as tourist attraction', *Indonesia* 49:37-74, see p.55
3 Strathern, M. 1988. *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia,* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, see p.148

Sufism and the secular state: the South Asian experience

Over the last two decades, since the appearance of a special issue of *The Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai) on secularism (1994), Indian intellectuals have intensely debated the question as to whether one can speak of a South Asian or Indian variant of secularism. Proponents of such a view (e.g., Rajeev Barghava[1]) take it for granted both that the concept of secularism historically emerged in a European context, and that the experience of European nation states with secularism has frequently been fraught with contradictions, since a sharp demarcation between state and religion(s) could not be maintained in practice. The South Asian variant of secularism abandons the need for strict demarcation.

Peter Custers

Above: The mausoleum of Bul Ali Qalandar in Panipat.

IT IS VARIABLY ARGUED that the secular state should occupy a position of *neutrality* between the faiths practiced by the Indian population, or should hold a position of *principled distance*. The Indian Constitution, as adopted after Partition, clearly indicates that the founding fathers of the post-colonial state did take cognizance of the fact that a 'hands-off' policy in itself does not suffice, since there is a need to balance freedom of religion with other democratic rights guaranteed under India's constitution. If the state is to play an emancipatory role in relation to society, it can't afford to acquiesce in religious views that are oppressive. Hence it is the obligation of the secular state to intervene in civil society where religions operate, and play a *reformist* role. And while one wonders whether any modern state – Indian or otherwise – has been effective in preventing the (re)emergence of 'revivalist' or 'fundamentalist' currents, it is clear that no secular state can survive without an activist defence of religious tolerance.

Tolerance and divisions

Now the concrete task I have set myself is to highlight the contemporary significance of South Asian Sufi *tariqahs* [fraternities] and shrines for the maintenance of peace and harmony between the subcontinent's diverse religious communities. Firstly, as to definitions: in its broadest sense the Sufi tradition refers to a whole range of mystics, of groups and people searching to reach an individual, direct spiritual union with Islam's God, Allah. Via their fraternities, these mystics devised a discipline aimed at reaching a spiritual state. It is important to note though that the definition of Sufism put forward by some strands of Islamic mysticism is more 'radical' yet, since they insist that all attachments to personal wealth be given up.

Further, it is crucial to point out that Sufism cannot *per se* be equated with a liberal attitude towards Islam's scriptures. Nor would it be appropriate to restrict oneself to the divide between those who do [*bashar*] and those who do not [*beshar*] adhere to Islam's legal system, the *Sharia*. For in the course of the steep rise of Sufism's social influence in South Asia (13th-18th centuries), there have been at least six other significant issues over which Sufi liberal representatives have clashed with (other) Islamic scholars [*ulema*], and with competing Sufi representatives. These divides between Sufi currents may be briefly summarized:

- between the advocates of Ibn Arabi's philosophy of *wahdat-ul-wujud,* i.e., the Unity of Being, on the one hand – and 'i nternal' opponents of this philosophy, such as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, on the other;
- between the practitioners of the *samā,* group musical sessions aimed at reaching spiritual ecstasy – and Sufis who oppose(d) the *samā;*
- between those advocating reconciliation with the majority population of Hindus, such as the renowned prince Dara Shikoh – and those advocating the humiliation of Hindus;
- between those who saw the veneration at tombs and intercession on behalf of visitors of shrines as positive – and those who considered it a violation of Islam's doctrines;
- between those who stress the need for instruction in the rational sciences – and those who accord primacy or even exclusive importance to instruction in the revealed sciences;
- lastly between those who were/are eager to develop a syncretic discourse and to learn from South Asia's Hindu ascetics – and those less inclined to do so.

Saint worship as heterodox feature

So far I have focused on the broad divide within South Asia's Sufi tradition between tolerance and intolerance. It is now time to highlight one of the issues in particular, namely the issue of saint worship. In Christianity, a cult of saint veneration reportedly grew up originally (3rd-7th centuries) at cemeteries lying outside the city centres of the Roman world. But, whereas this indicates that in Catholic Christianity saint worship has popular origins, the recognition of sainthood was subsequently sanctified by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The Papacy in Rome instituted strict rules and criteria as to who is eligible for sainthood, and brought saint veneration under its authority, thereby (partly) undermining its popular character. The latter cannot be said about saint veneration within Islam. As in early Christianity, the burial places of the Sufi holy men and preachers came to attract huge numbers of pilgrims venerating the saint and seeking intercession so as to solve life's problems. Furthermore, in South Asian Islam saint worship has remained a key component, with pilgrimages to numerous shrines continuing throughout the centuries, and with new *dargahs* [shrines] rising up, even in modern times. Unlike in Catholicism, in Islam there persists an uneasy co-existence between the religion's official scholars and legal experts on the one hand, and Sufi masters and disciples operating independently on the other. Intercession is either condemned as un-Islamic, since it is said to contradict with the religion's monolithic character, or it is grudgingly tolerated. In either case, sainthood in Islam is not conveyed from above. Hence, the mass visits to shrines where Sufi holy persons lie buried are an important and autonomous feature of South Asian civil society, and largely free from patronage by Islam's legal scholars, the *ulemas,* it seems.

Sufi shrines and Gramscian thought

The above summary on dividing lines within the Sufi tradition and on saint worship in Islam is brief, but it suffices for the purpose of discussing why the thematic of Sufism and the secular state is relevant towards an emancipatory conceptualisation of secularism. In the introduction I already referred to the South Asian conceptualisation of secularism – it disagrees with the European view that a strict line of demarcation should be drawn between religion(s) and the modern state. One way to visualise things differently, is by projecting the state as an agent of social change and reform. The argument can, however, be developed well beyond a discourse on clauses contained within India's post-independence Constitution. The Indian view on secularism can and should be integrated into a Gramscian political discourse; Antonio Gramsci differentiated between two spheres of society's superstructure: the state and civil society. The latter comprises all institutions and organisations that are non-economic in kind, and do not reside directly under the state's apparatus of coercion and legal dominance. From the points of differentiation between Sufi fraternities mentioned above, it is evident that the activities of these fraternities have a crucial bearing on the maintenance of religious tolerance or otherwise, since they have always been situated within civil society.

