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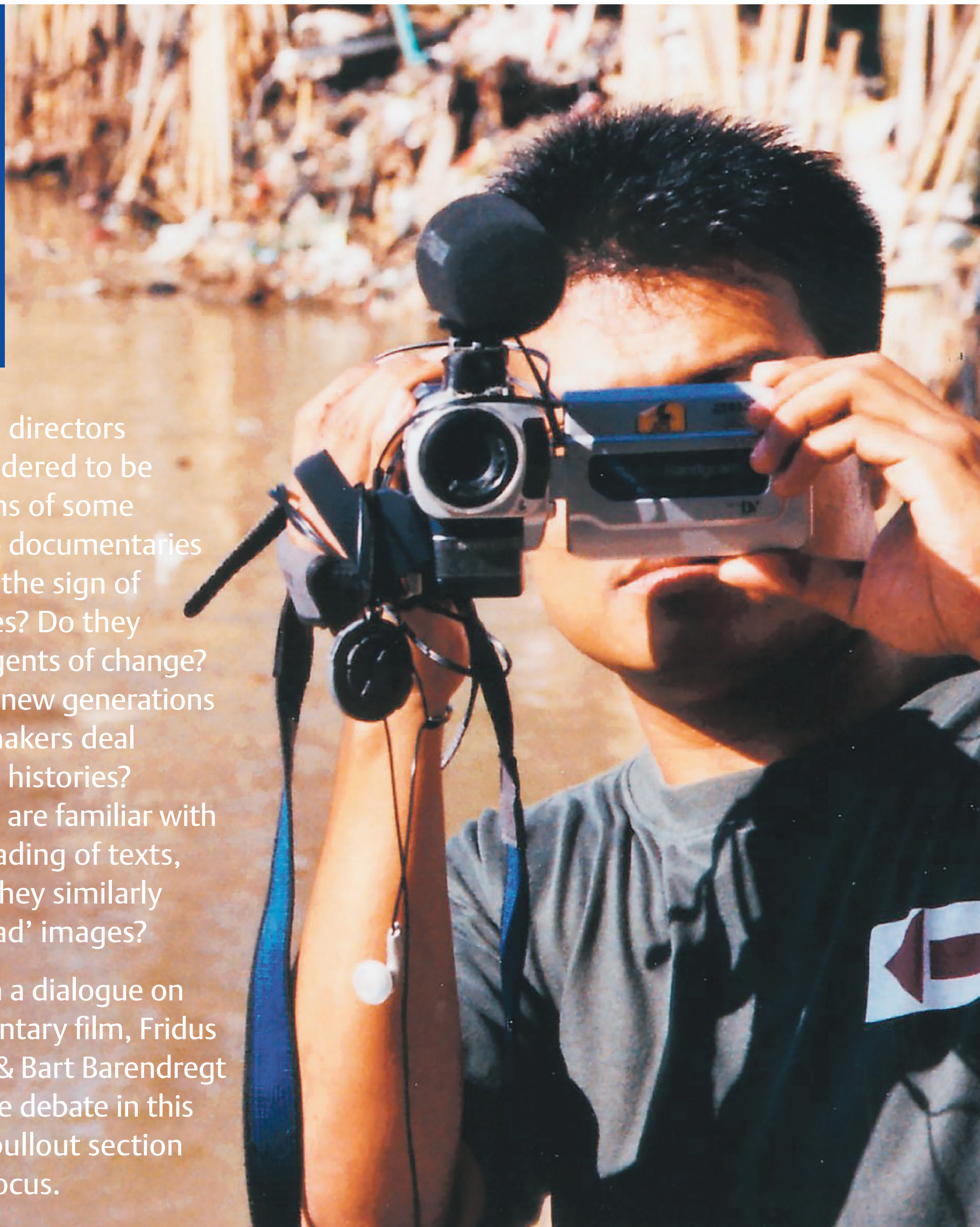
theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

A Dialogue on **68**
Documentary Film

Can film directors be considered to be historians of some sort? Do documentaries capture the sign of the times? Do they act as agents of change? How do new generations of filmmakers deal with old histories? Scholars are familiar with close reading of texts, but do they similarly 'close read' images?

Through a dialogue on documentary film, Fridus Steijlen & Bart Barendregt spark the debate in this issue's pullout section of the Focus.



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The Focus A Dialogue on Documentary Film

19-21

During the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) last year, a seminar was held in the context of the theme program 'Emerging Voices from Southeast Asia', in which some of the filmmakers involved shared thoughts about each other's methodologies and ongoing concerns with scholars studying Southeast Asian contemporary culture. Guest editors Fridus Steijlen and Bart Barendregt present a number of articles in this issue's Focus section as a response and extension to the discussion.

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Raul Niño Zambrano, the curator of the IDFA 'Emerging Voices' program reflects on his tour through Southeast Asia and his search for films to be included in the festival.

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Gea Wijers' contribution illustrates how a young generation of Cambodian filmmakers comes with its own preferences in writing history, focusing on the pre-and post-conflict periods, rather than the pain and trauma that accompanies the Khmer Rouge conflict for so many.

24-25

The best way for us to represent the often complex entities we are studying is to listen to the manifold voices trying to speak to us, which is what Farish Noor is trying to do in a new documentary series on Indonesian culture and politics he is currently directing.

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Documentary filmmakers' depiction of national history seems much dependent on personal experiences; see, for example, the divergent ways Rithy Panh and Joshua Oppenheimer chose to depict mass violence and genocide, both described in John Kleinen's essay.

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The essay by Nuril Huda shows how in Indonesia a novel genre of pesantren film is emerging from Islamic boarding schools, now that new regulations have enabled the insertion of more 'secular' subjects into the schools' curriculum.

28-29

Keng We Koh acknowledges the relevance of film in addressing and redressing historical themes. However, as with teaching all history, an appropriate context is a top requirement if one is to understand such remakings of the past.

30

Erik de Maaker shows how changing conditions such as the rise of commercial TV and the resultant breakdown of government control has provided Indian filmmakers with opportunities to gain control of their own agenda.



Studying Asian heritages

After the celebrations of IIAS' twenty year anniversary, I can now return to a more regular recounting of what the institute is up to and how the different programmes under the three thematic clusters are progressing (Asian Heritages, Asian Cities and Global Asia).

Philippe Peycam

I WILL DISCUSS HERE some developments within the Asian Heritages cluster, as the last six months have seen a number of projects taking a more solid if not institutionalised form, while more events took place or are being scheduled: a series of conferences on heritage politics in Southeast and East Asia, in collaboration with the Inst. for Southeast Asian Studies and Academia Sinica; the formalisation of a graduate teaching programme at Leiden University, and from Sept 2014, at National Taiwan University; and the continuation of the *in situ* roundtable series now in conjunction with IIAS Summer/Winter Schools.

Before I do that, I would like say something about the first Africa-based conference on Asian studies that IIAS, through the ICAS Secretariat, is helping to organise in collaboration with the Association for Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA) next year. This international conference entitled 'Asian Studies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interactions', will be held in Accra, Ghana, on 15-17 January 2015. It will be an event of historical magnitude for what it means in terms of long term development of a corridor of intellectual, academic and cultural exchanges between the two continents. I would like to thank the numerous people and institutions in Africa, Asia, the United States and Europe who have expressed interest in participating in this pioneering event, and those who are supporting it. We have been amazed by the number of paper and panel abstracts already submitted and by some fascinating ideas that have emerged for proposed roundtables. This enthusiasm is shared by people from US Liberal Arts colleges to prestigious academic centres in Senegal, India, Ethiopia, China and Southeast Asian countries. It shows that a real 'axis of knowledge' between Asia and Africa has now become a necessity. In anticipation to the Accra conference, I want to, on behalf of the organising committee, express my gratitude and satisfaction (for more information about the conference: www.africas.asia).

I am returning to Heritage. Heritage as a discourse corresponds to the rise of the modern nation-state and its formulation is constitutive to the nation-making 'project'. Yet, heritage is signified and produced as a result of a complex process of power relations involving social actors such as the state, local communities, activists, and civil society organisations – including universities – as well as international/interstate entities such as UNESCO, Asian Development Bank, ASEAN, etc. To address the complexity of this power relation, IIAS, ISEAS and Academia Sinica decided to explore the role of these social actors *in context*, and in their interactions with each other. The first conference took place in Singapore in January 2014, focusing on the role of the state. It was a great success, especially given the choice taken by the host partners, ISEAS and National University of Singapore, to juxtapose situations occurring in various countries with that prevailing in Singapore, particularly in the aftermath of the planned destruction by the Government of the Bukit Brown Cemetery. The second event is to be held in Taiwan in December 2014. It will focus on the role of citizens, local communities and civil society organisations in heritage-making. It promises to be another landmark event, largely because of the vibrancy of Taiwan's civil society. The third meeting will most likely take place in the Netherlands toward the end of 2015, and will focus on the role of international organisations and global heritage activism. Each of the events will result in a collective edited reference volume.

The second major breakthrough in the field of heritage studies is the establishment of a trans-regional graduate programme on Critical Heritage Studies in Asia and Europe. IIAS is here acting as a 'middleman' between universities such as Leiden, National Taiwan, Gaja Madah and Yonsei. Under the coordination (and teaching) of Dr Adele Esposito, the MA programme track started officially in September 2013 in Leiden. Its Taiwanese counterpart will begin in Taipei next September, under the coordination (and teaching) of Professor Hoang Liling. We expect to see our Korean and Indonesian colleagues to begin the following academic year. This undertaking has profound implications in the way faculty and students will frame their teaching and studies; but also, now that the participation of Professor Michael Herzfeld from Harvard University as IIAS Visiting Professor has been confirmed, a continuing dialogic platform will be established, involving language-based and/or historically knowledgeable scholars. This model will contribute, in a truly contextualised fashion, to the study of the production of cultural knowledge – 'heritage' – and its contemporary uses. It is a challenge that the universities mentioned above have been willing to take on, with the additional objective of engaging their societies and peoples in the whole debate over culture and identity, at home and in relation to 'others'.

In parallel to these two initiatives in the field of heritage, IIAS continues to help local partners in organising *in situ* roundtables where representatives of the civil society, local authorities and local universities are engaged in the revitalisation of an urban area. These events are usually developed in collaboration with UKNA members or affiliates (Urban Knowledge Network Asia, www.ukna.asia). The most recent roundtable took place in Macau, with a special focus on the city/port and now Special Administrative Region's 'Inner Harbour' (Portuguese: *Porto Interior*, Chinese: 内港). The area represents one of the oldest points of contact between China and Europe and was, for at least two centuries, the only allowed centre of commerce between the Empire and the rest of the world. The roundtable was organised in collaboration with the Institute of European Studies of Macau, Macau University, the SAR's Cultural Bureau and local civil society actors. It took place prior to IIAS's Winter School, this time in collaboration with Macau University, on the theme of 'Urban Hybridity in the Post-Colonial Age' (16-20 Dec 2013). The co-conveners were Michael Herzfeld, Akhil Gupta and Engeng Ho, with the participation of Tim Simpson, Jose Luis Sales Marques and Non Arkaraprasertkul. This Winter School, with twenty-six participants and twenty-one nationalities, proved to be one of the best ever organised by IIAS. We are now preparing the upcoming heritage-related Summer School, to be held in Chiang Mai next August, this time on 'Craft and Power', in collaboration with Chiang Mai University, and with the participation of Achar Chayan, Aarti Kawlra, Pamela Smith and Françoise Vergès. The Summer School, made possible by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, will be followed by an *in situ* roundtable with textile weaving communities.

Relevant to all our activities, including the IIAS Summer/Winter Schools, is the continued collaboration with Asian partners, to further anchor IIAS and its network at the core of knowledge-making in and on Asia.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS



IIAS Photo Contest 2014: Picturing Asia

Upload your photos now

Have you submitted your photos yet? There is still time to enter. You have until midnight 30 June 2014 (CET).

Vote for your favourite

Make sure to visit the IIAS Photo Contest page on www.flickr.com between 1 and 29 Aug 2014, where you will be able to vote for your favourite photos. The photo that has been marked as a "favourite" by the most people will be announced the winner of the Public Vote.

Seven prizes worth 200 euro

There will be one winner for each of the six Categories (selected by the jury) and one winner of the Public Vote. Each prize will be a gift voucher (from various online shops) for the amount of 200 Euro.

Prizes will be transferred to each winner by post or email.

All winners (Category and Public Vote winners) will be announced on Monday 1 Sept 2014. Announcements will be made on the Photo Contest website, as well as the IIAS website along with our social media sites on Flickr, Facebook and Twitter.

The October issue of The Newsletter (#69) will also feature the Photo Contest, the winners, and their winning photographs. Find all the information you need to compete and/or vote at

www.ias.nl/photocontest

Please do read the rules and regulations before submitting.
Good luck to everyone!!!

Asian Cities
Global Asia
Asian Heritages
Asia's Pop Culture
Everyday Life in Asia
Asia by Mobile

We ask you to send in a maximum of 5 photographs per person, for any combination of the 6 categories above (find a description of each category on the contest site)

The Newsletter and IIAS

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

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

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The Network pages editor: Sandra Dehue
Digital issue editor: Thomas Voorter
Design: Paul Oram
Printing: Nieuwsdrukk Nederland

Submissions

Deadline for drafts for Issue # 69 is 15 July 2014
Deadline for drafts for Issue # 70 is 15 November 2014
Deadline for drafts for Issue # 71 is 20 March 2015

Submissions and enquiries: iasnews@ias.nl
More information: www.ias.nl/publications

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Bali at war: a painted story of resistance to colonial rule

The defeat of the royal family in Klungkung by Dutch soldiers on 28 April 1908 marks the point at which the entire island of Bali was incorporated into the colonial administration of the Netherlands East Indies. Both the event and the painting discussed here are known as the *Puputan*, meaning the ‘finishing’ or ‘the end’ in Balinese, referring to the slaughter or ritual surrender of the Klungkung royal family. This painting sits within a corpus of oral traditions about the defeat of Klungkung yet it shifts conventional perspectives by describing local developments prior to the clash between the Dutch and members of the royal household at the site of the palace.¹

Siobhan Campbell

Entertaining the gods

The painting comes from Kamasan, a village of four-thousand people located between the east coast and the mountain ranges of Gunung Agung in the district of Klungkung in Bali. Formerly Klungkung was the seat of royal power, home to the court of the Dewa Agung, the preeminent ruler of Bali. Kamasan village is made up of wards (*banjar*) reflecting the specialised services once provided by artisans to the court, including goldsmiths (*pande mas*), smiths (*pande*) and painters (*sangging*). Kamasan paintings depict stories from epics of Indian and indigenous origin, relating the lives of the deities, the royal courts and sometimes even commoner families. Narratives serve a didactic and devotional function and are intended to gratify and entertain the gods during their visits to the temple, as well as the human participants in ritual activities. Paintings were once found in temples and royal courts all around Bali and these days paintings circulate in many different contexts including private homes, government offices and museums.

Kamasan art is highly conventionalised in that artists work according to certain parameters (*pakem*) and adhere to strict proscriptions in terms of iconography.² Their paintings are sometimes called *wayang* paintings with reference to shared roots with the shadow-puppet (*wayang*) theatre. Artists also refer to the figures they paint as *wayang*, which are depicted in almost the same manner as flat Balinese shadow-puppets except in three-quarter view. While artists interpret the stylistic and narrative boundaries of this tradition in different ways, they maintain that they belong to an unchanging tradition of great antiquity.

Artist Mangku Mura (1920-1999) is one of the most well-known Kamasan artists of the twentieth century. He was posthumously recognised by the Indonesian government in 2011 with an award for the preservation and promotion of traditional art. Unlike most Kamasan artists, who descend from a core line of painting ancestry, Mangku Mura comes from outside the ward of painters, but learnt to paint as a teenager by studying with several older village artists. Of his seven children, Mangku Mura nominated his sixth child, Mangku Nengah Muriati (born 1966), as his successor and both have produced several versions of the *puputan* story. Mangku Mura produced the first version of this painting in 1984 shortly after the initiation of an annual ceremony to commemorate the *puputan*. It was commissioned by the head (*bupati*) of Klungkung district who was also a member of the royal family.

The episodes depicted are based on an oral version of events related to Mangku Mura by his grandfather Kaki Rungking, said to have been an eyewitness to much of the action. In turn, Mangku Mura passed the story on to members of his immediate family, including his daughter

Mangku Muriati. Demonstrating how paintings gain additional layers of meaning through elucidation of the story, Mangku Muriati explained that Kaki Rungking had a connection to the royal court which is not mentioned in the painting – his sister was an unofficial wife (*selir*) to the Dewa Agung and lived in the Klungkung palace. This connection was emphasised to explain how Kaki Rungking knew of the broader sequence of events and to establish his credentials as a witness. The artists have also ensured that specific details are communicated without ambiguity by incorporating textual narrative in each scene, written in Balinese script (*aksara*).

Sacred heirlooms

The painting is divided into ten scenes over four horizontal rows. From the perspective of the viewer, the story moves chronologically from left to right beginning in the bottom left-hand corner and finishing in the top right-hand corner. The text in the first scene relates the movements of the Dutch soldiers, depicted as six uniformed men carrying muskets. Having landed at Kusamba, they passed through Sampalan along the bank of the Unda River. They continued towards the Pejeg burial ground (*setra*) and on to Tangkas. Finding nobody in Tangkas they kept moving towards the home of Ida Bagus Jumpung in Kamasan. He was the guardian of an heirloom dagger or *kris* (*pajenengan*) belonging to the Klungkung royal family, which the Dutch planned to capture. In the second scene there is a discussion between Ida Bagus Jumpung and his wife. The tree between them is a standard convention when two parties are facing one another in conversation or confrontation. Ida Bagus Jumpung is holding the heirloom and is accompanied by a retainer. Two females accompany his wife. Ida Bagus Jumpung is informing the women that he has been entrusted to safeguard the important regalia.

In the third scene the Dutch troops have reached the gateway of the priestly compound. They kill Ida Bagus Jumpung. As they seize the heirloom his corpse mysteriously disappears, so Ida Bagus Jumpung is not depicted in this scene. There are only two Dutch officers; they aim their muskets at the closed doors of the compound gateway (*paduraksa*), guarded by a pair of dogs. The latter two scenes emphasise the connections between the royal regalia and the ruling dynasty; the loss of sacred heirlooms also foretold the defeat of earlier Balinese dynasties.³ Here the capture of the *kris* is a sign that defeat was imminent. The fourth scene begins on the next row as the Dutch troops arrive at the Gelgel palace. This palace was re-established as a branch line of the Klungkung royal family during the reign of Dewa Agung Madia (1722-1736). There is a lone guard, a resident of Pasinggahan, standing on duty outside the palace. He is shot dead. The other guards are eating rice cakes (*tipat*) in the courtyard, a detail related only in the text. They are all shot down as the troops enter the palace.



Above: Mangku Muriati applying black ink to the eyes of the Dutch troops, Kamasan 2011.

Right: The site of the former royal palace in Klungkung today.

Below: Mangku Muriati reciting the story from a version made by Mangku Mura in 1995, Kamasan 2011.



Protecting the Gelgel palace

The plump figure of Kaki Rungking (grandfather of Mangku Mura) appears for the first time in the next scene. He witnessed the slaughter of the guards and covertly assembled his own weapon. It is mounted on a waist-high stand but is otherwise of similar appearance to the muskets held by the Dutch officers. Firing one shot, his bullet kills a lieutenant. His left hand rests on his hip and the thumb and index finger of his raised right hand are held together in the same gesture of defiance adopted by the Balinese figures in other scenes. Despite the show of bravado in his visual depiction, the text relates that Kaki Rungking was terrified to find himself all alone. He ran for cover as the Gelgel palace was destroyed around him. The people of Jero Kapal, where the palace is located, also ran away to avoid being shot. This is the only scene in which Kaki Rungking is depicted visually. His position in the centre of the composition highlights his role as protagonist. Iconographically, little distinguishes him from the commoner figures in other scenes. All have thickset bodies, hairy torsos, dark skin, wavy hair and short loincloths with less ornate head-dresses and clothing than the nobles.

Kaki Rungking's gallantry is reinforced by a detail in the text. It states that the target of his fatal shot was an officer of rank. By appearance alone the lieutenant is no different from his fellow officers, except that a chain binds his dead body. In fact, the only apparent difference between all of the colonial officers is their eyes. Most have the type of rounded (*bulat*) eyes associated with demons though a few officers have the same wavy (*sipit*) eyes as the commoners. This might refer to the composition of the colonial forces, which comprised both Dutch and indigenous officers. In relation to the veracity of Kaki Rungking's role, it is worth noting that the death of a Dutch lieutenant and his officers did occur in the fortnight prior to the massacre during a routine inspection of the opium monopoly at Gelgel. The incident resulted in raised hostilities between Klungkung and the Dutch.





Treachery

The third row, scene six, begins with the Dutch troops moving towards Tojan. They spent the night in a village called Carikdesa, the present-day site of Galiran market. While the troops were resting a commoner from Lekok appeared with a kris but was killed before he could attack. In scene seven, the text explains that key figures from the Gelgel palace went to Klungkung to discuss the critical situation with the king Dewa Agung Jambe. The lords of Gelgel were obstinately opposed to the Dutch. The father of the Dewa Agung is shown standing on the right with two servants seated in front of him.⁴ He advised the Dewa Agung that Klungkung must not surrender and that as nobles (*satria*) they must prepare to die. The Dewa Agung, on the left, is in the company of three women of the royal household whose different ranks are marked by their head-dresses. Traitors to the palace are depicted in the eighth scene, including the figure of a brahmana, a commoner (*kaula*) and a Muslim. The text explains that a lord (*cokorda*) was also secretly cooperating with the Dutch because he hoped to take over the role of the Dewa Agung. Mangku Muriati advised that when her father was initially commissioned to produce the painting he was instructed not to write the actual names of these traitors on the painting, even though they were known.

The action continues around the Klungkung palace in the ninth scene on the top row. The confrontation took place in the palace forecourt (*bencingah*) as the Dutch arrived from the south. Cokorda Bima attacked the Dutch; his loyalty to the Dewa Agung so great that when he lost his right hand he picked it up, tucked the limb into his waist-cloth and continued to fight with his left. The illustration shows him standing in the centre of his fallen comrades before he too is killed. Only a small child was left alive, buried under the dead, Dewa Agung Oka Geg (1896-1965), the eldest son of Dewa Agung Smarabawa, a half-brother of the Dewa Agung and the second-king (*iwaraja*). Despite being shot in the foot, he survived because a Dutch soldier, visible amongst the Balinese corpses, took pity on him. This detail tallies with other official versions, however, some Balinese accounts relate that the child was stabbed by other

Above: Mangku Muriati, *Puputan Klungkung*, 2011, acrylic and natural pigment on cotton cloth.

Balinese. The text of the tenth and final scene describes four treacherous lords from Akah, Manuang, Aan and Klungkung. They had hoped to benefit from a Dutch victory; instead they were exiled to Lombok and ordered to raise the surviving child. An adult Dewa Agung is depicted sitting on a pedestal on the right-hand side, separated from the three lords by a tree.

Reversing conventional representation

The Dewa Agung Oka Geg did return to Klungkung as an adult. He served various administrative functions within the colonial bureaucracy, including as clerk, inspector of roads (*mantri jalan*) and roaming official (*punggawa keliling*) to the Dutch administrator. In 1929 the Dutch Resident of Bali and Lombok swore him in as Dewa Agung of Klungkung at the state temple in Gelgel. In 1938 all eight of Bali's regents were given the title 'autonomous ruler' (*zelfbestuurder*) in a ceremony at Besakih. Formally, this placed the Dewa Agung of Klungkung on the same footing as the rulers of other kingdoms. However, by the 1940s the Dewa Agung was "probably the largest landowner of all the kings, and certainly the most powerful."⁵ Mangku Muriati commented that Dewa Agung Oka Geg was so powerful (*sakti*) that even the Dutch spared his life when they could have destroyed the royal family for good.

Although the visual presence of Kaki Rungking attests to the immediacy and integrity of the story, the story gains further elaboration with each retelling. Like some Balinese literary accounts of the puputan by the ruling families of Badung in 1906, the painting combines historical details, personal memory and conjecture.⁶ The most remarkable aspect of the painting is the way Mangku Mura embedded his ancestor in the centre of this historical moment. It is unusual for a commoner to take the leading role in a story commonly associated with the Balinese courts. Though Kaki Rungking is protagonist and story narrator, in the painting he appears alongside various commoners (*jaba*). Some loyally served and defended their social superiors, while others conspired against the royal family. Not only did Mangku Mura reverse conventional representation by giving the leading role to a commoner, he emphasised the disunity amongst the

Balinese themselves in their opposition to colonial rule. Given the role that the puputan plays in Indonesian national histories as a symbol of resistance this was probably the most subaltern position of all, disrupting conventionally conceived histories of the conflict between colonial and indigenous subjects.

Siobhan Campbell, Department of Indonesian Studies, The University of Sydney. Siobhan spent six months as an IIAS postdoctoral fellow researching collections of Balinese art in the Netherlands in 2013-14. (siobhan.campbell@sydney.edu.au)

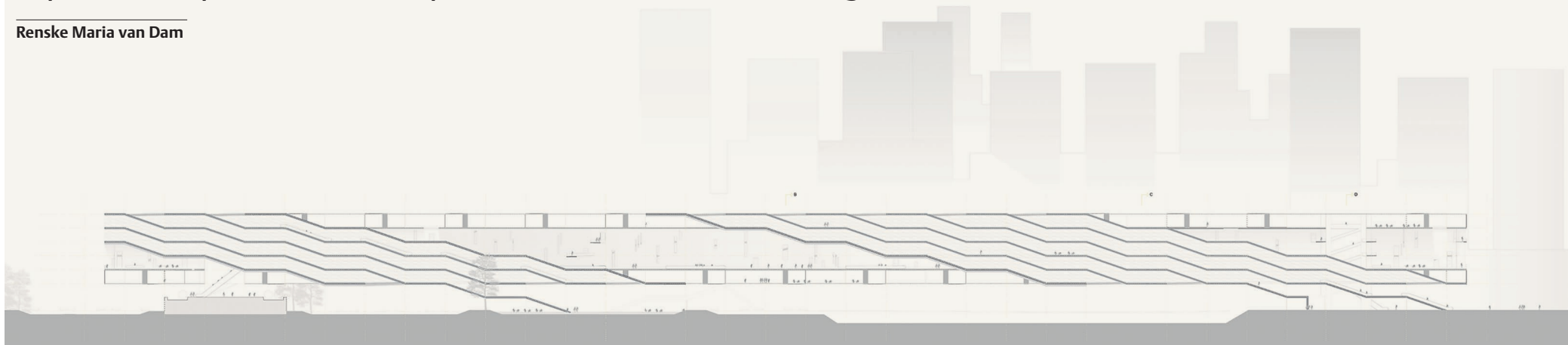
References

- 1 These are the subject of an extensive study by Wiener, M.J. 1995. *Visible and Invisible Realms: Power, Magic, and Colonial Conquest in Bali*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Wiener was doing research in Klungkung when Mangku Mura initially produced this narrative; after seeing his painting displayed in the office of the district head of Klungkung she commissioned a version of the painting, which became the cover illustration for her book.
- 2 Refer to Vickers, A. 2012. *Balinese Art: Paintings and Drawings of Bali 1800-2012*, Singapore: Tuttle.
- 3 For instance when Anglurah Agung ousted Dalem di Made from his palace in Gelgel many of his retinue returned to their own homes taking their powerful and sacred heirlooms with them. See Creese, H. 1991. 'Balinese Babad as Historical Sources: A Reinterpretation of the Fall of Gelgel', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 147(2/3): 236-260, Leiden: BRILL, KITLV (<http://tinyurl.com/balinese-babad>)
- 4 The birth father of Dewa Agung Jambe was Dewa Agung Putra III who died in 1903. On this point the text of the painting is not necessarily incorrect as the reference to father might be taken to imply the close relationship between Dewa Agung Jambe and the Gelgel palace.
- 5 See Vickers, A. 1989. *Bali, a Paradise Created*. Rowville, Ringwood: Penguin, p.139.
- 6 See Creese, H. 2006. 'A Puputan Tale: "The Story of a Pregnant Woman"', *Indonesia* vol.82, Oct 2006, p.82. (<http://tinyurl.com/puputan-tale>)

Learning from Hong Kong: 'place' as relation

The Hong Kong-China border is slowly dissolving. In 2010 a part of the frontier area at Lok Ma Chau opened up for new urban developments. By 2047, 50 years after the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China, the border will no longer exist. This project proposes an inhabited bridge at Lok Ma Chau, connecting Hong Kong and Shenzhen, that recognises both the global movement within the Pearl River Delta as well as the local sense of 'place'. In an attempt to learn from Hong Kong I ask: What makes place in Hong Kong valuable? What is the influence of globalisation on the local experience of place other than 'placelessness'? And how as designers can we work with this?

Renske Maria van Dam



Above: Cross section of the inhabited bridge connecting Hong Kong (left) and Shenzhen (right).

Below: Model pictures of the three atmospheres.

Placelessness

The Pearl River Delta is characterised by the intense movement between cultural, political and environmental differences. Due to Hong Kong's history as a British colony and its recent transformation into one of the most important global urban agglomerations connecting Eastern and Western economies, the Pearl River Delta has become a space of transit. At Lok Ma Chau this is clearly visible in the urban fabric. The landscape is dominated by huge infrastructural elements that facilitate the transit between Hong Kong's wealthy economy, with its beautiful wetlands along the borderland, and China's cheap labour industry with standardised high rises.

In contemporary urban theory this sense of movement, the result of the parallel existence of differences, is often understood as a problem rather than a quality, resulting in the experience of 'placelessness'. In this theory, the movement and the clash of differences are reflected in an accumulation and intersection of parallel urban atmospheres that prevent a local sense of place. As a reaction to this general shunning of place the question of a new sense of place arises. This often leads to a nostalgic desire for a traditional sense of place that is still visible in some historical villages, suggesting that the emergence of the modern metropolis has been a mistake.

But, in contradiction to contemporary urban theory, 'place' in Hong Kong is valuable. Not only in an absolute sense, reflected in the high land-prices, but also in an emotional sense as acknowledged by its visitors and inhabitants. In Hong Kong there is, despite the movement and differences, a possibility to experience what I call: a sense of *place within movement*.

Place as relation

To understand the valuable sense of *place within movement* in Hong Kong, place has to be valued as a dynamic intangible singularity rather than as tangible object or reified identity. In other words place should be understood as relation.

A juxtaposition of Western and Eastern conceptions of space helped formulate this conclusion. Whereas Western place-conceptions are formed on object-based networks, the Eastern conception of place is based on relationality through movement manifested in the use of voids. One of the most helpful concepts to understand this quality of place, as a dynamic intangible relationship, is the Chinese *bagua*. The *bagua* are eight 'trigrams' (symbols comprising three parallel lines, either 'broken' or 'unbroken', representing yin or yang respectively – signifying the relationships between the five elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water), which are often portrayed around a centrally placed yin-yang symbol, believed to have a void in its middle. This void is not empty, but filled with energy; relational movement between the elements. The *bagua* can be used as a 'map' to align all the elements in, for example, a house. The traditional Chinese courtyard is also an exemplary manifestation of this philosophy.

Thus the seemingly problematic context of movement and differences has potential. Hong Kong cannot be described by differences such as east or west, tradition or modernity, global or local, but the valuable Hong Kong place experience is one in which the differences between its parts cause a delicate and sensitive relationship and therefore a new sense of place; a sense of *place within movement*.

Personages

If place is understood as relation, as designers we not only have to engage with the physical qualities of place, but we also have to engage with the intangible qualities of place. We have to design for resonance. Resonance can be understood as emotional 'vibration' that is achieved by stimulation of latent experiences. Where the embodied experience of touching ice might cause a temporary cold feeling in your fingertips, the emotional response, the resonance, may be formed by means of transversal association; for example, previous personal or culturally based experiences, or even future dreams. Just like music instruments that, without being touched, vibrate in sympathy with another instrument being played at that moment; we too interact with our environment in this way.

To include latent experiences into the design process, I developed five personages, based on associative questionnaires taken with the potential future users. In short: 1) a school child living in Shenzhen and who crosses the border twice every day to go to school; 2) a businessman living in Hong Kong and who crosses the border at least twice a week to do business in the Pearl River Delta; 3) a migrant who crosses the border only during Chinese holidays to visit his family still in China; 4) a tourist who crosses the border for leisure purposes to see the Hong Kong cultural highlights; 5) a local living in the frontier area, who currently never crosses the border, but who might find a job in the developing borderland eco-tourism in the future. These personages inspired a design of three atmospheres (see below) that, defined by kinaesthetic differences, engage with a relational void, global and local program and the surroundings of the borderland.

Atmospheres

An atmosphere is a strong potential of a place that can influence one's feelings and is achieved by carefully designing for all the senses. Just like specific colours in paintings will stimulate specific emotions, the use of specific architectural elements will stimulate the experience of specific atmospheres.

The first atmosphere is inspired by the fast economic connection between Hong Kong and China and facilitates the users who will cross the border on a daily basis or visit for shopping. The energy is directive and commercially oriented. The second atmosphere is inspired by the leisurely connection

between Hong Kong and China. It facilitates the users who wander around the region visiting various kinds of tourist facilities. The energy is associative and educationally oriented. This atmosphere houses tourist information points and a historical museum. The third atmosphere is inspired by the local landscape and is designed as a place to enjoy nature and relax. It facilitates a natural walking route and the offices related to the border-control function.

Bridge in difference

The final design is for an inhabited bridge based on these three atmospheres that swirl through and around a long 'void' that literary and symbolically connects Hong Kong and China. This relational void, as inspired by the ancient Chinese *bagua*, links the atmospheres to each other and to the surrounding landscape.

The quality of the relational void is further developed in the inner and outer façades. The rhythm of the inner void interacts with the rhythm of the outer routes in such a way that the experience of place within movement is further stimulated by the effect of anamorphosis. And the swirl of the outer routes takes the *bagua* concept literary by turning the experience of its architectural elements upside-down; roof becomes façade becomes floor. In this way, what might be valuable (a specific view or experience) for one person, might be insignificant for others. Thus, by means of different speeds and purposes the bridge will become place and movement simultaneously. The Lok Ma Chau bridge therefore becomes a place to not only move through, but also to go to, and thus provides a sense of *place within movement*.

Learning from Hong Kong

Hong Kong inspired me to understand 'place' as relation instead of object. This opened up my thinking towards a different understanding of architecture. It also encouraged me to enrich my approach to design from a very rational, pre-determined design process to an open-ended one, based on trial and error. This project gave me the chance to work with a concept that is, in my opinion, highly valuable for contemporary society: an understanding of place as relation. It is my aim to develop this understanding of place and resonance in future research and design, since there is still much more to learn from Hong Kong.

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'Home and Away': female transnational professionals in Hong Kong

Mobility has become a buzzword of our times. There is an increased sense that we are no longer constrained to live in one place throughout our lives, or even in one place at a time. Indeed, there is now a growing body of literature that advocates the concept of transnational mobility to make sense of the new fluid living patterns, the affective and instrumental relationships that cross national borders and span localities, and the conceptualisations of transnational 'lifespaces'¹ within the broader perspective of pluri-local attachments in late modern society.

Maggy Lee

TRANSNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS are part of this broader trend of mobile people moving either part-time or full-time, temporarily or permanently. These 'transnational elites' – a term used to refer to the highly skilled professionals in global cities² – have been described as the archetypal transmigrant, the nomadic worker, the embodiment of a new cosmopolitan identity in cross-border spaces. They are able to take advantage of the flexibility in global labour markets, the ability to live and work in different places, and with these, increased leisure time in affluent societies, extended holidays, and flexible working lives. Yet we know relatively little about their motivations and actual experiences. Apart from a few notable exceptions,³ there is relatively little sociological work on what transnational mobility means for female expatriate professionals. Does it bring about greater freedom and security or social exclusion, improved or weakened social and financial status, better career prospects or new constraints?

Our two-year research study, 'Home and Away: Female Transnational Professionals in Hong Kong',⁴ looks at what transnational mobility means for female expatriate professionals, how and why they move from one place to another and under which conditions, their needs and aspirations, and the advantages and disadvantages of their mobile lives. The study involves in-depth interviews with forty highly educated, highly skilled female transnational professionals who relocated to Hong Kong either as lead migrants or as accompanying spouses on a dependent visa. The forty interviewees cover a broad spectrum in terms of age, Western and non-Western nationalities, employment status and sectors in which they or their partners work. About two-thirds were married at the time of interview. Their length of residence in Hong Kong varies from three months to thirty years. We used snowball sampling as well as a number of social institutions, non-governmental organisations, residential forums, internet-based blogs and expatriate websites as our recruitment sources. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, typically in coffee shops or the university campus; a number of respondents even welcomed us into their home or workplace to share their stories.

Meaning and practices of mobility

What is striking about these female transnational professionals is the extent of their mobility and how much this features as an integral part of their individual biography. Over half of the respondents have studied, lived and/or worked in other countries prior to relocating to Hong Kong. Their stories are full of intersecting forms of mobility and vivid memories of travel - for example, growing up as a child with parents with a history of military or missionary postings, backpacking and travelling for pleasure, working as au pairs or on overseas

postings, studying as exchange or research students. Some respondents kept moving in order to stay close to the family at different stages of their life course. For example, one interviewee was born in France, moved to Gabon in Africa with her parents at the age of two, finished her high school in Madagascar and university degree in France, lived and worked in Beijing and Switzerland before relocating to Hong Kong with her husband and their children.

