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IIAS

International Institute  
for Asian Studies

# theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

## 67 The Asian family & domestic violence

Although the issue of violence against women (VAW) has received much attention, the scourge of violence in homes is far from being diminished. Though a universal phenomenon, VAW is also context-specific. For the Focus in this issue of The Newsletter, seven scholars explore the question of family ambiguity within a comparative Asian context, especially as to how family norms and state laws in diverse national, cultural and religious settings interact to address or worsen the problem. By dealing with family ambiguity as a central critique of the domestic violence debate, they interrogate the gaps between concept, law and process.



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# The Focus

## The Asian family and domestic violence



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### Family ambiguity and domestic violence in Asia: Reconceptualising law and process

Guest editors **Maznah Mohamad** and **Saskia Wieringa** introduce seven articles that examine the effectiveness of family regulations and laws in the Asian context, with regards to domestic violence and violence against women (VAW). Comparative cultural and national responses to the issue have shown that the ambiguity of family underscores some of the gaps between the conceptual, legal and process-oriented solutions to the eradication of VAW in society.

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### Cultures of violence and silence

The family enjoys an iconic place in the social imaginary as an ideal unit. To establish how difficult it has been to distill domestic violence from 'privacy', **Amrita Nandy** highlights the philosophical foundations of a culture that subsumes individual identity under the family and community. The article traces the trajectory of family regulation in India.

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### Culture, power and narratives in domestic violence law

**Zarizana Abdul Aziz** lays the theoretical foundation for the claim that societal acceptance or rejection of domestic violence is shaped by those in positions of power and influence. To eliminate domestic violence, culture must be deconstructed. Instead of justifying domestic violence in the name of culture, culture should be enlisted to create a non-violent society.

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### The enforcement of heteronormativity in India and Indonesia

Heteronormativity in Asia is constructed around the claim that all its agents work towards the creation or preservation of harmonious Asian families. Yet, there is enormous violence involved in the perpetuation of this myth. **Saskia Wieringa** bases her contribution on the life stories of widows/divorced women, sex workers and lesbians in India and Indonesia.

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### Domestic violence and migration in the Philippines: Transnational sites of struggle and sacrifice

Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork carried out between 2006 and 2007 in San Pablo City in the Southern Tagalog province of Laguna (the Philippines) **Cheryll Alipio** explores the migration decisions, economic strategies and familial sacrifices that women make when faced with domestic violence.

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### Investigating intimate violence: A problem of law

**Narayanan Ganapathy** traces and analyses police response to domestic violence in the Singapore case. The article examines the context in which police intervention occurred in domestic violence situations, especially why it generated so few arrests, and the role of the state in all this.

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### The Indonesian family as a contested site of women's rights

**Nursyahbani Katjasungkana** traces the process through which the Domestic Violence bill in Indonesia was enacted in 2004. There the family is seen as the fundamental unit of society; thus, even while using the principles of gender equality, human rights and non-discrimination, the 'save our family' discourse was consciously incorporated as a core value in advocating the bill.

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### Malaysia's DVA: the clash of gender, cultural and religious rights

**Maznah Mohamad** documents and analyses the passage of the domestic violence law in Malaysia. Its historical development follows several periods, such as the early years, the campaign years and the stocktaking years. Ultimately what was negotiated and contested was only a compromise, rather than the completion of an agenda.



# IIAS Photo Contest 2014: Picturing Asia



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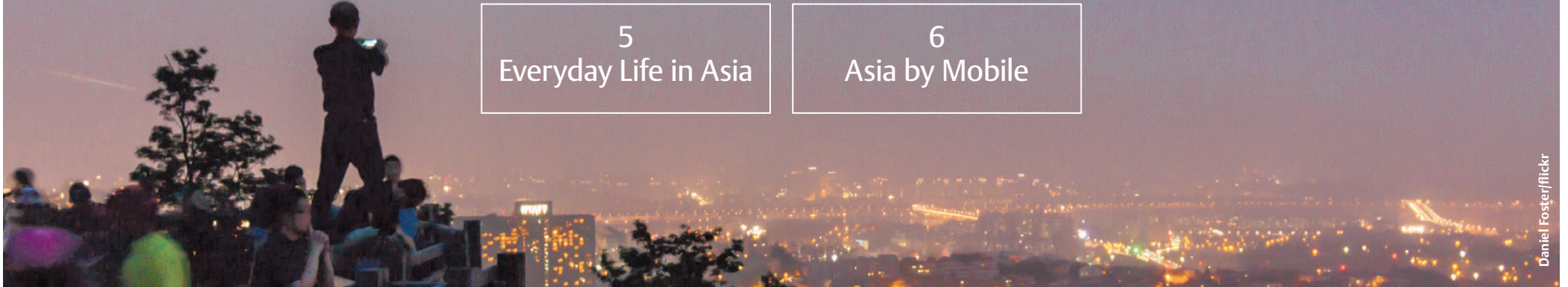
2 Global Asia

3 Asian Heritages

4 Asia's Pop Culture

5 Everyday Life in Asia

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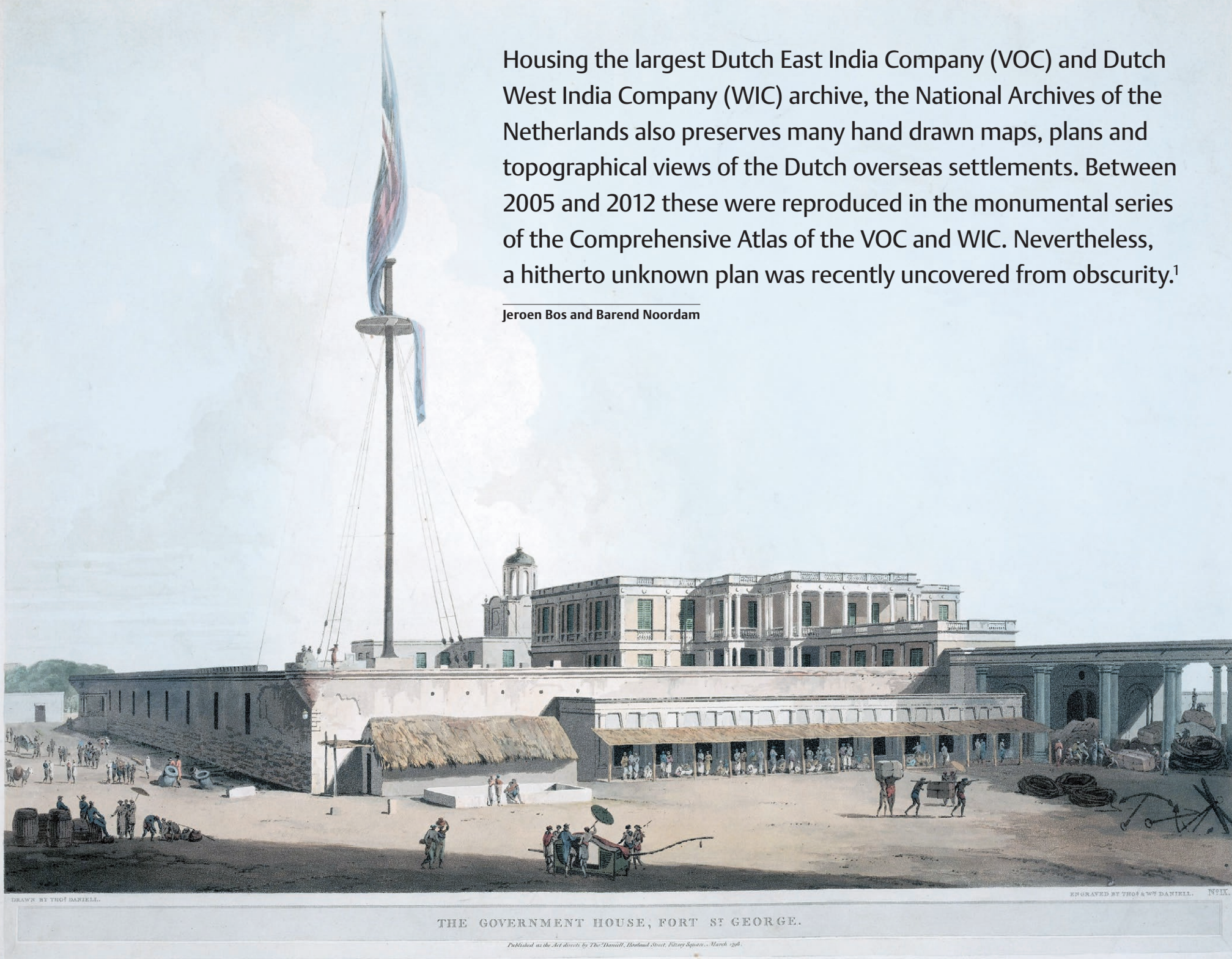
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# Peeking at the enemy

Housing the largest Dutch East India Company (VOC) and Dutch West India Company (WIC) archive, the National Archives of the Netherlands also preserves many hand drawn maps, plans and topographical views of the Dutch overseas settlements. Between 2005 and 2012 these were reproduced in the monumental series of the Comprehensive Atlas of the VOC and WIC. Nevertheless, a hitherto unknown plan was recently uncovered from obscurity.<sup>1</sup>

Jeroen Bos and Barend Noordam



Above: Thomas Daniell (1749-1840), *The Government House, Fort St George, Madras, 1798*. Aquatint, 54 x 74 cm, (c) British Library Board, P944.

THIS PLAN OF THE FORTRESS OF MADRAS (present-day Chennai) was made by the military engineer Carl Friedrich Reimer, who was employed by the Dutch East India Company (in short: VOC, after *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*), and can be considered an example of how a long-distance trading company gathered (military) intelligence at the closure of the eighteenth century. This was just a decade before the Napoleonic Wars dramatically changed the role and significance of military intelligence, and trading companies were replaced by larger political and economic entities that found their apogee in the formation of the colonial empires in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### Prologue

In the final quarter of the eighteenth century the Dutch struggled to survive in the rapidly changing trading world and did not fully adapt to new commercial configurations, instead sticking firmly to the monopolistic mode. Especially after the disastrous conclusion of the Fourth Dutch-Anglo War (1780-1784) it was clear to anyone that the Dutch Republic had lost its prominent place as a leading European power. In Europe the decline already set in after the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48). In Asia the Dutch, represented by the VOC, could preserve their leading role for a longer period. It was basically keeping up appearances, however, because internally the executives [*bewindvoerders*] were very well aware of the deplorable (financial) state of affairs.

The final blow, in Europe as well as in Asia, was dealt when the British presented peace terms to the Dutch in 1784. The results of the negotiations appeared not too disastrous for the situation in Asia; the conquered settlements were given back to the Dutch, with the one exception being Nagapattinam. The former Dutch main stronghold on the Coromandel coast was to remain in British hands. Although theoretically the Dutch could pick up where they had left off, their former position in the Asian trading network was never regained. Dutch involvement on the Indian subcontinent was especially marginalized.<sup>2</sup>

### Military commission

The executives turned to the highest political institution, the States General [*Staten-Generaal*], for financial and military support. They pointed to the (alleged) gains the VOC generated, in terms of tax revenues and the employment of their countrymen. On several occasions the States General gave in to their pleas and provided loans or equipped an entire naval fleet in order to suppress indigenous resistance. In 1786, when yet another appeal was made, it was decided that a new loan would only be given after an independent inspection of the overseas settlements was carried out by a Military Commission. Its members would be appointed by Stadtholder Prince Willem V.

It took two years before the Commission was staffed and could set sail for Asia. Reason for this delay was the political turmoil within the Dutch Republic. The system, headed by the Stadtholder, had its proponents (*Orangisten*) and opponents (*Patriotten*) and the two groups regularly clashed, verbally or by spreading anonymous pamphlets. Tensions reached a violent climax in 1787. After the Prussian intervention in September the leadership of Willem V was restored, leading to a fragile status quo. Underneath the surface, however, the conflict persisted and never really faded. As a result of this unsatisfactory outcome, political decision making was paralyzed. Even the nomination of the military commissioners became politically laden and took far too long, but in the end Captain J.O. Vaillant, Captain C.A. VerHuell and Lieutenant Colonel J.F.L. Graevestein were appointed to head the Military Commission.

Their appointment was a clear indication that the Stadtholder, on the behest of the Dutch army and navy, attempted to strengthen his grip on the Dutch overseas empire. Although the formation of the VOC and WIC, in 1602 and 1621 respectively, were based on political decision making, both long-distance trading companies could permit themselves to loosen the political bonds with the States General and Stadtholder in the course of the seventeenth

century. From the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the Stadtholder attempted to renew the ties with the overseas empire; in commercial, political as well as military affairs. In the years preceding the installation of the Military Commission the Stadtholder already offered high (military) positions within the VOC hierarchy to his confidants. The inspection tour by the Military Commission was a next step in the process of colonial empire building.<sup>3</sup>

### Reception

The fleet of the Military Commission could finally set sail for Asia in February 1789. The first important stop on the route was the African Cape Colony. In Africa, as well as at the Dutch settlements in Asia, the commissioners noted a lukewarm reception by the local VOC-authorities. The authorities observed them with much skepticism, because the Commission had a mandate to operate outside the traditional chain of command. Distrust or – what struck Vaillant and VerHuell even more – a total lack of interest in military affairs were frequent responses to their activities.

The highest VOC-authorities in Asia, the High Government [*Hoge Regering*], presiding at Batavia (present-day Jakarta), displayed a more positive stance towards the Military Commission. Although not pleased with the idea of prying eyes, the graveness of the situation was agreed upon. For a guiding role in the process, the High Government reasoned that direct participation was essential. It was therefore decided that Carl Friedrich Reimer, the most capable military engineer in the service of the VOC at that time, was to be sent to assist the commissioners in the role of advisor and (main) cartographer. To ensure treatment as an equal to the commissioners, Reimer was promptly promoted to the rank of Major. After receiving instructions by the High Government, Reimer was sent to Ceylon. Here he would await the arrival of the fleet, sailing from the Cape Colony, and join the commission for a period spanning nearly two years.



# Eighteenth century 'spy' plan reveals VOC military intelligence

## Professionalization

Reimer made a career within the VOC as a self-made man.<sup>4</sup> He had been trained as a land surveyor, but little is known about his personal life prior to his VOC enrollment. Since he functioned as a junior surgeon in his early years of service on Ceylon, he must also have picked up some rudimentary knowledge of medicine. As most of his countrymen, the Prussian-born engineer initially enlisted in the ranks of soldier. Thanks to his skills, Reimer was noted by his superiors and worked his way up in the Company hierarchy, enjoying patronage by senior officials along the line.<sup>5</sup>

Reimer witnessed an important transitional phase: the slow but steady professionalization of the land surveyors into a corps of trained military engineers. Until the middle of the eighteenth century land surveying was considered a craft and the surveyors were placed under a superintendent overseeing all construction work. These artisans were more and more replaced by military professionals who had enjoyed a military education. Reimer embodied that transition.<sup>6</sup> By joining the Military Commission, he became an extension of the Dutch army. As the navy, army and the Stadtholder were all trying to stretch their overseas influence via the Military Commission, Reimer clearly struggled with his new role. Although his allegiance should have been first and foremost with the Commission, he was very well aware of the Company patronage he had enjoyed in the preceding years. And so, he continued to send reports to the High Government in Batavia, while at the same time performing his duties as a member of the Commission.

## Coromandel coast

Although the Commission worked on a very tight schedule, the members afforded themselves 'leisure time' during their inspection of the Dutch settlements along the Coromandel coast. Visits to the Danish at Tranquebar and the British at Madras were planned, and would prove to be a great opportunity to take a peek at the European competitors. The commissioners were amiably received by the Danish and British, although both nations were fully aware of the true intentions of their Dutch visitors. The visit to Madras was therefore subject to several restrictions. For instance, Reimer and his fellow members could not walk freely through the town or fortress. In his report, Reimer wrote that he was only once allowed a partial walk around the defenses, and even then only under strict British guidance. This explains the blank areas on the plan. The engineer remarked that his predecessors would not hesitate to produce a plan in which every corner was drawn. Being a professional military engineer, he could not rely on speculation and highly criticized this practice. According to Reimer, accuracy should be the leading principle in mapmaking and cartography. Because he had not seen the British defenses in its entirety, he would only draft what he had actually seen. From the sources, the engineer appears to have been a very humble man. More than once he apologized for the incomplete plan he had made. Incomplete as it may be, when comparing his plan with official British maps of fort St. George the accuracy is striking. When Vaillant, VerHuell and Graevestein wrote positively on Reimer's work pace and high quality of map-making, they were not merely being polite.

## Military intelligence

Reimer's mapping activities should also be considered an example of the extent to which (military) intelligence gathering was a concern of early modern military and political actors like the Dutch East India Company. There is still a persistent perception that pre-Napoleonic military intelligence as a practice did not amount to much more than reconnoitering the enemy's battle formations just prior to an armed confrontation.<sup>7</sup> The persistence of this notion can be explained by the general paucity of modern research on this topic and the fact that early modern states and other political actors did not commit their intelligence gathering activities to paper. Recent research on the VOC wartime decision making and its information channels has revealed this fact for the seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup>

We have to keep in mind that military intelligence did not exist yet as it does today. There were no specific goal-oriented institutions tasked with intelligence gathering. Early modern states and other semi-political actors (like the VOC) relied on ad hoc activities, improvising according to the needs and opportunities of the moment, involving different levels of the command hierarchies. The professionalization of the study on early modern military intelligence has a long way to go. Still, research has been done on how European states – during the many conflicts of the seventeenth century – extensively sought intelligence on enemy war intentions.<sup>9</sup> They did so by employing third-party double agents at rival courts, intercepting written communications, interrogating prisoners of war and actively recruiting information brokers behind enemy lines.

When dealing with the different Asian powers, the practices gained within the European theatres of war and diplomacy were used. For example, in the 1620s the VOC campaigned diplomatically and, at times, aggressively to open Ming China (1368-1644) for trade. Even in this intercultural theatre, VOC-servants took intelligence gathering seriously and endeavoured to secure knowledge through the forceful acquisition of Portuguese documentation, the translation of official Chinese communications, the employment of interpreters of mixed Chinese and Iberian descent and the quest for Chinese merchant-cum-pirate middlemen with influential connections to the Ming officialdom.<sup>10</sup>

Turning back to the late eighteenth century, the activities of Reimer and the Military Commission prove that intelligence gathering was probably not an idiosyncratic pre-occupation of some individuals during the previous century, but continued to be taken seriously by VOC-servants, as well as their competitors. The precautions taken by the Danish and the English during the Dutch visit testify that breaches in security were fully expected. Considering the Company's status as a commercial non-state actor, we can even consider Reimer's plan of fort St. George as an example of early modern corporate espionage.

## Epilogue

The total production of the Military Commission was enormous. Hundreds of written pages full of analyses and recommendations are to be found at the National Archives of the Netherlands. They are accompanied by the plans and maps made by Reimer and his team of mapmakers. Although the Military Commission, back in the Republic in 1793, delivered

*Considering the Company's status as a commercial non-state actor, we can even consider Reimer's plan of fort St. George as an example of early modern corporate espionage.*

an impressive final report, there was no willingness under the VOC-executives to truly reform the (military) procedures. Meanwhile, the Stadtholder and States General were distracted by the turmoil in revolutionary France. The problems besetting the Company were of lesser importance and never fully addressed until the Dutch Republic was replaced by the pro-French Batavian Republic in 1795, leading to the flight of the Stadtholder to England. Compared to the total production, this Madras report (of 'only' twenty-two pages) and the accompanying plan pale into insignificance. Nevertheless, this archival find is a welcome contribution to our growing understanding of (military) intelligence gathering within the long-distance trading companies of the early modern period.

Carl Friedrich Reimer operated as an *ancien régime* agent of military intelligence in his dual role as a member of the Military Commission and as a servant of the Dutch East India Company. When the fleet returned to Europe, he chose to stay in Asia. Because of his loyalty the High Government offered Reimer a directorship in Batavia, overseeing military and urban construction in all VOC territory, which he accepted. He performed his duties tirelessly until his death in January 1796.

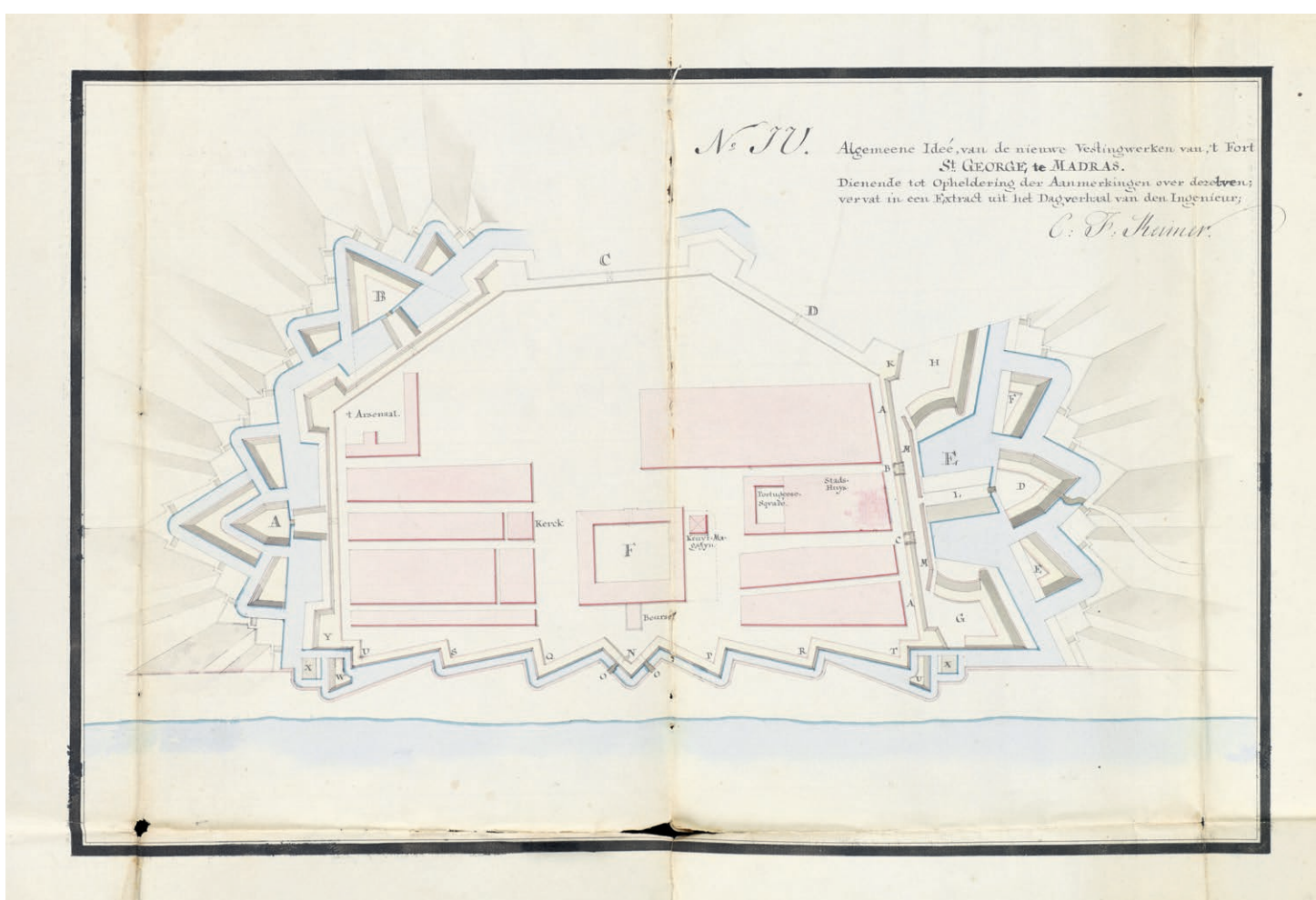
**Jeroen Bos (1978) is a freelance researcher and co-author of the sixth volume of the Comprehensive Atlas of the Dutch United East India Company. He currently works as a library staff member at Naturalis Biodiversity Center (Leiden).**

**Barend Noordam (1981) is a PhD student at the history department of Leiden University and is currently working on a dissertation dealing with Chinese general Qi Jiguang (1527-1588) and his involvement in frontier defence during the Ming dynasty.**

## Notes

- This article is based on a handwritten report by military engineer Carl Friedrich Reimer. The hitherto unknown plan of fort St. George (Madras) was drawn as a visual companion to the report and folded between the sheets. The document can be consulted at the National Archives of the Netherlands. NL-HaNA, Collectie Alting, 1.10.03, inv.nr. 76.
- A considerable body of literature is available on the decline of the VOC in the eighteenth century. We can recommend the analysis of the matter in Jacobs, E.M. 2006. *Merchant in Asia: the trade of the Dutch East India Company during the eighteenth century*, Leiden: CNWS.
- For the growing influence of the Stadtholder, army and navy on the overseas military affairs, see Zandvliet, K. 2002. 'Vestingbouw in de Oost', in Knaap, G. et al. (eds.) *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie: tussen oorlog en diplomatie*, Leiden: KITLV Press, pp.150-180.
- An unpublished MA thesis on Carl Friedrich Reimer is still the most informative source on the life and work of the Prussian military engineer in the service of the VOC: van Gerven, M.R. 2002. *C.F. Reimer, een werkzaam mensch: De Militaire Commissie naar Azië, 1789-1793*.
- Reimer was born in Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad) and entered VOC service as a soldier in December 1767. He functioned as a (junior) surgeon on Ceylon until 1777. In that year he was promoted to ensign-engineer and his main task became land surveying. Before his involvement with the Military Commission he was promoted once more and became lieutenant-engineer in 1785.
- For the gradual professionalization of the colonial military engineer, see Zandvliet, K. 1988. 'Kolonisatie en cartografie in de Oost: de rol van de militaire ingenieurs', in van Mil, P. et al. (eds.) *De VOC in de kaart gekeken: cartografie en navigatie van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie, 1602-1799*, 's-Gravenhage: SDU, pp.117-148.
- See for example the assessments of van Creveld, M. 1985. *Command in war*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp.17-23; Kahn, D. 2009. 'An historical theory of intelligence', in P. Gill, et al. (eds.) *Intelligence theory: key questions and debates*. London: Routledge, pp.4-15. A notable exception to this disregard for early modern (military) intelligence is to be found in Keegan, J. 2003. *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Mostert, T. 2007. *Chain of command: The military system of the Dutch East India Company, 1655-1663*, Unpublished MA thesis available online at <http://vocwarfare.net/thesis/> (retrieved 28-09-2011) pp.54-57.
- Examples of this research include Croxton, D. 2000. 'The prosperity of arms is never continual: Military intelligence, surprise, and diplomacy in 1640s Germany', *The Journal of Military History* 64/4, pp.981-1003; Donagan, B. 2008. *War in England 1642-1649*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Storrs, C. 2006. 'Intelligence and the formulation of policy and strategy in early modern Europe: The Spanish monarchy in the reign of Charles II (1665-1700)', *Intelligence and National Security* 21(4):493-519.
- Much of the source material has been collected in Groeneveldt, W.P. 1898. *De Nederlanders in China. De eerste bemoeiingen om den handel in China en de vestiging in de Pescadores (1601-1624)*, 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff.

*Below: Plan of the defences of fort St. George (Madras), made as a visual companion to a handwritten report by military engineer Carl Friedrich Reimer in 1790. NL-HaNA, Collectie Alting, 1.10.03, inv.nr. 76*





# Sukarno's art collection

Sukarno, the first President of the Republic of Indonesia, was an art connoisseur and lover. Following the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1945, the President purchased art works on a large scale, either personally or via an intermediary. He bought works by Indonesian artists, and also European painters such as Rudolf Bonnet, Willem Hofker, Roland Strasser, Theo Meier and the aristocratic Belgian artist Adrien Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès, who had settled on Bali and who was also known as the 'Paul Gauguin of Bali'. He mostly painted half-naked dancers such as his Balinese wife Ni Pollok. The Dutchman Willem Hofker also painted charming bare-breasted Balinese women. Other favourite subjects for these painters included tropical landscapes, *sawas* (rice paddies), temples and village scenes: 'Beautiful Indies romance'. So, how did Sukarno's extensive art collection become established and what happened to it after his death in June 1970?

Louis Zweers<sup>1</sup>



## Bali

Sukarno had a country house in Tampaksiring, about ten kilometres from the artists' village Ubud, on Bali. Since the early 1950s he had maintained personal contact with a number of artists, including the Dutch painter Rudolf Bonnet, who lived and worked in Ubud for many years. Sukarno – according to Bonnet, with whom he had friendly relations – sometimes commissioned him to do paintings, such as *De rijstooft* [*The rice harvest*]. This prominent work, measuring two by one metres, would later hang in the dining room of his palace in Bogor (Buitenzorg). During a visit to Bonnet's atelier, Sukarno expressed an interest in a large canvas from 1952 with the Italian title *Famiglia d'Anticoli*. Bonnet was asking a reasonable amount for it. Sukarno tried to bargain but the artist would not budge. In the end, Sukarno bought the work, but the price he paid is unknown. Incidentally, Sukarno had stipulated that he should be the first to receive photographs of and precise information about Bonnet's completed paintings. Thus, almost all of the large pieces produced by Bonnet on Bali in the 1950s ended up in Sukarno's collection. Indeed, a total of 14 paintings by Bonnet were to be found in his art collection. However, in 1957, Bonnet refused to sell an oil painting of his permanent model to Sukarno. The artist wanted to keep this double portrait in his possession. He offered the president a work of another model in the same pose. But Sukarno rejected this. He sent an envoy to the painter with the task of acquiring the coveted portrait and, in the end, the sublime work *Dua orang gadis* [*Two young women*] was included in Sukarno's art collection.<sup>2</sup> (image 1) Allegedly, during another atelier visit, this time to the painter Antonio Blanco in Ubud, Sukarno made it clear he wanted a particular work. Blanco remarked, however, that it was not finished. When Sukarno returned some time later, he was told that the painting was still not ready. In this way, Blanco was able to keep the work out of the president's hands. But six other oil paintings by Blanco did find their way into Sukarno's art collection.

## Cock fighting

From 1935 until 1945, the Austrian painter Roland Strasser lived in the village of Kintamani, situated on the slopes of the Batoer volcano on Bali. Strasser painted many dancers, but also tough-looking men and scenes of cock fighting, which was popular on Bali. There are a number of canvases in the Sukarno collection that depict cock fighting, such as a large oil painting of a Balinese man with a white fighting cock prominent in the image. (image 2)





The Dutch ex-KNIL (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) major Henry Schmidt (who died in 1971) claimed that this work had come into Sukarno's possession unlawfully. After Indonesian independence, Schmidt left service and worked as an estate agent in Bandung. He owned the canvas with the fighting cock and, in 1950, wanted to sell it. The Indies painter Ernest Dezentjé, a good friend of Sukarno, mediated the transaction. He showed the painting to the president who wanted it very much. But they could not agree on a price. Schmidt remained firm and, a few days later, the canvas was returned to him unsold.

In December 1953 Schmidt was arrested. He was suspected of being an accomplice of captain Raymond Westerling who, in 1946/1947, had been responsible for horrific purges on South Celebes. After a failed coup by Westerling in January 1950 against the young Indonesian Republic, Schmidt was thought to have worked for the Dutch-Indies Guerrilla Organisation (NIGO) on West Java. Poncke Princen, Indies-deserter and subsequent fighter for human rights in Indonesia, states in his autobiography, *Een kwestie van kiezen [A Question of Choice]*, that these accusations were fabrications.<sup>3</sup> But the remarkable book, *Villa Maarheeze*, about the Dutch Foreign Intelligence Service (IDB) again raises questions about his innocence regarding espionage.<sup>4</sup> Schmidt was found guilty by the Indonesian courts and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Later, this sentence was reviewed and he was freed in 1959. He wrote about his years in captivity in the book *In de greep van Soekarno [In the grip of Sukarno]*.

In this book, Schmidt states that when he was arrested his painting *Balinese man met vechthaan [Balinese man with fighting cock]* was seized by the Bandung police and that, subsequently, the canvas was given to the president as a gift. Indeed, this painting, according to Schmidt, was included in the extensive catalogue of Sukarno's collection in 1956.<sup>5</sup> However, all this remains uncertain, because Strasser had produced a number of almost identical oil paintings featuring a Balinese man with a fighting cock.

#### Exodus

Many of the European artists on Bali whose works were collected by Sukarno departed during the 1950s, when the political situation became increasingly difficult. The painter Rudolf Bonnet, prominent in Sukarno's collection, had to leave the country at the end of 1957 following the worsening conflict over New Guinea; he arrived back in the Netherlands disillusioned. He had previously been attacked by *rampokkers* (looters); his house was ransacked, but he remained unharmed, so his biographer Dr de Roever-Bonnet was prompted to tell me.<sup>6</sup> The Belgian painter Le Mayer did not get off so lightly. He was attacked in his home at Sanur on South Bali and received a large stab wound to his shoulder.

In Sukarno's collection there is a portrait in oils, of a young Balinese woman; the paint is showing signs of cracking, and it is possible that this work was subsequently restored. This small painting was created by the German artist Arthur Jo König who, in the summer of 1947, went to live in the cool and elevated artists' village Ubud. This idyllic location inspired him and he fell under the spell of the mystical Balinese community. His paintings of young beauties, gamelan players and processions show Bali as a harmonious community, but this exotic image is misleading. The atmosphere on Bali changed as a result of the troubled political situation. A shock went through the small European community on Bali when König was killed in his home in Ubud in 1953. The majority of his Balinese paintings were destroyed or damaged.<sup>7</sup>

1. Rudolf Bonnet, *Dua orang gadis*, 1955. Oil on canvas, 129 x 84 cm, Collection of President Sukarno.

2. Roland Strasser, *Balinese man met vechthaan*, signed but undated. Oil on canvas, 102 x 83 cm, Collection of President Sukarno. (Kunstcollectie Sukarno, 1956, deel I, nr. 84)

3. Sukarno, *Portret van Indonesische vrouw Rini*, 1958. Oil on canvas, 70 x 89 cm, Collection of President Sukarno.

4. Vice-President Mohammad Hatta giving a press conference in Batavia on 19 October 1945. In the background a painting by Basuki Abdullah (1915-1992) can be seen: *'De kust van het eiland Flores'* (middle). This work was later included in the art collection of Sukarno. Image produced by Netherlands Indies Government Information Service (NIGIS); copyright NIMH (Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie [Dutch Institute of Military History]).



#### Luxury albums

Sukarno was proud of his art collection, which suggests a preference for nationalistic, romantic paintings, giving an idealised image of the Indonesian revolution, the landscape and women. The painting collection of ex-president Sukarno is sometimes spoken of rather facetiously as it is, apparently, the largest collection of naked women in Southeast Asia. In the Calvinist Netherlands of the 1950s, Sukarno's artistic preference was almost considered pornographic. But similar paintings by the same artists would later collect impressive sums in the auction houses of Sotheby's and Christie's in Amsterdam, London and Singapore.

In 1964 five large-size luxury volumes with the title *Paintings and statues from the collection of President Sukarno of the Republic of Indonesia* were published. The first four volumes each contain one hundred colour reproductions of paintings, half of which were by the European artists who had worked for many years on the island of Bali. The last volume concerns his collection of sculptures and porcelain; the curator of this collection was the Chinese-Indonesian artist Lee Man Fong, advisor to and official painter at the presidential court. The 5 volumes are a significant documentation of Sukarno's art treasures. Previously, in 1956, two major books had also been published and three years later another two volumes appeared relating to his paintings, edited by the Indonesian painter Dullah.

The Indonesian paintings in Sukarno's collection, for the most part, originate from three 'court painters': Basuki Abdullah, Dullah and Lee Man Fong. They champion the figurative, romantic style. But there are also works by other modern Indonesian painters, such as Sudjojono, who captured heroic scenes from independence on canvas. For Sukarno, his art collection was of national importance, and he personally gave Western diplomats and journalists tours of his paintings. The Dutch-American reporter Sam Waagenaar, who was in Indonesia in 1957, visited Sukarno in his palace in Jakarta. Waagenaar told me just before his death in 1997: "It was relaxed conversation in Dutch. Sukarno even showed me his private collection of paintings. He ended the conversation with the confidential remark that he very much wanted to go to the Netherlands to meet the Queen."<sup>8</sup>

During another audience, Sukarno asked the journalist Hans Beynon if perhaps he could purchase an artwork by his uncle, the landscape and portrait painter Jan Daniël Beynon, who had an atelier on the Molenvliet in Batavia at the end of the nineteenth century. Beynon responded that these works were not for sale.<sup>9</sup>

#### Amateur painter

Sukarno not only collected paintings, but was also a talented amateur painter of realistic portraits. Thus, the volumes *'Paintings and statues ...'* (mentioned above) also reproduced his oil painting of the Indonesian woman *Rini* from 1958. (image 3) According to Sukmawati Sukarnoputri, the youngest daughter of the former-President, this work was never passed on to the family.<sup>10</sup>

In February 1965, Sukarno told the *Newsweek* correspondent Bernard Krisher: "I have an artist's easel and palette and paints ready and if I do not like something in one of my purchased paintings, then I improve it a little." Krisher called this admission the ultimate proof of his vanity.<sup>11</sup>

After Suharto seized power in 1965 the majority of Sukarno's paintings remained hanging in the palace at Bogor. In his book, *Een Mors Huis* [lit: A Dead House], Joop van den Berg says: "The dozens of paintings in the large rooms formed a sort of erotic Panorama Mesdag. Women everywhere, wherever you looked.



Incidentally, President Suharto, a devout Muslim, had had the most offensive canvasses removed.<sup>12</sup>

Sukarno had great plans for his art collection. In 1965 he told his biographer, the American journalist Cindy Adams, that he would leave his paintings to the Indonesian people, and they were to be housed in a yet to be established National Museum. That museum never came to fruition. A number of paintings from Sukarno's collection still hang in the stately corridors, receiving rooms and the offices of the presidential palace in Jakarta. That is to say, the more neutral landscapes and portraits; the whereabouts of the more erotic paintings from his collection are unknown.

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#### Notes

- This text is based on my article 'Een erotisch Panorama Mesdag, Sukarno's kunstverzameling', in *NRC Handelsblad, Cultural Supplement*, 15 October 1999, p.31. This is a reworked and translated version.
- de Roever-Bonnet, H. 1991. *Rudolf Bonnet. Een zondagskind, zijn leven en zijn Werk*, Amsterdam: Picture Publishers, pp.61-62
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- Interview by author with Dr. H. de Roever-Bonnet about the biography of Rudolf Bonnet on 1 December 1998, in Amstelveen (NL).
- See my article about Arthur Jo König 'Lost Paradise' in *The Newsletter* issue #61, Autumn 2012, pp.6-7
- Interview by author with the Dutch-American journalist and photographer Sam Waagenaar on 11 February 1997, two months before his death, in the Rosa Spierhuis in Laren (NL).
- Telephone call with the former *De Volkskrant* journalist, Hans Beynon, Amstelveen (NL), 23 October 1998.
- Giebels, H. 1999. *Sukarno, Nederlandsch onderdaan. Een biografie 1901-1950*, Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, p.11
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# The pursuit of happiness in modern Japan

The so-called rise of Asia has attracted renewed attention to Asian societies mainly as places of economic growth and business opportunities. But different socio-political orders throughout Asia also serve as a reminder of alternative priorities regarding the meaning of prosperity. Bhutan's proclamation of Gross National Happiness and the popularity of Tibetan Buddhism are only the most eye-catching examples that have cast a spotlight on the significance of subjective well-being and quality of life in contrast to promises of growth, wealth, and progress.

Torsten Weber

YET, AS THE GROWING NUMBER of studies into happiness reveals, a certain level of economic development appears to be a precondition for "the state of satisfaction of one's fundamental desires" – the wide-spread working definition of happiness. Therefore, it is no contradiction that the pursuit of happiness is a quest for both materialistic values and non-materialistic or "post-materialistic" values, following Ronald Inglehart's distinction. In addition to quantitatively measurable degrees of happiness over time and across societies, qualitative analyses of the historical meaning of happiness help to contextualise the findings of recent studies of happiness in the contemporary world. They also draw attention to the functions of the concept of happiness in public discourse as a proxy for more disputed social and political goals. Focusing on Imperial Japan, this article discusses how 'happiness' (幸福 *kōfuku*) served thinkers and activists as a consensual substitute for more controversial demands such as freedom, civil rights, socio-economic fairness, or a non-hegemonic social, economic, and political order.

## Happiness as a political concept

Happiness became part of the canon of modern political discourse following John Locke's observation that all human action is guided by the "removing of pain" as "the first and necessary step towards happiness" and his statement that the perfection of human nature "lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness" (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1689).<sup>1</sup> Article One of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) first postulated "the enjoyment of life and liberty" as well as "pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety" as inherent rights. In the same year, these rights famously became part of the US Declaration of Independence as "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) later provided a socio-philosophical basis to these ideas in his writings on utility. His utilitarian thought became known as the "greatest happiness principle", which postulates achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people as the aim of good government. These ideas also influenced political discourse in Japan, where politicised ideas of happiness emerged as part of the Movement for Freedom and People's Rights in early Meiji Japan (1868–1912). In fact, one of the first political societies in modern Japan, founded by activist and politician Itagaki Taisuke (1837–1919) and others, named itself after ideals proclaimed in the Virginia Declaration – namely the Society for Happiness and Safety (幸福安全社 *Kōfuku Anzensha*). The Movement's ideational indebtedness to utilitarian thought was also reflected in its pressure on the Meiji leaders to promulgate a civil constitution. More than half a century before "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was written into the post-war Japanese constitution by the US occupation authorities, Article Nine of the Meiji Constitution from 1889 defined the purpose of government as "increasing the happiness of the people".

The Meiji policies, however, prioritized the country's 'modernisation' with an emphasis on increasing the strength and wealth of the country, not the well-being of its people; the focus certainly was not on achieving the "greatest happiness of the greatest number of people". Instead, as civil rights activist Ōi Kentarō (1843–1922) criticised, "the happiness of the minority is the [result of the] unhappiness of the majority" (*Jiji Yōron*, 1886). This criticism of social injustice in Imperial Japan became more outspoken in the following decades under the influence of anarchist and socialist thought. In the tradition of the People's Rights Movement, which had pushed for the strengthening of *minken* (people's rights) versus *kokken* (state's rights), the neglect of the common people's happiness was contrasted with the growth of the country's prosperity (国富 *kōkufu*). In reaction, a new concept began to supplement the widely accepted "right to pursue happiness" – namely the right to *attain* happiness. Proposals oriented toward obtaining this happiness ranged from radical anarchism to blunt imperialism. Anarchists throughout East Asia appear to have made great

use of the concept of happiness in formulating their socio-political utopia: Wu Zhihui (1869–1953) of the Paris group of Chinese anarchists promoted the willingness "to abnegate all personal rights in order to pursue collective happiness", while Huang Lingshuang (1898–1982) argued for the "equality and happiness" of each individual. Famous Japanese anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui (1871–1911) emphasised the mutual links between freedom and happiness, as did the Korean revolutionary Sin Ch'ae-ho (1880–1936), who in 1923 not only called for the expulsion of "Robber Japan" from Korea, but also for the destruction of social inequality in order to "promote the happiness of all the masses".<sup>2</sup> But the linking of their political agendas to the widely agreeable concept of happiness could hardly conceal their anti-government stance; Kōtoku was executed for treason and Sin died in prison before Korea regained independence.

Pursuing happiness after the war: *Kōfuku o motomete* [In Search of Happiness] by philosopher and best-selling author Kushida Magoichi (1915-2005), published in 1948 (reproduced with permission).



## Freedom and happiness in women's magazines

In mainstream political discourse, however, happiness served less as a utopian goal than as a vehicle to promote alternative views of society as well as its traditional order and social institutions. This tendency can be observed particularly well in a new and growing medium of social discourse in Japan from the early twentieth century onwards: women's magazines (*fujin zasshi*). Their history goes back to the 1870s, and by the end of the Meiji period more than 100 different women's magazines had been founded. The most prominent ones reached circulations of up to 300,000. The combined circulation of all *fujin zasshi* climbed to 1.2 million in 1925, including a readership of 75-90% of all female students and women in employment.<sup>3</sup> Far from being monothematic in content, many women's journals served as progressive platforms for critical debate about diverse social issues (*shakai mondai*), often with a particular focus on their linkages to women, marriage, and family. As Kaneko Sachiko's research on the history of women's discourse in Japan has revealed, such discussions were strongly influenced by utilitarian thought.<sup>4</sup> In particular, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859) and his advocacy of individual freedom as the precondition for the attainment of happiness became cornerstones of debates about the role of women in modern Japanese society – and about Japanese society *in toto*. One of the most fervent advocates of the emancipation of women

from a utilitarian perspective was socialist activist and politician Abe Isoo (1865–1949). In a series of articles published from the late Meiji period to the early 1940s in women's magazines such as *Fujin Kōron* (Ladies' Review) or *Shufu no Tomo* (Housewives' Friend), as well as in other mainstream journals, Abe proposed to review and reform the traditional social institutions of marriage and family according to their contribution to individual happiness. Abe principally approved of marriage but emphasized independence – particularly in an economic sense – as a source of happiness (*Joshi Bundan*, 1913). The purpose of life, he stressed, was happiness, not marriage. Any happy marriage, therefore, started with a free choice of partners, Abe maintained. Furthermore, with regard to family, Abe emphasized the priority of "individual freedom and happiness" over the family system that sacrificed personal happiness to the happiness of the family (*Fujo Shinbun*, 1918).

Similar positions were taken by pioneering female journalist Hani Motoko (1873–1957). Her journal *Fujin no Tomo* (Ladies' Friend), founded in 1908, continues to be published to this day. Hani is also well known for being the founder of a private liberal arts college for women, the Jiyū Gakuen (in 1921) in Tokyo. Drawing on the experience of her own failed marriage, Hani aimed to liberate women from the idea that marriage was a prerequisite for a happy life. Marriage, Hani argued, was "not a tool to achieve happiness" (*Fujin no Tomo*, 1928). Rather, the precondition for achieving "real free happiness" was freedom in personal affairs and liberation from a strictly regulated lifestyle (*Fujin no Tomo*, 1918).

## Happiness as expectation and experience

In Abe's and, to a lesser degree, also in Hani's writings on women, family, and marriage, happiness and freedom is an inseparable conceptual pair that transfers the issue of socio-political reforms from a constitutional and ideological level to daily life. It was on this everyday level that ideas or measures (supposedly) leading to happiness could be verified or falsified. Simultaneously, the legal, political, economic, and intellectual circumstances provided a framework which could either promote or restrict the pursuit and attainment of happiness – in modern Japan and elsewhere. Therefore, the struggle for more far-reaching and structural reforms on the national level could as easily be subsumed under "the pursuit of happiness" as the search for individual happiness in everyday life. This binary of "smaller" and "greater" happiness finds its conceptual analogy in what Reinhart Koselleck has called *Erwartungsbegriffe* (concepts of expectation) and *Erfahrungsbegriffe* (concepts of experience).<sup>5</sup> The former are usually more abstract and refer to goals that are projected into the future, while the latter are closely linked to past or present day experiences. Their contents – or the state of their attainment – can be (in)validated on a daily basis. Throughout history, and even today, happiness appears to have worked as a particularly suitable barometer to measure these expectations and experiences because most people are able to provide an answer to the question "Are you happy?". The general positive interpretation of the "pursuit of happiness", already present in the early Meiji period, as a socio-political goal and an individual right characterizes both dimensions of *kōfukuron* (幸福論 discourse on happiness) in modern Japan.