Take the case of a typical *dargah,* as described in the socio-logical literature on South Asian shrines. It would comprise, besides the burial places of the saint and some of his disciples, the living quarters of the shrine's spiritual head and his family and of Sufi visitors; a library and *madrasah;* and space for the performance of *qawwali* music during weekly sessions or the *urs,* the annual celebrations. Moreover, the number of shrines where pilgrims gather for the *urs* is known to be huge; figures for the numbers of Muslim and Hindu participants in some cases run into millions. And while it obviously cannot be taken for granted that the motives for people's participation in these festivities are exclusively spiritual or religious in nature – intercession frequently is sought for purely earthly reasons – many if not most *dargahs* continue to be points of attraction for people belonging to different faiths. Hence, *dargahs* are a critical feature of India's civil society in Gramsci's sense.

The above statement on shrines and Gramscian thought, however, does not fully suffice for emancipatory conceptual-isation. Towards this purpose, two further steps need to be taken. First, Gramsci did not merely argue that civil society should be understood as a distinct social sphere; he also insisted that civil society is an arena of *contention,* of conflict between dominant and non-dominant classes. Hence we need to specify what meaning shrines have for society's most deprived sections, such as Muslim and Hindu landless labourers, informal sector workers, poor women who are widowed or childless, outcastes, *harijans,* etc. Moreover, the conceptual task involved is challenging, since Gramsci's political theory to my knowledge largely *bypassed* theoretical questions of secularism and tolerance.

Emancipatory conceptualisation

This then in a nutshell summarizes the double task to be accomplished. On the one hand, more empirical data needs to be gathered so as to assess, how and to what extent Sufi shrines contribute towards the maintenance of tolerance, and towards social struggles in the interests of society's poor. On the other hand, we need to investigate how or to what extent the debate by Indian intellectuals on the question of secularism has resulted in a *Gramscian* conceptualisation of secularism. Fact is that South Asian Sufi fraternities have not suffered the same fate as that suffered by *tariqahs* in countries of the Middle East, such as Egypt under Nasser and Turkey under Ataturk. This seems to confirm the thesis put forward by Indian intellectuals, that India's secularism since 1947 has been distinct from the secularism practiced elsewhere. Hence my assessment that the vibrant experience of South Asian shrines and *tariqahs* bears much significance for the international debate on the nature of an *emancipatory state* espousing secularism. To achieve an emancipatory conceptualisation we need an approach that is both grounded in Gramscian theory, and which creates further conceptual clarity regarding the dynamic relation between state and civil society towards defending secularism; a topic that, as stated, did not figure much in Gramsci's published *Prison Notebooks*.[2] In short, the ultimate task of this project is to put forward a Gramscian conceptualisation on Sufism and the secular state.

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Notes

1 Bhargava. R (ed.) 2013. *Secularism and it Critics,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press

2 Gramsci, A. 2001. *The Prison Notebooks,* Columbia University Press

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Forgotten cosmopolitanism: revisiting the urban side of Bali

Through the course of the 20th century, the world's encounter with the island of Bali and its architectural landscape is profoundly guided by the well-established image of an exotic 'Balinese' cultural otherness. Scholars such as Adrian Vickers and Henk Schulte Nordholt have argued that this powerful image is a product of a complex entanglement between colonial knowledge production, an orientalist conception of cultural otherness, the rise of the travel industry, and unfolding local identity politics. And as popular writings on Bali tend to focus on the iconic religious sites, the traditional villages, and the ritual life of the island's indigenous communities, rural settings are the most referred context when talking about the island's architectural tradition. The historical and shifting urban environments – the capitals of Bali's competing pre-colonial royal courts as well as the colonial and subsequently contemporary urban settlements – remain largely unknown. At the same time, these urban realms are the most dramatically changing environments, compensating the calcifying conservation of the 'villages' as the island embraces its economic dependence on cultural tourism industry.

Amanda Achmadi

THE MARGINALIZATION OF THE URBAN as 'un-Bali' is a recurring theme. Miguel Covarrubias (1937) began his renowned travel account of Bali by describing his dismay upon encountering the colonial town of Denpasar. In his words, "In the great 'alun-alun', the playground of Den Pasar, stolid Hollanders play tennis and drink beer near young Balinese playing soccer in striped sweatshirts [...] All around the square are the home of leading white residents, neat and bourgeois, small bungalows [...] The business street leading to the market [...] the same squalid shops [...] a small Chinese hotel, and curio stalls with mass production 'Balinese art', all kept by the same Chinese compradors, the same bearded Bombay merchants with eagle-like beaks [...] After the first bewildering days, when we had recovered from the shock of such distressing impressions as these, we began to 'discover' the real Bali [...] we found typical mud walls of the compounds, the thatched gates protected by mysterious signs [...] These were the proper setting for the lithe brown-skinned women returning from market with baskets of fruit on their head".[1] In a more recent observation, Don Townsend describes contemporary Denpasar, now the capital city of the island province, as "the main centre of change and profanity". He describes the latest wave of change moving across the island as "a process of physical, economic and psychological evasion of an unacceptable and culturally offensive way of urban living".[2]

The other Bali

Against the shifting architectural landscape of Denpasar the idea that there is a real Bali gains its urgency and realism. The urban Bali and its socio-cultural dynamic are subsequently perceived as a threat to the 'real Bali'. Such a perception problematically implies that the island's architectural and social history is largely a rural based phenomenon. It dissociates the urban from the historical as well as contemporary dynamics of the island, while denying the contemporary locals a chance to learn from their own urban past.

Revisiting the market district of Denpasar, the urban site rejected by Covarrubias, and reflecting on the way a more fluid interaction between urbanism and cosmopolitan cultural practices has unfolded in this place, gives us an opportunity to reposition the urban in our encounter with the island.

Fig. 1 (above): The shophouses of Denpasar's Chinese Village

The market district is a reminder of an important role that trade and multiethnic relations played in the everyday life of southern Hindu Balinese courts at the turn of the 20th century. A Chinese Village (Kampung Cina), an Arab Village (Kampung Arab), a Hindu Balinese *banjar* (communal unit) and two traditional markets compose the district. Established during the reign of the Badung kingdom in late 19th century and subsequently further consolidated during colonial time, the ethnic and spatial composition of the area is captured in one of the oldest maps of Denpasar produced by H.M. Van Weede during the 1908 colonial expedition into the region.

The Chinese Village is lined with stores selling households items and agricultural products, Chinese medicine stores and pharmacies, as well as white goods and furniture outlets. The Arab village is famous for its textile market that supplies the colourful fabrics of the iconic ceremonial apparels worn by Hindu Balinese communities in their ritual processions. The two traditional markets, Kumbasari and Badung are the main sources of fresh produce, artwork as well as ceremonial elements central to the local Hindu community's ritual life.