Economic and non-economic motivations

For many respondents, relocation to Hong Kong depends heavily on financial and career considerations and is perceived as part of a career advancement strategy for themselves or their partners/spouses. It involves obtaining employment opportunities and professional experiences that would otherwise be difficult to come by. Although perceptions of economic opportunities prevail across different cohorts, the conditions of possibility for female expatriates have been shaped by the changing socio-economic conditions, state policies and Hong Kong's colonial legacy and development as an international centre for global business and finance. Transnational professionals who are now coming towards the end of their working lives set out on their overseas careers in very different social and political environments. Single women who arrived during the era of colonialism and Hong Kong's rapid economic expansion in the 1980s encountered relatively few immigration restrictions and employment barriers. Most were able to secure job offers with high remuneration and tended to describe their relocation to Hong Kong as empowering and life-changing. One British respondent who joined the local civil service before the recruitment of expatriates officially ended in the mid-1980s recalled her excitement and sense of adventure when she was recruited to work in the legal department without having to retake any examinations: "The government paid for my business class flight. I was twenty-five. They did everything for me and gave me a serviced apartment. I got paid HK\$16,000 a month. It was an amazing deal."

In contrast, women who arrived in postcolonial Hong Kong have to navigate increasingly restrictive immigration policies and economic uncertainties. As one respondent explained, she had 'a fantastic time' as a single woman working as a pre-school teacher in Hong Kong when she was recruited by an international company in the early 2000s. However, her experiences during a second relocation with her unmarried partner on international transfer and their son were far less positive. The combined effects of her visitor status and visa restriction meant she could not seek part-time employment, open a bank account or join the local library, and she was constantly fearful that her tourist visa would not be renewed.

Our study demonstrates the continued importance of understanding how female transnational professionals negotiate their mobilities and moorings and the gendered effects of transience on individuals and families today.

Besides economic motivations, many respondents aspire to enhance social freedom and to break constrictive gender roles and family life through their spatial mobility. This is particularly evident amongst single women who spoke of their new lifestyle in terms of new beginnings and self-development as their status changes from being a student or self-initiated mover to a highly skilled transnational professional. Their relocation has enhanced their ability to be more self-confident and enabled them to clear their student debts: "I love my family dearly, but I found that I was doing things for them rather than thinking about myself. In Hong Kong I am doing everything for me. I have just started Mandarin classes. I am looking to join a choir or something so I can meet other people. I travel a lot using my own savings. It's all very liberating!"

Gender matters

Nevertheless the empowering possibilities of leading an itinerant lifestyle often go hand in hand with less positive feelings of loneliness and loss, of being unable to attend important occasions in the lives of family and friends (e.g., birthdays, christenings), of children growing up in the absence of grandparents and cousins. Seen in this light, transnational mobility involves both continuities and discontinuities, being able to embrace some sort of freedom while retaining certain social connections. Furthermore, their freedom from constraints and obligations is tempered by gendered expectations. This is particularly evident in the stories of accompanying spouses with children. Although many described shouldering a reduced burden of domestic labour in the expatriate household, this is almost always achieved through outsourcing household and childcare labour (e.g., employing live-in domestic migrant workers) rather than through renegotiation of gendered roles and practices. Others described or anticipated the obligation and stress of caring for elderly parents or parents with health problems especially in the current era of global austerity.

For many respondents, the focus of social interactions and leisure spaces tend to be shaped by their life course – revolving around colleagues, travel and the pub focus of expatriate life among single women, and around children and their school activities among accompanying spouses. This means women who do not fit into these categories can feel particularly vulnerable and socially isolated. Accompanying spouses who put their career on hold spoke of the practical and emotional challenges they face, frustrations of losing their financial independence and sense of identity, and the extra efforts required to lead an independent social life: "Back home where I grew up, people know me all my life. I have been a professional, so I am who I am ... Here, everything works around my husband. I want my husband to be better experienced and so on. But financially, I am insecure. In the past I knew that I have complete ownership of my income. Now even if my husband gives me money, I am not so sure if I want to go ahead to buy a pastry for myself because I am so used to enjoying my own money."

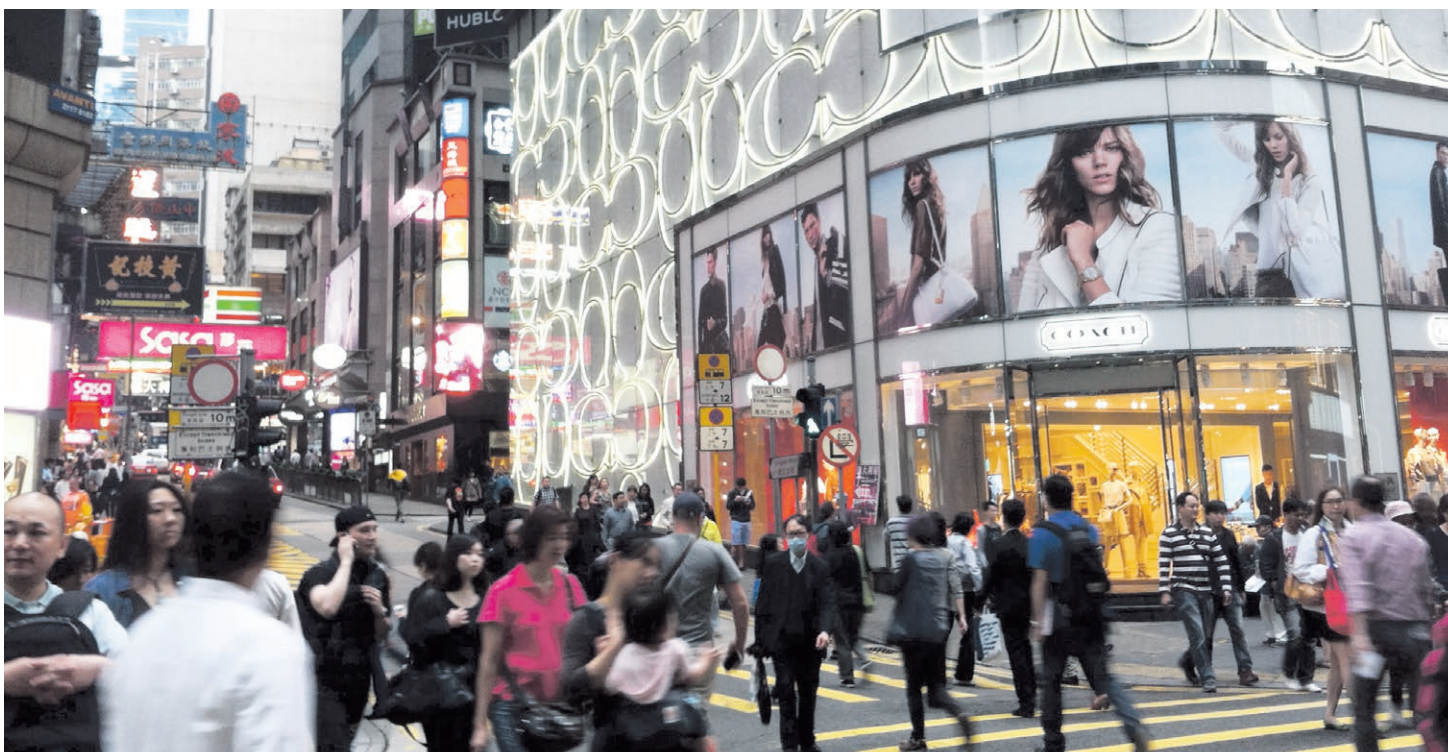
Negotiating mobilities

Our respondents' stories highlight the ongoing nature of migratory plans as highly skilled transnational professionals make continuous decisions to relocate, cut short or extend their stay, leave and then return to Hong Kong, often in the context of practising mobility as a family project. Although many women feel empowered by their mobile lives, there are still concerns about the persistent constraints of professional women's social lives and how these are exacerbated when the husband's career necessitates or precipitates the move abroad. Our study demonstrates the continued importance of understanding how female transnational professionals negotiate their mobilities and moorings and the gendered effects of transience on individuals and families today.

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'Silence is the best solution'

This study surveys the Dutch (military) strategy versus the media, during the conflict with the Republic of Indonesia between 1945 and 1949.¹ The Dutch (military) information services in Batavia had been slow to establish itself, and only a limited number of Dutch reporters and photographers were located in the capital. There was talk of embedded journalism; the majority of Dutch reporters stayed mostly in their *comfort zone*, never left their hotels in the centre of Batavia, visited receptions and press conferences and received their information via the diplomatic circuit, from briefings and the communiqués issued by the military and government information services. They were frequently hindered in their newsgathering, fact checking and the reporting of both sides, and if they did travel into the relatively unsafe conflict areas on Java and Sumatra they were accompanied by press officers.

Louis Zweers



PRESS CENSORSHIP, which led to a regulatory self-control among journalists, made it almost impossible for them to file critical pieces with their editors. It was difficult to escape the coercion and interference of the employees of the information services. The journalistic output of the majority of reporters, whose gaze was rather clouded by propaganda, served to legitimate Dutch military action. At that time, many Dutch journalists were generally obedient, the media was pillarised, and many national newspapers were just mouthpieces for political parties. The pro-government media behaved compliantly and the tone was reassuring. It appeared as if a silent agreement had been made: we shall not reveal all.

Over time, more and more (international) journalists and photographers arrived in this conflict area. Unlike the *embedded* Dutch journalists, these experienced foreign correspondents were not easily intimidated by the (military) information services, and routinely reported on the Indonesian independence struggle. The information authorities, as a result, dismissed the foreign press corps in Batavia as a nuisance, hacks on the payroll of – in their eyes – anti-colonial British and American authorities and media.

Communications war

During the first military action (July/August 1947) those press people considered to be reliable were given permission to join the advancing Dutch troops on Java and Sumatra. The information organisations were hereby not only managing the news, but at this point were also increasingly controlling the photo coverage of the war. Journalists and photographers were becoming ever more dependent on the cooperation of the information services. The majority of published photos and news reports of selected events of the war were ideologically coloured and gave a scripted version of reality. The communications war was an unequal struggle between the various information services and the Dutch media; especially for the left-wing newspapers and magazines such as *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland*, *De Groene Amsterdammer* and the communist *De Waarheid*, which had only limited financial resources and opportunities.

The opposition to the colonial war remained limited to these media outlets, which, due to a lack of funds, did not have their own correspondents and photographers stationed in the archipelago. Moreover, many of the left-wing daily and

weekly newspapers, critical of the Dutch policy in Indonesia, were banned for readers in the military, and often not even distributed in Batavia. These papers certainly did leave their own mark on the (photo)reporting about the Indonesian question. They were critical and even fiercely pro-Indonesian, but only about a quarter of the population actually read these relatively negative reports. Thousands of former *Het Parool* and *Vrij Nederland* readers appeared unappreciative of such critical and negative reporting, and the papers saw their subscription numbers drop rapidly.

There was a lot of verbal aggression in the press. The critical press was dismissed as *fellow travellers* and even as 'friends of Sukarno' by *Elseviers Weekblad* and *Trouw*, which functioned as mouthpieces for the colonial-thinking Netherlands. This conservative media accused them of using their coverage to undermine morale on the home front. Subsequently, in the pro-government Christian, social democratic and liberal newspapers and journals, reporting was dominated by emotionally-distant photos and soothing articles supplied by the information services. This reporting was less and less about actual military activities and more about social-cultural issues and the humanitarian activities in the colony.

Retaining civilian support

During the second military action (December 1948) and the subsequent guerrilla war in the first half of 1949, the (international) press was no longer granted access to operational areas. This was an effective means of curbing (international) attention for the Indonesian struggle for independence. The army and navy information services now dominated the production, selection and distribution of photographs and articles to the press. There were no longer any current images published.

The military information services engaged their strategy to keep the grisly guerrilla war out of the media. Specifically, this meant keeping war operations out of the headlines and allowing absolutely no shocking photos of dead or badly injured Dutch soldiers or Indonesian fighters in the newspapers and magazines. These sorts of images were never shown in the Dutch media, and the Dutch population was carefully shielded from violent images. This is not surprising, as violent photos could stir up strong emotions against the war. So no (photo) reports and newspaper articles were published about setbacks on the battlefield (including the many casualties on both sides),

Fig 1: Malang, East Java, end July 1947. Operation Product. KNIL soldiers (Royal Dutch-Indies Army) standing by captured, wounded and deceased Indonesian soldiers. Unpublished photo. Army photographer unknown.

the sometimes violent experiences of the Dutch conscripts and volunteers, and the hardships suffered by the local population during the intensive guerrilla war. The chaotic warzones and the reality of the fighting remained largely invisible. By omitting relevant (visual) information they were trying hard to keep morale on the home front high, to please public opinion and to minimise any anti-war sentiment among the Dutch people. The media was used to retain the support of the civilian population in the implementation of the government policy and, effectively, to use propaganda against the enemy, usually referred to as 'roving gangs'.

Letters from the front

The information authorities and the compliant media emphasised reassuring images of the Indies archipelago. But the humanitarian mission, as it was portrayed in the propaganda, was not what the ordinary soldiers experienced, especially on Central and East Java, which were consistently under attack by Indonesian insurgents. And although the military information services were successful in keeping certain reports and images out of the media, they had no control over the letters from soldiers published in *Het Parool*, *De Waarheid*, *Vrij Nederland* and *De Groene Amsterdammer*, which revealed the drama that was taking place in the tropical archipelago. The letters and eye-witness accounts by soldiers reported extreme engagements with guerrilla fighters, but also the civilian population.

While these allegations of violent excesses led to widespread public outrage at the time, in the absence of any visual proof of bombed *kampongs* and dead civilians and combatants, these acts of war remained hidden. Moreover, such reports were often denied, belittled or ignored by the government and the army leadership in Batavia. In reality, the colony found itself in a precarious position in the Spring of 1949. The (photo) coverage of the Dutch dailies and illustrated journals was, for the most part, a version of events propagated by the military information services and provided little independent and/or new (visual) information. This fit neatly with the desired image of the military top brass (General Spoor, spy chief Colonel Somer, the press chief Lieutenant-Colonel Koenders) and political elite (Catholic government leaders and HVK Beel in Batavia) about the military actions in the former Netherlands East Indies. The fight for public opinion was just as important as the actual battle being waged in the archipelago.

The military versus the media in the Netherlands East Indies 1945-1949

Fig 2: Malang, East Java, end July 1947. Operation Product. Indonesian man, killed in battle. Unpublished photo. Army photographer unknown.

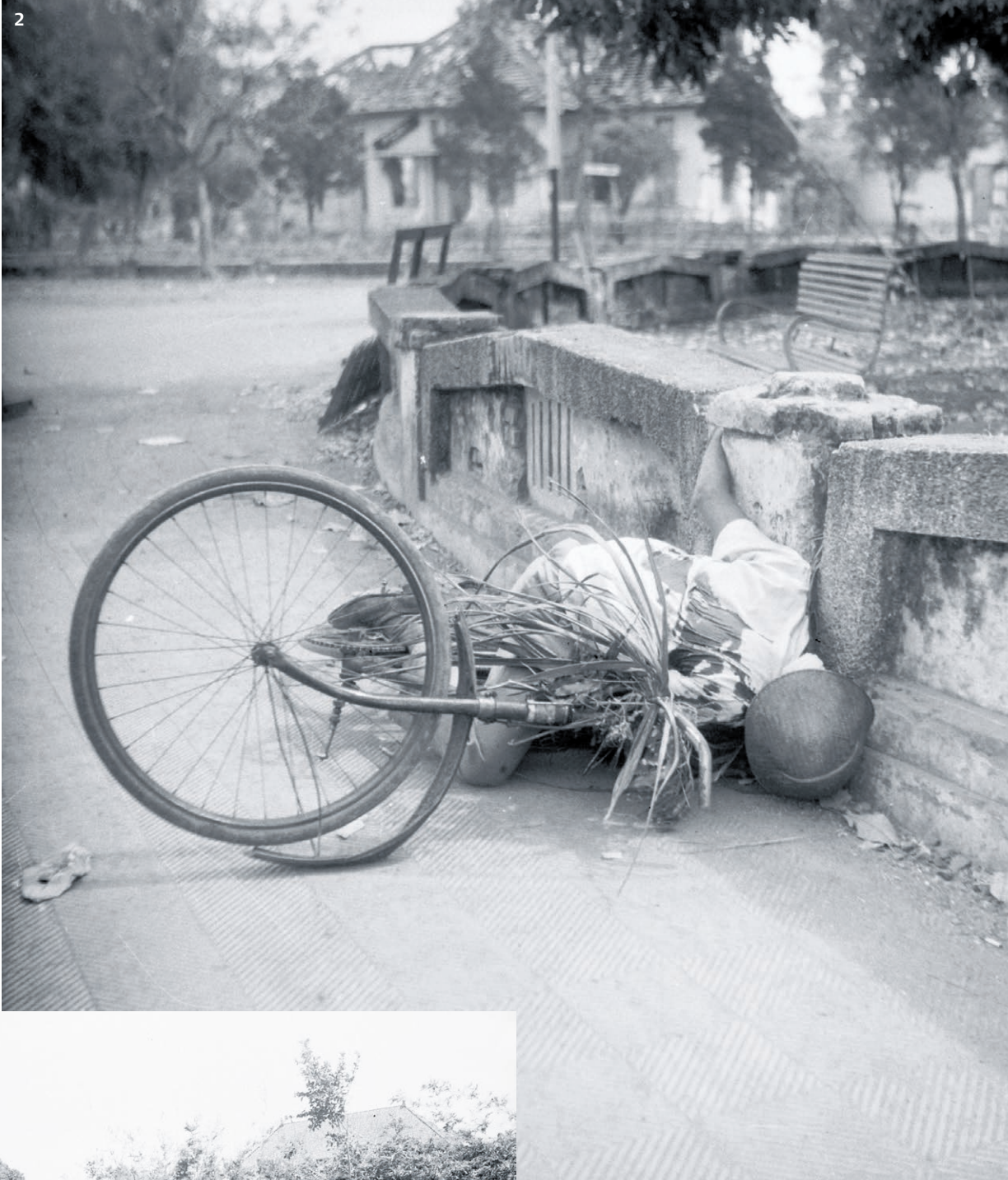


Fig 3: Batavia, West Java, 10 March 1948. DLC information officer at work. Army photographer, ensign H.J. van Krieken

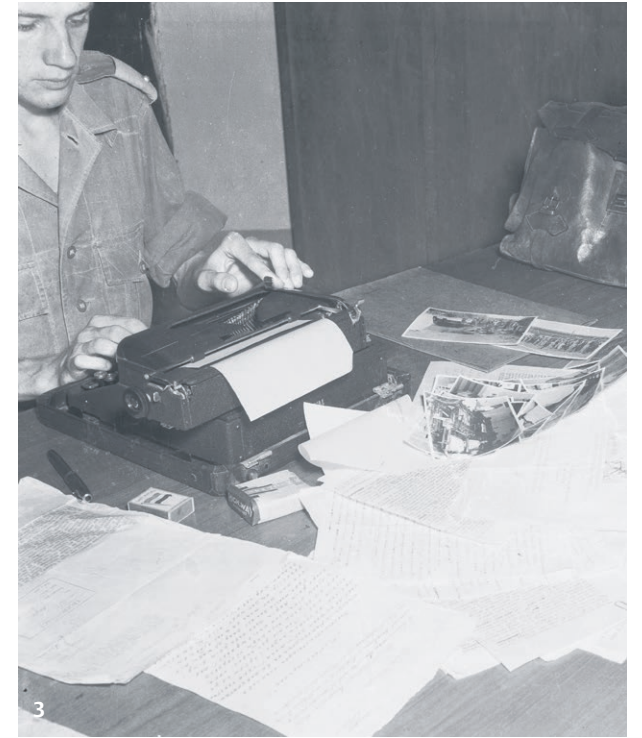
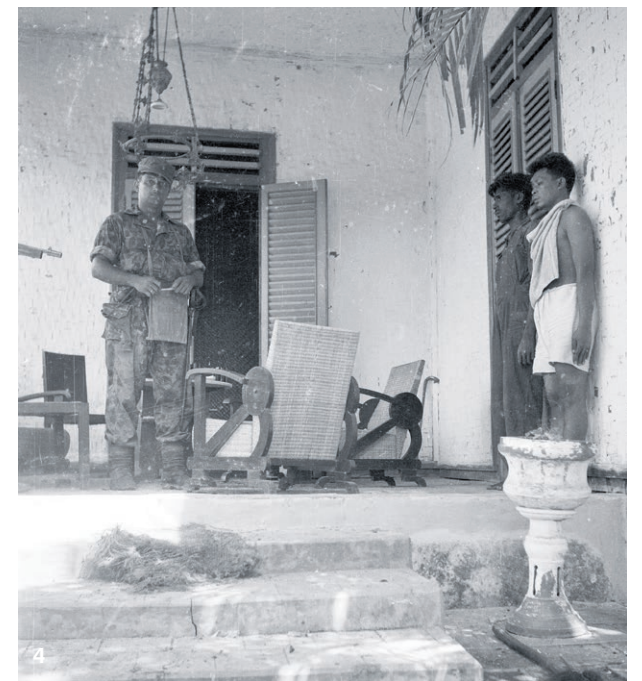


Fig 4: West Java, July 1947. Operation Product. Young Indonesian men held at gunpoint. Unpublished photo. Army photographer/camera man, lieutenant Wim Heldoorn



Foreign PR

The DLC and MARVO (the army and navy information services) were virtually absolute rulers in the area of military information and propaganda. They censored all photo and film material in the name of operational security, public opinion and the need to uphold the morale of the population. No poignant or revealing war images were released. This strategy determined the image of the struggle in the former Netherlands East Indies. The censored material was archived and was only available to the military authorities.

Initially, the DLC and MARVO maintained the impression that the colonial conflict was manageable and even winnable. This was a misrepresentation. Later, as the conflict progressed, Indonesian resistance increased, the violence escalated, and the lists of the dead became longer, the Dutch lost all chance for victory. By the end of 1948, during the second military action, the decisive DLC and smaller MARVO no longer even made any sophisticated use of the media. They blocked access for the (international) press to operational areas on Java and Sumatra; they postponed the forwarding of reports and images, by their own (photo) correspondents about the military actions, to the press. The cause of this suspension can be explained by interference from the United Nations, the US and Great Britain in the escalating military conflict. Foreign observers, correspondents and intelligence services meticulously followed the coverage in the Dutch (Indies) daily and weekly papers.

Until that point, the Netherlands had been particularly inward looking with regards to information and (international) press awareness. Only after this military action did the information services see the light, after it became clear that the

Fig 5: Pesing, near Batavia, West Java, 15 April 1946. Indonesian prisoners of war, some in military uniform, work under Dutch military supervision. Context unknown – they could perhaps be digging their own graves, or the graves of their fallen comrades. Unpublished photo. Army photographer unknown.

All images from the DLC Collection (Dienst Legercontacten), housed in the National Archives in The Hague.

Dutch government was receiving no support and international criticism was growing. The US even threatened to withdraw the promised Marshall aid for the reconstruction of the war-damaged Netherlands. Confronted with international isolation, The Hague and Batavia decided on a new media approach as well as spin-doctoring the effects of the conflict. The information services made common cause with an unexpected ally: the American media. In particular, Herman Friedericy of the NIB was active in the promoting of the Dutch standpoint in the USA. He advised the Dutch government to hire the American PR-bureau Swanson & Co to fight the negative image.

The turning point was the goodwill press trip to the archipelago for a group of prominent American journalists in the Summer of 1949. During the fact-finding mission, these journalists became increasingly convinced that Sukarno was not the right leader to stop the rise of Communism in Southeast Asia. This was despite the fact that the nationalist Sukarno had executed a group of high-profile Communist leaders. Dutch spokesmen labelled the actual elimination of these top PKI figures as counter-propaganda designed to achieve favourable media attention in the US. The coverage of the travelling American press was greatly swayed by the growing Cold War atmosphere in Asia. They had no trust in the Republic of Indonesia and saw the continuing Dutch influence as a safeguard against the encroaching Communism. In short, they chose for a pro-Dutch position. However, the Dutch PR coup was destroyed in one fell swoop when the KLM airplane Franeker, carrying the group of prominent American journalists, crashed on the journey home. Another American PR consultant, John Boettiger, was hired to start a new media offensive and press campaign in the US. But it was too little, too late.

Speaking out

In summary, the professional information services more or less set the agenda and the news in the Netherlands with respect to the struggle in the Netherlands East Indies. In particular, they zoomed in on the information that supported their views; the rest was ignored. 'White noise' and 'correct' details predominated. They had a tendency to neutralise and justify the colonial conflict, and were very good at disguising the war as a humanitarian action. They engaged in muddled language and transparent propaganda. Today this is called *perception management* or strategic communication. In fact, they were

juggling information about war operations; independent (photo) journalism was limited by a cordon of (army) press officers. The Dutch-Indies government in Batavia stayed in close contact with the expensive American PR bureau Swanson & Co, but also with the overzealous information officers under the leadership of Herman Friedericy, of the *Netherlands Information Bureau* (NIB) in New York, in order to portray the Dutch presence in the colony in a favourable international light via the press, newspapers, radio and films. And, when necessary, the secret services, such as NEFIS/CMI, were employed. Power always has the tendency to interfere with journalism.

At that time, the military press officers and spokesmen never spoke out against their superiors, and the often uncritical Dutch correspondents never went against their editors. Exceptions included the left-wing journalists Frans Goedhart and Jacques de Kadt from *Het Parool* and the astute NRC journalist Chris Scheffer, who was summarily dismissed because he dared to stick his neck out. Because journalistic reports and photos were censored and the majority of reporters censored themselves, the full reality of the war never penetrated the wider Dutch public. It is also striking that the Dutch media – with the exception of *Het Parool*, *De Waarheid*, *Vrij Nederland* and *De Groene Amsterdammer* – published harmonious copy (the tone was primarily reassuring) and neutral, meaningless photos taken by military information services. Dutch citizens were not well informed. Indeed, there was little provision for transparent information and only biased images about the struggle in the Netherlands East Indies.

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Reference

- 1 This article is a translation of (an edited version of) the summary from Louis Zweers' 2013 PhD dissertation: "Doodzwingen leek de beste oplossing. Militairen versus media, Nederlands-Indië, 1945-1949" ['Silence is the best solution'. The military versus the media in the Netherlands East Indies 1945-1949]

The challenges to female representation in Asian democracies

Political life in Asian countries is often characterized as a man's world, especially compared to its Western counterparts. Yet we have also seen increasing electoral opportunities for women in the region. Since 2000 alone, women have been elected prime minister in Bangladesh (Khaleda Zia in 2001; Sheikh Hasina in 2008) and Thailand (Yingluck Shinawatra in 2011), and elected president in the Philippines and Indonesia (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Megawati Sukarnoputri both in 2001) as well as South Korea (Park Geun Hye in 2012).¹ Furthermore, major parties, including the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan, have nominated a female presidential candidate (Tsai Ing-Wen in 2012).²

Timothy S. Rich and Elizabeth Gribbins



CURRENTLY THERE ARE seven female presidents and eight female prime ministers worldwide, six from Europe and three from Asia. Furthermore of the forty-one women elected to these offices since World War II, eleven were in Asian countries. More importantly, these women represent the broader political spectrum of the region and have not been limited solely to liberal-progressive parties. The election of South Korea's Park Geun Hye, for example, almost immediately drew comparisons to conservative female leaders from Europe, namely Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel. Considering that women comprise half the world's population, the factors that promote or discourage female leadership in politics require greater attention. This analysis adds to this research by connecting evidence from Asia to broader global trends.

Executive structure

Evidence from Asia provides several challenges to broader claims about female representation. Arguments suggesting that certain cultural contexts restrict opportunities for women have some merit. For example, the Middle East sees the fewest elected or appointed positions for women in politics, with Northern Europe seeing the most. Yet, this should not be conflated with a homogenous influence of Muslim culture, as predominantly Muslim countries, starting with Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto in 1988 and followed by Indonesia and Bangladesh, have elected female leaders. Women have also found electoral success in most former communist regimes, where opportunities within the old regime partially translated into experience valuable in later democratic elections. Yet these cultural or historical experiences alone fail to explain patterns in Asia. Instead of rehashing arguments largely based on vaguely defined cultural distinctions or historical conditions, we present here additional factors that influence female representation. Global evidence suggests several institutional factors that contribute to female success in electoral competition. In terms of elections to executive office, women have been more successful in parliamentary systems than presidential systems. In part this is due to the ways in which heads of government are elected. In a presidential system, candidates must appeal to a broad cross-section of the population, obtaining a plurality if not an outright majority of the vote. This presents a difficult hurdle for any candidate, but especially for women if large segments of the population view women as unfit for office. In contrast, parliamentary systems provide a potentially lower threshold as a candidate can either be elected to parliament through a constituency seat (e.g., United Kingdom) or a party list (e.g., Denmark) and if in the majority party or coalition, then be appointed as prime minister. However, the evidence from Asia shows little distinction by executive structure, suggesting additional factors.

Male predecessors

One striking characteristic among many of Asia's most successful female candidates has been their familial connections to dominant male figures from previous elections or the democracy movement more broadly. Indira Gandhi, India's first female prime minister, arguably benefited from being the only child of Jawaharlal Nehru. Srimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, the first female head of

government in the 20th century, was the widow of a previous prime minister. Both female presidents from the Philippines (Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) as well as Indonesia (Megawati Sukarnoputri) were related to former heads of government or major opposition leaders. Park Geun Hye of South Korea remains intrinsically tied to the country's former dictator, her father Park Chung Hee, effectively playing the role of First Lady after North Korean spies assassinated her mother. International coverage of her campaign echoed this connection,³ with Park supporters opting to positively spin references to her 'strongman' father. The role of familial connections in Asia contrasts patterns seen elsewhere, with only three clear examples of a similar connection in female presidents: current president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (Argentina), and former presidents Janet Jagan (Guyana) and Mireya Moscoso (Panama).

The consistency with which, on the national stage, successful female politicians spring from strong political roots of course begs the question whether these candidates would have had similar success without the name recognition. Such name recognition provides at the very least an initial advantage to those otherwise with limited political experience, both in attracting media attention and in assisting in fundraising. Similarly, one must question whether supporters identify a distinct policy from these female leaders or simply associate them with the policies of their male predecessors. For example, despite claims to the contrary, Yingluck Shinawatra of Thailand remains framed by supporters, and opponents alike, as a proxy to her brother Thaksin Shinawatra, ousted in a coup in 2006. Thailand's snap elections in February of 2014 were in part a result of a proposed amnesty bill that opponents claimed would lead to Thaksin's return to the country. Similarly, Park Geun Hye attempted in part to appeal to the nostalgia over her father's transformation of the South Korean economy, the so-called 'Miracle on the Han River', while attempting to distinguish herself in terms of North Korean policy from her predecessor and intraparty rival Lee Myung Bak.

Filling the quotas

Even if opportunities to the highest office remain in part linked to pedigree, women are seeing greater opportunities in national legislatures. Admittedly, Asian democracies still lag behind their European counterparts: women fill nearly twenty-eight percent of seats in lower house legislators in European democracies labeled 'free' by Freedom House, compared to fourteen percent in Asia.⁴ However, even Japan, where female representation in the House of Representatives rarely broke three percent, has witnessed meager increases. Female candidates have also benefited from gender quotas in legislative nominations and seat allocation, although seats set aside for women often do not incentivize party nominations beyond these areas, effectively limiting the number of female candidates overall. In other cases, quotas create a cohort of experienced officials that have a greater chance of winning elections in the future. Similarly, while gender quotas are consistently employed for placement on the party list in South Korea's National Assembly elections, nomination to district races remains rare, with similar patterns also seen in Taiwan. The underlying rationale arguably is that parties remain concerned about whether female candidates can garner a plurality of the vote in district competition.

From left to right: Sheikh Hasina, Park Geun Hye, Tsai Ing-Wen, Yingluck Shinawatra, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

However, part of this concern is predicated on the lack of female candidates with political experience. Simply put, if women are not afforded opportunities to gain campaign and office experience at lower level offices (e.g., city councils), they are unlikely to attempt higher office, much less get a major party's nomination.

Lower level office

Democracies in Asia face similar demands for greater female representation as seen elsewhere. As these countries gradually expand roles for women in lower level offices, we should expect similar increases in the number of women unrelated to previous leadership that receive nominations and succeed in legislative and executive offices. The pattern of women in Asia with familial ties breaking the electoral glass ceiling, if nothing else, provides role models for the next generation. Whether this familial pattern is a temporary legacy of the third wave of democratization, or a more enduring pattern, is unclear. One way in which Asian countries could take the lead in female representation is through the establishment of term limits for legislative offices and lower level positions, as existing evidence suggests term limits benefit female candidates.⁵ Due to incumbent advantages and a declining number of competitive districts, few district races afford women a realistic opportunity to gain seats. Proportional representation systems also potentially create a similar problem in that only a select few women, whether due to quotas or otherwise, are re-nominated. Regardless, until parties across the political spectrum actively recruit women for lower level offices as a means of gaining experience and name recognition, cracks in Asia's glass ceiling will remain limited compared to its European counterparts.

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References

- Other examples of women in national roles during this time-frame include Pratibha Patil (President of India 2007-2012), Roza Otunbayeva (Kyrgyzstan interim president 2010-2011), Chang Sang (acting prime minister of South Korea in July of 2012), and Han Myeong Sook (prime minister of South Korea 2006-2007).
- While this analysis focuses on Asian democracies, even the People's Republic of China (PRC) has seen a greater role for women, with Liu Yandong elected to the Politburo in 2012 and appointed vice premier in 2013.
- Emily Rauhala. 2012. 'The Dictator's Daughter: Park Geun-Hye May Become South Korea's Next President', *Time Magazine*, December 17. (<http://tinyurl.com/Park-Geun-hye>)
- Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org); In contrast, European and Asian countries labeled 'partially free' differ marginally in female representation in lower houses (twenty-two and twenty-one percent respectively). Calculations do not include Taiwan. (www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm)
- Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer. 2005. 'The Incumbency Disadvantage and Women's Election to Legislative Office', *Electoral Studies* 24:227-244.

Like wildfire

Yan Geling is a well-acclaimed and widely read Chinese writer and scenarist, especially in mainland China. Some of her short stories and novels have been made into films and translated into several languages. Yan Geling's stories mostly take place during the recent past in China, some based on her own experiences. She is now living in Germany with her husband and daughter, after having lived in the US, China and Nigeria since 1989. I had the opportunity to speak with Yan Geling in her Berlin home, in between her busy writing schedule and daily family life.

Ronald Bos

The Great Leap Forward

I only tasted the result of the Great Leap Forward, because when I was very little and in kindergarten there was famine in China and, as I remember, we had too much onion and cabbage. My parents did not tell me much and I have no other experiences. This movement was parallel with the political campaign, who was against it became a rightist. My father wrote stories about it, he saw people starving. He almost got beaten up, he was very lucky because many of his friends were condemned as rightists when they saw what was going on in the country. They sympathised with the people that suffered, and criticised the Great Leap Forward and were condemned. My mother was more passive. As an actress she had to perform state plays about this movement. Mid-sixties, before the Cultural Revolution, they were still performing these kind of plays.

Cultural Revolution

In the later part of the revolution, after the young intellectuals moved to the countryside to be re-education by the peasants, all the members of my family were talking about my elder brother and me who had to go; my brother was four years older and he was more likely to go. Back then Chinese opera was performed and all kids liked to be in these performances. If you were lucky to be selected by the army you were excused from going to the countryside. Then I tried very hard to get through all the tests and I was lucky to be selected by the army at twelve years. I was selected as a dancer and I was shipped out to Chengdu; it was 3000 kilometres away from my home and it took four years before my next home visit. All the young people came together and were given rifles as new soldiers and many new regulations. It was fascinating. PLA soldiers were heroes in China back then, so we wanted to follow their model. The life was very hard. We had to get up in the middle of the night for a rapid march and there were many military manoeuvres for the new soldiers during three months. Afterwards we got into the dance training, which was also very hard. The first excitement soon passed and then we had to face the reality. Compared with the normal Chinese civilians our life was good. Two times a year we all got new uniforms and we had meat; back then meat and sugar was rationed severely. Because we danced we got big rations. The army took good care of us. Just a hard life from six o'clock in the morning, when you got up to run, till ten o'clock in the evening to turn off your light.

Hatred

We always think of the Red Guards as villains. The destruction power came from the hormones. Girls too. In China there was always such a repression on sexuality, they had no outlet for the hormones. So they turned it into a force, which destructed people's homes and many nice things. It was a blind sexual force from the youth, they didn't know what to do with it. They destroyed many famous sites of Chinese antiquity, many famous temples. I was very young, eleven, twelve, these years I was mixed up, I didn't know what to think. Where did this hatred come from?

Above:
Yan Geling.

First people need a reason to hate, a purpose, when it goes out of control and it becomes black, you don't need anything. Like poor people hated rich people in China during the first and second national revolution. They have an ideal and they went out of control. As Freud said, these are forms of human regression. They can't help it to be regressed sometimes, violence and hatred for anything that they don't want to reason with. I don't remember all this blank, blind and abstract hatred. It spreads like wildfire that destroys everything. Anything that goes on and on becomes abstract.