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## Notes

- Asia is not included in the only monograph to date that provides an analysis of the history of happiness as a political concept: McMahon, D. 2006. *The Pursuit of Happiness. A History from the Greeks to the Present*, London: Penguin. For a historical contextualization of the concept of happiness in modern Japan see: Coulmas, F. 2009. *The Quest for Happiness in Japan* (DIJ Working Paper 2009/1), <http://tinyurl.com/Coulmas> (last accessed January 2014).
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# Making 'new' Muslim places in urban Malaysia and Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

My research in 2013 brought me to various cities in Malaysia and Indonesia. It gave me the opportunity to visit a multitude of interesting venues, ranging from sacred places (Chinese-style mosques), to eating places (Chinese halal restaurants), retail places (shopping malls and Islamic boutiques) and living places (Muslim gated communities), and led me to develop a new research project in which I will study Muslim identities and aspirations in contemporary societies, by examining the constructions of place, claims on space and the architecture of built forms.

Hew Wai Weng

BY STUDYING the production and consumption of 'new' Muslim places, this research aims to provide fresh ways of thinking about Islam, and more specifically, of thinking about Muslims and their relations to the challenges of urbanisation, modernity and plurality in contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia. It will examine how and under what conditions, religious movements transform urbanity and, vice versa, how urban space triggers religious innovations. Yet, it does not see Islam as the only parameter to understand such dynamics, but also takes other aspects into consideration such as consumer culture, ethnic interaction, political contestation and economic development.

While this research engages with both current scholarships of space and place, it highlights the material dimensions of spatial formation, by looking at places such as Chinese-style mosques, halal restaurants, Muslim gated communities and Muslim websites. Although they do not have a physical structure, online spaces entail material sensibilities represented by words and images. Instead of conventional Muslim places, such as mosques (in this case, non-Chinese style), religious schools and shrines, this study emphasises the development of new practices and the formation of new ideas, as reflected in the making of new places I describe below.

## Promoting inclusive Islam: Chinese-style mosques

This project builds upon my ongoing work, 'Translocal and Cosmopolitan Islam: Chinese-style Mosques in Malaysia and Indonesia'. Since 2000, at least ten Chinese-style mosques were built in Malaysia and Indonesia, clearly making them a translocal phenomenon. Inspired by the architectural design of old mosques in mainland China, different actors have built Chinese-style mosques in various cities in both Malaysia and Indonesia to preach the universality of Islam, as well as to show the compatibility between Islam and Chineseness.

Yet there are also different motivations behind the construction of each mosque. For instance, the Kelantan Beijing Mosque was sponsored by an Islamic party in Malaysia to promote an inclusive image of the party, while the Surabaya Cheng Hoo Mosque was established by the Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association to manifest a distinctive representation of Chinese Muslim cultural identity. In addition, the activities in the mosques are localized: the sermons are conducted in Malay or Indonesian, and most of the congregation members are non-Chinese Muslims. These mosques have also been promoted as sites for religious tourism and symbols of religious inclusivity.

## Culinary *Dakwah*: Chinese halal restaurants

The research will be extended to include places such as Chinese halal restaurants and Muslim gated communities. In the last ten years, the number of Chinese halal restaurants in Malaysia has mushroomed. Such restaurants attract many Malay Muslim middle-class clients in urban Malaysia. Chinese converts are key players in the Chinese halal food market. They see their restaurants as eating places that can promote ethnic interaction and facilitate religious preaching. Indeed, like Chinese-style mosques, Chinese halal restaurants are inclusive places where both Chinese and non-Chinese, Muslims and non-Muslims can gather.

Established in about 2006, the Mohammad Chan Halal Restaurant and the Sharin Low Seafood Restaurant are two of the most successful cases. As of 2012, there were eight

branches of the Mohammad Chan Restaurant and seventeen of the Sharin Low Restaurant in Malaysia. Notably, the Sharin Low Restaurant has expanded its business into Indonesia, where it launched a branch in Jakarta in 2012, and is planning to open another one in Bali by the end of 2013. Besides Chinese converts, Hui Muslims from mainland China have also recently opened restaurants in both countries. The successful stories of Chinese-style mosques and halal restaurants reflect a growing trend of accommodating Chinese cultural elements in the Islamic preaching.

## Creating heaven on earth: Muslim gated communities and Islamic cities

In contrast to halal restaurants, Muslim gated communities are exclusively Muslim spaces, specifically designed for pious Muslims (regardless their ethnicities). In the last few years,



Top: A panoramic view of the Beijing Mosque, a Chinese-style mosque in Kelantan, Malaysia

Below left: Bukit Az-Zikra, a Muslim housing cluster in Sentul, outskirts of Jakarta, Indonesia.

Below right: A geometric monument with a giant 'Quran'; the main roundabout in the city centre of 'Islamic City' Kota Bharu.

All photos courtesy of the Author.

there are increasing numbers of Muslim gated communities surrounding Jakarta, as a result of growing Islamic piety and market economy. These housing complexes offer a 'modern, green and Islamic' living environment to young middle-class Muslim families in urban Indonesia; thus, ideal sites to investigate how religiosity and modernity are negotiated by various Muslim actors in a real and everyday setting.

Villa Ilhami, Bumi Darussalam and Orchid Realty (Organization of Cyber Housing and Islamic Development) are three main property developers for Islamic housing (*Perumahan Islam*) in contemporary Indonesia. Aiming to "create heaven on earth", each housing cluster of Bumi Darussalam has its own mosque, in which its residents are encouraged to participate in various religious classes and activities. Meanwhile, Orchid Realty claims to be "Indonesia's first Islamic property developer" and considers its business to be a form of 'economic jihad'. Situated in Sentul, on the outskirts of Jakarta, Bukit Az-Zikra is another remarkable Muslim housing cluster. It has named its streets in Arabic and has adopted 'Islamic' features for its houses. Moreover, there are billboards in Bukit Az-Zikra, stating that its residents should perform prayers, wear Islamic attires and not smoke. Not surprisingly, many of the developers and residents of these Islamic housing areas are Muslims associated with Islamic parties and organisations.

There are not only efforts to 'Islamicise' housing areas, but also attempts to 'Islamicise' cities in Malaysia and Indonesia. Recently, Kota Bharu in Malaysia (Kelantan) and Bogor in Indonesia proclaimed themselves as 'Islamic city' and 'Halal city'. Kota Bharu's municipal government now requires all new commercial buildings to adopt 'Islamic architecture' and it has implemented a few sharia-influenced by-laws to police the morality of its residents. In terms of economic planning, the Kelantan state government has proposed the usage of *dinar* (Islamic currency), the development of a halal economy and the idea to build a palm island, mimicking the one in Dubai (not yet implemented). Meanwhile, the Bogor municipal government has planned to ban the slaughtering of pigs and limit the selling of pork in the city.

## From digital *Dakwah* to street *Dakwah*

In recent years, Muslim religiosity in Malaysia and Indonesia is not only negotiated in various physical places (from mosques to shopping malls), but also contested in numerous cyber spaces (from blogosphere to Facebook). The digital world facilitates the spread and discussion of religious knowledge and forms of practice among Muslims, without encountering a physical place of worship, or a religious scholar. Various Muslim activists, including Chinese converts, have creatively used various types of new media to conduct *dakwah* (dissemination of Islamic messages), which some of them called 'digital *dakwah*'.

Cyber spaces are important places where many Chinese Muslims share their conversion experiences, express their ethno-religious identities, and spread Islamic messages to non-Muslim audiences. The internet not only connects Chinese converts who are minorities in both Malaysia and Indonesia, but also links them to Hui Muslims in China, and Muslim converts in the West; this might contribute to a new form of online translocal *ummah* network (see <http://www.mualaf.com>, <http://www.revertedmuslim.blogspot.de> and <http://www.onenur.net>). Unlike conventional *dakwah* activities, which aim to strengthen the faith of Muslims, Chinese Muslims' digital *dakwah* aims to universalise Islam and invite non-Muslims to get closer to the Islamic faith. In addition to 'digital *dakwah*', Chinese Muslims also conduct 'street *dakwah*': a new phenomenon in Malaysia, in which Muslims (both Malay and Chinese) take their faith to the streets in urban centres and share their religion with non-Muslims. Some Muslim individuals and groups are involved in both forms of *dakwah*, leading us to speculate about the ways in which the two are related. How, for example, does the intersection of new media and urban spaces contribute to new forms of religious activities?

## Conclusion

From inclusive Chinese-style mosques to exclusive Muslim housing clusters, we witness placemaking by different Muslim actors, at numerous sites, in contemporary urban Malaysia and Indonesia. These places are sites of negotiation between Islamic movements and consumer culture, between religious piety and urban lifestyle; they are sites of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between Muslims with different backgrounds. On the one hand, there is a growing demand for diversity within Islamic expressions among the urban Muslim middleclass. They do not want to see all the mosques built in a similar pan-Islamic architecture, thus they support the construction of Chinese-style mosques; they do not want to just eat Malay food, thus they visit Chinese halal restaurants. On the other hand, there is also an increased desire to mix religious messages with modern ideas, to forge an 'Islamic way of modern living', by building Islamic gated communities and Islamic cities. Even though this 'Islamic way of modern living' adopts modern infrastructure and ideas, it is often accompanied by strict regulations, religious segregation and sometimes moral policing, which might alienate non-Muslims and non-conformist Muslims.

What are the translocal flows, national politics and local dynamics behind the making of various Muslim places? Who are the producers and consumers of these places? What do these places tell us about Muslim piety and urban politics? How do these places engage with existing religious plurality and cultural diversity in Malaysia and Indonesia? A study of urban Muslim places could provide us with deeper insights into the multifaceted and intertwined processes of 'Islamisation' and urbanisation in contemporary Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as the inclusionary possibilities and limitations of these processes of placemaking. These places could also tell us how and under what conditions, religious motivations, political mobilizations and market considerations converge in urban settings.

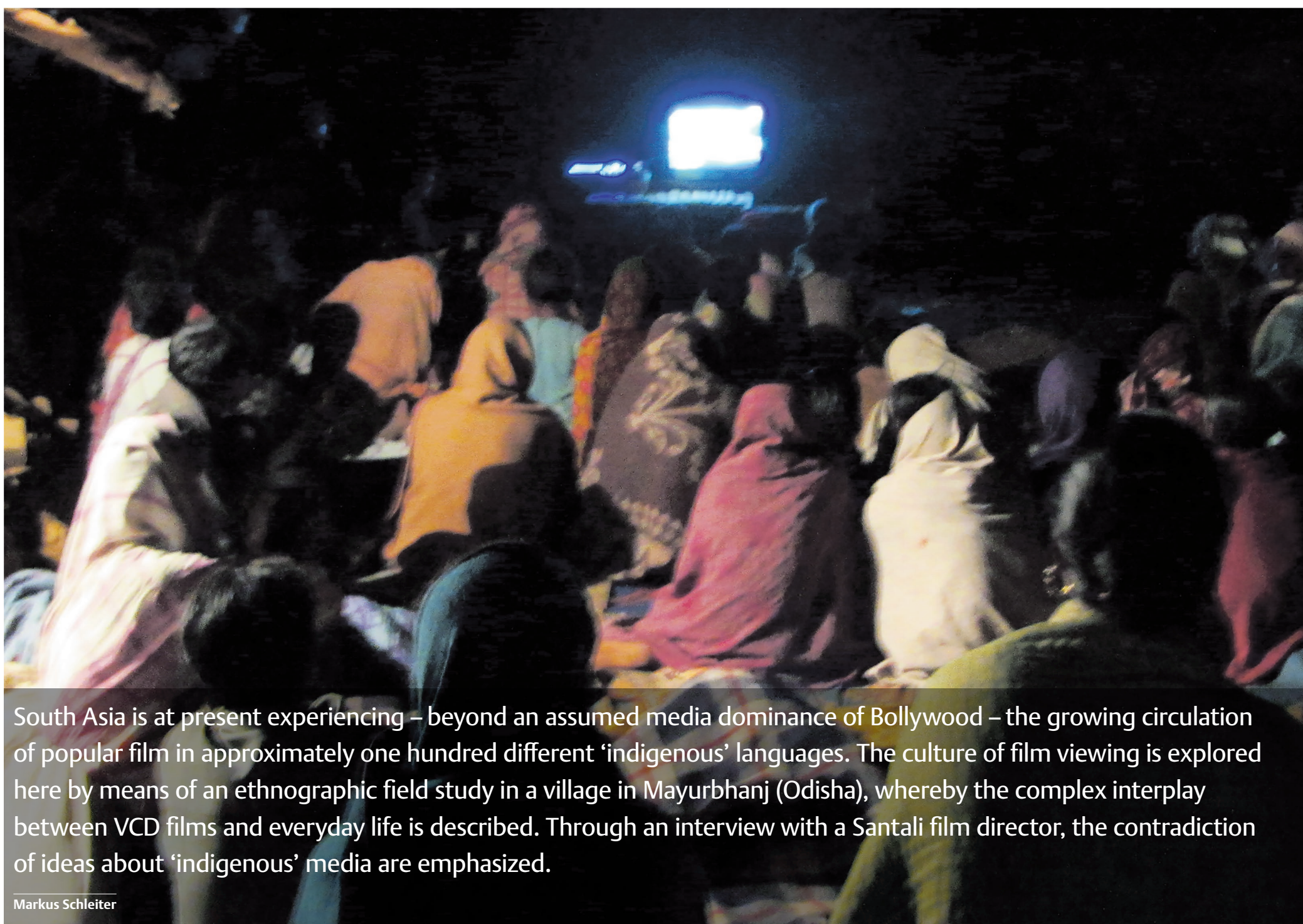
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## Note

1 An earlier version of this article was published in *ZMO Orient Bulletin*, No.24, June 2013. (<http://tinyurl.com/ZMObulletin24>)



# India's 'indigenous' cinemas



South Asia is at present experiencing – beyond an assumed media dominance of Bollywood – the growing circulation of popular film in approximately one hundred different ‘indigenous’ languages. The culture of film viewing is explored here by means of an ethnographic field study in a village in Mayurbhanj (Odisha), whereby the complex interplay between VCD films and everyday life is described. Through an interview with a Santali film director, the contradiction of ideas about ‘indigenous’ media are emphasized.

Markus Schleiter

POPULAR FILMS AND MUSIC VIDEOS in Santali, the language of the Santal, are highly enjoyed in villages and small towns of Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal (India). A single film can get an audience of up to 5 million viewers, if one considers all means of distribution, namely cinema and VCD sales, but also pirated VCD copies or mobile downloads available in countless shops. The present success of indigenous media, such as Santali films, concurs with a strong reappraisal of ethnic claims in many regions of South Asia as well as a support for indigenous groups by NGOs and the UN on a global level.<sup>1</sup> Simultaneously, the wide availability of and accessibility to consumer range film making tools – digital cameras and editing technologies – have facilitated the professional making of films and music videos at extremely low costs.

In the intense academic debate on the success, but also ambivalence, of ‘indigeneity’ as a global assertive concept, Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart have drawn attention to the role indigenous media plays in negotiations for political and economic entitlements of indigenous communities. They state that such media is of major importance within politics of identity, as well as for a resistance of indigenous communities against their subordination. The appropriation of new media technology by indigenous artists would be a means of fostering local traditions and values, while the use of media simultaneously points to the fact that indigenous culture is a “living, dynamic organism”.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, in Santragacchi, a prestigious suburban district in the vicinity of Kolkata, a high-level officer of Santal origin told me: “Popular Santali films will lead Santal in the villages to succumb to modernity and forget about their own tradition”. Below, I will focus exemplarily on the ways indigenous media and village everyday culture are intricately intertwined, and suggest on this basis that conjunctures of media and village life are open to very differing and unprecedented outcomes, which defy both of the takes on the cultural effects of indigenous media mentioned above.

## A film director's view on indigenous media

So far, around 120 Santali films, and an estimated 250 music video clip compilations, have been produced by small scale film entrepreneurs. The main centres of Santali film production are Asansol (West Bengal), Tatanagar (Jharkhand) and Baripada (Odisha). Two major film production companies of this industry

are located in the latter town, namely Maa Ambika Studio of Sanjib Dwibedi and Raja Mishra's film studio. Both of the owners have a small team of employees, and about 200 freelance artists and film technicians, of whom half are of Santal origin.

Raja Mishra, an Odiya high caste film director, not of Santal origin, also runs a photo studio on the 2nd floor of a market building close to Baripada railway station. Waiting to interview him, I sat in the back room of his photo studio. The tiny, bright green room serves as the office of his film company and – equipped with two computers – also functions as the editing room. Whilst sitting there, I could observe an employee editing images, routinely whitening the face and blackening the hair of a photo studio customer. Finally, Raja Mishra came in, wearing a half opened branded shirt and a golden necklace. Surprisingly, he turned out to be utmost humble and friendly, and at the same moment, outspoken and rather self-confident man:

“I am a self-made director. When I started fifteen years back, nobody would invest in my company. Now we are doing films with a budget of 500.000 Rupees (approx. €6000) in this studio. When I did my first album, I had no equipment, I just owned a small camera. Back then, I could not even afford to rent a car to reach outdoor locations. First, I would bring my assistant on my bike to the shooting location. Then I would return in order to pick up the star actress. She and her mother sat on the backseat of my bike together, and I drove the whole way again.”

“Is it important to show ‘traditional’ culture in Santali films?” I asked him.

“I am always keen on doing stories related to Santal customs. I will give you an example. Usually a Santal would marry outside his own lineage group (*gotra*). However, members of the two *gotras* Kisku and Marandi are not allowed to intermarry. Just now I am planning a film about two childhood friends, one a Kisku, and the second a Marandi, whose children have fallen in love with each other. We always bring in some of their traditions in a film, such as their dances or their rice-beer. I love the culture of Santals a lot, and have visited Santal villages often. Still, people of the villages want to see up-to-date films. They also want to watch dressy dance sequences, for example. You cannot deny it to them. Just recently, I made a video for a Sufi song in Santali, which became a big success.”

“So, you love shooting fashionable films?”

“It's not about choice. I would do a silent film with long shots, if I could make a film based on my own likes. Just an intense screenplay with very long shots, like in films by the off-beat Bollywood director Ram Gopal Varma. Nobody speaks in them. One, two minutes, just silence. But these kind of films I cannot sell. If I do fast cuts and put in a whole load of sounds and effects ... ‘Bum bam bum’ ... Only then people say, ‘Oh, Raja Mishra has made a good film’.”

Santali films are indigenous films in the sense that they are in an indigenous language, that they cater to indigenous target audiences and that indigenous people are part of their production. The director's words, however, illustrate the complexities of defining indigenous media as ‘indigenous’. In Raja Mishra's work a variety of ideas concur that show a love for indigenous tradition, even though he is not of indigenous origin himself; but above all, his self-identification with cinematic artistic endeavours and his assumptions about audience demands are omnipresent. Thereby, he believes that the indigenous target audiences favour up-to-date cinematic fashions. Integrating depictions of ‘indigenous tradition’ in Santali films is thus part of a multi-faceted assemblage, in which a variety of very differing viewpoints on the making of films – not necessarily indigenous viewpoints – are negotiated.

## A Santali video night

In 2002, I did my PhD research in a settlement of a Birhor ‘tribe’ in the multi-ethnic indigenous village Durdura in Mayurbhanj/Odisha.<sup>3</sup> Staying there, I came to experience the people's fondness of Santali films. Especially the male youths in the village would consistently plead with me to make a donation for a video night. At that time I tended to argue that they should instead enjoy a night of dancing together. In April 2011 I returned to the village for my present research, only to find that not much had changed. One late morning I was sitting with a quick, but, in equal measure disgusting cup of instant coffee on the veranda of the small one-roomed house where I was staying, when Raja, a young guy from the village, showed up. He said to me:

“Hey Markus, you have already stayed so many days here with us. I would like to ask you to do something for our Birhor sub-village now. You see, everybody wishes to watch films

Above: Village video night Durdura.



# A village video night and the future of Santal 'traditional' dances

tomorrow. Could you give us just 300 Rs (around 4 Euro), so that we could rent a TV-Set tomorrow evening?"

To his astonishment, eagerly in search of film audiences, I promptly agreed. And so, the following evening shortly after sunset, a video night started. Roughly 200 people, comprising all ages and genders, assembled at the dance area in the village. The video night started with an album of Santali music videos. Thereafter, the screening of films began, and throughout the hours of the night three Santali films were shown without interruption. Each film delivered a twisted love story embedded in a societal topic, like the exploitation by a gruesome landlord. Thereby, the hero of the film, a young guy with sunglasses and fashionable jeans, protected his heroine against the villain. The latter usually did not survive the revenge scene at the end of the film. Each film included five dance sequences of popular Santali songs. The majority of viewers, warmly wrapped up in their blankets, stayed the whole night, intensely and silently following the stories – though a few of them did fall asleep in front of the TV. With the start of dawn Raja put a last music video album into the disc player.

A close look at such a video night reveals that the act of joining becomes meaningful to village inhabitants far beyond film watching. First and foremost, a video night as a collective event occupies the same space as 'traditional' dances – which is an occasion to enjoy with people with whom one shares a relationship (Hindi: *rishta*; Birhor, Santali: *sagai*), and thereby to further bond these relationships. Likewise, village dances are a traditional opportunity for romance, and a video night consequently carries the exciting possibilities for (hidden) courting between youths.<sup>4</sup>

It became clear that the filmmaker's ideas about his target audiences proved insightful. First of all, except for a few youngsters, no one in the village appeared to be interested in watching a Bollywood film. In Santali VCDs, village inhabitants stressed that they particularly enjoy the story (*kahani*) of a film. They are eager to know in how far and for what reasons characters are hindered in fulfilling the demands of differing family, kin and societal roles. Especially the complexity of the story and the web of interrelated moral dilemmas, so I was told, make a film worth watching.

However, Santali films are not enjoyed by everybody in a village. Conducting an interview on Santali films with an elderly couple living at the Santal subvillage, the woman began venting her anger about films.<sup>5</sup> A few days ago, she lamented, the 'traditional' dances after the *chhatiyar* ceremonies for a baby's birth could not take place, because the host of the ceremony screened Santali films for his guests throughout the night. The women gnashed her teeth in vehement displeasure and continued: "All of the films are bad, may they be in Odiya

or Santali, but to Santals all of them are bad. Dance is the main thing for Santals, it is the only thing that gives pleasure to us. Video will put an end to dance."

Her husband, nearly 70 years old, though in line with her argument, disagreed on the last point, and elaborated on his more laid-back view on occurrences of cultural change in the village: "Dance will continue, it will never end. Some people may prefer video to dancing, it depends on them. Only the Birhor are doing a maximum of video shows. Now it is everyone's freedom, whatever one wishes to do, one can do. Before, we had not seen tobacco, no pants and no underwear. All these things have come, and also video comes now."

## Conclusion

In the village Durdura the culture of viewing Santali films refers to the meaningfulness of a 'traditional' dance night, and this has led villagers to celebrate these films as a means of enjoying time together. At the same time, villagers do expose the enduring nature of 'traditional' dances by comparisons with (the unworthiness of) 'video nights'. As such, film watching and 'traditional' practices in a village stand in a reciprocal reference to each other, and such media practice becomes part of supporting 'new media usage' as well as 'traditional' dance forms. This, however, contradicts forecasts cited at the start of the essay, that the appearance of 'indigenous' media would respectively predetermine either a dissolution or a revival of 'indigenous' culture in these communities. In the village Durdura as such, 'video' and 'traditional' dances have co-existed already for more than a decade, of which the persistency can be interpreted paradoxically to have resulted from the simultaneous presence of the various and contradictory engagements with 'indigenous' media outlined above.

Wilson and Stewart have built their argument for *Global Indigenous Media* to a large extent on the assumption that 'indigenous' media is an expression of 'indigenous tradition'. However, on the basis of the interview with Raja Mishra, the Santali films he makes have been shown to be influenced by the filmmaker's multiple self-identifications and viewpoints that go much beyond depicting 'indigenous' culture. At the same time, the 'indigenous' audience in a village proved to be not in need of depictions of 'indigenity' in Santali films. As such, I would suggest to laud 'indigenous' media for much more than its references to 'indigenous tradition', which are not necessarily part of Santali films. This would allow one, in addition, to overcome prevailing (partly derogative) preconceptions of 'indigenous' communities, artists and media foremost to be an outcome of an 'archaic culture', and much more to coequally recognize such 'indigenous' peoples' media as contemporary popular films.

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## Notes

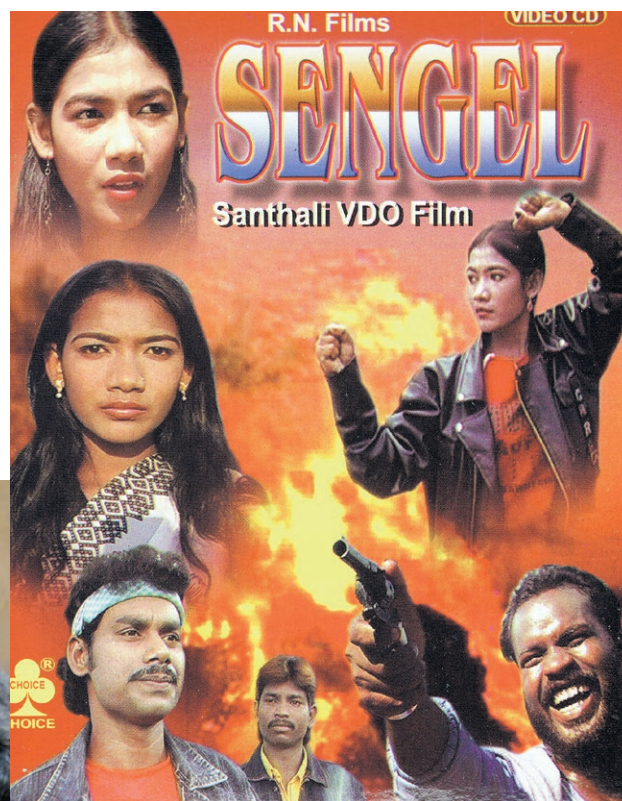
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- 2 Wilson, P. & M. Stewart (eds.) 2008. *Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics, and Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- 3 Schleiter, M. 2008. *Die Birhor: Ethnographie und die Folgen: Ein indischer 'Stamm' im Spiegel kolonialer und postkolonialer Beschreibungen*. Heidelberg: Draupadi.
- 4 Find a detailed analysis of such a video night in Schleiter, M. (forthcoming) 'Santali Video Nights: An Exploration of the "Cultural Margin" of a VideoCD Circulation in a village in India', in Mukherjee, Madhujā & Lotte Hoek (eds.) *VCD Visions/Video Landscapes*.
- 5 Find an extensive version of the interview in Schleiter, M. (forthcoming) 'VideoCD Crossovers: Cultural practice, ideas of belonging and Santali popular films', in Wolf, Richard & Frank Heidemann (eds.) *Indigenity in South Asia*.

Below left and right: Behind the scenes during the shooting of Ambika Studio.

Centre top: VCD cover.

Centre middle: Muna Bhai (producer Sur Sangeet Films).

Centre bottom: Santali Film Awards 2013.





# Ramâwan: 2013

Ramâwan commonly describes the important yearly ceremonies for the Cham-Bani community of Vietnam (also known as the 'Awal') that occur during the ninth month of the Cham-Bani calendar (*sakawi Awal*). There is also a reputedly small Cham-Bani community in Cambodia, predominantly known in the press and academic circles as the *Kaum Imam San* (*kaum*: from Malay for 'group', of Imam San's lineage). However, there are clear differences between this Bani community in Cambodia and the Awal of Vietnam, which will be the focus of future studies. In this essay the authors focus on the Awal of Vietnam as they represent an important example of localization of Islamic influence in contemporary Vietnam.

William Noseworthy and Quảng Văn Sơn



Left: Ew Muk Kei at Ghur Ranaih, Mỹ Thường, Ninh Thuận (Photo by William Noseworthy)

IN VIETNAM THE CHAM BANI number approximately 40,000<sup>1</sup> and live mostly in the dry coastal provinces of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận, although a large number of Bani youth have migrated southward to Hồ Chí Minh City to live and work. Every year, just before the month of Ramâwan begins, the Bani community in the Cham homeland of Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận swells in size as all family members return to their ancestral homes. The central ceremony during Ramâwan, called *éw muk kei*, is in fact focused on, literally, calling the ancestors and is a ceremony that is shared with the Cham Ahier ('Balamon' or Shaivite influenced Cham).<sup>2</sup> In this way the central focus of the Ramâwan ceremonies are less comparable to the practices of Ramadan, from which Ramâwan is derived, but more comparable to the common practices of ancestral worship shared amongst many Southeast Asian peoples. Amongst the Thai peoples these ceremonies are associated with *pu nya* ancestral spirit worship and amongst the Vietnamese these ceremonies are associated with *ông bà tổ tiên* ancestral worship. With this regional context in mind it is helpful to remember that the specific context of Ramâwan is dictated by a priesthood – comprising the Po Gru, Imâm, Katip, Mâdhir and Acar – which is unique to the contemporary Awal.<sup>3</sup>

In villages and small towns in Ninh Thuận province, the Islamic Shafi'i Sunni community's month of Ramadan began one day before the Awal month of Ramâwan this past year. However, before the month of Ramâwan begins, the Awal priests participate in a ritualistic cleansing ceremonies called *Ngap ndam pabak*. The ceremony consists of offerings of soup, goat meat and rice – and is used to clean the essence of the priests before they lead Ramâwan ceremonies. As with all other elements of the month of Ramâwan, this ceremony takes place in accordance with the *sakawi Awal*. However, the location differs. A temporary prayer tent called a *kajang* is constructed for the *ngap ndam pabak* ceremonies as follows:

- *Acar ngap yang pabak harei angar* (The lowest ranking priests: the Acar complete the ceremony on Wednesday)
- *Mâdhir ngap harei but* (The middle ranking Mâdhir priests complete the ceremony on Thursday)
- *Imâm/Katip ngap harei jip* (The Imam and the Katip priests complete the ceremony on Friday)

After the priests have taken part in this purification ritual they can then lead the rest of the Ramâwan rituals. These include the visitation of ancestral graves (*nao ghur*) before the month of Ramâwan technically begins, the ceremony of calling the ancestors (*éw muk kei*) and ceremonies of the month of Ramâwan (*balan mbeng aek* – the month of fasting).

#### Nao ghur

The *nao ghur* ceremony is possibly the most important Awal ceremony associated with Ramâwan. Although the ceremony occurs before the month of Ramâwan technically begins, it is understood as the gateway to the month. *Ghur* are ancestral grave sites of the Awal community. Each individual grave is marked by a headstone and a footstone. These sites are associated with each household and determined through matrilineal bloodlines. Depending on the household, each family may visit between two and four individual *ghur* sites, although the standard is three over the course of three days. The older sites are generally visited first, while the newer sites are visited later.

During the *nao ghur* ceremony the Awal priests lay out mats and line up on one side of the *ghur*. Recently in the Awal community, due to the decreasing ratio of priests to lay people, lay male assistants who act as priests in training may also recite the prayers, provided that they are able to remember them. They recite Qur'anic prayers to invite the ancestor spirits to return to earth, using a mixture of tobacco and betel leaf offerings. While the priests recite the prayers, members of the kinship group, predominantly female, but also younger males, prostrate themselves before the *ghur*. This process draws the ancestors back to earth, where their spiritual essence is then contained in a basket. These baskets are gathered up and brought home to the household, where an ancestral altar is constructed and offerings made to the ancestor spirits (*éw muk kei*). After approximately three days of the *nao ghur* and *éw muk kei* ceremonies, further preparations are made and the individual family can enter the *sang mâgik* as the month of Ramâwan begins.

#### The sang mâgik<sup>4</sup>

The majority of Bani ceremonies during the month of Ramâwan take place in the *sang mâgik*, or a Bani temple that serves as the center for village and small town life. In Ninh Thuận province, the local *sang mâgik* have formed a provincial board to redistribute donations from the wealthier small towns to the poorer villages and govern communal programs. *Mâgik* is a local pronunciation of *masjid*, the Arabic term for mosque, and *sang* is the Cham word for 'house'. However, the *sang mâgik* are different from what one might expect of either Sunni or Shi'a mosques. Most *sang mâgik* only open their



doors for life cycle rituals (weddings, funerals, etc.), Friday prayers and Ramāwan. While priests sit in the front of the *sang m̄gik* and live in them the entire month of Ramāwan, elder women sit in the back of the *sang m̄gik* each evening during prayers. Furthermore, during the prayer ceremonies a major focus is the prostration of older women, younger women and younger males inside the *sang m̄gik*.

During Ramāwan the doors open to the public in the evenings around 6 o'clock. Priests begin the prayers by filing out of the *sang m̄gik*, performing cleansing ceremonies and then re-entering with a chant of 'awluah' while tracing their fingertips around ceremonial headdresses, while the *Katip* beats a drum, before beginning prayers at 6.30pm. After approximately twenty minutes, lay people, predominantly women, filter in to the *sang m̄gik* in order to pray (*tagok*). At approximately 7:05 and 7:10, men shift their position for prayer. Then at approximately 8:15 the prayer begins to cease, as the nightly ceremonies end around 8:30pm. During the rest of the day, Awal priests remain in the *sang m̄gik*, during which time they are obligated to recite Qur'anic prayers five times per day (*subahik*). Each prayer session begins with the lighting of a special candle (*badien*) and then the cleansing of the priests before they recite prayers for Awal deities such as Po Awluah (Allah), Po Mohammed, Po Ali and Po Phatimah (Fatimah). Although the complex relations of Awal and Ahier deities (Balamon – Brahmanist influenced) cannot be fully explained in this short space, the Awal community has been known to map the deities on the human image in pictorial representations that resemble the Sufi concept of the 'perfect man'.<sup>5</sup>

#### The many facets of syncretic Awal traditions

The question of Sufi influence remains open historically, as in addition to certain Sufi markers (such as the concept of the 'perfect man' and the recitation of the phrase: *illa-illwa-illallah*), the Awal priesthood also shows markers of Buddhist influence, particularly as monks shave their heads, their clothes are embellished with embroidery that repeats certain Buddhist motifs, and they chant using rhythms that have been clearly influenced by either deeper origins of the Bani community as Cham Mahayana Buddhists or have appeared through contact induced change with Vietnamese and Khmer populations.<sup>6</sup> This milieu of cultural influence also explains why the senior (Po Gru) and junior (Po Acar) Awal priests have names that have Sanskrit roots. Further Indic influence is also thought to be found in the method of lay person prayer amongst the Awal population. For the older men, they sit cross legged and at two points during the ceremony turn toward the center of the *sang m̄gik*, remaining cross legged, with hands clasped together at the center of the forehead. For women and younger males, during the middle of the prayer recitations, they enter the doorway of the *sang m̄gik* lift their hands and touch them together in front of their forehead before they bow down, lying almost completely flat on the floor, with the palms of the hands poised upwards near the head; the palms are then turned slightly inward so that the thumbs and index fingers of each hand touch forming a triangle, and the entire motion is repeated three times. They bow down three times, before making room for others to enter. Normally, during the first days of Ramāwan, when the *sang m̄gik* is more crowded, an individual may only do this offering one time. However, as the population of the small towns and villages wanes during the middle of the month, a given individual may bow down in prayer three or four times, perhaps more, during the nightly ceremonies. Notably, this method is shared amongst both Awal and Ahier Cham populations, and is noted as a lay, rather than priestly, method of supplication.

While older and priestly members of the lay community may take on certain practices like eating a pescatarian diet (no meat except seafood); not cutting facial hair, hair or fingernails; refraining from drinking; and refraining from killing any live being, for a total of the first fifteen days, the majority of the younger population is generally less strict with these practices. The villagers and townspeople are

Right: Gahlau (Aloeswood incense) and Hala (betel leaves) are critical offerings (Photo by Quang Văn Sơn)



Through a combination of history and contemporary concerns, the protection of *ghur* sites [...] has become one of the most important contemporary issues in the discussion between the local Vietnamese officials and intellectuals in the Cham community.

responsible for providing meals for the Awal priests during Ramāwan. Although the entirety of the month is focused on ceremonies and may appear to have an ornamental layering of Islamic practice, as previously suggested, the central importance of Ramāwan for the Bani community is ancestral worship, which reappears during the ceremonies of *Muk Trun* (the arrival of the deity Po Phatimah) on the fifteenth day of the month, and *Ong Trun* (the arrival of the male deity Po Ali) on the twentieth day of the month. After these deities arrive, a number of other ceremonies can take place. This includes the ceremonies of *tuh brah*, which are offerings that parallel the Islamic traditions of *zakat*, and the *talaih kalam* ceremonies (*kalam* from Arabic *Qu'lam* meaning 'pen', or 'writing instrument'). *Talaih kalam* is particularly important, as it is during this ceremony that young males are symbolically (NB: not literally) circumcised (*katat*) and that they begin the study of Awal prayers written in the localized script of *Akhar Bani*.

Based on our current understandings, *Akhar Bani* is a localized version of Arabic with slight orthographic modifications and the absence of a certain number of letters to account for the differences in pronunciation between the Austronesian Cham and Semitic Arabic (*al-'arabiya* or *arabi*) languages, retaining approximately 80% orthographic similarity with standard Arabic. However, there are no institutions for the study of *Akhar Bani* other than the Awal priesthood. As such, study groups are held on weekends at the household of a Awal priest who takes the role of a teacher (*gru*, from Sanskrit *guru*) for the purposes of language study. The association with *gru* can be quite strong in the Awal community, with students holding almost kinship like loyalties to *gru*. However, the teacher-student relationship never trumps the relationship with ancestral spirits and this is evident throughout the month of Ramāwan. The month closes with *talaih Ramāwan*, which includes the return of ancestral spirits to their *ghur* with rituals that assist their return to the spirit realm.

The emphasis on ancestral worship as part of the Ramāwan ceremony highlights the importance of the protection of Cham grave sites. Many of these locations are old Cham villages that the Cham people were forced to abandon during the relocation of the Cham people under the Nguyen Vietnamese Emperor Minh M̄nh in the 1830s. Others are linked to Cham villages that were forcibly abandoned during the series of conflicts that devastated mainland Southeast Asia throughout the twentieth century. Consequentially, because the land of these grave sites has not yet been protected in any fashion, new construction in the 1980s and 1990s onward has threatened the heritage of the Cham community. While some *ghur* sites have been well protected, such as those in the village of Palei Pamblap Biruw, negotiations must be made at other sites between the Cham priesthood and local Vietnamese who have constructed, or farmed, upon *ghur* sites, before Awal ancestral worship ceremonies can be performed. However, these are not the only issues surrounding *ghur* sites. At some sites villagers have noted a potential for increased desertification as a result of unchecked water usage; and at others the apparent lack of ability to create a communal garbage collection system has led to high piles of trash near ancestral graves.

Through a combination of history and contemporary concerns, the protection of *ghur* sites, along with increased recognition of the Ramāwan ceremonies as part of the cultural heritage of the Cham community and the contemporary Vietnamese state, has become one of the most important contemporary issues in the discussion

between the local Vietnamese officials and intellectuals in the Cham community. Meanwhile, with the construction of a new provincial museum, local Vietnamese officials hope not only to promote tourism within the province, but also to improve public education; they continue the overall good relations that have existed between Cham and Vietnamese in the province over the past decades. Nevertheless, the protection of *ghur* sites is but one amongst a host of issues that local officials must negotiate, as planning moves forward for the controversial construction of Vietnam's first two nuclear power plants (which was recently delayed as a result of safety concerns regarding the proposed sites). Finally, a comparative analysis of the Cham Awal of Vietnam and the 'Bani of Cambodia' or 'Imam San' group is certainly worthy of future research.

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#### Notes

- 1 Yasuko Yoshimoto. 2012 (December). 'A Study of the Hoi Giao Religion in Vietnam: With a Reference to Islamic Religious Practices of Cham Bani', *Southeast Asian Studies* 1(3):487-505
- 2 Noseworthy, W. 2013. 'Reviving traditions and creating futures', *The Newsletter* issue #64, pp.12-13
- 3 By contrast the Bani of Cambodia, or the Kaum Imam San, have been influenced by more contact with Malay and Khmer culture. All priests are called Acar and there is no 'Po Gru'.
- 4 *Sang* is the Cham word for house. In the Phan Rang area, a consonant shift has led the initial 's' to be pronounced as a hard /th/ as in 'Thomas.' *M̄gik* comes from a Cham adaptation of the pronunciation of the Arabic word masjid, although, as in many places in Southeast Asia, the Cham developed their own form of construction for the *sang m̄gik*. The question of whether or not it may be better to understand the 'sang m̄gik' as an Awal temple is one for further research.
- 5 The most clear example of this can be found in the field notes of Dorris Blood dated to 1968.
- 6 This information, as with much of the information on the Bani community comes with great thanks to a long series of studies with 'Gru Hajan' (Dr. Thành Phần) over the past several years. The authors are always grateful for his instruction. He mentioned the suggestion of possible Sufi influence on Bani traditions in a recent publication: Thành Phần. 2013. 'Palei- Một hình thái cư trú của cộng đồng Chăm ở Việt Nam', in *Tapuk Bhap Ilimo Cam (Tập chí Văn hóa Chăm – The Journal of Cham Culture)*, No. 1, pp.4-12

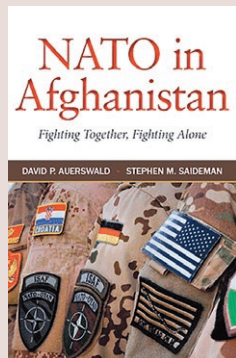
Below: Closing Evening Prayer during Ramāwan (Photo by Quang Văn Sơn)





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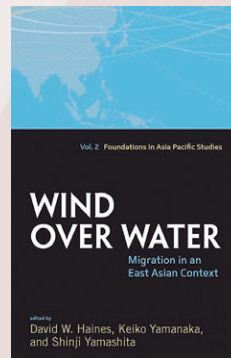
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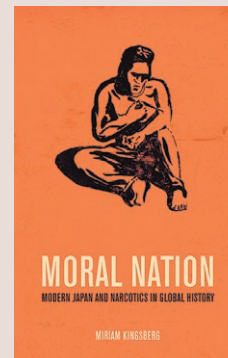
**Auerswald, D.P. & Saideman, S.M. 2014.**  
*NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone*, Princeton University Press, ISBN: 9780691159386



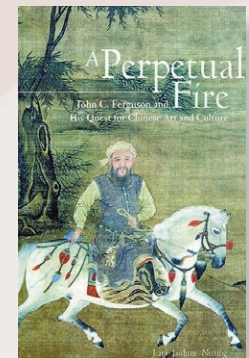
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*China's Silent Army: The Pioneers, Traders, Fixers and Workers Who are Remaking the World in Beijing's Image*, Penguin Books, ISBN: 9780241957530



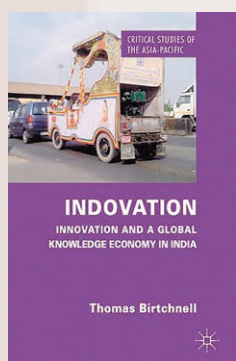
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*Wind Over Water: Migration in an East Asian Context*, Berghahn Books, ISBN: 9780857457400



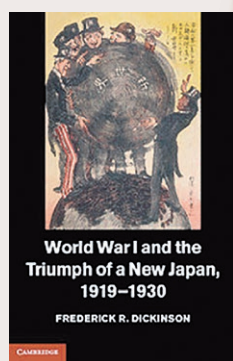
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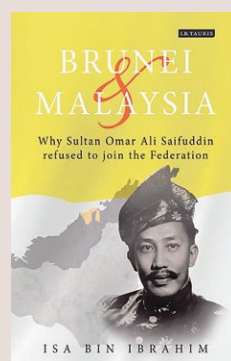
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*Indovation: Innovation and a Global Knowledge Economy in India*, Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 9781137027405



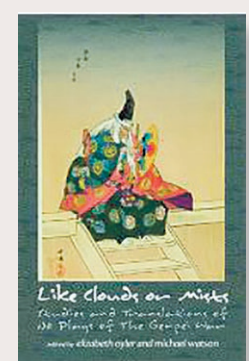
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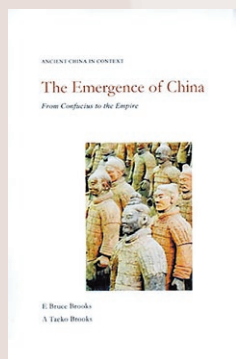
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*Brunei and Malaysia: Why Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin Refused to Join the Federation*, I.B.Tauris, ISBN: 9781780764368



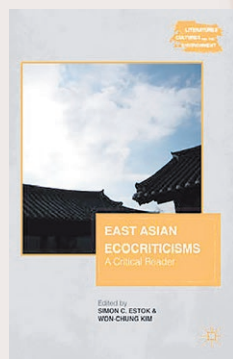
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*Remembering the Samsui Women: Migration and Social Memory in Singapore and China*, University of British Columbia Press, ISBN: 9780774825757



**Oyler, E. & Watson, M. (eds.) 2014.**  
*Like Clouds or Mists: Studies and Translations of No Plays of the Genpei War*, Cornell University East Asia Program, ISBN: 9781933947297



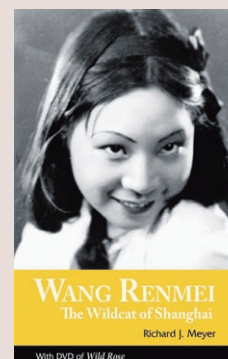
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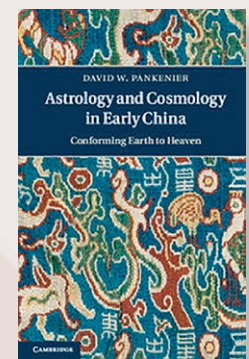
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*East Asian Ecocriticism: A Critical Reader*, Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 9781137274311



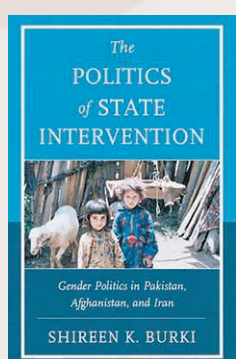
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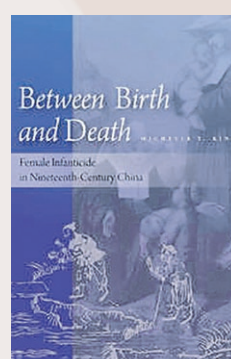
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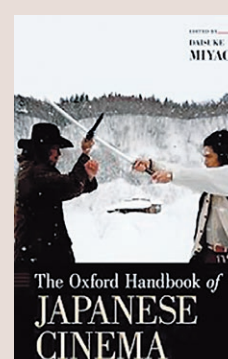
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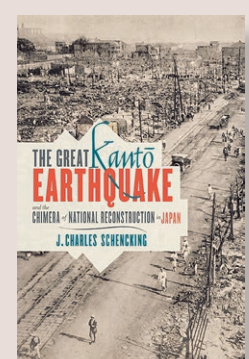
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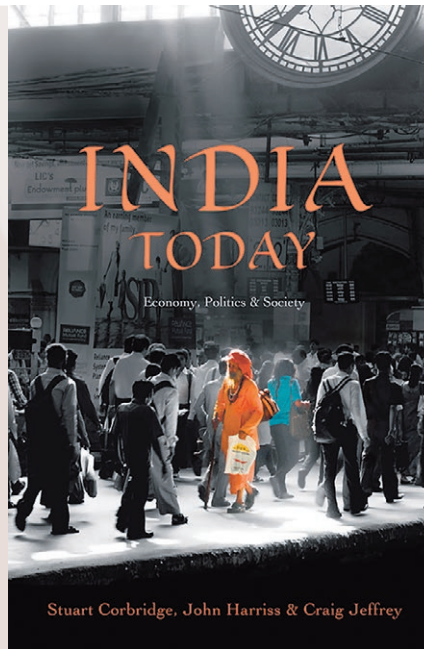
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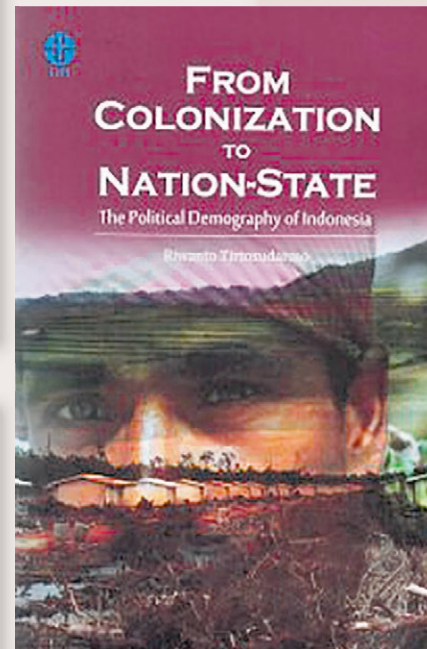
### India today

**Reviewer: Priyanka Singh**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 S. Corbridge, J. Harriss & C. Jeffrey. 2012.  
*India Today: Economy, Politics & Society*,  
 Cambridge: Polity Press, ISBN 9780745661117  
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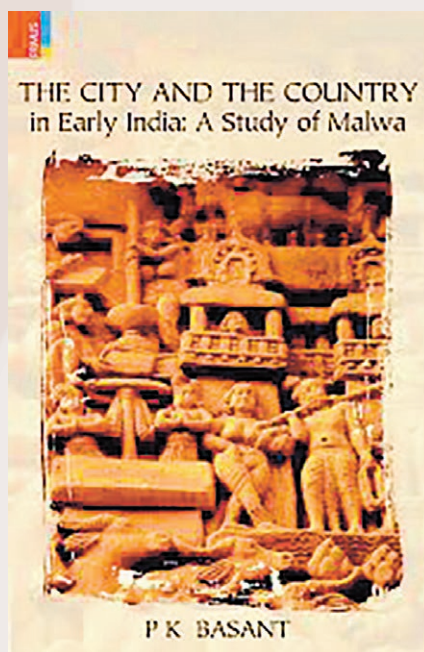
### The political democracy of Indonesia

**Reviewer: Shane Barter**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 Tirtosudarmo, R. 2013.  
*From Colonization to Nation-State: The Political Demography of Indonesia*,  
 Jakarta: LIPI Press, ISBN 9789797997601  
<http://newbooks.asia/review/Political-demography-indonesia>



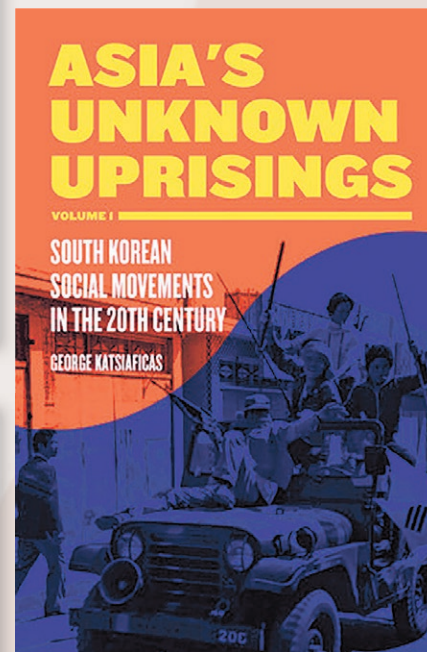
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**Reviewer: Heidi J. Miller**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 Basant, P.K. 2012.  
*The City and the Country in Early India, A Study of Malwa*,  
 Delhi: Primus Books, ISBN: 9789380607153  
<http://newbooks.asia/review/city-and-country>



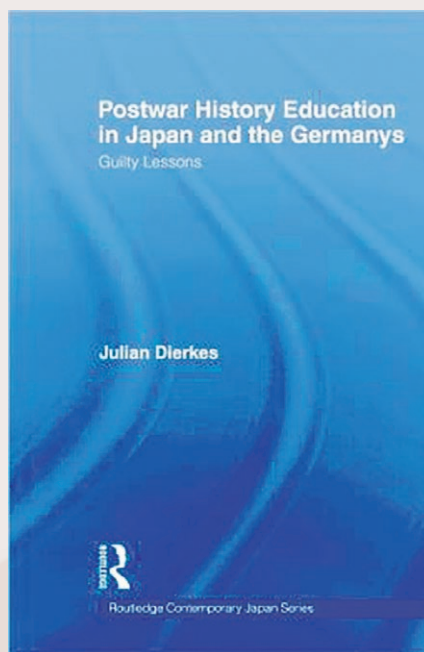
### On to an erotic utopia?