The Chinese Village today is a dense neighbourhood lined with two to three-storey shophouses. The majority of its residents are Chinese Balinese traders who own and have run the businesses and properties for several generations. Some of these structures still resonate the Chinese shophouse architecture of the early 19th century colonial settlements throughout Java with its narrow but steep pitched roof. But the majority of the shophouses in Denpasar today reflect a widespread adoption of the art deco architectural expression, a popular architectural movement in colonial settlements throughout the Dutch East Indies during the 1920s and 1930s (fig. 1).

The Arab Village is an equally dense urban neighbourhood. Despite its name, the area is home to a mix of Middle Eastern, Pakistani and Indian traders, their businesses and families. A mosque is situated at the southern end of the neighbourhood, orientated towards Mecca. Similar to the Chinese shophouses, adoption of art deco architectural elements can also be observed here. The two and three storey shophouses in the Arab Village are accessible from the front and back. This way, the neighbourhood also has an active back laneway, which it shares with the adjacent Banjar Titih, the long-standing Hindu Balinese neighbourhood of the old Denpasar.

Thoroughly enclosed by the Arab and Chinese Villages, Banjar Titih is not visible from the main street of the district. A cluster of low-rise multi pavilion courtyard compounds, Banjar Titih is primarily built around the village temple Pura Dalem Padang Entas. Most of the dwelling compounds have been renovated and densified throughout the years in order to accommodate the banjar's growing community. What used to be a series of semi-open pavilion units, the compounds may now house a series of freestanding single-storey enclosed buildings, each containing a number of rooms. An adoption and adaptation of colonial bungalow style architecture can be found in a number of compounds.

Architectural hybridisation and cosmopolitan neighbourhoods

With its mixed-use function, social cultural diversity, and considerably high population density, the market district is a lively urban precinct where private and public realms intermingle effortlessly. More importantly, the ethnic neighbourhoods are not physically or socially detached from the others. Their co-existence is translated through a dense network of streets that connect and permeate through and within the three neighbourhoods. The inhabitants of the three quarters also share public amenities in the area and interact with public spaces surrounding the Kumbasari and Badung markets, where food markets are held each night. Interactions between different ethnic communities have also taken place through marriage and participation in each neighbourhood's communal gatherings and social events. Through the years these interactions have triggered a range of appropriations of the physical structure of dwellings in each ethnic quarter, in order to accommodate the growing community. Most typical examples of these appropriations are the construction of a family Hindu Balinese temple *(pemerajan)* on the roof of a shophouse structure and the adoption of an enclosed living pavilion within the courtyard dwelling compounds.

Such interactions, and their physical traces in the form of architectural hybridisation, indicate an urban everyday life of a multi-ethnic community. This phenomenon is not unique to Denpasar. Mixed use and ethnically diverse districts can also be found in urban settlements in the northern region of Bali, such as Klungkung, Karangasem and Singaraja. These former capitals of the royal courts of 19th century Bali have an even longer span of historical encounters with colonialism and trading relations with Chinese and Middle Eastern traders. A hybrid urban form, featuring elements of Chinese shophouses, Art Deco architectural expressions, and Hindu Balinese tectonics, can be observed along the main market streets of these northern urban settlements of Bali.

Read against the intricate architectural traces of its cosmopolitan history, Denpasar today is less enthusiastic about embracing its multiethnic realities. Instead, privately developed gated housing estates, often ethnically and socially exclusive, are the main feature of the city's urban fringe development. Meanwhile, the city's authorities continue to be preoccupied by a mission to safeguard its perceived Balinese identity and cultural heritage. The recent government-led 'architectural restoration' of the market precinct of Denpasar exemplifies an unresolved tension between the city's actual existing urbanity and its conceived Balinese cultural identity. Before the market street could be promoted as part of the city's cultural heritage, a series of architectural restorations were undertaken. Restorations included the covering of Art Deco façades of the Chinese shophouses with materials such as red brick and sand carvings, which is considered to be 'traditional Balinese' architecture. The multi-ethnic collectivism that has long evolved in this part of Denpasar, and its diverse urban building typology, are now concealed by a 'Balinese looking' architectural finishing. The 'hidden' urban Denpasar exists as an invisible subject on an island where an imagined otherness has been seen as the only reality, at the cost of its own urban history, present and future.

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Notes

1 Covarrubias, M. 1937. *The Island of Bali,* Oxford University Press, New York, see p.xx

2 Townsend, D. 1994. 'Denpasar, Bali: Triumph of the Profane', in Askew, M. & W.S. Logan (eds.) *Cultural Identity and Urban Change in Southeast Asia: Interpretative Essays,* Geelong: Deakin University Press, see pp.228-230

The uprooted: one boy's story

At the French colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence, a newly declassified file provides biographical information on Henri ROBERT,[1] born in Vietnam in the late 1930s of a Vietnamese woman and a French man. Included among the medical exam records, annual teacher evaluations, and smiling school pictures of young Henri is a document telling the story of how he came to be a ward of the French colonial state. This document, dated 1945 and signed by a Madame Aumont, states that Henri's mother was "completely uninterested in her children"[2] and hence handed them over to colonial authorities. Yet files tucked away in the Vietnamese National Archives in Hanoi reveal that Madame Aumont forcibly removed Henri from his mother and willfully lied about Henri's history.

Christina Firpo

HENRI ROBERT WAS JUST ONE of thousands of children who were removed – at times by force – from their Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Lao mothers between 1890-1975, from the colonial period through the end of the Vietnam War; and Henri's file was just one of many from the *Fédération des oeuvres de l'enfance française d'indochine* (FOEFI), a French organization dedicated to mixed-race (métis) children from Indochina who had been abandoned by their French fathers. When the FOEFI closed its doors in the early 1980s, FOEFI authorities placed the wards' files in the French national archives to enable former wards to trace their families when they reached adulthood.

Preserving colonial power by 'protecting' métis children

Madame Aumont, a French woman who worked as a librarian in Tonkin during World War II, also worked for the Jules Brévié Foundation, a protection society for abandoned métis children that would later be renamed the FOEFI. The Brévié Foundation had grown out of the multiple Societies for the Protection of Abandoned Métis Children founded in the late 1890s – a period during which French civilians and colonial authorities were growing concerned about the rising number of métis children born to Asian mothers and French fathers, who would later abandon them. These French colons feared that Indochina would develop the same problem that plagued the Dutch in the Netherlands Indies: a sizable population of impoverished mixed-race men and women who engaged in prostitution and rebelled against the colonial government. Drawing on detailed reports from the French consulate in Batavia, the colonial government in Indochina formulated a métis protection system modeled on the one used in the Dutch Netherlands Indies.