Sino Vietnamese War in 1979

It was a border conflict and it happened very sudden. Five army regiments were sent to the front and there were not enough correspondents to cover it. Back then I was nineteen and I thought it was time for me to be a real soldier, a real military and a real hero. A soldier who never goes to war is not real. I went there as the only girl and they didn't want me to go to the front, so they had me stay in the field hospital. I visited all these wounded soldiers and interviewed them. After that my heroism was gone and it never came back again. Life is worth much more than any heroism, nationalism or patriotism. All these soldiers were just as old as I was. I saw them die, I saw the wounded. The air smelled like blood, it was very sickening. Then I started to write, I found so much to write. I jumped overnight from a dancer to a writer. All the reading experiences, all this classic literature quietly, without me knowing, had built a very solid foundation. So then I started to write and my works got published easily. That was very encouraging. I went back to the front, to the field hospital again. I visited more soldiers who were carried off from the front. I travelled between the front and the city where I was living, maybe three times. I wrote many short stories, short reportages and poems. Most of them got published. I wrote fictional stories and they never found there was a undertone against the war. Now I realise from that time I was a peacemaker, I never wanted war again because I saw what casualties it makes. Whenever there is a war, I am against it. What problem you want to solve with war? I think there are other ways to solve problems.

Green blood (1985)

The novel *Green Blood* was my first book. It is a story about a group of performers who were sent to the front. It was basically my own story. It was called Green Blood because the army was circulating the country and we were green. Green blood is cold, meant to kill. Cold blood. The book is about my self discovery in the army. The first four years we danced a ballet, later on we changed to Chinese classic dance, folkdance and minority dances. We had to learn many kind of dances. After that I became a writer. I was in a writing group for the railroad construction soldiers. In China the soldiers do all the hard work for the country, railroad and highway construction and military experiment sites. All this construction work is done by soldiers. We had a group of artists, painters, sculpturists, playwrights. In 1985 I left the army when they had a reduction. That was the end of my army career.

USA

I got an invitation from the United States Information Agency in 1987 to visit the US the next year. So I went to the US in 1988. I think they invited me because I had published three novels and some movie scripts. One movie was made and I became known as a young writer. My most important interview was in China Daily, they gave me a big profile and not long after that I received the invitation from the *International Visitor Leadership Program* (IVLP). I stayed in the US for six months and I started to learn English.

During my visit I saw many young writers. They were so free, they were never concerned about what could be published and what would be banned. I liked that challenge. The political oppression, the censorship is first coming from outside and later becomes self censorship. Subconsciously you wonder: can I write this? And that's very poisonous to a writer's mind. You become a victim. Why should I think about this? That's not a writer's concern. All the editors in China said: "Ah, this is harsh, be careful. Maybe we have to leave this out." Back then I was young and the editor's opinion was important to me. So, there I was in the US and it was very good for a young creative person like me. But they have different poison. Commercialism. The US is producing a lot of reading junk. I think they give you freedom to write, but if you don't follow the commercial formula you can't get published. So it's the problem on the other end. That's what I realised later when I was in school in the US.

13 Flowers of Nanjing (2012)

The massacre of Nanjing in 1937 is a big story for Chinese. In six weeks 300.000 people were killed. This is something we must keep telling the world, which we didn't do. That's why I choose the narrator as a contemporary person, the voice is contemporary. I didn't want to make it a story that happened in the past. I wanted the storyteller to be someone who is aware of the past and wants to carry this legacy. It was a holocaust too, because of the race and the systematic killing. Also Chinese people were not fully aware of this. This story has a contemporary voice. In the English translation they cut it off for the story to flow more. But I didn't want to have it flow more. I wanted alienation, you stop and then you think, before going into the story again. I always like this alienation, I don't want you to read and cry and be carried away. I don't think this is necessary.

What's next?

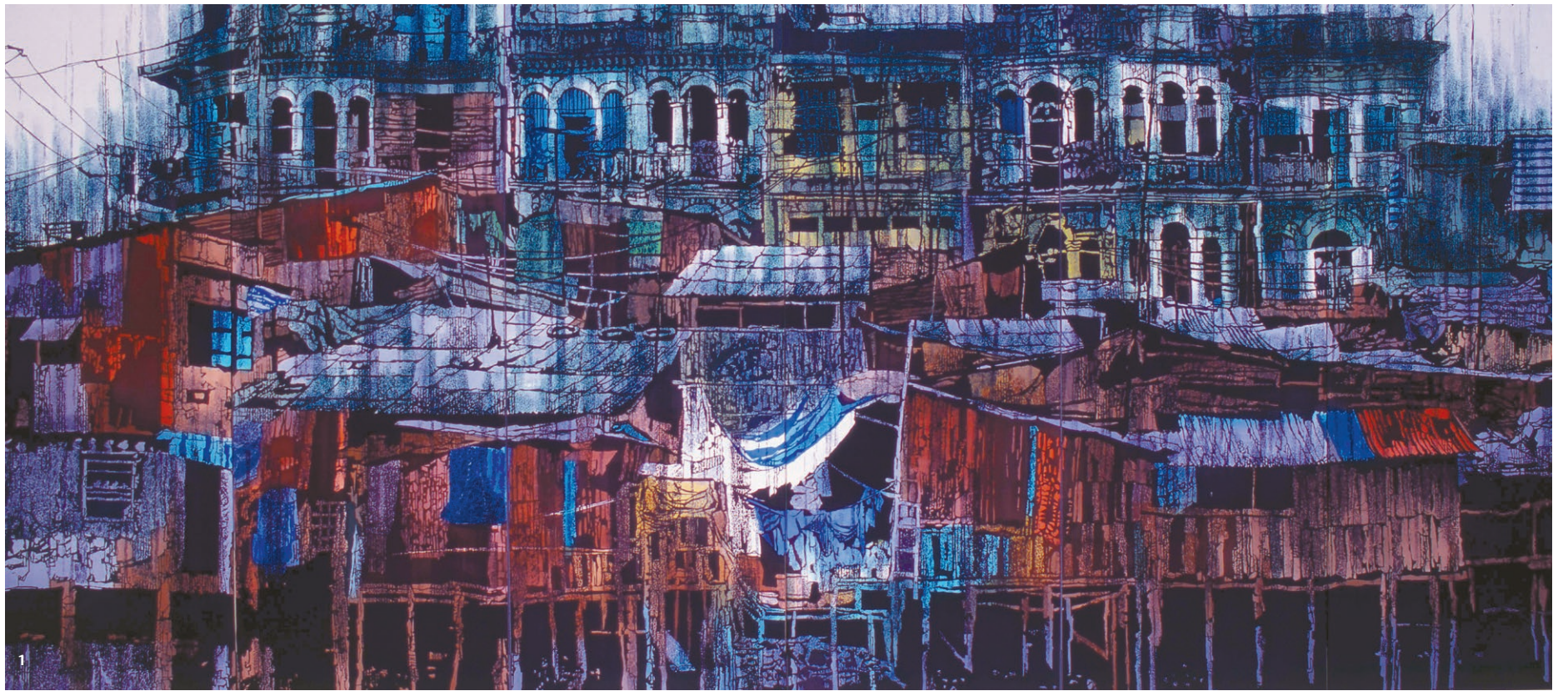
Yan Geling is currently writing a new television series and a novel. Once again, one of her novels has recently been made into a movie: *Coming Home* by director Zhang Yimou. It had a special out-of-competition screening at the Cannes film festival, and received rave reviews. See: www.filmmbiz.asia/reviews/coming-home

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The Writer

Images of Vietnam in the art of *katazome*, by TOBA Mika

The Artist



In commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Japan-Vietnam Diplomatic Relations, the Fine Arts Museum Ho Chi Minh City hosted the exhibition 'Sceneries remained forever in one's soul' from 23 November to 15 December 2013, displaying the works of the Japanese artist TOBA Mika. Deeply inspired by her various journeys to Vietnam starting in 1994, the artist creates colourful, impressive and thought-provoking images of a land in transition by using *katazome* – a centuries old unique Japanese dyeing technique.¹

Stefan Jeka



BORN IN AICHI PREFECTURE, TOBA Mika 鳥羽美花 graduated from Kyoto City University of Arts in 1987. At that time she had already developed her very own approach to the old dyeing technique *katazome* 型染め, reviving the traditional craft to use it for her contemporary art. Prior to her graduation her works were shown in exhibitions throughout the country – at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art – and she won several art prizes in Japan, like the ‘Kyoto New Artist Prize’ in 2002 and the ‘Urban Culture Incentive Award’ in 2003. Her remarkable works focusing on Vietnam were also exhibited abroad at the Vietnam National Museum in Hanoi, and in 2005 TOBA Mika was eventually awarded with the ‘Cultural Testimonial Award’ by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. As a current professor at Kyoto Seika University of Arts, TOBA Mika is able to personally introduce this old tradition to her students.

Katazome – dyed patterns

Among the several elaborate dyeing techniques, *katazome* – the term could be translated as ‘stencil dyed’ – is a particular example of Japanese wits and craftsmanship. Resembling the expensive woven brocades, *katazome* was used to dye inexpensive cotton or linen garments. Therefore it gained wide popularity and was produced in large quantities to meet the growing demand among the commoners in early modern Japan. Like the famous batik dyeing method of Indonesia, the fabric is partially covered with a resist to hinder the applied colour from penetrating the parts where it is not desired. This technique produces well-defined patterns, that resemble sharp edged prints rather than painted designs.

In batik these patterns are realised by applying liquid wax by hand or stencils. This method of using wax was not practised in Japan, perhaps the production of wax was not sufficient or the wax was used for other purposes, for example, the fabrication of medicine. Instead, the resist paste used in *katazome* is mainly based on the abundant raw materials rice and rice bran.

To briefly describe the complex process used by TOBA Mika, the resist paste is applied to a silk textile by brushing it through the patterned stencil cuts of a sheet of mulberry paper, the *katagami* 型紙. The paper is first treated with *kakishibu* 柿渋 – a tannin made from the persimmon fruit – to enhance its durability, and then firmly placed on the fabric. After applying the paste the paper is removed, exposing the areas to be coloured later on. The cloth is then left to soak in soybean juice overnight (*jiire* 地入れ, ‘put into ground’). This procedure keeps the resist from cracking and, working as an undercoat, it prevents the blotting of the dye and intensifies the colours. Then, after applying the dye and steaming the cloth at high temperature to fixate the colours, the spectacular moment of washing – *mizumoto* 水元 ‘to dip in water’ – comes: “Katazome is, indeed, a very dramatic method because all of the colored patterns will appear at one single moment of removing the resist.”²

Depending on the size of the picture, cutting the stencil – *katahori* 型堀り, ‘dig out the pattern’ – can take up to two months from start to finish. As several of these steps are necessary when more colours or patterns are desired, the creation of even a single picture becomes a very complex and time-consuming endeavour. Though the *katagami* is quite durable and can be used several times, the outcome will be unique each time.

Fading old Vietnam as reviving inspiration

When TOBA Mika realised that the traditional *katazome* designs – mainly flowers, abstract patterns or scenes of folk and popular tales – did not any longer contribute to the development of her artwork, she took a flight to Ho Chi Minh City in 1994 in search of new inspiration. She went there without any real idea about the country or people, but from the first moment TOBA Mika was enchanted and inspired by the vigour, the heat and the landscape of the city.

From then on, she visited Vietnam every year and travelled around the country from north to south, to tiny fishing villages, to paddy fields, the old imperial town of Hue and, of course, the cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon. It was the time when Vietnam had begun to undergo vast changes due to the rapid economic development the government pursued with the *Đổi mới* (‘renewal’) reforms. Starting in 1986 these reforms eventually led to a so-called socialist-orientated market economy and the growth of private enterprises, emerging from the existing shadow market of family oriented enterprises. But, alas, this development in one way or the other influenced the sceneries TOBA Mika witnessed and the places she selected for her paintings, and very often these would no longer exist upon her return. Stimulated by the rapid and dramatic changes in scenery, she felt she simply *had* to paint to keep hold of the memories of the moment – place and time. The objects of her pictures were precious and yet so very fragile. The streets, houses, landscapes, they contained the real essence of the Vietnamese history. TOBA Mika explained: “The houses opposite of the river were as if they were telling the history of the journey of the Vietnamese people. The decaying houses with the French

colonial style buildings behind them seemed like living artworks. It was the scenery I painted for the picture ‘Monsoon’, but as time passed the scene was completely gone, replaced by a highway.”³

Assembling the patterns of life

‘Monsoon’ (モンスーン, 1998) is an impressive work consisting of six panels, more than 5 meters in length. Many of her artworks come in the form of a *byōbu* 屏風, a traditional Japanese folding screen – reminiscent of the heritage of the Japanese arts TOBA Mika pays tribute to. Although the seemingly deserted colonial houses in ‘Monsoon’, with their dark empty windows, and the nearly collapsing roofs of the crooked stilt houses in front, give us a somewhat dreary and desolate impression, the focal point is a bright awning that covers the freshly laundered clothes hanging out to dry. The absence of people is a distinct feature of nearly all of her works, but like in ‘Monsoon’ or ‘Labyrinth’ (迷宮都市, 1998) the decaying houses and empty streets are nevertheless filled with life – represented by the bright yellow lights shining from inside a shop, a set of chairs, parked bikes or motorbikes and boats floating on a river, all just waiting for the imminent return of the people onto the scene. In this regard, because of the intimate and personal relationship with the landscapes depicted, her pictures focusing on Vietnam are filled with neither nostalgia nor sadness, but rather with an idea of future expectations. TOBA Mika is witness to the inevitable historical process happening in Vietnam at this very moment, which in contrast to that process she tries to catch by using the elaborate and time-consuming process of the *katazome* technique.

Keeping the before mentioned process in mind, large sized paintings require more effort. But, TOBA Mika felt as if the Vietnamese sceneries she wanted to draw demanded such proportions: “So, it requires a lot of hard work to produce a large scale painting, but somehow, the Vietnamese sceneries I wanted to paint seem to fit only to a large scale art work. The energy of the Vietnamese life and the heat of the city, they all gave me a lot of power.”⁴

It is the large size of the paintings that allow the viewer to stand back, at a distance, and take in the astonishing effect of the abstract puzzle of sharp edged coloured fields forging themselves together into a coherent image. It is this combination of abstractionism and photo realism that makes her work such an impressive experience.

Current works and future projects

At the time of this interview TOBA Mika had already begun working on a special project; presumably for the first time, the *katazome* technique will be used for the painting of *fusuma-e* 襖絵 (panelled sliding doors) for the Zen-temple Kennin-ji in Kyoto. In preparation for the 800th anniversary of the death of monk Eisai (1141-1215) in 2015, sixteen panels for the temple’s small library room will be decorated by the artist and shown in the exhibition ‘TOBA Mika – dyeing the ZEN spirit’ at the temple from 29 November till 14 December 2014. Again, much of her inspiration derives from her journeys



Fig 1:
モンスーン/Monsoon
6-panel byōbu, 1998
233 x 524 cm

Fig 2:
迷宮都市/Labyrinth
2-panel byōbu, 1998
160 x 200 cm
Hanoi, Embassy
of Japan.

Fig 3:
The artist TOBA
Mika at a garden
in Ken'nin-ji, Kyoto
Exhibition poster
鳥羽美花一禅を染める
/TOBA Mika – dyeing
the ZEN spirit.

Fig 4:
辿りついた場所 I-III
/Eternal place I-III
(from left to right)
4-panel byōbu, 2013
210 x 300 cm each
Picture taken at
the exhibition in
Ho Chi Minh City
Museum of Fine Arts
November 2013.

All pictures courtesy
of TOBA Mika, reprint
with kind permission
of the artist.

to Vietnam, for it is the tranquil image of the mountains and waters in a small Vietnamese village that she finds most appropriate for the *fusuma-e* in the oldest Zen-temple in Kyoto. In the project’s second phase another 36 panels of *fusuma-e* are to be completed for the temple’s large library room, depicting the four seasons in various Japanese landscapes.

TOBA Mika also has plans to present her work in France in the near future. There she wants to show panels from her current project at the temple in Kyoto, as well as her works that were inspired by her various travels through Vietnam. This will be a fine selection from what she has produced in the past twenty years and the first opportunity to experience her art in Europe.

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References

- 1 This article is based on both personal and online interviews with the artist and used with her kind permission. General information about the artist and her work was mostly derived from the artist’s website (toba-mika.net) and the catalogue from the exhibition *Nara and Hanoi bound together with Katazome*, held in commemoration of the 1300th anniversary of Nara Heijo-kyo and 1000th anniversary of Thang Long-Hanoi at the Yakushi Temple in Nara and the Temple of Literature and the Vietnam National Museum of Arts in Hanoi in 2010.
- 2 Committee for the Toba Mika’s *Katazome* Exhibition (ed.) 2010. *Nara and Hanoi bound together with Katazome* (Exhibition Catalogue), Tokyo: Sankei Shimbun sha, p.111
- 3 Interview, January 2014
- 4 idem



Satyamev Jayate: a quiet Indian revolution

On 15 August 2012, a special Independence Day episode of the reality show *Satyamev Jayate* (Truth Alone Prevails) was aired on Indian television. It was a rare event in the nation's media history, as it showcased the immediate social impact that the show had had in India: a fast track court set up in Haryana to address long-pending cases regarding female foeticide in the state; generic medicine stores in Maharashtra; street-plays performed to increase awareness about toxic food; a long overdue bill passed in Parliament to protect children from sexual abuse ... the list was a long one.

Rituparna Roy

SEASON 1 of *Satyamev Jayate* ran from 6 May–29 July 2012. The show was heavily promoted and garnered widespread attention even before it began, courtesy of the show's host, Aamir Khan, one of India's greatest living actors and beloved by the nation. Khan was always a popular actor, dishing out Bollywood hits since 1988, yet he started to redefine his career – and the Hindi film industry – in 2001 by producing and (later) directing offbeat, socially relevant films (*Lagaan*, 2001; *Taare Zameen Par*, 2007; *Peepli Live*, 2010; *Dhobi Ghat*, 2011). His audience has now come to identify his work not only with quality and substance, but also newness. They are invariably (to use a Bollywood term) *hatke* [different].

Awakening India

That difference was adroitly carried over by Khan from his celluloid creations to his maiden TV venture in 2012: *Satyamev Jayate* [henceforth SMJ]. Interestingly, the timeslot Khan chose for SMJ was Sunday morning at 11am, in a bid reminiscent of the telecasting of the epic serials *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* a generation ago, when the whole country came together to watch the stories grandmothers of yore habitually told their grandchildren. Bringing India together was only one part of Aamir Khan's agenda. In one of the promotion films for SMJ, Khan said: "Remember – Sunday, 11am – I am coming India, to awaken you." He lived up to his promise. In a series of hard-hitting episodes over the course of the next three months, he did awaken India to issues that have been its bane for decades, but have never received the attention they deserve – female foeticide; child sexual abuse; dowry; medical malpractices; persons with disabilities; domestic violence; alcohol abuse; untouchability; old age; inequality.

With SMJ, Aamir Khan had taken media activism to new heights. Never before had the powerful medium of television been used to this effect in India. It may be noted here that until the introduction of Satellite TV in the early 1990s, the only channel that Indians were exposed to was the state-owned, rather staid, Doordarshan (or DD). Things changed dramatically with the opening up of the skies; and with the rapid proliferation of 24/7 channels thereafter, India went the way of most other countries in this respect, offering infotainment through standard categories – soaps, news-based programs, film-based programs, sports (read cricket), dance and music competitions. And Reality Shows.

But few shows have been able to capture the collective imagination of Indians like SMJ. I am reminded of particular predecessors – each for a different aspect of the show. In terms of sheer newness and immediate audience impact, I am reminded of *The World This Week* – Pronny Roy's pioneering news show way back in the late 1980s, which was the hottest new topic for India's young then. And something of the excitement that I felt as an impressionable schoolgirl anticipating the next episode of *The World This Week* I rediscovered more than two decades later for SMJ. But perhaps the most immediate predecessor of SMJ and one with which it could be fruitfully compared (though their program-categories are different) is NDTV's *We The People*, anchored by Barkha Dutt, India's most popular TV personality. For the last ten years, Dutt's program has been successfully debating contentious current issues facing the nation. But while *We The People* has consistently raised topical issues and highlighted India's problems, *Satyamev Jayate* has gone a step further and has tried to find their solutions.

Storyteller

Its social commitment is the single most important factor that distinguishes SMJ from everything that has gone before it, and was eloquently expressed in Aamir Khan's 'Apologia' in the inaugural episode:

I work in films – enact different roles, live different lives. But in the midst of all this, I also have a life of my own – not as an actor, but as a human being. I read newspapers, watch television, meet friends and different kinds of people – a lot of things affect me and touch my mind. On the one hand, India is advancing at a fast pace, reaching new heights. I feel very happy about it. Feel very proud to be an Indian. But on the other hand, there are some bitter truths that we don't want to face. When I think of them, I get perplexed, depressed. There are times I think – 'Why should



I bother about issues that don't affect me directly? My life is getting along fine. What difference would it make? But it does. After all, I too am a part of this society. Whatever affects it, affects me and all others. Had Gandhi, Tilak, Bose, Nehru, Maulana Azad been alive today – what answer would we have given them? Does the India of today live up to their dreams? So, I'm coming amidst you – to listen, to understand, and also to share. I want to go to the bottom of every issue; want to bring out the truth; want to talk about those issues that touch the lives of all Indians. I don't want to blame or judge anyone. After all, the responsibility of our problems lies with one of us – or maybe, all of us. So, join me in a journey – to seek, to find, to listen, to tell, to solve some grave puzzles.

The 'journey' was indeed memorable throughout – with both the host and millions of audience members being enriched in the process. Of course, it was not all smooth sailing. Khan had enraged many, most notably doctors who felt he had unfavourably portrayed their profession in the episode on medical malpractices in India. There were others who were not impressed with the show's popularity and thought that it led people to mistakenly believe that there are simplistic solutions to India's complex problems. Khan was also accused of faking emotions during the show. I can understand why. Khan is prone to crying while listening to the traumatic stories of his guests – and Indian men are not supposed to cry, hosts of reality shows (and a film star!) even less so. But there is nothing fake about the emotions that Khan's show evoked in his audience – though in the September 2012 TIME magazine feature on him, Khan admitted to manipulation through a dramatic presentation of the stories: 'I'm not a journalist, I'm a storyteller ... I can make you angry, sad, happy ... That's my skill set.'

Agents of change

True. Though a reality show, with lots of relevant facts and figures, it was the personal stories that stood out in SMJ: Snehalata, who discovered a new life after 16 years of being subjected to domestic violence; Harish Iyer, who found an escape in Sridevi's films during his 12-year-long sexual abuse by his maternal uncle; Kishwar Jahan, who continued to have faith in the power of love, even after her son Rizwan Rahman became a victim of an honour-killing for marrying the woman he loved; and Parveen Khan, whose face was bitten off by her husband because she could not produce a son. The stories of victims aside, there were innumerable memorable moments in the show, where people who fought for others and tried to usher in some change in society shared their thoughts and experiences. One is reminded of Bezwada Wilson, inspired to make the eradication of manual scavenging his life's mission; or Samit Sharma, lamenting the death of his maidservant's little son due to a lack of generic medicine; or Sunitha Krishnan, asking why is it that trafficked women find a place in films and literature, but not in society.

Listening to these agents of change, it was not difficult to understand why Aamir Khan had gone on record saying: "Doing the show, my faith in my country and countrymen has only increased". He actually transmitted that faith to others; through his show, Indians came to know of institutions they were not even aware existed – institutions like Snehalaya, Unique Home for Girls, Humanity Trust, Himmat Mahila Samooch, Love Commandoes, Azad Foundation, Sarvodaya Trust, Prajwala. Some of them are big and operate at national or state levels, but most are small initiatives by brave people wishing to eradicate injustices and redress problems.

A quiet revolution

Spurred by its success, SMJ came back with a second season in March 2014. Although fewer episodes than the first season, it once again successfully placed its finger on the pulse of the nation. It started with an issue that had shaken India in the intervening period between seasons – the increasing incidence of rape and brutalization of women, with the gruesome case of Nirbhaya in December 2012 as the starting point; and ended with two episodes on India's polity in the warm up to the country's 14th General Elections – urging Indians to be more responsible citizens in one, and presenting a stark picture of the extent of the criminalization of politics in India in the other. The remaining two episodes dealt with the Police in India and ways of garbage disposal.

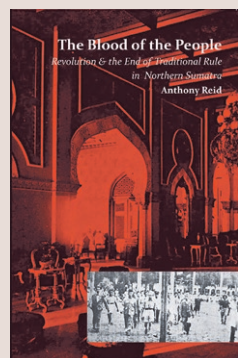
Like the previous season, the impact of the show lasted beyond the airing of the episodes, with the program organizers' own intervention in the issues discussed testifying to their social commitment. For example, one of the main demands of SMJ's *Fighting Rape* episode, aired on 2 March 2014, was the setting up of One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs) for survivors of sexual assault (which was already a key recommendation of the Justice Usha Mehra Commission). This was further strengthened by a series of events launched by ActionAid India, SMJ's partner NGO, including an audience with the President of India on March 7. Soon after this, on March 11, Aamir Khan and Uday Shankar, the CEO of Star India, wrote an open letter to the Chief Justice of India, asking him to intervene on some issues that affect survivors of rape in India and delay the process of giving them justice.

Many more examples can be given; the point being SMJ's pioneering media activism. In the very first episode of SMJ, in 2012, Aamir Khan had declared: "it is our desire to be part of a change in India." Well, that change did happen – and in a way and to an extent that is nothing short of a quiet revolution.

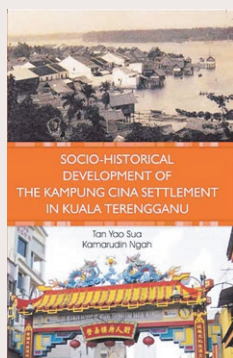
Rituparna Roy is an IAS Alumni and the author of two books: *'South Asian Partition Fiction in English: From Khushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh'* (AUP, 2010) & (the co-edited volume) *'Writing India Anew: Indian English Fiction, 2000-2010'* (AUP, 2013). She currently works as a Freelance Editor and writes a blog on Indian Cinema – rituparnasandilya.wordpress.com

New for review

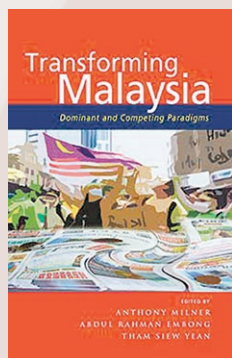
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Anthony Reid. 2014.
The Blood of the People: Revolution & the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra (Second Edition)
NUS Press
ISBN: 9789971696375



Tan Yao Sua & Kamarudin Ngah. 2013.
Socio-historical Development of the Kampung Cina Settlement in Kuala Terengganu
Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD)
ISBN: 9789675832819



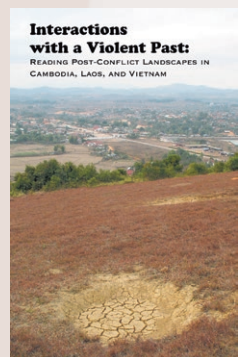
Anthony Milner, Abdul Rahman Embong & Tham Siew Yean (eds.) 2014.
Transforming Malaysia: Dominant and Competing Paradigms
Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)
ISBN: 9789814517911



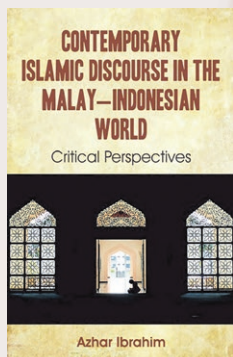
Sarah Turner (ed.) 2014.
Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Socialist Asia
University of British Columbia Press
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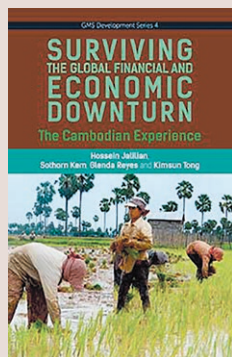
Sonja Arntzen & Moriyuki Itô (trans.) 2014.
The Sarashina Diary: A Woman's Life in Eleventh-century Japan
Columbia University Press
ISBN: 9780231167185



Vatthana Pholsena & Oliver Tappe (eds.) 2013.
Interactions with a Violent Past: Reading of Post-Conflict Landscapes in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
NUS Press
ISBN: 9789971697013



Azhar Ibrahim. 2013.
Contemporary Islamic Discourse in the Malay-Indonesian World
Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD)
ISBN: 9789675832970



Hossein Jalilian et al. 2014.
Surviving the Global Financial and Economic Downturn: The Cambodian Experience
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)
ISBN: 9789814379892



Danielle Labbé. 2014.
Land Politics and Livelihoods on the Margins of Hanoi, 1920-2010
University of British Columbia Press
ISBN: 9780774826679



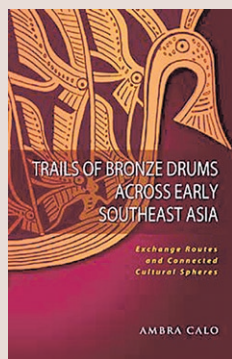
Robert Stolz. 2014.
Bad Water: Nature, Pollution, and Politics in Japan, 1870-1950
Duke University Press
ISBN: 9780822356905



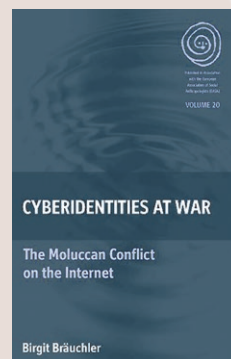
Filomeno V. Aguilar. 2014.
Migration Revolution: Philippine Nationhood & Class Relations in a Globalized Age
NUS Press
ISBN: 9789971697815



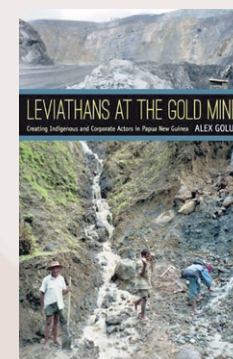
Paul G. Pickowicz, Kuiyi Shen & Yingjin Zhang (eds.) 2013.
Liangyou, Kaleidoscopic Modernity & the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945
Brill
ISBN: 9789004245341



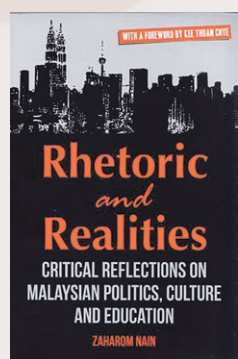
Ambra Calo. 2014.
Trails of Bronze Drums Across Early Southeast Asia: Exchange Routes and Connected Cultural Spheres
Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)
ISBN: 9789814517867



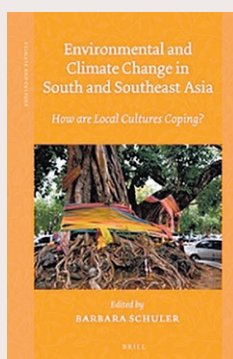
Birgit Bräuchler & Jeremy Gaines. 2013.
Cyberidentities at War: the Moluccan Conflict on the Internet
Berghahn Books
ISBN: 9780857458544



Alex Golub. 2014.
Leviathans at the Gold Mine: Creating Indigenous and Corporate Actors in Papua New Guinea
Duke University Press
ISBN: 9780822355083



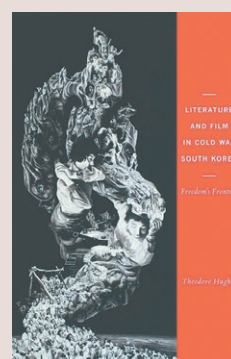
Zaharom Nain (ed.) 2013
Rhetoric & Realities: Critical Reflections on Malaysian Politics, Culture & Education
Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD)
ISBN: 9789675832796



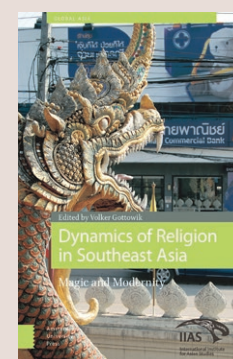
Barbara Schuler (ed.) 2014.
Environmental and Climate Change in South and Southeast Asia: How are Local Cultures Coping?
Brill
ISBN: 9789004245884



Julia Kuehn, Kam Louie & David M. Pomfret (eds.) 2014
Diasporic Chineseness After the Rise of China: Communities & Cultural Production
University of British Columbia Press
ISBN: 9780774825917



Theodore H. Hughes. 2014.
Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier
Columbia University Press
ISBN: 9780231157490

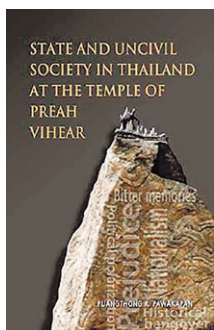


Volker Gottowik. 2014.
Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia: Magic and Modernity
Amsterdam University Press
ISBN: 9789089644244

Uncivil society

This short book discusses what Shakespeare's Hamlet [Act 4, Scene 4] might have termed 'an egg-shell', something small over which armies of 'mass and charge' might contend. But nationalism has made frontiers an even more sensitive matter than in the great playwright's time, and the popularisation of politics can conduce to outright conflict. The tussle between Thailand and Cambodia over the temple of Preah Vihear – which led to some loss of life, notably in 2011 – is a case in point. As Dr Puangthong R. Pawakapan suggests, it raises other issues too, given, for example, the fact that the two countries are members of ASEAN and that the regional organization is aiming to make itself more people-centred.

Nicholas Tarling



Reviewed publication:

Puangthong R. Pawakapan. 2013. *State and Uncivil Society in Thailand at the Temple of Preah Vihear*, Singapore: ISEAS, ISBN:9789814459907

A FULLER UNDERSTANDING of the issue arguably calls for a longer history than the author has room for in her nevertheless telling book. The relations of the two countries have often been unhappy. A diminished Khmer state faced Thai dominance even before the Vietnamese appeared on the scene. It was to preserve what remained that subsequently led the king to accept French 'protection' in the 1860s. The French colonial venture in 'Indo-China' – an amazingly aggressive operation – put on a show of regaining the monuments of the Khmer empire. Angkor was one, Preah Vihear another. The conflict with Thailand did not end with the blockade of the Menam in 1893, but in a treaty of 1907 France secured Cambodia's 'lost provinces', Siemreap and Battambang. In 1908 a boundary commission agreed on



the Dongrek range as the basic frontier line, but allotted the temple to Cambodia. That perhaps helped to appease the *parti colonial*, which wanted to go further, and Khmer monarchists who wanted some counterpart to an intensified protectorate.

In the Japanese phase, Thailand regained the provinces, but, very reluctantly, returned them to French-protected Cambodia after the war. With the defeat of the French in Vietnam and their virtual departure from Indo-China in the 1950s, Cambodia had to make new arrangements for ensuring its independence and territorial integrity. That became the diplomatic objective of Sihanouk. Though he might not fit Hamlet's characterisation of Fortinbras, 'a delicate and tender Prince', he was percipient as well as persistent. Both Thailand and South Vietnam fell into an American sphere. That made him more concerned about his neighbours, not less.

The dispute with Thailand over Preah Vihear he took to the International Court of Justice. In 1962 that decided the question of the ownership of the temple itself in Cambodia's favour – to the fury of Thailand's strongman, Sarit – but the court did not decide on the frontier. That left a disputed territory of truly eggshell size.

With the end of the Cold War, and the re-creation of a non-Communist Cambodia, Thailand looked to improved relations, which would give its rising industries a market and promote its 'Golden' dreams for the region in a new and more acceptable form. Perhaps over-ambitiously, Cambodians and Thais sought to make the temple an emblem of a new relationship. It would also be a tourist centre, and making it a World Heritage site is a recognised way of promoting heritage tourism.

The arrangements, however, became a focus for the political disputes in Thailand that pitted primate city against countryside, middle-class against peasantry, conservatives against Thaksin, and, on the streets and at the airport, 'Yellows' against 'Reds'. The Yellows took up Preah Vihear as a national cause, sustaining it even after Thaksin was displaced in 2006, and indeed after the Democrat Abhisit became Prime Minister in 2008.

The historiographical community, like others, was divided. The author of this book was one of a group headed by the respected Charnvit Kasetsiri that endeavoured to undercut nationalist misinterpretations and offer a more reasoned and better supported background to the affair. Her book now does the task for us. It is also a good advertisement for good history and its public importance.

As her title suggests, she raises some other considerations. Civil society organizations are widely thought essential to democracy, but the activities of the People's Alliance for Democracy suggest that they may also undermine it. The events of 2008-11 are thus not only part of the turbulent history of democracy in Siam/Thailand since the original coup of the Promoters. They may also have wider implications for other would-be democracies and for ASEAN itself. Its essential basis is the burying, if not resolving, of inter-member disputes. Can that be sustained if they are dealt with 'uncivilly'?

Nicholas Tarling, from the New Zealand Asia Institute (The University of Auckland), is an historian, academic, and author. (n.tarling@auckland.ac.nz)

Geopolitics of energy

Secure oil and alternative energy is the second and last volume coming out of a research project shared by the KNAW and the Chinese Academy of Sciences respectively. In their introduction, the editors argue that shared interests of China and the EU create conditions for cooperation between these large energy importers and point to the obstacles to overcome.

Henk Houweling



Reviewed publication:

M. Parvizi Amineh and Yang Guang (eds.) 2012. *Secure oil and alternative energy. The geo-politics of energy paths of China and the European Union*, Leiden: Brill, ISBN: 9789004218574 (hb)

THE WORK DIVIDES its 13 articles into two parts, respectively entitled "Geopolitics, geo-economy and energy" and "Renewable energy and sustainable development". The papers are written by specialists, often drawing from their ongoing research, yet address a larger audience. The editors have cast their net wide. At the regional level, Cutler and Umbach each focus on Caspian-Central Eurasian energy, though from a different perspective, while Sun Hongbo studies energy linkages between China and Latin America with the focus on Venezuela. The work has three chapters on Iran as foreign policy actor and oil exporter. At the national level, Rakel reports on elite change and its impact on the foreign policy orientation of Iran since the presidency of Ahmadinejad. Yu Guoqing studies Chinese – Iranian relations since the conclusion of the 1942 Friendship Treaty between Persia and the Kuomintang government. Currently, Iran is substantial oil supplier to China. Unlike China, Japanese – Iranian relations, studied by Raquel Shaoul, are severely constrained by Japan's alliance with the US. Despite America's inability to supply oil to Japan, its government has duly

supported US sanctions on Iran since 2005. Zhao Huirong and Wu Hongwei follow up the theme of Umbach and Cutler with a case study of Chinese – Kazakh bilateral political economy of oil and gas deals, competing with the geo-political interests of particularly Russia. Chen Mo, reflecting on the long bilateral relations between China and Angola, writes on the current exchange relation between them of oil for infrastructure. In the 1970s Chinese-Russian competition in Angola landed China on the same side as the US, both supporting UNITA of Savimbi.