**Reviewer: Niels Mulder**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 Katsiaficas, G. 2013.  
*Asia's Unknown Uprisings Volume 2: People Power in the Philippines, Burma Tibet, China, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Thailand, and Indonesia, 1947-2009*,  
 OaklandCA: PM Press, ISBN 9781604864885  
<http://newbooks.asia/review/erotic-utopia>



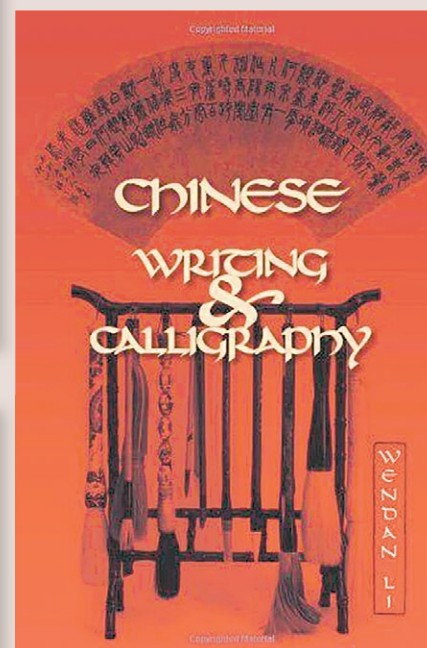
### History education and postwar national identity

**Reviewer: Elizabeth Dutridge-Corp**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 Julian Dierkes. 2010.  
*Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germanys: Guilty Lessons*,  
 London and New York: Routledge, ISBN 9780415553452  
<http://newbooks.asia/review/history-education>



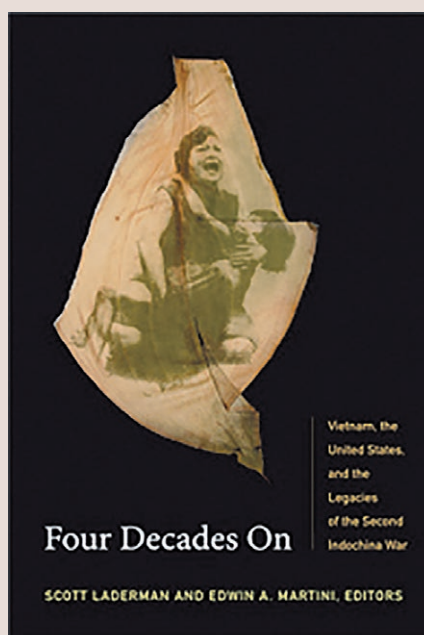
### Like a dancer

**Reviewer: Lucien van Valen**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 Wendan Li. 2009.  
*Chinese Writing & Calligraphy*,  
 University of Hawai'i Press, ISBN: 9780824833640  
<http://newbooks.asia/review/dancer>



### Four decades on

**Reviewer: William Noseworthy**  
 Reviewed publication:  
 Laderman, S. & E.A. Martini (eds.) 2013.  
*Four Decades On: Vietnam, the United States and the Legacies of the Second Indochina War*,  
 Duke University Press, ISBN 9780822354741  
<http://newbooks.asia/review/four-decades>



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# Modern library of Indonesia

The following books have been published by the Lontar Foundation.  
All reviews supplied by Niels Mulder.

## Oblation to status

### Reviewed publication:

Rusmini, O. 2011. *Earth Dance*. Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation, 162 pages, ISBN 9789798083822

OKA RUSMINI'S *Earth Dance* brought to mind the time of my early experiences in Southeast Asia when I had difficulty in understanding – let alone correctly acting in – a hierarchising social environment. During my first year, at the dignified Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, my teachers despaired whether they would ever succeed in instilling a modicum of appropriate language and manners in this blunt, egalitarian Dutchman. When being called up for military service, I was confronted with a system where a man is his rank, where he is a uniform with insignia. That lesson, however, didn't sink in; after six months, they sent me home. Ten years later, my Thai teachers tried to do a better job than the drill sergeants, and four years hence it was the turn of my Javanese mentors ... Reluctantly, I gradually learned that in Thai or Javanese social life a person is a rank, that rank obliges; one has to live up to it, and display it to boot. Deep down, one may be different and even disagree. That is a private affair that should not disturb the social show.<sup>1</sup>

Oka Rusmini's tale is set in Balinese society and dwells on the preoccupations of four generations of women who are hemmed in by caste, tradition, taboos and, naturally, by gender ideas. Through highlighting these limitations, and the escape routes of excelling in the gracefulness of dancing, of being beautiful, and of marrying a high-caste husband, Balinese realities come into sight that are far divorced from the overload of myths that colours the view of outsiders.

The possibilities of 'escaping' are very limited, and so many characters are goaded to resort to alternative ways of 'self-expression, such as jealousy, backbiting, derision, intrigue, and even migration to the anonymity and freedom of life in the city.

In order to bring the story's main theme out in sharp relief, one of the main characters, highborn Telaga, pursues her dream of marrying her childhood love Wayan, a gifted painter and, much more important, a lowly commoner (*sudra*). This opens the gates of hell! Was her life already controlled by her mother's avarice, she now added the unrelenting bitterness of her mother-in-law and the greed of her sister-in-law. A noble woman marrying beneath her station is an insult to the good order, is breaking taboo, and inviting the wrath of super nature, which is confirmed by Wayan's death after only a few years of marriage. In order to prevent further disaster, Telaga is persuaded to still go through the ritual of exiting from her high status and of becoming a real *sudra*.

Next to this, we still find a *sudra* woman who was successful in marrying into a *brahmana* household which, consequently, opens the sluices of resentment at her very presence there. With these examples, the message becomes – for women as well as for men – that caste binds and divides, that hierarchy obliges and sets people apart.

Bali – a nice place? Touristy, spectacular, an Orientalist fantasy. Life on Bali? Hidden from the foreign gaze, we are confronted with anything but an idyll. This is the merit of Oka Rusmini's insider story. As a Jakarta-born (1967) Balinese, she knows what she is writing about.

*Earth Dance* was first published in 2000; it earned the author a literary achievement award from the Department of Education. It was translated into English by Rani Amboyo and Thomas M. Hunter, and then commented upon in an Afterword by Pamela Allen. The present edition appeared in the Modern Library of Indonesia series of The Lontar Foundation. The book carries a well-thought-out Glossary, even as I would have appreciated glosses on the meaning of always recurring Balinese first names/titles, such as Oka, Putu, Wayan, etc.

## Condemned to each other

### Reviewed publication:

Farid, Lily Yulianti. 2010. *Family Room*, Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation, 149 pages, ISBN 9789798083808

THE MAIN THEME of Farid's *Family Room*, that is, 'who are we vis-à-vis each other?' reminded me of Sartre's play *Huis clos* ('closed shutters') in which it is clear that we are inescapably condemned to each other. In such bondage, we find torture and the relief of laughter, loneliness and love, abandonment and the inevitable confrontation with ourselves.

Lily Farid's particular celebration of *La condition humaine* or 'man's fate' is sometimes set in out-of-the-way locations, but most pertinently in contemporary Indonesia with anti-Chinese

rioting and looting, with the gunfire of guerrilla attacks, and interreligious violence in the Moluccas. Even so, violence is not the privilege of the surrounding world outside, but looms in the very family room that has been booby trapped with mines and into which family members throw sticks of dynamite. Next to the familiar reaction of people sticking to themselves behind the closed doors and shutters of their privacy, we find the violence against the integrity of the individual, personified in, on the one hand, the pervasive corruption of the servants of government and their concomitant abuse of privilege, and, on the other, the corrupting influence of social climbing.

The holy cow of reputation, of what is being said and thought about oneself and one's family, with, in tandem, obscurantism and hypocrisy, all get their due in settings that strike as a run-away up-to-date style of life, with unwanted pregnancies, drugs and overdose, consumerism, and the abuse of those who do not enjoy the privilege of money and status. No wonder that the author's satires on political subjects are sour and cynical, and that her comments on life – or the absence of it – in the family room have a sense of bitterness and anger. The family room with its endless bickering and blatant egocentrism – also of mothers and fathers – is not a nice place to be. So, it comes as no surprise that the only intimate relations depicted are between a girl child /woman and her nanny, and between a grown-up daughter of a first marriage and her youngish step-grandmother.

With family members, as a rule, being out of reach of each other, the author created the space for unexpected and often amazingly powerful stirs of emotion. Another stratagem is her infusion of a mild streak of schizophrenia; people may be willy-nilly dependent on themselves, but they live with the voices of their alter-egos. Maybe it is the little girl of yore that keeps talking to the grown-up protagonist or commenting on her adult way of life and preoccupations, and maybe it is the voices of former relations or even television characters ('Daddy in the box').

*Family Room* is an anthology of short stories chosen from two collections of Farid's work plus a few, at the time, unpublished stories. As a publication that appeared in the Lontar 'Modern Library of Indonesia', they have been translated by John H. McGlynn, and provided with an introduction by Melani Budianta. As it stands, the work teems with unexpected insights and sketches, and may be somewhat bewildering for those who know the country from before the days it was fully exposed to the exigencies of economic growth and the vagaries of modern life. The picture it paints is not inviting; the way the author does it, however, is innovative and refreshing. I look forward to reading more of her.

## New York stories

### Reviewed publication:

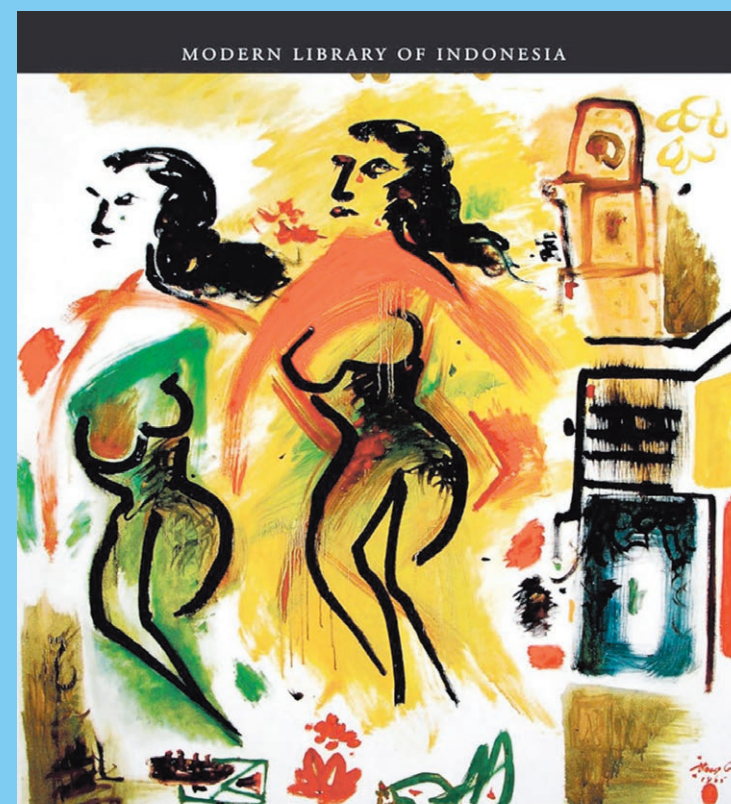
Kayam, U. 2012. *Fireflies in Manhattan*, Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation, 200 pages, ISBN 9789798083846

FROM HIS RETURN FROM CORNELL in the ominous year 1965 until his demise in 2002, Umar Kayam, or UK as his wife tenderly recalls him in her Introductions, was one of the towering figures on the Indonesian cultural scene, even as it lasted up to the publication of *Seribu Kunang-kunang di Manhattan* with Pustaka Jaya in 1972, before he also established his name as a short-story writer.

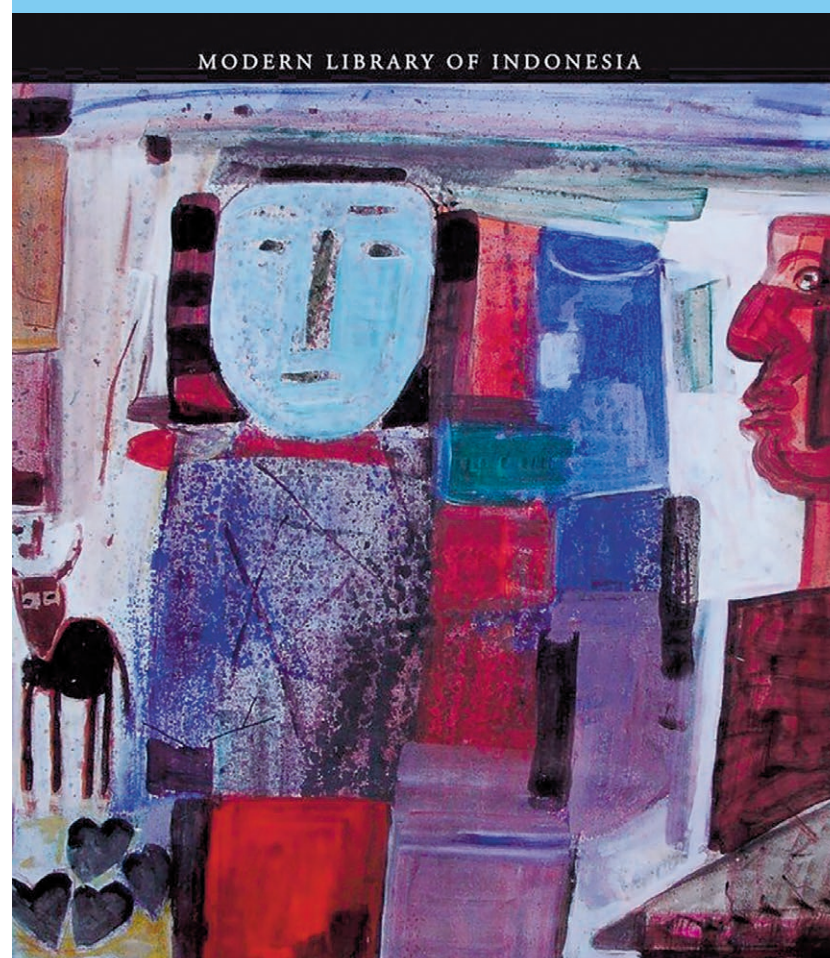
The present collection of his stories divides into three parts that coincide with separate creative periods, of which in the first two – New York and 1965 – he deals with the challenges posed by living as a naïve and relatively isolated Indonesian graduate student of New York University in the big-city American environment, and then with the challenge of dealing with the incredible realities of massacre, fanaticism, incarceration and persecution. The third part, Lebaran, is set in the familiar circumstances of the festive yet hectic *Idul Fitri* or Lebaran holiday – comparable to the Christmas season in Christian countries – celebrating the end of the yearly fasting month of Ramadan.

The light and semi-ironic tone UK's New-York stories combines with a mood of loneliness. In contrast to the sociability of Javanese life, his New-York characters are generally loners or feel themselves to be alone, and are fighting their own individual problems. Even as this may reflect his and his wife's feelings of living in the midst of a concrete and steel jungle, the sketches of life in that environment strike as true to life and are always spiced with humour and refreshing amazement.

As may be expected, the tone set in the period of the anti-Communist pogroms of 1965-66 is entirely different from the light irony of the New-York stories. The three stories that



Oka Rusmini  
*Earth Dance*



Lily Yulianti Farid  
*Family Room*



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Umar Kayam  
Fireflies in Manhattan

comprise the second part focus on individuals and their plight in a world gone out of balance. It is through the experience of personal crises that UK manages to grasp the ambience of what people and country went through. Interestingly, the three rather lengthy narratives also offer lots of deep insights in Javanese mentality and how it changes with the times.

It is this quality they share with the Lebaran stories. In the tone UK sets in dealing with 'things Javanese' vibrates his love for and fascination with the wisdom former generations went by and that will hopefully – albeit in different forms – endure as guidelines for individual comportment in these times that offer little to personally hold on to. During my own research on Javanese mentality and civilisation, I was privileged that UK regularly resided at the university housing complex of Bulaksumur in Jogjakarta where, from time to time, I took the liberty of disturbing him with my questions that he gracefully endured.

UK was a gifted teacher, which shines through in the open-ended way he concludes many of his stories, in that way leaving it to the reader's imagination to chew the cud. It is a wonderful and stimulating way of storytelling which draws the reader into the scene.

The introductions to the three parts give a generous share of biographical and professional information; they trace his careers as a civil servant and author. In the first, a poignant picture is drawn of the life of short-kept students in the early 1960s in the inhospitable climate of New York – far different from the imagination shaped by Hollywood movies. Upon coming back to Jakarta, the couple's circumstances in run-down Indonesia were not much better, while they were soon to be engulfed in the madness of the times, such as the collapse of Sukarno's reign, the extermination of 'Communists', and the rise of General Suharto.

Arts Council in 1977; later, in 1984, it was still named recipient of the Pegasus Prize, a literary award sponsored by Mobil Oil Indonesia. *Dan Perang pun Usai* also drew foreign attention, as it already appeared in 1986 as *And the War is Over* in a translation by John H. McGlynn (Louisiana State University Press). The Lontar Foundation's edition – here reviewed – contains McGlynn's revised translation, and appeared in the Foundation's 'Modern Library of Indonesia' series that is devoted to introducing Indonesia to the world through literary translations.

## Life's course in lyrics

### Reviewed publication:

Djoko Damono, Sapardi. 2012 (rev. ed.). *Before Dawn*, Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation, 172 pages, ISBN: 9786029144185

AS A JACK-OF-ALL-LITERARY TRADES – as essayist, short-story writer, translator, and poet – Sapardi Djoko Damono is best known as Indonesia's foremost lyricist whose career meanwhile spans five decades of published work. It is the first four of these that are reflected in this collection of some 135 poems (1961-2001). The poetry is presented in chronological order, so yielding glimpses of a life in lyrics from young man to the loneliness of old age and of having been through it all. In other words, the subject matter of the collection is the experience of life.

It is an existential exploration of "who are you, who am I?" that unfolds in amazingly effective language, touching on life's salient points, clarifying them as it were while making them accessible to others. A very effective device to do just that, is that the poet is never alone but always accompanied by "something walking besides you". It is a soliloquy, and at the same time an internal dialogue between an ego and its alter.

The poet's versatility is impressive, as he is able to draw powerful pictures with a minimum of words to a palette of poems, which a glance appear to be prose. The poem *Distance* (p. 40) may give an idea of the minimalist:

*and Adam came down to the forest  
to disappear in myth  
and suddenly we are here, gazing  
at the sky: empty and still ...*

Whereas *Meditation* (p. 116) is a short-hand illustration of Sapardi's singing lyrics that sometimes seem to be prose:

*Do not disturb: I, the paladin, am meditating  
in a cave, an egg or a word – is there in fact a  
difference? And at some point in time when  
roots have encircled me and I, a seed, have  
found meaning – will you, my friend, have the  
courage to approach?*

Some pieces of the latter *genre* may run up to eight pages, of which I particularly like Sapardi's observations on old age, such as the seven-page piece *What's the News Today, Den Sastro?* and the more conventionally composed title song, *Before Dawn*. I find these pieces attractive because they delve into the experience of my own, old-old life.

Whatever this layman opines is, of course, not very relevant, even as I am impressed by the images Sapardi evokes in my mind. Upon receiving his fourth literary award, the Achmad Bakrie Award for Literature (2003), the jury observed, "Sapardi's work is a perfect example of how the creative writer is able to rejuvenate language through the process of creating his own personal style" and as such he provided evidence that he has inherited the mantles of both Chairil Anwar and Amir Hamzah, two of modern Indonesian poetry's most eminent practitioners (p. xi).

These observations were concluded with, "Poetry gives life to language and the successful poet, through his linguistic skill and discipline, is capable not only of changing his readers' view of the world, but also giving shape to the world itself. Sapardi, through his poetry, invites us to engage in the freedom to do so in the most basic sense: to give birth to a new reality by reflecting upon and grappling with that most basic cultural element of language."

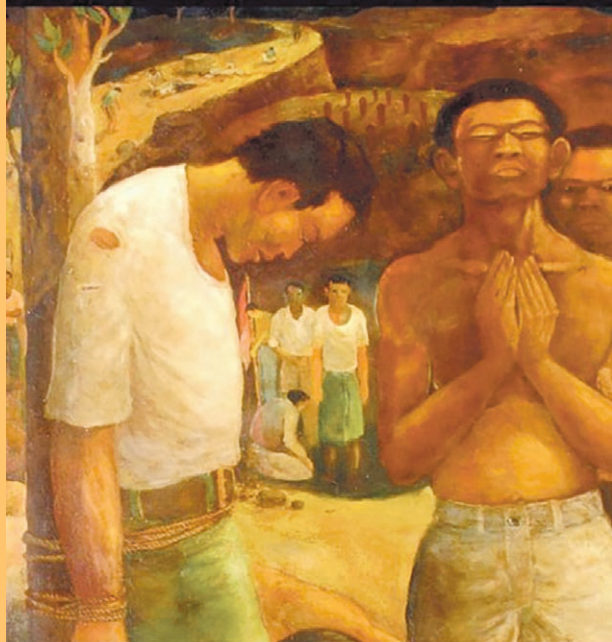
We still should compliment the skill of the translator John H. McGlynn who, over the past thirty-five years has done much to bring Indonesian literature to readers world-wide. The fact that he could even tackle poetry in a fascinating way attests to his mastery.

**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 (print-to-order ed., ISBN 978-3-659-13083-0) 2012. (niels\_mulder201935@yahoo.com.ph)**

### Notes

1 See 'The Crux is the Skin; Reflections on Southeast-Asian Personhood', in Mulder, N. 2012. *Situating Filipino Civilisation in Southeast Asia; Reflections and observations*.

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Ismail Marahimin  
And the War is Over

## Crazy times

### Reviewed publication:

Marahimin, I. 2011. *And the War is Over*, Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation, 189 pages, ISBN 9789798083761

WHEN, IN THE LATE 1960S, I set out to do my first fieldwork among the Javanese of Jogjakarta, I was struck by the reference to the period they were under Dutch rule as the *zaman normal* or the time of normality. The Japanese invasion of 1942 announces the turn of the wheel of time: the Dutch East Indies cease to exist, and country and people enter the turmoil of the *zamanédanor* – crazy times. During such periods the righteous will suffer while rascals will rise and rule in a world turned topsy-turvy. The Dutch are interned and forced to labour under arbitrary Japanese, and may have to fill the bathtubs of their mistresses who formerly served the white masters.

During my first time on Mid-Java many people doubted whether the coming of Independence heralded normalcy. Under Sukarno's whimsical rule, they were fed slogans rather than rice, and the massacres that marked the end of his 'guided democracy' were still fresh in mind; even to the point that some who had participated in them told me nervously giggling their stories. Would his successor – an eminent product of the crazy times, rising from a colonial non-com to the very apex of the nation – augur a period of order?

*And the War is Over* is set in the final days of World War II in a small village in Northern Sumatra where the Imperial Armed Forces have established a prisoner-of-war camp for Dutch internees and a site for a group of Javanese forced labourers, the so-called *romusha*. It is a time rife with rumour and short on solid information, even as internees and the Javanese are totally in the dark. Unaware of what is going on, a group of Dutchmen plans and prepares for their escape into the jungle for which they need the cooperation of some influential locals. An exceptional *romusha* – generally these are mistrusted and looked down upon by the local population – is about to propose the daughter of a prestigious haji. Some Japanese surmise that the United States has finally capitulated, as others commit suicide in the expectation that their out bombed country is about to surrender.

As much as the narrative has an exceptional *romusha*, it also presents us with various leading and a crowd of ordinary villagers, willing-to-flee and staying-on Dutchmen, successful mistresses and whores, a humane Japanese officer and hard-line non-coms and soldiers, and the reasoning of wandering *Minangkabau* (West-Sumatran) merchants. All of these play their part in ephemeral settings that change by the day – and that, as such, evoke flashbacks of life in Japan, in the Minang heartland, and in the *normal* Indies – while giving the author ample scope to narrate a complex story in relatively few pages. In order to add particular flavour to the variety of nations and customs, a modicum of Javanese, Minang, Arabic (Muslim), Dutch and Japanese words and expressions occur in the body of the text, next to a considerable number of specific Malay-Indonesian nouns that had better be left un-translated; they are explained in a six-page 'Glossary' at the end of the narrative.

Ismail Marahimin's first and only novel was an immediate success as it was nominated the best of the year by the Jakarta

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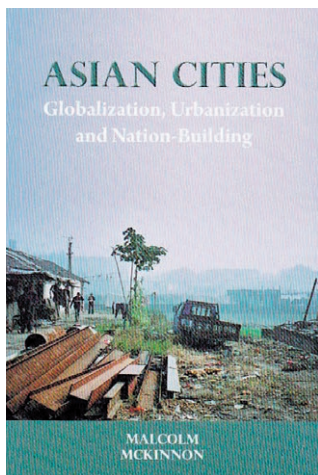
Sapardi Djoko Damono  
Before Dawn



# Whither the 'Asian' City?

The worlds of Santosh, or Mohammed or the women of Yangzhou cannot be explained by globalization yet that does not relegate them to the category of 'traditional' or 'backward'. They live in kaleidoscope worlds, as does anyone living in a rapidly changing capitalist city. It is a world in which making a living is an erratic, uncertain enterprise; in which faith can be regular observance, occasion for celebration or simply overlooked; in which marriage provides status and security but also carries risks. They are worlds in which 'of the city' or 'being urban' is the here and now, in which 'west' might be no more than a compass point. [p. 107]

Sin Yee Koh



**Reviewed publication:**  
McKinnon, M. 2011.  
*Asian Cities: Globalization, Urbanization and Nation-Building*,  
Copenhagen: NIAS Press,  
288 pages, ISBN  
9788776940799 (pb)

In *Asian Cities: Globalization, Urbanization and Nation-Building*, Malcolm McKinnon argues that globalization is not the only default explanation for urban transformations in contemporary Asian cities. Instead, he argues that cities in "developing Asia" – which he interprets as the People's Republic of China, the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia [p. 11] – face two processes that "do not affect Western cities in the same way" [p. 3]. These processes are urbanization (i.e., massive transformations of the social, cultural and built environment) and nation-building (i.e., the process through which a population of a particular territory acquires a shared identity). He supports his argument empirically by adopting comparative analyses of a metropolitan centre where "a great deal had been written" [p. 14] with a lesser known provincial or second tier city "with which it was more practicable for the researcher to become acquainted" [p. 14]. These are the three pairings of Shanghai with Yangzhou in China, Jakarta with Semarang in Indonesia, and Bangalore and Mysore in India.

The book is organized into four parts. Following an introduction in Part 1, Part 2 discusses urbanization and cities:

chapter 2 focuses on urbanization, defined as "the process by which cities and towns become more populous and more economically significant than rural areas" [p. 37]; while chapter 3 focuses on urbanism, defined as transformations in cities vis-à-vis traditional areas of life, including "new levels of education, new kinds of occupation, and new opportunities for private space" [p.71]. Part 3 discusses how various processes in Asian cities relate to nation-building: chapter 4 discusses businesses, i.e., the "building of domestic networks and markets by capitalist businesses" [p. 136]; chapter 5 discusses the flows of domestic labour migration; chapter 6 discusses the travel and hospitality industries in cities; and chapter 7 discusses how commercial popular culture is a national and global phenomenon in developing Asian cities. Part 4 concludes the book and postulates the future of urbanization, urbanism and nation-building in developing Asian cities.

McKinnon's broader objective is to question Eurocentric dominance in urban theories that have been conveniently projected upon non-Western contexts. Globalization, taken as the default explanation for late-20th and early-21st century Asian capitalism, results in "the relative invisibility of both urbanization and nation-building in scholarly discussion" [p. 9]. Triggered by his visits to a number of Asian cities in late-1990s and early-2000s, McKinnon questions how globalization has been conveniently interpreted as "symmetrical globalization" [p. 214], arguing instead that globalization pans out "asymmetrically" in different (developing Asian) contexts. Thus, he argues that it is useful to consider "multiple globalizations" [p. 215], as well as how the shift from one type of globalization to another implicates processes at other scales (e.g., regional, subcontinental, national).

However, a casual reader without the benefit of knowledge of recent debates in contemporary urban studies would find it difficult to follow McKinnon's book. The book gives prominent space to ethnographic accounts and detailed

descriptions of urban phenomena in the respective chosen cities. As a consequence, little space is given to explain the theoretical conversations that this book locates itself within. It is as if McKinnon assumed that readers would be familiar with debates about Eurocentricism and the questioning of globalization in urban studies. As a result, the reader is left to do a lot of work: firstly, to connect the dots between the stories; and secondly, to understand how these fit into the flow of arguments at the broader theoretical perspective.

On the other hand, as an academic researcher and writer, I find it hard to get past two shortcomings of the book. Firstly, while McKinnon has rightly identified that non-Western cities go through processes of urbanization and nation-building that were not similarly experienced in Western cities, his somewhat careless categorising of "developing Asia" repeats the flaws of Eurocentricism he criticises. In claiming that the purpose of the book is "to draw out common elements in the urban Asian experience of globalization" [p. 13], McKinnon has over-generalized and essentialized the "developing Asia" based on a few conveniently-selected case studies.

Secondly, although McKinnon has attempted to address issues of bias in his ethnographic methods (e.g., selection bias, language barriers) [pp. 11-19], this appears cursory and lacks further elaboration. For example, no mention was made about the durations, frequencies, and nature of any fieldwork visit, other than a quick mention that "ethnographic investigation was carried out periodically in the case study cities over six years" [p. 16]. Another sentence mentioned that "ethnographic material is least rich for China and richest for India" [p. 16], without explaining why and what implications this would have on the analysis. These shortcomings, unfortunately, do not do justice to his use of comparative urban research, as recently advocated by urban studies scholars.<sup>1</sup>

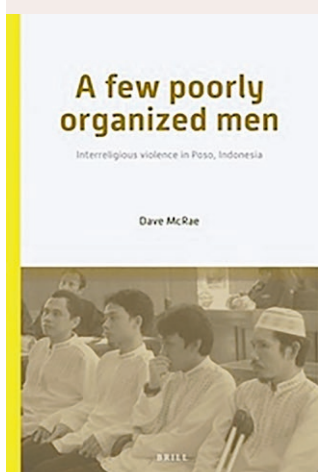
There is no doubt that McKinnon's message is important: cities in "developing Asia" have divergent urban experiences "on the ground" [p. 69], which urban theories developed from the Western experience cannot quite capture and explain. Furthermore, processes and phenomena within a nation-state may better inform our understanding of cities, in addition to globalization as an explanatory factor. Unfortunately, this message has not been fully articulated and/or supported with convincing comparative analysis of both "developing Asia" and "the West". For the significance of the underlying message contained within, I wish that this book had articulated the message loud and clear, instead of leaving the casual reader lost without a clear sense of how the case studies connect with each other and to a broader debate.

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## Notes

1 Robinson, J. 2011. *Cities in a World of Cities: The Comparative Gesture*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35: 1–23.

# A few poorly organised men



Indonesia's transition from Suharto's authoritarian regime to a more democratic government saw a number of violent uproars, especially in the so-called Outer Islands. Apart from the separatist movements that sought to establish their own independent states (in Aceh, East Timor, and West Papua), many violent regional conflicts materialized along ethnic-religious cleavages.

Antje Missbach

## Reviewed publication:

Dave McRae. 2013. *A few poorly organised men: interreligious violence in Poso, Indonesia*, Leiden: Brill, ISBN: 9789004244832

The interreligious conflict in Poso, Sulawesi, was Indonesia's most protracted conflict during the post-Suharto era (1998–2007). While previously a quiescent and peaceful locality without any history of interreligious unrest, between 600 and 1000 people lost their lives there due to the outbreak of violence and the many acts of reprisal. Although this number made the Poso conflict less damaging than the deadly clashes

in the neighbouring Moluccas taking place around the same time, the events in Poso nonetheless had deep repercussions among the local Muslim and Christian populations. Also, it left a distressing mark on the national recollection.

Based on long-term observations and multiple fieldwork encounters over ten years, Dave McRae has gained unique insights into the local settings in Poso and the socio-political developments that shaped the bloody events. Thus, his book presents the first comprehensive history of the conflict in Poso. Nonetheless, given that the causes and courses of interreligious violence in Indonesia, and elsewhere, have busied

large numbers of scholars, experts of local conflict histories have to put up with the question of what are the greater contributions of their books to understanding both the genesis of interreligious violence and finding ways to terminate it? In other words, what could be possibly learned from reading a narrow account of just one conflict rather than a more comparative analysis of interreligious violence that takes into account a number of conflicts? There are a number of good reasons, which make Dave McRae's book an enriching and rewarding reading.

Violent conflicts in Indonesia have often been described as the consequence of the rapid political change after the end of the Suharto-era. This change was characterised first and foremost by democratisation and decentralisation that allowed more people to partake in political competition. McRae, however, makes the effort to study the local dynamics in great detail in order to explain both the onset and the continuative dynamics of the enfolding violence. Rather than just assuming that "violence [can be utilised] as political tool in political contestation" (p. 54) when transitioning state authorities (including the security forces) can no longer guarantee law and order, McRae points out the "insufficiency of political interest to account completely for the violent action of the key actors" (p. 66). As McRae successfully demonstrates, by instigating violence against people of the opposite faith, local conflict leaders had little to gain, but much to lose. Having been found guilty for the instigation of violence, in fact, cost a number of promising candidates their prospect of success in



# Quarrelling with the past



At one point in his intriguing, provocative and sometimes irritating *A Lover's Quarrel with the Past: Romance, Representation, Reading*, literary scholar Ranjan Ghosh claims that indignation and dissent “can infuse a sense of discovery to our historical studies.” [p. 79] The phrase, subconsciously perhaps, describes Ghosh's own work, a work that is not only written in dissent, but cries out in justified indignation.

Paul Doolan



## Reviewed Publication:

Ghosh, R. 2012. *A Lover's Quarrel with the Past: Romance, Representation, Reading*. New York: Bergham books. 188 pp. ISBN: 9780857454843

THE ENEMY THAT EARNS GHOSH'S WRATH is those scholars and pseudo-scholars who shrink historical narratives into the pliable political tools of communalists; more specifically, the target of his ire is a Hindu fundamentalism that, thriving on anti-Muslim emotionalism, represents Indian history within a horizon permitting space only for a narrative of Hinduism, cleansed of all outsider contamination.

The heart of the book is an essay, “Reality of Representation, Reality behind Representation: History and Memory”. Here Ghosh allows his indignation to brush against those Indians who willingly permit their history to be shrouded in myth, so “myth and history hide beneath the skin of each other in a pontifical discourse that censors, suppresses and mismaps events” – all the better to feed the agenda of Hindu fundamentalists. [p. 18] The case study that forms the centerpiece of this essay is the north Indian town Ayodhya. Infamously, in 1992 a mob of tens of thousands of Hindus stormed the mosque in Ayodhya and tore it down, because the mosque reportedly stood on the site of the birthplace of Rama, an avatar of the God Vishnu. The mob could justify their actions by appealing to the collective memory among Hindus, of the Hindu temple that once stood on this spot. Ghosh convincingly maps how this ‘history’ was nurtured by British imperial scholars and later cultivated and developed by Hindu *sadhus*, politicians, historians, and archaeologists in order to produce “a public memory largely governed by communal discrimination and prejudice”. [p. 39] He plausibly argues that the mytho-history or heritage that has coalesced around Ayodhya provides a collective memory of fear and victimization, creating a screen upon which Hindu communal unity can be projected.

The Greek Goddess of memory, Mnemosyne, was the mother of the muses, including Clio, the muse of history. With the professionalization of historical studies one could be forgiven for believing that it was the other way around – that Clio, the muse of history, gave birth to Mnemosyne, Goddess of memory. But historians only offer one set of vantage points (among a multitude) from which to view the past. Novelists, politicians, artists and, increasingly, film makers offer the public representations of a past reality and when these representations come to be accepted they in turn contribute to the construction and distribution and maintenance of a mediated collective memory. In Ghosh's words: “Modern media and the contemporary politics of memory are entwined in a mutual embrace”, and, moreover, “Riding piggyback on such megamediatization-serialisation of the Hindu cultural past – the flow of cultural memory with its ‘entangledness’ in televisuality and popular culture – Hindu radicals win the major part of their battle by controlling public memory.” [pp. 56-57] In other words, when it comes to memory wars unleashed by rival cultural/religious believers, the Hindu fundamentalists have proven their political astuteness by creating mytho-historical narratives through the use of televised religious epics and other media strategies.

Aleida Assmann has written of how an area of land can become “a sacred text” and how usually this happens in places considered to be “the localization of myths”. Ominously, she concludes that he who conquers such a site “has to create a *tabula rasa* before he can engrave it with the tale of his own glory.”<sup>1</sup> This would imply more trouble ahead in Ayodhya. One can understand Ghosh's indignant call for dissent.

Opposing the totalitarian certainty of the fundamentalist, Ghosh is aware of the sheer difficulty of doing history, what he aptly calls “the agony of history”, whereby the historian accepts that something always escapes his representations but this lack

of understanding “makes him try his intelligence with greater enthusiasm and power to make deeper and varied sense of the past.” [p. 9] In the other central chapter of this book, “Whose Mandir? Whose Masjid? The Historian's Ethics and the Ethics of Historical Reading”, while acknowledging his debt to Groningen philosopher of history, Frank Ankersmit, he argues for an ethics of historical reading. Taking his cue from E. H. Carr's famous dictum that facts do not speak for themselves, he sees that the task of the historian is to invest the facts with meaning. That meaning will always be influenced by the present-mindedness of the historian, including the historian's personality and values. This is not necessarily a weakness, but a strength, ensuring the historian does not tail off into irrelevancy, forcing him or her to find the connection with the central discourses of our time.

Anticipating the recent revelations from former American intelligence analyst Edward Snowden, Ghosh expresses his resistance to “statist superintendence” of a “panoptic character resulting in disciplinary surveillance by the government”. [p. 105] He appeals to historians to not be “collaborators in power” [p. 115], but instead to embark on “the risk of history” [p. 119], daring to accept responsibility to the public when creating historical representations while aware of the double bind – our inability to understand the past fully and a lack of access to complete data due to the opacity of government.

The memory wars being fought over Ayodhya beg a comparison with what seems like a similar situation in Jerusalem. Professor Hans Bakker has written extensively about Ayodhya and has compared the situation in Ayodhya to Jerusalem during the Crusades. He has even dared to call into question the age of the Hindu city of Varanasi.<sup>2</sup> I was somewhat surprised to find no mention of Bakker in Ghosh's otherwise excellent bibliography.

Ghosh has written an original, intriguing, even passionate book and, for the most part it is written in an appealing style, with interesting images and quirky turns of phrase. But it is sometimes burdened by what I felt to be unnecessarily obscure jargon and neologisms. An excellent chapter on presence, for instance, is weakened by a short section containing sentences such as: “Presence is not always a surfacing of the repressed; rather, it lubricates out of the persistent ‘translogical’ quarrel with the past, out of a negation of efforts that threaten to lobotomise the past and, also, grows out a negativity and apprehendability in historical representation and description.” Does it have to be this esoteric?

As Peter Geyl famously said, “History is an argument without an end.” Ghosh has sent us news from the frontline of the memory wars in India. No end to this argument is yet in sight. His book is a call for tolerance and sanity and doing history responsibly.

Paul Doolan, Zurich International School (pdoolan@zis.ch)

## Notes

- 1 Assmann, A. 2011. *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 287-291
- 2 Bakker, H. 1991. ‘Ayodhya, A Hindu Jerusalem’, in *Numne* 38; Bakker, H. 1996. ‘Construction and Reconstruction of Sacred Space in Varanasi’, in *Numen* 43.

the impending local elections. By studying the most prominent leaders and core combatants, McRae not only disentangles the medley of payback and revenge, he also reveals an astonishing shortage of direct political interests. But how does McRae then manage to fill this explanatory vacuum in order to explicate the shifting dynamics of aggravation?

McRae divides the conflict in four specific phases that overlap and at the same time are each marked by very specific characteristics of patterns and participation in the collective violence. For each of these phases, McRae exposes different “divisions of labour” among conflict participants, which serve as one of the most outstanding factors for explaining the shifts in violent action. Whereas the first phase of fighting (1998-2000) started as a youth brawl and then developed into urban riots between rivaling patronage networks, the subsequent phase (May-June 2000) saw widespread killings carried out by Christian combatants, who had been recruited spontaneously and received some form of rudimentary training. While the two-sided violence between Muslims and Christians continued as tit-for-tat murders and sporadic attacks on villages during 2000 until 2002, the Christian dominance started to crumble with the arrival of mujahidin fighters from other parts of Indonesia. Not only had these mujahidin access to manufactured instead of only self-made weapons, moreover, because of their affiliation with Islamic terror groups, such as Laskar Jihad, some of them had previously received military-style training in other conflict areas, both inside the archipelago and overseas. Although these mujahidin brought

along a number of conceptions of piety and morality that they sought to impose on the newly recruited followers, they had no formulated further-reaching political objectives other than multiple revenge.

Given the swelling militancy and the enduring violence applied by the involved fighters, who did not shy away from bombing public markets, burning places of worship and beheading innocent civilians, one must ask the question of why the state authorities both at the national as well as at the provincial level remained inactive for such a long time? McRae refers not only to the peripheral significance of Poso amidst all the other Indonesian troubled districts and provinces, but also mentions the shortage of funding, skills and resources among the local police that prevented them from conducting proper investigations. Moreover, arrests were also impeded by the fears of reprisals towards law enforcers, as a number of officers had previously died while on duty. The inactivity of the central government only paused briefly in the aftermaths of 9/11 and once again, after the Bali bombings, when Indonesia saw widespread arrests of militant Muslims. Given the continuing violence and the risk that the Poso conflict might spread to other areas, the central government eventually had to stop looking the other way. The “cost of violence” among combatants increased through the deployment of extra troops and the arrests and prosecutions of some leading figures, making fighters rethink their participation. According to McRae, continuing to fight was seen no longer as a necessity for defence but rather became a choice that brought along higher risks than before when

perpetrators usually enjoyed impunity (p. 170). The battle fatigue together with the need for community rebuilding led some former fighters to return to their villages and take up their previous occupations in the fields and plantations. Financial shortages among the mujahidin also caused some of them leave their posts. Last but not least, the negotiations that eventually led to Malino Peace Agreement deserve some mentioning here, even though McRae deals with these consultations only marginally. However, given the involvement of four state ministers, first and foremost Vice President-to-be Yusuf Kalla, and several dozens of representatives from the Muslim and the Christian sides, this approach later became an important model for conflict resolution in other areas in Indonesia, such as in Aceh.

Dave McRae's book is a great example of thorough and subtly nuanced research. He has sought to reconstruct the violent developments through interviews with victims and perpetrators, court documents and other material evidence. In encountering the many voices and versions of the stories, he consistently applied a healthy amount of scepticism towards the content of material documents and interview responses, which allows him to create a well-nuanced and fine-graded analysis. Thus, his book offers profound insights that other comparative analyses can hardly ever offer. All and above, this book is written in a sober and straight-to-the-point-style, however, what makes it particularly pleasant to read, is the occasional interspersions of subtle irony.

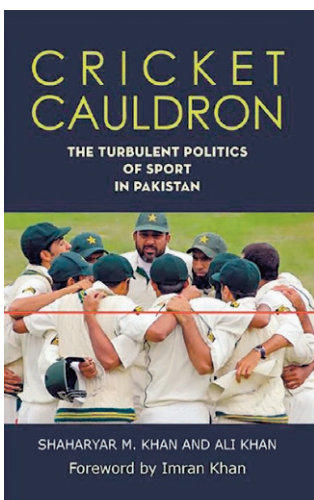
Antje Missbach, University of Melbourne  
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# Cricket and society

Over the years, the conjured image of Pakistani cricket is one of a road show which is exhilarating at times but summons nightmares for those who experience the ordeal. As a sporting institution it is always in turmoil. The Pakistan Cricket board is probably the only international administrative body to operate without a constitution. A touring English cricketer had once dunked a local umpire in a swimming pool in protest against a string of problematic decisions. Instances of suspect on-field behaviour of the Pakistan team had led to the nation's honour being taken hostage by British tabloids. After a first round World Cup exit, the national coach died under mysterious circumstances. And finally, terrorists have shot at foreign players leading to a cricketing isolation that is still in place. These are snippets from the cauldron of Pakistani cricket, which is a melting pot of corruption, nepotism, exploitation and politics-defying, abounding talent that flourishes on the roadside and takes on the world.