For some unmarried mothers of métis children, the protection society system was a blessing. In a society where contraception and abortion were illegal, protection societies provided reluctant mothers with a means of escaping the duties of motherhood. Other mothers turned to the protection societies not to permanently relinquish custody of their children but to ensure their survival in times of hardship. During the 20th century impoverished mothers, or those incapacitated by disease, temporarily placed their children in foster-care type situations. They did so with the understanding that, when their situation improved, they would be able to retrieve their children – though, as it turned out, the protection societies rarely, if ever, returned them. Other mothers refused to relinquish custody of their fatherless métis children. In those cases, French authorities forcibly removed the children and placed them in special orphanages. While it is impossible to quantify exactly how many children passed through Indochina's protection society orphanages, in the course of my research, I have collected data on more than 4,000 métis wards. The history of métis child removals in Indochina bears striking similarities to the removal of more famous cases of indigenous child removals in other colonial contexts, namely Australia, the United States, and Canada.

In Indochina, the métis protection program was tied up with colonial demographic plans. The mass carnage of World War I had revived French fears of depopulation and fueled the growing French Pronatalist movement in the colony, as well as the metropole. Authorities in Indochina looked to fatherless métis children to help bolster the colony's dwindling white French population. Claiming ownership over fatherless métis children on the grounds that they were sons and daughters of Frenchmen, authorities removed them from their mothers and even sent some to the metropole to repopulate areas that had been decimated by the war. Initially, colonial authorities were only interested in children who could pass for white, but by the time World War II broke out, protection society workers like Madame Aumont were also removing the fatherless children of African men who had served in the colonial army. This was the beginning of a gradual shift in the colonial understanding of what it meant to be French. With the increase of colonial troops from Africa and India representing France in Indochina, some protection society workers began to see African and Indian troops, and their *métis* children, as French. The expanding definition of what it meant to be French had less to do with enlightened ideas than a desperation to preserve the empire. The child of a French West-African father, Henri Robert was one such case.

The truth about Henri's removal

The documents produced by women who worked for the métis protection societies reveal that the ways that protection societies obtained custody of these children were not always as ethical as the societies led the colonial public to believe. In 1942, Madame Aumont was alerted to the existence of the Robert children; Henri was the youngest. Aumont forcibly removed Henri's older sister and brother and placed them in orphanages in Tonkin. It is not clear whether Aumont permitted young Henri to stay with his mother because he was still nursing – a typical exemption – or whether she was simply unaware of his existence at that time. In 1943, Aumont decided to take Henri after all. She requested aid from the colonial police because his mother refused to relinquish custody. Madame Aumont's inclusion in her report of Henri's mother's resistance, directly contradicts Aumont's later claim, quoted at the beginning of this article, that Henri's mother was completely uninterested in him, or her other children. But Madame Aumont had colonial law on her side. She carefully manipulated an 1889 metropolitan French law that stripped absent or abusive parents of their parental rights, declared Henri's mother "incapable of raising" the two-year-old, and ordered authorities to forcibly take him from her.[3]

Madame Aumont placed Henri in the École Saint Joseph, an orphanage and boarding school for fatherless mixed-race children, many of whom had undergone similar experiences of being removed from their mothers. There, wards were raised in a French-only linguistic and cultural environment. The plan was that once the wards reached adulthood, they would integrate into the colony's French population. Not long after Henri arrived at the École Saint Joseph, his mother tracked him down. In a move that leaves little question about Henri's mother's interest in her children, she confronted the priest in charge and demanded that he return her child. When the priest refused, she took Henri and the two of them fled. Upon learning of Henri's so-called abduction, Madame Aumont dispatched the colonial police to conduct an extensive search of the Tonkin countryside. Mother and son managed to evade authorities for a few weeks until a local Vietnamese official turned them in to the police. Wise to the indomitable will of Henri's mother, the protection society moved Henri to another orphanage and sent his brother and sister to separate institutions. At the orphanages, officials changed Henri's name multiple times – from Henri ROBERT to Robert HENRI to Robert-Charles HENRI, and finally to Charles HENRI – to prevent his mother from tracking him down again. Indeed, during this time, his teenage brother attempted to find him but was thwarted by the series of aliases.

Journey to France

Henri remained in the protection society institutions. As an adolescent, he attended the *École des enfants de troupe eurasien,* a military school in Dalat designed to train young métis men to become officers in the colonial military. After the military defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords that declared Vietnam, Cambodia, and Lao to be independent nations, France was forced to withdraw its colonial administration and military. The FOEFI, the latest manifestation of the protection society programs, proceeded to send almost all of its wards to France. As archival documents indicate, many mothers objected to the evacuation program and attempted to retrieve their children before they left. For their part, many wards refused to go. In 1955, as the *École des enfants de troupe eurasien* was preparing cadets for their journey to the metropole, young Henri NICHOLAS obstinately refused to leave Vietnam. He incited a small riot among other cadets who wanted to stay in Vietnam with their families. Teachers reported that Henri made anti-French statements and told lies about the protection societies. While it is not clear what kinds of 'lies' he told, it is possible that he alluded to the circumstances of his separation from his mother. As the French military and protection societies were pulling the last of the French presence from Indochina, authorities at the military school struck Henri's name from the list and left him in South Vietnam.

Saigon after decolonization in the mid-1950s was a rough town, plagued with corruption and violence. Among the city's problems were the gangs of fatherless Eurasians, now adults and social outcasts, who roamed the town causing disturbances. In an attempt to curb the problem this population presented, the South Vietnamese government permitted the FOEFI to continue searching the countryside for fatherless métis children. As in the colonial period, some such children were forcibly removed and shipped to France, where they were raised in orphanages. Within this context, Henri Robert was eventually sent to France. The archival trail for Henri Robert ends in 1963, when he finally aged out of the protection society system.