Clean energy

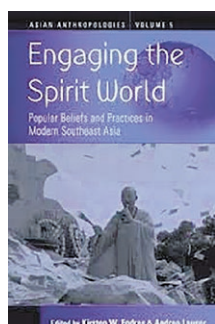
Part two, on clean energy, comprises five chapters, four of which are at the national level. Scholten writes on green innovation, Li Xiaohua studies the Chinese solar energy sector; Lima reports on biofuel developments in Brazil and its contested sustainability. Vermeer investigates causes of the slowing down of the hydro-energy projects announced in the 2008 National Development and Reform Commission's plan. Hydropower is the largest source of efficient renewable energy. He finds that the 2007 change from high to low electricity prices, affecting investor's rate of return, is one cause; the fragmented policy making machinery, driven by conflicting national and provincial actor interest, resettlement costs and concerns about responses to environmental impacts of the often large projects, are part of the equation. At the same time solar and wind energy equipment producers pressure for the expansion of their business. The recent trade conflict between the EU and China about solar panel subsidies testifies to the link-up between the industry and the Chinese government. The disappointment expressed by the US for the EU's compromise with China, highlights the global importance of solar



Engaging the spirit world

As the contributions to this collection rekindled my early experiences 'in the field', reading through the ten chapters of *Engaging the Spirit World* was great fun. As the greenhorn I was, I laughed at my initial encounter with 'spirits' (*phii*) in Thailand, which so upset my girlfriend that she slapped me in the face. It spelled the end to my fun. I not only learned to take beliefs seriously – whether western, eastern, religious, or political – but also to realise that for the believers concerned these represented their living experience. In that sense, beliefs are as tangible as a bowl of rice and have to be explored concretely before we, 'servants of science', put any 'theoretical' *à priori* on top of them.

Niels Mulder



Reviewed publication:

Endres, K.W. & A. Lauser (eds.) 2011. *Engaging the Spirit World; Popular Beliefs and Practices in Modern Southeast Asia*, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, ISBN 9780857453587 (hb)

IN SEVERAL EARLY CHAPTERS of the collection, researchers apparently struggled with the above caveat. Rather belatedly, they discovered that 'modernisation theory' about disenchantment, rationalisation, and its supposed correspondence with capitalism consisted of heaps of untenable hypotheses. This I experienced on Java while doing research among sophisticated members of the urban upper and middle classes in the late 1960s. To them, the practice of mysticism or the development of the secretive 'inner man' (*kebatinan*) was at least as real as their Dutch-taught 'rationality'. It spelled my escape from the intellectual straight-jacket of high-flown ivory tower assumptions.

I realised that the world is an enchanted place, with or without religion. Imagine the desert that life would be without fantasy and art, without dreaming and making love. We simply need these to sustain ourselves. Besides, don't most people in this world take the existence of an esoteric double – 'their soul' – for granted?

The intention of *Engaging* is to illuminate the wider context of the contemporary dynamics of religion in Southeast Asia. The flourishing of religion, urban mediumship, the worship of ancestors, heroes and deities, and the need to appease hosts of unfulfilled lives/souls evoked by unrestrained American barbarism in Vietnam – with which the editors are most familiar – led to inviting the contributors to the collection to relate and reflect on their research in Laos, on the Indonesian islands of Lombok and Java, in Vietnam,

Korea, Malaysia, Burma, Southern Thailand, and on Thai ghost films-cum-horror movies.

In the process of examining contemporary engagements with the world of spirits, ghosts and ancestors, most contributors bend over backwards to offer insights and fresh interpretations that seek to contribute to the theoretical discussion of the relationship between religion and modernity. To their credit, all of them take the phenomena they encounter 'in the field' seriously and engage with these as the point of departure for building 'grounded theory'.

Writing the last sentence made me conscious of the datedness of my vocabulary, as the ideas of phenomenology and grounded theory simply do not occur in the collection. The various researchers make an 'ontological approach' to their subject matter – which is fine by me – while proposing that modernity does not equate with the western ideal type of it. As a result, authors recommend 'alternative modernities' that assume their own characteristics depending on the (cultural) milieu in which they originate. Next to this, they recognise that the idea of the autonomous individual is an inapplicable construct to elucidate Southeast Asian personality. Life and self-definition thereabouts are strongly relational' and may make us aware that modern westerners are not such lonely monads, either.



A delightful observation proffered is the idea that spirits and all the beliefs that surround them are pleasantly flexible; whereas they do not escape from the wide realm of religion, they are impervious to dogma and doctrine. As a result, they can accommodate to any circumstance and practice of modern life. So, as we study them, we should be aware that they are in step with contemporary existence, which seems to me a rather basic field-anthropological assumption.

The book is composed with the expectation to contribute to the

re-enchantment debate. In order to do so, the authors assume that local traditions of engaging supernatural entities are important arenas in which the dynamics of political, economic and social change are confronted and negotiated. Accordingly, market relations, economic opportunity, social change, power struggles, etc., are brought into relation with the reconfiguration of local spirit worlds. In doing so, it bared the necessity of reshaping discourses on cultural identity, morality, power relations, and interpretative control, while challenging the concept of modernity itself. Altogether, these ambitions resulted in a loose plethora of stimulating ideas that make the collection well-worth reading.

During a possession session on Java, I did an interview with the Nyai Loro Kidul, the mystical queen of the southern ocean; in Thailand, my broad smile excited the tenth century Marshal of the Queen of Dvaravati so much that he threatened me with an accident on my way home – and I must avow that I drove more precautionary than usual; in the Philippines, reputed medium Mang Tinoy urged me to team up when he hopped around his audience as the playful Santo Niño (Holy Child Jesus). After many such experiences 'in the field', I was well-prepared to take my anaesthetist brother seriously when he volunteered that he regularly conferred with my Dutch-Reformed minister-grandfather who died when he (my brother) was three years old. Wherever we are, we live with fairies – and we need them dearly.

Niels Mulder retired to the southern slope of the mystically potent Mt. Banáhaw, Philippines, where he concluded his swan song, *Situating Filipino Civilisation in Southeast Asia; Reflections and observations*, Saarbruecken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2012 (print-to-order ed., ISBN 978-3-659-13083-0). (niels_mulder201935@yahoo.com.ph)

Reference

1 Mulder, N. 2011. 'The Crux is the Skin: Reflections on Southeast Asian Personhood', *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 1/2011: 95-116.

industry, as well as its clout, in China and the US. The largest producer of panels in the EU, Germany, the sector lost influence relative to automotive and machine tool exporters to the PRC. Vermeer takes into account the implication of the slowdown in hydropower for China's 2010 Copenhagen commitment to procure 15% of electricity from non-fossil sources.

The work concludes with an essay on the somewhat torturous notion of global energy governance and its evolution since early 20th century, a thing which in the words of the author "is highly diffuse and almost non-existent". Borrowing from Beriman's Earth System Governance, the author sees global energy governance at work where others tend to see the pursuit of national interest by the strongest powers.

Potential areas of cooperation

What to make of this vast and multi-authored study?

The editors of the work under review hint to potential areas of cooperation between these two large energy importers. However, this theme does not figure explicitly in the work. I find that unfortunate. Relations between domestic growth and international conflict about raw materials got, and still gets, most of the scholarly attention. Take for example the still influential study of Nazli Choucri and Robert C. North, *Nations in conflict. National growth and international violence*. San Francisco: Freeman (1975). They developed a model, and tested its observable implications empirically, for the era of Europe's second industrial revolution annex competitive colonization drive. They found strong linkages between and among the expansion of industry in western European countries, domestic pressure to go beyond borders to get access to resources, conflicting claims on territory and maritime trade routes,

alliance activity, military build-ups and militarized inter-state disputes. National level rival mobilizations around these conflicts were not mediated by parliament, leading to rallies and clashes between large, organized sectors of the domestic economy. These domestic contests played role in conflict escalation. The editors of the work under review take exception to the inevitability of a repetition of such a development. They hint to potential areas of cooperation between these two large energy importers. For many, turning around the causal linkage between growing resource use from conflict towards cooperation instead, may come as a surprise. Why? Ascending, middle-income, China is urbanizing its vast peasant population at an unprecedented rate. These low per capita energy consumers in the most populous country of the world used to depend on biomass for cooking and heating. Bringing these people to an urban environment will increase their per capita fossil consumption, which interacts with food and water supplies as well as emissions. Accordingly, it should not come as a surprise that China is destined to pass the US as the largest oil-importer in the next couple of years, increasing its still relatively low per capita rate of consumption. High-income, highly urbanized, Europe on the other hand, already operates on a high level of per capita fossil energy use. Indeed, World Energy Outlook 2010 estimates primary energy demand to increase by 36% between 2008-2035. As may be expected, most of that increase will come from Asian demand. In my opinion, these very characteristics of the Chinese – European dyad do not only imply a potential for conflict. They also create a bargaining field for cooperation on the basis of shared interests. Chinese and European economies are connected through a dense network of trade, investment and transport linkages. It is in the EU's interest

to assist China further improving its energy efficiency in the fossil sector. It would slow down the rate of resource depletion when current oil exporters with high population growth are increasing their domestic consumption. Today, Saudi Arabia is the only exporter with an oil-surplus production capacity.

Another area of cooperation between China and the EU is the emerging clean energy sector. China and the European Union try to escape from the fossil-carbon emission trap by developing domestic sources of clean energy. If successful, developing domestic sources of clean energy should further reduce the level of lateral pressure in each of them to compete for access to sources beyond borders. The joint development of clean energy points to the shared long-term interest in viability of both societies in the face of climate change. In the European Union, international energy cooperation also serves the latent objective to contribute to the creation of energy policy competence at the EU-level, with the potential spin-off of for strengthening the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Supported by, among others, the Chinese Academy and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, Amineh and Yang Guang have currently underway a shared research project on the trans-nationalization of Chinese oil companies and their involvement with local governments and institutions. We are looking forward to seeing what is happening on the ground in several large energy exporting countries of Africa and Latin America.

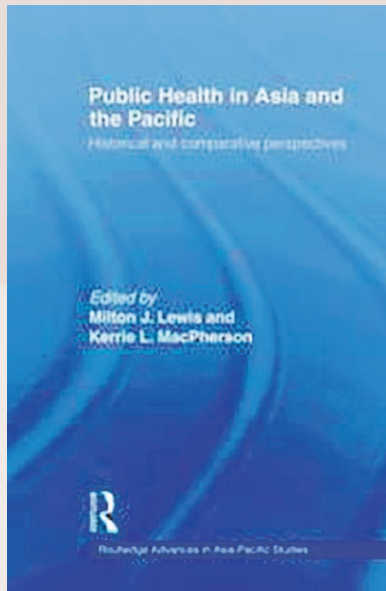
Henk Houweling, Associate Professor of International Relations, University of Amsterdam; Instructor at the Europe Institute of the University of Macau. (hwhouweling@gmail.com)

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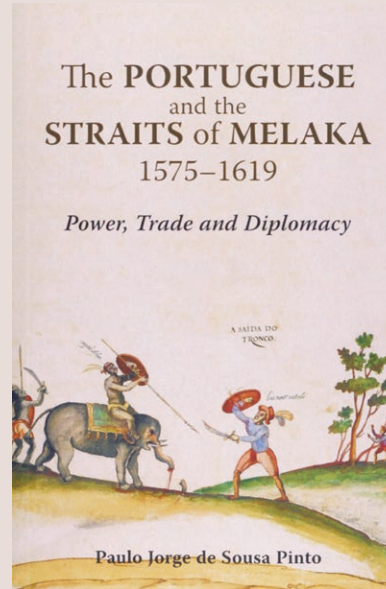
Public health in Asia and the Pacific

Reviewer: Vivek Neelakantan
 Reviewed Publication: Lewis, M.L. & Kerrie L. Macpherson (eds.) 2008.
Public Health in Asia and the Pacific: Historical and Cultural Perspectives, London: Routledge, ISBN:9780415359627 (hb)
tinyurl.com/asiapacifichealth



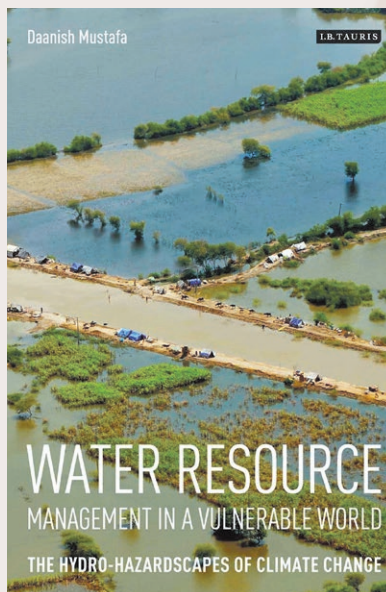
Portuguese Melaka at the center of a maritime empire?

Reviewer: Sander Molenaar
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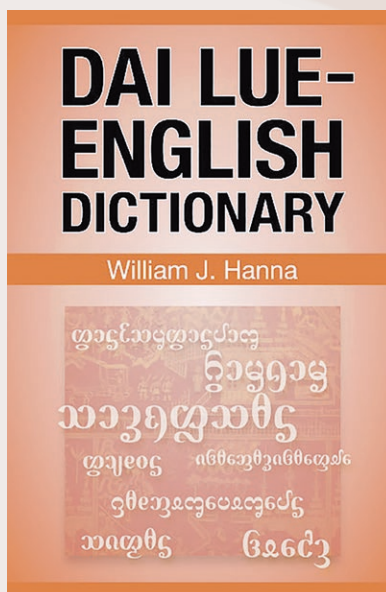
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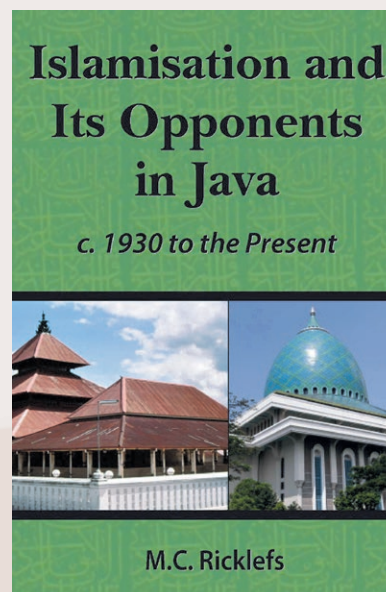
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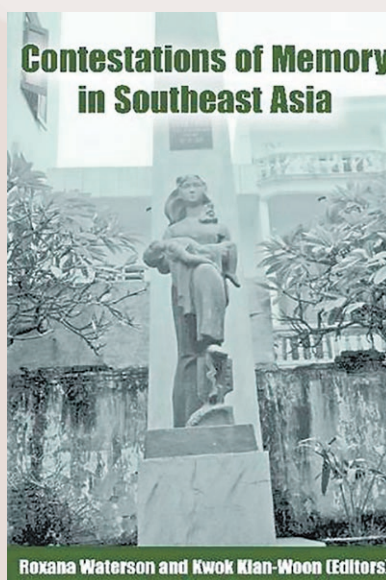


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Pull-out supplement

theFocus

Emerging voices from Southeast Asia: seeing a region in its documentary films

November 2013's issue of the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) included a theme program on 'Emerging Voices from Southeast Asia', featuring fourteen recent documentaries from the region and several Q&A sessions with some of the directors. In addition, Cambodian documentary film director Rithy Panh was invited to comment on a retrospective of his oeuvre.¹ Coinciding with this program the KITLV, Leiden University, IIAS and IDFA organised the seminar 'Making History, Everyday Life and Shifting Moralities', in which some of the filmmakers involved shared thoughts about each other's methodologies and ongoing concerns with scholars studying Southeast Asian contemporary culture. A supplementary roundtable, on the use of film in research and the classroom, took place on November 27th at the launch of LeidenGlobal.²

Fridus Steijlen & Bart Barendregt



Emerging voices from Southeast Asia *continued*

Discussions at both occasions proved stimulating but did not – and this won't come as a surprise – provide us with definite answers to all questions we had initially posed ourselves. As we became increasingly aware of yet other themes that merited our attention we realized the need to instigate further dialogue between filmmakers and students of the region. This special Focus issue hopes to prompt such dialogue by referring to some of the discussions at the November meetings, but also by offering some of our colleagues, all experts in the field, the chance to comment on these discussions.

(re)Making the past

A first set of questions was related to historiography and the role Southeast Asian documentary films play in addressing and reinterpreting past events central to the societies they depict. At the seminar, Cambodian director Kavich Neang recounted how when making a film he first does extensive research on the themes addressed, adding that “it is about sharing and what I am learning about the history and about what is happening in Cambodia. By doing this I hope it spreads to other young people [enabling them] to learn about the history and what is happening in my country.” Can our directors indeed be considered to be historians of some sort, and if so, how are their materials to be used by students of the region in studying its recent history. In his contribution to this Focus, Keng We Koh acknowledges the relevance of documentary as well as feature films in addressing and redressing historical themes. However, as with teaching all history, an appropriate context is a top requirement if one is to understand such remakings of the past. These remakings offer mostly an alternative to the nationalist and official histories these directors have been growing up with. In doing so they may help fellow citizens to navigate often obscured, painful to remember or simply ignored episodes of their own national or more local pasts, reinterpreting a history otherwise little owned.

In a similar vein, Gea Wijers' contribution illustrates how a young generation of Cambodian filmmakers, often supported by Pahn's Bophana Audiovisual Center, has been “educating itself in expressing their views on Cambodian society through film documentaries”. This new generation comes with a shift in themes and its own preferences in writing history, focusing on the pre-and post-conflict periods, rather than the pain and trauma that accompanies the Khmer Rouge conflict for so many. The role documentary filmmakers prefer for themselves as chroniclers of national history seems much dependent on personal experiences. A case in point are the divergent ways Rithy Panh and Joshua Oppenheimer chose to depict mass violence and genocide in respectively Cambodia and 1965 Indonesia, both described in John Kleinen's essay. Unlike Panh – himself a victim of the Khmer Rouge regime – Oppenheimer did not personally witness the atrocities of Indonesia's 1965 'coup' that his film deals with. This may help explain why he resorts to depicting the perpetrators rather than the victims, although Oppenheimer himself has pointed at more pragmatic reasons: past victims are still too scared and traumatized to willfully figure in front of his camera.

Situating the everyday

The films compiled in the 'Emergent Voices' program are a far cry from the usual 'drums and trumpets' history seen in historical feature films. Yes history is being rewritten here, but in small acts, and by zooming in on small people. And it is through the everyday events that they are part of, that we witness social change in a Southeast Asian context.

During our November seminar one of the films featured proved to be illustrative of this. *The Brick* (2013) is a short documentary film portraying a local community producing bricks in a small Myanmar village. The film itself was the result of a *Solidarity Shorts International Workshop* in Rangoon, which teaches inexperienced filmmakers how to handle a camera. Director of *The Brick*, Polish filmmaker Jan Czarlewski, had expected the local trainees to exclusively focus on the brick making process as for the economic viable process it is to the community. Instead workshop participants had started to chronicle the periods in between work shifts, the lunch breaks and power naps or children's play on the factory ground, with the social clearly overtaking more economic dimensions and thus stressing the power of the everyday. It does not necessarily show cultural differences between European filmmakers and Myanmar workshop participants, Czarlewski argued, but for him it did prove the lack of discussion when it comes to our call of documentary films capturing the everyday. Similarly, workshop participants had been asked to record their own family lives, something all of them refused. Underscoring the power of the camera, people explained it as being too intrusive in a country that only very recently started the process of (yet modest) democratization, and where filmmakers had been, just one year earlier, sent to jail for simply filming mass demonstrations. In such a context the (capturing of the) everyday almost automatically becomes a political act.

Documenting change

Does a good documentary capture the sign of the times, does it foretell how it is soon to change or does it actively take part in changing the course of history? These were yet other questions raised in our panel discussions. In fact they may do all of this, but not in the ways we often simply assume.

The IDFA special program included at least two examples proving how directors and their films may act as agents of change, but also how often, due to national contexts and cultural preoccupation, seemingly similar battles may be fought with different weapons. Both the film *The Mangoes*

(2012) by Indonesian director Tonny Trimarsanto, and the Thai documentary *Consider* (2013) by Panu Saeng-Xuto, deal with the topic of transgender. However, they do so in diverse ways. Both films are playing with concepts of gender and sexuality, at once commenting upon the bad fate of those failing to fit a neat and convenient categorization. But *Consider* does so by explicitly visualizing such bad fate of transgender in Thai society whereas *The Mangoes* subtly defends the rights of Indonesian transgenders by depicting the life trajectory of one particular person, showing transsexual Reni on her first visit home to village and family, after having fled to the big city. Such differences in style may obviously be as much dependent on personal as well as societal tastes or preferences.

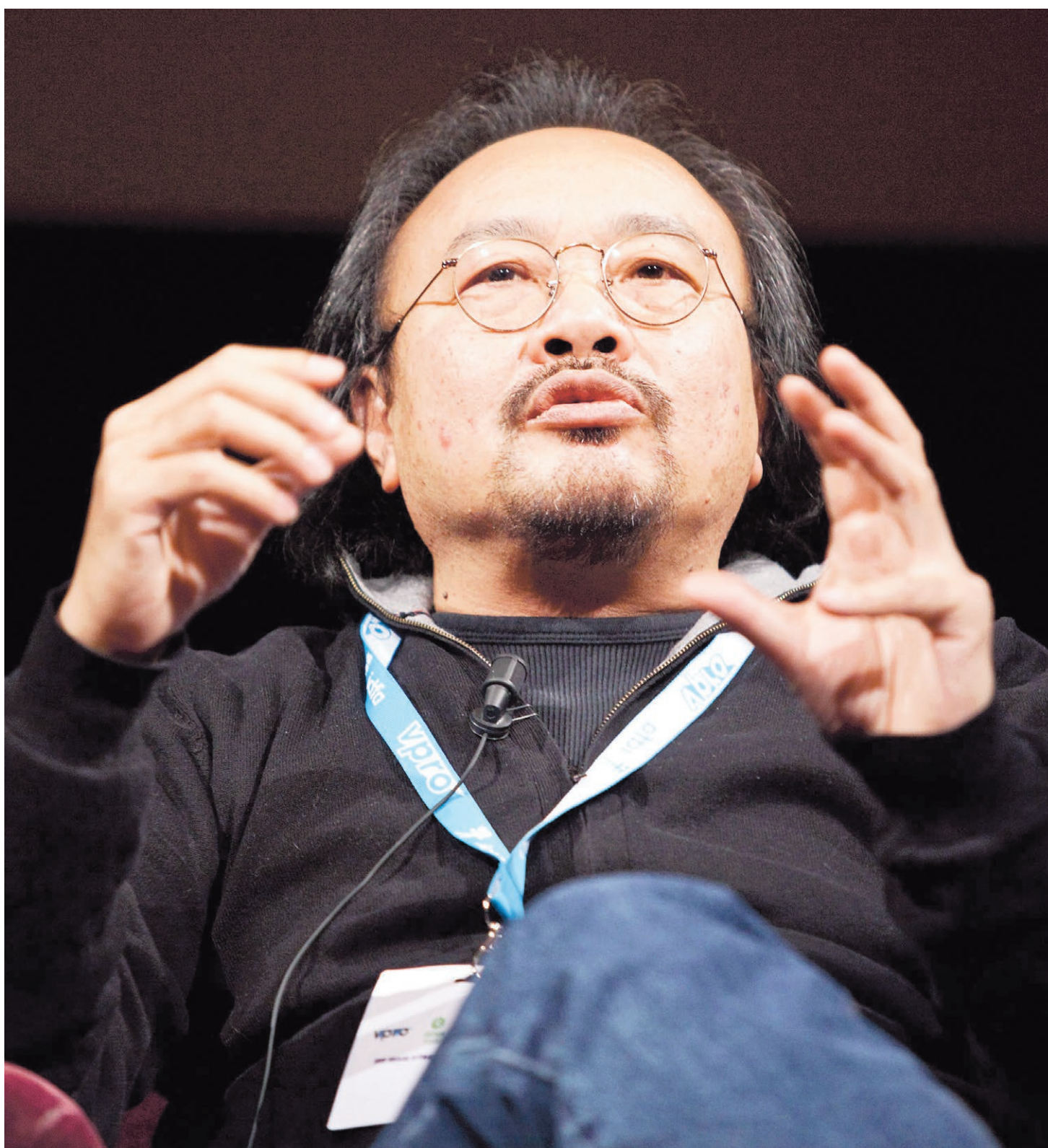
Documentary films and their makers are not seldom attributed with strengthening civil society, speaking for those otherwise little heard, and hence explaining the title of the program and it being sponsored by the foundation for Democracy and Media. Naturally, some critical reflection is required here. During the November seminar, questions were raised about the extent to which funding agencies, sponsors or festival organizers are doomed to impose certain agendas and (maybe even) Western liberal values on other people's cinema? There is no denying that some of the Southeast Asian films that have made it to Western film festivals are successful precisely because they correspond to either (self) orientalist fantasies or the hopes of western audiences that such films may change these societies for the better, and that they read more in accordance with universalist demands of democracy and individual agency. However, today's independent documentary scene in Southeast Asia is multiple in character and does not necessarily have to subject itself to NGO agendas or take notice of the tastes of foreign audiences.

In his contribution, Raul Niño Zambrano, the curator of the IDFA 'Emergent Voices' program reflects on his tour through Southeast Asia and his search for films to be included in the festival. He shows that, although not on purpose, some central themes pop up while curating. Raul also argues how the conditions for documentary film in Southeast Asia differ from, for example, regions like Latin America and what this means in terms of quality.

The essay by Nuril Huda effectively illustrates the multi-voice of today's Southeast Asian documentary 'scene'. Nuril shows how in Indonesia a novel genre of *pesantren* film is emerging from Islamic boarding schools, now that new regulations have enabled the insertion of more 'secular' subjects into the schools' curriculum. *Santri* directors,

Below: Film crew interviewing the leader of a mass organization in Indonesia. Photo by Fridus Steijlen.





Above:
Rithy Panh.
Photo by IDFA.

Below:
Supplementary
roundtable at
the launch of
LeidenGlobal.
Photo by
LeidenGlobal.

mostly autodidacts making use of cheap handheld cameras, increasingly resort to themes and materials little known outside the context of the Islamic boarding school, providing outsiders with a glimpse of (changing) everyday life of these Muslim students. In the aftermath of such films, *santri* cinema has also made it big on the national screen, with popular feature films such as *3 prayers, 3 loves* taking up similar strategies. Erik de Maaker – responding to the ‘Emergent Voices’ program by looking at historical documentary trends in the neighboring South Asian region – similarly shows how changing conditions such as the rise of commercial TV and the resultant breakdown of government control has provided Indian filmmakers with opportunities to gain control of their own agenda.

Old constraints, new challenges

Not everyone equally applauds the winds of change in and throughout the Southeast Asian cinematic landscape, and more reactionary forces and outright censorship still do play a significant role in many of the societies visualized in the ‘Emergent Voices’ program. Nontawat Numbenchapol’s film *Boundary* (2011) – part of the IDFA program and dealing with the tense conflict in Thailand between red and yellow shirts, but also the 2011 border conflict with Cambodia –



was banned by the Thai government for reasons of national security. But by now, all countries in the region have moved away from a 100% tight state control of its film industries, although some countries have only just started to do so. In Myanmar, for example, one still has to take into account opinions of the state apparatus or the pressure exercised by politically motivated parties. In most other places such pressure is, fortunately, only relative. For example, *The Mangoes* documentary about an Indonesian transgender is circulated within Indonesia, despite protests by rightwing Islam movements and accusations that the film is pornographic.

Recent examples from Southeast Asia show how potential censorship can simply be avoided by screening documentaries in more informal settings, or by distribution through the internet, although the lack of broadband internet in many places still clearly hinders dissemination beyond the usual centers. Ismael Basbeth, director of *400Words*, doubts the advantages of internet for distribution and thinks it is better to screen films at festivals where they can prompt lively discussions; he also stresses the importance for himself and fellow directors to profit from ticket sales and thus secure investment for future projects. And yet access to cheap technologies and the shared skills that come with them are already changing the face of Southeast Asian documentary cinema, as are internet based platforms such as Vimeo and YouTube; new audiences are now able to watch Southeast Asian documentaries on a previously unknown scale and outside the usual context of festivals or private screenings. Our directors also mentioned efforts to successfully use social media for crowd funding, a model that in the nearby future may replace the need of selling tickets at international festivals and may provide for an even larger audience at home.

Also for scholars of the region, inter-streamed documentaries prove a big challenge with many of the online posted amateur and short professional movies offering new insights into a region that is rapidly changing. John Kleinen thus told his audience that he is now able to track the rapid urbanization of Hanoi, and the inclusion of the village in which he has been

conducting research since 1992, by using postings on YouTube. With new audiences and their respective demands, indigenous minorities and the rural poor picking up the camera, a complex and very dynamic ‘field’ of Southeast Asian documentary filming is offering itself to the world and is waiting to be studied. But in how can one see and study this changing region and its emergent voices; e.g., what new literacies are required?

Visual literacies and other agendas

An important prerequisite to our discussion was for scholars and directors to engage in each other’s methods. No longer can we hold on to a simplistic and rigid dichotomy between academic writing and film production; both deal with similar problems of how to faithfully tell our stories without having to resort to whole truths. The best way for us to represent the often complex entities we are studying is to listen to the manifold voices trying to speak to us, which is what Farish Noor is trying to do in a new documentary series on Indonesian culture and politics he is currently directing. By working both as an academic and in the media, Farish is personally very aware of the different languages spoken in the two fields, and notes how the “obvious power of the image ... communicates meanings with an economy and effectiveness that words often fail to do”. It is a power that merits further study as diverse societies, and even groups within such societies, tend to read visuals in ways different from others and hence the call for ‘learning to read’ Southeast Asian documentary films, often heard in the two meetings we organized. Learning to read film is about understanding key scenes, the structure of language in stories told, but also intercultural varieties of editing styles – as Erik de Maaker points out in his contribution: audiences in the West often tend to be interested in quite different themes than the societies or circles in which such films are produced, consequently failing to truly recognize what these films are about. In this case a solution is not so much sought in trying to escape a simplistic East-West dichotomy and resorting to produce for local audiences only, but to seek cooperation with counterparts from elsewhere to see how also foreign audiences may be familiarized with otherwise local concerns.

Scholars are familiar with close reading of texts, but do they similarly close read images? Many universities worldwide happen to have visual anthropology programs, but a solid method for reading images is still underway. We still can do better to fully insert documentaries and still images into our curricula and stimulate students to use visuals in the class and their work. Also, a further engagement between directors and scholars may help facilitate the development of reading skills. The discussions triggered by the seminar and roundtable helped us realize the need for a closer engagement between scholars and filmmakers and a further focus on the themes they can explore together. A first step then is this edition of *theFocus*, which we hope may add and grow into a larger debate and potentially shared research agendas.

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Bart Barendregt is associate professor at the Leiden Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, specialising in the popular culture of Southeast Asia and the field of Digital Anthropology. (barendregt@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

References

- 1 See The Newsletter Issue #65, Autumn 2013, p.52
- 2 See participants list below

Participants Seminar

Aung Nwai Hyway, Myanmar | Azharr Rudin, Malaysia
Bart Barendregt, Leiden University | Chairun Nissa, Indonesia
Fridus Steijlen, KITLV | Ismail Basbeth, Indonesia
Kavich Neang, Cambodia | Kong Rithdee, Thailand
Kyaw Myo Lwin, Myanmar | Lynn Lee, Singapore
Min Thu Aung, Myanmar | Jan Czarlewski, Austria
Nontawat Numbenchapol, Thailand | Panu Saeng-Xuto, Thailand
Philippe Peycam, IIAS | Phuong Thao Dong, Vietnam
Ratna Saptari, Leiden University | Raul Niño Zambrano, IDFA
Sopheak Sao, Cambodia | Tonny Trimarsanto, Indonesia

Participants Roundtable

Bart Barendregt, Leiden University | Chairun Nissa, Indonesia
Erik de Maaker, Leiden University | Fridus Steijlen, KITLV
John Kleinen, University of Amsterdam | Ucu Agustini, Indonesia

Reflecting on the 'Emerging Voices' program

As a festival IDFA is keen on paying attention to developments in film production around the world. Besides economic and political changes currently taking place in Southeast Asia we have noticed a rapid increase in film production throughout the region. We closely monitored how fiction films produced in that region gained considerable respect among critics and audiences in recent years.

Raul Niño Zambrano

THE FILM *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* by Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul serves as an example here, winning the Golden Palm in Cannes in 2010, as does the work of Filipino filmmaker Brillante Mendoza, which has been selected several times for festivals in Cannes and Berlin. This has also been the case with a number of documentary films including *Kano: An American and His Harem* (2010) by Filipino director Monster Jimenez, who was awarded the IDFA prize for best debut film, or *Red Wedding* by Cambodian directors Lida Chan and Guillaume Suon, which in 2012 obtained the IDFA award for best Mid-Length documentary. Additionally, there has been an increase in documentary film festivals such as *ChopShots* in Indonesia and *Salaya Doc* in Thailand, but also the workshop-like *DocNet* seminars that are organized throughout the region and which have encouraged young filmmakers to start producing more documentaries of their own. Altogether, this justified the special attention during our festival for Southeast Asian documentary production.

Research trip to Southeast Asia

A first step, in the beginning of 2013, was making a research trip in order to meet filmmakers and producers in the region. It took us to Malaysia, Cambodia and Myanmar/Burma. In Malaysia, we were much inspired by *The Asian Side of the Doc*, a massive yearly documentary conference, where producers and directors from all over Asia meet. The documentary genre is clearly blossoming, and the need to exchange experiences and tell one's own (his)stories was apparent everywhere. Filmmakers and local funders (mostly from the world of broadcasting) were united in their ambition to realize more documentary projects, but this has not always been this way. In the past, funding for Southeast Asian documentary projects often tended to be sought in the West. In spite of such conditions it was striking to see that most Southeast Asian filmmakers were hanging on to their own approaches and ways of doing things, rather than copying ideas imported from elsewhere. Southeast Asian filmmakers have been anxious to tell stories in their own way.

In Cambodia, we visited Rithy Panh's *Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center*, an institute that focuses on the research of mediated traces of the genocide that took place during the Khmer Rouge regime. The *Bophana Center* restores and preserves visual materials from the past, making sure it is available for future generations to use. Young filmmakers are trained here by professional filmmakers including Rithy Panh himself. Our visit to Cambodia was completed with a two-day seminar organized by DocNet, entitled *The Voice of Southeast Asian Documentary – Reaching out to the World*. This seminar served as a platform of exchange and was aimed at networking between various professional groups in Southeast Asia that are involved in the production of documentary films. It was a great opportunity to meet commercial producers, representatives of TV stations, governmental film board officials, representatives of film schools and NGOs, all of whom may be able to support the sector in the near future.

Burma was a different story all together. After years of military dictatorship, the country's cinematic production is still in its infancy, but they are catching up fast. That much was also proven by our visit to the *Yangon Film School*. With few resources, but with utmost dedication, students are carving out their own ways to tell stories. A good example is *Tyres* (2013) by director Kyaw Myo Lwin, a well-crafted black-and-white short, portraying the recycling of car tires; a practice necessitated by extreme poverty

It is difficult to compare Southeast Asia with other regions, such as Latin America. In terms of documentary production Latin America now seems at an entirely different level. Countries such as Mexico, Argentina and Brazil

have strong documentary traditions and legislation and other facilities have contributed to a climate in which the documentary industry is able to deliver high quality creative products. This is not yet the case for Southeast Asia where we are generally looking at independent productions or documentaries that have mostly been made possible with resources from abroad.

Curating the program

After the research trip it was clear that the focus of the program should be on recent films, films able to reflect on the current state of the documentary scene throughout the region. Noticeably, there is much eagerness among young filmmakers from the region to tell stories of their countries being in transition. That process is enforced with accessible cheap digital cameras now being widely available.

It was also an honor to introduce Rithy Panh and his works to our international audience. We invited Panh as our special guest at IDFA, where he not only showed and commented on a retrospective of his own works, but also screened a program of films that have inspired him in his own work. We invited him to show our audiences how films may well connect personal and regional stories, whilst at the same time address universal themes.¹

For the 'Emerging Voices' program we initially had no specific theme in mind. All we wanted to do was to show how diverse Southeast Asian cinema currently is in its themes and styles. However, an important criterion in our selection process was the balance between cinematographic elements, differentiating documentaries from mere TV reports or home videos, but also their potential to resonate with international audiences. From this selection emerged personal stories that in oft creative ways address changes and challenges that the various countries in this region are currently facing. The documentary *House/Grandparent* (2013) by Azharr Rudin, for example, portrays a grandmother in Malaysia having a hard time keeping her own tempo while her family is thinking of moving to a new place. Similar tensions and challenges were also evident in Ismail Basbeth's film *400WORDS* (2013), showing a young modern Indonesian couple discovering their apparent very different approaches to wedding rituals and family values while attempting to produce a fiction film for their guests.