Souvik Naha



## Reviewed title:

Khan, S.M. & Ali Khan. 2013. *Cricket Cauldron: The Turbulent Politics of Sport in Pakistan*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 300 pages, ISBN 9781780760834 (hb)

IN THIS BOOK, former foreign secretary and Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, Shaharyar Khan, situates cricket in a broader social history to understand the extent to which a sport can mirror and epitomise

public culture. The narrative begins with his appointment as the Chairman in 2004 as part of a political drive to replace military personnel in the Board with civilians, and ends with his premature resignation before the World Cup in 2007. The authors take the reader through the successes, disputes and failures of a nation as reflected in the prism of cricket in eleven chronologically ordered, simultaneously descriptive, speculative and suggestive chapters.

The book provides an excellent overview of the impact of educational crisis, religious extremism, social hierarchy, regionalism and the like on the making of cricket as a public pursuit. Unlike India where sports culture has recently become a subject of serious academic research, the topic has gained little or no curricular importance in Pakistan. The few books written by historians, journalists and cricketers usually describe Pakistani cricket as a product of the anachronisms that define the country at large – the common refrain being development in spite of the system. Khan's book is one of the few serious attempts to transcend popular stereotypes and bring anthropological analysis into the study of the unfolding of familiar cricketing events. The first of these was the famous 'goodwill' tour by India, organised as a ploy to thaw the diplomatic imbroglio arising in the wake of a border war in 1999. Hitherto unknown and riveting background stories of Pakistan's gradual ascendancy in the pecking order of global cricket under Bob Woolmer's stewardship, the new directions in fiscal policy and domestic cricket, the rise of player power leading to infringement of managerial directives, decline

in performance and general disorder which culminated in Woolmer's puzzling death have been recounted in detail, adding to the future cricket historian's database of resources. A wealth of structured information makes the book a compulsory read for understanding the last ten years of Pakistani cricket and by extension its society and politics. In terms of legacy, the book should be remembered more for the research it inadvertently suggests than its own formulations. I shall mention three such directions.

Firstly, the book is an interesting entry to the study of sport as a public relation exercise under military regimes. Khan's appointment as the Chairman was a response to public criticism of the military control of every national institution. His first briefing and every subsequent meeting with President Pervez Musharraf, also the Patron of the team, was underlined by the obligation to better performance. Cricket victories were reportedly capable of inclining public opinion towards the establishment, ensuring the latter's longevity. Musharraf took an active interest in cricketing affairs, attended critical meetings and even took aside time to telephone the team's captain when the situation required so. Incidentally, the military government lost favour of the people after the team's humiliating exit in the 2007 World Cup, and has since been replaced with a democratically elected government. In addition to the example of India where the leading cricketer is a nominated Member of Parliament and political parties incorporate former cricketers to exploit their fan base, Pakistan provides an interesting case study of the intermingling of sport and politics.

Secondly, Pakistan cricketers are admittedly difficult to govern or socialise with. The authors explicate the mannerisms and playing techniques of individual cricketers in terms of the society in which they are embedded. They provide adequate explanation for the spiritual and material reasons for players' association with the Tableeghi sect of Islam. Nevertheless, analysis of the impact of community, educational facilities and geographical factors on the upbringing of cricketers often relapse into a narrow Marxian understanding of class. The average Pakistani player's inability to speak fluent English or reluctance to drink alcohol can very well be regulated by choice and not social contracts, such as Islamic scriptures. The so-called 'culture' of Pakistan cricket is an illusion bred by the apparent uniformity of cricketers from a small, largely homogenous country. The image has gradually eroded over the years as agency of cricketers has fostered change. Does indeed a cricketer's lack of primary education prevent

Pakistan Cricket fans. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of J.J. Hall on flickr.

him from learning enough conversational English throughout his adult life? Which education or religion then permits him to take banned performance enhancers? The book introduces many questions worth pondering over, which should be addressed by a more critical sociology of cricketers.

Thirdly, the British media's response to the ball tampering crisis in 2006 stands in stark contrast to similar accusations made in 1992. Following disastrous defeats to Pakistan, England players Ian Botham and Allan Lamb alleged that the Pakistanis had resorted to illegal means such as ball tampering to take advantage of match conditions. Although the court ruled out their criticisms as libel, the British media rallied behind its cricketers, casting racist, disparaging remarks against the entire nation of Pakistan. The outlook has visibly changed in later years. In 2006, as Pakistan faced another allegation of ball tampering and forfeited the match impetuously, the same British media now empathetically projected them as victims of the system. Khan's narrative reductively ascribes this media response to his previous successful negotiations with the English Cricket Board and camaraderie with its CEO David Morgan, hardly acknowledging any plausible transition in intercultural relations. This changing mediascape warrants further examination of evolution of national subjectivities and cultural forms in a global age as reflected in the press.

The book could be considered the definitive thesis on cricket and society in Pakistan had it approached the topic with sharper analytical tools and avoided repetitive observations. It is possible that the authors simplified complex issues deliberately or at editorial behest so that international casual readers were not intimidated by the book's academic commitment. The book's limited temporal scope along with constant shifting between themes prevent in-depth discussion of cricket's impact on public sphere and private spaces. No bibliography is included, nor is the list of references extensive enough to encourage serious readers to travel through further literature. The book remains essentially the personal odyssey of an extremely efficient cricket administrator; its framework closer to the public history model in which a nation's history is inhabited and observed through personal encounters. Careful editing and additional attention to analysis with a focus on the main contentions would have benefitted the book immensely.

Souvik Naha, doctoral student at the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (souviknaha@gmail.com)



Pull-out supplement

# theFocus

## Family ambiguity and domestic violence in Asia: Reconceptualising law and process

The book *Family Ambiguity and Domestic Violence in Asia* (2013; Brighton: Sussex University Press) raises pertinent questions as to why the incidence of domestic violence has remained as a continuing scourge. The Focus section in this issue of The Newsletter provides the abridged version of select articles within the book. Seven scholars examine comparative experiences in the Asian context in order to gauge the effectiveness of family regulations and laws in diverse national, cultural and religious setting. Although the issue of violence against women (VAW) has received much attention from scholars, social activists, policy makers and international agencies, violence in the home has persisted. Though a universal phenomenon, VAW is also context specific. As domestic violence (DV) per definition takes place within a family setting, the specific forms of families and their supporting ideologies greatly affect the specificities of DV in particular contexts. Comparative cultural and national responses to the issue have shown that the ambiguity of family underscores some of the gaps between the conceptual, legal and process-oriented solutions to the eradication of VAW in society.

Maznah Mohamad and Saskia Wieringa



## Family ambiguity and domestic violence in Asia *continued*

The culture defence discourse and the right to family and privacy, act to seal the family as an isolated and autonomous unit. A human rights perspective is needed to re-situate the family within the justice system. Violence against women is reinforced by the state conception of family as a private domain, as well as the notion of the harmonious family being the foundation of the nation. Male authority over the family and the women in it is further imposed as a religious norm.

AS HAS LONG BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED the family is no longer seen as primarily a site of production and reproduction, but also as a locus of tension and conflict, with violence among intimate partners being one of its manifestations. By conceptualising this issue as stemming from the family context, bestriding the private-public domain, this collection of research articles aims to uncover some of the sources of the difficulties and paradoxes in understanding domestic violence as an all-encompassing problem, from its legal to its cultural dimension.

Articles in this Focus section start from the conceptualisation of family as sited within both public as well as private domains; and herein lies the source of its ambiguity. When the state intervenes in family matters (as in policies on reproductive health and in criminalising domestic violence) the family is treated as a public concern. However, the state takes a liberal stance on respecting individual human rights or even multicultural rights, when the sacredness of family as a private domain is emphasised. There are also extremes in degree of state intervention upon the family. States that enforce Sharia - Muslim laws - do not even limit the extent of their intervention upon private, individual and family lives, but for the most part, reinforce masculine dominance. Other states are selective about when and how they intervene. If domestic violence is conceptualised as a private hurt that leads to public harm, the state criminalises the offence; but when domestic violence is presented as being rooted in gender inequality and in need of more than just a legal solution, then the nature of state intervention may be more ambivalent.

Contextualising the analysis of domestic violence within the notion of family ambiguity thus allows the issue to be explored from its multi-faceted aspects. At the policy-level, it is hoped that these questions can throw new light on how the state should relate to the family as an 'ambiguous' unit, often used to represent the unified state, yet in contrast to the state itself when 'family' is considered a private domain. By theorising and presenting field evidence around the issue of 'family ambiguity' this volume studies the various intervention measures used to affect family and its positive and negative possibilities. The three main focal points of the book - Concept, Law and Process - are explicated below.

### Concept

Articles under the rubric 'concept' capture some of the more salient debates surrounding the issue of domestic violence. There are conceptual issues that are still not reconciled or continue to be disputed, yet contribute towards how advocacy, law, policy and cultural norms are being shaped.

### Culture-as-defence

One of the more prevalent defences of why violence happens in the home is that certain cultural and religious doctrines allow for its use, and that by using it, the boundaries of cultural and religious distinctiveness are defended. Hence, domestic violence can be viewed as being a culture in and of itself, explains Aziz in her article. But she cautions that culture merely represents a socio-political symbolic discourse, which changes over time. By analysing several international cases of domestic violence, Aziz excavates how and why domestic violence continues to be erroneously placed within culture and why the intersecting issues of privacy, culture and honour with violence have gotten in the way of granting justice to victims of domestic violence. The culture defence discourse and the right to family and privacy, act to seal the family as an isolated and autonomous unit. A human rights perspective is needed to re-situate the family within the justice system. In this, state action and inaction sometimes work against this as they tolerate, if not encourage, domestic violence.

### DV: Neutral or gender-based?

Another conceptual paradigm that has muddied the debate on domestic violence is the question of whether domestic violence should be seen as a neutral wrong rather than one that is specific to gender discrimination. The profound ambiguities that these debates reflect are relevant to the Asian context. It shows how universal the idea of family and its link to the perceived dichotomy between private and public has become. As our Asian case studies illuminate, at one level there is successful mainstreaming of the domestic violence issue implying feminist collaboration with institutions such as social work, healthcare or the criminal justice system. However, these are not necessarily in tune with the feminist position on domestic violence, as a form of violent discrimination against women.

The other dilemma is that while the human rights approach has succeeded in eliciting a state response to domestic violence, criminalisation must also include preventive and protective support measures. However, there is still scant recognition that violence is intrinsically related to gendered inequality between men and women, a conceptual flaw that would need to be addressed all over the world.



Above: Protestors against gender violence, India. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of 'Say No-Unite' on flickr.



### Family as state construction

In exploring the breadth and depth of domestic violence, the family as social construction forms part of the intriguing puzzle. Just as state prerogatives have shifted, so has the image of the family. Nandy traces the trajectory of family regulation vis-à-vis domestic violence in India, where there have been major shifts in legislation and its discourse. Outlining ancient Indian family's attempts at self-regulation, to modern state-based regulation, Nandy's contribution makes note of different forces that have buttressed the notion of family privacy and sanctity all along. She argues that rights to conjugality have always superseded that of the individual's.

In locating family as a state construction, Ganapathy analyses the tenor of state paternalism when the proposed Bill on Family Violence was rejected after 30 days of parliamentary debates in Singapore. The grounds for this was that it would be detrimental to the family. The bill was said to be at odds with the state's defined role of the family, considered the "fundamental building block out of which larger social structures can be stably constructed". Popular sentiment has it that criminalisation is neither an appropriate nor an effective method to deal with abusers against their own family and that social service agencies are preferred over police intervention.

Provisions in the 1987 Philippine Constitution define Filipino sexuality, and shape Filipinos' "consciousness of what is acceptable and unacceptable, what is normal, and what is deviant or perverse", as Alipio argues. Marriage, the family and the nation are interlinked. The Constitution "recognises the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation" and therefore the state will actively promote its development. Additionally, The Family Code of 1988 explicitly proclaims that parental authority over the person, property and children is given to the father/husband, whose decision shall be paramount over the mother/wife. Thus, the belief that the husband has absolute authority over his wife and children, and the impossibility of divorce, enhances the belief that the man can do no wrong. Alipio's study finds that for women their bodies have become their voice, by going abroad. This is seen as a silent but appropriate strategy to leave abusive relationships, especially since divorce is illegal in Catholic Philippines.

Katjasungkana similarly discusses the pervasiveness of violence against women that is being reinforced by the state conception of family as a private matter, as well as the notion of the harmonious family being the foundation of the nation. Male authority over the family and the women in it is further imposed as a religious norm.

In Malaysia no 'family code' is explicitly worded, as there is in the Philippine and Indonesian cases. Hence, the family debate is largely captured under the rubric of Islam as analysed in Mohamad's article. Due to the dominance of Islam in governance and the extending of provisions within Sharia law for Muslims, the Domestic Violence Bill was initially opposed because of the belief that the law (by encompassing Muslims and non-Muslims) would usurp the jurisdiction of the Sharia court over the Islamic family. Unlike the Philippines, India and Singapore, the notion of family protection and privacy was not the main narrative of that debate, but a power struggle between Islamists and feminists over legal

jurisdictions. Interestingly enough, the objection around 'marital rape', being defined as one form of domestic violence was only rejected by the Islamic faction. In Malaysia it is as though Islam has become the de facto representative of all patriarchal forces, and assumes its role as the main builder and gatekeeper of the essential 'moral' family.

### Heteronormativity as violence

Another crucial set of concepts explored here is heteronormativity and passionate aesthetics, and its link to violence in the family. Wieringa argues that in maintaining the internal cohesion of heteronormativity, violence is exerted in the physical and symbolic sense. Her research on widows, sex workers and prostitutes suggests that there is enormous violence involved in the perpetuation of the myth of heteronormativity as creating or preserving the harmonious Asian family.

Wieringa explicates the meaning of aesthetics in situating violence within heteronormativity. It is a concept referring to a set of principles that underlie the making of morality. Heteronormativity as a system of values is subjective, while at the same time considered to have universal relevance. Any aesthetic distinction is based on subjective views, yet acquires a hegemonic power in a given context. Violence, as explored in Wieringa's article is intrinsic to passionate aesthetics that underlie heteronormativity. Even when mental and sexual violence occurs the ideal of the harmonious heterosexual family remains intact. Women internalise their shame and guilt rather than blame the perpetrators. Hence, they attest to the power of the symbolic violence of heteronormativity.

### Law

Besides 'concepts', the articles also centre their analyses of domestic violence in Asia around the issue of 'law'. They touch on the role of law in bringing the issue of domestic violence into the public realm. It was in Malaysia that the first legislation on domestic violence was passed in Asia. The Malaysian Domestic Violence Act (DVA) was first passed in Parliament in 1994, but it took two years for it to be implemented. The two years that the law was held in limbo was due to pressure from various quarters, significantly the Islamic faction, which did not want Islamic family matters to be governed by what was perceived as a civil and therefore 'secular' law. Mohamad's article argues that in the Malaysian case the state tried to be responsive to both feminists as well as the Islamic factions, resulting in a law that was 'diluted', and making it difficult for domestic violence to be charged either as a criminal offence or a civil wrong.

In Singapore, the first legislative change dealing with domestic violence came about in 1997 when the Amendments to the Women's Charter (Chapter 353) were made to provide protection for family members. Most cases of domestic violence are set aside of the criminalisation process, due to the absence of support structures for 'victims' if criminalisation proceeds as the course of action. The paternalistic and patriarchal state also impedes women's empowerment by prescribing the limits of police intervention in domestic violence. In a paternalistic discourse, protection is predominant over empowerment or equal treatment.

Below: Illustration taken from an Indian poster about violence against women and how to seek assistance. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of the 'Center for Women's Global Leadership' (CWGL) on flickr.



In the Philippines, despite the enactment in 2004 of Republic Act 9262 (The Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act), violence still remains pervasive throughout the country, where reported cases of rape and acts of lasciviousness are high. Alipio argues that the protection of women's rights does not end with the enactment of a law. It needs to be followed through with implementation.

Besides the problems of implementation experienced similarly elsewhere, Katjasungkana analyses several national laws that are in conflict with the stipulations within the DVA. This constitutes one of the biggest structural barriers to the successful implementation of the DVA. The laws include the 1974 Marriage Law, the 1991 KHI and the Labour law. Another problem is Indonesia's system of Legal Pluralism, which is a legacy of Dutch colonialism. Additionally there is the dichotomy between civil and criminal legal and court jurisdiction. Domestic violence straddles both. Regional particularity such as the comprehensive implementation of Sharia in the province of Aceh also contributes to the difficulty of enforcing law that is based on the principle of gender rights as human rights.

Poor conviction rates in domestic violence cases and unwieldy court procedures have made legal remedies less useful for women. Hence, the passage of India's domestic violence law, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), did not radically transform the notion that family privacy is sacrosanct. Many surveys in India, as discussed in Nandy's article confirm the popular perception that "domestic violence is a family affair". The privacy of family will continue to sustain gendered hierarchies that are often dependent on the deployment of male domination and violence. In such a situation law "becomes a site of ambiguity instead of a force against it".

The ambiguous status of the law, being both civil and criminal, has become an obstruction to the solution. Mohamad's study shows that gendered violence, even if defined within the ambit of the Malaysian Penal Code, will still not be sufficiently addressed by it, given the complex nature of 'hurt' and 'harm' inflicted by intimate partners on each other.

### Process

A third crucial layer, after concept and law, is the process itself – how actors and stakeholders participate in the contest to get domestic violence on the agenda of national and global deliberations and interventions. In Mohamad's article the Malaysian DVA was presented as one of the most outstanding examples of law-making from below, involving the participation of a spectrum of interest groups.

The campaign and social movement behind the establishment of the DVA in Indonesia is another significant social process evolving rights consciousness on gender-based violence. Katjasungkana documents how NGOs like LHB-APIK and Rifka Annisa collaborated with state agencies, such as the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian National Commission on VAW, to push for a legislation on domestic violence. The drafting team consisted of Members of Parliament in collaboration with the Parliamentary Forum on Population, established academics, law professors and members of APIK. The law was finally enacted on 14 September 2004, and became effective on 22 September 2004, during the term of President Megawati Soekarnoputri.

The above triangulation of civil society, politicians and bureaucrats finds similar resonance in the Malaysian domestic violence movement. The campaign for a DVA in Malaysia started as early as 1985, although the law was only passed in 1994 and enforced in 1996. Like the Indonesian case, the drafting of the bill was an inclusive process that engaged many different representatives of civil society and government, including the religious bureaucracy.

But the process of making domestic violence a named subjectivity is not just the preserve of civil society; Ganapathy's study reveals the frontline process undertaken by the police in the recognition or concealment of domestic violence as a punishable offence. In his study, police response to domestic violence is largely circumscribed by a state discourse that discourages its criminalisation.

### Rethinking the Asian family

Violence against women is a global phenomenon, rooted in the unequal balance of power between women and men, in which women suffer severe forms of physical, emotional, sexual and economic harm. Laws and policies must reflect this recognition. The anti-women's backlash spurred by the family violence approach may lead to the continuation of practices that put women's health and safety in jeopardy. Sexual literacy, legal awareness among women and gender awareness among law enforcers must be given special attention, as should education for girls and a ban on early marriages. As domestic violence takes place in the home and is often justified by patriarchal biases that stipulate that women should be demure, dependent and submissive, the fallacy of the harmonious Asian family must be exposed.



# Cultures of violence and silence

An account of the evolution of 'privacy' in India is presented here by tracing the conceptual trajectory of privacy through the filter of family regulation. In doing so, it scans a wide discursive canvass for constructions of privacy as well as crucial shifts, continuities and peculiarities of the context. What makes the inquiry of Indian notions on the subject interesting is that among all the social institutions in India, the family enjoys an iconic place in the social imaginary as an ideal unit. Often singled out as a cultural trope with an ahistoric, 'natural' and private existence, it stalls scrutiny into its intimate and sacrosanct space. Hence, the long-standing struggle against the family's firm defence of privacy is replete with tussles among religious jurisprudence, cultural norms, modern legislation, notions of community identity and individual autonomy, justice and human rights' discourse. The discussion here highlights, inter alia, such conundrums vis-à-vis the state's response to the family's class, sexuality, religious orientation, and so on; furthermore, it argues how the family, at the epicentre of these conflicts, has been exposed and rendered permeable, to some degree.

Amrita Nandy

## 'Familyism' in legal history

To establish how difficult it has been to distil domestic violence from 'privacy', the philosophical foundations of a culture that subsumes individual identity under the family and community are highlighted: "if there is one 'ism' that governs Indian society, it is familyism".<sup>1</sup> In ancient India (1500 BCE to 500 BCE), both personal affairs and social order were regulated by the principle of *dharma* or moral righteousness, not formal legal mechanisms. When classic Hindu 'law' *per se* emerged as *dharmasutras*, it was a loose assortment of complex, diverse and contradictory codes on ethics, rituals, philosophy and so on. It endorsed physical punishment to discipline a misbehaving wife in tandem with the well-accepted norm that the husband had power over his wife.<sup>2</sup> Settlements were guided by the ideal of conjugal indivisibility; the family was kept intact by the husband's authority, the wife's sacrifice and endurance, and the community's intervention, if needed. Centuries later, as the Indian subcontinent became home to an increasing number of religious and cultural communities, each regulated its familial affairs through its unique religious, scriptural ambiguous tradition or customary 'law'. For example, while scriptures saw divorce as a violation of the 'union-of-souls' Hindu marriage, customary laws permitted termination of seriously flawed marriages. Nonetheless, most ancient Aryan and Hindu texts support the notion of the 'divine' family with women as its moral guardians.

This socio-legal paradigm of self-regulation changed to modern state-based regulation only when the British codified indigenous laws. Ostensibly to avoid tampering with personal matters of Indians, the British ended up creating the simplistic category of 'religious personal laws' by randomly collating disparate ancient laws and patriarchal customs. The repercussions of this codification have been experienced even in post-colonial times, especially with regard to interventions in 'family matters'. Issues such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and so on were placed under religious personal laws that are beyond the reach of the state. Hence, family regulation became doubly guarded and 'private', seen, for example, in the vexing 1986 Shah Bano case involving a destitute Muslim woman's alimony. Having pit religion, gender and state against each other, the issue became a communal raw nerve when a Muslim section protested the Supreme Court's 'interference' in Islamic law, claiming that the latter is divine and therefore beyond human intervention. Ironically, religious laws had already been tweaked by colonial jurists in India. The existing Muslim Personal Law in India also emerged out of the Anglo-Mohammedan law that was collated and drawn up by the British. Hindu personal law has been extensively reformed over the years. On the other hand, the demand to reform personal laws, with the assumption that reform can make laws gender-just, could be erroneous. The political furor led to demands for a Uniform Civil Code for all Indians (irrespective of their religious identities), but the idea has been in cold storage ever since.

In India's baffling heterogeneity, even customary laws can pose as 'private' territories where the presence of state law is questioned. *Khap panchayats* (caste councils), for example, have legitimized brutal murders of youngsters who married against their customary diktats. Community leaders have vociferously demanded that the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 be amended to include a ban on intra-lineage and intra-village marriages which, as per their 'customs', are incestuous. These examples demonstrate how 'private' itself is tightly intertwined with other identities such as caste and religion in India's kaleidoscopic social fabric. Apparently, boundaries between private and public have been blurred repeatedly. In fact, the Indian legislature and state are clearly implicated in the maintenance/creation of laws - religious and secular - as well as the continuities and discontinuities of various hybrid privacies.

## Privacy and rights

The debate over privacy and rights has raised its head in Indian courtrooms and left the judiciary divided on the issue. Some judgements reveal the varied stance that judges have taken on the subject. In 1983, a High Court judge struck down a Restitution of Conjugal Rights suit where a man had appealed to have his wife returned to the matrimonial home by stating, "The remedy of restitution of conjugal rights is violative of the right to privacy and human dignity guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution. A decree of restitution of conjugal rights constitutes the grossest form of violation of an individual's right to privacy."<sup>3</sup> This became a landmark judgement as it flagged the woman's rights of privacy as an individual over conjugal rights. On the other hand, in 1984, the Delhi High Court passed a judgment on a similar case but said the contrary: Introduction of constitutional law in the home ... is like introducing a bull in a China shop ... in the privacy of the home neither Article 21 nor Article 14 have any place.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the substantive transition from ancient *dharma* to modern family law, it was not until 'dowry deaths' grabbed international headlines that the veil of the private family was forcibly lifted. The argument that there are some totally private spaces that ought not to be invaded by the state became difficult to defend from this juncture. In the 1980s, dowry-related violence triggered a high-pitched women's movement that pushed the Indian government to amend existing laws and protect women from violence. Ironically, the punitive amendments to dowry law caused inadvertent collateral damage - all other forms of domestic violence were trivialized and, to some extent, normalized. The definitions of 'cruelty' - "grave injury or danger to life, limb or death" - were interpreted to exclude a whole range of physical and non-physical violence. As a result, the legal approach to domestic violence became lackadaisical and neglectful.

Although Section 498A addressed cruelty and domestic violence, its vague definitions of violence (often excluding sexual violence), difficult implementation, low rate of conviction, lack of civil relief provisions to women and, as described earlier, the overarching conception of violence-as-dowry, made it quite ineffective. It also did not protect women from harassment and cruelty in natal, live-in or other non-marital relationships. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) 2005 finally presented a clear definition of domestic violence, based as it is on the UN Framework for Model Legislation on Domestic Violence and the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women. Besides covering a gamut of physical, verbal, economic and mental abuses, the act also includes sexual abuse, especially forced, non-consensual sexual intercourse. However, rape is still not recognized in marriage, unless committed with a minor or separated wife. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code makes an exception to the offence of rape in marriage because sexual intercourse is seen as a right of the husband and a natural implication of the marriage. By conceptually including marital rape in the PWDVA (through the euphemistic term 'sexual abuse'), yet another dimension of violence in the family has been challenged. Yet, women may not always recognize coercive sex by husbands as violence (Lawyer's Collective Women's Rights Initiative and ICRW 2005).

To deal with gendered violence in diverse private domestic relationships, the act has taken the unprecedented step of including "any relationship in the nature of marriage", thus including women in live-in relationships, legally void/voidable marriages and common law marriages. It can also be used in natal family relationships by mothers, daughters, widows and so on. Unlike in the pre-PWDVA days when a woman had to visit a number of courts to seek different kinds of relief, the

new law offers her a "single-window clearance" - one court for a number of supposedly immediate relief measures such as protection from violence, monetary relief and compensation, temporary custodial rights and the right to the "shared household". The right to reside in the shared household is one of the highlights of the act as it addresses a major lacuna in the system - dispossession from the house. The PWDVA allows women direct access to the court through new support structures in the form of Protection Officers, Service Providers and even Counsellors.

Monitoring reports of the post-PWDVA scenario indicate an increase in the number of cases filed under the act, but a mixed response vis-à-vis the outlook towards privacy and violence. There have been many pro-women judgements since the implementation of the PWDVA 2005, but cultural stereotypes and biased interpretations persist. The notion of family privacy, however, continues to feature prominently among attitudes and perceptions on the subject. Monitoring and evaluation reports reveal how Protection Officers perceive domestic violence to be 'a family affair', and how they see their role as saving families from breaking down and their need to strike a compromise. The construction of ideal femininity is based on traditional beliefs and practices that emphasize her sacrifice, suffering and endurance for the 'honour' of the family (and nation, in case of the nationalist). Marriage and children are central to the projected image of the ideal woman. The good woman's most valued attribute is her silence. This sentiment is even reflected in several court rulings on rape - "no self respecting woman would come forward in a court just to make a humiliating statement *against her honour* [emphasis added] such as is involved in the commission of rape on her" or "the rapist degrades the very soul of the helpless female".<sup>5</sup>

## Womanhood and the culture of silence

The link between these deeply entrenched norms of womanhood and the culture of silence around domestic violence is *a posteriori* - a majority of women interviewed during the last National Family Health Survey justified violence against them by their husbands. As many as 54 percent of women and 51 percent of men agreed that it is justifiable for a husband to beat his wife (for example, when she disrespects her in-laws or neglects the house or children). UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children 2012* reported that among 15- to 19-year-olds in India, 57 percent of boys and 53 percent of girls believed that a husband was justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances. It seems that notions of self identity, shame and honour exert more pressure and influence on the collective consciousness of women than laws that promise them redress.

With such stiff cultural resistance to making private matters public, a backlash against legislation was inevitable. Men-led groups (comprising husbands, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law) across the country have facilitated a large and active country-wide network of different organizations such as the *Bharat Bachao Sangathan* (Save India Organisation), *Pariwarik Suraksha Samiti* (Family Protection Group) and the *Pati Pariwar Kalyan Samiti* (Husband Family Welfare Group). Their umbrella network (cleverly titled Save the Indian Family) claims to rescue the institution of the family from the state.

Despite domestic violence legislation, 'public' regulations can simultaneously be rendered ineffective by omnipotent notions of privacy that promote silence and tacit acceptance of domestic violence. Critical feminist analyses of the family have helped problematize notions of the family as secure and private (and women-as-victims) that continue to obfuscate violence and ensure women's silence. Meanwhile, women continue to bear the cross for the family, community and nation's honour in India's patriarchal regime. The heightened presence of law in

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family matters has become a mere chink in the armour of the private family, as proven by the rise in the practice of dowry and dowry-related crime, the prevalence of honour killing, persistent domestic violence and so on. It may not be an exaggeration to say that while law tries to bring order in the family, law itself can be mediated by and enmeshed in culture.

A significant reason for the much-valued notion of family privacy is the high moral, cultural and political stature allotted to the heteronormative family, the only 'natural' looking model validated by law and religion. While its reproductive, child-centred structure and system suits the state and the market, a monogamous, patrilineal and patrilocal family cannot represent the myriad of other family forms such as single-parent, adoptive and same sex families. In fact, the immense zeal of the Indian state to criminalize consensual homosexual relations vis-à-vis its protracted reluctance to criminalize violence in heterosexual private relations speaks volumes about its attitudes. Although feminists have long denounced the private-public divide, their challenge to and critique of the position of the heterosexual family has not been as forthcoming.

#### Reconceptualization of divides

Central to unpacking the private-public divide will be a compelling re-conceptualization of privacy. For one, the notion that the family has enjoyed privacy is artificial because the state itself has drawn the private-public boundaries. The mid-1970s national family planning drive or the Government of India's Child Care Leave only for its women employees are examples of the state breaching boundaries. Perhaps Frances E. Olsen is right when he asserts that "non-intervention (of the state) is a false ideal because it has no coherent

meaning [...] the state is continuously affecting the family by influencing the distribution of power among individuals".<sup>6</sup> Olsen strongly disagrees with the popular view that the state should intervene only when necessary because it "presupposes that non-intervention is a possible choice; and second, it usually accepts non-intervention as a norm or as an ideal".<sup>7</sup>

On another note, feminists and the women's movement in India have had a difficult and paradoxical relationship with law. Since law is inextricably involved in the very acts that it condones, controls and penalizes, it becomes a site of ambiguity instead of a force against these acts. As Nivedita Menon cautions, "our attempts to transform power relations through the law tend rather to re-sediment them and to assert dominant values".<sup>8</sup> It may, therefore, be useful to go along with feminist legal scholars such as Margaret Davies who emphasize the necessity to re-conceptualize law as 'horizontal' or plural, open-ended, self-reflexive and inclusive instead of 'vertical' or hierarchical, positivist, autonomous and exclusive.<sup>9</sup> This may create newer and alternative legal meanings that do not devalue subjectivities, and that imagine moving the 'subject' from a passive recipient of law to an active agent of its creation. It still begs the question – even though the family needs to be protected from violence, what if the family needs protection from the violent state? Self-regulation by the family seldom works. On the other hand, the state tends to become panoptic.

This discussion puts forth that while privacy of the family is valuable, it needs re-imagining within the framework of justice and human rights. Privacy has never been totally inviolate, especially because its boundaries have constantly been adjusted by the state. Although law in India does not view domestic

violence as a 'private' matter, the cultural ideology that obliquely permits it, does. It contends that since law can subterraneously embody and perpetuate cultural codes, it cannot be expected to regulate, counter or undo prevalent socio-cultural notions and values, at least not single-handedly. The aspiration should be a holistic formulation of the concept of privacy that lies both inside and outside the legislative arena.

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#### Notes

- 1 Kakar, S. & Poggendorf-Kakar, K. 2007. *The Indians: Portrait of a People*, Delhi: Penguin
- 2 Agnes, F. 2008. 'Hindu Conjugalities', in Parasher, A. & Dhanda, A. (eds.) *Redefining Family Law in India*, Delhi: Routledge, pp.236-257 (p.256)
- 3 *ibid.*, p.244
- 4 *ibid.*, p.245
- 5 Goonesekere, S. 2004. *Violence, Law and Women's Rights in South Asia*, Delhi: Sage
- 6 Olsen, F.E. 1994. 'The Myth of State Intervention in the Family', in Moller Okin, S. & Mansbridge, J. (eds.) *Feminism, Schools of thought in Politics Series No. 6*, Cambridge: University Press, pp.835-864 (p.842)
- 7 *ibid.*, p.863
- 8 Menon, N. 2004. *Recovering Subversion: Feminist Politics beyond Law*, Delhi: Permanent Black, p.206
- 9 Davies, M. 2011. 'Feminism and the Idea of Law', in *Feminists@Law* 1(1):1-7

Among all the social institutions in India, the family enjoys an iconic place in the social imaginary as an ideal unit. Dowry-related violence triggered a high-pitched women's movement that pushed the Indian government to amend existing laws and protect women from violence. It seems that notions of self identity, shame and honour exert more pressure and influence on the collective consciousness of women than laws that promise them redress.





# Culture, power and narratives in domestic violence law

This article presents the theoretical foundation for the claim that societal acceptance or rejection of domestic violence is shaped by those in positions of power and influence. The modern Westphalian state is uniquely invested with power to politically determine and mediate cultural narratives, as it can legitimize ethos, values, and practices through both legal and political machinations, as well as action and – more crucially – inaction. The state is thus imbued with the responsibility to encourage and create cultures free of domestic violence.

Zarizana Abdul Aziz

First, an examination of the formulation of narratives of cultural discourse. Assertions that domestic violence is embedded in any one culture must be challenged to expose it as a practice supported and re-enacted through cultural narratives. Rather than essentializing domestic violence as culturally embedded, it is more constructive to acknowledge that it is a culture in and of itself. In this latter construction, culture is a socio-political symbolic discourse that changes over time with the state playing a role in its incarnation. Consequently, even if domestic violence exists as an oppressive and reprehensible practice within cultures, it should not be preserved, respected, and perpetuated. Second, an analysis of how and why domestic violence continues to be erroneously placed within culture, as well as the consequent difficulty in challenging it due to intersecting issues of privacy, culture, and honour. Third, the claim that the contestation of rights to privacy within the family and rights of victims of domestic violence cannot be resolved in favour of the former. And finally, an examination of the patterns of state action and inaction that condone and even encourage domestic violence. This discussion concludes by reiterating the primacy of eradication of violence in the construction of society and the nation state. In the endeavour to eliminate domestic violence, culture must be deconstructed; instead of justifying domestic violence in the name of culture, culture should be enlisted to create a non-violent society.

## The narrative of cultural discourse: conceptual understanding of culture and domestic violence

Cultural narratives that demand social and legal acceptance of domestic violence as well as assertions that all cultural practices be preserved need to be challenged. When conservative forces claim ownership over 'authentic' interpretations of culture, tradition, and religion that include domestic violence, women are not only told to accept violence, they are denied their role as equal and active contributors to the development and production of culture. Thus normative laws and rights are not only intrinsic to cultural formations, the formulation of the cultural narrative is itself bound to law making, power, and privilege.

The essentialization of domestic violence occurs more frequently and is more commonly accepted when located within the culture of the 'other'. This results in states' acceptance and tolerance of domestic violence as a manifestation of other cultures. Yet, victims of domestic violence are not limited to certain cultural backgrounds. The common view of domestic violence as embedded in cultural practice must thus be reconceptualized. Domestic violence as a culture phenomenon, with an understanding of culture as a system of practices that is distinct to a society or group, implies that only women from certain communities are victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, the conflation of acknowledging the prevalence of domestic violence and tolerating it as a manifestation of culture deserving of preservation allows culture to be invoked as explanation – if not justification – for domestic violence, thus conceptualizing women not as victims of violence, but transgressors of culture. Such reasoning sets up a false binary between domestic violence and culture, compelling both state and society to choose between honouring culture and eradicating domestic violence.

The interrelationship between culture, power and privilege must be examined. Power and the use of power to protect privilege not only leads to the defeat of the voices of the powerless but, over time, to their silence altogether. Thus, culture as a practice is reflected in wilful action, power relations, struggle, contestations, and contradictions. Such contestations can be illustrated, for example, by examining the gang-rape of Mukhtar Mai. The Pakistani Mastoi tribal leaders, powerful members of a remote community, ordered the gang-rape of Mukhtar Mai as punishment and revenge. In the case of Mukhtar Mai, the revenge was for the alleged audacity of a male member of her family (from a lower caste) to socially liaise with a woman from the higher caste of the Mastoi tribe. Many Pakistanis condemned the rape, and the Chief Justice of Pakistan ordered the provincial police chief and senior provincial officials to appear before the Supreme Court. Mukhtar Mai herself sought to create an alternative cultural narrative by using her compensation money to build two schools, with the belief in education's role in changing male mindsets.

Mukhtar Mai. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of 'United Nations Photo' on flickr.

Local contestations within Pakistani society demonstrate that the justification of violence in the name of Pakistani 'culture' entails the adoption and legitimization of the narratives of only the male Mastoi tribal members. The role of the Pakistani state must be to mediate between contesting narratives; it is not the state that is held at the mercy of culture, but it is the state that moulds culture and with it, cultural identity. Punishing the tribal leaders and providing reparation for Mukhtar Mai sends a powerful signal that the state does not tolerate sexual violence against women, and that it is determined to root out sexual violence from institutional and cultural structures, thus creating a Pakistani culture free of sexual violence.

## Uncovering why domestic violence is erroneously essentialized as culture

The clash between traditional cultures and modernization in the discourse of domestic violence is misplaced. Domestic violence is a systemic global practice embedded in masculinities, patriarchy, and the domination of women that is then justified in the name of honour, culture, and religion; in the process, this re-conceptualizes women not as victims of violence, but as violators of culture and family (male) honour. Dominant societal notions of manhood depend on male superiority over, and entitlement to govern, women. Cultural justification of domestic violence obscures the fact that it is steeped not in culture, honour or religion, but in practices of violence. As long as men's 'conjugal mastery' over women can be rationalized as being rooted in tradition and culture, the right to maintain and enforce this mastery through domestic violence will remain unquestioned.

The state's conceptualization of the family as situated within the private realm under the husband's stewardship, away from state scrutiny and intrusion, further protects this status quo. In cases of domestic violence - through inaction - the state perpetuates a culture of domestic violence. Ironically, such inaction is an aberration, as the state has an interest and duty in confronting and eradicating all forms of violence. According to dominant theories of political philosophy, rules against violence and the use of force are the historical impetus for society-formation away from the Hobbesian "state of nature". Therefore, confronting violence is and must be the primary duty of the nation state. When the state assumes the right to punish transgressors in the name of society, the individual simultaneously gives up his right to do so.

In order to analyze the practice and prevalence of domestic violence, it is important to inquire not only into the subordination of women, but also into relationships between men. The continuous competition for social status and hierarchy between men has given rise to what anthropologists call a "culture-of-honour" stance. This stance links the idea of male honour to physical prowess, toughness, and courage. It also requires men to define themselves as dominant to women, using violence if necessary. Consequently, while other expressions of culture-of-honour are circumscribed by the state, violence against women generally, and domestic violence specifically, remain the main surviving expressions of culture-of-honour violence. This disinclination not only translates into impunity for perpetrators of domestic violence, it points to a breakdown of societal order and the failure of states in discharging their guarantee to protect women from violence. Indeed, the state is required to exercise a *higher* degree of vigilance in relation to domestic violence, as violence in the home is so easily rendered invisible.

If the state allows a man to commit domestic violence with impunity, or accepts his honour defence, the state signals that it will support domestic violence as providing symbolic meaning - at the expense of women's security and lives. Thus the state's actions (or inaction) signify that it is willing to incarnate domestic violence as a culture in and of itself. Domestic violence excused in the name of culture erases from view the injury to women, and actively re-inscribes it as injury to male and family honour. Legal rules not only influence the development of the 'honour' norm, they create it. Legitimizing the commission of a category of violence in the name of honour circumscribes the boundaries of 'honour'. The law, in espousing a norm that the ordinary

man can lose his self-control and commit violence against his wife and other women, removes the constraint on men to control their behaviour. When law provides domestic violence with an excusatory dimension, men are wont to practice it whenever an affront is perceived. It is the state's failure to take effective action against domestic violence that has resulted in a mainstream discourse that both accepts honour as a defence for domestic violence and incorporates the 'honour defence' as part of state cultural identity. (See *Opuz v. Turkey* ECHR 2009; *Maria Da Penha v. Brazil* IACHR 2000)

In law, the defence of honour and provocation, premised on the loss of self-control, are often used interchangeably. Like self-defence, the defence of provocation must be premised on an absence of opportunity to avert violence, and a provocation that is grave and sudden. Honour crimes, however, are often seen as punishment for moral transgressions against family and male honour, and therefore does not accord with the elements of the defence of provocation. It is also instructive to compare the treatment of the 'honour defence' to that of self-defence, which is more commonly used by victims of domestic violence when they are prosecuted for attacking or killing perpetrators of violence. In *State v. Stewart* (1988), the Supreme Court of Kansas held that Peggy Stewart could not avail of a self-defence instruction to the jury because there was an absence of imminent danger.

Therefore, it is not domestic violence per se that formed the basis of the courts' rationalization; rather, it is violence by a man against a woman in the name of male honour that the courts are willing to rationalize and, to a certain extent, accept and forgive, thus encouraging and perpetuating a culture of domestic violence against women.

## Contestation of rights

Cultures are shaped by states, either through affirmative action in promoting certain values, ethos, customs and practices, or through inaction in allowing values and practices to be enacted and re-enacted sans state interference. By extension, cultures, therefore, are not above reproach.

The state and society generally have a deep interest in the institution of the family, which in domestic violence cases, translates into prioritizing the perpetrator's right to family over that of the victim's human right to life and physical and mental integrity. Positing the institution of the family within the private sphere and removing the private sphere from scrutiny of the law and the community, the state can divest itself of all responsibility over the supervision of behaviour within the family. In so doing, the state cloaks itself in an aura of neutrality while turning a blind eye to injustice and violence within the family. In *Opuz v. Turkey*, the state relied on this contestation of rights to justify its non-interference with the family and the perpetrating husband's rights to privacy.

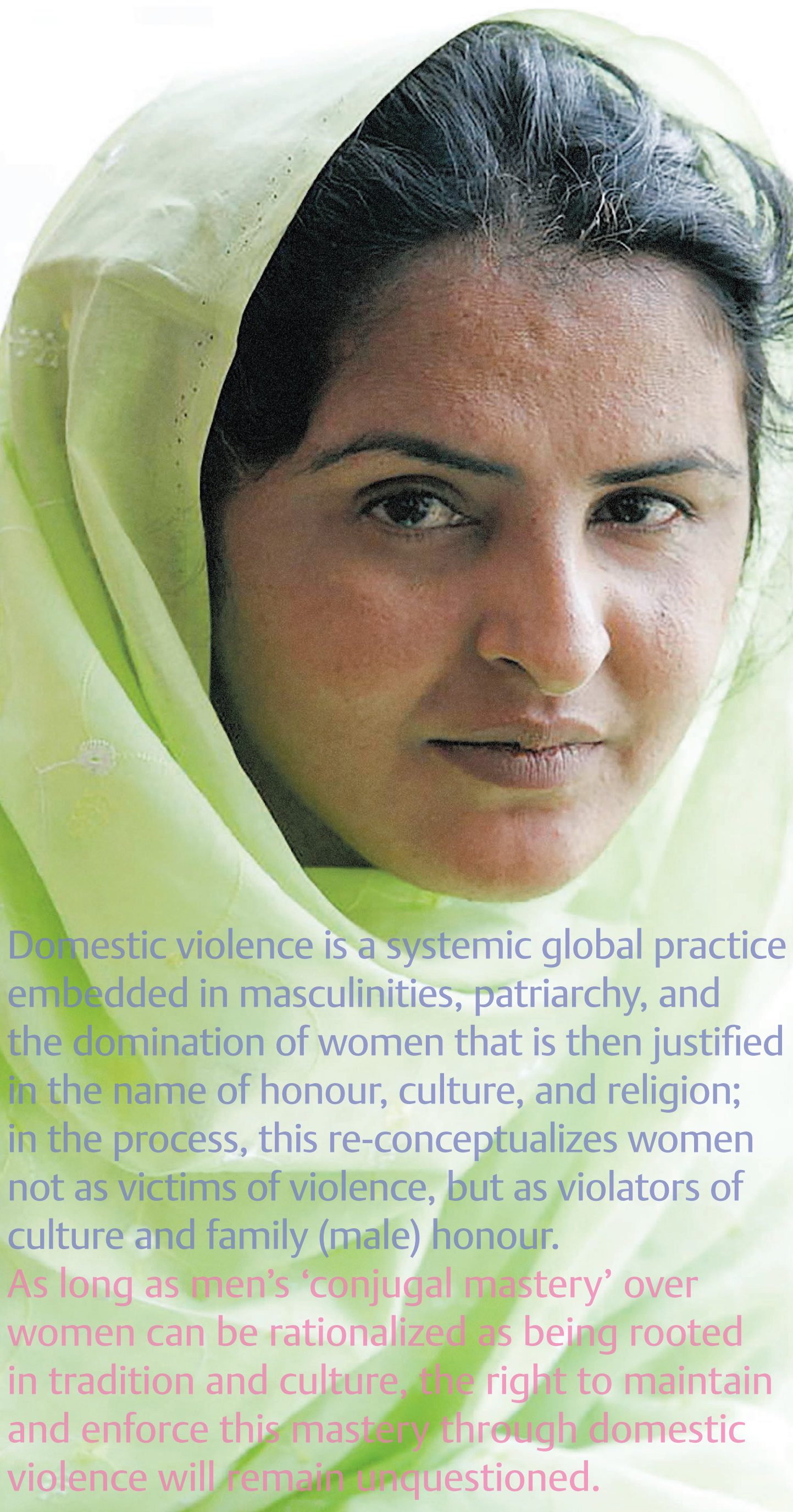
Although conflicts between rights are unavoidable, it is the state's duty to intervene in the commission of violence against another person. This duty embraces different notions of responsibility. Implicit is the state's positive obligation to promote and protect the right to security of every person. In considering the contestation of rights, states must, therefore, resolve in favour of protecting the safety and security of every person. Thus state intervention in private or family life of individuals is necessary not only to prevent the commission of criminal acts, but also to promote and protect the health and security of others.

## Role of the state in shaping culture

The condoning of domestic violence by the entire state system serves to perpetuate the alleged basis and factors that sustain and encourage domestic violence. Yet, the meaning of symbols change over time and place, which makes for autonomy in the cultural dimension. For signs to have meaning, there must be systematic relationships among signs and a group of people who recognize those relationships. When we take the meaningful aspect of human action out of the flow of concrete interactions, we are able to disentangle the semiotic influences on action from other sorts of influences. In this sense, culture may be thought of as a network of relationships.