The FOEFI continued to search the South Vietnamese countryside for the children of French men or French colonial soldiers, through till 1975. By sending them to France, the Federation's actions, in this case, aided many young men and women who would have otherwise been social outcasts. But that had not always been the case. When piecing together wards' lives from documents scattered among seven archives and libraries in Vietnam, Cambodia, and France, it becomes clear that the stories of how fatherless métis children came to be separated from their mothers are not as clear-cut, or as rooted in altruism, as has historically been presented; many of them had been forcibly removed from their Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Lao mothers.

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Notes

1 In an effort to respect privacy laws, I use the pseudonym Henri ROBERT.

2 "Note de Madame Aumont, chargée de l'oeuvre des enfants eurasiens a Hai Phong," 22 June 1946. Centre des Archives Outre Mer, fonds du FOEFI: 90APC62.

3 Letter, Madame Aumont to M. Resident Mayor of Haị Phòng, 28 October 1942. Vietnam National Archives 1, files of the Governor General of Indochina 495.

Below: 'Clairs Matins' orphanage, Hanoi.

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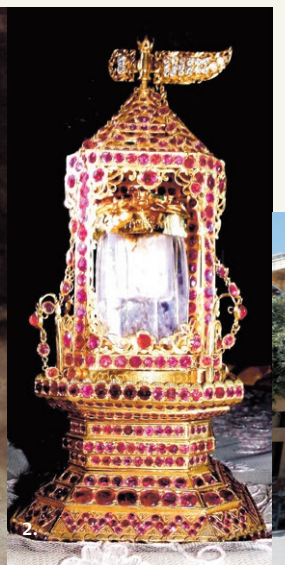
Between religion and history: afterlives of Buddhist relics

In 1892 Alexander Rea unearthed a small piece of bone in an inscribed stone reliquary at Bhattiprolu (in southern India). The translation of the ancient inscriptions identified the bone as the corporeal remains of the historical Buddha. In 1916 the Government of India proposed to present the Bhattiprolu relic to the Maha Bodhi Society, a prominent neo-Buddhist association. However, during the actual act of relic presentation in 1921, the reliquary itself was retained by the Madras Museum as an object of artistic and antiquarian value. The old bone was put in a new casket and presented to the Society for ritual enshrinement in the new Buddhist temple of Calcutta, the Dharmarajika Vihara.

Sraman Mukherjee



THIS WAS NEITHER THE FIRST NOR THE LAST instance where ancient Buddhist corporeal relics discovered in the course of archaeological excavations in colonial South Asia travelled to practicing Buddhist shrines. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, archaeologists identified and excavated a number of Buddhist funerary mounds *(stupas),* which led to the unearthing of Buddhist corporeal remains in reliquaries. The inscriptions on the reliquaries were decoded by scholars, identifying the relics as corporeal remains of either the historical Buddha or of prominent ancient Buddhist monks. The British Indian state distributed these relics to various Buddhist countries, communities and associations across South and mainland Southeast Asia. In every instance, the old reliquaries housing the corporeal remains at the moments of their discovery were retained in museums as objects of art, history, and antiquity. The bare bones were classified as purely sacred objects, having no historic value, and were given away for ritual enshrinements in new relic caskets.

Fig. 1: Copy of a Photograph of the Relic Casket discovered from Shahji-ki Dehri in the Peshawar Museum, 1909. Courtesy, Buddha's Collarbone Relic Temple, Mandalay, Myanmar.

Fig. 2: The Peshawar Relics Enshrined in a new ruby encrusted reliquary at the Buddha's Collarbone Relic Temple, Mandalay, Myanmar. (Photograph author)

Fig. 3: Buddha's Collarbone Relic Temple, Mandalay Hill, Myanmar. (Photograph author)

Fig. 4: New Reliquary with English Inscriptions designed by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1910 for the Peshawar Relic now in Mandalay, Myanmar. (Photograph author)

This study explores why and how this classification of bones as essentially sacred, and the ancient reliquaries housing them as objects of art and history, was produced. It does not ascribe the British colonial state or its political and cultural apparatuses – institutions of archaeology and museums – with the sole agency of producing meanings around ancient corporeal remains. Circulation of Buddhist relics predated both European colonialism and the rise of modern nation states in South and Southeast Asia. The study, however, seeks to bring out the centrality of modern regimes of scholarship and religious practice in producing a new visibility and multiple identities of Buddhist relics. Both colonial and postcolonial nation states produced new networks and protocols of exchange and circulation that lent to the production of different and competing values and meanings around Buddhist relics.

Buddhist relics at the crossroads of history, politics, and religion

In 1898 Buddhist relics unearthed at Piprawah Kot (in eastern India) were presented by the British Indian state to the King of Siam (Thailand) as the only reigning Buddhist sovereign, which he, in turn, distributed between the Buddhists of Siam, Burma (Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Japan. In 1910 Buddhist relics discovered at Shah-ji-ki Dheri near Peshawar (in Pakistan) were presented by the state to the Buddhists of Burma to be enshrined in a new relic temple at Mandalay (Burma). Such presentations of relics represented acts of frontier and foreign diplomacy of the colonial government. The presentation of relics to King Rama V of Siam reflected British anxieties to increase their political influence over Siam, which had emerged as an important geopolitical buffer between the British and French colonial interests in mainland Southeast Asia. The presentation of relics to Burmese Buddhists was intended as a symbolic gesture to consolidate the new found British political hold over Burma after its political and economic subjugation in the late nineteenth century.

In the early twentieth century, as competition for colonial control among the European powers and an emergent Japan intensified over South and Southeast Asia, the presentation of these relics to practicing Buddhist territories and countries provided the colonial state in India an opportunity to fashion themselves in the image of pre-modern imperial benefactors of the Buddhists. The context of the Wars and particular turns in nationalist politics in colonial India, Ceylon, and Burma, which moved beyond associational politics of urban middleclass to anti-colonial mass movements, provided the backdrop in which relics excavated from Bhattiprolu and Taxila (in Pakistan) were presented to the Maha Bodhi Society in 1921 and 1932. The new regimes of relic circulations mediated by the colonial state were designed as responses to contain politically contingent situations and secure the loyalty of colonial subjects at moments of crisis of the Empire.

The separation of corporeal remains from the caskets that these presentations ensued stood in sharp contrast to the early colonial archaeological encounters with Buddhist relics. Till the mid nineteenth century Buddhist corporeal relics along with their relic caskets, like those unearthed from Sanchi, Sonari, and Satdhara (in central India) during the 1850s, travelled out of South Asia to major museum collections in London. There was no established code that could prevent Buddhist relics – both the bones and reliquaries – from being treated as unsuitable objects of specialized scholarly analysis, scientific preservation and public display. The religious sacrality of the bones and historicist sanctity of the reliquaries did not remain fixed and permanently coded over time. The new visibility and classifications produced around Buddhist corporeal relics were forged by the colonial state's politics of relic diplomacy and a concurrent refashioning of Theravada Buddhism at the intersection of worlds of scholarship and devotion.