Out of more than a hundred possible films from the region we eventually selected fourteen; a number that proves the huge potential of filmmaking in and of that region. We were happy that the filmmakers of all fourteen selected films were able to attend the 2013 IDFA festival. They brought to Amsterdam the very same energy and enthusiasm we had already encountered during our trip, and they shared it not only with our audience, but also with other film professionals visiting the festival. The Southeast Asian directors met possible future collaborators and some of them were able to apply for our IDFA Bertha Funding, enabling them to develop follow-up projects. I am very hopeful that some of them will come back to IDFA to show their future products.

Below: Still from the Indonesian film *The Mangoes* (2012) by Tonny Trimarsanto.

Telling stories

In many ways the 'Emerging Voices' program showcased current events and developments in the documentary world of Southeast Asia, but it also highlighted the massive political, economic and social transitions that are presently taking place within the region. In Myanmar, for example, we visited the Yangon Film School. It was only five years old and had but limited means. The institute is nevertheless a hotbed of cinematic activity. It was here where we stumbled upon Aung Nwai Htway's *Behind the Screen* (2013), in which the filmmaker dissects the marriage of his parents - they were film icons in 1960s Myanmar. The film shows how the heartrending scenes acted out on the silver screen were a pretty accurate reflection of their real off-screen lives.

Although we were not looking for special themes, there is a common thread that is apparent in most of the fourteen films screened during the festival. *Behind the Screen* is as such exemplary for the program as a whole, highlighting larger cultural themes by telling personal stories. Most of these Southeast Asian filmmakers are not responding to the oft threatening circumstances by resorting to political statements, but rather they focus on personal accounts, often about family life, to thus say something about changing conditions within their country. *Consider* (2013), by Panu Saeng-Xuto, similarly confronts Thai society, reputed as sexually liberated, with the everyday hardships that transgender persons face.

The personal journey is yet another important theme in some of the films. The Indonesian film *The Mangoes* (2012) by Tonny Trimarsanto provides us with the very personal story of another transgender person who travels from her new home in metropolitan Jakarta to the village where she was born, to face her family for the first time since her life-changing decision. While the filmmaker refrains from explicit comments, the road trip is telling for the conditions of modern-day Indonesia. Finally, Nontawat Numbenchapol's *Boundary* (2013) portrays an age-old border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia through the motif of a road trip by the filmmaker, thus artistically blending his philosophical musings and sociological observations, with personal first hand experiences. While *Boundary* is the only film in the 'Emerging Voices' program to explicitly focus on borders, all fourteen films could somehow be said to deal with such a trope. Each film in its own way laid bare, and challenged, the borders of the societies these films were produced in.

Raul Niño Zambrano has been working at the Program Department of IDFA (the International Documentary Film festival Amsterdam) since 2008. His expertise relates in particular to Latin American documentaries and shorts. Other fields of interest include data visualization and multimodal metaphor. He was the curator of the IDFA theme program 'Emerging Voices from Southeast Asia'. (raul@idfa.nl)

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- 1 Rithy Panh's Masterclass is available online at: <http://tinyurl.com/rithypanhmasterclass>



Carefully approaching an absent center¹

In the early 1900s cinema arrived in colonized Cambodia. Mainly originating from its colonizer France, the first showings were documentaries that brought Western concepts and understandings to the Cambodian people. Documentary and fictional films started to be produced in Cambodia itself in the 1920s.² This, however, did not halt foreign influence but, rather, incorporated it into distinct local products. After its decolonization from French tutelage (1863-1953), Cambodian cinema went through two decades of modernization inspired by Western examples. In many ways, the 1950s through to the early 1970s can be seen as Cambodia's cultural 'Golden Age'.³

Gea D.M. Wijers



Kavich Neang filming in Cambodia. Photo from private collection Kavich Neang.

WHILE PRINCE NORODOM SIHANOUK was in power (1953-1969), he proved a proud sponsor of the Golden Age. Fostering the postcolonial nationalist spirit, he instated governmental funding for indigenous cinematic productions and banned Western films. While foreign films would still enter the country from Thailand, India or Hong Kong, the local film industry blossomed.⁴ Remarkably, from 1970 to 1975, while the civil war that would bring the Khmer Rouge into power was raging outside of Phnom Penh, Cambodian cinema drew its largest audiences.⁵ However, most of the films that came out in these years were neglected and lost in the years of conflict that followed; as were the lives of many of the actors, directors and producers that had made the industry thrive.⁶

Formally, the Cambodian conflicts came to a halt with the 1991 Paris Peace Accords. However, it took decades for the restoration of the Cambodian film industry to receive governmental attention. For example, in 2010 only two cinemas in Phnom Penh were showing mostly low quality Cambodian horror films; compared to the 30 cinemas and an approximate 400 film productions in the period 1960-1975. Only in 2011 did two new large film theatres, Cineplex and Legend, open up in Phnom Penh and start to feature international films. Until then, internationally produced documentaries and art house films were only shown to a largely expat audience in the small setting of NGO and cafe film rooms.

Reanimating Cambodia's cinema

Yet this is not to say that no filmmaking took place in post-conflict Cambodia. In the 1980s, video technology brought about a surge of regionally produced films that were watched at home or shown on local television. This small-scale revival, however, was already extinguished by the end of the 1990s.⁷ Larger international productions, such as of course the *Killing Fields* (1984), were shot in Cambodia upon occasion, bringing technical expertise to the country and employing local staff. Additionally, the French Cultural Center (FCC) and other international NGOs, such as the German cultural center Metahouse (2007), started to focus on art, communication and media in order to serve as networking platforms and resource centers for the local creative community. The Cambodian film industry, however, suffered from negative perceptions as most films, and especially the documentaries about Cambodian subjects, were Western-made and conflict-focused.⁸

As one of the first local measures to support the development of a domestic film industry, the Cambodian Ministry of Culture's Department of Cinema initiated the foundation of Khmer Mekong Films (KMF) in 2006. This production company set out to produce Cambodian-made films that would not 'suffer' the foreign view on Cambodia. While KMF depends on international cooperation to build the needed capacity, its aims are rather nationalist in nature. The government aims to stimulate the production of non-political, non-social issue and non-conflict related pictures of Cambodia that will, in their idea, bring forward traditional values and "strengthen the nation". This initiative went hand-in-hand with plans to open a film school at the Cambodian Royal University of Fine Arts.⁹ Unfortunately, so far, neither company nor school can be said to have materialized in reality.

Kon Khmer Koun Khmer: Cambodian films, Cambodian generation

Parallel to this centralized development effort, a young and independent generation of filmmakers has been educating itself in expressing their views about Cambodian society through films and documentaries.¹⁰ Inspired by Western role models such as Martin Scorsese and mentored by Cambodian French returnee Rithy Panh, individual members of this group have set about acquiring as much of the film-making skills available in Cambodia and on the internet as they can.

Known for ethnographic productions like *Rice People* (1994) as well as documentaries that directly confront the national Khmer Rouge trauma, such as *S-21. The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003) and Oscar nominated *The Missing Picture* (2013), Panh's support has been essential to the development of most members of this group, both locals and returnees. As no extensive film academy training is available in the country, the locals have had to take their own education in hand. In addition to NGOs and the Cambodian Film Commission that enlists visiting film crews, the support of the Bophana Audiovisual Center, which Panh helped establish in Phnom Penh in 2005, has been very important in this process. Bophana provides many of the (im)material resources that are vital to Panh's goal of giving Cambodian cinema its voice back.¹¹

This piecemeal building of their know-how, forced a new generation of filmmakers to become active cultural entrepreneurs who set out, individually and by teaming up, to make the most of the available (digital) resources and international (funding) opportunities.¹² Independent of the government and formal institutions they found ways to develop their own cinematographic language. The shifting of generations thus brought about a shifting of themes and approaches in filmmaking.

The 'new generation' of collaborators and friends calls itself the Kon Khmer Koun Khmer (lit: Cambodian films, Cambodian generation) and may be distinguished by their own involvement in contemporary subject matters. As if carefully avoiding the pain and trauma that accompanies the Khmer Rouge conflict for so many, they focus, rather, on the pre-and post-conflict periods, thus approaching but never touching on this painful cultural 'void' in Cambodian history. While the consequences of the consecutive civil wars are certainly present in their work, these do not take center stage. Carefully, the gap that was struck in Cambodian filmmaking history is approached through, for instance, the reconstruction of cultural histories or following small stories of everyday life linked to personal experiences of the filmmaker. In this sense their ways of storytelling are not 'new' but firmly embedded in Cambodian history, traditions and culture as well as in international practice. In contrast to the government-related KMF organization, however, they do not shy away from socially relevant issues and do not hesitate to show their personal fascination with the subject under study.¹³

A case in point is the celebrated documentary *Where I go*, by Kavich Neang, which was presented at the 2013 IDFA 'Emerging Voices from Southeast Asia program'.¹⁴ In his following of the everyday life of a bi-ethnic young adult, while not passing judgment or explicitly recounting history, important aspects of the recent Cambodian past are revealed. Neang doesn't attempt to answer the questions he brings forward, but simply acknowledges the fact that they exist. On his motivation for filmmaking Neang states that, as a local, he has insights into current Cambodian culture that those born abroad would just not be able to put into film. He is emphatic, however, that his work is not meant to be political and can be said to practice mild 'self-censorship' in order to not suffer the scrutiny that government critics in Cambodia are subject to.

Thus Neang illustrates how – as Hamilton aptly states in her work on the reconciliatory dimensions of the new Cambodian documentary cinema – the Kon Khmer Koun Khmer opens up and expands on cultural continuity and survival while carefully approaching an absent center.¹⁵ While recent developments in Cambodian society bring an unprecedented number of peaceful young activists, mobilized through Facebook, to the streets in a so-called 'Cambodian Spring', the 'cultural activism' of this new generation of filmmakers brings the changing values of Cambodian society to an international audience.¹⁶

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Exceeding the gaze of the scholar



Those who are familiar with the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*, will be familiar with the episode in which the semi-divine warrior-prince Arjuna, on the eve of the fateful battle between the Pandawas and their cousins the Korawas, beseeches the God Krishna to explain how and why the battle between the two sides is necessary. Arjuna cannot reconcile his duty as a prince and his duty as a soldier, and is thus torn between two seemingly contradictory ends: to protect life and to destroy life. Krishna, on the other hand, warns Arjuna that he cannot hope to understand all, for his own mortal mind and faculties are finite, and that such an understanding would require the capacity to encompass the infinite. When Krishna finally relents to Arjuna's plea, he reveals himself – and the universe – in all its complexity; this image of the infinite is so great in scope and magnitude that Arjuna is forced to beg Krishna to resume his mortal form. The lesson is plain enough for all to see: our knowledge of the world is necessarily limited, subjective and piecemeal so that we can comprehend some of it.

Farish A Noor

All knowledge is partial

The lesson is also instructive for those of us who inhabit the field of academia, and as every scholar knows no academic endeavour can ever hope to be exhaustive in its breadth and scope, and no work can ever represent the subject of research in its totality. This is the problem of full presence, as it has been articulated by successive generations of philosophers, and points to the obvious fact that nothing, *nothing*, can ever be fully reconstituted in its entirety for the sake of academic examination, no matter how sincere and comprehensive that effort may be. It is a caveat that ought to be attached to every sample of academic writing: 'This work cannot and should not be taken as final, closed and exhaustive.'

In my other avatar as a full-time academic, such caveats have been brought into play in my drier academic writing. While working on two massive religio-social movements, namely the Tablighi Jama'at and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party PAS,¹ I was able to add further qualifications to the observations I forwarded in my books, namely that my research was necessarily partial, limited and shaped by the contingencies of the here-and-now. But no such provisions are available to me when I find myself in the unfamiliar terrain of media work.

I am currently in the process of working on a documentary project about Indonesia in the lead-up to the elections of this year, and it is proving to be a herculean task indeed. Despite the fact that the documentary series will include six episodes, there is simply not enough time to devote to the myriad of topics that make Indonesia the complex and hugely fascinating country that it is. Here one is confronted by a thorny question that is on the one hand practical and on the other hand philosophical: How does one ever capture the complexity of a composite entity such as a nation-state, and can such a project ever truly succeed?

Academics and the media

Academics such as myself have a long acquaintanceship with the media, and the fact that I have a weekly op-ed column in several newspapers already testifies to the fact that I do not underestimate the power of media in general. However, the dilemmas faced by the academic when working in and with the media are manifold. For a start, the usual degree of control that an academic has when presenting his work via lectures and tutorials is severely compromised by the practical limitations of the media – be it in terms of time or column inches. The academic is used to working

Above:
Farish A Noor.
Right: Film crew
Farish A Noor in
Cambodia.

Both photos from
author's private
collection.

in an environment where claims need to be proven and substantiated, often via cross-referencing, triangulation and the power of footnotes, endnotes and appendices. The luxury of the academic book is that despite the obvious limitation of pages, there are at least pages – in the plural. Whereas in the case of a regular op-ed, the word limit of a thousand words renders impossible the fall-back position of citations, references and extensive quotations to back up a point.

These limitations are compounded in the case of visual media, where the relationship between the producer, cameraman and the academic is a complex one. On the one hand there is the need to capture not only ideas, but to translate them into visuals that are arresting and interesting for the viewer. The academic on the other hand is less concerned with spectacular images and more concerned with the need to get as much data crammed into the short space of 23 minutes (which is the average for any half an hour documentary, with advertising breaks thrown in). It is not an easy task, I have discovered, to reconcile these very different needs and agendas in a common project.

Imagine then the difficulties I now face while trying to do justice to a topic as vast as Indonesia today. How to bring to the fore the manifold narratives of two hundred and forty million

The challenge of encompassing Indonesia

lives that encompass the nation-state of Indonesia. There lies the epistemic challenge when working on a project such as this one, for the fundamental question is – how do we speak of ‘Indonesia’? The tendency of scholars and the media alike is to speak of nation-states in the singular, thereby giving the impression of a flat, two-dimensional national space that is called the nation; and by doing so reinforcing the view that nations are fundamentally homogenous and with clearly defined boundaries (both political and geographical). That this is erroneous is old hat by now, for it has been debunked time and again by scholars like Benedict Anderson who have presented nations as imagined communities where individual subjectivities tend to overlap thanks to shared interests or the understanding of common national symbols; but this does not imply the existence of a unitary nation. Even if we accept that all nations are complex – and Indonesia is certainly no exception to the rule – how do we capture this complexity in media form?

The challenge is akin to capturing movement in a photograph, which is literally impossible for all photographic images are necessarily static. But a photograph (or rather the photographer) can capture the *impression* of movement at least, and when this is done successfully some epistemic claims can be made. One can look at such a photo and say “I can see that there is movement in the (still) image”. In trying to capture the diversity and complexity of Indonesia I cannot hope to capture it in its entirety, in some raw form that exceeds media/visual arrest. Invariably, so much will be left out thanks to the editing process, and much of what will eventually end up on the screen will be selected. One cannot hope to ever present Indonesia – or any country – in its entirety, be it in the media or in academic scholarship, but one can at least try to allude to that complexity that escapes the camera lens and the TV screen.

Indonesia documented

That Indonesia’s complexity needs to be appreciated and acknowledged now is greater than ever, for the country has undergone so many changes that it would be wrong for us to assume that the Indonesia of 2014 is the same country that it was in the 1980s or 1990s. Decentralisation and demands for autonomy have created pockets of local power all over that vast archipelago, to the point where we may soon be able to speak not of a singular Indonesia, but of several ‘Indonesias’. The youth boom, the demographic changes, massive rates of urbanisation, and the emergence of a new educated urban middle class, have all contributed to a plethora of new subject positions that did not exist two decades ago; and in the process fuelled demands by hitherto-silent and marginalised groups for recognition and presence on the national stage.

The singular voice of Indonesia – if there ever was one, which I doubt – has given way to a cacophony of new narratives and demands, and each of these will demand its share of air-time and column inches too. In short, if the project I am working on now seems a daunting task, it is only because Indonesia has become a daunting nation,

including for Indonesians themselves. In the midst of this complexity, however, there is still the need for us to understand – no matter how fragmentary that understanding may be – the complexity of that vast and great nation-state known as Indonesia.

To this end, several narrative/media devices and strategies were incorporated in the Indonesia documentary series in order to cover as many bases as possible, and to foreclose the possibility of criticism. The first hurdle to be overcome was the very title of the series itself (which is still being discussed by myself and the team of producers). From the outset, it was decided that the title has to convey the impression of Indonesia’s complexity and pluralism, without falling into the trap of reductionism or over-simplification. Titles such as ‘Inside Indonesia’ were rejected for they suggest some privileged ‘inner knowledge’ of the country, which in turn gives the mistaken impression that the host has some form of privileged access that the viewers and interviewees do not. Likewise we wished to convey the notion of a complex country that was still understandable if one were to adopt an open-minded and nuanced perspective on the subject. Sensational sub-titles like ‘the war on terror’ were likewise rejected, as we wanted to go beyond the conventional headlines, stereotypes and tropes through which Indonesia has been viewed thus far.

The scope of the documentary series was also meant to be far-reaching, looking at as many places in Indonesia as possible within the limited confines of a modest budget and obvious time-constraints of the host who is, after all, a full-time academic with other academic responsibilities as well. Yet despite the gruelling schedule that the entire team was forced to work by, we did manage to address issues in places as diverse as Aceh, Jakarta, Surakarta, Jogjakarta, Bali, Makassar and Poso, covering at least three major island groups: Sumatra, Java/Bali and Sulawesi. Our dream of doing an episode in West Papua, however, did not materialise due to restrictions on travel and filming in that province.

The focus of the series was on issues and personalities, and one episode was dedicated to the question of autonomy in post-*reformasi* Indonesia, an episode on youth aspirations, an episode on upward social-economic mobility (and immobility for some), on religion, on culture and on the new paths to power. In this respect at least I was particularly happy to be able to include a wide range of personalities from all walks of life and social class backgrounds. The interviewees included a princess from the royal family of Surakarta Hadiningrat who was running for a Parliamentary seat, a member of the Indonesian Porche owners club, a prominent social commentator and novelist, a range of activists and also ordinary Indonesian *beca* (rickshaw)-pullers, workers and students, each of whom offered a very different glimpse into the socio-economic and political realities of Indonesia today.

Millions of voices

Finally, it was decided that for a series like this the final word should be given to the people of Indonesia themselves, and the final sequence of the final episode features an extended

The singular voice of Indonesia – if there ever was one, which I doubt – has given way to a cacophony of new narratives and demands.

‘talking heads’ gallery of profiles, where each interviewee is asked the same question: What do you hope to see for the future of Indonesia? The result is an extended catalogue of hopes and aspirations, articulated by Indonesians themselves, about what they wish to see in the future of their country. This was a point that I was keen to emphasise from the beginning of the project, namely that no documentary about Indonesia would be complete unless we gave the final say to the subjects of the documentary themselves. If the idea of there being not a single Indonesia, but rather millions of ‘Indonesias’ is to be conveyed at all, then I felt that the best way to do so would be by allowing Indonesians to speak of their hopes and concerns about their own country, and in the process of doing so communicate the impression of the many life-worlds that exist in Indonesia at present, and by showing how this contested nation is still being debated, discussed and dissected by the citizens themselves – proof, if any was still needed, of the dynamic and evolving nature of contemporary Indonesian society and politics. Here the academic host was deliberately pulling himself into the background, in order to open up a new space where the contested imaginaries of Indonesia can instead come to the fore.

As the academic host for the series, I felt that it was vital for me to make my own intervention/s in the documentary process and to ensure that the final outcome would be a documentary series that at least alludes to the complexity of the subject at hand. I confess to harbouring deep-rooted concerns about the power of the media, and the worry that I may not have done justice to a subject as vast as Indonesia today. For there is always the attendant fear that a finished work – academic or mediatic – will leave the subject entirely objectified in the most simplistic manner, and that the final product will seem to the reader or viewer as something that is whole, complete, exhausted. In the light of recent developments in academia and academic writing – ranging from the deconstructive and plural histories of the likes of Simon Schama and the criticisms of post-structuralist thought – such an easy conclusion would be derided as a case of over-simplistic reductionism or lazy encapsulation, and would not be accepted by any serious scholar today.

The anxiety of the scholar who has to work via the medium of the media is thus doubly compounded, as it is in my case. There is not merely the desperate need to be able to make *epistemic* claims, but I confess to harbouring the need to do *justice* to the subject as well, to convey the complexity of the subject correctly – *epistemically and ethically* – to the best of my abilities, and to the extent that the media format accommodates and allows.

Compounding matters for academics such as myself who have chosen to also work with and in the media is the tendency of the academic institution – itself a closed hermetic circle with its own particular rites and rituals of mutuality and association – to view the media askance, and to regard liminal entities such as media-friendly academics as an anomaly. The tag-line often pinned upon such individuals is to refer to them as ‘pop-star academics’ (one of the less derogatory terms, I might add) and their work as ‘pop academia’. Such labels are of course superfluous, but they are not entirely meaningless, for from a Wittgensteinian point of view their meaning lies in the manner in which they point to the gulf (of perspective, norms, modalities) between the academic and media worlds, and they give the mistaken impression of their being an unbridgeable gap (or worse still, a hierarchy) between the two. In my defence of the media I would simply note the obvious power of the image and how in some instances images – understood here as signs/signifiers – can communicate meanings with an economy and effectiveness that words often fail to do. It is one thing to cite statistics of poverty and wage differentials, it is quite something else to show an image of a poor beggar forced to eat mouldy bread from a dustbin. The former satisfies our need for empirical data, but the latter touches upon a raw human nerve and makes such inequalities tangible for us, opening the path to empathy, and consequently – one hopes – understanding and knowledge as well.

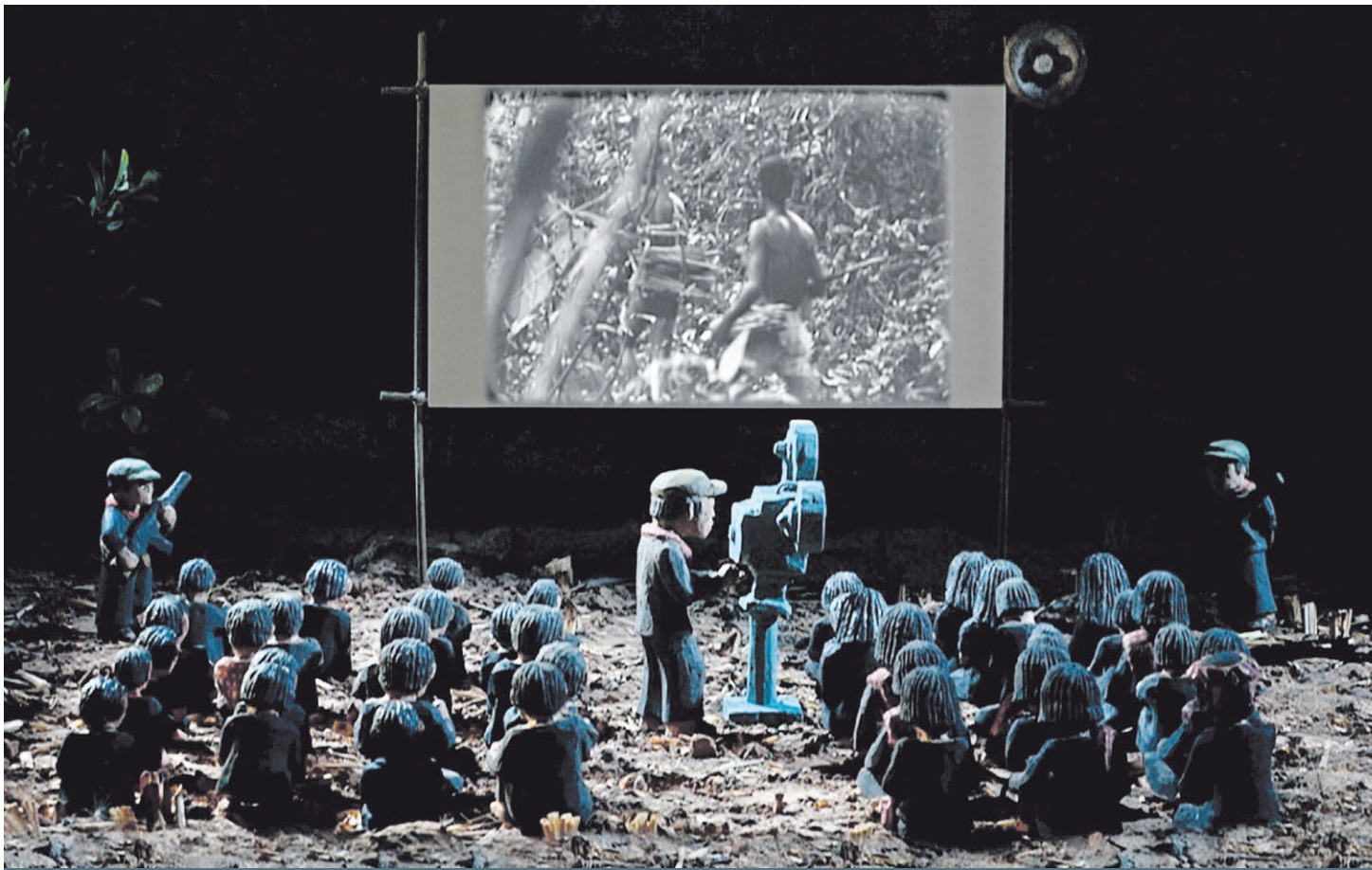
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Mass killings represented: the movies of Panh and Oppenheimer



My movie and its title *'The Missing Picture'* was partly inspired by my search for a photograph of an execution that a Khmer Rouge guard once told me about. The missing picture, maybe it's the images of genocide that don't exist. Maybe they're lost, maybe they're buried somewhere, maybe someone hid them.¹

John Kleinen

THE CAMBODIAN-FRENCH FILM director Rithy Panh is never too tired to explain why he made his successful Oscar-nominated odyssey of loss and torment in the period 1975-1979, when Pol Pot's reign of terror was accountable for the death of at least 1.7 million people. The movie is an unusual one in the genre; hundreds of carefully carved clay figurines tell the story of the many dead in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime as a result of medical neglect, starvation, slave-like working conditions and executions. The scenes are interspersed with propaganda materials of Democratic Kampuchea; footage that was recovered by the Vietnamese army after it toppled the regime at the end of 1978.

Realist factual footage of mass killings is very scarce. We have exactly 1 minute and 59 seconds of moving images of the executions of Jews in Eastern Europe; similar visual representation of executions of Kulaks during the Great Terror or the starvation of Chinese during Mao's Great Leap Forward is equally absent. Panh's choice to represent the trauma of the Cambodian democide by artificial means is motivated by a well-known filming technique known as 'distancing' or 'defamiliarization'. It disrupts the viewer's emotional indulgence and absorption in a taken-for-granted story, instead of a more general picture of extreme asymmetric power balance.

For Panh, the picture that was missing was a personal one that he never will get to see. "It's the one that I miss the most. It's to see my parents get older, to be able to share time with them now, to help them, to love them, to give them back what they gave me," he said to *Le Point* reporter Ono-Dit-Biot. "I would prefer to have my parents with me than to make movies about the Khmer Rouge" (*Le Point* 3-10-2013).

It is not Panh's first movie about Cambodia's national nightmare. Best known is his *S21: The Khmer Rouge Death Machine* (2003), followed in 2011 by *Duch, Master of the Forges of Hell*. In between he made movies about the colonial past and the return of refugees to his home country, among others. With his impressive *Bophana, a Cambodian tragedy* (1997), memorializing the victims portrayed in the thousands of mugshots that the prison guards left at Tuol Sleng, he opted to show the atrocities exclusively from the victims' perspective. Separating victims from perpetrators seems to be a deliberate choice for Panh. In an interview with Joshua Oppenheimer, the director of *The Act of Killing*, he said: "Now, since (...) *S21* has been made (...) ... there are several films (...) where they bring the victims and the guardians together. But often also against each other's will. And that gives a kind of unease when you see that kind of encounter between people."²

Acts of killings

Oppenheimer's *The Act of Killing* (*Jagal* or 'Execution(er)' in Indonesian) was the big surprise of 2012. Unlike Rithy Panh, Oppenheimer exclusively used the staged memory of criminal and paramilitary vigilantes who did the dirty business for the Indonesian army and the politicians who toppled President Sukarno in 1965. The *Kudeta* of 30 September 1965 brought Suharto's military junta to power. In a wave of killings lasting five months, members of the Special Forces, ad-hoc criminal gangs and religious Muslim fanatics destroyed the lives of at least, and possible more than, half a million people. Unlike the Khmer Rouge leaders, these people were never brought to justice. Instead, they continue to be feared and in a certain way respected, still enjoying the admiration of many in Indonesia. Two protagonists prominently figure in *The Act of Killing* – Anwar Kongo (72) and Adi Zulkadry (69) – who re-enact their own roles during the murderous events. Anwar was a petty thug in the mid-1960s, trafficking in movie-tickets. Adi was a leading founder of the paramilitary Pancasila Youth and a member of its elite death unit, the Frog Squad. Embarrassingly for Indonesia's democratic rulers, Anwar maintained personal relations with a local newspaper editor who played a coordinating role during the massacre. But similarly uncomfortable is the appearance in the film of the current-day politician Jusuf Kalla, who is seen congratulating members of Indonesia's youth movement, *Pemuda Pancasila*, for their share in exterminating Indonesian communism. Revealing is the applauding audience of a TV talk show that visibly enjoys Anwar stories of his killing spree. Adi reminds the viewer of the victor's justice: "War crimes are defined by the victors. We won."

The near absence of victims in Oppenheimer's movie is for good reason. Filmmakers in Indonesia are confronted by an officially encouraged conspiracy of silence about the past; this is unlike in Cambodia where, already in 1979, the Vietnamese advisors of the Heng Samrin government tried to bring Pol Pot and Khmer Rouge Foreign Minister Ieng Sary to justice. This trial, often considered a 'show trial', resulted in death penalties, which for lack of defendants in custody were never actually carried out. And it took nearly two decades to successfully arrest and imprison some leaders of the Khmer Rouge, where after the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC, better known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal) could finally start proceedings in 2004. Whatever one's opinion of the tribunal, at least the Cambodians have sought justice for the victims. Legal actions have been ongoing since 1979, despite disapproval from the UN, which regarded the Khmer Rouge as the official representative of Cambodia until 1993.

Graphic details of killing

This attitude is clearly absent in Indonesia. When it comes to the search for historical truth in both countries, Cambodian efforts are evidently more successful. Movies such as those made by Rithy Panh are freely distributed, whilst it would be absolutely unthinkable for films such as *The Act of Killing* to be promoted by Indonesia as a national product to be proud of – which is exactly what happened with Panh's movie at Cannes, where it won the prestigious *Un Certain Regard* Award.

Oppenheimer's movie is, nevertheless, path-breaking in the way it brings back a nearly forgotten way of representing the acts of killing, which were not the sole responsibility of the Indonesian army, but also seemingly ordinary citizens who went on a killing rampage. This is accentuated in the movie by the hubris shown by those interviewed, and by the stories made public by the military supporters of the New Order.³

In Panh's movie the graphic details of the killings are portrayed by using clay figurines, whilst Oppenheimer engages over-acted re-enactments to tell the story. Where Panh reinforces his cinematic testimonial by alternating sequences from propaganda movies (shot by China-trained Khmer Rouge cameramen) with stills of the clay puppets, Oppenheimer leaves us puzzled by phantasmatic shots of a bizarre opera-buffa near Toba Lake, or by a mediated act of remorse by Anwar Congo at the scene of one of his former crimes. Both movies confront us with the phenomenon of the mass destruction of humans. In Panh's filmic strategy to unravel the Khmer Rouge's democide, one sees the panic of a regime that fell onto its own sword. This led to its demise but also to a catastrophe for its victims. Oppenheimer's movie is so disturbing because he suggests that civilian psychopaths or lunatics were mainly responsible for the act of killing.

In a recent book, Dutch sociologist Abram de Swaan makes a more convincing argument than Oppenheimer does.⁴ The killings of hundreds of thousands of people, often randomly executed, go back in history far beyond modern times, but the organized mass killings we have seen in the last century have been possible only in societies where social compartmentalization has taken place. The killings are enabled by a deliberate cutting of social contacts between the majority and a condemned minority. Exclusion on a large scale leads to extermination at a certain point within special compartments, which have been physically or mentally erected by the *genocidaires* acting on behalf of the rulers. But this doesn't mean that everybody becomes a killer when circumstances are 'right', De Swaan repeatedly warns. And he categorically calls into doubt Hannah Arendt's 'banality of evil'. The occasion enables the act, but individuals are still able to refuse under extreme circumstances, as is shown by Panh's not Oppenheimer's movie.

Indonesia and Cambodia

In his book, De Swaan deals with a large number of genocidal regimes, ranging from Nazi Germany to the nearly forgotten campaign against the Maya-Ixil Indians of Guatemala under the regime of Efraim Rios Montt in 1982 and 1983. Suharto's regime started as a reign of terror driven by an organized military group and ended with a mega-pogrom. To suggest that the motives of people like Anwar Congo were commonplace, seriously underestimates the ways in which they became involved in these killings. In Cambodia, the mysterious Communist Party went on a rampage against its own population. In both cases the compartmentalization of their self-created adversaries was the motive and the orchestrated means of the killers. The Khmer Rouge's mass slaughtering did contain elements of an enacted utopia, inspired by Maoist China, and the temptation of the experiment is cynically voiced by the French radical philosopher Alain Badiou, who needed 35 years to apologize for his former defense of the Khmer Rouge: "Mieux vaut un désastre qu'un désêtre" ("better a disaster than a lack of being"). It explains very neatly why Rithy Panh, in his movie, avoided confronting the victims with their executioners.

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The 'cinematic' santri

In Indonesia, over the last five years or so, a new generation of *santri*¹ across the country has demonstrated a progressive attitude toward film production. Mostly using new film technologies such as personal video recorders and digital cameras, many of these young students have made films about, but not limited to, the everyday lives of Muslims in *pesantren*. Some of these films have only been circulated within the *pesantren* circuit, but most of them have also experienced alternative public screenings, particularly through social media such as YouTube. A few of them have even been screened at local film festivals and commercial cinemas.

Ahmad Nuril Huda

Voices hitherto unheard

Some scholars might have anticipated the emergence of these santri-made films in Indonesia,² yet the fact that the majority of these filmmakers made their films inside their *pesantren* raises questions of how they came in touch with film production in the first place. Despite them being many in number, santri are still a minority within the world of Indonesian film, and as far as the history of Indonesian cinema can be recalled, they have struggled to represent themselves within the national film arena. Significantly, this marginal position may hint at the somewhat intrusive character of their cinematic activities, to the world of film as well as the world of the Islamic boarding school itself. Furthermore, when talking to these santri and watching their films, it is clear that they voice concerns that hitherto have been overlooked by major commercial film companies and other media players in Indonesia. This article highlights some of the ways santri have come to producing films and what kind of concerns are voiced by these films.

Film production has been introduced into *pesantrens* in various ways, yet there are some similarities. The story of Ali, a santri in East Java who in 2010 made the documentary film *Para Penambang* (The Sand Miners), is as such revealing. Coming from a rural area in the Western tip of Java, Ali had been living in his *pesantren* in Kediri, East Java, for over seven years. During his *pesantren* studies, he also attended a nearby Islamic college to obtain his bachelor's degree in Islamic education. He was an avid reader and had much interest for writing and journalism. Ali had never seen a film in a cinema before, but one of his friends showed him the highly celebrated Islamic film *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (2008) on his laptop. Having seen the movie, he realized the importance of film in disseminating Islam, but also its potential use for spreading *pesantren* values. Hence he was encouraged to make a film about Islam in the context of the *pesantren*. But he did not own a camera, and he had no knowledge about film production.

Luckily, he was informed that a relative of one of the female santri was willing to lend him a camera, and some of his fellow santri had attended a nearby vocational school and had learned camera skills. In short, a borrowed Handycam, his friends' technical knowledge, and a donation from a parting santri enabled Ali to realize his ambitions; a documentary film about sand miners working the river nearby his *pesantren*. In his film, Ali not only sympathizes with the miners, but he explains his compassion by referring to the *pesantren*'s teachings.

Ali's story exemplifies the emergence of a generation of 'cinematic' santri who are aware of the power of film and film technology to engage in national debates. Importantly, the emergence of these filmmakers has been facilitated by changes in the *pesantren* curriculum, which now allows for santri to follow non-religious studies, and is no longer exclusively aimed at a young mostly rural population, but also welcomes students from largely middleclass backgrounds. In addition, the rise of the cinematic santri has been supported by film-related NGOs eager to introduce film literacy to particular *pesantren*.³

From texts to film

Pesantren films are by no means homogenous. They use diverse narrative methods, tell different kinds of stories and also make use of a range of film formats. *Pesantren* films come as short and feature films, fiction or documentary, and there are amateur and more professional films. Nonetheless, and as far as I can observe, what these films share is that most pay attention to particular *pesantren* traditions; traditions much akin to santri everyday life, but often ignored or simply overlooked in mainstream Indonesian cinema.

One of these traditions is the *kitab kuning*: a collection of classical Islamic texts dating from the medieval period within Islamic history. These texts have long been an exclusive source of Islamic knowledge in Indonesia's more traditional

pesantren.⁴ While many traditional *pesantren*, in an effort to modernize, have included non-religious materials as part of their curriculum, the majority continue to stress the importance of the *kitab kuning* and hence the central role of the scripture for education. Few films have acknowledged the pivotal role of the *kitab kuning* in santri life, instead choosing to foreground the Koran, contemporary Islamic books, or fatwas. A number of Indonesian films and television dramas have incited disappointment amongst the santri as the latter feel poorly represented. Many of my informants were concerned about how commercial films and television dramas discuss the *pesantren* world, but fail to correctly describe current *pesantren* life, with some even outright contradicting *pesantren* norms and values.