Through its legal and political machinations, states create and perpetuate a culture of domestic violence. If society sees no evidence of willingness by the state to take effective





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action to sanction against domestic violence, society will more readily associate domestic violence with its own cultural identity. Thus, when states fail to prevent or prosecute domestic violence, it is the state and not traditional practice or ethos that should be the focus of our inquiry. Examining domestic violence from the perspective of the state's role exposes domestic violence as a culture in and of itself. State inaction in enforcing the letter of the law coupled with signals given by the legal and judicial officers that domestic violence is tolerated, implicitly sanction the continued practice of domestic violence. Thus where a culture of domestic violence exists, domestic violence is transformed into institutional and structural violence that is found formally or truly embedded in society.

In international law, states are required to act with due diligence to eliminate violence against women. Despite this and international and regional instruments investing states with the responsibility to eliminate violence against women, many states lodge reservations on the grounds of culture. These reservations, in so far as they apply to domestic violence, are made all the more serious in view of the argument that domestic violence should be understood and treated as a form of torture and, when less severe, ill-treatment.

The prohibition of torture as a whole is a *jus cogens* that violates the demands of humanity and dictates public conscience. Torture is *malum in se*, namely that torture is just wrong and would be wrong whether positive law prohibits it or not. Acknowledging that domestic violence can be torture, or at the very least ill-treatment, elevates it into *jus cogens* prohibition in international law, which necessarily means that states are not able to derogate from their obligation to intervene, prevent, stop, sanction and provide remedies in cases of domestic violence. As there can be no 'cultural defence' against torture, there can be no cultural defence against domestic violence.

#### Conclusion

Traditional practices, ethos and values that form the 'cultural excuse' for domestic violence must be questioned. Domestic violence cannot be justified in the name of the family, society or national/traditional culture. Neither can perpetrators be given impunity under any guise. States should be held accountable for complicity in domestic violence, whenever they create and implement laws that directly or indirectly trap women in abusive circumstances. This includes accepting, justifying and excusing domestic violence on cultural grounds. The state's sanction of domestic violence in the name of culture on the one hand, and its refusal to intervene into family life in the name of the right to privacy and family on the other, has created a fertile terrain for the perpetuation of domestic violence. It is essential that we remove the culture of violence from the family, eliminate state tolerance (and implicit encouragement) of domestic violence and emphasize the message that domestic violence has no part to play in the cultural identity of society.

The avoidance and prevention of violence constitute the basic purpose of lawmaking. The predominant model of addressing domestic violence both as discrimination and through the formal judicial system has borne limited success. Hence, it is essential that we broaden our understanding of domestic violence to emphasize the harm it causes. Domestic violence is an assault on human dignity, often seeking to reduce or eradicate a person's autonomy, destroy self-esteem and compel subjugation.

Deconstructing culture in the context of domestic violence, therefore, involves examining the identities of those claiming their rights to culture, the authorities that sanction these rights, and in the event culture is used to claim legal rights, the role of the state as the final arbiter in recognizing and perpetuating these claims. In this regard, it is more accurate to construct domestic violence as a culture in and of itself, rather than embedded in culture, and to scrutinize the role of the state in alternatively creating, tolerating, developing and encouraging a culture of domestic violence as well as the state's role and responsibility in its eradication.

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# The enforcement of heteronormativity in India and Indonesia

Heteronormativity in Asia is constructed around the claim that all its agents work towards the creation or preservation of harmonious Asian families. Yet, there is enormous violence involved in the perpetuation of this myth. This article is based on the life stories of widows/divorced women, sex workers and lesbians in India and Indonesia. I focus on the factors that produce domestic violence and make it intelligible within the normative patterns of Indian and Indonesian families. The emphasis is on the mechanisms, the passionate aesthetics, that inform the particular construction of heteronormativity in these countries. These aesthetics are commonly classified as 'private' as they are played out within the domestic unit.

Saskia E. Wieringa<sup>1</sup>

IN THIS DISCUSSION the untenability of the distinction between the public and the private sphere becomes clear since heteronormativity is informed by social constructs and institutions. The research project on which this article (and the original book chapter) is based was conducted in the framework of the Kartini Asia Network.<sup>2</sup> The fieldwork was implemented between 2005 and 2007 and explored the ways in which passionate aesthetics are being constructed in India and Indonesia. I first discuss the concepts used in this research and then list nine forms of different passionate aesthetics that emerged from the project.

## Concepts used: passionate aesthetics and heteronormativity

Passionate aesthetics are defined as the institutions, dynamics, motivations, codes of behaviour and (re)presentation, as well as the subjectivities and identities that together make up the complex structure of desires, erotic attractions, sexual relations, kinship and partnership patterns that are salient in a given context. Passionate aesthetics thus underlie particular regimes of heteronormativity and of sexual subcultures. One of the effects of passionate aesthetics is maintaining the internal cohesion of heteronormativity; in constant processes of expulsion and repulsion, a category of abject others is created while the inner core group is silenced or seduced into subjection.

Heteronormativity informs the normativity of daily life, including institutions, laws and regulations that impact the sexual and reproductive lives of members of society as well as the moral imperatives that influence people's personal lives. Heteronormativity refers to practices, norms governing those practices, institutions that uphold them and effects produced by those norms within individuals. These effects can be seen in behaviours and feelings as well as in the aspirations for the future that the narrators nourish for themselves and their children.

The life stories collected in this project provide rich examples of the effects these often-invisible norms produce in the lives of those who are positioned both within and outside the institution of normative sex. The passionate aesthetics displayed in these life stories demonstrate how heteronormativity is continuously produced, reproduced and also how change is possible, by displacement, partial adherence, fusion, subversion or downright rejection of dominant norms.<sup>3</sup> Not all heterosexual practices or lifestyles have a similar status; there are hegemonic and subordinate forms of heterosexuality. Violence, as I will explore here, is an intrinsic part of the passionate aesthetics that underlie heteronormativity.

## Passionate aesthetics within the 'harmonious' Asian family

The passionate aesthetics by which the present day heterosexual patriarchal family in Asia is represented as the ideal of a harmonious family - the repository of marital bliss composed of dutiful, virtuous wives and responsible husbands - are multiple. The glorification of this family model hides its underlying symbolic and physical violence.<sup>4</sup> The passionate aesthetics explored here range from epistemological concerns (insistence on the binaries that inform heteronormativity), to rape and shame.

For women in India and Indonesia, the normative family model is based on pre-marital virginity, chastity during marriage, and motherhood. Self-sacrifice and dependence upon males is glorified for women. These norms are anchored in religious values. The Indian 'divine family' should not be ruptured by divorce; in Indonesia too, marriage, particularly a woman's sexual obligation to her husband, is seen as a service to God. In both countries, divorced women are heavily stigmatized; this stigma even extends to organizations that attempt to empower those women. Ideals of purity and self-sacrifice in India are often enforced by in-laws; in Indonesia, these ideals are more directly tied to social control over sexual behaviour by husbands. The dominant Asian family is not only heterosexual, it is also supposed to remain within caste lines (India) or religious systems.

The family is not always the safe haven, the model of harmonious life, that its proponents would like it to be. It can, in fact, be a very violent place, particularly for young girls. The two major studies on the Indian family system do not mention incest,<sup>5</sup> other than referring to it as a category of marriage avoidance. In Indonesia too, talking of incest is taboo. Our narrators suffer the pain, guilt and shame in silence. They initially tried to hide these traumatic experiences and to paint a rosy picture of their childhood. Instead of blaming the perpetrators or those who shield them, most of our narrators have internalized the shame and guilt, thus attesting to the power of the symbolic violence of heteronormativity. Many feel it is their own fault that their 'loving' parents behaved so callously towards them.

The core of heteronormativity is formed by sexual difference - the assumption that humanity is neatly and 'naturally' divided into biological females and biological males who demonstrate feminine and masculine behaviours linked to their biological identities. A second binary is the split between 'normal' and 'abnormal'. The supposed naturalness of these divisions supports the hierarchy between sexes and genders.

A third, less commonly noted, characteristic is that the 'abnormal' category is further subdivided into various types of abjection, while their shared origin has become blurred. The three categories of marginalized women we researched are similarly constructed as 'abject' by their heteronormative societies, while they are each set apart as distinct categories. This makes it difficult to see through the barriers that keep them apart from each other. They do not see each other as allies but as differently abjected others and constantly weigh their relative distance from the socially valued 'normal'. Their point of reference remains the heterosexual patriarchal family, not the commonality of their positions as falling outside its boundaries. The widows and sex workers do not blame the heteronormative construct for their current state of abjection, but rather their own bad luck. The lesbian activists see through the myth, but not

Training of Village women on Dowry, Domestic Violence and Child Marriage, India. Image reproduced under a Creative Commons License, courtesy of the 'Center for Women's Global Leadership' on flickr.



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all of our narrators were activists and even the activists structure their private lives along at least some major aspects of the 'heterosexual matrix'.<sup>6</sup>

Pre-marital virginity remains important in India; for instance, in Madhya Pradesh on 30 June 2009, virginity tests were conducted before a government-conducted mass wedding of rural women. Activists protested, but it is unlikely they made a dent in the underlying enforcement of virginity. The pressure to remain a virgin until the marriage date leads to early marriages, particularly for girls in poor households who cannot afford to attend secondary school.

The 1974 Indonesian marriage law recognizes polygyny, although it sets certain conditions. A man can only marry four wives and the consent of the first wife is needed. However, many men either do not present a letter of consent to the registrar or marry in front of a religious official only, the so-called *kawin siri* or unregistered marriage. Needless to say, the new wife can be divorced without any difficulty by the husband. Children born in these unions cannot get a birth certificate and often find it difficult to enrol in schools (for which a valid birth certificate is needed). First wives are often unaware of subsequent marriages. The children in polygynous marriages suffer too as they experience the injustice done to their mothers.

Traditionally, Indian women live with their in-laws after marriage. Sons are dependent on their mothers, and daughters-in-law are often treated badly. The problems often centre around money. Girls have to provide a dowry upon marriage. There are many conflicts about these dowries, sometimes even ending in the murder of the young wife. The standard narrative of a dowry death is harassment of the daughter-in-law by a group of her affinal kin (comprising mother-in-law, husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, etc.). In the litigation that may follow, the conjugal family invariably takes the plea that the death was either due to an accident in the kitchen or suicide following mental illness (commonly subsumed under the clinical term 'depression').

Even where there is no mention of direct physical or sexual violence between spouses, marital relations in the heterosexual families of our narrators were not always cordial and warm. There was often a lack of communication or even downright deceit. Money matters are a source of much strife within the Asian households discussed here. In India and in Indonesia, men are supposed to be the breadwinners and derive social standing and power within the household if they fulfil that role well. In Indonesia, this is even formally stated in the marriage law. In popular understanding, women provide sex to their husbands, and men give their wives money. The housewife-breadwinner ideology does not hold up in poor households, where both women and men have to work, yet in anticipation of a man's breadwinner role, boys receive better education than their sisters if there is not enough money to provide schooling for all siblings.

Negotiating a dowry, Indonesia. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of 'Mikaku' on flickr. Image used solely to illustrate article. No implied meaning is attached to the actual event portrayed.

Although the characteristics of Indian and Indonesian heterosexual orthodox families differ in some aspects, both constructs are suffused with patriarchal values. The threat of polygyny with its accompanying deceit and jealousy in Indonesia, and arranged marriages and dowry issues in Indian families, are all supported by patriarchal values. Male superiority runs deep. Sometimes it is built on overt forms of violence, at other times the symbolic violence of some kind of male mental or intellectual superiority is accepted as natural by the women of the house. Women are supposed to adjust to the habits of their husbands. Fathers or husbands are the obvious sources of power, but if a vacuum arises then brothers and sons are quick to assume their roles in the patriarchal household hierarchy. The imposition and maintenance of patriarchal values is one of the major expressions of the passionate aesthetics of heteronormativity. These values include that men are superior, earn more money and have more power.

Two imbricating processes form the basis of the passionate aesthetics of 'othering': expulsion and repulsion. While expulsion has to do with the construction of physical, material and social barriers and taboos, with invisibilization and silencing, repulsion refers to the fears, desires and fantasies that are involved within the 'normal' and the 'abnormal'. Not only is a person expelled from the boundaries of 'normalcy', but all elements that may be sympathetic to that constructed 'abjected' person also have to be removed from the consciousness of those within the fold of heteronormativity and those outside it. Often, the excluded others internalize the disgust, hatred and fear expressed by the 'normal' population. Precisely because the 'normal' and the 'abnormal' are so closely intertwined, the process of its forced separation entails a lot of violence.

#### Conclusion

In this study we investigated the passionate aesthetics of heteronormative relationships in India and Indonesia. The class/caste divide and religion largely determine the internalization of a patriarchal culture of morality and silence imposed on our narrators. We analysed the extent of the physical and symbolic violence of heteronormativity. The forms of passionate aesthetics discussed above range from epistemological considerations (the stress on binaries) to marital arrangements and internalized shame and guilt.

Our narrators, all of whom as intimate outsiders lived both normative and non-normative lives whether as children in their natal families or in their adult lives, experienced the ways in which women within this structure are policed, as well as the punishment meted out to those who transgress or are expelled from the boundaries of heteronormativity. The violence they experienced ranges from physical to symbolic, from rape to shame.

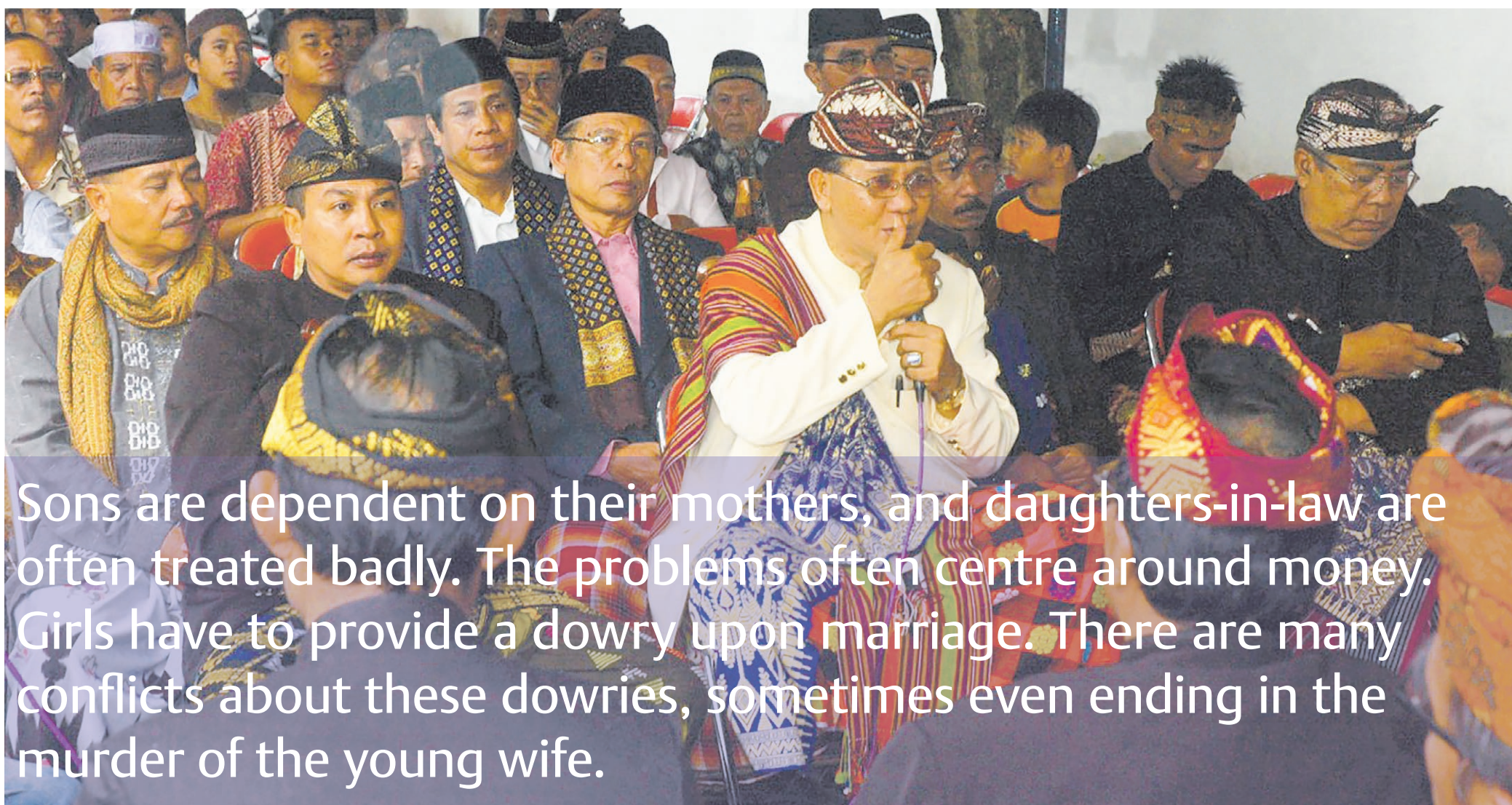
Heteronormativity presents the heterosexual family as the ultimate goal in life for women, where they will attain the bliss of a 'normal', 'harmonious' family life. However, in reality, the family is often not the safe haven promised to them. Once cracks become apparent, women are supposed to adjust, emotionally, intellectually and financially. Passionate aesthetics involve various modes of control, abjection and violence, rendering the non-heterosexually-married space for women highly unattractive or even dangerous. However, there is danger within the 'normal' heterosexual family too. The success of these aesthetics lies in the way women, even in non-heterosexual relationships, aspire to its values, while women who have experienced various forms of violence themselves continue to love, or at least live with, the perpetrators of that violence.

Perceiving violence against women as a private issue may have the effect of making structural factors that fuel this violence invisible. Heteronormativity is not limited to the bedroom but extends its tentacles into courtrooms, boardrooms and into all locations in which societal institutions operate.

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#### Notes

- 1 I am grateful for the generous grant from the Asian Research Institute at the National University of Singapore that allowed me to work on this project for three months in 2009. I also thank my co-coordinators, Abha Bhaiya and Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, for their collaboration in the research. I am indebted to all the researchers who gathered the material for the interviews upon which this article (and book chapter) is based.
- 2 [www.kartiniasia.org](http://www.kartiniasia.org)
- 3 See Wieringa, S.E. 2012. 'Passionate Aesthetics and Symbolic Subversion: Heteronormativity in India and Indonesia', in *Asian Studies Review*, 36(4):515-530. Special issue: 'Queer Asian subjects: transgressive sexualities and heteronormative meanings'; Wieringa, S.E. 2014. (forthcoming) *Passionate aesthetics and symbolic subversion; heteronormativity in India and Indonesia*, Eastbourne and Toronto: Sussex Academic Press.
- 4 In India, the lesbian group Sappho for Equality, in collaboration with the Kartini Asia Network, documented 92 kinds of violence that lesbian women experience, ranging from abuse and ridicule to murder or double suicide. See Ghosh, S. 2011. *Vio-Map: Documenting and mapping violence and rights violations taking place in lives of sexually marginalized women*, Kolkata: Sappho for Equality.
- 5 Patel, T. (ed.) 2005. *The Family in India, Structure and Practice*. New Delhi: Sage; Uberoi, P. (ed.) 1994. *Family, kinship and Marriage in India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 6 Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble; Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York and London: Routledge.



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# Domestic violence and migration in the Philippines

From actresses to migrant workers, stories of women from all socioeconomic groups, who courageously break their silence to speak up about domestic violence, show that despite the enactment in 2004 of Republic Act (RA) 9262 (the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act), domestic violence remains rampant in the Philippines. With the inability of the law to stem domestic violence and by extension, gender-based discrimination, women have looked outside the confines of the state and family for ways to escape abuse.

Cheryll Alipio

WHILE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT of academic research has been done on domestic violence in recent years, and research on domestic violence in immigrant communities continues to emerge, inquiries into the implications of domestic violence on migration and religion remain minimal, often focusing on the 'running away' experience of women. Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork in San Pablo City (Southern Tagalog province of Laguna, Philippines) carried out between 2006 and 2007, this article explores the migration decisions, economic strategies and familial sacrifices that women make when faced with domestic violence.

The patriarchal ideologies and institutions underlying structural inequality and gender-based discrimination govern the extent to which Filipino women and their interests are reflected in the legal system. Using feminist approaches to law, human rights, ethnography and poetry, I "probe[s] beyond the realm of filial piety and finances" to understand how "something wrong at home" could cause women to leave the Philippines as migrant workers.<sup>1</sup> Despite the opportunities for self-transformation and empowerment from labour migration, women continue to struggle transnationally as they move from one form of abuse to another.

## Colonial and Catholic constructions of gender

The roots of violence against women as a form of gender-based discrimination can be traced to Spanish and American colonization and its introduction of the male-centred and male-dominated religion of Roman Catholicism. Spanish colonizers used the religion to facilitate their rule over the local people. Laws such as the institutionalization of property ownership, passed during this time, deprived women of their independence. The legal rights given to men subsequently made women dependent, even subordinate, to male figures in their.

In her poem, *Ang Pagiging Babae ay Pamumuhay sa Panahong Digma* [To Be a Woman is to Live at a Time of War], the Filipino poet, scholar and activist, Joi Barrios, writes: "I grew up with fear beside me/Uncertain of a future/Hinged/To the men of my life:/Father, brother/Husband, son."<sup>2</sup> Like Chandra Mohanty who points out that women are "constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion, and other ideological institutions and frameworks,"<sup>3</sup> Barrios describes how Filipino women and their lives are defined in relation to men. Similar to Dianne Otto's view that women, as depicted in the text of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966, are constructed in "procreative and heterosexual terms as mother and wife and as inevitably subject to and dependent on 'men' in their various forms: individually as fathers and husbands and collectively as the State, the military";<sup>4</sup> and I would include the Church as well as Barrios illustrates Catholicism's strong influence, that is, the 'fear' it imposes in women's lives. The poem also points to the Church's protective and paternalistic ideology that places controls on women's future movements, a 'hinge' that restricts their education to rudimentary reading and arithmetic, home crafts, the Christian doctrine and to any wishes and whims made by the men in their lives.

American colonial rule in the Philippines did very little to eradicate the patriarchal norms, beliefs and practices introduced by the Spanish colonizers. The American schooling system maintained the same sexual division of labour and even encouraged women to pursue careers that were compatible with their 'womanly' qualities. The socialization of Filipino women, consequently, placed an emphasis and primacy on the female reproductive role as mother, wife and daughter. Cultural beliefs further intensified the necessity for regulating the mobility of females to the private sphere of the home. Using their physical weakness and their 'dangerous' reproductive capacity as justification for protection, rural females were discouraged from roaming freely outside or even within their *barangay* (village). Thus, the American colonial education laid great emphasis on Castilian values and norms of sexual behaviour, such that the practice of monogamy and chastity prevails today. Tellingly, prior to RA 9262, rape was classified as a crime against chastity and was a private offense, which implied that the women who had been violated became unchaste and that only the chaste could be violated. Courts tended to treat these as crimes of lust and passion, conveniently excusing the rampant violations against women and disregarding their basic rights in the process. With RA 9262, rape is now classified as a crime against persons and is considered a public offense.

The heterosexual and patriarchal beliefs that prevail over family formation, personal relations and cultural, spiritual and political practices in the Philippines demonstrate not only the limited extent of the legal system to capture the multiple identities and intersectionality of women's lives and voices, but also indexes the wide extent to which the 'public' continues to be prioritized over the 'private'. By essentializing women to a common experience and identity, and privileging male hegemony over public life, gender discrimination remains the unresolved issue in the close connection between gender-based violence and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In other words, the major forms of disenfranchisement, exclusion and oppression of women are bound to the disadvantages they suffer in cultural, social and economic realms. As Barrios writes in her poem, "... the cruelty of war/ Lies not on heads that roll/But tables always empty" – a stark reminder that we must also "look at poverty's face". Below, I argue that Filipino women are resilient, turning to opportunities outside of the home and nation for the physical safety, psychological comfort and even financial security that they cannot fully gain domestically through legal means.

## Transnational sites of struggle and sacrifice

"To be a woman", as Neferti Tadiar states in her reading of Barrios' poem, "is a way of life in a time of war; it is to make a living out of conditions of war", such that "women's being as a living... [is] an active undertaking". If we further read the "conditions of war" as being the colonial and Catholic ideologies and institutions that structure women's lives, then women's "being and becoming are cast as a form of work and survival as well as the practice of defiance under general, socialized terror".<sup>5</sup> That is, as Barrios reveals: "No moment/Is without danger/At home/To speak, to defy/Is to challenge violence itself/On the street/Walking at nightfall/Is to invite a stranger's attack/In my country/To fight against oppression/Is to lay down one's life for the struggle." The fear that comes from colonial and Catholic forces is, therefore, turned into a direct "challenge [of] violence itself," which requires a recognition that one's own body and life is the site of such a fight and that the transformative struggle must actively take place both at home and in society. As Barrios declares: "I seek to know this war/To be a woman is a never ceasing struggle/To live and be free despite the danger, terror and fear." "To speak, to defy", however, is clearly a risk-taking activity that Tadiar suggests is "brought about precisely by the gambling gestures women make" to reclaim futures and achieve another destiny that are not defined by the men in their lives.

Laura<sup>6</sup> is a woman who dared to "make a living" out of abusive conditions by following in the footsteps of her mother. At the time of my fieldwork, Laura was 30 years old and had just returned to the Philippines after leaving behind her four young boys at home with their father while she worked as a domestic helper in France for three years. It was not until she was married that her husband started taking drugs and became physically and verbally abusive. Because she loved her husband, Laura put up with him, eventually becoming addicted to drugs herself. Ultimately, she sought help for her addiction and realizing what her life had become, Laura decided to escape her abusive husband by going abroad like her mother, who had left her at the age of seven. When she returned to the Philippines, she was forced to separate from her husband and is now waiting to return to Europe, to her mother and siblings who are also there. Despite finding a solution to the domestic violence at home, Laura is tempted not only by the increased monthly income she would earn as an overseas Filipino worker, but also by the future opportunities and possibilities it affords.

While the labour migration would mean leaving behind her children again, it is a sacrifice Laura has chosen to make, saying she has many dreams not for herself but, rather, for her family. "When I was a child," Laura recounts, "my dream was to have a good home... I don't want my children to experience the hardships of life." She states, "OFWs work abroad for the sake of their family and loved ones. Because of the difficulties of life, we think we have to leave the family and migrate to other countries and work there." Like Laura, another woman who chose to escape the physical abuse meted out by her husband is Maria, 46 years old, who left the Philippines to work in Saudi Arabia. However, on a visit back to the Philippines,

she chose to go back to her husband. At first, everything seemed better so she stayed, opening up a little tindahan (small grocery store) to help support her three children who had remained in the Philippines; but then the abuse started again. Eventually Maria separated from her husband and went back to Saudi Arabia.

In a community with a long history of family migration to France, Spain, Italy and Saudi Arabia, going abroad is seen as a viable and convenient alternative to abusive relationships, especially with poor economic conditions and limited legal rights at home in Catholic Philippines, where divorce is illegal. Thus, the decision by Laura and Maria to become OFWs rather than abused wives at home proclaims that they are willing to escape abuse in search of a better life elsewhere even though labour migration does not wholly promise liberation or happiness. Many female migrant workers explain their decision to go abroad in terms of *pakikipagsapalaran*, or fate playing. This is an act of faith, where one risks and gambles on the chance of another future, of a different life hopefully free from abuse.<sup>7</sup>

It may be the opportunities for self-transformation they find in their countries of destination that empower them to return back to the Philippines and articulate their grievances. The increased incomes and possibilities for

The Church [holds a] protective and paternalistic ideology that places controls on women's future movements, a 'hinge' that restricts their education to rudimentary reading and arithmetic, home crafts, the Christian doctrine and to any wishes and whims made by the men in their lives.





## Transnational sites of struggle and sacrifice

a relationship free from violence, in addition to the mere act of leaving home or 'running away', became a kind of 'leveraging tool' through which women, like Laura and Maria, are able to negotiate the conditions of their domestic situations and to separate from their abusive husbands. In this empowered transformation, they undermine what Ratna Kapur has criticized as the image production of a "truncated Third World woman who is sexually constrained, tradition-bound, incarcerated in the home, illiterate and poor."<sup>8</sup> Instead, Laura and Maria represent a growing group of women from low-income families who are educated, mobile and participating in the global economy.

### Conclusion

Filipino women have long gambled on the prospect of better lives, taking risks in spite of their fears. Women, who choose to defy traditional gendered expectations and obligations in order to fight against oppressive abuse or poverty by migrating for work overseas, are more likely to face guilt and come up against criticism than to encounter praise for their initiative from those who control and normalize regimes of power and knowledge. Discourses on the traditional and ideal family remain strong and calls for its stability echo throughout the nation, from the media to the classrooms. Such media representations and national discourses vilify and shame migrating women, allowing the public an opportunity to further morally discipline women and resist changes in gender equality, family formation and household structure. As Arjun Appadurai observes, globalization has commonly led to "ideas about gender and modernity that create large female work forces at the same time that cross-national ideologies of 'culture', 'authenticity', and national honor put increasing pressure on various communities to morally discipline working women."<sup>9</sup> Filipino women, who migrate to challenge the very violence of unequal relations and conditions that Barrios suggests create their "... never ceasing struggle/To live and be free", are unable then to elude the traditional gender roles to which they are ascribed.

**Below: Church gates, Philippines. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of flickr.**

Transnational migration, consequently, is a contradictory process, exacting both freedom and costs in a "cosmic gamble of fate."<sup>10</sup> In confronting the contradictions between the ideals of a dominant Western feminism and the lives of women in non-Western societies, Lila Abu-Lughod asks: "What does freedom mean if we accept the fundamental premise that humans are social beings, always raised in certain social and historical contexts and belonging to particular communities that shape their desires and understandings of the world?"<sup>11</sup> Tadiar replies that "communities are not simply given but, indeed, shaped by and called into being by the very cultural practices of freedom and power that Filipinas exercise through their imaginative and bodily capacities."<sup>12</sup> To lessen domestic violence in the barangay, community members must pay attention to the actions of women like Laura and Maria, who choose to leave rather than find solutions and support from within their communities.

For women who do leave violent relationships, it is indeed a gamble to migrate and leave their children behind with the abusive father, especially if social services, government offices and legal laws are unavailable or ineffective. Women, therefore, face the cruel decision of staying at home or leaving, one struggle of being a woman – per Barrios' definition – "at a time of war". As women choose to migrate from home to work abroad, the risk does not seem to bring a clear benefit to women. Instead, as women struggle transnationally – still hinged – they move from one form of abuse to another with the patriarchal beliefs and spirituality that first structured the discrimination they are subject to in cultural, social, economic and legal realms, now ironically resurging as a coping measure, reaffirming their suffering and sacrifice as they free themselves from unbearable conditions of violence and poverty. "Religious faith," Laura poignantly expresses, "is important, You turn to 'Him' in times of trouble and when you are very down."

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### Notes

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# Investigating intimate violence: A problem of law

In 1995, domestic violence surfaced as a problem in Singapore. The awareness of the issue came in the form of the Family Violence Bill introduced to the Singapore Parliament that year. Fundamentally, the bill would give the police greater power to arrest an abuser without a warrant or court order, making it a *seizable offence* provided for by the Singapore Penal and Criminal Procedure Code. The state's response was clear – it feared that the bill would introduce litigation at an early stage, leading to the disintegration of the family.

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DESPITE THIS FAILURE to have the bill passed as law, the Singapore Police Force's willingness to improve the policing of domestic violence can be traced to the implementation of the Domestic Violence Project at a police division later the same year. This project, organized around an elaborate network comprising the police and social service agencies, was essentially an administrative set-up designed to assist victims of domestic violence in making a formal complaint.

Under the scheme, the police referred the victim in non-seizable (non-arrestable) cases to a Family Service Centre (FSC) for counselling. The counsellor at the FSC then worked closely with the Neighbourhood Police Officer on one of the two options available: to prosecute the offender (a criminal perspective) or to monitor the victim's progress (a social work perspective). A significant development in the implementation of the Domestic Violence Project was the extension of the socio-legal control mechanisms that dealt with the problem of marital violence and the empowerment of FSCs to act as 'official gatekeepers' of domestic cases of assault that entered the criminal justice system.

A notable legislative development arising from this police initiative was the Amendments to the Women's Charter (Chapter 353) that came into effect in May 1997. The application of a protection order was extended to other family members including former spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, siblings, relatives and incapacitated persons besides the 'traditional' categories of spouse and children. The definition of 'violence' was also broadened to include intimidation, continual harassment or restraining someone against his/her will. Significantly, a breach of the conditions of any of the Protection Orders – Personal Protection Order, Personal Protection Order with Exclusion Order and Expedited Order – was made a seizable (arrestable) offence (except for failure to attend compulsory counselling sessions which remains non-seizable).

To rank-and-file police officers, however, these changes implied marginal *operational* differences to the way most police officers responded to and investigated domestic violence. The disjunction between 'street-level' policing and 'managerial' policing raised some serious questions about the effectiveness of police or legislative reforms. Not only did it question the policies of various land divisions, the quality of training, and the effectiveness of police supervision and accountability systems, but it also cast doubt on the entire reform process as it related to making the police more responsive to marital violence.

To better conceptualize the issue of rank-and-file *decisions to avoid arrest*, feminist criminologists, in particular, have developed a perspective where they specifically seek to examine and delineate aspects of rank-and-file police culture that seem to determine handling of domestic situations. Studies using this perspective essentially presuppose that a negative police response, conceptualized as one equivalent to perfunctory or 'non-arrest' intervention, is reflective of the normative values achieved during the process of social and organizational socialization of the police. A notable feature of this rank-and-file police culture, which most studies have highlighted, is the perception that attending to domestic situations is not an 'appropriate' police duty. Although I subscribe to the basic premise of the cultural perspective that 'no-arrest' outcomes are reflections of normative values developed and sustained by rank-and-file police culture, I argue that an all-powerful and deterministic conception of police subculture *alone* fails to adequately explain and account for rank-and-file officers' *decisions of arrest*.

Using Pierre Bourdieu's relational concepts of "habitus" and "field", I argue for a need to take into account *both* the cultural dispositions of police subculture and structural conditions of policing to understand police response to domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> By structural conditions of policing, I am referring to the social, political and legal contexts in which the policing of domestic violence takes place in Singapore.

## Conceptualizing police response to domestic violence

Theoretically, although my observations of police decisions of *arrest* and *non-arrest* were largely congruent with the findings of situational theorists that combinations of variables, data gathered through qualitative methodologies of observation and case-study was instrumental in developing a perspective that focused on the *meanings* patrolmen attached to these variables. As much as these meanings were constructed and sustained by the police occupational culture, they were equally acquiescent to 'triggering' factors encountered within the political, social and legal context in which they exist, thus explaining the (seemingly) equivocal police response to domestic violence situations.

Examining the context in which police intervention occurred in domestic violence situations – and in a way that generated so few arrests – required an analysis as well as an explanation from the level of *interactions* (everyday policing encounters) to that of *structures* (context in which everyday policing was to be situated). Although police officers exhibited reservations at having to deal with domestic violence cases and offered resistance to incorporating it into the ranks of 'real crimes', the low arrest rate arising from domestic violence cases could not *solely* be attributed to the organized (cultural) resistance and circumvention strategies displayed by officers on the ground. That the majority of domestic violence cases did not result in arrest was a direct consequence of officers *merely* satisfying the statutory requirements of the law – most cases did indeed *legally* fall into the non-seizable category where the police cannot initiate arrest without a warrant.

The central (legal) categories for the operational policing of family violence are drawn from provisions available in the generic category of "hurt" under Chapter 224 of the Singapore Penal Code. Typically, the definition of a 'domestic violence incident' is based upon the classification of the incident as "voluntarily causing hurt" (VCH) under Section 323 (where the police cannot arrest without a warrant) or "voluntarily causing grievous hurt" (VCGH) under Section 325 (where the police can arrest without a warrant). My data reveals that the bulk of all family violence cases did not result in arrest because they could not justify the very 'exclusionary' definition of "voluntarily causing grievous hurt". For a case of violence to be defined as 'grievous hurt', the victim has to satisfy one of the following conditions: (a) emasculation; (b) permanent privation of the sight of either eye; (c) permanent privation of the hearing of either ear; (d) privation of any member or joint; (e) destruction or permanent impairing of the powers of any member or joint; (f) permanent disfiguration of the head or face; (g) fracture or dislocation of a bone; (h) any hurt which endangers life, or which causes the sufferer to be, during the space of 20 days, in severe bodily pain, or unable to follow his ordinary pursuits.<sup>2</sup>

A consequence of this very 'exclusionary' classification, lop-sided if you like, is that most cases of domestic violence are diverted from the criminalization process. This probably would explain why the 'referral' and 'advice' roles of the police have to be incorporated, institutionalized and legitimated within the operational framework.

## Victims' experiences of domestic violence policing

There is a predominance of the victim-choice model in conceptualizing the majority of victims' relationships with the police where the victim must display an initiative throughout the criminal justice process to prosecute the abuser in court. The institutionalization of a victim-choice approach by the Singapore police, however, could be challenged on several different grounds. First, it allowed individual victims to decide what may be best for them without considering the impact of non-prosecution on perpetrators and victims of marital violence in general. Second, the idea that the police should act on women's choices also presupposed that women could achieve the 'right' decision without accurate information,



support and advice. It assumes that the social and structural context that victims of violence inhabit is conducive to 'free choice' and that they are able to express their wishes uncoerced – both structurally and interpersonally. Third, the victim-choice approach also exposes women to the manipulation of others – perpetrators, police officers and family members – who might have an interest in the criminal justice process not being invoked.

My own perspective on this is that this effect comes about because of the way officers, especially patrolmen, marshal the institutionalized categories at their disposal. Of particular importance here, are the categories set up as polarities: 'victim' and 'suspect'; 'innocent' and 'guilty'; 'no-crime' and 'crime'. These terms are, perhaps, familiar to most people, but they perform a special function in the semantic network of police work. Within the confines of operational response and subsequent processing of a domestic violence incident, there must be both a 'suspect' and 'victim'. However, if the person with injuries in a domestic incident does not wish to step into the labelled box of a 'victim', it is difficult for the police to process the incident as a 'criminal' one. To the officers on the ground, such cases amounted to "victim failing to substantiate an allegation", an analytical as well as an operational category that functions as a hinge between the polarities of 'victim' and 'suspect', 'guilty' and 'innocent', 'no-crime' and 'crime', before the case is admitted into or evicted from the police system. Thus, the policing of domestic violence becomes essentially a problematic category because the protracted and complex situation in which the violence takes place between known individuals makes it difficult to readily identify an offender and victim from the perspective of the police and as warranted by formal procedures.

Contrasting the 'victim-choice' model is the 'pro-arrest' policy, which occupies a position at the other extreme of the continuum of police response. A major irony in the case of domestic violence as far as the Singaporean experience is



If the person with injuries in a domestic incident does not wish to step into the labelled box of a 'victim', it is difficult for the police to process the incident as a 'criminal' one.

Police intervention in cases of domestic violence in Singapore occurs within a specific political regime and within the boundaries defined by the authoritarian and 'hetero-patriarchal' state.

In a paternalistic discourse, protection takes precedence over empowerment or equal treatment.



concerned is that a victim tends to lose her choice the moment she exercises it (by seeking a Protection Order for instance) as the 'system' assumes control of the criminal justice process henceforth with little regard for the victim's needs.

#### State discourse on the limits of police intervention

As a whole, the discourse surrounding police intervention in cases of domestic violence in Singapore occurs within a specific political regime and within the boundaries defined by the authoritarian and 'hetero-patriarchal' state. In a paternalistic discourse, protection takes precedence over empowerment or equal treatment. An analysis of the Family Violence Bill provides an excellent opportunity to appreciate the state's perspective on police intervention in domestic violence. The bill was rejected after 30 days on the grounds that it would introduce litigation at an early stage, which could be detrimental to the family.

Given the Singapore government's desire to promote the family as the "building block of society" and its constant warnings against "decadent western values" – thought to pose a threat to the wellbeing of the family – a Family Violence Bill that did not accept the state's defined role for the family was deemed problematic. This was particularly evident in light of the state's intent to ensure the preservation of the family unit whose role is clearly prescribed in the White Paper: "the family is seen as the 'fundamental building block' out of which larger social structures can be stably constructed".<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the strategy adopted by proponents of the bill was to avoid making it solely a women's issue, but rather one in which whoever takes to violence should be stopped.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis on women's rights and needs makes the Singapore state uncomfortable because it does not deny either being a patriarchal state or supporting the patriarchal family. For women's needs to be addressed, they have to be made politically relevant by locating those needs within the context of the family.

The Singapore Parliament. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of flickr.

Feminists in Singapore, and proponents of the bill in particular, were compelled in a sense to accept and participate within the dominant political discourse that maps out the state's locations for 'women' and women's role in the 'family'. They were also confined by the state's definition of legitimate actors who may introduce such an issue and legitimate strategies that emphasize negotiation and consensus-finding.

The strategy of using the law as a tool to legislate protection for victims of violence was interpreted as a more Western and confrontational way of solving issues instead of "a more Asian and less legalistic way of sorting out family problems".<sup>5</sup> There is again a creation of categories: one Western and litigious and detrimental to the family and the other Asian and consensus-seeking, displaying a concern for the preservation of the family.

#### Conclusion

Given the desire of the Singapore State to promote the family as a 'building block of society', it should, therefore, come as no surprise that 'radical' reforms such as mandatory and presumptive arrest policies do not even enter the debate on local reforms. Reformers who wish to place family violence on the political agenda have to ensure that the issues discussed and measures suggested do not contradict the state's view on the role of the family in Singapore society. Consequently, this leads reformers to abandon their philosophical views on *empowering* women as a strategy against male violence and choose *protection* from the state instead.

Choosing protection, however, subjects women to further abuse. Leaving protection to the state – both as motivator and dispenser of that protection – is equally problematic since it may, through the organization of the police, set boundaries to what constitutes violence. In responding to women who report violence, the police are involved in a (social) process of defining which attacks are to be criminalized and made arrestable and which are to be condoned and 'no-crimes'. The categorization

of violence into seizable and non-seizable offences, for example, which informs patrolmen to make an immediate arrest or not, is a classic illustration of how the police make a distinction between violence they deem justifiable and violence they deem as requiring police attention.

A consequence of this process of defining and categorizing violence is the separation of victims into those 'deserving' and 'undeserving' of police attention. Thus, the police do not offer unconditional protection to *all* victims against *all* forms of violence, but rather any protection they offer is conditional upon victims meeting police notions of 'deservedness' and the circumstances of the attack meeting their definition of 'crime'. It is through the policing of violence, to achieve a degree of *general order*, that the social divisions of class, race, gender and sexuality – *stratified order* – are reproduced in Singapore society.

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#### Notes

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# The Indonesian family as a contested site of women's rights<sup>1</sup>

Patriarchal religion and culture are embedded in various family laws, such as the 1974 Marriage Law. The socio-political context that allows fundamentalism to grow and influences the law-making process further weakens women's position in the family and society. Fundamentalist groups managed to influence law makers at the local level to such an extent that by the end of 2011, 207 regional by-laws used 'traditional' cultural values and religious teachings as their sources; 78 of these were discriminative towards women.<sup>2</sup> Lack of capacity among legal authorities and failure of the institution (the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection)<sup>3</sup> mandated by law to uphold the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) adopted in 2004, also create impunity and limit female victims of domestic violence from exercising their rights and accessing justice.

Nursyahbani Katjasungkana

## The 2004 Domestic Violence Act: some progressive provisions

Article 15 of the DVA requires that each person is to the best of his/her ability obliged to: a) prevent a criminal act, b) protect the victim, c) provide emergency assistance, and d) facilitate the process of requesting a protection order. Domestic violence is no longer a private matter but a public concern.

DVA stipulations are regulations for the following reasons. Firstly, an integrated approach is used, which is not only a deterrent, since it criminalizes the perpetrator, but also contains some preventive and rehabilitative provisions that emphasize support to victims. Secondly, the DVA definition includes all members related by blood, marriage or employment (in the case of domestic helpers) and living under the same roof. Article 2 of the DVA provides protection to: 1) husband, wife and child/ren and 2) persons living in the same household as the individuals (as stated in 1) and who are related by blood, breastfeeding,<sup>4</sup> guardianship or custody. Persons who work in the household are also considered family members for as long as they live under the same roof.

Thirdly, Paragraph 10 of Chapter IV of the DVA deals with the rights of victims, including a) protection from family members, police, prosecutors, courts, lawyers, social institutions or other parties, whether on a temporary

basis or based on court orders; b) access to health services according to medical needs; c) special treatment to maintain confidentiality of the victim; d) welfare and legal assistance at all levels of the investigation, according to existing laws; and e) religious guidance/spiritual counselling. The social institutions referred to are the organizations concerned with the issue of domestic violence, for example, legal aid groups. Social workers are those who are formally trained or those who have practical experience in social work. This means that the issue of gender-based violence, materialized in the DVA as well as other conventions related to the elimination of gender-based violence, must be included in the curricula of legal aid, social work, health and legal education.

Fourthly, the victim protection principle is further strengthened by a stipulation known as the protection order (Article 16 Paragraph 3), which rejects the perception that the DVA tends to cause family breakups and a high rate of divorce. A protection order can be requested on behalf of the victim; similarly, a restraining order can be requested against perpetrators. Fifthly, Articles 5 and 6 of the DVA define violence to include physical, psychological and sexual violence.

Sixthly, the DVA introduced economic abuse or economic neglect. Article 9 of the DVA states that 1) it is forbidden to neglect persons living in the same household; as it is

stipulated by laws, consensus or agreement that a person is obligated to provide a livelihood, care or maintenance to those persons living in the same household; 2) neglect as referred to in Paragraph 1 also applies to all persons who cause economic dependence by limiting and/or forbidding other persons within the household from working or earning a suitable income within or outside the household, such that they become victims under his control.

## The struggle for the law: transformative legal aid and the triangle of empowerment

APIK, or the network of offices of feminist lawyers, has used the concept "transformative legal aid" since 1995. A legal case is used as an entry point to look at women's experiences in dealing with the legal system and those experiences are used as research data and translated into policy advice. APIK also uses the concept of the triangle of empowerment in which civil society, parliament (feminist politicians) and government (femocrats) together play a critical role in drafting and advocacy.<sup>5</sup> This triangle, when it works well, bridges civil society and the state, articulating women's demands, translating them into policy issues and fighting to get political support for their agenda.

During the first year of its formation in 1995, APIK handled 111 cases, 65 percent of which were domestic violence cases. The difficulty in handling them was mainly attributed to the lack of awareness - not only among victims but also among law enforcers, religious leaders, family members and the public in general - that domestic violence is a crime. APIK demonstrated that the only legal regulation on sexual assault in the Criminal Code was very ineffective.

The most contentious aspect of advocating the DVA was the culture and belief system, especially in the Muslim community.<sup>6</sup> Indonesia has some 300 ethnic groups, all with their own spiritual traditions and customs. Most of them share the notion of women's subordination. Women's economic dependence on men is another factor that made it difficult to punish perpetrators of domestic violence.

In 1997, APIK organized a seminar on "The Social and Legal Responses toward Domestic Violence". The outcome was a mandate to APIK to begin the process of formulating a draft of the DVA.<sup>7</sup> APIK then conducted media campaigns to promote monthly activities that enabled abused women to report grievances. Policy studies were conducted to compare the Indonesian Criminal Justice Code with domestic violence acts in Malaysia, Turkey, Australia and the United States. Life stories of female victims of domestic violence and their experiences in dealing with the legal system were also collated.<sup>8</sup> Some of these activities were organized under the auspices of the National Commission on Violence Against

Indonesia has some 300 ethnic groups, all with their own spiritual traditions and customs. Most of them share the notion of women's subordination. Women's economic dependence on men is another factor that made it difficult to punish perpetrators of domestic violence.





Women, following its formation in 1998. The final outcome was a draft of the DVA as well as an academic paper produced by the drafting team in collaboration with the Centre for Gender and Law Studies of Brawijaya University in East Java. These were then disseminated and discussed in several cities in Indonesia.