Nineteenth century Orientalist textual and text aided archaeological scholarship on Buddhism led to the discursive emergence of an ancient 'pure' Buddhism as a humanist creed. Transnational Buddhist reform and revivalist associations drew on this image of 'authentic' Buddhism in fashioning a new reformed practicing Buddhist subject. At the turn of the twentieth century the Maha Bodhi Society emerged as the most prominent transnational Theravada Buddhist voice whose emphasis shifted from a quest for scriptural purity of recovered, translated, and critically edited canonical Buddhist texts to the physical site and space of Buddhist pilgrimage in Ceylon, India and Burma. The Society's demands for recovery of ancient Buddhist sites in India brought the world of practicing Buddhism into intimate encounters with the historicist vision of archaeological conservation of ancient monuments. The potential sacrality of Buddhist relics to a large extent thus prevented their complete archaeological/ museological appropriations. Antiquity preservation laws enacted in British colonies across India, Ceylon, and Burma in the early twentieth century were designed to consolidate the authority of the colonial state over movable and structural antiquities. However, keeping in mind the colonial state's commitment to religious non-intervention, the laws shied away from granting protected status to antiquities in active ritual use or even potentially sacred like archaeologically unearthed Buddhist corporeal relics. As objects overlaid with historical, artifactual, and religious connotations, bones and reliquaries now travelled to different destinations, to temples and museums.

Old bones, new caskets: dual lives of Buddhist relics

To end this study it might be worthwhile to explore how ancient Buddhist relics and reliquaries emerged as sites of competing claims and custodies inhabiting multiple spaces of history, heritage, and religion. In a different context of the repatriation of the Sanchi relics from the Victoria and Albert Museum during the 1950s, Torkel Brekke (2007) has argued that the idea of making copies of the reliquaries by the museum authorities reveal that they did not believe in the sacrality of these objects - not primarily because the objects belonged to an alien religion, but because of their modern secular worldview. Keeping in mind Brekke's point about different epistemologies of knowledge and belief, I argue that the commitment to the making of duplicate reliquaries can also be explained by the material particularity of the objects in question – the relics and their relation to their reliquaries.

At the most fundamental level, corporeal 'relic' usually denotes the body or fragment of the body of a deceased person revered as holy. Unlike other material objects a corporeal relic requires a physical frame that explicitly signals its status as sacred object. The symbolic potentials of such relics are constructed in the ways they are physically and ritually framed. In sharp contrast to icons and images, the relic's absence of representational features and its recognition as a moment of unmitigated corporeality is construed by the denotative work done by its frame, its reliquary. A relic without its reliquary/ casket loses its identity of a hallowed object.

In the context of colonial South Asia, the heightened importance of the reliquaries relates to the ways in which Buddhist corporeal relics came to the identified and authenticated. In pre and early modern polities across South and Southeast Asia the test of authenticity of Buddhist relics lay in their magical ritual powers woven around narratives of their durability, indestructibility, and mobility. In sharp contrast to these attributes, the primary identification of Buddhist corporeal relics, especially those unearthed during archaeological excavations across colonial South Asia, lay in the decoding of ancient inscriptions on the reliquaries. This was a world of specialist scholarly expertise, a new domain of archaeological and epigraphic research that was introduced in South Asia under the aegis of the colonial state.

For all concerned parties the separation of the bones from reliquaries threatened to turn Buddhist corporeal relics into meaningless scraps. To prevent this, the colonial state, despite its official commitment to remain unconnected to objects of religious worship, took upon itself the task of designing new relic caskets. The new caskets, now inscribed with a brief statement of the discovery of the relics and a translation of the original inscription, sought to attest to the enshrined bones' identity as authentically Buddhist. This divorcing of the reliquaries from the corporeal remains led the production of a new order of Buddhist relics centred only on the symbolic sacrality of the bones. It would require more than the demands of religion to gain custody over relics and reliquaries from the preserves of museums and archaeology. In the context of South and mainland Southeast Asia, it would be the demands of postcolonial nationalist repatriations that would drag bones and ancient reliquaries from museums in Europe to the sanctums of new Buddhist temples.

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It's not all about caste

It might sound like a paradox to shift the focus away from caste in order to speak of Dalit (former untouchable) and low-caste women political activists in Lucknow, the capital of the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). For decades now, this state has been the epicentre of low-caste politics. The paradox gains strength when adding that the above women are activists within the Bahujan Samaj Party (the majority of the people's party, or BSP), for which Dalit caste-based identity has played a pivotal role. However, as I entered the world of politics through women in the BSP, when my fieldwork began in the mid 2000s, other sociological features such as gender, class, and politics – and their interplay with caste – signalled their importance in capturing women's identities and activities.

Manuela Ciotti

DALIT AND LOW-CASTE WOMEN ACTIVISTS were 'different' compared to the same caste women I had encountered and researched until then. What is more, the women activists were also hardly 'explainable' through what I have termed the 'Dalit woman trope', an expression with which I refer to an existing body of knowledge that has emerged from the study of these women and which has returned them as victims of marginalisation, violence and exploitation within their caste communities and Indian society at large. Indeed, many women are victims of these phenomena, and in 21st century India, Dalit communities as a whole still experience atrocities, discrimination and marginality.

Women activists neither fit the Dalit woman trope, nor would they represent themselves in that manner; so how to write about them? My forthcoming book *Political agency and gender in India* offers alternative conceptual tools to look at Dalit and low-caste women, whose broader constituency of individuals has been overwhelmingly identified, researched and written about through the prism of caste.[1] This book is a counterintuitive account of Dalit and low-caste women, who do not fit existing representations, accompanied by a new conceptual framework that their very presence invokes.

Overall, the book is an invitation to think of these women in the plural. One of the most notable signs for the need of this plurality consisted of the difficulty in encapsulating women's agency and identities under one (and important) label: 'Dalit'. Some of the BSP women resisted the label as a tool of self-identification; to acknowledge this resistance, I speak here of Dalit and low-caste women. To complicate the picture further, a double positionality runs throughout the book: women in the BSP could be called 'a proletariat of politics' for the subordinate position they held within the party – yet, they could simultaneously be referred to as an 'elite' (in very relative terms), as far as Dalit women masses are concerned.