Keeping these concerns in mind, it is no accident that the film *3 Doa 3 Cinta* (3 Prayers 3 Loves, 2008), the first ever-Indonesian commercial film directed by a santri, has brought the *kitab kuning* to the screen. Without precedent in the history of Indonesian cinema, this film portrays the *kitab kuning* not only as a source of religious knowledge, but also as an identity marker of Indonesian Islam *vis-à-vis* an Islam of the Arabic heartland. Following *3 Doa 3 Cinta*, other *pesantren* films also started showing increased attention for the *kitab kuning*, and the book's place in santri life, in their films. This is particularly evident in *Intensif* (Intensive, 2012), the second feature film to be produced by the santri of the West Javanese Kidang *pesantren* within three years. The film succeeds in portraying the enthusiasm

Below:
Santri Film Festival.
From author's
private collection.

of students reading and discussing the book. The *kitab kuning* is shown as not only as the book that all Kidang santri have extensively studied in class, but also as the book that provides them with practical advice for their everyday-lives.

Voicing images

During his fieldwork in several *pesantrens* in East Java in the 1990s, Lukens-Bull identified the santri's strong emphasis on the *kitab kuning*, despite all the changes occurring in the *pesantren* environment. He explains such preservative efforts as being part of *pesantren* 'politics', and just one of the ways in which *pesantren* people maintain tradition and identities. They do this in the aftermath of intense educational transformations, in which local Islamic traditions were contested and choices had to be made between being Indonesian or being part of a transnational Muslim *Ummah*.⁵ His analysis is significant for understanding the current 'emblemization' of the *kitab kuning* in *pesantren* films, which should be understood as being part of the ways in which santri give voice to traditions that have been hitherto ignored by mainstream media in Indonesia. Santri films thus offer an alternative imagination and outlet for voices otherwise rarely heard.

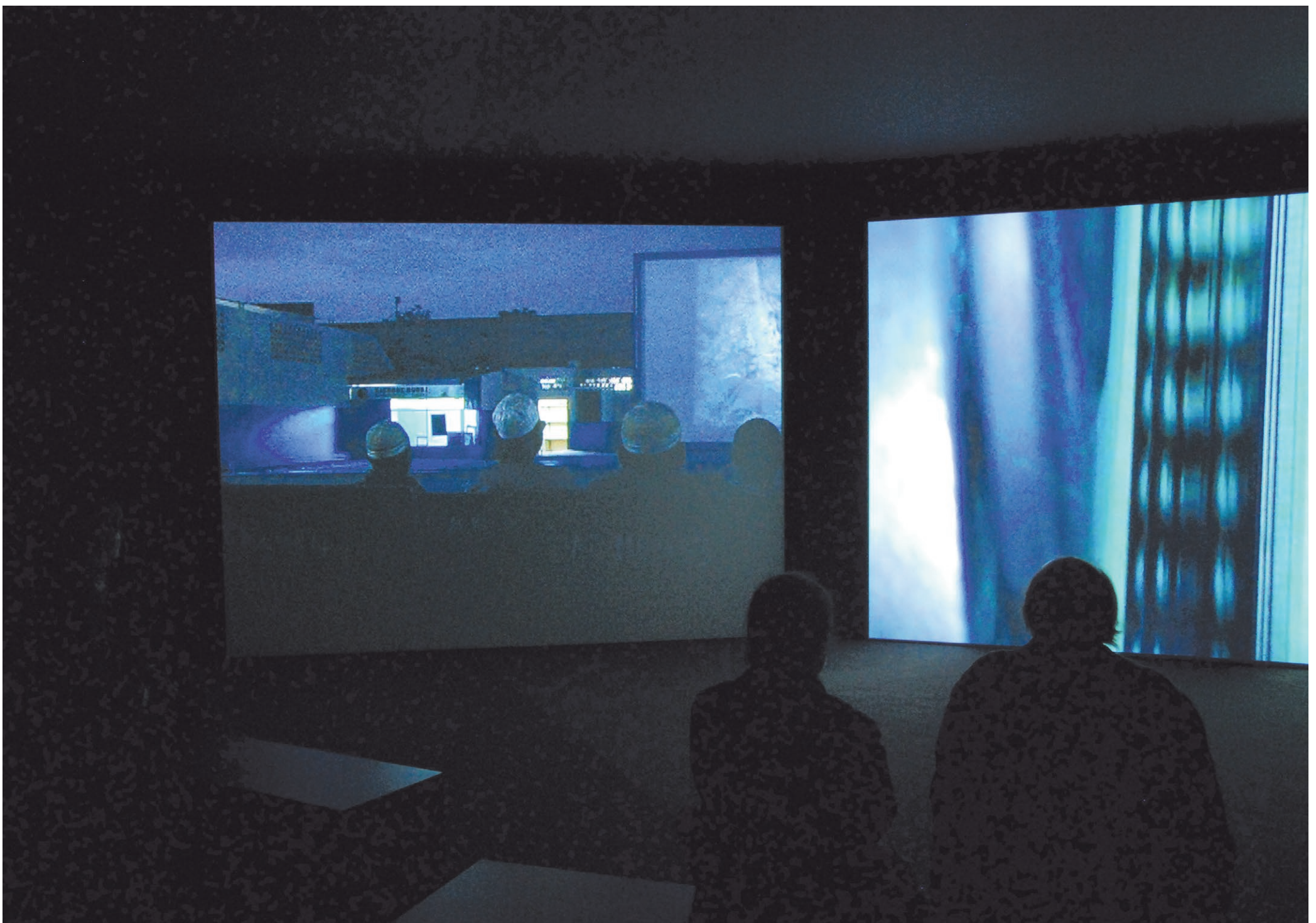
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- 1 The term *santri* generally refers to a student at a *pesantren* – an Indonesian Islamic boarding school. It can also be used to refer to a specific cultural 'stream' of people among the Javanese, who practice a relatively orthodox version of Islam. In this article, I use both definitions interchangeably.
- 2 Eickelman, D.F. and J.W. Anderson (eds.) 1999. *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 1-18.
- 3 One of these NGOs is SFCG (Search for Common Ground). One of its programs is to give a film workshop to students of *pesantrens* across the country.
- 4 Van Bruinessen, M. 1990. "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic script used in the *Pesantren* milieu: Comments on a new collection in the KITLV Library", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 146(2/3), Leiden, p. 227.
- 5 Lukens-Bull, R. 2005. *A Peaceful Jihad: Negotiating Identity and Modernity in Muslim Java*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 47-70.



Visualizing Southeast Asia in the classroom through film



The expanding array in the last thirty years of documentaries, historical films, and fictional films on Southeast Asia, and produced from within the region, has provided an exciting resource pool for teaching about the region, not only for Southeast Asian cinema but also history, the social sciences, and other fields. The visual dimension is not new to the university classroom; images and films have become an important part of the teacher's repertoire. Their effectiveness in terms of visualizing concepts, issues, events, and personalities and capturing the attention of student audiences has contributed to their popularity.

Keng We Koh

FILMS, LIKE IMAGES, also pose interesting questions and challenges as a pedagogical tool. These would include the differences and parallels between film and the text as media of mass communication, issues of accuracy, perspective, and creative or ideological license in determining such 'value', as well as their relative importance in the classroom. For example, how do films differ from texts in the way they communicate ideas, concepts, and themes to the audience? Can film not also be read as texts? Are textual sources not subject to the same problems of factual accuracy, bias and creativity often associated with film? How is the value and authority of film in the classroom defined *vis-à-vis* text? To what extent does the power and impact of film in the classroom depend on factual accuracy and derive its authority from this? Are historical films or other fictional genres still useful in the history classroom with the mix of creative license and visual impact?

Fiction, fact and bias: genres and expectations

The main 'value' of films in teaching about Southeast Asia would be their ability not only to visualize the region, but to also bring the region 'to life', making it more immediate, dramatic, intimate, and 'real'. Therein, perhaps, lies its potential and power; but also danger, namely that of substituting fiction, or at best, interpretation, for fact. This is especially so with respect to history.

These issues are not unique to film. Academic and primary historical texts pose the same problems and challenges, although in the latter, it is often assumed that the peer review process and measures to police the standards of the field provide safeguards against factual inaccuracy, and highlight any biases in methodology. Films often enjoy greater leeway in terms of factual accuracy and truth, although expectations vary in terms of genre concerned. Expectations are greatest perhaps for documentaries. Historical films, however, are often assumed to take creative license in representing and interpreting historical events, personalities, and themes, although they are on some level still expected to provide plausible and accurate renditions of social, cultural, and political settings for their creative plots. Documentaries too, like textual sources, often suffer from bias and factual inaccuracies. Are such documentaries still useful for teaching? Are historical films and fictional films, with their penchant for dramatization and improvisation, still useful for teaching Southeast Asian history? These are some questions that I have grappled with in the course of using films in my classes.

Historical films: representing or re-inventing Southeast Asian pasts

Historical films, far from just recreating or representing Southeast Asian pasts, are often also about contesting these pasts, re-framing them, or recalling forgotten ones.

The use of these films in the Southeast Asia classroom needs to locate them in their respective political, ideological, and historiographical contexts. We can perhaps divide the historical films that we use into two loose categories. The first genre encompasses the films produced outside of Southeast Asia, often in former colonial metropolises and Cold War centers. This would include films like *The King and I*, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, *Max Havelaar*, *Mother Dao*, *The Turtle-Like*, *Indochine*, *The Killing Fields*, and various Vietnam War movies, among others. Based on memoirs, real personalities and events or fictional reconstructions, these films were mostly concerned with the memories of these countries' engagements with the region. Several of these films have achieved prominence (and sometimes controversy) in raising questions about the memories and perspectives of the colonizing or imperial powers in Southeast Asia, their relations to local elites and populations, and the perspectives of the latter.

Indochine, for example, was as much an attempt to revisit the memory of Indochina in France, as the positing of a different gendered perspective to this history, from the perspective of women, both French and Vietnamese. The relationship between Eliane Devries and her adopted daughter, Camille, can also be read as a metaphor for the relationship between French colonialism (represented by its fledgling business class) and Vietnam, with Camille the orphaned daughter of rich Vietnamese aristocrats. The story is also located in the

Above:
Filmscreening. Photo
by Fridus Steijlen.

Issues and possibilities

context of the political transformations in Vietnam in the late 1920s, with the Yen Bay rebellion, the radicalization of the communist resistance, and the breakdown of the old Vietnamese socio-political order (especially the old elites allied to the French colonial elites). On the whole, the breakdown in the relationship between Eliane and Camille, caused by her love for the young French officer and her journey in search of him that brings them to the Vietnamese communist resistance, mirrors the changing relationships between Vietnam and France in the context of the nationalist movements and their radicalization.

Historical films on the Vietnam War, produced in the United States between the 1980s and the present, have questioned the role of the United States in the conflict, and the suffering inflicted not only on the Vietnamese and Cambodians, but also the American personnel themselves. *The Killing Fields* not only highlighted the brutality of the Khmer Rouge projects of 1975-1979, but also sought to portray these events from the perspective of a Cambodian. *The Year of Living Dangerously*, produced in Australia, also drew attention to the atrocities of 1965-1966 in Indonesia at a time when political stability, economic development, and state propaganda had led to the gradual forgetting of these events in western countries.

These films provided important dramatizations of key events in Southeast Asian history. While often representing these events from the perspectives of people associated with the colonizers or imperial powers, they, nevertheless, offer interesting objections and alternatives to standard narratives on the past associated with them.

Films from Southeast Asia

Historical films have been an important part of the early histories of the new nation-states and the nascent film industries in the region. Even as they represented local perspectives, we must take into account the political and ideological conditions in which they were produced. The nation-building travails and the Cold War challenges between the 1950s and 1980s, the political changes in the region since the mid-1980s, and the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, have created a new environment of debate and contestation over national identity, politics, culture, and the past in many Southeast Asian countries. This period also paralleled the revival and rapid growth of film industries in the region, and new genres of historical films.

Besides films aimed at glorifying official narratives of national pasts, we also see the production of a series of films that have come to question the official historiographies of the preceding period, either for key events or personalities, or in discussing topics or subjects hitherto discouraged. The regional and global exposure of these films was aided by the changing global film market, which has helped several of these films to become commercially re-released in America and other developed European and Asian countries, with some of them not only entered in prominent film festivals, but even emerging victorious as winners in key categories.

In Thailand, the decline during the 1980s of a previously vibrant film industry was reversed in the late 1990s onwards, and we have seen the emergence of a new commercial and independent Thai film industry. Historical film productions such as *Bang Rajan* (2000), *The Legend of Suriyothai* (2001) and the *Naresuan* series (2007-2011) replicated the themes or issues of older historical films from the 1960s, namely the glories of Ayutthaya – regarded as the charter state for present-day Thailand – and its contests and wars with Burmese rulers, but on a much larger scale and budget. They can be seen as attempts to revive national pride in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the painful economic restructuring in Thailand.

Despite its nationalistic overtones, *The Legend of Suriyothai* offered the retelling of the story of the politics of Ayutthaya from the perspectives of the royal women. The film also highlighted the cosmopolitanism of the polity during the first half of the 16th century, as well as the structure of pre-modern politics in the region, as outlined in the writings of Wolters and historians of Thailand and Southeast Asia, especially the importance of heterarchies, family politics, shifting loyalties, and the control of manpower in the cultural matrix of the region. *Yamada: Samurai of Ayothaya* (2010) provided a fictional account of the life of Yamada Nagamasa, a seventeenth-century Japanese adventurer who served in the Ayutthaya court.

The Overture was not only the retelling of the life story of a famous *ranak-ed* palace musician from Siam in the early 20th century, but also the reevaluation of a period in Thailand's history after the bloodless coup of 1932, during the 1930s and 1940s, a period dominated by military governments and their nation-building projects. The confrontation between the musical master and the military officer entrusted with enforcing the state's ban on the playing of traditional musical instruments symbolized the tensions between the old and the new in the context of the modernizing projects in this period. It led to a revival of traditional Thai music, and presented certain aspects of Thai culture to the world.

Historical films (including fictional films that locate their plots in a historical event or period) draw their strengths not so much from fictional accuracy, but from highlighting themes and perspectives on Southeast Asian pasts through the visual impact of moving images. Due to the creative license taken with events and people, and even the questions over the reconstruction of the dress, material life, and built environments of the past, there is a need for a more critical use of these films in the classroom. The instructor plays an important role in providing background information, where possible, on the production of these films, their target audiences, and the motivations and concerns of the film creators. Students must be taught how to critically interpret these films, both through the evaluation of 'facts' and the reading of metaphors and narratives.

Rescuing history from the nation?

Like the film industry, the production of documentaries about Southeast Asia has seen similar trends in the last thirty years, both outside and within the region. A multitude of documentaries on Southeast Asian history, heritage sites, cultural life, and socio-political and environmental issues are now available for the classroom, produced either by national broadcasting corporations, subscription cable channels, or independent companies.

The processes of political, economic, and cultural change since the mid-1980s, and especially after late 1990s, have seen the increasing engagement of documentary makers in projects questioning official ideological and historiographical positions, especially with respect to national history. These documentaries also engage social, cultural, political and economic issues often ignored by the state in their respective countries, and present the perspectives of non-mainstream or marginalized interest groups. Amir Muhammad's *Apa Kabar Orang Kampung* (2007) and *The Last Communist* (2006), *I Love Malaya* (2006) by a group of young filmmakers, and Fahmi Reza's *Sepuluh Tahun Sebelum Merdeka* (2007) are good examples of such attempts to re-examine key periods of Malaysian history, namely the debate over the Malayan Union proposals of 1946, the Malayan Emergency, as well as the recent applications by former leaders of the Malayan Communist Party to return to Malaysia, notably the late Chin Peng.

Fahmi Reza's documentary interviewed politicians and activists in socialist, worker and women groups, who had in

1947 submitted alternative proposals for a future Malaya, which had been deliberately overlooked by the British government in favor of the proposal submitted by the traditional Malay elites and their new political movement. This rebuff culminated in a nation-wide strike in 1947. Drawing on interviews with Malayan Communist Party members in southern Thailand, Amir Muhammad's documentaries and *I Love Malaya* sought to present the voices of the people fighting on the 'other side' or the 'losing' side, their imaginations of the Malayan nation, and their accounts of their past. Although critics might question the bias in the interview pool of these documentaries, they provide an important counter narrative to state-sponsored discourses represented in official documentaries and texts. Each documentary faced the challenges of presenting a balanced history of these episodes, without the demonization or glorification of either side. Presenting the silenced voices was an important first step.

For Indonesia, we note the same trends. The growing numbers of young directors making short films, documentaries and fictional films examining social, political, economic and cultural issues, offer a growing body of documentary resources for teaching about the country.¹ We also see the same questioning of official state historiographies, regarding critical events in the nation's history, in recent documentaries like *Shadow Play* (2003), *40 Years of Silence* (2009), and *The Act of Killing* (2012). Although produced outside Indonesia, they have begun to critically engage the history of a controversial period of Indonesian history and that of the Cold War, namely the events of 1965-1966, especially the massacres that took place across the country in response to the purported coup and attempt to seize power by the Indonesian Communist Party.

The Act of Killing, in particular, has attracted domestic and global attention for this historical event, through the controversy of its methods, which allowed the perpetrators of the killings to make a movie about themselves and the executions they carried out during the 1965-1966 events, and through its winning of a BAFTA for Best Documentary and its Oscar nomination for Best Documentary. The film remains officially banned in Indonesia, but has managed to be screened a number of times throughout the country, and has attracted much discussion on the internet.

Film, text, and history

Films, through visualizing history, and often dramatizing it (even in the case of documentaries), have become very powerful tools for teaching and thinking about Southeast Asia and Southeast Asian history. This power also presents certain dangers, especially in terms of factual accuracy and perspective. These issues are not unique to film, and extend to more traditional text-based print media, although there are more safeguards for the latter in terms of peer review processes. As we have seen above, the use of film is in spite of issues of creative license in the representation and re-enactment of events and characters. The producers have often used film for their impact value, in positing alternative readings of texts or questioning existing narratives and ideological positions.

Film, and other forms of audio-visual mass media, have come to dominate our everyday lives and information flows, through cinema, television, the personal computer, tablets and mobile phones. This prevalence makes it necessary for our students to be trained in the critical use of this media and its different genres, not only in forming critical perspectives on Southeast Asia, but also in maintaining this critical approach in navigating the new information environments. In the modern history classroom, the instructor plays an important role in helping the student negotiate between different media tools in the transmission of knowledge and the training of critical thinking. A variety of online resources have been created, by the film industry and history-teaching associations in North America and the United Kingdom, to guide teachers in the use of this medium. The number of websites dealing with this topic is a reflection of this trend.

Ultimately, film and text are inextricably linked, and both depend on instructor guidance to help students navigate the abovementioned issues. Although it is doubtful that film could ever totally supplant text in the classroom, it can be used to challenge the authority of text in the classroom, and it constitutes part of an increasingly complex and critical repertoire shaped by the possibilities and demands of multimedia technologies in everyday life of the 21st century.

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Note

¹ For more information on the Indonesian scene, see <http://tinyurl.com/docnetSEAsia>

Below:
Still from the film
Behind the Screen.



Why do South Asian documentaries matter?



The 9th edition of Film South Asia,¹ a film festival held in October of 2013 in Kathmandu (Nepal), created a row that came not entirely unexpected. The festival presented 55 documentaries that focused on Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Burma/Myanmar. Days ahead of the start of the festival, the Sri Lankan government asked the Nepali government to prohibit the screening of three films about Sri Lanka.

Erik de Maaker

THESE FILMS, *Broken* (2013) and *The Story of One* (2012) by Sri Lankan filmmaker Kannan Arunasalam, as well as *No Fire Zone* (2013) by UK-based filmmaker Callum Macrae, deal with the violent conclusion of the Sri Lankan civil war in 2009, and its aftermath. Some of these films had already been banned from theatrical screenings in Sri Lanka. The Nepali government gave in to the pressure, and banned all three films.

The organizers of Film South Asia were obviously upset, and protested against “this unwarranted intrusion into the cultural sphere, an action that goes against the freedom of expression and the right of documentary filmmakers to exhibit their work”, as festival chair Kanak Mani Dixit was quoted saying in the press.² But rather than altogether cancelling the screenings, these were instead shifted to a ‘private venue’. As was to be expected, the ban generated even more interest in the films. In addition, the organizers created an ‘impromptu’ panel on ‘Censorship in South Asia’, which gave journalists and documentary filmmakers the chance to express their deep concern about censorship in the South Asian region. By moving the screening to a private location, which was accessible by ‘invitation’ only, the organizers of Film South Asia followed a well established strategy to evade censorship, which has been in existence in South Asia over the last three decades. Controversial documentary films have regularly been banned, but that didn’t stop people from seeing them in large scale private screenings. While filmmakers have vehemently, and usually eventually successfully, resisted such bans, these have generally generated more interest in their films and emphasized the partisan nature of their work.

The turmoil described above is indicative of the impact that documentary films can have in South Asia. Documentary footage, and the analyses based on it, can be highly controversial. This is certainly the case for the last months of the Sri Lankan civil war, of which the Sri Lankan government, a UN Fact Finding mission and Tamil groups have radically diverging readings. According to the Sri Lankan government, the last months of the war claimed about 7000 civilian lives, the UN puts that figure at 40,000, while Tamil groups estimate 147,000 deaths.³ Where the Sri Lankan government spoke of a ‘clean war’, Tamil groups talked of ‘genocide.’ But documentary films do not need to focus on ‘high’ politics or topics deemed newsworthy in order to raise critical and challenging questions. These are often found in relation to culture and religion as well.

Sponsorship, censorship and evasion of control

Below, I focus on the development of documentary filmmaking in India. Documentary filmmaking on the subcontinent started in the colonial period. During the Second World War, the government created a film organization, primarily to produce films in support of the war effort. After independence, in India, this government body transformed into Films Division. From the early 1950s onward, Films Division (based in Bombay) commissioned films that had to contribute, in one way or the other to ‘nation building’. Topics were diverse, ranging from urban planning and immunization campaigns to India’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage.⁴ Producing up to

Above: Making a documentary in a South Asian village. Photo by author.

one film a week, with a length of about 20 minutes on average, Films Division quickly gained the reputation of being the world’s largest producer of documentary films. Until the early 1990s it was compulsory for movie theatres to screen a Films Division documentary preceding the main feature film, which ensured these documentaries of an audience.⁵ Censorship practices that had applied in colonial times, were more or less continued in independent India, and documentary films could (and can) not be screened in public places unless they had (and have) been cleared by the Censor Board. Consequently, the documentaries produced by Films Division tended to avoid controversy. They would not explicitly critique the functioning of the state, nor would they contain materials that one community or the other might consider offensive.

Until the early 1990s, most documentaries were shot on ‘real’ film, which was very costly. Filmmakers dependence on Films Division implied that in a practical sense, the state controlled documentary film production. Since film projectors were seldom individually owned, but only available at ‘public’ venues, ‘real’ film technology also implied the regulation of film screenings.⁶ When videocassettes and video recorders came onto the Indian market in the 1980s, these revolutionized the dissemination of documentary films, as they made screenings in non-public spaces possible. A circuit developed in which documentary films, whether they were certified or not, were screened at venues such as colleges and NGOs, attended by ‘invited’ audiences. Often, such private screenings took place in the presence of the filmmaker, and discussions with the filmmaker afterwards were part and parcel of these events, which they still are.

By the mid 1980s, India also saw the emergence of the first independent filmmakers; such as the iconic Anand Patwardan, whose films on, for instance, the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (*In the Name of God*, 1992) and on Hindu fundamentalism (*Father, Son and Holy War*, 1995) made waves in India and abroad. Many of his films were initially rejected by the Censor Board, but after lengthy trials they were eventually screened in public venues and on television.

The liberalization of media space

The 1990s saw a speeding up of the gradual liberalization and deregulation of India’s ‘controlled’ economy, and one of the sectors on which this had an immediate impact was the media. The compulsory documentary screenings in cinema halls came to an end, and television, previously the exclusive domain of state broadcaster Doordarshan, was ‘opened up’ to commercial channels. In a few years, scores of new channels entered the market. Most of these are dedicated to soaps, music videos, sports (cricket!), Hindi movies and news, but they rarely program documentaries. The Indian state broadcaster, with its popularity rather dramatically reduced, gained new importance for the documentary circuit when it became the channel to air documentary films produced by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, which works with government funding.⁷ Since 2001, it has commissioned more than 500 documentary films, mostly from independent filmmakers.⁸

However, much more important than their TV screenings (mostly late-night slots), the films enter the ‘private screenings’ circuit that has continued to flourish, and continues to be a preferred way for the socially-committed middleclass to engage with documentary films (and the filmmakers that produce these). Unfortunately, with an average budget of €4000 to €6000 per film, production budgets are modest even by Indian standards, and the equipment used is often of a lower quality than what Western broadcasters consider acceptable.

Winning the West?

Tailored as these films are to a South Asian audience, they often lack the kind of contextual information that a Western audience requires. Consequently, such audiences generally fail to understand what these films ‘are about’, and are often unable to appreciate their merit. As a result, these films rarely get selected for major documentary festivals such as IDFA. The disappointment is mutual, in the sense that South Asian documentary filmmakers often fail to understand why the selection committees of such festivals continue to prefer ‘orientalist’ documentaries that either emphasize South Asia’s mysticism, or its ‘communal’ violence. This also holds for smaller film festivals, such as the Amsterdam based ‘Beeld voor Beeld’ festival.⁹

To tap into the rich potential of South Asian documentaries, European producers have been working with South Asian filmmakers. Some of these films, tailored to Western audiences, have been international successes. An example is *Laxmi and Me* (2008), a reflexive documentary by Nishtha Jain on her relationship with her domestic helper.¹⁰ For a South Asian middleclass audience, whose prime concerns are corrupt politicians, Hindu nationalism, and the country’s growing social inequality, this is not directly a topic that conveys a great sense of urgency. For a Western audience though, the film provides valuable insights into the delicate balance between contract and patronage that characterizes so many social and economic relationships on the subcontinent.

The organizers of Film South Asia have from the outset recognized the importance of gaining more international exposure for South Asian documentaries. After each edition of their festival, the 15 most appealing films go on tour. Perhaps not surprisingly, Travelling Film South Asia has mostly been presented at US, UK and Australian universities that maintain substantial centers for South Asian studies. So far, Travelling Film South Asia has come to a small European country like the Netherlands only once (in 1999).

Another increasingly popular way to make documentaries available, is to upload them in their entirety to video sharing sites such as *vimeo*. This is also a way to evade censorship, which continues to be an issue for politically controversial films. Unfortunately, even online distribution cannot solve the problems of ‘context’. So far, too few of these films reach an audience in the world beyond South Asia. There definitely lies a task ahead for the programmers of major international film festivals. Rather than limiting themselves to the presumed tastes of their audience, programmers should – more than they currently do – screen films that have been made for circulation in South Asia, seeking to extend the referential framework of their audience. Documentaries from South Asia deserve to be more extensively viewed, to inform global audiences about the major challenges that the South Asian subcontinent faces, and the radical transformations that its people are confronted with.

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- 9 See for example: Bedi, N. 2013. ‘Orientalism Today: Alive and Well’, *Anthrovision* [Online], 1:2; Online since 2 August 2013, <http://anthrovision.revues.org/645>, accessed on 14 Mar 2014.
- 10 See: www.lakshmiandme.com

Matches and gunpowder: the political situation in the East China Sea

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has unquestionably risen to prominence in many different ways. Over the past decades China has firmly established itself as a major actor in both regional and global affairs, much to the discomfort of its neighbours and nemeses: Japan and Taiwan. The balance on the economic, political and military scales is shifting ever further in favour of the Middle Kingdom, which has already resulted in episodes of intense friction (e.g., the reignited Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute in 2011). Indeed, old grudges and a new division of power harness the potential to threaten regional security across the East China Sea. In his works, Richard Bush discerns the causes of contemporary and (expected) future friction through the role each actor plays, while addressing the possible scenarios for crises and solutions. As such, he provides an indispensable framework for those interested in East Asian political affairs.

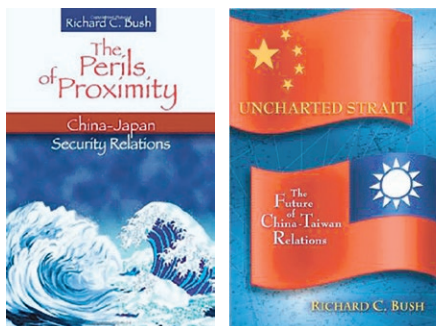
Matthijs de Boer



Reviewed publications:

Bush, R.C. 2010. *The Perils of Proximity: China-Japan Security Relations*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, ISBN: 9780815704744 (hb)

Bush, R.C. 2013. *Uncharted Strait: The Future of China-Taiwan Relations*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, ISBN: 9780815723844 (hb)



A barrel of gunpowder

The current tense situation across the East China Sea is a remnant of a 20th century filled with conflict. Shortly after the Nationalists ended the Emperor's reign in 1911, China entered a state of intense civil war between the Nationalists of Chiang Kai-Shek and the Communists of Mao Zedong. In a spirit of opportunist imperialism, Japan took advantage of China's internal struggles to occupy and subsequently ravage part of the country between the years 1937 and 1945. After Japan was defeated and World War II brought to an end, civil war continued in China until the Nationalists were forced to flee to the island of Taiwan. In 1949 the Communists founded the PRC on the Mainland, while the Nationalists' Republic of China (ROC) continued to exist merely on Taiwan. As the Cold War engulfed East Asia, contradictory economic and political models saw the countries grow apart even further. While the PRC walked along the path of totalitarian communism, the ROC and Japan (gradually) walked towards liberal democracy, taken by the hand by the United States (USA). With past conflicts not resolved, the East China Sea currently compares to a barrel of gunpowder; there is always the potential that tension might combust into another violent chapter in regional history.

Playing with matches

In the latter half of the 20th century, Japan and Taiwan sped away from China in terms of economic and military development as a result of being backed by the USA. While Japan quickly boasted the second economy in the world, Taiwan ultimately thrived on the spoils of manufacturing consumer electronics, as it became known as one of the Asian Tigers. In addition, Tokyo and Taipei could both militarily outclass Beijing by means of their alliance with Washington.

Consequently, China was forced to play inferior to its neighbours and historical adversaries for decades.

Nevertheless, once China's potential started developing in the late 70s, so did its political influence over the region. Particularly during the past decade, when it continuously demonstrated a rapid pace of economic development to ultimately overhaul Japan and become the world's second economy, the balance has tilted evermore in favour of the People's Republic of China. This has resulted in an increasingly strong foothold of the Chinese in regional, international affairs. Officials are currently busy defining a new regional hierarchy in which they aim for China to assert the top position. In doing so, they often implement methods of political and economic coercion that border dangerously close to what is acceptable by its neighbours – and occasionally even cross that line. Across the East China Sea and Taiwan Strait, Japanese and Taiwanese officials and civilians have reacted to the inherent re-division of power in a similarly strong fashion. On both island nations there have been pre-emptive defensive-aggressive moves on the political and civilian level. For instance, recently Japanese politicians have openly questioned the limitations implied by their current constitution, which forbids Japan from having a military system that is capable of doing more than defending their homeland. In Taiwan, results in contemporary democratic elections have shown that the Taiwanese people do not wish to lose their independence. Through all these methods and moves, the Chinese, Japanese and Taiwanese continue to play with matches in the easily combustible East China Sea region.

Current regional implications

It has been mentioned that the reevaluation of regional hierarchy results in a series of implications regarding the security of the East China Sea region. Perhaps the most significant is that of Taiwan's independence. Currently, the PRC refuses to acknowledge the ROC as a sovereign political entity, indeed, it considers Taiwan to be a renegade province. Naturally, the Taiwanese government begs to differ as its fears that assimilation into the PRC's political and economic system will prove disastrous for the well-being of the country and its residents. Neither party therefore is particularly prone to make a concession regarding this matter. Taiwan has its powerful economy and backing from Japan and the USA to stand on, however, the increase of China's global importance (including for the USA) means that Taiwan's case continues to weaken. In fact, China seems to have implemented strategies of 'soft coercion' through political and economic channels already, questioning Taiwan's capabilities of existing as a sovereign nation. It is paramount that both China and Taiwan handle this issue with utmost care in order to prevent escalation of their political dispute into a military showdown; however, it seems that both have too much to lose at this moment to engage in armed conflict.

The above issue does not merely provide friction between China and Taiwan; indeed, it is in Japan's best interest that Taiwan remains a sovereign nation as well, according to officials. Similar to China and Taiwan, Japan is heavily dependent on access to seaways to support its economic development. Would Taiwan be incorporated into One China then Japan is expected to suffer the consequences in an economic sense as a result of the Taiwan Strait becoming a domestic instead of an international sea-lane. Furthermore, the territory of their nemesis would virtually expand onto their doorstep, as the island of Taiwan lies relatively close to the Japanese Ryukyu islands. As their political relationship is still far from smooth, an issue annually tested by Japanese officials visiting the Yasukuni shrine, the mere prospect of a Chinese expansion towards the Japanese homeland indiscriminately leads to increased political friction between the two.

Another issue that involves China, Japan and Taiwan is the access to possible oil and gas reserves under the East China Sea bed. In response to an ever-increasing demand for fossil fuels to support continuous economic development, particularly regarding rapid economic growth in the PRC, the right to exploit possible oil and gas reserves is rather important to officials in each of the countries. Recent friction concerning the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands therefore was not just the result of territorial demarcation by China and Japan, and to a lesser extent Taiwan, but most certainly represented a struggle for access to these possible reserves (albeit through territorial demarcation) as well.

Possible solutions

According to Richard Bush the numerous episodes of political friction between China, Japan and Taiwan reveal the fragile state of international relations along the East China Sea, however, it does not imply that the only possible future scenario that would solve this friction is full-on military action between these actors that would eventually lead to the hegemony of one of them. Indeed, all parties have too much to lose in this scenario, particularly in terms of the stability of their economic development and their internal and international political credibility and support.

Perhaps there will never be a completely satisfactory solution for all parties involved, since consensus is hard to achieve when all maintain opinions that are as impregnable as they are opposite. The most viable option might consist of mutual engagement in certain confidence-building measures on all fronts, which includes political, military and economic cooperation. Once officials will start trusting each other more on these matters, the public might follow and the general tendency of distrust could be (partly) removed. China and Taiwan, on account of their shared Chinese heritage, have ventured down this path already with significant successes. Nevertheless, their relationship remains sensitive and minor bumps still have the power to prove that old habits die hard. Among all three nations, there will be a pace at which confidence-convergence remains comfortable, however, this most likely is slower than the current pace of political and economic developments. Therefore, it is paramount that officials (including those of the fourth and fifth important actors: South Korea and the USA) continue to value future perspectives while trying to close sensitive chapters from the past together to reduce any official or civilian suspicion before it occurs. It will not provide a definite solution per se, yet it will contribute to an improved stability of the current status quo.

Concluding remarks

While China asserts its leading role in the regional (and possibly global) hierarchy, the circumstances demand a reevaluation of political relations between the main actors. China, Japan, Taiwan and the United States all need to reconsider their positions in order to not impair regional security in the East China Sea. As Richard Bush perfectly illustrates in *Perils of Proximity* and *Uncharted Strait*, this causes serious issues that mainly result from unresolved past conflicts. Perhaps the single most important is Taiwanese sovereignty; where China aims to incorporate Taiwan within its 'One China' principle and fulfil its political ambitions as such, both Taiwan and Japan aim for an independent Republic of China, which they feel would guarantee the security of their economic activities and their populations. With some of the world's major actors involved in political struggles in a region that some dub the centre of gravity of the current Asian century, a comprehensive insight into the historical context and former political relations in the East China Sea region should perhaps be considered essential to the current and future generation of politicians and officials around the globe. Both in *Perils of Proximity* and *Uncharted Strait* Richard Bush manages to provide exactly that insight, in fact, his works strongly complement each other to perhaps even go beyond that level.

Matthijs de Boer holds a degree in Urban Geography from Utrecht University, yet his academic interests are of greater diversity. Throughout his career his research has predominantly focused on the East Asia region. (c.m.de.boer@gmail.com)

Above: Twenty-six ships from the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force in the South China Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Jennifer A. Villalovos /Released)

Unconscious dominions

The cover of *Unconscious Dominions* deserves special mention. It displays a painting by Picabia titled *Face of a man and head of a horned animal*. It is appropriate to Freudianism: over a man's image is superimposed an anxious animalistic creature, peering fearfully out at the world. This book is an attempt to explore how and in what ways the psychoanalytic subject – as a universalised 'construct' consisting of unconscious, ego and superego, which was created by Freudian psychoanalytic theories – is also a colonial creature.

Julia Read

Reviewed publication:

Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jenson, and Richard C. Keller (eds.) 2011. *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonial Trauma, and Global Sovereignities*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, ISBN 978049792 (pb)

Unconscious Dominions is an edited collection brought together by Warwick Anderson, Professor of History, who conducts research in values, ethics and the law in medicine at the University of Sydney; Deborah Jenson, Professor of Romance Studies with involvement in global health and Haiti humanities at Duke University; and Richard Keller, Associate Professor of Medical History and Bioethics at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. *Unconscious Dominions* is thus an international and interdisciplinary collaboration, and the contributors – also international – represent predominantly (but not only) psychoanalysis and colonial studies, history of medicine and psychiatry, human sciences, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and ethics. This is an extraordinarily wide-ranging collaboration; the area of interest is a nascent one that clearly has potential.