In 2002, the engagement of law makers started. The draft of the DVA (the bill) was submitted to the Indonesian Parliament and the Indonesian Government by APIK's Coalition. Regretfully, there was no response by the government, represented by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWE & CP), although parliament members were actively involved in reviewing the draft. As the legislating process was going on, lobbying and campaigning activities continued. The parliament finally enacted the DVA on 14 September 2004.

#### Implementation of the DVA and access to justice

The UNDP defines access to justice as "the ability of people to seek and obtain a remedy through formal or informal institutions of justice and in conformity with human rights standards".<sup>9</sup> APIK conducted a desk study that concluded access to justice is not guaranteed by the state. The 2006 UNDP conceptual framework sets normative standards. All laws and procedures must be in place and understood by duty and claim holders. The DVA must be understood by legal authorities, other institutions mandated by the law and claim holders. However, the government has no national action plan to implement the DVA. The failure of the MoWE & CP, as coordinator, in upholding the DVA also contributes to the lack of understanding of legal authorities, service providers and claim holders.

A second requirement is legal awareness by victims of domestic abuse, which enables them to have a better understanding of the legal aspect of their case and of the circumstances that triggered the abuse. In Indonesia, the public's familiarity with the law and legal processes is generally very low. This also applies to awareness of the DVA. Since its enactment, few initiatives have been undertaken to improve the public's knowledge about the DVA. These efforts are inadequate in view of Indonesia's population of more than 240 million, its large geographical area, and the low level of legal awareness especially among women.

The third component is access to appropriate forums, either formal or informal. The availability of legal remedies and legal awareness alone is not sufficient for women to gain access to justice. Victims must have access to forums or other forms of mediation through mechanisms that are in their interest. Law enforcement agencies must also facilitate victims' access to justice and be open to accepting

Below: Conducting a wedding prayer, Indonesia.

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domestic abuse cases. The dual court system - *shariah* and general court - and the dichotomy between the civil and the criminal court systems, are a major obstacle for abused women in their quest for justice. The criminal court system is oriented towards punishment, while family members are often influenced by cultural and religious interpretations as well as economic considerations (the possible absence of the breadwinner).

A problem is that although the definition of 'family' in Article 2 of the DVA is quite broad, people with non-normative gender identities or sexual orientation, as well as couples who have not registered their marriage, and children who are considered illegitimate, face various obstacles in accessing legal remedies provided by the DVA. The long and complicated criminal procedure is also a barrier for abused women. It may take months or even years for the court to give its verdict. This makes the procedure very costly because of court and lawyer fees; free legal aid for women is limited and mostly located in big cities.

The fourth component in the 2006 UNDP framework is access to effective handling of grievances and provisions of remedies. It implies that duty bearers or legal enforcers and service providers must take necessary action to provide remedies for a grievance. Our study shows that it is difficult for victims to access such services. The DVA gives victims the right to health, social, spiritual, psychological and legal services. However, we found that these services were not available in many locations. Even where they were available, law enforcers might not provide relevant information or might withhold these services from the victims. The management of a case is considered effective when law enforcement agents and service providers take the appropriate action to resolve abuse cases. The results of monitoring activities by Rifka Annisa and LBH APIK Jakarta in 2009 indicated that law enforcers and service providers were not adequately carrying out their duties and taking appropriate action to help victims, including the most basic action such as issuing a protection order.<sup>10</sup>

The fifth component is satisfactory remedies obtained. A legal settlement is considered satisfactory, from the point of view of abuse victims, when all procedures are carried out in accordance with the DVA and human rights standards are fulfilled. An investigation by the Centre for Human Rights Studies at Padang University concluded that legal resolutions on domestic abuse cases are still not satisfactory.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the requirements stipulated in the 2006 UNDP Conceptual Framework on Access to Justice are generally not fulfilled in Indonesia.

#### Conflicting laws and regulations

Apart from the problems noted above, the DVA conflicts with other laws, especially the 1974 Marriage Law. There are also contradictions between the DVA and the many regional by-laws promulgated after the adoption of a policy of regional autonomy in 2001. Similarly, the influential 1991 Compilation of Islamic Laws and the Labour Law contains provisions that make access to justice for victims of DVA difficult.

The 1974 Marriage Law limits a domestic relationship to that between husband and wife and between parent and child. It stipulates an unequal relationship between men and women through a rigid division of labour by which a husband is the head of the family and main wage earner and a wife is the household caretaker (Article 31 in conjunction with Article 34). This Marriage Law regulation can inspire men to prohibit women from working outside the house, which is considered an economic abuse by the DVA.

The provision that gives husbands the right to adopt and practice polygamy,<sup>12</sup> as stipulated in the 1974 Marriage Law in Article 3 (2), is not only discriminatory but also male-biased, as it places the woman as a household caretaker who must serve her husband's sexual needs, a producer of children who is not allowed to be sick (Article 4 (2)). The Criminal Code (Articles 278 and 279) considers marriage while in another marital relationship a criminal act or a marital crime. However, polygamous marriages are seldom exposed by law enforcers. The 1991 Compilation of Islamic Laws determines that a marriage can be substantiated if the following requirements are fulfilled: a) bridegroom, b) bride, c) a male relative or guardian of bride, d) two witnesses and e) marriage solemnization. The groom must also pay a dowry or *mahr*. Without civil registration, however, the marriage is not legal according to the Marriage Law. In an 'unofficial' marriage, the woman and children have no legal recourse in terms of claiming income, assets and the 'husband's' inheritance.

#### Conceptual contestations

In Indonesia, the family is seen as the fundamental unit of the society; this is legalized in the 1974 Marriage Law. Compounded by Islamic teachings and patriarchal customs this leads to a culture of silence where different kinds of discrimination and violence experienced by women go unvoiced. APIK's Coalition is fully aware of the importance of the family in Indonesian society. For that reason, even while using the principles of gender equality, human rights

and non-discrimination, the 'save our family' discourse was consciously incorporated as a core value in promoting and advocating the domestic violence bill. Gender-neutral wording such as 'anyone' or 'victim' were used to convince the opponents of the bill that it would protect all family members, including men. APIK's Coalition also took into consideration the situation of domestic workers who may be abused by their female employers who treat them as family property. This is why APIK's Coalition used the term 'domestic violence' rather than 'family violence'. APIK's Coalition was able to convince society, government and the opponents of the bill that the law on domestic violence was not meant to send a husband to jail or to make a criminal case, but that it was built on values of equality, peace and unity within the family, also known in Islam as maintaining a 'harmonious family' (*keluarga sakinah*, a safe and peaceful family). The success of APIK's Coalition in advocating the DVA means that the rigid separation of the domestic and the public arena was broken down.

#### Conclusion

The notion that domestic violence is an internal family problem or a private matter reinforces the tendency to resolve such abuse within the family or by customary law. The silence around domestic violence and the inability of victims to report the abuse they experience are linked to the weak structural position of women vis-à-vis their husbands, their families and the public at large, due to the prevalence of gender stereotyping in Indonesian society. Various policies and laws further formalize gender stereotyping. The public's perception that it is an honour for a woman to be a wife and a mother, and that a mother's primary role is manager of the household (as defined in the Marriage Law) tends to influence victims of abuse to remain dependent - economically, socially and emotionally - on the perpetrators of abuse. These norms have been legalized into various laws and policies.

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#### Notes

- 1 This article is based on LBH APIK's experiences, a study on the implementation of the DVA conducted by the Kartini Asia Network/APIK (2009) and a follow up desk study.
- 2 See Komnas Perempuan. 2011. *Annual Report on Violence Against Women*, Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan
- 3 In 2000 the Ministry for Women's Affairs was renamed the Ministry of Women's Empowerment, under the progressive Muslim Minister Khofifah Indar Parawansa. In 2009 'Children's Protection' was added to the name.
- 4 According to Islamic law, when a child is breastfed by a woman other than its mother, its status is the same as a biological child.
- 5 Wieringa, S.E. & Vargas, V. 1998. 'The Triangle of Women's Empowerment', in G.A. Nijeholt, V. Vargas & S.E. Wieringa (eds.) 1998. *Women's Movements and Public Policy in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean*, New York and London: Garland, pp 3-25 (p.3)
- 6 Munir, L.Z. 2005. 'Domestic Violence in Indonesia', *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights* 2(1):1-37; Munti, R.B. 1997. 'Pemukulan Istri dalam Perspektif Islam' [Wife Battering from the Perspective of Islam], *APIK Bulletin* 5:7-9.
- 7 We extend our thanks to NOVIB, the Ford Foundation, USAID and other funding agencies and individuals/organizations, that we cannot list individually, for enabling APIK to produce a six-year strategic plan and formulate a draft of the DVA until it was enacted as the DVA No 23/2004.
- 8 Katjasungkana, N. & A. Damanik (eds). 2004. *Studi kasus kekerasan domestik: Kejahatan yang tak dihukum [Case studies on domestic violence, crimes without punishment]*, Jakarta: LBH APIK Jakarta.
- 9 UNDP. 2006. *Programming for Justice: Access for All - A Practitioner's Guide to a Human Rights-Based Approach to Access to Justice*, Asia-Pacific Rights and Justice Initiative, UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok (p.5); (accessible from <http://tinyurl.com/UNDP2006>)
- 10 Rifka Annisa is a women's organization established in 1993 in Jogjakarta (Central Java). It provides legal services and has a crisis centre for victims of domestic violence. LBH APIK (Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan/Indonesian Women's Association for Justice) is a legal aid society that provides free legal assistance to poor women and does advocacy work or legal reform. The 2004 DVA is a result of the advocacy of LBH APIK from 1995-2004.
- 11 Data was obtained from a researcher at the Centre for Human Rights Studies, Padang University. The results of this investigation were requested by the Judicial Commission to evaluate the promotion of judges; for this reason, the researcher has requested that his/her name be excluded.
- 12 The appropriate term is polygyny, because the right to polygamy (marriage to many partners) is only given to husbands and not to wives.

The silence around domestic violence and the inability of victims to report the abuse they experience are linked to the weak structural position of women vis-à-vis their husbands, their families and the public at large, due to the prevalence of gender stereotyping in Indonesian society.

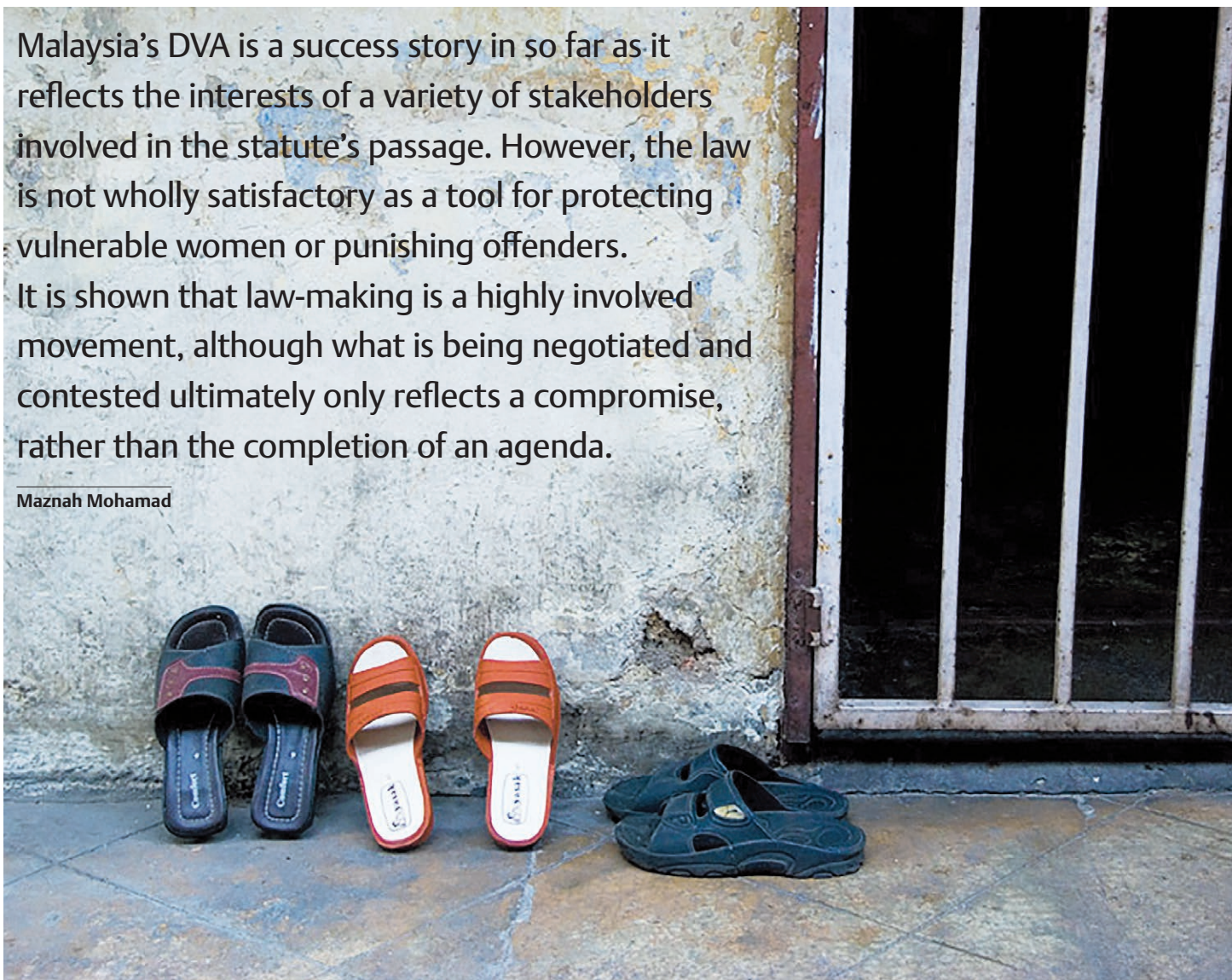


# Malaysia's DVA: the clash of gender, cultural and religious rights

Malaysia's DVA is a success story in so far as it reflects the interests of a variety of stakeholders involved in the statute's passage. However, the law is not wholly satisfactory as a tool for protecting vulnerable women or punishing offenders.

It is shown that law-making is a highly involved movement, although what is being negotiated and contested ultimately only reflects a compromise, rather than the completion of an agenda.

Maznah Mohamad



## Violence undefined

In the pre-DVA years, the legal system, either Syariah or civil, treated violence against married women as mere matrimonial misconduct rather than an offence punishable by law. The Married Women Ordinance 1957 considered a man and a woman in marriage to be one person and, therefore, not entitled to damage claims against one another when an injury is inflicted upon their persons (or body). This law allowed the couple to sue one another if there was damage to their *property*, but not to their *bodies or reputation!* Yet another legislation that worked against Muslim women at that time was the separation of civil and Syariah jurisdictions on matrimonial matters. This proved to be a great obstacle for Muslim women as a few cases showed that the Syariah court was less reliable in guaranteeing women safety from their abusive spouses.

However, for both Muslim and non-Muslim parties, domestic violence was wholly attached to a matrimonial condition, and it was only if women decided to end the marriage that spousal abuse could be used as a justification for it. Most legal cases involved women plaintiffs who were ready and able to do so. However, had they chosen to stay in a violent marriage, no amount of complaints over wife-battery could lead to conviction, since the law did not recognize it as an offence.

In the Syariah courts there were some highly inconsistent rulings in cases of violence against Muslim women. As in the civil court, a complaint of violence could only be made to the Syariah court upon application for divorce under either *taklik* or *fasakh*. *Taklik* divorce is automatically and judicially granted to a woman (without spousal consent) if the court is satisfied that a husband has breached some stipulations inserted in the marital contract; wife-beating being one of them. If wife-beating is not stipulated in the marriage contract for divorce, then a woman can apply for divorce under the terms of *fasakh*, as one of the conditions for a *fasakh* divorce is cruelty and wife-beating.

Islamic stipulations, such as the rejection of female witnesses and the acceptance of sworn oaths as claims to truth in courts, were also applied to deny women their right to be free from their violent husbands. In another case the complainant was denied divorce by *fasakh* despite providing a witness to the assault and submitting a medical report as evidence of her injury. The *kadi* ruled that the testimony of her witness, her female domestic helper, could not be accepted. According to the *kadi*, under Islamic law (*hukum Syarak*), only the testimonies of two male witnesses or one male witness together with two female witnesses can be accepted in court.

## The campaign years

Rising awareness about the battery of women in their own homes, the unequal treatment that abused women experienced under different jurisdictions, and the accumulated experiences of women's shelters in dealing with domestic abuse cases, were some of the many reasons for public

support of a domestic violence law in Malaysia. One of the first few conceptual issues that arose was whether this law, covering family matters, would be drafted as a criminal or a civil legislation and whether it would cover Muslims as well.

In Malaysia, it was the legal aspect of family that was being debated rather than its cultural significance. This was because Malaysia did not have an explicit 'family code' or any written constitutional provision extolling 'family' as the moral fibre of the nation (as in the Indian, Philippine and Indonesian cases); instead, the family's supposed sanctity was guarded by civil or Islamic law. Legal developments around the above concerns reinforced the delineation of jurisdictional turfs between the 'Islamic family' and the 'Other family'. Much of the DVA campaign was thus taken up by advocacy, debates and resistance around the question of who had authority over the Islamic family. There followed a long, combative and arduous process of organizing and negotiating. During this period religion came between the bill and its passage. Much resistance came from the Muslim/Syariah faction (or the Syariah Islamists), which considered anything pertaining to Muslim marriage within their jurisdiction. Nevertheless objections also came from those reluctant to accept domestic violence as a criminal offence.

There was thus uncertainty over whether the original DVA was meant to be a civil or a criminal law, as some believed that family offences did not deserve criminal treatment. Most importantly the bill drafting committee had to find a way to avoid the conflict of jurisdiction between Muslims and non-Muslims. The way out was to include all Muslims and non-Muslims under a common law, with the DVA drafted as a criminal legislation. Having passed this hurdle, the bill then needed to accommodate the views of Islamic scholars who expressed dissatisfaction with marital rape being included in the definition of domestic violence, claiming that this was not acceptable under Islamic law. Neither a civil nor a criminal domestic violence legislation seemed likely to please all factions, all of the time.

Although the DVA was finally approved by Parliament, the struggle to have it gazetted and implemented continued. It was two years later, in 1996, that the 'Cinderella Act' or the DVA 1994 could be enforced. English-language dailies, such as the *New Straits Times* (NST) steadfastly supported women's interests in getting the DVA enforced. Women journalists at these publications carefully strategized the publication of public debates to suit the agenda of the law's final adoption. Islamic religious authorities, who were represented at meetings to draft the act, were purported to be changing their minds. Zaleha Ismail, the then Minister of National Unity and Social Development, was also hesitant about the implementation of the DVA, remarking that the Islamic faction was not "in favour of the Act applying to Muslim women as they feel all matters pertaining to Muslims should come under the jurisdiction of the Syariah court, the power of which they fear could be undermined if the Act applies to all".<sup>1</sup>

## Enforcing the law

Even after parliamentary endorsement of the DVA in 1995, the government and politicians representing the ruling party were anxious about how the law would resonate with their 'sensitive' constituencies, namely the Islamic lobby, which was then aggressively pushing for exclusive judicial control over Muslims. Within 10 days of what appeared to be a continuous repartee communicated through the press, the minister finally relented by announcing in the parliament that the act would be enforced in early.

Amidst the seemingly positive atmosphere surrounding the acceptance of the DVA, a new controversy erupted in 1997. The police, perhaps playing its role as the *de facto* vanguard of the patriarchal state, seemed to resist the law's implementation. Oddly enough, Minister Zaleha Ismail, who had been hesitant about the DVA's enforcement, found herself at the receiving end of police and male 'power'. The dispute was finally settled when then Acting Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, intervened, noting that the police should have conducted their investigations into reports of domestic violence "in a manner acceptable to all". Police officers were subsequently asked to attend courses on public relations, so that they could be "more courteous" and "hopefully, help improve the public image of the police".<sup>2</sup> With the termination of the conflict between Islamists, police and women activists, the system seemed to be on women's side. However, the DVA was still not a satisfactory piece of legislation. It was a version that accommodated the interests of many parties. It was not the law envisaged by its early initiators, who wanted to introduce a bill that explicitly recognized domestic violence as an offence, "as a statement from society that domestic violence won't be tolerated".

As the DVA needs to be read with the Penal Code, the law is quasi-criminal, combining civil and criminal procedures. The ambiguity of the law, being both civil and criminal, is not the actual obstruction to the solution. Even if gendered violence is defined within the ambit of the Penal Code it will not be sufficiently addressed by it, given the complex nature of 'hurt' and 'harm' inflicted by intimate partners on each other. Malaysia's DVA is a success story insofar as it mirrored the compromises and accommodations that contributed to the statute's passage. However, the law does not satisfy all parties nor does it have sufficient provisions to fully criminalize the offence of domestic violence.

## Ongoing issues

By tracing the history of the passage of the DVA one sees how marital violence was conceived and defined by the courts in the early years before the DVA campaign took root. Legal judgements in the Syariah and civil systems revealed the dissimilar experiences of Muslim and non-Muslim women when they sought justice against their abusers in court. By the mid-1990s, domestic violence began to be slowly recognized and named as a grave offence; the right to guard the body against harm was recognized. This period saw an intense contestation involving the government, media, police and civil society interests. It was an unmistakable moment for gender consolidation. Although it was a historic law, the relevance of the DVA's provisions and the effectiveness of its implementation are still continually being assessed and critiqued. The stocktaking years revealed some of the difficulties of the DVA in resolving family matters, ranging from the seemingly simple procedure of obtaining a Protection Order to intimidating court procedures unsuitable for family deliberations, as well as the dilemmas around intervention and the autonomy of victims to decide if and how violence upon them should be criminalized.

The legal campaign was a potent opportunity at raising rights consciousness. But it was also a manifestation of the limited capacity of law and the state in affecting social transformation. The campaign for the DVA allowed for much rethinking around the question of one's own subjectivity (and empowerment) in relation to gender, family, ethnicity, religion and nation. However, the implications of the law also drove home the realization that domestic violence has yet to be deeply understood as a form of gendered violence and explicitly criminalized under the Malaysian legal system.

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## Notes

1 See Muharyani, O. 1996a. 'Still waiting for the Act', *New Straits Times*, 1 February, p.8.

2 See Deutsche Presse-Agentur. 1997. 'Malaysian cops to undergo ethics course to polish image', *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, 27 August, online source: <http://tinyurl.com/DPA-Malaysian>, last accessed 15 October 2012.

Rising awareness about the battery of women in their own homes, the unequal treatment that abused women experienced under different jurisdictions, and the accumulated experiences of women's shelters in dealing with domestic abuse cases, were some of the many reasons for public support of a domestic violence law in Malaysia.



# News from Southeast Asia



INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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The articles in the 'News from Southeast Asia' pages were compiled by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore. Please send correspondence to [iias\\_iseas@iseas.edu.sg](mailto:iias_iseas@iseas.edu.sg)



SOJOURN is an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of social and cultural issues in Southeast Asia. It publishes empirical and theoretical research articles with a view to promoting and disseminating scholarship in and on the region. Areas of special concern include ethnicity, religion, tourism, urbanization, migration, popular culture, social and cultural change, and development. Fields most often represented in the journal are anthropology, sociology and history.

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## Imaginary frontiers and deferred masculinity: working class men in Batam

Terence Chong

DAN LIGHTS HIS CIGARETTE as he climbs to the upper deck of the 45 minute ferry heading to the Indonesian island of Batam. Soon he will be massaged, pampered and desired. He will feel like a 'real man' once again. Singapore has played the role of metropolis to the hinterland of Batam since the early 1990s as part of the sub-regional 'growth triangle', which includes the Malaysian state of Johor. The metropolis, however, spills over more than just capital, skills or tourists – sexual desires and masculine identities are shared as well.

The sex industry on the Riau islands has grown and diversified in tandem with the maturing economic relations to Singapore. From the smattering of bars, discotheques, and massage parlours, in addition to traditional *lokalisasi* (brothel compounds) in the early 1990s, a strong supply of low- to mid-range hotels, together with shopping malls, has since been established in Batam to cater to the increasing number of tourists. While Indonesian laws do not explicitly prohibit sex work, it is illegal to participate in the trade of women or to live off the earnings of sex workers, although such laws are seldom enforced.

Though much has been written about women sex workers, there is far less documentation of the men who buy sex. Notoriously shy and elusive, men have become the invisible subjects of the sex industry. The Singaporean men who travel to Batam for sex are predominantly working class, many of whom consume sex not just to satisfy carnal desires but to reassert heteronormative notions of masculinity. In reality, Batam is more than just an overseas sex space, but an imagined frontier that conjures up a sense of lawlessness, personal freedom, and relief from the grind of work for these working class men to 'defer' their masculinity, which has been displaced from the hyper-capitalist metropolis.

### "If you're not rich in Singapore, forget it ...": a crisis of masculinity

There is a dark side to Singapore's shiny global city status. Traditional notions of masculinity have been eroded by structural unemployment, the downgrade to lower income jobs, and the perceived failure to adequately play the role of provider. One social consequence of this is the undesirability of working class Singaporean men to local women, resulting

in many seeking foreign brides from neighbouring countries like Vietnam, Thailand, or China.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, Singaporean men who married foreign brides were more likely to be older and less educated.<sup>2</sup>

In light of their subordinated masculinities, working class men interviewed generally speak of two things when they travel to Batam for sex. Firstly, they talk of being pushed or squeezed from the metropolis. Typical sentiments from respondents include: "it's hard to make a living in Singapore"; "if you're not rich [in Singapore], forget it ..."; and "... I'm not a foreign talent *lah*, so cannot make it". Secondly, they speak of seeking new spaces – both territorial and cultural – as necessary to regain their sense of self. "[I come here to] relax and enjoy, or else go crazy" says one. He goes on to reveal that, "go there [Batam], can *cheong* [Hokkien, meaning 'to seek pleasure'] until *peng san* [Hokkien, meaning 'to faint']". In short, sex in Batam is "an escape into the fantasy of men-as-men and women-as-women, an uncomplicated distribution of roles which provide a refuge from life, because nobody has to step outside the prescribed exchanges and dialogues".<sup>3</sup>

### "They are my friends": beyond libidinal bonds

Dan is a 50 year old bespectacled Chinese warehouse supervisor who has been going to Batam, and occasionally Bintan, for commercial sex for about 10 years.<sup>4</sup> He is married with two teenage daughters who, he admits, are closer to his wife than they are to him. He earns about S\$2500 a month, only patronises massage parlours and returns to Singapore in the evenings, hardly ever spending the night away from home. Dressed neatly in well-pressed short-sleeved shirts and trousers, Dan prefers to go to Batam alone and dislikes pubs and discos because "they are too loud and noisy, very *luan* [messy] ... Massage is more relaxing, and got special afterwards, no need to move around ... it's more convenient". After the massage, Dan may bring the girl out for lunch if he enjoys her company. According to him: "There the gals have to survive on 'special services' [euphemism for sex acts]. Some of them go by contract basis [and] are recruited by their friends, and others come [on freelance] basis... I know some who worked in factories and got retrenched and end up in massage joints. Not much of a choice, since they have to feed their family back in *kampung*."

Over the years, Dan has formed a series of friendships with girls lasting for as long as they remain on the island, some of whom he patronises regularly. "They are my friends. I visit them to see if they are okay ... Sometimes when they go back home [to their home province] I feel sad. I will give them an *ang pao* and tell them to take care of themselves." Dan's feelings of friendship suggest that the sexual encounter, though premised on economic power, may be characterised by more than just 'libidinal bonds'.

On one hand, Dan's ability to show care and concern has been deferred from the metropolis to the hinterlands. The imaginary frontier has allowed the sexual encounter to develop into a more socially complex relationship where money purchases the opportunity for men to display certain traits such as care and concern, which may otherwise not be required from his emotionally-distant wife or busy teenage daughters. In such cases, these scenarios of affection are intense and temporal, filled with physical contact like hand-holding, cuddling and playful teasing, but suspended when the man leaves the imaginary frontier in a mutual understanding that the woman's sex work must continue until he arrives on the island again.

This arrangement, on the other hand, has also been beneficial for Batam sex workers who enjoy treats and gifts from men like Dan. "Indeed older girls often purposely nurse a series of such liaisons with different men, and then derive their main support from remittances, rather than from regular work in prostitution".<sup>5</sup> The imaginary frontier is thus a space for the men to play out certain emotional needs and familial desires while the sex worker may willingly subject herself to such male imaginations, either because of the rewards at stake, or because her own imagination of a caring, perhaps even lovelorn, boyfriend offers a comforting counterbalance to the uncertainties and dangers in her profession.

Continued on next page >>



News from Southeast Asia *continued*

## Under the spotlight: researchers in the region

Interview with Dr Miksic conducted by S.T. Foo

Dr John N. Miksic is the Head of the Archaeology Unit at ISEAS in Singapore. He is one of Southeast Asia's leading archaeologists on the study of ceramics, and has published numerous works including *Borobudur: golden tales of the Buddhas* (1990); *Old Javanese Gold* (2010); *Earthenware in Southeast Asia* (2003); and *the Historical Dictionary of Ancient Southeast Asia* (2007). His latest book is *Singapore and the Silk Road of the Sea: 1300-1800* (2013)

**Q: How did you become interested in archaeology?**

As a young boy, I became fascinated by the stone tools found on my own farm where I grew up in upstate New York, near Niagara Falls. My grandfather and I used to talk about what life would have been like on our farm a thousand years ago. After my BA work on North American prehistory, I joined the US Peace Corps and was sent to work in the Bujang Valley (Kedah), to help form farmers' cooperatives. As I travelled around the area, I began to notice ancient ruins, including a large stone temple called Candi Bukit Batu Pahat. I also heard stories about Raja Bersiong, a mythical king with fangs.

I started looking for information on the historical archaeology of the area, though not much was available.

When I was applying to PhD programs I was accepted to Cornell University's Department of Anthropology on the basis of a research proposal to study a modern Chinese neighborhood in Penang, Malaysia. Several months after my acceptance, I kept experiencing a nagging feeling that archaeology was still important, even though its practical applications were less obvious. So when I first arrived at Cornell, I reported to the head of the department that I was thinking about switching to archaeology. I was afraid that he might think badly of me for being indecisive, but he immediately shouted across the hall to

John Henderson, a young archaeologist who was working on the Maya, if he was interested in supervising me, and he said "Yes". That was the moment when I realized I was actually going to become an archaeologist. For my PhD work at Cornell I did comparative research on the Maya, the specialization of my supervisor, where ceramics are a major form of data. This led me to decide to focus on Southeast Asian earthenware.

After graduating with a PhD in January 1979, I had two job offers: one to teach archaeology in Montana, and one to join the US Agency for International Development and work in Sumatra. I chose the latter because I wanted to be in Southeast Asia even if it meant moving back into rural development. I spent two years as a rural development and management advisor in Bengkulu, Sumatra. While there I learned of an opportunity to join the Ford Foundation to develop a new university curriculum for archaeology, so that enabled me to get back on track.

**Q: How did you come to live and work in Singapore?**

I became involved in Singapore in 1984, while I was working at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta (Indonesia), sponsored by the Ford Foundation. We excavated near the Keramat Iskandar Shah, and found 14th-century remains in situ. I continued working in Indonesia for the next three years, but in 1987 I accepted the offer to work at the National University of Singapore. I viewed Singapore then as a good place to do further research on early ports and ceramic trade, within easy reach of Indonesian sites.

**Q: What do you hope readers will take away from your latest publication, *Singapore and the Silk Road of the Sea: 1300-1800*?**

I was trying to show how Singapore is a good example of a much larger phenomenon, the ancient Southeast Asian port city. Very little archaeological research has been devoted to this type of site, which is a shame, given its important role in the present as well as the past. I hope people will realize that modern Singapore is rooted in an ancient and elaborate tradition that can be traced back two thousand years.

**Q: What do you feel are some of your biggest contributions to your field?**

Teaching a large contingent of students from all over Southeast Asia as well as some from China; bringing students and young professionals from different countries together to form networks; generating public interest in archaeology and ancient Southeast Asian history; publishing in Indonesian as well as English.

**Q: How has the field changed and what are its prospects?**

The main change has been the growing number of Southeast Asian archaeologists who can operate independently of foreign advisors. I hope that in the future, collaboration between countries in Southeast Asia will become more common. Younger scholars are eager to see this happen.

When I started 38 years ago, very few Southeast Asians had archaeology degrees, or any significant field experience. They were reliant on foreign partners for funding and guidance. Few foreign archaeologists left a good impression on their Southeast Asian partners, and there was not much transfer of knowledge. Few of them learned local languages. This has changed completely. Now foreign and local archaeologists work as equals, or in situations where the Southeast Asians are the principal investigators. Foreign funding is still significant, but Southeast Asians are fully capable of planning and carrying out projects.

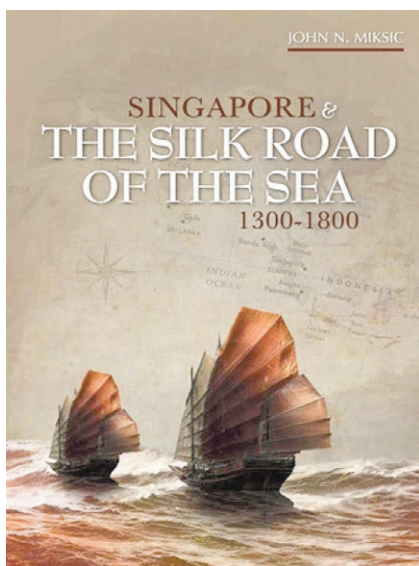
The only remaining weakness is in publication. This is partly due to the fact that most archaeological projects in the region are conducted by national departments of archaeology, and their main performance indicator is to produce a report. These reports are usually not published, and often are very difficult for outsiders, including local academics, to obtain. This situation must change.

**Q: In December 2013, a bronze sculpture called *Uma Parmeshvari* at the Asian Civilizations Museum (ACM) in Singapore was found to be stolen from a temple in Tamil Nadu. What are your thoughts on the issue?**

The case of the *Uma Parmeshvari* statue is sadly typical of the problems confronting museums wishing to acquire Asian art. Museums now do conduct research before acquiring major pieces, but there is still no complete international registry of stolen antiquities that can be consulted in such cases. It is still standard practice to assume that certain well-established dealers are too subject to scrutiny to deal in stolen art, but unfortunately this is not always the case. Such a register needs to be set up, and it is in the interests of museums themselves to contribute to its development.

**Q: Finally, what advice would you give to someone who is thinking of studying the art history or archaeology of Southeast Asia?**

Be flexible! Be willing to take jobs wherever they appear. Take advantage of opportunities to work in various fields, and make yourself relevant to interdisciplinary pursuits. I've almost always had to combine archaeology with some other field, including rural development. Take advantage of any opportunities to do research when they arise, even if they are only salvage excavations. Learn a local language, and develop relations with local informants. Communicate as much as possible in a form that the general public can understand.



&gt;&gt; Continued from page 37

**"As a man, you must pay lah": playing provider in the hinterland**

Khairun is a 31-year-old Malay Singaporean.<sup>6</sup> As a contract worker with an emergency response team for a private company his income is not stable, averaging between S\$1800-S\$2200 a month. Although single, he has other financial commitments, like supporting his diabetic mother and younger sisters. Khairun has been making the trip to Batam for about five-six years. His occasional Singaporean girlfriends never last because, in his words, they "always want more". According to him: "After booking the girl [you] must pay for their food, cigarettes if she smokes and drinks such as beer and liquor. The total cost is around RP700,000 to RP900,000 rupiah. Depends how many bottles and food she orders. As a man, you must pay lah. Whether you want to impress her is another thing... but I think you feel better inside when you can treat her, right?"

For Khairun, activities like drinking, smoking, relaxing and paying for the girl's expenses are intertwined with sex. Sex is part of a collective experience and cannot be simply isolated as an act of hegemonic masculinity or exploitation of women. Interestingly, Khairun's ability to treat the girl to meals, drinks and cigarettes in Batam is a simultaneous reminder of his inability to do the same in Singapore. Slightly plump and casually decked out in jeans and T-shirt, Khairun is clearly cognisant of his deflated economic status on either side of the border. In Singapore "it's very hard ... you buy drinks and cigarettes, that's it. No more money. What are you going to tell the girl? Game over, bro. For Batam, with the same money, you can enjoy more things [sic.], and longer some more [sic.]. He goes on to talk about the cost of marriage. "Seriously getting married in Singapore is costing a bomb ... you can cry trying to save up money just in order to marry someone ... Do you know at Batam [you can] just throw S\$2000 [and] you can get married with grand ceremony?"

**Sources of pleasure and danger**

Men like Dan and Khairun are, however, not naïve. Given their working class status, they are more wary of being fleeced or taken for a ride by Indonesian women. Indeed, sex workers are often simultaneous sources of pleasure and danger.

Khairun warns against letting one's guard down with Batam girls. "With money, they treat you well. As we know, they work in this line to find money in order to clear off their debts. Some of the Batam girls try to cheat your money ... Do not fall too deep into their feelings. Well like I said, not all the *ceweks* are the same. If encounter a good gal, you are lucky." Male fantasies come complete with feelings of vulnerability and the need for constant vigilance in the imaginary frontier.

The cases of Dan and Khairun show that Batam is not merely a site for the exploitation of sex workers or the straightforward fulfilment of hegemonic fantasies, as feminist scholars are quick to suggest. It is also a space in which scenarios of affection can be played out and the ability to provide can be exercised. The marginalisation of working class men in Singapore compels them to defer their masculinity to the imaginary frontier. Their deferred masculinity is the cyclical act of economic castration and endowment of the male working class.

**Terence Chong is Senior Fellow at ISEAS and co-ordinator of its Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme. This essay is from a chapter in *The Sijori Cross-border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics and Culture*, edited by Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong (ISEAS Forthcoming)****Notes**

- 1 *Asiaone*. 3 July 2010. 'Foreign brides the answer for Asian men'. <http://tinyurl.com/asiaone-asianbrides> (accessed February 2014)
- 2 National Population Secretariat. 2009. An Occasional Paper on 'Marriages between Singapore citizens and non-Singapore citizens: 1998-2008', <http://tinyurl.com/NPS-Marriages> (accessed February 2014)
- 3 Seabrook, J. 1996. *Travels in the Skin Trade: Tourism and the Sex Industry*. London: Pluto Press, p.36
- 4 Interview with author; name changed.
- 5 Cohen, E. 1986. 'Lovelorn *Farangs*: The Correspondence between Foreign Men and Thai Girls', *Anthropological Quarterly* 59(3):115-127 (p.116)
- 6 Interview with author; name changed.



# Singaporeans in Batam<sup>1</sup>: living with discourses of danger and corruption

Su-Ann Oh and Reema Bhagwan Jagtiani



SINGAPOREANS RESIDING IN BATAM have received little attention from scholars. This is surprising given the nature of their sojourning, the economic importance given to the Singapore-Johor-Riau cross-border region, and the cross-border nature of these experiences. The academic literature has tended to focus on the economic aspects of this configuration – the differentials and arbitrage opportunities in relation to industry and tourism – and the sociological impact on the lives of Indonesians on the island.<sup>2</sup> While there has been some research on Singaporeans in Batam, it has mostly considered Singaporean men's masculinity and sexuality in relation to intimate relations with islanders.<sup>3</sup>

In 2013 we began a study attempting to address the gap in knowledge by examining Singaporeans living in Batam and their connections to Singapore, and to obtain as much information as possible about the lifestyles of Singaporeans residing in these two localities. Individuals were asked about reasons for moving to Batam; mobility patterns: frequency and mode of moving between Singapore and place of residence; consumption patterns; work arrangements; family arrangements; children's schooling; etc.

'Singaporeans' in this essay include both citizens and permanent residents of the country. For this essay, we draw upon the interviews conducted with five respondents living in Batam. As this is a small number of respondents, we make no claims about the generalisability of our findings. However, the interviews have provided us with insights into the experiences of Singaporeans living in Batam, particularly their encounters with discursive borders relating to danger and corruption.

## Singaporeans in Batam: who are they?

It appears that the majority of Singaporeans live on Batam because they have been posted as agents and managers of Singapore-based firms or transnational corporations to set up and/or to manage subsidiaries on Batam. They tend to live in small flats close to work; their lives have a temporary and 'expat-like' nature. This group tends to be male. Those who are married travel back to Singapore over the weekends to spend time with their families, while those who are single do so less frequently. They may have to visit their company headquarters regularly. Another group of Singaporeans moved to Batam to set up their own companies and factories. From interviews it became clear that most respondents return to Singapore on a weekly basis.

## Danger and corruption in Batam

In Singaporean media reports and the popular collective imaginings of Singaporeans, Batam is seen as a lawless frontier, where crime is rife, danger lurks around every corner and moral (sex tourism) and political corruption reign. "...the mentality of many Singaporeans to, say, go to Batam, retire there, maybe they think about the corruption, and then maybe some of them think that the law, what you call, maybe a lot of crimes there. They are thinking of crimes, the corruption of police there, maybe very dangerous living out of Singapore" (interview with Mr Toh, December 2013).

These Singapore-centric narratives surrounding Batam serve as discursive borders to sustain the 'imagined community' of the Singapore nation.<sup>4</sup> They have a two-fold purpose: to define 'Singaporeanness' in contradistinction to its neighbours and to keep Singaporeans from venturing next door where life is cheaper and less regulated. One of our respondents called this a 'psychological barrier':

"... a lot of Singaporean place a psychological barrier *lah* about going over to [live in] Batam ..." (Mr Toh, December 2013).

It is within this discursive framework that Singaporeans living in Batam situate their understanding and impressions of their adopted hometown, and which they have to reconsider when challenged by their actual experience of life there. Singaporeans in Batam constantly have to confront national narratives and discourses – through friends, colleagues, family members, newspapers, TV, radio – about Batam. The narratives that Singaporeans in Batam have to deal with the most are related to danger and corruption.

"I find overall, you know, Batam quite ok for Singaporean, say you want to retire there, buy a house there is much much cheaper you know and it's not very far from Singapore. Strategically speaking, for people who want to retire there you know, to buy a house there. In my opinion, quite good ... the mindset of Singapore ... is that Batam is not safe. That's the feeling that some Singaporeans feel" (Mr Toh, December 2013).

For the majority of our respondents, their experiences of Batam are initially mediated through Singaporean characterisations – dangerous and corrupt. However, after some time, some aspects of these essentialised notions of Batam islanders and Indonesia begin to blur around the edges. In response, some Singaporeans manage to pull themselves out of Singapore-mediated notions of life in Batam, others remain in a limbo of contradictory narratives, while others find that these Singapore-based constructs are reinforced.

## Conclusion

This essay has provided a summary of the discursive borders that Singaporeans encounter and engage with while living on Batam. The regularity and frequency of return to Singapore places them in fixed circuits of mobility that shape their experience of borders in ways that are different from that of Singaporeans who remain in Singapore or those who live

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in more distant countries. First, unlike Singaporeans living in Singapore, they are regularly confronted with the border and its attendant routines, bureaucracy, laws and symbols. Second, unlike their counterparts in more distant parts of the world, they are au courant with events in Singapore through Singaporean media that is available in Batam, regular and frequent visits to Singapore and constant contact with friends and family based in Singapore. Consequently, they become caught up in material and discursive borders, which challenge their own notions of identity, Singapore and Batam.

Su-Ann Oh is a Visiting Fellow and Reema Bhagwan Jagtiani is a Research Officer at ISEAS. This essay is from a chapter in *The Sijori Cross-border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics and Culture*, edited by Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong (ISEAS Forthcoming)

## Notes

- 1 We would like to thank our respondents for their time; names used in the text are pseudonyms. Our gratitude goes also to Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong for their insightful comments and support.
- 2 Lindquist, J. 2009. *The Anxieties of Mobility: Migration and Tourism in Indonesia's Borderlands*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; Lyons, L. & M. Ford. 2007. 'Where Internal and International Migration Intersect: Mobility and the Formation of Multi-Ethnic Communities in the Riau Islands Transit Zone', *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 9(2):236-263 (<http://tinyurl.com/lyons-ford-2007>).
- 3 Williams, S., L. Lyons & M. Ford. 2008. 'It's about Bang for Your Buck, Bro: Singaporean Men's Online Conversations about Sex in Batam, Indonesia', *Asian Studies Review* 32(1):77-97 (<http://tinyurl.com/WLM-2008>); Chong, this issue of *The Newsletter*.
- 4 Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso Books.

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# IIAS Reports

International conference report

## South Asia and the Long 1930s: Appropriations and Afterlives

6-7 December 2013, Leiden, the Netherlands

Sanjukta Sunderason (IIAS) and Carolien Stolte (Institute for History, Leiden University)

ON 6 AND 7 DECEMBER 2013, the international conference 'South Asia and the Long 1930s: Appropriations and Afterlives', was convened in Leiden. Conceptualised by an expanding and amorphous collective of historians of modern South Asia at the Leiden University, the conference was organised jointly by Prof. Nira Wickramasinghe and Dr. Sanjukta Sunderason from the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and Dr. Carolien Stolte from the Institute for History. The conference received generous funding support from the Dutch Royal Academy of Sciences, the Asian Modernities and Traditions research profile of Leiden University, the LIAS, the IIAS and the Leiden University Fund. It brought together South Asianists across disciplines and research specialisations to focus on the complex forms and terrains of the political, social and cultural currents of 1930s. Yet the scope of the conference spanned beyond South Asia, and the organisers were fortunate to be able to include experts from other regions to engage with the currents and resonances of the 1930s. As a result, all panels benefited from discussants who provided inputs from the Middle Eastern, European, British, and Chinese perspectives. Showcasing modern South Asian studies in Leiden as well as opening up South Asia to thematic dialogues from other regions (and area studies perspectives) was one of the driving forces behind the conference.

The three panels in this two-day conference elaborated upon themes that can be seen to frame the 1930s: International Affinities, Aesthetics and Politics, the Market and the Ordinary. Reflecting research specialisations of the three key organisers, the panels were chaired by Carolien Stolte, Sanjukta Sunderason, and Nira Wickramasinghe respectively. The first conference day kicked off with two sessions on 'International Affinities'. This theme was selected to shed light on the long-distance networks that had emerged in the aftermath of the First World War, the establishment of the League of Nations and the Bolshevik Revolution. Whether working towards world

federation, religious revival, or national independence, and whether based on ties of friendship, solidarity or ideology, individuals and groups in this period sought new blueprints for a world of greater justice and equality. In particular, the organisers felt that while these networks were marked by considerable ideological flexibility throughout the 1920s, the 1930s experienced a sharper drawing of ideological boundaries. Earlier histories of South Asia have often subordinated these engagements to national narratives. These sessions, by contrast, sought to examine these networks and affinities in their full international dimensions.

This internationalist enthusiasm was evident in the paper by Michele Louro of Salem State University, who spoke on the League against Imperialism. Rather than looking at the League's formative years, she focused on the changing relationship between working class mobilisation and bourgeois nationalism in the 1930s. While this development closed some routes for the League's Indian members, it also enabled the formation of new anti-imperialist networks. Ben Zachariah of Heidelberg University took up a different political divide of this period through the lens of Indian exiles in Germany. Berlin played host to persons whose contacts and connections, engagements, politics and personal relationships ranged across the world at a time of tumultuous change and potential revolution. Several Indian communists spent their formative years in Berlin, but many others were genuinely interested in the potential of fascism for Indian politics. Rahul Nair of Gwinnett College continued several themes from this discussion by showing how, in the long 1930s, sexual and reproductive practices were included in discourses of nation-building. He also showed how the public debates around this issue were part of an international discourse on sex, eugenics, birth control and population. Asiya Alam from Yale addressed the intersection of social reform and internationalism in a different sphere, through Iqbalunnisa Hussain's engagements with both international feminism and local reform. Finally, there was room for how international politics intersected with regional issues as well. Uma Ganesan of Berea College Kentucky, spoke on the Self-Respect Movement in South India. She raised the question as to whether we might see this movement not just as anti-imperialist, but also as anti-national. Her paper showed that the 1930s saw a development in which the class and caste radicalism of the movement gradually gave way to an ethno-linguistic focus in which an Aryan North was pitted against a Dravidian South. Ali Raza and Franziska Roy, both of the ZMO Berlin, delivered a joint paper on the Khaksar Movement, whose rise coincided with a proliferation of paramilitary and uniformed volunteer groups. Providing a social history of the Khaksars rather than an analysis of the movement's leader Mashriqi, they were able to focus on the changing political alignments of the 1930s.