One of the tasks of the book consists of reconstituting BSP Dalit women as non-victim subjects, and the vantage point chosen to carry out this intervention is that of agency. In doing so, the book aligns itself with the re-orientation of women's studies in India that has occurred over the past decades and which was aimed to correct the passive woman /perennial victim representations present in the literature. However, not only has *Political agency and gender in India* shifted the attention to agency among women, but it deploys its analytics in the study of women largely believed to be the quintessentially marginal and powerless. This implies more than the above alignment, and I will return to this later in the essay.

The book does not treat the assertiveness observed among women political activists as a synonym of agency. Likewise, the book holds the analytical overlap of agency with resistance equally limiting. The ways in which Dalit women's 'difference' was displayed as 'assertiveness' in the field, the book shows, needs to be interwoven with factors such as marriage, husbands' profession, and the urban location, among others, the combination of which went to significantly shape women's choices. While signalling the importance of how these factors were 'put to use' in the field of politics, women's assertiveness in the field constitutes a snapshot of their political career and biography – a fixed moment – but does not constitute the 'process' itself. It is in fact the processual and generational nature of agency, and the transformative effects of politics in women's lives, which cannot be captured simply by collapsing agency with the assertiveness that women displayed in Lucknow. Rather, assertiveness could be taken as an entry point into a more complex picture.

Speaking of agency

Political agency and gender in India offers three interlocking analytical directions for thinking about agency among Dalit and low-caste women activists. The first places attention on elements that women activists in Lucknow share with actors of political participation in the history of women's activism in India: women wove BSP political ideology and praxis with long-standing traditions of activism amongst women in India. In this process, underlying deeper structures of gendered political agency cutting across time, class and caste were found among BSP women, who are largely regarded as separated from the rest of the society as a result of their Dalit identity. Thus, Dalit and low-caste women connect to and disconnect from wider historical and contemporary societal trends in India. And their agency sits at the intersection of these movements – that of connecting and disconnecting – rather than at one end or the other.

Second, the ethnographic insights from the study of Dalit and low-caste women constitute a vantage point from which to interrogate the relations between society and politics. The book is a rare account of these women as subjects of political participation in post-Independence India; it is essential to ask how and why certain gender regimes produce certain kinds of women activists at which historical conjuncture. Further, the book asks to what extent the realm of politics – both discourse and praxis – could be considered as a mirror of gender relations, and whether a society and its gender regimes can be exhaustively gauged through the lens of its political worlds.

Against this backdrop, the third analytical line set up by the book for the study of agency concerns Dalit and low-caste women as subjects of politics in a comparative perspective. Spencer has argued "The 'universal' subject of post-Enlightenment political theory [...] is not universal at all – 'he' is gendered, white, European, heterosexual – and the appeal to universalism conceals the way in which marks of culture, race, gender, class, all work to exclude certain people from power".[2] A great deal of political theory in India has focused on de-constructing the life of ideas such as democracy in their universalising western renditions, and through political ethnography scholars have fleshed out the workings of this idea, bringing to light the modalities of postcolonial citizenship and political participation. Concerning women political subjects – outside the confines of spectacular examples of female political leadership in South Asia – I have argued elsewhere that the process of deconstructing this post-Enlightenment universal subject and comparatively re-constructing non-western female political subjects, drawing on features of political participation observed in India, has only just begun. And the book does some of it. Further, with Spencer's observation in view, it is no longer a matter to explain exclusion through the lines of culture, race and class in a given geographical context, but inclusion; that is, explaining the entry of a large number of citizens into politics, through the line of caste, for example. With Dalit communities in focus, the issue at stake has been to understand how exclusion (namely untouchability) and positive discrimination policies have produced politics through the formation of political organizations such as the BSP. In this respect, women have been an absent subject in the inquiry.

Producing theory

In pursuing the three analytical lines outlined above, the book's premise lies in considering Dalit and low-caste women's political agency not as a poor imitation of women in 'advanced' western democracies, or of those hegemonic subjects of gender and politics in India (that is upper caste and class women). Dalit women are analysed in their own right, as non-western political subjects, and *not* as a case study of incomplete and injured political personas. This is why the interventions the book wishes to accomplish imply more than an alignment with women's studies' efforts of recuperating agency. But there is more to it.

Research on Dalit and low-caste women has led to the production of novel theoretical insights. But why is there a need to state an almost obvious point? Almost three decades ago, Appadurai poignantly argued "Although there have been a number of fine and detailed ethnographic portraits of Untouchable communities, their status in anthropological theory mirrors their lowly role in South Asian social life".[3] After reviewing studies informed by a theoretical framework that asked whether these communities replicated the hierarchical system they lived in, Appadurai concluded "the ethnography of Untouchables places them at the service of external theories. [...] Untouchables are fodder for scholastic battles that could equally well have been fought without dragging them in".[4] Since the publication of Appadurai's article a number of lines of inquiry have emerged from the study of these communities. A great deal of scholarship has, however, focused on what research insights might have to say on Dalit communities and their predicaments (which is indeed a crucial task) – often without venturing further to ask what those insights might contribute to debates beyond Dalit identity and the Dalit studies rubric – a 'sub-field' of South Asian Studies – and how, for example, the categories and arguments generated through research have reshaped South Asian Studies, rather than the other way around. By contrast, *Political agency and gender in India* re-imagines Dalit and low-caste women as actors of political participation generating theoretical insights on agency, and not only Dalit agency – on gender and not only on Dalit gender. And the list could be extended.

If situated research has brought to light lived difference, heterogeneity and plurality of a group of Dalit and low-caste women, this has led to think of these women in the plural, beyond the Dalit woman trope, and it has inaugurated new representational lives for them as objects of knowledge. In turn, this work will hopefully inaugurate new ways in which these women are viewed in the public sphere.

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The elephant is the symbol of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Photograph reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of opoponox on flickr.