The volume represents an attempt to explore the psychoanalytic subject – a universalised 'cathartic figure' created by European high modernism, as a colonial creature. The project thus carries with it a number of other questions, such as, how did it happen that people around the world came to recognise this figure in themselves and others? Will it be possible to retrieve and imagine other possible selves under increasing globalisation?

Sigmund Freud is known as a product of his time, but scholars have paid less attention to the implicit colonial assumptions of early practitioners and theorists of psychoanalysis. For example, Freud's famous description of female sexuality as a 'dark continent' was part of his whole conceptualisation of 'primitive' societies and the origins of civilisation, which was Eurocentric.

The Introduction by the editors positions psychoanalysis as a mobile technology of both colonialism and its critics. Insights from psychoanalysis shaped Western ideas about the colonial world, the character and potential of indigenous cultures and the anxieties and alienation of colonisers and sojourners. Moreover, engagement with the empire came to shape subjectivities amongst both colonisers and colonised. Yet the character of this intersection has scarcely been explored or examined. This book is thus concerned with the specificity of the relations of psychology and globalisation, seeking new historical depth and political nuance for psychoanalytic elements of postcolonial history – a project of retrieving and also uncovering.

Ethnohistory, colonialism, and the cosmopolitan psychoanalytic subject

The research reported in *Unconscious Dominions* is organised around two goals: (1) focusing on the history and practices of psychoanalysis in the colonial period and (2) referencing this 'colonialised' psychoanalysis in postcolonial critique.

First, Hans Pols recounts Freud's analysis of a famous case, the "Rat Man", to explain how processes of abjection, narcissism and defence, fundamental to our becoming human, can cause recurrent splitting in our relationships. When these psychic

processes are embedded within cultures and institutions, they constitute major hazards, and with globalisation these are multiplied. Pols suggests any democracy to come will not come of its own. It will emerge, recur, or appear as a movement, or a series of such, that slowly comes to know itself as its (recurrent) coming into being gives rise to counter-movements determined to annihilate it. Current developments in the Middle East come to mind!

Alice Bullard's chapter on late colonial French West African psychiatry illustrates how European psychiatrists drew on assumptions of the "primitive" as a referent, often without connection to psychoanalytic data, in Africa and Algeria. The colonised individual was not seen as an individual psyche by analysts, but viewed through a Western conceptual frame of cultural analysis flavoured by racial stereotyping. This extends to the present in many places with regard to people outside or at the bottom of local hegemonies.

Joy Damousi's chapter discusses the psychoanalytic anthropologist Geza Roheim in Australia. It was believed that Australian Aborigines did not have depth of feeling or complex adult emotions because they were primitive. Roheim was no exception; but although he was unaware that much of what he observed was due to the effects of dispossession and discrimination, he perceived the indigenous self as a complex, intricate and multi-layered subject worthy of analysis and interrogation, not to be dismissed as simple-minded or childlike. This signifies an important early contribution to challenging colonialist assumptions.

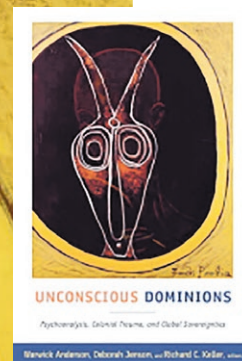
Christine Hartnack's chapter on Freudian and Bengali Hindu synergies in British India contrasts with the previous three. The reception of psychoanalysis in India was self-motivated and not imposed, and originated in continental Europe, not Britain. Moreover, cultural resistance in India could gain in strength by drawing on pre-colonial modes of thinking and behaviour. Girindrasekhar Bose was a charismatic psychoanalyst, a member of an elite caste of the dominant Bengali Hindu community, and founder of the Indian Psychoanalytical Society and Indian Psychoanalytical Institute. Patients were members of the British-educated urban elite and were among those most exposed to a dually British and Indian world where British and Indian cultures merged, co-existed, competed or clashed.

In Bengali beliefs, wishes play an essential role in the sourcing of psychic disturbances. Bose gave the concept of wishes a central place in his oeuvre. A major difference in relation to Freudian theory was that, in Bose's view, resolution of psychic disorders could come about not by sublimation but by the recognition and gratification of repressed wishes. In the Bose model, psychoneurosis is the result of a conflict between repressing and repressed forces; thus, the essential task of the psychoanalyst is to liberate these repressed elements. Bose and Freud corresponded for sixteen years, and eventually Freud acknowledged that he had neglected the existence of opposite wishes and realised he must work them into his system.

Hartnack points to differences between Bose and Frantz Fanon – of Algerian Front fame – to show that colonialism and its effects are not monolithic. India, for example, was exposed to Mogul domination in the past and developed a "rich patchwork" history of cultural influences. Fanon, another anticolonial and critical psychiatrist, had a very different life experience. As an African-Caribbean he was always an outsider, first in France and then in Algeria, confronted with racism, prejudices against non-Muslims, and resentment against intellectuals who came as members of the colonising mission. Bose was not limited to the binary concept of "Black Skin, White Mask"; he strove rather to establish connections and could make a lasting contribution.

Mariano Plotkin's chapter explains that in Brazil things happened differently indeed with regard to the influence of Freud's ideas. In Brazil, psychoanalysis was 'read' through the filter of the Brazilian elite's preoccupations with race, race relations and national identity. There were three overlapping areas of reception of psychoanalysis: its reception in medical circles, its impact in the artistic avant-garde *modernista* movement, and its influence on social sciences.

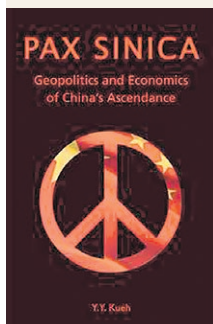
From the late 17th century, the Brazilian economy depended on black slaves imported from Africa in enormous numbers to work on sugar and coffee plantations. Due to widespread interbreeding, the construction of a national identity in Brazil was thus closely connected to the existence of a large mixed-race population. In the early 20th century the mostly illiterate



Encountering a new economic powerhouse

Grasping the nascent international agency of regional powers with global aspirations has become a dominant topic in the study of world affairs. The rash of attention for the emergent dynamics of international interactions has been facilitated by the break-up of the Cold War order, which has allowed a number of actors to extend their international roles and outreach. In this respect, thinking about the shifting contexts of global politics has often gravitated towards the realms of fiction and fantasy.

Emilian Kavalski



Reviewed publication:

Kueh, Y.Y. 2012. *Pax Sinica: Geopolitics and Economics of China's Ascendance*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, ISBN 9789888083824 (cloth)

THIS SEEMS TO BE PARTICULARLY THE CASE when grappling with the emerging international agency of China—an actor whose conceptualization in world politics often straddles the invention/reality divide. Beijing's enhanced confidence and ability to fashion international relations seems to attest both to the transformations in and the transformative potential of Chinese foreign policy attitudes.

Y.Y. Kueh's study, thereby, offers a much needed and an extremely erudite analysis of China's emerging international agency. The point of departure for Kueh's comprehensive reconsideration of China's external outlook is the suggestion that it is Beijing's very ability to maintain consistent levels of economic growth that have allowed it to demonstrate an enhanced confidence and ability to fashion international relations. In particular, Kueh asserts that it is economics that underwrite the geopolitical clout of any actor. The claim then is that the global financial crisis rocking both the American and European segments of the allegedly ubiquitous Global North reveal not merely fissures, but profound underlying flaws of the Western models of development and governance. As Kueh presciently observes, this does not mean that the West should in any way

be perceived as defeated or obsolete. In fact, according to him such vocabulary indicates problems with the way in which we have been schooled to observe, explain, and understand the changing patterns of world politics.

Instead, what Kueh has in mind is that while Western actors still maintain their primacy in a number of spheres of international life, a number of alternatives are springing up. And it is China, according to him, that offers one of the most exciting and innovative models. Labelled as "Pax Sinica", Beijing's model for domestic development and governance underpins what many perceive to be a gradual shift to the East in international life. Such "Pax Sinica" can therefore be seen as an eventual replacement of "Pax Americana", which has dominated global affairs since the end of World War II, which in turn itself replaced the preceding imperial "Pax Britannica" that dominated the nineteenth century (p. vii). It is the elucidation of the content, scope and implications of this Chinese model that distinguishes Kueh's prescient engagement of China's global roles.

What "Pax Sinica"?

The term "Pax Sinica" is usually associated with what some used to call the Chinese world order dominating East (and large parts of Central) Asia from around the year 300BCE to about the mid-1800CE. "Pax Sinica", therefore, was promoted as a type of normative order which maintained both Chinese influence and the Chinese worldview. This order was sustained through the complex institutional arrangement of a tribute system which ensured subscription to the centrality of China in international relations. For Kueh, "Pax Sinica" is not necessarily an institutional arrangement – neither formal, nor procedural. Instead, "Pax Sinica" is a set of practices. These practices span the military, economic, and cultural sphere. As a result,

what emerges is a strategic intention framed by particular and contextual interactions. Therefore, "Pax Sinica" should not be perceived as something fixed and inflexible that others will have to comply with and abide by, but a fluid practice whose meaning emerges in the process of Beijing's interaction with other actors.

Kueh reveals as a major oversimplification the tendency to interpret "Pax Sinica" merely as an ambitious and aggressive strategy for either regional or global domination through the establishment of a Sinocentric order. In fact he suggests that the tendency to read "Pax Sinica" as a modern-day Chinese quasi-imperialist vision of regional security governance reflects Western strategies of narrativizing historical experience. For Kueh, the reference to "Pax Sinica" infers a movement away from neo-colonial approaches to international politics that will "help sustain peace and prosperity in the Asia Pacific" (p. 371). In other words, "Pax Sinica" intimates socializing practices through which Beijing engages in informational, procedural, and symbolic transference and diffusion of its norms in the context of bilateral and multilateral interactions.

In this setting, Kueh suggests that Beijing's global outreach reflects China's attempt to construct itself as a responsible, as well as a reliable, international player that offers a viable alternative to existing models of global politics. It is for this reason that Beijing has generally resisted engaging in direct subversion of established institutions and international regimes, and has more often than not complied with their standards and/or has sought inclusion through membership of their organizational clubs. "Pax Sinica", therefore, can be treated both as a shorthand for and a confirmation of Beijing's insistence on its peaceful rise to international prominence.

Whither "Pax Sinica"?

Kueh is quite blunt that "it seems simply surreal to envisage Chinese superpower emerging in the foreseeable future to replace Pax American in its totality" (p. 371). Yet, such assertion should not be taken as an indication that "Pax Sinica" is not in the offing. The fact that it has not replaced practices that have come to dominate international relations during the last sixty years, does not mean that it does not exist or that it is not viable. Instead, as Kueh's work demonstrates, alternatives need to be studied, engaged with, and understood. It is in the process of accumulating such knowledge that these alternatives become not only more comprehensible, but also less threatening. Kueh's study of "Pax Sinica" seems to achieve for the case of the fledgling Chinese model. Not surprisingly, therefore, his book will be welcomed by students, scholars, and policy-makers alike.

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former slaves began to move into the cities, producing an urban underclass that fed industrialisation and rapid urbanisation. Housing conditions and public health deteriorated. The government only became involved in public education in the 1930s. This was the context in which psychoanalysis arrived in Brazil.

A positivist-somatic paradigm was then fashionable, which included a degeneracy theory: the idea that mental and physical diseases were inherited. In Brazil the seeds of degeneracy were thought to be in the black and mulatto populations. The reception of psychoanalysis in Brazil was thus linked to local elite perception of 'exotic' and 'wild' elements of their own society. Early reception of Freud's ideas was closely linked to education and a neo-Lamarckian emphasis on evolution through inheritance of acquired good characteristics that could be introduced from outside. Psychoanalysis became quickly institutionalised in Brazilian medical circles.

There was a growing perception since the 1920s among the avant-garde that psychoanalysis was not only an innovation in psychology and psychiatry but also an essential component of cultural modernity. Modernism became a powerful movement in Brazil. Modernists used psychoanalytic concepts and ideas differently from psychiatrists. For artists psychoanalysis provided a tool for the construction of an aesthetic and ideological movement that exalted exotic and wild elements of Brazilian culture as creative forces.

The reception of psychoanalysis was positive amongst both medical and avant-garde components of Brazilian society for quite different reasons. The social sciences provided a third space for its reception. Brazilian universities were only created in the 1930 with foreign assistance. Modern social sciences – together with transnational research agendas and mechanisms of validation and funding – were introduced and institutionalised earlier in Brazil than in other Latin American countries and were at the centre of university projects aimed at creating a new breed of national and local intellectual and technical elites.

Thus in spite of differences in their approaches, doctors, educators, social scientists and avant-garde artists in Brazil all found in psychoanalysis an instrument for their social and cultural projects, in a uniquely Brazilian way.

Trauma, subjectivity, sovereignty: psychoanalysis and postcolonial critique

The first chapter in the second part of this volume, by Hans Pols, describes a psychoanalytic interpretation of the Indonesian Struggle for independence. The psychiatrist Pieter Mattheus van Wulfften Palthe had been associated with the medical faculty in Batavia before the Japanese occupation. He was able to observe the events after the Indonesian declaration of independence first hand. His interpretations were influenced by Freud's "Totem and Taboo", which relates how revolting hordes kill an all-powerful father, only to resurrect him in the form of a totem to which they vow unconditional allegiance. According to van Wulfften Palthe, in the Dutch East Indies, the all-dominant father figure had vanished twice, not because of the murderous acts of revolting hordes but as a consequence of unrelated events. In 1942, the Dutch quickly capitulated to the Japanese imperial forces; in 1945, the Japanese surrendered after the US dropped atomic bombs on Japan. In both cases, van Wulfften Palthe argued, Indonesians were left without an object to which they could project their ambivalent feelings of aggression towards the Japanese, which they then transferred to the Dutch when they tried to retake their colony. Relying on general ideas of the primitive mentality of the indigenous population, crowd psychology and psychoanalysis, van Wulfften Palthe located the ultimate reasons for the Indonesian struggle for independence in factors entirely extraneous to the Dutch and the way they had governed their colonial empire.

Pols remarks that Van Wulfften Palthe stood firmly in the tradition of psychiatric commentary on colonial affairs by emphasising the infantile character of the Indonesians. He delegitimised the Indonesian resistance against the resurgence of the Dutch rule in the colonies by explaining it as the outcome of neurotic processes and the irrational, erratic and violent behaviour of hordes. In his perspective, the hatred against the Dutch originated in the few weeks after the Japanese capitulation. In other words, it was not based on the exploitative nature of colonial society, which had existed for over three centuries.

The second chapter in the second part, by Deborah Jensen, is about Haiti. Her concern is intercultural between European

European psychiatrists drew on assumptions of the "primitive"..., often without connection to psychoanalytic data.

and creolised scientific/cultural spheres, specifically as it concerns the evolution of the psychoanalytic notion of trauma. She traces the notion of trauma, beginning with early medical commentary on an African sleeping sickness, or "hypnosis" in Saint-Domingue, to the proposition by American physician Benjamin Rush that slavery in the West Indies produced melancholy and madness, to a decisive late-18th-century creolised unfolding of mesmerism in the colony, to hypnotic modalities in French reactions to the Haitian Revolution and the upheavals of Napoleonic imperialism, and finally to the origins of both psychoanalysis and trauma theory in hypnotic therapy. Thus her chapter follows a tortuous trail to place Saint-Dominique/Haiti on a "geopsychanalytic map".

Richard Keller's chapter, "Colonial Madness and the Poetics of Suffering" tells the story of Kateb Yacine, an Algerian novelist, poet and playwright. We most often imagine medicine as a healing art, a means of alleviating pain. This is a scenario in which medicine is a primary source of – or at least coextensive with – suffering and trauma. Keller's chapter explores iatrogenic forms of suffering, examining the complicity of medicine in the structural violence of the colonial situation, one in which medicine cannot be imagined as anything other than a force of oppression. Fanon (mentioned earlier in relation to Harnack's chapter) is compared with Kateb.

Didier Fassin's chapter, "Ethnopsychiatry and the Postcolonial Encounter" is about ethnopsychiatry in France. He accuses ethnopsychiatrists of reification of culture and fascination with difference. He describes how women are patronised when their economic and mental conditions are labelled cultural difference.

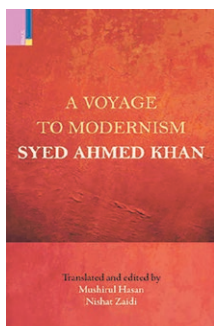
Unconscious Dominions has been meticulously edited, which is unusual these days. The bibliography is extensive. It should be read by researchers and practitioners in the social sciences and psychiatry, by historians and students of culture of all stripes, and by anyone who is interested in cultural interaction, intercultural communication and international understanding.

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Encounters with Europe

Syed Ahmed Khan travelled from Benares in India to London in England in 1869, spent seventeen months in England, and returned to India in 1871. He wrote an Urdu travelogue, in letter-cum-journal form, about his voyage, and this appeared in different issues of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. Mushirul Hasan and Nishat Zaidi have now translated these fascinating pieces, with annotations and a lengthy introduction. The text, originally titled the *Safarnama-i-Musafiran-i-Landan*, is all the more fascinating since it was penned by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, founder of the Aligarh educational institutions and leader of the Aligarh movement among Indian Muslims.

Barnita Bagchi



Reviewed publication:
Mushirul Hasan & Nishat Zaidi
(trans. & eds.) 2011.
A Voyage to Modernism:
Syed Ahmed Khan,
New Delhi: Primus Books,
ISBN:9789380607078 (hb)

EARLIER EUROPEAN TRAVELOGUES by Indian Muslims include notably those by Mirza Abu Taleb Khan (1752-1806), and Lutfullah (b. 1802); Hasan, however, argues that Syed Ahmed Khan's travelogue is different in nature, inaugurating a new phase in relations between South Asian Muslims and the West, in which the observations of modernity in England also contain the core of an argument for rapprochement between the British and South Asian Muslims.

We find in these pages a constantly active, entrepreneurial mind, keenly interacting with the world around him whether in Egypt or in Europe, and thinking constantly about how to create channels and institutions for communicating messages of Muslim reform, and for fostering Anglo-Muslim relations. Syed Ahmed is known as one of the progenitors of the so-called 'two nation theory', whereby Hindus and Muslims were

supposed to be members of different nations, a doctrine which led to the movement and eventual creation of Pakistan. Yet his mind as shown in these pages is sharp and dogma-free. When Major Dodd, a Director of Public Instruction in British India mentioned to Syed Ahmed that a particular man had not been made Director of Public Instruction because he did not hold any religion to be true, Syed Ahmed retorted that in his opinion precisely such a man should be appointed to the post in a country such as India, since otherwise, in a country of so much religious diversity, religious prejudice would impede the growth of secular education. Syed Ahmed thus shows his belief in such a broad, nondenominational, secular system of education. This impression is further strengthened by the cordial, admiring warmth with which he interacts with Mary Carpenter (1807-1877), the English Unitarian social reformer and educator who was travelling on the same ship as he was. Although Syed Ahmed himself did little to promote girls and women's education, he says that he was keen to meet Carpenter because of her efforts towards furthering women's education in India. The two of them spoke with the help of a translator since Carpenter spoke no Urdu and Syed Ahmed spoke little English. Syed Ahmed brings up one of the most striking transcultural episodes in the history of nineteenth-century reform, viz. the syncretic, monotheist reformer Rammohan Roy's visit to Bristol, where he stayed with Carpenter's father, and where he died and is buried. Inspired by Rammohan Roy, Carpenter started working for Indian education and social reform,

and she visited India in 1866, 1868, and 1875. Her efforts resulted, for example, in the establishment of a Normal School to train female teachers in India.

This reviewer was riveted by all the everyday details about diet, monetary and credit transactions that Syed Ahmed recounts. He makes detailed enquiries about how animals whose meat he will eat are slaughtered, whether on board ship, or whether in a hotel in Bombay, and gives descriptions of such methods. He gives helpful advice to those Hindus whose dietary practices made it difficult for them to eat food cooked by others on such a voyage to Europe: his advice was to carry enough dry food that would last the month of the voyage, and then to begin cooking once Europe was reached.

In Versailles, Syed Ahmed protests against the way in which Algerian women are shown to be humiliated, bedraggled, and bereft of dignity in a painting that commemorates the French victory in Algeria in the early nineteenth century. Again and again he protests against manifestations of colonial arrogance, as, for example, when he notices Major General Babington writing 'ungrateful and heartless' when Mary Carpenter asked him to jot down his opinion of Hindustanis (Indians) in her notebook. Syed Ahmed writes following this, "All this leads to the conclusion that there is no meeting ground between the British and the Hindustanis. Both carry strange assumptions about each other and the assumptions of both are undoubtedly most often misplaced." [pp 119-120]. Such moments of perceived intercultural impasses on Syed Ahmed's part need to be remembered, lest we think of him in an over-facile manner as the architect of an Anglo-Muslim alliance in nineteenth-century India.

Syed Ahmed visits and makes notes about educational institutions such as Cambridge, all the while planning, gathering funds, racking up debts, and ceaselessly working to further his own educational reform plans in India. These would come to fruition when he set up the school and then the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College (1877) in Aligarh. Aligarh became, and remains (in the shape of the present-day Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh, India) a key centre for the production of modern knowledge spanning disciplines, with research and teaching conducted in a rigorous, analytic, open-minded manner. Both Mushirul Hasan and Nishat Zaidi are themselves products of that Aligarh education and ethos, and it is thus fitting that they have produced such a useful, enriching, multifaceted translation and annotated edition of Syed Ahmed Khan's encounters with Europe, written from Syed Ahmed's own vantage-point as a key Muslim modernist figure of the nineteenth century.

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China Information is published three times per year in March, July and November by SAGE Publications and edited by Tak-Wing Ngo at the University of Macau.



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Reports

HUTONG | Adaptation, Special issue of Abitare, on the Beijing Hutong

Bert de Muynck & Mónica Carriço (MovingCities)



GULOU, HISTORY WILL NOT REPEAT ITSELF

Especially prior to the start of the 1980 Beijing Olympic Games, the phenomenon of the disappearance and demolition of the hutong gained great momentum. The threat posed by demolition, once considered an exception...

Following analysis of the present architectural condition of the hutong in and around Gulou, 'The connection between the past and the future' is the central theme of the article. The article discusses the role of the hutong in the city's history and the challenges it faces in the modern era.

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Beijing has undergone several infrastructural and architectural makeovers that have altered the morphology of the city's historical core. During the past two decades this process accelerated and the Old City, the terrain within the former city walls (turned second ring road) became a focal point for architects, conservation experts, local residents and governmental institutions to think about – but also to refute – the importance and need for preservation of its accumulated layers of history, *in casu* the hutong, the typical narrow alleyways that provide China's capital with its characteristic social life and construction culture.

Old city, new Beijing

Hutong life at the beginning of the 21st century has many faces, perspectives and shapes. Beijing's inner city has become an arena for real-estate investment, courtyard upgrading and localized gentrification with building regulations putting literally and figuratively a cap on the height of construction. The decision, in 2001, that Beijing would host the 2008 Olympic Games set new pressures on the inner city's traditional residential areas, the hutong, while also instigating queries on how to develop and preserve this urban tissue. Since then, the tension between the demands to consolidate an image of the 'Old City' and the yearning for a 'new Beijing' provoked discussions about the value and future of Beijing's hutong traditional lifestyle and architectural qualities.

The hutong's way of life is today understood as an endangered aspect of Beijing and of Chinese cultures that needs to be conserved and/or adapted to contemporary needs. Decades of adaptations and inhabitations of the many courtyard structures not only obscured the original architectural structures, but also provoked questions about property ownership and rights, implementation of governmental policies, reckless destruction by real-estate developers, 'accidental' demolition, gentrification and the need to secure people's livelihoods in the centre of China's capital.

During the past decade, tourism injected itself prominently as a program into this territory – it has brought new life, business and people to the hutong. It created new and localized scales of economies and activities. Hutong tourism celebrates and capitalizes on the intertwining of construction and destruction. Its architectural representation leads to a double-identity syndrome that balances heritage protection and consumption. Paradoxically, tourism does not totally oppose the discourse on demolition, but accelerates the hutong's demise through a pastiche-like architectural redevelopment agenda. Replacing small-scale residential programs with strip-like commercial activities, tourism has thus triggered an economic benefit while having a gentrifying effect on some neighbourhoods. Today, the hutong's vibrant and messy theatre of daily life co-exists with these crowded and sterile historical copycats. Areas like Nanlugouxiang, the Drum & Bell Tower and Qianmen Area (South of Tiananmen) have all exploded in less than a few years and have been flooded by masses of tourists seemingly unaware that most of these places represent a reconstructed architectural authenticity. At the same time the hutong is still a battleground for property rights disputes (resulting from the *danwei*-system, forced eviction or influx of migrant population in search of cheap and temporary housing), and most of its streets are in need of renovation of its basic public amenities.

Today, Old Beijing still breathes hutong and history, while also choking and running out of air. From within, the hutong has given birth to a living culture, adapted to both the reality of and rumours about ongoing and sudden change. It is mutating to the demands of modern China, both negatively and positively, and some buildings are rusted and ramshackle, others grand and ghostly. Even though facing rapid demolition, many areas have also been 'protected' from the 1990s onwards and strangely influence the rapid disappearance of those hutongs not included in these protection plans.

Abitare/MovingCities

Coinciding with the 2013 Beijing Design Week, Abitare China Magazine asked us (MovingCities) to guest-edit a special issue on the hutong. Rather than lamenting loss, or trying to turn back the tide, to a traditional understanding of heritage preservation, we tried in 100 pages (featuring more than 20 contributors) to look at the future by understanding the present. And rather than dealing with professional architects' opinions on what needs to be done, we investigated and talked with those directly affected by, or those influencing, the development of the hutong: local residents, business people, artists, lawyers and government officials who have chosen to live and work in and with the hutong.

A living organism absorbing the demands and influences of its surrounding urban environment, the hutong sustains a uniquely evolving and localized living culture; a place where territorial changes abound, where new professionals move in, yet local residents remain; where traditions are continued and revived, reinvented and reinterpreted. It raises the questions of what, how and why to preserve, demolish and renovate. As such, a new understanding emerges; despite all the destruction, the hutong continues to respond to the demands of twenty-first century Beijing, and, most importantly, new life is ceaselessly generated in these territories.

The hutong presents problems that eschew straightforward solutions, as all of its predicaments are interconnected: housing conditions and property issues, cultural and heritage preservation, commercialization and tourism, governmental initiatives and individualistic approaches, accessibility and environmental degradation, as well as the upgrading of basic public amenities.

Under the keyword HUTONG, MovingCities presents a volatile architectural, urban and cultural condition, concerning the transformation of a local Beijing spatial culture. Let us call this HUTONG/adaptation; so to encompass the multitude of strategies, visions and reflections flourishing in this urban tissue. Beyond the demand or desire for preservation, ideas and visions of renovation, revitalization, occupation, relocation, legislation, urbanization and gentrification are explored. The content of the magazine is organized in three complementary sections, identifying locations and actors influencing the perception and planning of these urban areas. Firstly, by looking back – REWIND – to reflect and remember; secondly, investigating and touching upon the present – NOW – so as to feel a possible future, and finally – DASHILAR – a historically important area just South of Tiananmen Square that throughout the past year has become a focal point for a new mode of urban development. Rather than large scale destruction and construction, DASHILAR embraces 'nodal development' – infusing small scale creative business within a living community.

Adaptation is a common thread in the discussion on the future of Beijing's hutong, in the many interviews conducted with professionals (architects, lawyers, urban planners, decision makers, journalists, writers and creatives), entrepreneurs, and residents, living and working in and with the hutong. They speak of the urgency to debate the role and relevance of architectural and urban preservation in Beijing. In this special issue of ABITARE CHINA, MovingCities argues that the hutong does not demand utopian visions, but rather common sense and solutions for basic and tangible problems.

MovingCities is a Shanghai-based think-tank investigating the role of architecture and urbanism in shaping the contemporary city. Established in 2007 by Bert de Muynck [BE] and Mónica Carriço [PT], MovingCities' varied work ranges from publications, creative collaborations, cultural consultancy and setting up new international architectural and urban relationships. Bert de Muynck is an architect and writer, and assistant-professor at the University of Hong Kong, Shanghai Study Centre. Mónica Carriço is an architect-urbanist, researcher, and a member of the Portuguese Architects' Guild.

ABITARE seeks cutting edge design, architecture and art projects, all seen from a new perspective. Based on the 50-year-old classic magazine Abitare, specializing in culture and architecture, ABITARE China always follows a characteristic, literary writing style, and provides in depth cover of events and stories about architecture, design, culture and people in a lively and interesting way. (www.abitare.it/en)

For further inquiries, updates, background, interviews and lectures related to the special issue of ABITARE China (#34 Hutong/Adaptation), visit www.movingcities.org/projects/abitare-china-34-hutong-adaptation or contact MovingCities at info@movingcities.org

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Reports continued

The present state of social science research in Asia

G.K. Lieten

THE FIRST PAN-ASIA CONFERENCE 'Status and Role of Social Science Research in Asia, Emerging Challenges and Policy Issues' (New Delhi, 13-15 March 2014), with representatives from 24 countries in Asia and some non-Asian countries, was intended to assess the present state of social science research in Asia and to set up a network for further coordination and support. The conference, at the initiative of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and funded by the Canadian IDRC (International Development Research Centre), sought to line up the concerns, mainly addressing the role of research granting councils in Asia and internationally (www.icssridrc-conference.com). In the final session, it was agreed that an Asia Network of social science research councils, institutions, think tanks and eminent social scientists will be established. The following report is a modified version of the closing lecture that I delivered at the conference to summarise the proceedings.

Somewhere in the 1980s, it was predicted that the 21st century would be the Asian century, the century of Asian dominance. In terms of population figures, there is no shadow of a doubt that Asia is a giant. In terms of economic magnitude and significance, Asia has been catching up impressively, albeit restricted to specific regions. In terms of academic achievement, however, the track record in many areas is insipid. The pan-Asia conference in New Delhi illustrated the ascending and declining curves in the different areas.

For social science research (SSR) to adequately support policy making, the organisers stated, the presence of supporting infrastructure is of crucial importance. But funding will not be the panacea. Various speakers at the conference lamented the low qualifications of the research staff and the low quality of output, and hence the inefficiency of such research funding. Some even suggested that the quality and policy-relevance of output in the publicly-funded institutions is dismal and that private-public partnership with well-qualified professionals is doing a better job.

Knowledge societies

Whatever the outcome of the debate, one firm and incontestable given should remain, or should become, the bottom line of any discussion: the importance of SSR. Sukhadeo Thorat, the chairman of the ICSSR, stated in his opening speech: "It enables us to empirically understand reality and it helps to throw light on the causes of mal-development, which will allow us to develop policies, reduce inequalities and tension and develop national goals".

This deserves repetition. We live in a world in which 'knowledge' is regarded as the driver of change and growth. Technological knowledge particularly has spread at an exponential rate, also in a number of Asian countries, and public and private funding testify to its importance. But in most countries, as the examples of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Afghanistan have illustrated, research outlay is low and is mainly allocated to medical and physical science. SSR funding, which in many of these countries falls under the Ministry of Science and Technology, is abysmally low. It is peanuts rather than breeding money. It is remarkable how limited the number is of studies on most social issues in a region of close to 3 billion people, especially in comparison with the array of studies which are being conducted on social and psychological issues in western countries. Notwithstanding all the other problems and weaknesses in the SSR structure in many Asian countries, a higher level of funding may, to an extent, help us to understand the depth of social problems, the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, the debilitating effects of old customs and modern (globalising) inductions, the consequences of polarisation and of development.

Research has been embedded in an economic model oriented towards product expansion and profit generation, towards improving and streamlining the material infrastructure. Funds are by and large allocated to technological research. SSR receives the remnants – close to the Arts – which are regarded as a luxury, especially in times of economic crises and resource constraints. Financial cuts are explained away as rational budgeting: the dominant neo-liberal philosophy, based on the orthodoxy of market-led development, regards societies as self-organising systems. During the last quarter century there has accordingly been an ideological onslaught against 'the makeability' of society. This is what the argument in favour (or against) social science research hinges on: the makeability of society or social engineering.

Such makeability of course should not be construed as an absolute factor, easily to be rejected. Rather, in the context of developing countries, the question should be asked why something, which after many dreadful decades of the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, has in the twentieth century very much helped in the state formation and progress

of developed countries, should not be applicable to Asia. As Jan Breman (Amsterdam) argued in his submission, the development of the various social science disciplines played a significant role in streamlining the dynamics of change. In various ways, although not in a directly tangible way as is the case with technological research, SSR has contributed to development and to embedding of society in the economy, and the other way round. Moreover, unlike in the long gestation period of capitalism in the West, growth and social development can no longer be sequenced, as C. Rangarajan, the chairman of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India, aptly stated in his opening remarks. They should develop simultaneously.

It is a credo that Gunnar Myrdal drew attention to in the early 1970s, with his seminal book *Asian Drama*, but which seems to have been forgotten in the context of market-driven development. The lesson in those days was rather simple, without being simplistic: the more the masses are included in the development process, the more development will take place and the more a need for understanding, controlling, enhancing, upgrading and galvanising social processes. The importance of SSR therefore seems to have a strong correlation with the troth and froth of the development process. SSR and the spread of social knowledge could be regarded as an amplifier in development.

In that process, various research fields and sub-fields of research need to be developed. The conference was a checklist of the multiple issues on which research ought to be done, but aspects of funding were always in the centre, or around the corner. Some, particularly those who work in private research institutes (think tanks, consultancy firms, etc.), with enough research grants and projects to tap, have argued that money is not the problem. It was contended that actually much of the funding is pure social wastage: it is distributed among malfunctioning public centres that excel in bad research and non-dissemination.

In various countries in Asia, even in various institutions in countries with a better track record, inefficiency and incompetence may very well be the rule rather than the exception. Despondency and a further cut in the already dimly low finances, however, would be the wrong response. It is rather a matter of heavily investing in a low quality product so as to lift it to a higher level, or, in economic terms, from a low equilibrium to a high equilibrium. The emergence of a critical mass of well-equipped research institutes and qualified researchers is a *sine qua non*. This requires much more than the scraps presently available for SSR in most Asian countries.

Research as different concepts

The presentations and discussions at the conference were fascinating, but it struck me that participants were sometimes speaking different languages. When delegates argued that enough funds were available, that research should be policy-oriented and could involve commercial partners, bypassing the universities, that foreign project funding was a helpful makeshift in difficult times, etc., they were indeed talking about research, but one could not help but become conceptually confused. Semantically, 'research' has at least two different meanings: applied research and core research, or, problem-solving research and problem-oriented research.

Below: Professor Sukhadeo Thorat, chairman ICSSR: "to enhance the importance of social sciences in informed policy making".



Any industrial house has an in-house R&D department, where day-to-day problems and processes are investigated. Ministerial departments, political parties and NGOs similarly (should) have an investigation wing or consultants to rely on when dealing with nasty social issues or new social phenomena. In many Asian countries, we have been told, there is in-house research, investigative journalism, action research, rapid appraisal, etc. These activities, however, could not possibly substitute for core SSR as it is done in the universities and research institutes.

Actually, both components in the 'research' arena are fairly related. Any research, in whatever constellation and for whatever purpose, requires a robust set of qualified professionals. Applied research in that sense has an instrumental function. It can only be done by well-groomed researchers, having gone through the university system and having been trained in the nitty-gritty of research methods and methodologies. Many of us, on an honorary basis or on a pecuniary basis, have done applied research, but have done this on the basis of professionalism. It is this type of research that the conference addressed when interacting on funding, capacity building, and institution building. Achieving such professionalism, on a higher level of equilibrium, that appears to be the big job ahead, particularly in the many Asian countries, which have not progressed that far, or which are slipping.

This is the perspective – the difference between SSR and its instrumental use in applied research – from which I have tried to understand the debate on various issues. I shall elaborate on three of them here: the needs versus demands issue, the relevance and impact, and the funding quagmire.

Needs and demands

The relevance of SSR has generated much discussion. Research funding, after all, is mostly financed by the so-called tax payers' money, and answering to public demands would be a factor of concern. There basically is nothing wrong with demand-driven, policy-oriented research (even with policy-supporting research by those who wish to do so). At the level of applied research, demands (by the funding agency basically) would normally be accepted as the guiding criteria, but it was felt as a disquieting factor that these demands follow the fashion and the hypes of the day and may have a very short-term horizon. They would also cover only a small portion of the entire gamut of research that needs to be done on issues that may not have mainstream attention, but which nevertheless are important to understand.

There are three other disquieting features related to a policy-oriented, policy-supportive and/or stakeholder-driven research agenda. One problem is that such research more often than not is consultancy-oriented. Whereas in quite a number of countries in Asia, universities are in a state of intellectual impoverishment, as some of the country reports have indicated, the private research establishment is flourishing. Since more openings, and better-paid opportunities, become available in private research foundations, the better qualified research staff, raised with taxpayers' money, will be tempted to leave the publicly-funded and publicly functioning research establishments.

In the second place, such research is inhibiting the spread of knowledge in the public domain. If the output of research, by contractual prohibition, does not enter the public arena, it hampers the intellectual development and understanding of social processes.

In the third place, such research does not have a breeder function. Research projects go to the lowest bidder. It was mentioned by the director of an important high-quality research institute in New Delhi that presently 75% of its research project is acquired on the basis of bidding. The narrowly earmarked funding does not allow for a spread effect and internal capital formation within research establishments, nor does it extend into university education. It does not have the knowledge-amplifier function, which SSR should have.