The second conference theme, entitled 'Aesthetics and Politics', examined new patterns and vocabularies of cultural radicalism and 'front-making' with artists, writers, performers, academics and journalists in the 1930s. This theme was chosen for the new imperatives of cultural production that emerged in this period, bolstered with ideals and ideologies of anti-fascism, socialist romanticism, anti-imperialism, and nationalist populism. Under the catchword of 'progressive' art, realism was intertwined with modernism, activating notions of the social, the formal, the everyday and the national-popular. South Asian scholarship is still in the process of researching and rethinking the artistic and ideological lives of the ideal of 'progressive' culture, and the next six speakers of the conference explored these new cultural imaginaries in art, literature and performance.

Three of the papers in this session dealt with cinema. Madhumita Lahiri of Warwick University spoke on the early years of sound in Indian cinema, in particular the social film. Specifically targeted to move audience to outrage, in particular on issues of untouchability and forced marriage, this genre sought to inculcate rational forms of spectatorship. Sound – live-location rather than non-synchronous – was a vital part of this viewer commitment. Similar themes were raised by Rachel Ball of Boston College, who showed how progressive social and political messages were conveyed in Marathi cinema through the use of religious figures. These films were deliberately marketed as devotional films in

order to reach a broader audience. Suzanne Schultz of the University of Texas at Austin, focused on 1930s cinema halls and spectators rather than the films themselves. Her careful examination of Ali Sardar Jafri's *Lucknow ki Paanch Raaten* suggests that cinema, much like the progressive writers' meetings and student rallies, were sites where social(ist), political, and literary sentiments coalesced. Ali Kamran of the University of Texas at Austin further elaborated upon this last issue by speaking on the Progressive Writers Association itself, and their understudied relationship with the first Soviet Writer's Congress of 1934. His paper showed that similarities of aesthetic and literary themes between South Asia and the Soviet Union continued and increased into the 1940s. Maia Ramnath of Pennsylvania State likewise spoke on the Progressive Writers, and more specifically on the movement's co-founder Mulk Raj Anand. By focusing on his engagement with the Spanish Civil War, Ramnath's paper continued the conference's examination of the close relationship between the literary, artistic, and progressive internationalist realms of the 1930s. Rashna Nicholson of the University of Munich, finally, moved the discussion into the realm of theatre by examining Parsi plays and the concerns of the Parsi community they reflect. Her paper showed that the plays of the late 1920s and early 1930s demonstrate a transition from communal self-glorification to a collective fear of what decolonisation would bring.

The third theme of the conference, 'the Market and the Ordinary', examined the impact of economic depression and mounting social tensions of the 1930s. In many ways, South Asia carried the brunt of the economic depression that had engulfed the world. For instance, Indian immigrant labour witnessed racial violence from Burma to Ceylon, and was often sent back home as a result of restrictive labour policies. Yet we know little about the way common people experienced these times in their everyday lives, in particular the effects of state and market in shaping the ordinary. Held on the second day of the conference, this session examined the market-driven modernity sponsored by modern imperialism and the effects of market induced practices of exclusion and inclusion upon a variety of social formations from workers, peasants and traders to women, 'lower castes' and modern consumers.

This session's first speaker was Daniel Rycroft of the University of East Anglia, whose paper addressed the political, cosmological and visual orientations of 1930s Indian anthropology. Using the concept of 'interworld', he showed that the representation of Adivasi heritage in this era was an intricate dialogue between images of primitivism, policies of integration and narratives of conflict. Daniel Bass of Southern Connecticut State University also elaborated on representations of ethnicity, in this case by looking at the societal transformations taking place in late colonial Ceylon. Mass labour struggles, as well as the introduction of universal suffrage, cemented ethnicity as a main identifier in this period. This severely impacted possibilities of class solidarity, making the 1930s the tipping point for the gradual ethnicisation of politics in Sri Lanka. Idrees Kanth of Leiden University continued the theme of political representation. He analysed the evolving discourse of rights in Kashmir in the wake of Indian Muslim responses to colonial intervention in the area. Abigail McGowan of the University of Vermont, finally, moved the discussion into the Bombay Presidency, exploring changes in the social and domestic sphere through the large-scale introduction of new goods in the 1930s. This celebration of new global commodity flows contrasted sharply with the contemporaneous khadi movement and prompts us to rethink the domestication of the global 'modern' in consumer aesthetics.

The conference ended with a final roundtable session titled 'Making the Unfamiliar Familiar: Stories from the South', designed specifically to draw together a cross-regional, inter-disciplinary dialogue around archives and narratives from the global South. The roundtable started with a keynote by Fredrick Cooper of New York University, whose talk was entitled 'Making the Familiar Unfamiliar: Retelling Empire Stories'. Through a provoking examination of British and French imperial strategies, as two among a much wider and non-Eurocentric repertoire of empire-building, he showed that the history of the European empires is far from a tale of progression and modular nationalism. After the keynote, four faculty members of Leiden University provided comments from the perspective of their own regions of study. This provided a perfect opportunity to launch a final discussion on the outcomes of the conference days, and the new ways of viewing the long 1930s opened up by the presentations. In this discussion, the feedback by Susan Pennybacker (University of North Carolina) and Jane Burbank (New York University) was especially valuable. The organisers hope and feel this conference was successful in contextualising the international flow of ideas, commodities and affinities that marked the interwar period, and in rethinking not only the 1930s themselves but also the afterlives of this decade within the unfolding dialectics of decolonisation in South Asia.







## Threads of Time: Traditional Textiles and the Contemporary Transformation in Taiwan

25-28 November 2013, Leiden, the Netherlands

Willem Vogelsang (IIAS)

FROM 25 TO 28 NOVEMBER 2013, a delegation from Taiwan visited IIAS for an intensive one-week series of events that focused on the theme of traditional Taiwanese textile crafts. The programme, which included a series of lectures, demonstrations, workshops and a small exhibition, paid special attention to the use of indigo dye and the weaving techniques of the indigenous Atayal tribe. The programme was sponsored by the Taiwanese Ministry of Culture in the framework of its 'Spotlight Taiwan Programme' and organised by Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) in cooperation with IIAS, and supported by the Textile Research Centre (TRC) in Leiden.

### Exhibition

The Atayal people, one of the 14 indigenous communities in Taiwan, believe that the lifetime of a human being is woven by god. The temporary exhibition 'The Spinning of Life' at the Textile Research Centre in Leiden ([www.trc-leiden.nl](http://www.trc-leiden.nl)), which was set up in the context of the Taiwanese visit to Leiden, took the form of a circle interlinking with other circles. It showed the interaction between people, and emphasised that the opening of each circle sends out welcoming messages for more people to join. Featuring different textiles and outfits and celebrating various types of Atayal woven forms, the exhibition attracted a steady stream of visitors. It also acted as background to the indigo dyeing workshops and lectures organised during the same week.

### Lectures

On Tuesday 26th November, the programme included a series of lectures by representatives of Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) and the Zhuoye Studio, which is dedicated to the revival of the traditional craft of indigo dyeing.

In the morning, in the stately *Gravensteen* building in the ancient centre of Leiden, Professor Lin Hui-Cheng gave an introductory presentation of the concept of cultural heritage in Taiwan and the various cultural heritage transitions over time. Professor Lin is the Director of the Cultural Resources School and Professor in the TNUA Graduate Institute of Architecture and Cultural Heritage. Next, Professor Chiang Min-Chin from

Above left:  
Atayal, Takekan  
Group men's short  
jacket, wrapping  
cloth and necklace.  
Above right:  
Atayal, Wushe  
Group women's  
wrap skirt and sash.

the same Graduate Institute focused on Taiwanese textiles as a form of intangible heritage. Professor Chen Wan-Lee (Director of the Center for Traditional Arts and Professor in the Department of Theatre Design of TNUA) talked about the education of traditional arts at TNUA. Finally, Mr. Cho Tzu-Lo from the Zhuoye Studio presented an example of indigo revival.

In the afternoon the programme continued at the Textile Research Centre with a lecture by Ms Yuma Taru (Atayal artist and founder of the Liang Studio) entitled *Atayal traditional weaving and its contemporary transformation*. The day was concluded with a viewing of the exhibition 'The Spinning of Life' and a reception.

### Indigo dyeing workshops

On Wednesday 27th November, a series of workshops was organised at the Textile Research Centre (located at Hogewoerd 164 in Leiden), which introduced the participants to the techniques of indigo dyeing. Indigo dyeing has been practised in Taiwan for hundreds of years, but disappeared from ordinary life in the twentieth century due to the import of chemical dyes. In the 1990s, researchers started to revive this traditional craft. The Zhuoye Studio in Taiwan intends to preserve the traditional techniques as well as to improve the production process with modern technology. The Studio also hopes to bring the indigo memories back into everyday life. They make indigo clothes, everyday items, decorative items and art works in order to bring indigo back into daily life and allow more people to get close to this clean and non-toxic traditional industry.

The three consecutive workshops, given by Ms Cheng Mei-shu and Mr Cho Tzu-lo, of the Zhuoye Studio, focussed on making beautiful indigo motifs with chopsticks, wooden sticks and rubber bands, or with wax-resist techniques (batik). Before the start of each of the workshops (which were fully booked well in advance), a 20-minute introductory lecture was given in order to present the traditional processes and techniques involved in producing indigo dyes. The lectures also touched upon the historical development of the indigo industry in Taiwan and introduced the Zhuoye Studio.

Review of the *Asiascape: Digital Asia* conference

## Revisiting the Emancipatory Potential of Digital Media in Asia

24-25 January 2014, Leiden University, the Netherlands

Florian Schneider

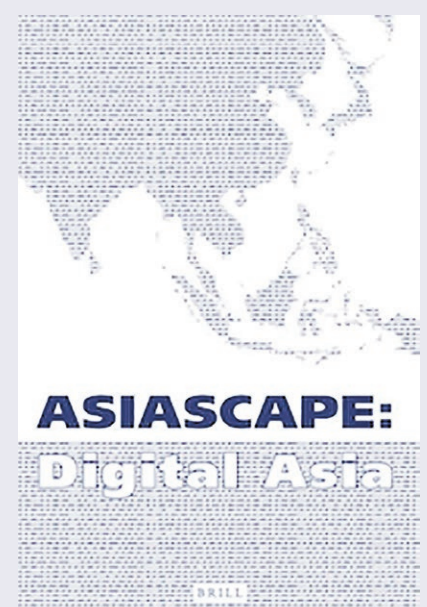
Editor's note: below are the opening paragraphs to F. Schneider's report, which can be read in full at <http://tinyurl.com/digital-turn-in-asian-studies>

LIKE ANY INTERDISCIPLINARY ENDEAVOUR, studying digital communication in Asia can be challenging: not only does such work have to convince area specialists, it also has to connect with research across different disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, political science, media studies, or the computer sciences. About a year ago, several of my colleagues and I discussed how we could create a platform for those who are taking on that challenge. We decided that we needed a new academic journal, and that the work that we would showcase there should also be accompanied by events and discussions, both online and offline. As a result, we are launching the first issue of our new journal *Asiascape: Digital Asia* this March, and in the run-up to that launch we organized an international conference at Leiden University to discuss what it means to be part of the digital turn in Asian studies.

From the 24th to 25th of January 2014, we asked participants to help us revisit the debates surrounding digital media and their potential to emancipate people. Throughout five panels and three sessions of lively plenary discussion, our contributors presented empirical evidence from societies in Asia and debated the theoretical and practical implications of how digital media are used in diverse settings, ranging from China to Korea, from India to Indonesia.

Rather than going chronologically through our conference programme, which is available online along with the book of abstracts, I want to take this opportunity to highlight what issues we came across in our discussions and suggest how our work on 'digital Asia' might fruitfully proceed. Before the conference, we asked our guests to send us answers to three short questions about digital media and Asia, and much of our discussion revolved around the responses to these questions: where might we find 'digital Asia', how should we study our subject, and who might benefit from digital media's supposed 'emancipatory potentials'. I'll go through each of these questions in turn. Throughout, I'll also include examples from the conference, links to various useful resources, as well as reference to related books and articles.

*Asiascape: Digital Asia* is a new academic journal on the political, social and cultural impact of digital media in Asia. Information: [www.asiascape.org](http://www.asiascape.org)





IIAS Reports *continued*

International conference report

## State Policy and the Cultural Politics of Heritage-Making in East and Southeast Asia

16-17 January 2014, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore

Kathleen Azali, Research Officer, ISEAS



WHY IS IT THAT, AT THIS POINT IN HISTORY, heritage has become a pertinent issue across the world? What's at stake in the process of heritage-making in our societies today? These were the two main questions raised during the conference on *State Policy and the Cultural Politics of Heritage-Making in East and Southeast Asia*, held on 16-17 January 2014 at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, and co-organised by ISEAS, the Singapore Research Nexus and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (NUS), and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

The conference brought together scholars from different regions of varying academic seniority. From more than 200 submissions, the conveners – Hui Yew-Foong (ISEAS), Daniel Goh (NUS) and Philippe Peycam (IIAS) – selected 21 papers and organised them into seven thematic panels, with the last two focusing on heritage in Singapore.

With his insightful, thought-provoking keynote speech entitled *The Politics of Materiality: Monuments and Manners in the Construction of National Selfhood*, Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) set the tone for the conference, challenging the participants to reconsider some of the common reified dualisms (for example, tangible/intangible, formal/informal, material/symbolic, structure/practice, and state/people) that inform the discourse of heritage. At the same time, he situated heritage politics in the context of its linkages to colonialism and its reproduction within the UNESCO multi-state schema.

In the first panel, entitled *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Its Discontents*, the presenters looked at state-sponsored heritage-making among the Kam minority community of Southwestern China, analysed the legitimization of religions as heritage in China, and examined policy and practice pertaining to Kantrum folk music in Thailand. The second panel, *Contesting Memories, Contesting Representations*, based on case studies in Sarawak, South Korea and Taipei, broadened the discussion by exploring how different political

and social forces – including urban governance, 'activism' (artistic activism), cinematic representation, and post-colonial constructions – competed for space in the sphere of memories and representations. The third panel, *Heritage and the Making of Cities and Nations*, presented a contrarian perspective on the 'legacy' of heritage in the politics of the changing nation-state, discussed how, in Jakarta, heritage can be embodied in modalities entangled within social and material relationships, and investigated the contestation of national independence heritage in Malaysia. The first day ended with a welcome dinner and speech by distinguished guest speaker Michael Hsiao (Academia Sinica), where he shared his observations on how the state 'imagines' heritage-making and collective memories in Taiwan in the past three decades.

The second day opened with the fourth panel, *The Vicissitudes of World Heritage Status (WHS)*. One paper analysed the role of Norodom Sihanouk's administration in the articulation of Preah Vihear as national heritage, while another investigated the processes of participation, institutional arrangements, spatial planning, resistance and alliances over WHS listing in Bali. A third paper highlighted the case of Hoi An and the problems that UNESCO WHS listing could lead to for vulnerable, less affluent sites. The fifth panel on *The Dark, the Vanishing, and the Forgotten*, looked at the conservation movements of underground war-related sites in contemporary Japan, questioned architectural heritage and gentrification schemes in Manila, and studied the cultural politics of making or not making colonial prisons into heritage sites in Taipei, China and Singapore.

In order to better engage local communities and state actors in Singapore on heritage issues, the last two panels were dedicated to *Heritage in Singapore: Challenges, Conversations and Consequences*. For the first of these panels, *Articulating Singapore's Cultural Resources*, the papers discussed the historical developments of heritage assessment in Singapore, the excessively top-down legal schemes that regulated its historical built environment,

Above:  
The rediscovered Chinese cemetery at Bukit Brown in Singapore (Photo by Hui Yew-Foong).

and the potential of an intercultural approach in heritage interpretations in Singapore. The second panel, *Singapore – Sites of Aspiration and Memory*, examined the roots and spirits of the rediscovered Chinese cemetery at Bukit Brown, the contested urban landscape of Geylang Serai as a site for the Malay-Muslim community, and the history and repositioning of Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall in Singapore over the past six decades. TC Chang (NUS) wrapped up the conference with a short overview of the Singapore Research Nexus and its website [www.fas.nus.edu.sg/srn](http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/srn), where academic publications, creative works and consultancy projects related to Singapore can be accessed.

The conference had started by questioning and challenging the premises of heritage politics and its associated discursive dualisms, as well as interrogating the complex interactions between different actors in the heritage-making process. These broad dynamics were then explored through the various case studies from different regions that were presented and debated at length. It ended by bringing these considerations to the Singapore context, providing a platform for policy-makers, civil society actors and academics, both local and international, to engage in the deliberation of heritage policy and politics and their implications on the ground.

**Next conference and publication**

Space does not permit a more detailed review, but a publication is being planned at this stage. The next conference in the series 'The Cultural Politics of Heritage-Making' will be held on 11-13 December 2014 at the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica (Taipei) and will focus on the role of citizens and civil society in the process of heritage-making. Further information will be made available at [www.iias.nl/events-iias](http://www.iias.nl/events-iias).

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For conference details, see:  
<http://tinyurl.com/ISEASconference>



## Report of the IAS Winter School in Macau

# Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age

16-20 December 2013

Devaka Gunawardena (UCLA) and Lauren Yapp (Stanford)

THIS PAST DECEMBER, the IAS' Winter School on Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age brought together distinguished professors, trained experts, and selected graduate students from four continents and several disciplines for a lively week of discussion and research in the fascinating city of Macau. Following on the successes of two prior IAS Summer Schools held at the institution's headquarters in the Netherlands, this year organizers collaborated with the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Macau to hold the Winter School at its main campus on Taipa (one of the small islands that make up Macau). This location proved to be the ideal setting for both the participants' intellectual discussions of urban hybridity in the classroom, and our hands-on exploration of it in the streets and squares of the metropolis' diverse neighbourhoods.

The week began with a series of individual presentations by graduate students on their own doctoral research, as well as by the Winter School's three co-conveners – Professor Engseng Ho (Duke University), Professor Akhil Gupta (UCLA), and Professor Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) – each a world-renowned scholar in the field of anthropology. In the true spirit of the Winter School's stated themes, the students' work proved to be extremely diverse, with PhD projects ranging from studies of protest spaces in Malaysia and 'Chinatowns' in post-war Japan, to histories of immigrant enclaves in Australia and modernist city planning in Pakistan, to ethnographies of youth heritage activism in Indonesia and urban beautification projects in Sri Lanka. The co-conveners not only offered insightful comments on all of these projects, but also began each day's session with lectures based on their own research. In these, they knitted together various issues raised by the student presentations, while also drawing upon their own extensive fieldwork in India, Dubai, Thailand, and Singapore.

In addition, throughout the week the Winter School also facilitated guest lectures from local and foreign experts on the history and architecture of Macau. Presentations by Jeff Cody, a conservator at the Getty Institute; Tim Simpson, a dean at the University of Macau; and José Marques Sales, the last Mayor of Macau under the Portuguese administration, together presented a multifaceted picture of the city and its past. In his presentation, Jeff Cody discussed the role of the built environment, focusing on material changes to Macau over time. He explored the use of particular materials and building styles that both reinforced the trans-local connections between Macau and Las Vegas (the American city to which it is so often compared) while emphasizing the former's unique aspects.

Tim Simpson traced a complex history of gambling and the ever-present question of illicit activities on the islands, producing a humorous yet astounding picture of the massive capital that flows through Macau. Finally, José Marques Sales offered an elegiac portrait of changes to the city from the mid- to late-twentieth century through the lens of a personal biography. He discussed the changing world of a Portuguese creole elite trying to make sense of the growing political influence of China in Macau's affairs. At the same time he stressed the singular position through which Macau is able to maintain its relevance, particularly as an access point for Taiwan and as a demonstration of China's own internal complexity.

### Words, history, and the senses

From these presentations, lectures, and our spirited discussions that followed over tea and dan tat (Macanese egg tarts), three major themes arose. The first was a shared effort to rethink the terminology we use to discuss post-colonial cities. Hailing from departments of anthropology, history, media and culture studies, music, and architecture, the graduate students worked together as a highly interdisciplinary group. Throughout our interactions, we found ourselves reconsidering several terms long central to our respective fields; for instance, notions of 'identity,' 'heritage,' 'nostalgia,' and even 'hybridity' itself. While all are undoubtedly useful, in some cases these concepts cannot effectively capture the kinds of complexities in urban physical and social form that each of our research projects aim to understand. Over the course of the Winter School, many suggestions were made of how to re-work this existing terminology (for example, 'hybridities' rather than 'hybridity') in a matter we felt could better reflect the realities we faced in

our fieldwork and allow us to communicate ideas more effectively between our different disciplines. In this vein, Professor Herzfeld himself made a strong case for moving away from the usual talk of 'identity,' a word that often carries with it a false sense of fixity and internal coherence, and towards experimentation with the more nuanced concept of 'positionalities.'

The second theme to emerge from the Winter School was a desire to draw connections between the past and the present of Asian urbanism. Indeed, all of the participants shared a strong interest in historical depth – whether of physical urban landscapes, social relations of city-dwellers, or exchanges between cities within Asia – and in how that depth was represented (or left unrepresented) in contemporary heritage discourses and other public displays of an 'official'

past. Professor Ho, in particular, pointed out that many of the urban centres that served as the field sites of the graduate students' research were in fact port cities with historical linkages to each other that stretched back centuries, and challenged us to consider how these longstanding connections might be being reconfigured or reinvigorated in the present.

Finally, while the Winter School's participants came to Macau from far-ranging countries and disciplines, a strong common curiosity quickly became clear – a curiosity in the spatial, material, and sensory make-up of cities, and in how urban hybridity (or, rather, hybridities) might be understood or observed in these terms. This interest ran throughout both the individual student presentations and the lectures of the co-conveners, from Professor Gupta's characterization of incomplete infrastructure projects in Indian cities as the 'ruins of the future,' to Professor Herzfeld's account of the recent 'spatial cleansing' of Bangkok neighbourhoods to make way for parks and heritage attractions, to Professor Ho's discussion of the impact that the striking architecture of 'global cities' like Dubai and Singapore have on visitors and residents alike.

### Experiencing Macau

This shared interest in the material, spatial, and sensory dimensions of urban hybridity in Asia is a theme that the students were able to explore further in the second half of the Winter School. We split into small groups to conduct independent ethnographic and media research projects around Macau using the 'toolkit' of qualitative and quantitative research methods that the co-conveners had presented in the opening meeting of the workshop. Each group was paired with a local student from the University of Macau, who contributed enormously to our brief fieldwork experience in this

multi-layered, and sometimes daunting city. They served both as cultural and linguistic mediators and as theorists in their own right, helping the graduate students to navigate important issues regarding the cultural complexity and history of Macau.

Each group had a condensed time frame in which to pursue their own research project in Macau. This seeming constraint, however, encouraged the participants to develop innovative approaches to their fieldwork and to experiment with new methods. Some participants interacted with local residents, identifying and interviewing key informants in order to understand the history of residential associations in Macau and the role of local trade. Other groups, wanting to understand how the spatial organization and architectural construction of Macau is itself reflective of hybrid cultural dynamics, embarked on walking tours. They paid particular attention to the aesthetic and sensory features of Macau's diverse cityscapes: from the UNESCO World Heritage Site that is its historic colonial core, to the working-class neighbourhoods just off this tourist trail, to the wide avenues of its glitzy casino district.

The result of these explorations into the tangible and social dynamics of Macau was a series of short presentations on the final day of the workshop, each packed with great detail and creative insights that reflected participants' wide-ranging expertise, while also coalescing their shared interests under the general themes of the Winter School. Of the groups that focused on the spatial and sensory aspects of the city, one studied the official celebrations (coincidentally, occurring during the week of the Winter School) commemorating the handover of Macau from Portugal to China in 1999. They concluded that these self-conscious representations of Macanese heritage strategically depicted its Portuguese past as part of a politically benign multiculturalism. Another group of students examined the ubiquitous Portuguese tiles that pave the streets and sidewalks of the historic centre, tracing their historical background and connections to Portugal. They pointed out that despite their importance, today these tiles are relatively overlooked by pedestrians and tourists going about their daily affairs. Still others took a more explicitly sensory approach to Macau, producing field recordings that highlighted the aural landscape of activities concentrated in distinctive neighbourhoods.

In addition to these aesthetic and sensory themes, another set of students addressed the social aspects of everyday life in Macau. One group focused on the material infrastructure of local markets, including questions of zoning and regulation. They linked these back to issues regarding local trade amongst fruit and vegetable vendors and the larger market that has emerged in order to supply casinos. Taking a fine-grained look at the history of associational life in Macau, a final group produced a rich visual and ethnographic portrait of residents' patterns of living. In great detail, their fieldwork revealed residents' long-standing yet evolving relationships with the wider city, particularly their ambivalent engagement with mass tourism.

Overall, the diversity of themes explored by the graduate students offered up a vivid cross-section of Macau and a holistic picture of life in this complex, and sometimes contradictory city. As was the original aim of the IAS in holding the Winter School outside the usual confines of its Leiden office (a logistical feat in itself!), Macau served as the perfect backdrop for participants, both students and professors alike, to think through the larger comparative and theoretical issues that the phenomenon we called 'hybridity' continues to raise in post-colonial cities across Asia.



Photos: (top) Colorful preparations along the route of the parade celebrating the anniversary of Macau's handover to China. (under) Apartment balconies in central Macau (both photos by Lauren Yapp).

Below: Street scene, Macau. Sketched by Nurul Azreen Azlan during the group research project.



Gunar T. Miao Temple, Macau

19 Dec 2013 - 19:15



IIAS Reports *continued*

International conference report

**Cultural Heritage: Environment, Ecology and Inter-Asian Interactions**6-8 January 2014, Nalanda University, Bihar, India  
Jointly organised with IIAS

Michiel Baas

FROM 6-8 JANUARY 2014 Nalanda University hosted a highly successful conference on 'cultural heritage' specifically highlighting the role inter-Asian connections and environmental/ecological factors have played in the establishment and continued existence of heritage sites. Keynotes were delivered by Professors Engseong Ho, Akira Matsui and Frederick M. Asher. The final session of the conference on the heritage of Bihar was held on the lawn of the archaeological museum, right opposite the ruins of the ancient university of Nalanda itself.

**Approaching cultural heritage**

In Asia, the notion of 'heritage' is often associated with the construction of post-independence nation-state models, the definition of national 'traditions' and the idea of pre/post-colonial historical national continuity. As a result discussions about heritage often tend to be state-dominated, leaving little room for regional and trans-regional views. This dilemma is of particular relevance to Nalanda University, a new international university that is in the process of establishing a highly innovative academic program and campus with world class facilities in Rajgir, a small town in Bihar, India. This new university takes forward the academic excellence, teaching-learning model, and inter-Asian character of the ancient Nalanda. The conference on 'cultural heritage' took inspiration from this and sought to highlight how Asian connections and interactions have often given shape and meaning to the establishment of particular cultural heritage sites. Nalanda's first two Schools, Historical Studies and Environment & Ecology Studies, will commence in August 2014 and as a result the University was keen to explore the role ecological and environmental conditions have played in the establishment and preservation of particular sites as well.

**Inter-Asian connections**

In a highly thought-provoking and insightful Keynote, Engseong Ho of Duke University kicked-off the conference by highlighting the network of trade, politics and religion across the Indian Ocean through which he was able to lay bare the prophetic genealogies as well as the density of inter-Asian connections. Eminent scholar Anne Cheng (College de France) opened the first session by focusing on the centrality of India in the imperial Chinese era of the fourth century CE. India was imagined as the ideal kingdom at the time, while China was seen as inhabiting the margins. Subsequent papers by Padma D. Maitland (Berkeley) working on tourism and pilgrimage in Bodhi Gaya and its central place in the Buddhist imagery; Olga Deshpande of the Hermitage in Saint-Petersburg discussing how the image of Buddha travelled in Theravada; Andrea Aciri (ISEAS Singapore), exploring the history and ecology of Indic palm-leaf manuscript culture; and Grazia Marchiano, (University of Siena-Arezzo) investigating South Asian rock carvings from the Palaeolithic era, all perfectly illustrated the importance of examining the interplay of inter-Asian connections and ecological/environmental factors when focusing on cultural heritage.

**Technological interventions**

How research on this can benefit from technological interventions was made clear by another set of papers. Making use of digital techniques in order to recreate the architectural complexities of temples from the period of 400-900 CE, Sambit Datta (Curtin University) was able to highlight the many architectural linkages between temple building traditions of South and Southeast Asia. Making use of satellite imagery M.B. Rajani (Nalanda University) explores the man-made water bodies in the vicinity of the ancient university in order to understand its evolution and development. Investigating the Giant Tank in the Mannar District of Sri Lanka and making use of much simpler technology, Lodewijk Wagenaar (University of Amsterdam) and Alan Potkin (Digital Conservation Facility, Laos) aim to understand how the tank was originally 'engineered' and why subsequent restoration works during colonial days was only partially successful.

**Questions of authority, autonomy and ownership**

Questions of authority, autonomy and ownership, often drawing directly upon the observation of changing geopolitical conditions, clearly bound another set of papers. Independent scholar Alex McKay kicked off with a particularly pertinent question informed by his work on the emergence of Gangotri as a prominent pilgrimage site: who actually has the authority to determine the importance or sacredness of a particular site? Engaging in Japanese naturalist Minakata Kumagusu's work and criticism of the Japanese state's attempt to regulate Shinto shrines, allowed Brij Tankha of the Institute of Chinese Studies in Delhi to elucidate on the question of state authority and nation-state building, which often has far reaching consequences for the way (sacred) sites continue to function or even exist. Saayan Chattopadhyay (University of Calcutta) provided a reading of similar issues in his exploration of the rapidly growing popularity of the Durga



Top: Engseong Ho delivering his Keynote

Below: Group photo of conference participants

Bottom: Ruins of Nalanda University



puja festival in Kolkata. Christoph Antons (Deakin University), raising awareness of the often contested nature of intangible heritage, brought to light the way 'rights discourses' take shape especially in relation to the environment in which they are said to have originated. In relation to this both, Preetee Sharma (Jawahar Nehru University), Shaik Azahar Shaik Hussain (Universiti Malaysia Serawak) and Alice Lowsons (University of Exeter) drew attention to the way landscape, regions and memories are connected, respectively in the case of the Buddhist sites of Suryapahar (Assam), the heritage left by the 'white rajahs' in Serawak, and the trade in heritage items in the Chettinad region of Tamil Nadu. As the work of Elizabeth Cecil (Brown University) illustrated (focusing on a number of cave sites in Maharashtra), there are a myriad factors that determine if a particular 'sacred' site becomes heritage and how this is engaged with 'locally'. Swadhin Sen (Jahangirnagar University) raised an important question that had direct relation to this: how can we understand the growing disparities between the perceptions of heritage?

**Environment, ecology & great Asia**

Akira Matsui's evocative Keynote on the devastating effects of the 2011 tsunami in Japan not only brought to the fore the way environmental factors can impact on cultural heritage, but also that when it comes to such disasters there are no national borders. In that sense many other papers sought to highlight further the idea of a Greater Asia or a pan-Asia characterized by connections and interactions. While Sun Bo (National Museum of China and Peking University) illustrated how inter-Asian linkages and related geopolitical developments had informed the construction of Xiuding Temple Pagoda; Sraman Mukherjee (Presidency University, Kolkata) took an inter-Asian perspective in order to make sense of the circulation of Buddhist corporeal relics especially in relation to the 'articulation of pan Asian moral geographies'. Examining the work of several Greater India scholars, such as Kalidas Nag, enabled Carolin Stolte (Leiden University) to discuss the way in which relationships between India and Central Asia developed. Finally Marieke Bloembergen (KITLV) focused on the scholarly and spiritual knowledge exchange between India and Indonesia in relation to two major Javanese sites: Borobudur and Prambanan.

**Nalanda University, Patliputra and 'Bihar'**

In his powerful Keynote on the final day of the conference, Frederick M. Asher (University of Minnesota) elaborated on 'Monsoon Asia's' pre-modern connections via texts, histories and ideas especially in relation to the role of ecology in stimulating trade and sustaining large networks. As such his Keynote generated considerable discussion about the ancient Nalanda University as well as other important historical sites in Bihar. Other presentations such as the one by Diwakar Kumar Singh (Delhi University) on Buddhist sites in and around Nalanda; Abhishek Amar (Hamilton College) engaging in questions of heritage and history-making in the Gaya Region; Murari Kumar Jha (National University of Singapore) discussing the rise and demise of Pataliputra (current day Patna, the capital of Bihar) as an imperial centre in the fourth century BCE; and Sraman Mukherjee examining the displaced identity of Bihar Sharif as a centre for collectible heritage.

**Research agenda and network**

The conference was highly successful with engaged participants from 15 countries. This conference unveiled the launch of a new research agenda that aims to give inter-Asian connections and environmental/ecological factors a more prominent place in research on cultural heritage. Furthermore, it has led to the formation of a new network of scholars working on related topics who will find a welcome and enthusiastic partner in Nalanda University.

Michiel Baas, Fellow at Nalanda University  
(Bihar, India)





## First joint NIAS/IIAS PhD platform meeting The Power of Knowledge: Asia and the West

7-8 November 2013, Sønderborg, Denmark

Willem Vogelsang (IIAS)

ON 7 AND 8 NOVEMBER OF LAST YEAR, some twenty-five PhD students and senior scholars met at Campus Sønderborg of the University of Southern Denmark, for the first annual joint NIAS/IIAS meeting of PhD students in Asian Studies from Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. With this meeting, NIAS and IIAS launched a new series of annual joint 'PhD Platform Meetings', which are intended to take place once a year in different European cities.

This year's PhD Platform Meeting was organised by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), the Nordic NIAS Council, IIAS and the University of Southern Denmark within the context of the European Alliance for Asian Studies. Led by NIAS Director Dr Geir Helgesen, the meeting revolved around the theme of 'The Power of Knowledge: Asia and the West', and succeeded a conference on the same theme from 4 to 6 November.

The Platform Meeting included presentations by the PhD students of their previously submitted paper, which was then discussed by a senior scholar and the other students. The structure of the Platform Meeting allowed for ample time to discuss the various papers, and the interaction between the European students was further enhanced by their joint social programme during the evenings in the truly beautiful city of Sønderborg. The group of PhD students included students from Scandinavian universities (themselves originating from all over Europe) as well as an enthusiastic group of eight young scholars from the Universities of Amsterdam and Leiden in the Netherlands, who had also participated in the preceding conference. The senior scholars were: Nandita Chaudary (Delhi), Geir Helgesen (NIAS), Nikita Kharmalov (Aalborg), Chunrong Liu (the deputy director of the Fudan European Centre for China Studies), Dongchao Min (NIAS), Willem Vogelsang (IIAS), and Qi Wang (Sønderborg).

The PhD Platform Meeting was regarded by all participants as a great success, and it further strengthened the growing cooperation between NIAS in Copenhagen and IIAS in Leiden. The next PhD Platform meeting is planned for 13-17 October, and will take place in Reykjavik, Iceland.

## International conference report Patterns of Early Asian Urbanism

11-13 November 2013, Leiden, the Netherlands

Willem Vogelsang (IIAS)

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES (RMO), located on Leiden's stately Rapenburg canal, was the venue for a stimulating and very well-attended conference on Early Asian Urbanism, held from 11-13 November 2013. Organised by IIAS, with the active support of the Faculty of Archaeology of Leiden University and the Archaeology Unit of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore, the conference opened with four keynote lectures and featured 80 conference papers. The topics under discussion covered a vast geographic expanse, extending from the Indus valley in modern-day Pakistan, via the urban centres of medieval Mongolia and the jungle sites of Southeast Asia, to the cities of historical China and the urban centres of early Japan.

The conference was sponsored by the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), the Leids Universiteits Fonds (LUF), and the research profile area 'Asian Modernities and Traditions', also of Leiden University.

After the official welcome by the hosts (IIAS Director Philippe Peycam, Head of Collections and the museum's Research Department Pieter ter Keurs, and Willem Vogelsang, Institute manager at IIAS and an expert on the ancient history and culture of Afghanistan), the opening plenary session was dedicated to four keynote speakers, who delivered their lectures in the main hall of the National Museum of Antiquities.

### Keynotes

The keynote lectures and presentations focussed on one of three broad themes of the conference: 'processes of urban development', 'urban economy', and 'the social fabric of the Early Asian city'. John Miksic (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore) elaborated on 'Convergent pathways to urbanism in Southeast Asia between 1000 and 1600 AD'. Miksic differentiated between various economic and societal factors that led to seemingly similar urban features, following different processes of development. John Bintliff (Department of Archaeology, Leiden) addressed 'Urban origins, social composition and economic change in cities of the pre-modern Mediterranean and Europe'. Like Miksic, he stressed the varied nature and origins of cities all over the world, thus placing the major theme of the conference, Early Asian cities, into a global context, while drawing upon his extensive knowledge of Early Greece. The third keynote speaker was Norman Yoffee (Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York), who focussed on 'Early cities and the evolution of history'. His lecture discussed Volume 3 of the Cambridge World History, 'Early Cities and Comparative History', recently edited by Yoffee and to be published shortly. In both this volume and in his lecture, Yoffee reviewed various aspects of the social fabric of early cities: as the arena of performance, as places of information exchange, and the distribution of power in early cities. The fourth and final keynote by Roland Fletcher (The University of Sydney), concerned the topic of 'Tropical forest urbanism and the significance of Angkor'. Fletcher's lecture focussed on the low-density, agrarian urbanism that developed in many parts of the world in the first millennium AD, for instance in lowland Central America, northern Sri Lanka, and mainland Southeast Asia. Fletcher's main focus was on the large-scale site of Greater Angkor, which covered an area of about 1000 square km during the 12th and 13th centuries. By drawing attention to climatic changes in the 14th century, Fletcher hypothesised on the demise of the Angkor civilisation. According to Fletcher, low-density urbanism was and still is particularly vulnerable to climatic change.

### Petra

During the lunch break on the opening day all participants were invited to visit the museum's special exhibition, featuring the ancient city of Petra, located in the Jordanian desert. Lucas Petit, the curator of the Museum's Near Eastern collection, gave an introductory lecture on the archaeological significance of Petra, hence widening the comparative perspective on ancient urbanism addressed in the conference.

### Parallel sessions

The succeeding two conference days were dedicated to three groups of parallel sessions with brief, 20-minute presentations, followed by discussions. The sessions were organised along the main three themes of the congress, and broadly divided into three geographical areas: South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central and East Asia. Some of the sessions were organised by participants themselves, with three or four scholars introducing aspects of one particular theme, as for instance 'Asian urbanism through time in context: Facilitating ancient to modern comparisons' (organised by Benjamin Vis, Leeds University); other sessions were formed according to thematic foci, such as, for example, 'Asian port cities in comparative perspective'.

For South Asia, much attention was given to the so-called early medieval period, commonly regarded as a period of urban decline. A number of papers opposed this generally-accepted idea of decline, basing their argument on archaeological evidence suggesting continuity and even urban growth. Attention was also drawn towards the role of Buddhism in processes of urbanism. Regarding Southeast Asia, a number of papers reviewed Angkor and its evolution as an urban centre, while others were directed towards Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. Central Asia was the focus of presentations concerned with, for example, the architecture of Samarkand, the oasis settlements of Xinjiang in western China, urban development in Tibet, and the (proto) urban sites located in today's Mongolia. Both the development of ancient cities in China and the history of urbanism in Japan were the topics of a considerable number of presentations. In addition, quite a few papers concentrated on urban centres founded or developed by the Portuguese, for instance in South Asia. A range of papers discussed urban development during the contemporary Mughal period in India.

Furthermore, special attention was given to highly advanced technology for remote sensing in archaeology. Airborne laser scanning and the impressive results of such remote sensing techniques have contributed to our understanding of complex sites, as highlighted by the case study of Angkor and its vast low-density territory.

The participants found the conference to be a successful and productive event. It offered stimulating presentations and discussions, and above all it brought scholars from all disciplines together to exchange views and to widen the scope of comparative research within the field of early Asian and global urbanism. The farewell reception at the end of the third day resulted in many email addresses being exchanged and future plans and ideas developed and discussed.

Abstracts of the lectures and papers can be downloaded from the IIAS website at: [www.iias.nl/event/patterns-early-asian-urbanism](http://www.iias.nl/event/patterns-early-asian-urbanism)



# Pacific Affairs

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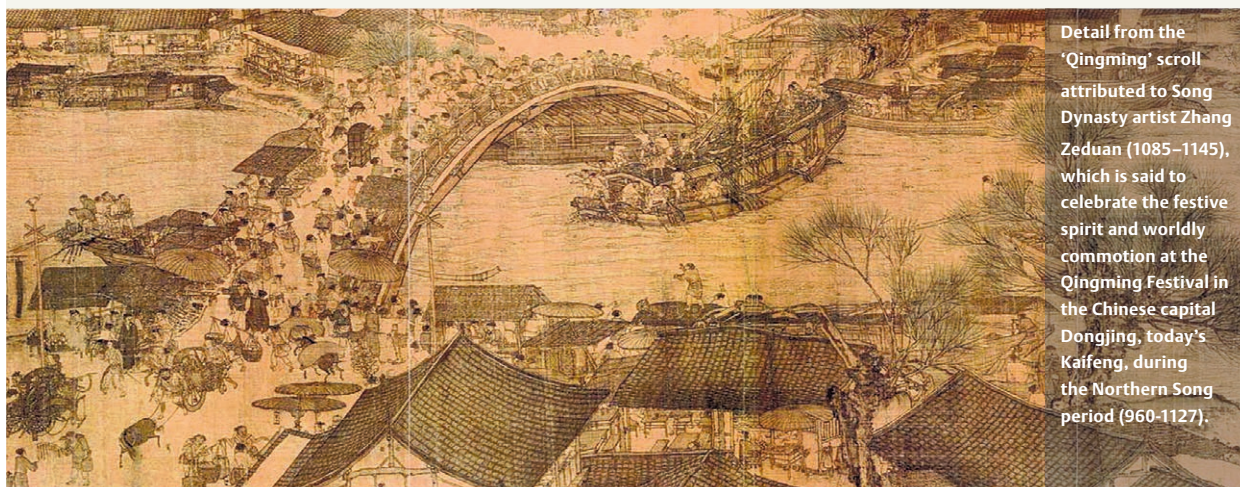
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Detail from the 'Qingming' scroll attributed to Song Dynasty artist Zhang Zeduan (1085-1145), which is said to celebrate the festive spirit and worldly commotion at the Qingming Festival in the Chinese capital Dongjing, today's Kaifeng, during the Northern Song period (960-1127).



IIAS Reports *continued*

# The architecture of Southeast Asian cities: how do architectural and urban expressions of modernity relate to heritage?

Adèle Esposito

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (12-14 June 2013), organised by the research group AUSSER,<sup>1</sup> together with the European-funded network UKNA,<sup>2</sup> the architecture school of Paris-Belleville (ENSAPB), and the international research network on architecture and urban planning "Métropoles d'Asie Pacifique", dealt with recent physical transformations and developments of Southeast Asian cities. This broadly defined geographical area is characterised in part by the diversity of its human settlements, which historically have experienced intense cultural exchanges with each other and with other cultures from beyond Southeast Asia. These historic interactions have led to the creation of distinctive spatial cultures. Today, Southeast Asian cities are experiencing both rapid urban transformations and increased globalising influences, which are reflected in the changing nature of the agents, models and tools of urban development. In analysing these trends, the conference questioned the influence of inherited spatial cultures in the shaping of recent projects. Contemporary debates in urban studies often centre around the idea of a uniform kind of globalising urbanisation that is spreading worldwide. The conference examined this idea as a hypothesis in light of the history of each city, the persistence of ancient urban morphologies, and heritage policies promoted by various Southeast Asian nations.

The conference was organised around five thematic panels, where presenters reflected upon how agents responsible for physical changes, and the operational tools employed in urban development interact in the designing and implementing of architectural and urban projects. They retraced the circulation of models and their reception by different kinds of agents – particularly by the inhabitants – who appropriate, transform or contest urban projects imposed 'from above'. Papers also dealt with questions such as: do projects embody a particular vision and expression of architectural and urban modernity and, if so, how? Are these expressions of modernity specific to Southeast Asian cities because they are the results of the encounters between exogenous inputs and locally based cultures? In addressing these and other questions, the papers analysed the originality of recent projects and spatial solutions in Southeast Asian cities. The papers not only focused on architectural and urban creation, but also on projects, which aim to conserve and/or enhance inherited urban forms and spaces. In the same way that the design of new projects is likely to be influenced both by international and local models, distinct representations of heritage that inform conservation projects often draw upon external cultural backgrounds, while making reference to specific local cultures.

The conference deliberately focused on Southeast Asian countries, because, recently, analytical backgrounds and operational tools involved in urban development easily circulate among the countries comprising ASEAN, where transnational exchanges are becoming increasingly frequent. The conference explored the perimeters, parameters and networks associated with these exchanges, which sometimes extend beyond the limits of Southeast Asia, to include China, India, Japan and other nation states. The conference also questioned the role of regionalisation – which has mainly been studied from the historical, geographical and political point of view – in shaping contemporary Southeast Asian cities.<sup>3</sup>

One key objective of the conference was to amalgamate both French and non-French research focusing on contemporary Southeast Asian cities, and to foster interdisciplinary approaches in urban studies that cohere some of the most critical concepts, tools and the methods of architectural and urban analysis with those that are typical of social scientific research.

## Keynote talks

Michael Herzfeld (Professor of Anthropology, University of Harvard)

*'Tradition as a modernist project: reflections on the Bangkok skyline'*

Popo Danes (Architect) *'Bali's architecture today: a model for the regional situation of South East Asia'*

## Scientific coordination

Dr. Adele Esposito (adeleesposito@yahoo.fr and a.esposito.2@umail.leidenuniv.nl)

## Scientific direction

Prof. Pierre Clément, Prof. Charles Goldblum, Prof. Nathalie Lancret

The scientific committee selected some of the papers from the conference to be edited and included in a forthcoming book. All the conference abstracts will soon be published on the AUSSER's blog: <http://umrausser.hypotheses.org>

## The Panels

Building the Southeast Asian city in the era of internationalisation: cultures of projects, urban ideals and other ingredients of urban shaping in Southeast Asia

Coordinator  
Charles Goldblum  
(Emeritus Professor, University Paris 8)

IN THE LAST FEW DECADES, Southeast Asian cities have experienced rapid urban development, which has dramatically changed their forms, scales and social compositions. Beyond these dramatic transformations, these cities are still marked, as cultural and social facts, by their diversity, which is one crucial peculiarity of the region. However, against this background, urban development strategies and the processes of projects' implementation operate in these cities. These projects are often large-scale (mega-projects that activate mega-urbanisation); they are frequently driven by economic rationale and shared professional cultures (conveyed by the same categories of agents, sometimes by the same people, e.g., developers, international experts, architects, urban planner, engineers, tour operators, etc.). Through their mutual connections, these powerful movements draw on common sources, extend beyond the ASEAN's geographical and political framework and are echoed in both East Asia and South Asia. This interplay is based on exchanges and is crossed by hierarchical networks (e.g., international urban cooperation and international donors). In this context, the long distance circuits, which exert an influence over urban shaping, such as the dissemination of concepts and techniques, knowledge and know-how of the international cooperation collide with (and not without interference) the short distance circuits, which convey models of consumption and images through various media, including the Internet. These dynamics deeply impact urban practices, and especially idealised housing types.