Notes

1 Ciotti M. Forthcoming. *Political agency and gender in India.* London, New York: Routledge

2 Spencer J. 2007. *Anthropology, politics and the state: Democracy and violence in South Asia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (p.9)

3 Appadurai A. 1986. 'Is Homo Hierarchicus?', *American Ethnologist* 13(4):745-761 (p.750)

4 Ibid., p.751

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The treasure chambers of the Leiden University Library

There can be no university without a library. Twelve years after William of Orange established Leiden University in 1575, he founded Leiden University Library, which, from the beginning, was meant to serve as a research facility. Access was restricted to a few privileged men (and their dogs!), and the books had to be consulted on the spot as they were chained to the shelves. Times have changed. Books are electronically protected, academia is no longer a man's world – and dogs are asked to stay outside. The collection has grown from a few hundred books to over 4 million printed copies, plus approximately 1 million electronic books. Electronic resources, such as the 500+ databases in the University Library, allow us to share knowledge with, and to connect to, the most remote parts of the world. However, some things have not changed: the library still guards true treasures, thousands of jewels that reflect ideas and thoughts of times long past.

Doris Jedamski

1.

The Special Collections

The Leiden University Library has excelled in building up an eminent collection of non-Western material, patiently brought together and studied by scholars and librarians since the 16th century. At first, it was principally Middle-Eastern manuscripts that were collected. Stimulated and facilitated by the European colonial expansion, thousands of letters, drawings, prints, maps, rubbings, inscriptions, photographs, and about 18.000 manuscripts soon travelled from Southeast Asia to Leiden. A large part originated from the Malay archipelago and covers a great variety of languages, among others Malay, Javanese, Balinese, Bimanese, Acehnese, various Batak languages, and Buginese. Many manuscripts are written in a vernacular script, some use the Arabic scripts for Javanese and Malay (fig. 1). With its unique religious, historical, epic and law related texts this Leiden manuscript collection still attracts researchers from all over the world.

A great number of items derive from the legacies of two celebrated scholars, the great Arabist and colonial official Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, and the bible translator and linguist H. N. Van der Tuuk. Both collected not just thousands of manuscripts; Snouck Hurgronje also accumulated an extraordinary collection of photographs. His legacy was bequeathed to the University Library in 1936. Van der Tuuk left, in additon to the manuscripts, an exquisite collection of Balinese drawings to the library after his death in 1894 (fig. 2).

In the field of South Asian and Tibetan Studies, it is the legendary Kern collection (named after Hendrik Kern, the first Sanskrit Professor in Leiden) that has elevated the Leiden collections to world fame. In 2010, it became part of the University Library. Kern, together with Jean Philippe Vogel and Johan van Manen, accumulated a varied collection of Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscripts, mostly from South India. The Van Manen collection, however, is first and foremost renowned for its more than 1000 Lepcha and Tibetan (block) manuscripts, which he collected in India between 1908 and 1943 with a focus on non-canonized historical and religious works. The Lepcha manuscripts collection is the largest of its kind in the world.

Three other jewels in the Leiden University Library are the extensive collection of Congshu, or 'Chinese collectanea'; the collection of unofficial poetry journals from the PR of China; and the personal library of Robert Hans van Gulik, renowned Dutch sinologist, diplomat, and author of the Judge Dee Mysteries.

Many distinguished scholars have enriched Leiden academic life and the library, among them J.L.A. Brandes, G.F. Pijper, N.J. Krom, A.A. Bake, J.PH. Vogel, J.G. Casparis, J. Gonda, and R.R. Ras. Many archives have yet to be explored. In the past, facsimiles and catalogues facilitated access to items or collections, but in-house digitization facilities of the highest standards have made research and high-quality publication much easier. On-going digitization projects are soon to provide open access to the Snouck Hurgronje collection and the Tibetan block prints from the Van Manen collection.

In the spotlight

While a few items are seemingly left to oblivion, others attract attention even outside the scholarly world. A late 19th century watercolour by an anonymous Javanese painter, from the Snouck Hurgronje collection, featured in one of the major Dutch newspapers recently. It shows the Javanese Prince Dipanagara, the leader of the Java War against the Dutch (1825-30), in a western-style room with a little demon at his feet (fig. 3).

La Galigo, a Buginese manuscript from Makassar (South Sulawesi), made the international spotlight when, in 2010, it was included in the UNESCO's Memory of the World register (MOW). The Leiden manuscript is the longest coherent fragment of this epical poem extant in the world. It consists of twelve parts that together constitute the first part of the creation myth of the Buginese.

With its striking presence on the internet, the Charter of King Rājendra Chola I (11th century) has reached a different kind of fame. Its 21 copper plates are held together by a bronze ring bearing the seal of the king (fig. 4) – altogether weighing more than 30 kg. On the web, praised as the most relevant of its kind, the Charter is simply referred to as 'the Leiden plates'.

Thousands of other items are still waiting for their turn to be rediscovered, to be researched and written about, to be looked at or listened to. The Kern collection alone contains more than 70,000 photographs and almost the same amount of slides; about 37,000 images have been catalogued. In the age of data management it is worth emphasizing that old research data do not lose their significance. Aryan Usharbudh published his PhD in 1968, but his recordings of Hindustan ritual folk songs in Suriname are still of enormous linguistic and cultural relevance, and not just to the present-day Hindustan community of Suriname.

Still growing

Soon the Leiden University Library collections will expand impressively once again. Regrettably, due to funding cuts, both the libraries of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT, Amsterdam) and the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV, Leiden) are closing down. As a result of intense negotiations, both collections could luckily be saved. The Heritage Collection of the KIT collection will soon be part of the Leiden University Library Special Collection. The KITLV collection, too, will find its new home in the UB on Witte Singel 27. Sad as it is in some respect, the fusion of these magnificent collections is also a chance to put South and Southeast Asian Studies in Leiden and beyond even more prominently on the map.

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The Special Collections of the Leiden University Libraries:
www.library.leiden.edu/special-collections
specialcollections@library.leidenuniv.nl

Annually, the Scaliger Institute offers various research grants (1-3 months) for research of (parts of) the Special Collections.
www.library.leiden.edu/special-collections/scaliger-institute
scaliger@library.leidenuniv.nl

2.

3.

4.

Fig.1: Quran, probably 19th c. with notes on recitation in Malay and Acehnese, found on the body of a dead 'Acehnese priest' after the storming of the Great Mosque of Kotaradja (Banda Aceh) during the first Aceh War of 1873-1874.

Fig.2: Van der Tuuk collection, drawing by I Ketut Gede, Singaraja/North-Bali, c.1880. Scene from the Balinese fable of the bull, the tiger and the palm-wine tapper, narrated in verse in the geguritan Gunawtai.

Fig.3: Prince Diponegoro, West Java, late 19th century (before 1892).

Fig.4: Charter of King Rājendra Chola I (11th century).