The topic of the panel was situated within the field of comparative urban planning cultures. It examined new urban shapes established at different scales of metropolitan territories, analysing the specific conditions in which these shapes emerge in the cities ('grafts', 'plating', but also de-foundation, expropriation, elimination or exclusion of certain forms), and relating them to pre-existing urban realities, the phases and the contexts that have preceded urban development. The papers crossed three introductions to the subject, depending on the cities of reference, the project rationale and the types of strategies: the new architectural and urban forms; the territorial shapes in which these forms are located, or that they contribute to shape; and the agents, organisations and institutions (public, private and others; local, national, regional or international) who act as prescribers, convey forms, influence agents and regulatory agencies. This panel addressed the question of urban models and their assumed standardisation via the detour of techniques, agents and conceptions, which play a part in 'regular' or normative urban development. It did not neglect eventual confrontations, 'spill-over' or combinatorial associations with other circuits of urban development. With regard to this issue, the understanding of real estate mechanisms underlying the new spatial configurations elucidated the modalities of urban de-foundation/re-foundation in the contemporary metropolis. It enlightened the system effects generated by these processes and the deviation from regulations (supposed or imposed) to which these processes expose themselves.

## Presenters

Buy To Uyen (University of Toulouse)

*'L'interface urbaine-rurale dans le processus de l'urbanisation accélérée de la ville de Hanoï à travers les projets de nouveaux quartiers'*

Christiane Blancot (Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme)

*'Phnom Penh, patchwork, collages et changement d'image'*

Marion Sabrié (Centre Asie du Sud-Est)

*'Le nouveau développement urbain de Rangoun et le retour vers sa "fluvialité"'*

Pawda Tjoa (University of Cambridge)

*'Tale of two cities: Jakarta's main artery from the Old Town (Kota Tua) to New Kebayoran (Kebayoran Baru)'*

Xavier Guillot (ENSA de Saint-Etienne)

*'Habitat et mondialité urbaine'*

Heritage and tourist cities, the challenges of safeguard and development

Coordinators  
Adèle Esposito (Research Associate, IPRAUS-Lecturer, IIAS/Leiden University) and Jeffrey W. Cody (Senior Project Specialist, Getty Foundation, Los Angeles)

IN ASIAN CITIES, intense and rapid processes of urban development often coexist with the emergence of heritage awareness. Institutional agents recognise the heritage values of archaeological remains, inherited buildings and urban areas. They shape cultural policies, which are involved in the construction of national identities. These policies influence the design of conservation projects and have indirect effects in the territories surrounding the heritage objects and sites: tourism development sometimes engenders spatial transformations and urban development, and either urban or territorial management follows from these spatial transformations.

The papers in this panel focused on the conception, implementation and reception of policies, planning and projects, which aim to safeguard architectural and urban forms in Asian cities. They analysed the role of multiple stakeholders in the design and the implementation of instruments of planning (e.g., politicians, public officers, experts, etc.). They also examined the forms of resistance exerted by other categories of stakeholders – such as inhabitants and real estate promoters – who contest dominant heritage meanings, regimes of ownership imposed from the top or the implementation of plans and projects, while they propose alternative visions of heritage.

The papers questioned the cultural backgrounds associated with plans and projects for heritage conservation, as well as the control of urbanisation for the safeguarding of heritage: heritage representations, tourist images, analytical frameworks (heritage concepts and theories) and operational principles. Lessons from heritage conservation projects are often shared on an international scale, as they are disseminated by the international organisations. The papers questioned the appropriation and the application of these projects and plans in particular contexts where they interact with local societies.

The papers analysed the social and spatial transformations of 'historic' cities. They scrutinised the effects of heritage policies. They questioned the role of tourism in these processes, evaluated relevant management proposals and examined spatial configurations created either by inhabitants and/or real estate promoters who benefit from tourism development. Authors investigated new urban forms and spaces created by projects situated at the margins of heritage sites.

## Presenters

Punto Wijayanto (Architect)

*'Managing heritage districts in Indonesia case study: Kotagede, Yogyakarta'*

Bruno Fayolle Lussac (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Bordeaux/IPRAUS)

*'Les ambiguïtés des politiques urbaines et des choix architecturaux dans la mise en valeur d'un site du patrimoine mondial: l'impact du classement de l'armée de terre de Qin Shihuangdi sur l'évolution de la ville de Xi'an'*

Ian Dull (University of Cambridge)

*'Memorialising modernity: Cambodia's modernist architectural "heritage" in a "developing" world'*

Savitri Jalais (IPRAUS)

*'Promotion of Benares' riverfront'*



## The circulation of spatial cultures: criss-crossed receptions and cultural-mix process

### Coordinators

Nathalie Lancret (Research Director, CNRS) and Corinne Tiry-Ono (Architect, Research Associate CRAO, Centre de Recherche sur les civilisations de l'Asie orientale)

## The city designed at the territorial scale in order to manage its environment: a new field of inquiry and experimentation

### Coordinators

Pierre Clément (President, ARTE-Charpentier Studio, Research Associate IPRAUS) and Gilles Hubert (Professor, University of Paris East)

## Resiliency/resistance: the city is built, appropriated and defended by its inhabitants

### Coordinator

Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University)

TODAY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, the architectural and urban fields are experiencing diversified renewal processes. This panel analysed new situations and resulting changes introduced by architectural and urban projects. The panel asked the question: do projects shape original expressions of modernity which, simultaneously, relate to local contexts? The panel focused on the analysis of projects and the degree to which they provide a full account of the negotiations and the individual decisions through which professionals or inhabitants shape space. The proposals focused on the spatial cultures, which give form to projects. They investigated the circulation of these cultures, the phenomena of criss-crossed reception, the cultural-mix processes and the introduction of innovative elements, all of which have implications on spatial transformations.

It was assumed that four categories of objects play a part in shaping built forms: people, urban and architectural types, media, and buildings. By focusing on their circulation through different geographic contexts, the proposals both questioned their roles and analysed the connections of objects belonging to different categories.

First, the circulation of people, especially professionals in the architectural and urban fields, engenders a complex set of dynamics, namely, the transmission of knowledge and experiences; their contact with other cultures and contexts; and the transformations of urban forms and inherited architectural and urban practices. Conversely, through travels and cooperation agreements, for example, agents working in Asia sometimes face unknown contexts and have to adapt their conceptions, models and practices to specific historical, political, economical, technical and legislative situations.

Secondly, the circulation of architectural and urban types on a global scale subverts the relations between built forms and social practices. On the one hand, new practices, influenced by the 'new' lifestyles disseminated by globalisation, transform inherited (sometimes ancient) local types. These transformations spread over different steps or situations, from integration to resistance. On the other hand, it is necessary to take the structural or cyclical conditions into account - the rooted local practices and inherited environments that remain after the importation occurs.

Thirdly, the circulation of texts and images is accelerated by the Internet. New media weakens the traditional connections between the centre and the periphery at the regional, national and international scales. Do they standardise the architectural and urban vocabulary (forms, materials, symbolic values and tools) or do they play an active or even innovative role in the design and renewal of the projects?

Finally, some ephemeral types of buildings circulate in particular contexts. Several forms of mobile architecture, such as temporary emergency housing, are models that circulate either at the scale of a single territory or from one region to another. Do these forms have an impact on local construction practices? Do architects integrate elements of 'traditional' forms and techniques in these types of projects? Conversely, do agents having a different culture appropriate these thrifty, sometimes ecological building types? 'Displaced' architecture - famous buildings, works of art, 'museumified' monuments saved from destruction or probable disappearance - is another form of direct and physical circulation. Do, for example, 'open-air museums' or other hosting places in situ, encourage the dissemination of exogenous models? Are they involved in heritage transmission or education?

### Presenters

Cathérine Guéguen (Université Paris-Sorbonne)  
*'Redéfinir Binondo, le quartier chinois de Manille'*  
Shoichi Ota (Kyoto Institute of Technology)  
*'Planning a Vietnamese village: a crossroad of the Eastern and Western planning culture'*

EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD, because of rapid urbanisation and extension outside of their ramparts and historical frameworks, cities have recently colonised larger territories. This form of colonisation has taken different shapes: urban sprawl and densification of peripheral areas; suburbanisation, which has absorbed villages and created new neighbourhoods; and voluntarist policies, which have tried to manage urban extensions through the creation of satellite towns located a few kilometres away from the main city. Because of these kinds of urban territorial expansions, architects and urban planners have to face new challenges associated with energy-related crises, the will of responsibly using natural resources, climate change and CO2 emissions. Urban creations, which until recently had been confined to the field of empiricism and imagination, now require both scientific knowledge and traditional expertise. The main question posed by this panel is located at the intersection of two methods: traditions, which have been adapted to specific local conditions, and the experimentations of new practices which involve other disciplines.

Although the conference will focus on the territory covered by ASEAN, the panel also accepted comparisons between projects situated in Southeast Asia with others located in neighbouring Asian countries such as India, China, Korea and Japan. This is because we cannot ignore the influences of the projects realised in countries situated beyond ASEAN on the historical and contemporary transformations of Southeast Asian cities. The papers analysed the conditions and conceptions under which projects emerge; new spatial scales considered by them and their consequences on urban transformations; the instruments of management situated at the interface of these scales; and the influence of cultural specificities, local models, innovative knowledge and indigenous know-how.

### Presenters

Labib Hossain (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology)

*'Housing in a shifting ecosystem in Kerqiganj, a suburban area of Dhaka City'*

Prin Jhearmanechotechai (AUSSEER)

*'From the agricultural patterns to the city's form: the map of the Bangkok peri-urban to the Tha Chin River at the beginning of the 20th century'*

Fang Yu Hu (AUSSEER)

*'Interaction between urban spatial organisation and flood risk. Taipei case study'*

Anil Kumar Roy (CEPT University)

*'Revitalising natural heritage through urban planning tools: the case of Sabarmati riverfront development in Ahmedabad, India'*

### Notes

- 1 AUSSEER is a research unit (CNRS, National Centre for Scientific Research/MCC, Ministry of Culture and Communication). The group consists of departments from IPRAUS (Parisian Institute of Research Architecture Urbanism Society), ACS (Architecture Culture Society XIXth-XXth century), OCS (Observatory of the Suburban Condition), AHTTEP (Architecture, History, Techniques, Territory, and Heritage), and is hosted by the AUSSEER research unit (Architecture, Urbanism, Society: Knowledge Teaching Research). The scientific committee for this conference included 14 members coming from 10 different institutions.
- 2 The Urban Knowledge Network Asia, piloted by the International Institute for Asian Studies, brings together more than 100 scholars and professionals from 16 institutions in Europe, Asia, and the United States.
- 3 Fau, N., Khonthaphane, S. & Taillard, C. 2014. *Transnational Dynamics in Southeast Asia: the Greater Mekong Subregion and Malacca Straits Economic Corridors*. Bangkok: IRASEC.
- 4 Guggenheim, M. & Stöderström, O. 2010. *Re-shaping Cities. How Global Mobility Transforms Architecture and Urban Forms*. London-New York: Routledge.

THE CITY IS OFTEN DESIGNED and conceived by professionals, politicians, urban planners and architects, but it is also practiced, transformed, adapted and sometimes defended by its inhabitants. Inhabitants are involved in urban shaping in different ways. In Western countries, their participation is often limited to political or residential choices. Through the vote, some urban concepts emerge and are employed in policy-making, which sometimes engender short term or long term impacts on the urban reality. Through the residential choice, inhabitants exert an influence on the housing sector and choose among a relatively narrow range of housing solutions. The relation between the demand and the offer is ambiguous: the demand engenders the offer, or conversely. In Southeast Asian contexts, the inhabitants act in several different, sometimes singular or unusual ways, depending on their relation to the power. 'Local democracy', the laissez-faire admitted by the authorities, or conversely, policies based on incentives, determine the role played by the inhabitants and sometimes encourage their active participation in the urbanisation processes. The residents are agents in the housing field: they transform, adapt and appropriate their dwellings according to their exigencies. In so doing, they counterbalance inadequate projects, which have been conceived in an authoritarian way and without public participation. The frequency of these kind of transformations show that there is a gap between projects, as they are imagined and realised by architects and decision makers, and realities of daily urban life which are often neglected by experts and politicians. Inhabitants also convey the sense of urbanity in some areas of the city, especially in new neighbourhoods which are often planned, designed and built in a short time, to the detriment of the quality of public spaces and architectures. Inhabitants are able to rapidly appropriate these places and bring civilisation and sociability. This is the case of the new settlements created for the relocation of evicted people, which maintain their social cohesion and neighbourhood relations despite the displacement. The resistance to urban projects exerted by inhabitants expresses a power that should not be neglected by decision makers. In Vietnam, some projects have been deeply transformed, sometimes abandoned because the power of residents' associations (village-based communities, neighbourhood associations, etc.) were minimised. However, this resistance has some limits and can also produce negative effects. Abusive behaviours occur when the authorities do not set up a clear framework for compensation and relocation.

### Presenters

Fanny Gerbeaud (Université de Bordeaux) *'Vers une fabrication partagée de la métropole: l'habitat spontané à Bangkok'*

Marie Gibert (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne – PRODIG) *'Les espaces publics urbains vietnamiens face à la "modernité": Hô Chi Minh Ville: résistance et réinvention de la culture de la rue'*

Gregorius Sri Wuryanto (Technische Universität Berlin/ Duta Wacana Christian University, Jogjakarta) *'Continuity and discontinuity of the dwelling culture in post-disaster urban transformation in Kotagede, Jogjakarta, Indonesia'*

Ariane Louvet-Pham (Institut Parisien d'Urbanisme) *'La planification urbaine du Grand Ha Noi: le e-débat comme espace virtuel de négociation de l'espace réel'*



# IIAS/AUP Publications

## New book series at Amsterdam University Press

Paul van der Velde

IN THE ARTICLE '20 years of publishing at IIAS' in the previous issue of The Newsletter (#66, p.40) we reflected on past publications at IIAS. We also informed you that the IIAS and ICAS Publications Series would be discontinued at the beginning of 2014, and we briefly mentioned that we were planning three new series that are more in line with the IIAS research

agenda. Now that the contract with Amsterdam University Press (AUP) has been signed, we are happy to inform you that these three new series have been established. Below you will find the relevant information (series editors and editorial board members) on the new book series: Global Asia, Asian Cities, Asian Heritages.

In the course of this year five to six books will be published and by the time the series is officially launched at ICAS 9 in Adelaide (2015), we hope to present 15 books during the ICAS Book Presentation Carousel. If you are interested in publishing a book in one of these series, do not hesitate to contact the series editors.

### Global Asia

**Series editor:**

**Tak-Wing Ngo, Professor of Political Science, University of Macau, China (takwingngo@gmail.com)**

ASIA HAS A LONG HISTORY of transnational linkages with other parts of the world. Yet the contribution of Asian knowledge, values, and practices in the making of the modern world has largely been overlooked until recent years. The rise of Asia is often viewed as a challenge to the existing world order. Such a bifurcated view overlooks the fact that the global order has been shaped by Asian experiences as much as the global formation has shaped Asia. The Global Asia Series takes this understanding as the point of departure. It addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region, as well as Asia's projection into the world through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies, and so forth. The series aims to publish timely and well-researched books that will have the cumulative effect of developing new perspectives and theories about global Asia.

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Kevin Hewison, Sir Walter Murdoch Distinguished Professor of Politics and International Studies, Murdoch University, Australia

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### Asian Cities

**Series editor:**

**Paul Rabé, Coordinator of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, The Netherlands (p.e.rabe@iias.nl)**

THE ASIAN CITIES SERIES explores urban cultures, societies and developments from the ancient to the contemporary city, from West Asia and the Near East to East Asia and the Pacific. The series focuses on three avenues of inquiry: evolving and competing ideas of the city across time and space; urban residents and their interactions in the production, shaping and contestation of the city; and urban challenges of the future as they relate to human well-being, the environment, heritage and public life.

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### Asian Heritages

**Series editor:**

**Adele Esposito, Research Associate ENSAPB, Paris; Lecturer and MA Coordinator 'Critical Heritage Studies' IIAS/Leiden University, The Netherlands**

THE ASIAN HERITAGES series explores the notions of heritage as they have evolved from European based concepts, mainly associated with architecture and monumental archaeology, to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and value. This includes a critical exploration of the politics of heritage and its categories, such as the contested distinction 'tangible' and 'intangible' heritages; the analysis of the conflicts triggered by competing agendas and interests in the heritage field; and the productive assessment of management measures in the context of Asia.

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IN ADDITION to the three new IIAS series, Amsterdam University Press would like to introduce the two latest book series in its Asian Studies domain: 'Emerging Asia' and 'China's Environment and Welfare (CHEW)'.

If you are interested in publishing a book in one of these series, or if you would like more information about AUP's Asian Studies programme, do not hesitate to contact the series editors or AUP's Senior Commissioning Editor for Asian Studies, Saskia Gieling (s.gieling@aup.nl).

Saskia Gieling will also be present at the AAS conference in Philadelphia (28-30 March 2014). Furthermore, University of Chicago Press (UCP) will be representing AUP during the conference at booth #310.

### Emerging Asia

**Series Editor:**

**William A. Callahan, London School of Economics, United Kingdom**

THERE IS MUCH POPULAR INTEREST in the rise of emerging powers in Asia, especially China and India, and also other countries. However, as yet there is very little committed academic analysis about what the rise of Asia would mean for Asians, and for the world. The 'Emerging Asia' book series publishes monographs and edited volumes that address

- 1) analysis of the impact of the rise of individual countries (e.g., China, India, Korea, Indonesia) on Asia's international politics;
- 2) comparative analysis of intra-Asian relations (e.g., Sino-Indian relations, India-ASEAN relations);
- 3) the role of Asia in global affairs; and 4) the promise and possibility of Asian ideas and norms influencing a post-Western world order. It encourages both discipline-based research and inter-disciplinary research.

### China's Environment and Welfare (CHEW)

**Series Editor:**

**Anna Lora-Wainwright, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, United Kingdom**

CHINA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES are an issue of global concern.

This has, however, meant that in much writing on the topic 'the environment' has become equated with 'pollution'. In similar ways, the study of welfare has become synonymous to the study of illness. This book series champions a broad analytical rethinking of these terms, and encourages explorations of their complex interconnections. Practices under scrutiny may range from fengshui and hygiene to farming, forest governance, mining and industry. Topics may be equally wide-ranging, spanning from climate change, waste incineration and cancer villages to everyday environmentalism and cultural and ritual engagements with environment and welfare. Geographically, the series covers rural and urban areas as well as their growing hybrid meeting points. Interdisciplinary in scope, the series will feature disciplines from across the social science and humanities, including anthropology, sociology, geography, development studies and political science. As a whole, the series promotes a conception of welfare that positions human welfare as part of broader ecological welfare and probes human-ecological interactions. It will make an excellent contribution to the study of China by significantly improving understanding of these major topics and redefining them in a creative and innovative way. The series will also contribute to key debates in Chinese studies on state legitimacy, agency and social change through a close study of these topics.



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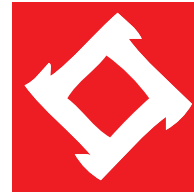
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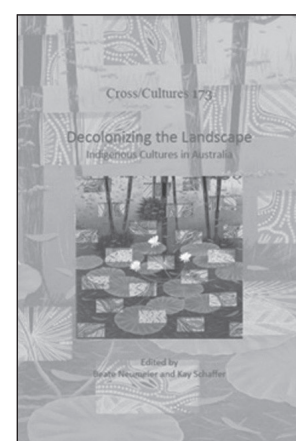


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## Decolonizing the Landscape

### Indigenous Cultures in Australia

Edited by  
Beate Neumeier and Kay Schaffer



How does one read across cultural boundaries? The multitude of creative texts, performance practices, and artworks produced by Indigenous writers and artists in contemporary Australia calls upon Anglo-European academic readers, viewers, and critics to respond to this critical question.

Contributors address a plethora of creative works by Indigenous writers, poets, playwrights, filmmakers, and painters, including Richard Frankland, Lionel Fogarty, Lin Onus, Kim Scott, Sam Watson, and Alexis Wright, as well as Durrudiya song cycles and works by Western Desert artists. The complexity of these

creative works transcends categorical boundaries of Western art, aesthetics, and literature, demanding new processes of reading and response. Other contributors address works by non-Indigenous writers and filmmakers such as Stephen Muecke, Katrina Schlunke, Margaret Somerville, and Jeni Thornley, all of whom actively engage in questioning their complicity with the past in order to challenge Western modes of knowledge and understanding and to enter into a more self-critical and authentically ethical dialogue with the Other.

In probing the limitations of Anglo-European knowledge-systems, essays in this volume lay the groundwork for entering into a more authentic dialogue with Indigenous writers and critics.

Amsterdam/New York, NY  
2014. XIX, 296 pp.  
(Cross/Cultures 173)  
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# Announcements

## A-ASIA Inaugural Conference 'Asian Studies in Africa: the Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interaction'

15-17 January 2015, Accra, Ghana,  
Call for papers deadline: 1 April 2014

'ASIAN STUDIES IN AFRICA' will be the first ever conference held in Africa to bring together a multi-disciplinary 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 Asia 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?

### 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 April 2014. 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 1 June 2014. The working languages of the conference will be English, French and Portuguese, but all PowerPoint presentations must be in English.

Further information and submission (application) forms can be found at: [www.africas.asia](http://www.africas.asia)  
Contact: [m.c.van.den.haak@ias.nl](mailto:m.c.van.den.haak@ias.nl)

## Meet Titia van der Maas, programme coordinator for the new IIAS programme 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context'



ON 1 FEBRUARY 2014 Titia van der Maas joined IIAS as Programme Coordinator for a new IIAS programme entitled 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context' (2014-2016). This three-year pilot initiative is aimed at strengthening and redirecting Asian Studies and is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York.

The programme is built on a practice of close interactions between Asian, European, American and African partners, and aims to foster new humanities-focused research and educational opportunities in the field of Asian Studies on the basis of a trans-regional interdisciplinary collaborative platform. The initiative will include a range of scholarly activities in five topical areas, or 'forums':

Forum 1: 'History and Asian Intellectual Traditions: Modal Epistemology and Theory for AmEurAsia' (META)

Forum 2: 'Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage in Asian Contexts'

Forum 3: 'Asian Spatialities'

Forum 4: 'The Idea of the City in Asian Contexts'

Forum 5: 'Views of Asia from Africa'

As Programme Coordinator Titia will work on the planning, monitoring, reporting and coordination of the logistical aspects of the five dialogical forums and the activities included in the programme.

Titia van der Maas obtained a bachelor's degree in Language and Culture Studies at Utrecht University and a master's cum laude in International Relations in Historical Perspective, also at Utrecht University. As a political historian she is interested in the diverging socioeconomic dynamics and political developments in Asia in a globalised setting. Over the past four years she has worked with various Leiden University institutes. Titia was Programme Coordinator with the Training Indonesia's Young Leaders Programme; subsequently she served as Project Officer for the Islam Research Programme, commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most recently she worked with IIAS as Seminars Coordinator.

For more information on the programme, see [The Newsletter #66 \(page 16\)](#)  
<http://tinyurl.com/IIASrethinking>

# 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.

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### 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  
[ias@ias.nl](mailto:ias@ias.nl)



Announcements *continued*

International conference report

**Religion and the Politics of Development:  
Priests, Potentates, and 'Progress'**

28-29 August 2013, Robin Bush, Asia Research Institute

*The Religion and the Politics of Development: Priests, Potentates, and 'Progress'* international conference took place at University Hall, National University of Singapore, on 28-29 August 2013. This conference was jointly-funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and the Asia Research Institute.

The conference was well-attended, attracting an audience of over 100 people, including scholars from multiple disciplines and universities in the region, practitioners from a range of development and humanitarian organizations, civil servants, and students. The conference began with introductory remarks by the organizers, calling attention to recent shifts in the geopolitics of development assistance and the power imbalances that still mark the fight against poverty. The organizers called for an introduction of analysis of 'religion' in conversations on the politics of poverty, and discussions of ways in which development and religion are mutually constitutive. Both days of the conference began by a dialogic keynote panel in which two senior scholars made substantial presentations, followed by incisive commentary by ARI/NUS experts, and discussion with the audience.

On the first day, the keynote session, featuring Katherine Marshall and Jeff Haynes, focused on 'Development Actors', and on the second day, the keynote session, featuring Carole Rakodi and James Putzel, focused on the role of the State. Following each keynote session were parallel break-out panels in which 18 scholars presented papers across the

following broad sub-themes: transnational religious actors, humanitarians & religion, interrogating religion, entanglements with the state, engaging Islam, and secularity. These sessions featured rich, empirically grounded case study research on the nexus of religion, development, and politics in Central Asia, West Asia, Thailand, Myanmar, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Malaysia, China, Japan, and Bangladesh. A number of the papers presented by junior scholars were particularly strong, with exciting new paradigms and rich analytical frames being presented and discussed.

One of the foremost objectives of the organizers was that this conference would represent conversations not just among scholars, but that development practitioners' voices would also be a key element of the debates. As such, one of the innovations of the conference design was a Practitioner's Panel – held as the capstone session on each day of the conference. In these panels, 8 senior development practitioners representing OECD, AusAID, ICRC, Tony Blair Faith Foundation, The Asia Foundation, World Vision, Save the Children, and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (NUS), shared their insights into the role that religion plays in various aspects of development. On the first day, the practitioner panel focused on discussions of development policy, and on the second day, it focused on grounded and field-based experience. Many people remarked on the practitioner panels as

being a forum that worked remarkably well, and that were a highlight of the conference. The debate and interaction between practitioners and scholars was not just limited to these panels, however – it prevailed throughout all of the sessions of the conference, and indeed became a primary theme of discussion. That is, the 'bridge building' objective of the conference became a point of discourse itself, and as a point of dialogue was enthusiastically embraced by participants. Points of potential collaboration that were identified included the need for more rigorous data and evidence, the need for systematic and detailed mapping, and the need for comparative case studies. In terms of networking, both practitioners and scholars mentioned their appreciation for the opportunity to meet and connect with cross-disciplinary colleagues.

Across the two days of the conference, a few key themes emerged as prevalent talking points. One of these was the broad disjunction between many scholars, who felt there was a 'resurgence' of interest in religion in development studies and social science more broadly, and some practitioners who felt that religion was of little interest to many development agencies and absent in development policy. Another frequent theme was the lack of data or evidence on how engagement with religion affects development outcomes, and vice-versa, how engagement with development shapes religious institutions and identities. A third point of discussion was the complex and varied relationship between the state and religion in differing historical and political contexts, and ensuing implications for citizen welfare. While the goal of the conference was not to arrive at a general consensus or overarching conclusions, generally it was felt that the provocative conversations enabled a more nuanced and complex understanding for both scholars and practitioners about how religion, politics, and development interact. Conference organizers are in the process of producing an edited volume containing some of the papers from the conference. The volume will be entitled *Religion and the Politics of Development*, and will be published in Palgrave MacMillan's International Political Economy series. The volume is expected to be available in late 2014.



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# IIAS Research and Projects

IIAS research and other initiatives are carried out within a number of thematic clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents – all built around the notion of social agency. The aim of this approach is to cultivate synergies and coherence between people and projects and to generate more interaction with Asian societies. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics. For more information visit [www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl).

## Asian Cities

WITH A SPECIAL EYE on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longstanding Asian urban “tradition”, by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia and linking the various elements of city cultures and societies, from ancient to modern (colonial and post-colonial) times. Through an international knowledge-network of experts, cities and research institutes it seeks to encourage social scientists and scholars in the humanities to interact with contemporary actors including artists, activists, planners and architects, educators, and policy makers. By bringing together science and practice, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities ‘in context’ and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

### The Postcolonial Global City

This research examines the postcolonial cities of South, East and South-East Asia, and how some of them have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right. Intended as an inter-disciplinary research endeavour, the Postcolonial Global City has, thanks to events such as its seminars and lectures, brought together not just architects and urbanists, but also people from other disciplines, such as geographers, sociologists and political scientists, as well as historians, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of Asian studies. A key factor in the research is architectural typology. Architecture is

examined to see how it can create identity and ethos and how in the post-colonial era these building typologies have been superseded by the office building, the skyscraper and the shopping centre, all of which are rapidly altering the older urban fabric of the city. The research programme organises a seminar every spring. The 2013 seminar Asian Cities: Colonial to Global fits into the Postcolonial Global City’s wider research which focuses on city design and city governance, and its investigations into institutions of governance, rule of law, and the role of language, as well as issues of environmentalism and sustainability.

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

### 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. 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 EU and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IIAS is the coordinating institute in the network and administrator of the programme.

**UKNA Partners:** Ambedkar University; Beijing University of Technology’s College of Architecture and Urban Planning; CEPT University; China Academy of Urban Planning and Design; TU Delft Faculty of Architecture; Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture Paris-Belleville; Hong Kong University’s Architecture Department; Indian Institute for Human Settlements; International Institute for Asian Studies; Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences’ Centre for Urban and Regional Studies; Tianjin University’s School of Architecture; University College London’s Development Planning Unit; University of Macau’s Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities; University of Southern California’s Sol Price School of Public Policy. Strategic partners are: Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore and the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning (NTUBP) of National Taiwan University. **Coordinators: Paul Rabé ([p.e.rabe@iias.nl](mailto:p.e.rabe@iias.nl)) and Gien San Tan ([g.s.tan@iias.nl](mailto:g.s.tan@iias.nl))**

## Global Asia

THE GLOBAL ASIA CLUSTER addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region as well as Asia’s projection into the world, through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies and so forth. Past and present trends are addressed. The cluster aims to expand the understanding of the processes of globalisation by considering the various ways Asian and other world regions are interconnected within a long-term historical framework. Acknowledging the central role of Asia as an agent of global transformations, it challenges western perspectives that underlie much of the current literature on the subject and explores new forms of non-hegemonic intellectual interactions in the form of ‘south-south-north’ and ‘east-west’ dialogue models. In principle, any research dealing with Asian global interactions is of interest. By multi-polarizing the field of Asian studies, an enriched comparative understanding of globalization processes and the role of Asia in both time and space will be possible.

### Asian Borderlands Research Network ([www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net))

The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN 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 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’.

**Coordinator: Eric de Maaker ([maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl))**

### Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

The EPA-research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. The New Joint Research Project is called *The Transnationalization of China’s Oil*

*Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017).* Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this new joint comparative research project of the Energy Programme Asia will analyse China’s increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil. It seeks to determine patterns of inter-action between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects, and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economies. A core team of principal authors will present individual studies on various aspects and different countries. The resulting studies will be published in refereed journals such as Energy Policy, Social Aspects of Energy [Elsevier], China Information, and a book volume. This project is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS. **Coordinators: M. Amineh, Programme Director EPA-IIAS ([m.p.amineh@uva.nl](mailto:m.p.amineh@uva.nl) or [m.p.amineh@iias.nl](mailto:m.p.amineh@iias.nl)), Y. Guang, Programme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS [www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa](http://www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa)**

### IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance

The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the Centre facilitates projects on State Licensing, Market Closure, and Rent Seeking; Regulation

of Intra-governmental Conflict; Social Costs, Externalities and Innovation; Regulatory Governance under Institutional Void; and Governance in Areas of Contested Territoriality and Sovereignty. **Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo ([t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl))**

### 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 headed by a steering committee of scholars, mainly from Africa and Asia. 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’ (for the call for papers see page 51). 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.

## Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested distinctions of ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in defining one’s own identity or identities vis-à-vis those of others. It addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for social agency. It aims to engage with the concepts of ‘authenticity’, ‘national heritage’ and ‘shared heritage’ and issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. It will critically address the dangers of commodification of perceived endangered local cultures/heritages, languages, religious practices, crafts and art forms, as well as material vernacular heritage.

### Indian Medical Heritage Research Network

The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network wants to stimulate social-cultural and social-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage](http://www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage)) for collating research findings

and other information about India’s medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds.

**Coordinator: Maarten Bode ([m.bode@uva.nl](mailto:m.bode@uva.nl))**

### ABIA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index

The ABIA project is a global network of scholars co-operating on a bibliographic database of publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. From March 2013, Brill Publishers has taken on the ABIA Netherlands office as an in-house digital bibliographic project.

**Information: [www.abia.net](http://www.abia.net) or [e.m.raven@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:e.m.raven@hum.leidenuniv.nl)**



## Open Cluster

### Ageing in Asia and Europe

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. Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l’Age, la Citoyenneté et l’Intégration Socio-économique (REIACTIS). **Coordinator: Carla Risseuw ([c.risseuw@iias.nl](mailto:c.risseuw@iias.nl))**



# IIAS 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 IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.

## CURRENT FELLOWS

### Natsuko Akagawa

*Heritage conservation and cultural diplomacy in Southeast Asia*  
1 Dec 2013–28 Feb 2014

### Mehdi Amineh

Coordinator "Energy Programme Asia (EPA)"  
*Domestic and geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union*  
1 Sep 2007–31 Mar 2017

### Gregory Bracken

Coordinator "The Postcolonial Global City"  
*Colonial-era Shanghai as an urban model for the 21st century*  
1 Sep 2009–31 Aug 2015

### Bernardo Brown

*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

*Histories of Balinese art and museum collections*  
1 Sep 2013 – 28 Feb 2014

### Yung-mau CHAO

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

### Rui CHEN

*Informal development, another status of urbanisation in China: Transitions in social structure, regional governance, and urban environment*  
2 Jan 2014–31 Mar 2014

### 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 2013–30 Jun 2014

### Ana Dragojlovic

*Indisch genealogy and forms of relatedness: rethinking diaspora and citizenship*  
1 Dec 2013–20 Jul 2014

### Romain Dittgen

*Chinese business borderlands in Sub-Saharan Africa*  
2 Jan 2014–30 Jun 2014

### Jonathan Duquette

*A study of Śivādvaīta Vedānta theology with reference to Appaya Dīkṣita's Śivārkaṇḍīpikā, a subcommentary on Śrīkaṇṭha's Brahmamīmāṃsābhāṣya*  
1 September 2013–28 February 2014

### Elisabeth L. Engebretsen

*Precarious livelihoods, rising inequalities, and politics of survival in contemporary urban Chinese society*  
1 Sep 2013–31 Mar 2014

### Elisa Ganser

*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

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

### Jenna Grant

*Technology, clarity, and uncertainty: an ethnography of biomedical imaging in Phnom Penh*  
20 Jan 2014–19 Oct 2014

### Bingyue HAN

*The historical landscape in the Netherlands*  
2 Jan 2014–31 Mar 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

### Pralay Kanungo

Visiting Professor, India Studies Chair (ICCR)  
*Indian Politics*  
1 Sep 2013–31 Aug 2015

### Ward Keeler

*Masculinity, autonomy and attachment in Buddhist Burma*  
1 Nov 2013–30 Apr 2014

### David Kloos

*Becoming better Muslims: religious authority and ethical improvement in Aceh, Indonesia*  
1 Jul 2013–31 Jan 2014

### Retno Kusumaningtyas

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

### Viet Le

*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

*Pemuda Fever: nationalism, youth and public culture in urban Indonesia*  
1 Oct 2013–31 Mar 2014

### Yongwoo Lee

1 Apr 2014–31 Jul 2014

### Duccio Lelli

*The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda. A critical edition, translation and commentary of kāṇḍa fifteen*  
1 Jan 2014–30 Jun 2014

### Nina Mirnig

*Early Śaivism in Nepal*  
1 Oct 2013–31 Jan 2014

### Rohit Negi

1 Mar 2014–30 Jun 2014

### Tak-wing Ngo

IIAS Extraordinary Chair at Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam  
Coordinator "IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance"  
*State-market relations and the political economy of development*  
1 May 2008–30 Apr 2017

### Elena Paskaleva

*Reading the architecture of paradise: the Timurid Kosh*  
1 Sep 2012–31 Jul 2014

### Gerard Persoon

IIAS 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

### Saraju Rath

*Indian manuscripts in the Netherlands: from forgotten treasures to accessible archives*  
5 Jan 2004–31 Dec 2015

### Carla Risseuw

Coordinator: "Ageing in East and West"  
1 Jan 2008–30 Jun 2014

### Masaya Shishikura

*Trans-border humanity through case studies of travelling music and migrating peoples in northeast Asian contexts*  
1 Mar 2014–31 Dec 2014

### Albert Tzeng

*Framing sociology in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore*  
20 May 2013–31 May 2014

### Ning WANG

*The green and innovation development path in the peri-urban area*  
1 Jan 2014–31 Mar 2014

### Meng YU

*Urbanisation and rural modernization in China: the mechanism of migration, driving forces and balanced urban-rural development*  
1 Jan 2014–31 Mar 2014

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### CHEN Rui

China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, (CAUPD), Beijing, China

'Informal development', another method of urbanisation in China



AFTER MORE THAN 30 YEARS of reform and opening up, China is now undergoing a deep transition period in the development of a market economy and society, which brings along significant changes in the relationship between government and society. The market economy is now playing the most important role in social life while the state-owned enterprises are facing further reform. The rapid growth of the market economy is accompanied by an equally rapid development of urbanisation, but the city management, or governance, is still permeated with the features of a planned economy. This means that the government can one-sidedly decide how a city should be developed, with little or no room (or rights) for other parties to change this development. China's urban planning lacks the amount of elasticity that may be desirable for a system that allows agency by various market parties, and, primarily serving the government, leads to a blueprint.

I call this pattern of urbanisation, which is most common in China, the 'formal development'. Although this pattern is an efficient approach in centralised decision-making, and it not only brings along a rapid growth of the urban population but also a modernisation of the urban constructed area as well as a more and more globalised economy, 'formal development' also neglects the demands of other market agencies, and usually leads to serious urban problems, among others in the areas of the environment, traffic and social issues. In urban planning, and even in China's political atmosphere, the reconstruction of the relationship between government and market has become a most important topic.

But, I have also discovered that there exists a pattern of 'informal urbanisation' in China, which has captured my utmost interest and which is the topic of my research with IIAS. This second type of development, with Wenzhou in Zhejiang province as an example, lacks government guidance. In contrast to 'formal development', the driving force behind 'informal development' is endogenous, coming from the activity of local private sectors or persons. The town of Longgang in the Wenzhou metropolitan region is the most typical case of a town that was planned and built by the local farmers instead of the local government. Nonetheless, Longgang now is an important sub-centre in the larger Wenzhou Region.

The decision-making process of urban construction in Wenzhou is more democratic in nature, with more participants, than that of other cities in China. Many important public buildings were realised with funds raised by the citizens. Although the weak government in Wenzhou leaves room for more consideration for a wide variety of demands from the market and society, it has also faced many public problems, most notably the degradation of the environment. A better way to sustainable urbanisation would be to clarify the relationship between government and society, and to strengthen the role of the government in developmental control and governance.

My stay with IIAS and access to the Urban Knowledge Networks of the EU and Asia provides me with the opportunity to learn about and understand the role of government and NGOs in the urban society of Western developed countries, which will be very helpful in conceiving the future of China. The ample opportunities for informal discussion at IIAS, for example during the lunch lectures, has also helped me to study the urban social transitions from different angles. This transition may mean an important reform of China's urban planning method.



## Natsuko Akagawa

The University of Western Australia

Heritage conservation and cultural diplomacy in Southeast Asia



DURING THE FIRST PHASE of my fellowship at IIAS, I completed the manuscript of my monograph *Heritage Conservation in Japan's Cultural Diplomacy: Heritage, National Identity and National Interest*, which is currently in press, to be available in late June 2014. In this book I have established the theoretical nexus between the politics of heritage conservation, cultural diplomacy and national interest. The book examines Japan's role in developing international heritage protocols through its influential involvement in UNESCO and its contribution to the development of heritage policy and practice in Southeast Asia. This work has also established the implication of immaterial or non-physical or intangible elements underlying heritage conservation and has questioned the apparent dichotomy in East-West heritage practice at a global level. I have also worked on two book chapters on intangible/immaterial heritage for inclusion in two forthcoming key texts in heritage studies. In one chapter for *Theorising Heritage* (Routledge), I reveal how the former East-West binary in heritage discourse has gradually dissolved in a discourse on the necessity of respecting cultural diversity across and within nations when developing global heritage frameworks. In a chapter for *New Heritage Studies Companion* (Blackwell), I explore the notion of embodiment and cultural identity.

During the subsequent part of my fellowship, I will be conducting a project *Heritage Conservation and Cultural Diplomacy in Southeast Asia*. This will involve a broader examination of heritage practices in Southeast Asia in the context of global and local heritage discourse and cultural diplomacy in colonial and post-colonial, as well as non-colonised states. In preparation for this second phase of my fellowship I held a number of consultation visits with officials of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and Dutch Centre for Popular Culture and Immaterial Heritage to enable me to gain first hand understanding of Dutch heritage policies and current development of its 'mutual' heritage program in association with countries including Indonesia, Japan and Australia. I have also been studying the EU Commission's approaches on safeguarding moveable and immovable cultural heritage of Europe under the terms of the EU Treaty (Article 167, 1993). Investigation at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology), technical site visits and informal interviews with local residents have also provided me with good insights on different perspective on erfgoed, heritage, in the Netherlands.

In addition to the above, I had the opportunity to participate in the IIAS Roundtable Meeting in Macau in December where I was able to draw on my long-term research on the historical and heritage legacies of Macau to contribute to discussion on how urban historic areas with high economic interest could be adequately safeguarded for local people. It was particularly pleasing for me to note the interest in the Netherlands in *immaterieel erfgoed*, intangible heritage, including the existence of a number of the University courses which are prescribing the book *Intangible Heritage* (Routledge 2009), which I co-edited. I certainly feel it has been a productive Fellowship so far.

## ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme

A joint fellowship offered by the African Studies Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies

THIS FELLOWSHIP aims to attract researchers whose work is informed by current theoretical debates, in the social sciences and humanities, on global connectivities and who are able to critically engage with shifting paradigms in 'area studies' beyond the ways in which these have traditionally been conceived in the West. We are particularly interested in receiving fellowship proposals that go beyond a mere analysis of current issues associated with African-Asian comparative economic developments or Chinese investments in Africa – although none of these themes, if appraised critically and for their societal consequences, will of course be excluded. Our definition of Asia and Africa is broad and inclusive, Asia ranging from the Middle-East to the Pacific Coast, and Africa from North-Africa to the southern tip of the continent.

Application deadline: 15 March and 15 September each year  
For more information and application form, go to:  
[www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme](http://www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme)



IIAS FELLOWSHIPS



The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to apply for a fellowship to work on a relevant piece of research in the social sciences and humanities.

WE ARE PARTICULARLY interested in researchers focusing on one of the Institute's three thematic clusters: 'Asian Cities', 'Asian Heritages', and 'Global Asia'. However, some positions will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed.

### Asian Cities

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

### Asian Heritages

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

### Global Asia

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

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

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





# Treasures from Korea

Through May 26, the Philadelphia Museum of Art is presenting an extraordinary exhibition, *Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910*. As the first major exhibition in the United States to survey art and culture of a significant historical period of Korea, this exhibition seeks to broaden the understanding of Korean civilization, featuring 150 objects drawn from the renowned collection of the National Museum of Korea, important temples, and other institutions around the country, and includes National Treasures. The exhibition will travel to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Hyunsoo Woo



**Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910**  
Philadelphia Museum of Art,  
March 2 – May 26, 2014

THE JOSEON DYNASTY (1392–1910) was the world's longest-ruling Confucian dynasty, reigning in Korea for over 500 years. Its substantial legacy continues to manifest itself in Korea today, influencing modern etiquette, cultural norms, and societal attitudes. The exhibition examines this important chapter of Korean art and offers valuable insights into Korea's past and its enduring influence.

To illuminate the artistic accomplishments and dynamics of Korean cultural life in the Joseon period, the exhibition is organized around five key themes – 'The King and His Court', 'Joseon Society', 'Ancestral Rites and Confucian Values', 'Changes and Continuity of Joseon Buddhism', and 'Joseon in Modern Times'. These themes are unified by a thread of Confucianism, the founding philosophy of the dynasty. It extensively influenced all aspects of the society, providing esthetic standards and specifying the proper manner of production and utilization of objects used in various occasions. Under these themes, paintings, calligraphy, books, ceramics, sculptures, furniture, costumes and metal works together vividly illustrate multi-faceted aspects of Korean history, philosophy, and society.

The first section focuses on the highest artistic achievements of the Royal Court and the central role it played in shaping the unique culture of Joseon society. Most prominently, screen paintings, crafts, costumes, and the books of royal protocols, *Uigwe* (designated as a 'Memory of the World' by UNESCO in 2007) will be featured with detailed textual and visual descriptions about their uses in court rituals and events. The second section explores the diversity and dynamics of Joseon art and culture within the rigid Confucian class system. Two room settings distinctively displaying men's and women's quarters suggest their segregated life styles as different social groups. The Book and letters written in Korean alphabet *Hangeul*, a means of written communication for people of all classes, give a glimpse into the vibrant cultural interplays among different social groups in the society. The third section features ritual wares of various materials and introduces Confucian ancestral rites. As an integral social activity that consolidated the ruler's authority and strengthened hierarchical social structure, ancestral rites were performed at all levels of society, from national to private. The implements not only

**Fig. 1: Sun, Moon, and Five Peaks**  
19th century  
Eight-fold screen;  
colors on paper  
Overall 210-552.3cm  
Private collection

**Fig. 2: Bottle with Rope Design**  
16th century. Porcelain with underglaze iron decoration  
H. 123/8 inches (31.4 cm)  
National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Sinsu 12074  
Treasure No. 1060

**Fig. 3: Jar with Design of Bamboo and Plum Trees**  
16th–17th century  
Porcelain with underglaze iron decoration  
H. 153/4 inches (40 cm)  
National Museum of Korea, Seoul. Deoksu 6294  
National Treasure No. 166

**Fig. 4: Śākyamuni Assembly**  
1653  
Banner painting;  
colors on hemp  
12-7.8m  
Hwaeomsa, Gurye National  
Treasure No. 301



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visually represented such rituals, but also symbolized the ideal of Confucian austerity that was intended to govern the life and thoughts of all people.

The fourth section focuses on religions and belief systems other than Confucianism that primarily took a role to ensure welfare of the society. Buddhism, the greatest counterpart to Confucianism, was increasingly suppressed under Confucian rule. Its longstanding tradition, however, could not be entirely eliminated from daily life across all classes. One of the highlights of this section is the large-scale Buddhist ceremonial banner paintings, or *Gwaebul* (40 ft high). These were uniquely Korean innovations, used as focal points of worship in outdoor Korean Buddhist ceremonial rituals. In this exterior setting, *Yeongsanjae* (designated a 'World Intangible Cultural Heritage' by UNESCO in 2009) were performed on the 49th day following a person's death, in the hopes of helping to effect a smooth transition of his or her soul from this world to the next. *Yeongsanjae* will be performed during the exhibition.

'Joseon in Modern Times', the last section, delineates how the rigid Confucian society proceeded modern Korea while encountering and being challenged by world changes. The featured objects show the adaptations of Western civilization into dynastic traditions and formalities in the late 19th century. This section addresses the cultural issues in the order of time: from the early indirect influence of the Western civilization through China to a series of Western-inspired institutional reforms during the Korean Empire (1897–1910). A range of archival materials contribute to demonstrate the encounters of the East and West toward the end of the dynasty.

*Treasures from Korea* is expected to enhance the public's understanding and appreciation of Korean art and culture while making an important scholarly contribution to Korean art history. 'Joseon in Modern Times' is a subject that has received little proper attention even in Korea, not to mention in this country, until now. Due to the difficult and still politically sensitive history of Korea during the first half of the 20th century, when it was annexed by Japan, this period has not been favored as a research subject. Incorporating this dynamic and important transitional period enables *Treasures from Korea* to be the first truly comprehensive survey of the dynasty's art and culture. A new and broad overview of the art of the Joseon dynasty will benefit all audiences, deepening their knowledge of Korea.

*Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392–1910* is organized by Hyunsoo Woo, The Maxine and Howard Lewis Associate Curator of Korean Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, in close consultation with Dongsoo Moon, Associate Curator of the National Museum of Korea, of which efforts supported by curators of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, co-published by the Philadelphia Museum of Art with Yale University Press.



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