This is what could be regarded as collateral damage. In the words of Abid Suleri (Karachi), it leads to "a process whereby the connection of research to policies is fragmented, non-systematic, involving a plethora of actors and institutions acting relatively independent of others (and) never seeing the light of the day because they are not published in the public domain, not peer reviewed and thus not scrutinised for their validity in contributing to sound policy".

These hallmarks of the new research agenda were summarised by Ravi Srivastava (New Delhi) with three epithets: *privatisation*, *marketization* and *fragmentation*. Examples from Pakistan, Thailand, India and Bangladesh clearly testified to this triple process. If not reversed, the entire mission of SSR will be at risk. That mission was cursorily summarised by S.R. Deshpande (Bangalore): "the understanding of social processes by an emancipatory interest in welfare and wellbeing". Such mission is outside the purview of applied research.

The issue of needs and demands would better be discussed at this level, rather than at the level of an alleged contradiction between needs (what researchers feel) and demands (what funding organisations need). Whereas demands relate to policy issues of today, needs relate to the understanding of processes,

past, present and future. The latter are the core SSR concern, but a good SSR basis facilitates a demand-driven research agenda. Such an agenda should emerge in an autonomous process.

Nationally embedded SSR research in public institutions would help to provide insights in social processes and in turn would help to upgrade the applied research projects. It would help to challenge existing (western-dominated) paradigms, rather than validate what already exists, with only the addition of local circumstances, as Khalid Riaz (Karachi) argued. He framed much of present-day research in his own country as 'imitative research' and vividly described how a history of funding through private sources has left the universities in Pakistan in a state of intellectual impoverishment. That point was also taken up by Likhit Dhiravegin (Bangkok) who, drawing on his long-standing experience with (the decline in) Thai research, reasoned similarly and even framed such commercialised, foreign inducted research as 'research delinquency'. Rehman Sobhan (Bangladesh) qualified the consequences of such a regime of externally driven research as 'devastating'.

Relevance and impact

Even if it is readily accepted that SSR will never be in the driving seat of policy making, and that much of the research output is not directly useful (redundant, low-quality, not-in-tune with policy demands, etc.), social scientists would like to consider that they have an impact, and therefore need to be properly funded.

Core SSR may have a low direct impact on policies. It is safe to suggest that impact remains a mystery, and that a cost-price analysis is nonsensical. Direct policy-oriented applied research may have some relevance, but even there reports, even if they are of good quality, may disappear or may get lost in the lowest drawer in the office, may eventually land on the office desk for a while and then be forgotten, or may be 'executively' summarised by an assistant; it may eventually also be glanced through by the person in charge who may lift the less relevant points for action and then subsequently realise that finances are lacking and then leave it to the implementing agencies, who have their own agendas and botheration.

The overall conclusion could very well be, as some have argued, that relevance and impact are fairly limited. But one should also measure the other way round: not assessing the forward linkages but the backward linkages as well; feeding societal knowledge and contributing to the knowledge society. In one of the sessions, the role of the media was emotionally discussed; the media reproaching the academia that they were operating in an ivory tower and did not use the media as a tributary of their findings, and the academia reproaching the media that, given the commercialisation in all the platforms, there was no real interest in academic experts or research results.

Intellectuals in the past, also in Asian countries, have played an important role in critical analysis and in the spread of knowledge generally. It is something that in the past was referred to as the 'upliftment' and 'conscientisation' of the masses; but such enlightenment, still on the policy agenda in the 1970s and 1980s, seems to have given way to entertainment and has narrowed the avenues for delivery of knowledge.

At the conference, some voices advocated the hybridisation of higher education, with a lesser role for established universities and a bigger role for various types of private institutions. Whatever the argument, none of the institutes of (higher) learning can live up to their role unless they have publicly-transparent SSR as a feeding ground. In the knowledge-based chain, the developing and nationally-based insights can then be spread via the professional cohort of teachers to all levels of society. Such a backward linkage of research is as important in terms of relevance and impact as the forward linkages to policy makers.

Funding

A number of international funding agencies – the International Development Research Centre (Canada), CNRS (France), the German Research Foundation DFG and International Development Research (United Kingdom) – dwelt on the various ways in which funding is available and the technicalities of the selection procedures.

All funding has conditions attached and these conditions generally are the ownership of the funding agencies. The funding agencies by and large set the intellectual climate, concepts and parameters for research. This is where the shoe pinches. Not surprisingly, the modalities came up for discussion. Even allegations of western intellectual imperialism were thrown up by Shamsul Amri Baharuddin (Malaysia) and Likhit (Bangkok).

All (foreign) funding, Larry Strange (Cambodia Development Research Institute) argued "should be supportive of long-term commitment and to avoid the treadmill of reactive project opportunism", which in his view is detrimental to institution and capacity building.

As an alternative to 'fragmented, top-secret, short-term, non-enduring' research, block funding to public institutions was advocated. A good example of such block funding in the last quarter of the previous century, it could be recalled, was the Indo-Dutch programme on Alternatives in Development. It was a joint effort in which ownership was properly divided and the funding agency, with its own set of needs and preferences, was not in the driving seat. Such an approach would be the way forward.

Summing-up

For various reasons, as stressed during the conference, many more funds will have to be made available for core SSR. It will ultimately help to lift the research capacity and relevance to a higher equilibrium. Reducing research to its instrumental function, namely applied research on topics and issues to be decided by policy, would be detrimental to the core SSR. SSR essentially provides the breeding ground for knowledge enlargement and enlightenment. The backward linkages of research, feeding into education and in to society at large, are immeasurable. The contribution of SSR in this respect can only be neglected at a high social cost, hampering cohesion and development.

Block funding to public research institutions is mandatory. It feeds into publicly available knowledge and synergy. The present trend of diverting research funds to private firms and institutions hampers many of the direct and indirect benefits that SSR could deliver. Too often, it was also agreed at the conference, SSR is still at a low quality level. The setting up of a Council of Asian Research Institutes may help to mutually reinforce institution building and orientation.

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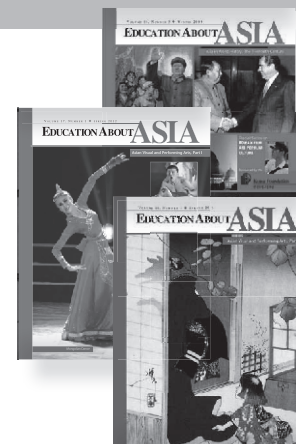


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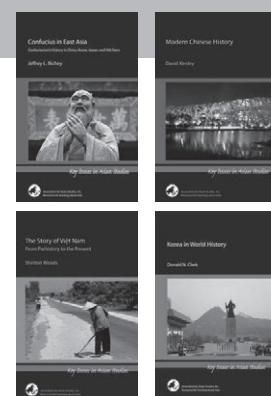
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The return of the hải ngoại artist and new art spaces in Vietnam

Huong LE THU



THE ART SCENE IN VIETNAM is undergoing a revival. Fast changing socioeconomic trends brought about by the 1986 *Đổi Mới* have resulted in profound changes in every sphere of Vietnamese life, including the arts and entertainment sector. Economic growth followed by international cooperation, the advancement of technology, including new media, have seen a proliferation of new cultural activities, innovative forms of artistic expression and creative cultural exchange with other countries. Art has once more become attractive to a wider national audience.

Nevertheless, this optimism was not always there. Indeed, the *Đổi Mới* may have even been detrimental in some ways to the traditional arts. For example, pre-*Đổi Mới*, the arts and performing organizations were subsidized by the communist

Artist Ngoc Nau is working in her studio to produce artwork 'Light portrait', 2013
Source: San-Art

regime, but later, economic reforms saw a reduction in public funds available to the cultural sector. On one hand, the cultural sector saw a reduction of subsidies while, on the other, it failed to generate sufficient income because of the small portion of income an average Vietnamese spent on art and entertainment. Many art and cultural organizations were severely affected, including the film industry. Those who managed to commercialize and survive, however, also complained about the difficulties of preserving artistic standards. Meanwhile, state control over the content of artistic and cultural expressions hampered innovation and creativity. Mainstream art was harnessed by the state to inspire patriotism and represent 'Vietnam-ness' through the themes of idyllic villages, peace, life and heroic people. Art served the purpose of promoting

national identity, particularly important for a country that suffered years of wars and continuous foreign aggressions. The communist regime decided what artistic expressions to promote and what to prohibit.

The political turmoil and wars resulted in a mass exodus of artists in the 1960s and 1970s, the majority of which originated from south Vietnam. This artistic diaspora formed a vibrant community of *hải ngoại* (literally 'overseas'), who sought freedom for their artistic, and often political, expression. *Hải ngoại* became a genre of its own, manifesting mainly in music, but also in literature and cinematography, and is popular among the overseas Vietnamese in France, USA, Canada, Australia and other western countries. These artists in exile were able to express what could not be expressed in their country and produced works of art that were full of nostalgia and idealization of a beloved, estranged motherland. Quite naturally, these overseas Vietnamese were influenced by western styles and artistic idioms whilst they continued working with traditional art. With the relaxing of state censorship and the return of the *hải ngoại* artists to Vietnam, a new art form is being introduced to a domestic audience of 90 million.

Many post-war artists have embraced forms of expression that transcend local traditional styles and themes, and have begun experimenting with contemporary art. Contemporary art, still marginal, is consumed only by a small and select community of art lovers. The Academy of Fine Art continues to focus on preserving traditional forms of artistic expression and hence is resistant to artistic innovation. However, new spaces for contemporary art are emerging. While only a small circle of cosmopolitan Saigoners, many of them *Việt Kiều* (overseas Vietnamese), was initially supportive of contemporary art, Hồ Chí Minh City is now offering prominent art spaces like Galerie Quỳnh, Cactus Gallery or Zero Station. Not to be outdone, Hanoi also boasts Manzi, Hanoi Grapevine and Nhà Sàn Studio to cater to its contemporary art lovers. Foreign partners, like the Goethe Institute and the British Council in Hanoi, have been instrumental in promoting contemporary artistic expressions.²

The changes wrought by *hải ngoại* artists became more evident by the late 2000s. A new generation of *hải ngoại* contemporary artists began to make their mark. One such initiative was Sàn-Art, based in Hồ Chí Minh City, established in October 2007 by four Vietnamese-born and educated artists who are now working abroad, namely Dinh Q. Le, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, Phu Nam Thuc Ha and Tiffany Chung. Noticing a lack of artistic exchange in Vietnam, they started Sàn-Art as a platform where local and international artists could engage and showcase their work, serve as a forum for contemporary art discussion, and to nurture new talent. Sàn-Art was for a long time the only such experimental art organization in Vietnam that worked with local and regional artists while offering education opportunities. It has been recognized as a good example of the UNESCO Convention on Promoting and Protection of Diversity of Cultural Expressions.



Above:
Light Portrait' 2013;
Photography light
box 70 x 50 x 7 cm
Source: San-Art

In 2013 Tran Vu Hai turned a Soviet-era pharmaceutical factory in Hanoi into an arts complex called Zone 9. Soon, it became the hottest spot in the city. "Here in the factory, we can make things from zero and do whatever we want to do," said Hai in an interview with the Diplomat Magazine.³ This space, symbolic in the way it provides a sense of freedom and expression, is a unique atmosphere that attracts both Vietnamese and foreigners. The Zone 9 spirit spread beyond the artistic community to amass an impressive 60,000 'likes' on Facebook.

Another new space is 'Initiative - Contemporary Arts Museum' (I-CAMP), which helps to exhibit and preserve contemporary artworks. Tran Luong, the artist and curator behind the idea envisions an exhibition space for contemporary artworks, including installation, video art, photography, conceptual art, land art and site-specific art. More than 10 artists in Hanoi have been involved in this project, including famous names like Trinh Thi, Luong Hue Trinh, Huy An, The Son and more. They launched I-CAMP's first exhibition in December 2013 at Muong Museum. A bold project of implanting modern technologies and consumer goods in under-developed settings underlined the gap between urban middle class and poverty-stricken areas in rural Vietnam.

The return of *hỏi ngoại* artists and the creation of new art spaces is slowly changing the production and consumption of art in Vietnam and responsible for contributing to the on-going revival of the artistic landscape. As young artists, intellectuals and educators, these contemporary Vietnamese artists are leading the wave of experiments in cultural expressions.

**Huong LE THU, Visiting Research Fellow,
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- Hỏi ngoại music is of particular impact, promoting Vietnamese overseas art as well as bridging new generations of Vietnamese born abroad to the heritage of their ancestors. There are a number of studios, distributors and production centers, like Thuy Nga Paris, Asia, Làng Văn or Văn S n Studio. They have served as homes for 'refugee' artists and composers, centers of cultural and artistic community and providers of comfort to the Vietnamese political and economic emigrants. Some of Vietnamese most prominent modern artists, composers and writers have been creating 'in exile' and distributing their work 'back home' through these centers.
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Culture and politics of the newly announced Vietnamese Independent Writers' Association

Jason Morris-Jung

IN VIETNAM'S HIGH POLITICS of Politburo and Party Congresses, the recent 'Declaration to Establish a Vietnamese Independent Writers' Association' by 62 prominent Vietnamese writers from inside and outside the country might appear as a trivial event.¹ Indeed, one is immediately confronted with the question of why such an Association would even be necessary when the official Vietnam Writers' Association (*Hội Nhà Văn Việt Nam*) has already been operating for more than a half century. Yet in the context of growing oppositional voices within the single party-state, the Declaration is another important event. It is a direct challenge to state censorship and control over the arts and literature, while also calling on all Vietnamese writers to take up the struggle of revitalizing the nation's political consciousness and envisioning new alternatives.

While the *đổi mới* reforms of the late 1980s brought Vietnam onto the path of a market economy, its political system has remained stubbornly communist. Jonathan London refers to this model as Market-Leninism, whereby "communist parties pursue their political imperatives through market institutions and market-based strategies of accumulation while maintaining Leninist principles and strategies of political organization."² One of these key strategies has been 'state corporatism'. Under a corporatist approach, state authorities officially recognize certain organizations as the sole representative of their group or class in exchange for political obedience.³

When the Vietnam Writers' Association was established in 1957, it was designed as part of an elaborate institutional skeleton being rolled out at the time by the fledgling party-state – as newly recognized by the Geneva Accords of 1954 – to establish the basic structure of this corporatist approach.⁴ Organizations like the Writers' Association were important not only for promoting a certain type of thinking that reinforced the party-state's own political platform, but also as a convenient instrument for disciplining and punishing regime critics by divesting them of professional status and sully personal reputations. Hence, when members of this new Association called themselves 'independent', it should have been very clear from what they were declaring their independence.

One has only to look at the author of the Declaration to understand well the political context and history of this initiative. At the age of 82, Nguyễn Ngọc is one of Vietnam's most renowned nationalist writers for his glorifying accounts of the contributions of the highland ethnic minorities to the war efforts of the North Vietnamese. However, Nguyễn Ngọc was also at the center of controversy in the late 1980s, when he was dismissed as Editor-in-Chief of the Vietnamese Communist Party's *Arts and Literature Magazine* for his role in publishing the satirical and irreverent writings of Nguyễn Huy Thiệp and other "đổi mới" writers. Since then, he has earned a reputation as an outspoken critic of state politics and ardent supporter of many privately funded cultural and educational projects.

Other signatories to the Declaration include southern writers Bùi Minh Quốc and Tiêu Dao Bảo Cự, who, at the time of Nguyễn Ngọc's dismissal, organized a protest march through the Writers' Associations across the country to demand his reinstatement. There are also literary scholar Nguyễn Huệ Chí and writer Phạm Toàn (aka Châu Diên), who are famous for the online petition they drafted in 2009 that brought together 135 of some of the most well-known and accomplished Vietnamese intellectuals from inside and outside the country in common protests of a government policy for bauxite mining. Among them are well-known regime critics, such as poet Hoàng Hưng and writer Hà Sĩ Phú, who have both been jailed for their writings and outspokenness. Yet there are others too, like writer Phạm Đình Trọng, a lifetime Party loyalist until recently when he renounced his party membership and became a vocal critic of the party-state.

That this group of writers came together to protest state censorship and control over the arts and literature is significant. The last time they did so, in the late 1950s, they were brutally repressed by the party-state in what was known as the Nhân Văn – Giải Phẫu Affair, named after the two arts and literature journals around which they were organized. However, in the past few years, Vietnamese artists and intellectuals have re-emerged on the domestic political landscape. Through traditional and especially online media, they have been raising awareness and leading public discussions on many of the nation's most sensitive and important political issues. Their historically rich discourses and their own public

prestige have played a vital role in bringing together diverse Vietnamese groups from across the country and even around the world in a common opposition to major policies of the party-state.

The Declaration for the new Association reminds its readers of "the most important functions of literature, which is to stir the moral conscience and build up the ethical values of society." Its purpose is to help forge a 'fundamental renewal' in the nation's political consciousness, one that has not been possible up until now because of the type of state controls and political culture that has pervaded Vietnamese arts and literature since the Nhân Văn – Giải Phẫu Affair. For this reason, the Declaration argues:

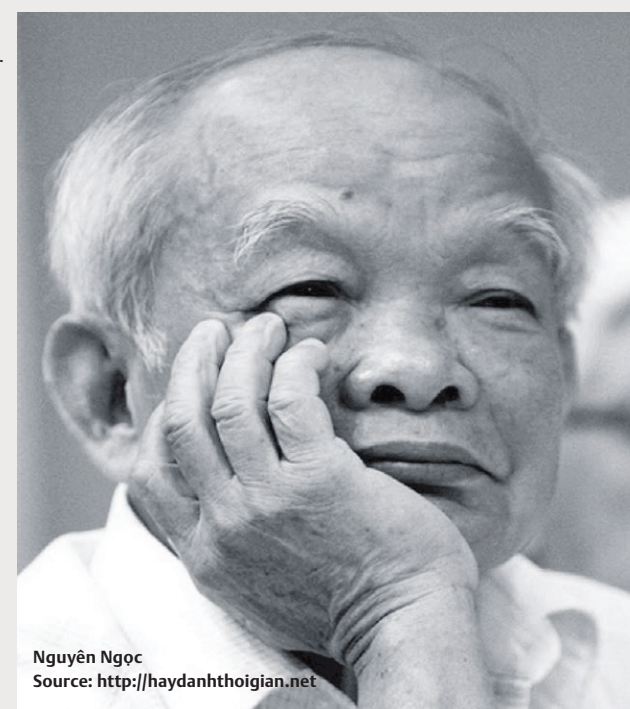
Facing this prolonged situation that has now become urgent, we, the writers that have signed our names below, have decided to establish an independent organization for Vietnamese writers from inside and outside the country called the Vietnam Independent Writers' Association, with the hopes of contributing actively to building and developing an authentic, humane, democratic, modern, and globally integrated Vietnamese literary profession that can play a necessary vanguard role in the cultural renewal and renewal of the nation that our history demands.

The Declaration is less clear, however, on how the Association will be established and what exactly it will do. However, this is also indicative of the new politics that the Vietnamese intellectuals are leading. It is more performative than instrumental. It is more about raising awareness and exposing the limits of the current political system than a belief in gently influencing the system to transform itself. In this regard, the Declaration for the Vietnamese Independent Writers' Association cannot lose. Either it finds a way to establish itself and flourish and thereby demonstrates the possibility of a more independent existence; or state authorities suppress it in the usual way, but in the process expose themselves to an increasingly vigilant public eye.

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Nguyễn Ngọc
Source: <http://haydanthoigian.net>

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IN 1877, when the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen introduced the term 'Great Silk Road' for the trade routes between the Far East and the West that ran through Central Asia, it became clear to the world that beneath the sands of these forgotten regions, lost cultures could be found. It was a time when archaeologists were making great discoveries, and in the late nineteenth century they turned their attention to Central Asia. The earliest expeditions, organized by Russia, Great Britain, Germany, France, Sweden and Japan, competed for the most spectacular finds. Lost cities and monasteries were unearthed and caves discovered in Mongolia, western China, and later in the present-day Central Asian republics exclusively by Soviet archaeologists. Unexpected sites proved to hold treasures spanning many centuries, from long before Christ to the Middle Ages: Buddhist images, traces of Christianity and Judaism, silk, silver, gold, wall paintings, sculptures, and jewellery, all of high artistic quality and bearing witness to astonishing interactions between cultures and religions. Lost countries, cities and empires acquired names: Sogdiana, Chorasmia, Parthia, Khara-Khoto. This was the discovery of the Silk Road, a magical world where treasures ranging from long before Christ to medieval times attest to unprecedented cultural interchange.

The world's largest trade network for more than 1,700 years

The origins of the Silk Road are said to lie in the second century BC. China was under regular attack by nomads, the Xiongnu, and responded by building the Great Wall of China. In search of allies in this struggle, the Chinese emperor Han Wudi sent a diplomatic mission led by Zhang Qian to the west in the late second century. Zhang Qian's reports included descriptions of all the regions, kingdoms, and city-states that he visited. His journey resulted in China's earliest trade relations with the peoples to the west and Chinese products such as silk gradually spread to such far-off places as Rome. This was the start of a network of trade routes linking China to the Mediterranean over a distance of 7,000 kilometres. It branched to the north and south of the inhospitable and mostly barren Taklamakan Desert, running through the almost impassable mountain ranges of Pamir and Tian Shan to the fertile regions around the Oxus and Jaxartes Rivers (now known as the Amu Darya and Syr Darya). From there, it went south to Persia and north to the Caspian Sea, and through the Caucasus to Asia Minor.

Crossroads of civilizations

In the ancient and medieval worlds, Central Asia was at the crossroads of several great civilizations: India, Persia, China, and the Roman Empire. In the north, it bordered on steppes where nomadic peoples dwelled. The oases and kingdoms of this vast region played a crucial and welcome role as way stations and marketplaces. The Silk Road was not a single, fixed route, but a network of trade routes that grew out of China towards the west. And it carried much more than just silk. Besides silk,

the products from China in the east included lacquer, paper, bronzeware and later porcelain and tea. Traders also brought glass, wool, and linen (often in the form of tapestries) from the Mediterranean region in the west. Fur came from Siberia in the north, while topaz, emeralds, perfumes, henna, and exotic animals were brought from India in the south. Every part of the Silk Road traded leather, paper (a Chinese secret until the 8th century) and chemicals such as ammonium chloride, used in polishing metal and treating leather. In Central Asia, halfway along the Silk Road in what is now Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, lay Sogdia, a pivotal trading post and a source of highly valued silver vessels. The Sogdian craftsmen also produced fine silver that was in great demand. Sogdian merchants settled in various locations along the Silk Road and played a dominant role in trade. Their elite led lives of luxury, dressing in elaborate silk clothing and using beautifully decorated dishes and vessels at their banquets, as a superb mural in the exhibition shows. Their interest in the good life encouraged the advancement of the applied arts to a very high level. Sogdian kings built palaces whose majesty has been uncovered by archaeologists. One of the exhibition's many highlights is a nine-metre-long mural from the Red Hall of the palace of the kings of Bukhara in Varakhsha.

The Silk Road: an early technology highway

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

IN RECENT YEARS there have been many books, articles and exhibitions about the so-called Silk Road and how 'it' was used to transport goods and ideas, notably silk and Buddhism, from one part of the world to another. Yet, this series of merchant trade routes also had another function. It enabled technology to move from one region to another.

An example of how the 'Silk Road' acted as a technology highway can be seen in the 'history' of one particular type of weave, and in the way its form changed as examples of the cloth gradually moved from Western China to Egypt and the Mediterranean. The type of cloth in question is technically known as a compound weave, namely a weave in which the weft or warp is divided into two or more series, which appear both on the face and on the reverse of the cloth.¹ The design produced is identical on the front and the back of the cloth, except that the colours are reversed.

The earliest known examples of compound weave textiles come from Western China and are of the warp-faced variety, in which the warp threads (the vertical, tension bearing threads on a loom, contrary to the weft threads, which are passed

under and over the warp threads) are combined into series and the patterns appear in the warp.² They belong to the Warring States and the Han periods. These textiles were produced in their thousands and then sent in the form of small bales as wages, trade goods and so forth, to cities and communities living in Central Asia and beyond.

Until the coming of (warp-faced) Chinese silks in Central Asia, the local weaving technology seems to have favoured cloths in which the pattern is in the weft. In addition, wool was widely used for textiles rather than silk. It would appear that some unknown weaver(s), being confronted with the warp-faced compound weaves imported from China, started to experiment and produced a technique for weaving compound weave textiles in the weft form using both silk and wool; examples of this type of textile have been found at sites such as Lou-lan, in Xinjiang.³ And weft-faced forms in wool (rather than silk and wool) were found at Niya, also in Xinjiang, dating to the first quarter of the first millennium AD.⁴ These and other pieces suggest that weft-faced compound weave textiles in either silk or wool (or both), were being produced in Central Asia sometime in the first to third centuries AD. Interestingly enough, shortly afterwards weft-faced forms of textiles started to appear in China, as these textiles and their technique travelled eastwards again.

But the story of the compound weaves does not end at this point in time. Both the (Chinese) warp and the weft-faced forms from Central Asia travelled along the Silk Road to the Middle East and the Mediterranean, in the form of actual textiles

or by weavers talking with each other, or indeed both.

Of particular interest are the weft-faced compound weave textiles that were found at Roman-period sites in Egypt. Examples come from Mons Claudianus in the north of Egypt, from Qustul, Akhmim, as well as Qasr Ibrim and Gebel Adda in the far south of this vast land. The compound weaving technique was used for particular textiles, including cushions, mattress covers and wall hangings.⁵ These were made in wool, while compound weave curtains were generally made of wool and linen.⁶

In addition, archaeological evidence and extant textiles show that the compound weave was also used and adapted in Iran and beyond, during the Sassanian period (224-637 AD). These include the famous textiles with large circular designs often including singular or paired birds, animals or people, that are encircled by small discs or pearls. This form was made in both wool and cotton, as well as in silk. Examples of silk weft-faced compound weave textiles of the Iranian style, for instance, were found at the Syrian site of Palmyra (destroyed 273 AD) and Halabiyeh (destroyed sixth century AD).⁷

The production of weft-faced compound weave textiles continued well into the Medieval period, when wool with cotton versions (Iranian influence?) are found at Egyptian archaeological sites, notably at Fustat (the early capital of medieval Islamic Egypt) and Quseir al-Qadim, an obscure port on the Red Sea coast of Egypt. And the tradition still continues.

Fig 1: Head of a monk (Buddha's pupil Ananda?). Dunhuang, China, 8th-9th century. Loess, clay, painted. Fig 2: Hand of a Buddha. North-Bactria, Karatepe, 2nd-3rd century. Plaster. Fig 3: 'Sakya-knights'. Kucha, Xinjiang, 6th century. Loess, clay, plant fibres, wood chips, painted. All images © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

The spread of Buddhism

These trade routes became the site of an unprecedented exchange of goods and ideas. We can see the results in the magnificent wall paintings found in many places along the routes. Often wall paintings in a wide range of styles were found on the same site. Buddhism was one of the first phenomena to spread along these routes, from India towards China by way of Gandhara (modern-day southern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan). Centuries later, Islam began moving eastward, replacing Buddhism in many places. It followed the same routes as the Silk Road traders. Christianity and Judaism spread into Central Asia in the same way, as shown by artefacts such as an incense burner with Christian iconography and a ring with a scene of Daniel in the lion's den. Many remains have also been found of Zoroastrianism – the first world religion, which was founded by the prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra).

The end of the Silk Road

The conquest of Central Asia by the Mongols under Genghis Khan ushered in the region's last golden age, as part of a vast, centrally controlled empire and continued well into the fourteenth century, despite the fact that the Mongol Empire was separated into minor principalities. In the fifteenth century, China's Ming Dynasty stopped exporting silk. The maritime roads along the coasts in the Indian and Pacific oceans were known since antiquity, but it developed rapidly after 1488 when the Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias discovered a sea route around the Cape of Good Hope, which soon replaced trade routes on land. The rise of companies for maritime trade, such as the Dutch East India Company (VOC), brought the story of the overland Silk Road to an end. By this time, Islamic culture was for a long time dominant in Central Asia, and the mosques and mausoleums along the Silk Road could be recognized by the blue colour of their domes and outer walls.

The expeditions and the collection

The cultures of the Silk Road were not rediscovered until the late nineteenth century, when Russia, Great Britain, Germany, France, Sweden and Japan organized the earliest expeditions and competed for the most impressive finds. The Russian expeditions hit their stride after 1905 under the leadership of scholars such as Mikhail Berezovsky, Sergei Oldenburg and Pyotr Kozlov. Dozens of expeditions headed by Russian archaeologists set off for Mongolia, western China, and, in the Soviet period, to the now independent Central Asian republics. In numerous places, they uncovered treasures spanning many centuries, from long before Christ to the Middle Ages. In the Hermitage in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), these were put on display as ancient treasures of the Soviet Union with its many peoples, as well as the past of the nations of communist China and Mongolia. To this day, the Hermitage has continued its excavations in Central Asia – for instance, in the Sogdian city of Panjakent in Tajikistan. These projects are now led by experts from the Oriental Department of the State Hermitage Museum, who are also involved in the making of this exhibition.

Martijn van Schieeven, press and publicity coordinator
Arnoud Bijl, exhibition staff member

By the beginning of the 21st century two main lines of production in the Middle East can be identified, namely the Egyptian and Iranian forms. The Egyptian versions are now totally in cotton, rather than wool or linen. The Egyptian form is loosely woven and flexible, which is not so surprising, as this type of cloth was and is used for bed spreads. A little more surprising, however, is that some of the designs being used can be traced back to Roman period forms. This form of compound weave cloth is often called 'Akhmim,' after the middle Egyptian city of Akhmim where archaeological examples of this type of weave have been recorded from the Roman period. They are still being produced here, thus continuing a tradition of almost two thousand years.

As noted above, the second line is the Iranian form. They are now called *zilu* and were being produced in various centres, notably, until today, in the city of Maybod in Central Iran close to Yazd. *Zilus* are made in cotton and are produced on vast upright looms. These hardwearing textiles are used as rugs and large floor coverings and were popular in mosques, where they lasted for decades. Although these textiles were in widespread use in the 20th century, by the beginning of the 21st century virtually every *zilu* loom in Iran had ceased to work and many were broken up and burnt. Their demise after nearly two thousand years of history was due to another form of technological and trade development, namely the import of vast quantities of cheap, machine made textiles,

Right: A *zilu* loom from Maybod, Iran. Photo by Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, 2000.

The spread of Buddhism in Central Asia

Jonathan Silk

NOTHING CERTAIN IS KNOWN of the Buddha or his earliest communities. The reasons for this are numerous, beginning with the absence of writing in India until several centuries after the Buddha's lifetime (setting aside the Indus Valley inscriptions, which may be writing, but if so, remain undeciphered). Whatever the Buddha may have preached, and whatever was said about him, therefore, was transmitted only orally for a long time.

The result is that we have a good idea of what certain communities believed about the Buddha, but we know nothing historical. In terms of his community, putatively originally nomadic, at some unspecified time it began to establish settled monastic institutions, but it was likewise hundreds of years before, what we assume to have been, the earliest monastic architecture in wood – long decayed into oblivion – gave way to edifices in stone. Therefore, even the earliest material remains of institutional Buddhism in India are forever lost to us. It is not until the time of the great emperor Aśoka in the early 3rd century BCE that we begin to obtain concrete information, much of which comes to us from the inscriptions the emperor had erected throughout the Indian subcontinent. These provide our first clues of the geographic spread of Buddhism, and indicate that already quite some time after the Buddha lived and taught in the North central Gangetic valley, his tradition had spread toward the Northwest, the area now known as Pakistan and Afghanistan, ancient Mathura and Gandhara. This region has also yielded our earliest written Buddhist manuscripts. While there is no question that Buddhist scriptures (sutras) were transmitted orally, originally and even after the innovation of writing, the states in which those oral texts existed were naturally entirely ephemeral. Even when we have texts, transmitted in Pali in Sri Lanka for instance, which may in origin have been older, these have been subject to generations of revision. The Gandhari Buddhist manuscripts, written on birch-bark, provide us with our oldest sources of Buddhist literature, and demonstrate the highly literate and sophisticated state of Buddhism in the Northwest of the subcontinent from around the first century BCE.

A relay race

Given the geography of Asia, the routes that Buddhism followed in its spread naturally followed the contours of the land, the paths already traced out since time immemorial by traders. These are commonly, although in some respects no doubt misleadingly, referred to as the Silk Routes. But of course, it was much more than silk that was traded. Moreover, refined silk is a Chinese product, and the implication that the trading routes invariably linked China with lands west is also misleading, for these routes were certainly, in terms of volume, much more interregional networks of short-distance trade. This has implications for the transmission of Buddhism

too, since it is very much the exception rather than the rule that individuals would travel long distances. We should think rather of a relay race, with a baton being handed from one runner to another, each member of the team remaining within a relatively limited area.

Most of the attention paid to the spread of Buddhism across Central Asia concentrates on its progress north out of the Bamiyan valley, through mountain passes, then eastward, along either the northern or southern borders of the Taklamakan desert, through the oasis towns there, to the north through Kashgar, Kucha, and Turfan, to the south through Khotan, Niya, and Miran, joining in the now-famous Dunhuang oasis. However, Buddhism in fact also spread west, into Bactria, the Greek lands once conquered by Alexander, to places such as Termez along the Amu Darya (Oxus) river. We do not actually know quite how far Buddhism spread west, or why, when and where it stopped, and this remains an interesting topic for future research.

Multilingual literature of Buddhism

As Buddhism – its teachings, its scriptures, its practices, and ultimately even its monastic institutions – spread, one important issue was that of language. In what language would believers receive the Buddha's word? There are two models: either scriptures were preserved in the 'Church Language', in the same fashion that Jews generally preserve the Bible in Hebrew no matter what language they speak, or the texts may be linguistically localized. In Buddhism's trek across Central Asia, we find both of these models, and not infrequently, we find them together. That is, texts might be revered in Sanskrit, but as this medium remained foreign to Central Asian people, the texts were either translated, paraphrased or rewritten in a local language – often though with the preservation of a significant Sanskrit vocabulary, just as we do when we talk of the Buddha, his Dharma, of Zen and the like. This led to the production of a multilingual literature of Buddhism across Central Asia, in languages like Khotanese (Middle Iranian), Sogdian (another form of Iranian), Uigur (Turkish), Tangut (a Tibetan language, written in a variant of Chinese script), Tibetan, and of course, Chinese. The Chinese, as is well known, were relentless in their quest for Buddhist scriptures, and engaged, albeit entirely unsystematically, in the greatest translation project in world history, rendering huge numbers of often very arcane texts into an evolving form of written ('classical') Chinese.

At the same time, we must remember that Buddhism is far from only its scriptures, and in fact the most vivid and easily 'accessible' artefacts of Buddhism and its spread across Asia is found in the often remarkable physical objects produced: sculptures, wall-paintings, banners, and so on. The latter were often produced on silk, a product that the artists could only have obtained in China. But that does not mean necessarily that the objects themselves were produced even within the sphere of Chinese cultural, much less military and political, control. Rather, it is a tribute to the vitality of trade that such goods – luxury goods that they may have been – were widely available along these corridors.

The exhibition now on show at the Hermitage in Amsterdam highlights a variety of aspects of the presence of Buddhism along the so-called Silk Routes of Central Asia. Anyone with the slightest interest in this fascinating episode of human history is warmly invited to visit this stunning show.

Jonathan Silk is Professor of Buddhist Studies at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies. (j.a.silk@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

from, among other places, China. But the *zilu* tradition in Iran still continues. Some years ago I laughingly bought a *zilu* rug at a petrol station near Maybod. Made of plastic.

Dr Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, director of Textile Research Centre, Leiden. (www.trc-leiden.nl)

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- 4 Watson, W. 1973. *The Genius of China*, London: Royal Academy Exhibition catalogue, p.130, nos. 247 and 248; Shih, H.Y. 1977. 'Textile finds from the People's Republic of China', in V. Gervers (ed.) *Studies in Textile History*, Toronto: ROM, p.314
- 5 See for example, VA 780.1893 and 243.1890, Whitworth Art Gallery 8529 (cushions); Boston Museum of Fine Art 04.2036 and Textile Museum 31.11 (mattress covers)
- 6 British Museum 21703
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ICAS



Australia warmly invites Asia Scholars to ICAS 9 in Adelaide
The 9th International Convention of Asian Scholars
5-9 July, 2015, Adelaide, Australia

ICAS 9 will be hosted by an international team of experts, spearheaded by Adelaide's three leading universities: University of Adelaide, Flinders University of South Australia and the University of South Australia; in cooperation with the Asian Studies Association of Australia. Interested parties can participate as commentators, speakers (paper, panel, roundtable), exhibitors, contestants (ICAS Book Prize), or presenters (books and dissertations).

Call for papers

To participate in a panel or roundtable, please visit our submissions site for further information and application forms.

Visit: www.icassecretariat.org

Submission deadline: 10 Sept 2014

PhD Pitch

This new element at the convention is aimed at young doctors who would like a chance to pitch their dissertations at ICAS 9 (defended within the period June 2013 to June 2015). They will be allotted a half hour to make their presentation in a specially reserved meeting room. Presenting a PhD does not exclude any young doctors from participating in a panel or roundtable at ICAS 9.

www.icassecretariat.org/proposal-phd-pitch

ICAS Book Prize

Established in 2004, the ICAS book prize aims to create an international focus for publications on Asia while increasing their worldwide visibility. The biennial ICAS Book Prize is awarded to outstanding English-language works in the field of Asian Studies. Prizes are also awarded to the best dissertation in the Humanities and the Social Sciences. The Colleagues Choice Award gives the academic community the opportunity to voice their opinion as well. Votes can be cast online through the IBP Polling Booth from 16 Mar-16 June 2015.

All submissions must be made by 15 Oct 2014. For details visit: www.icassecretariat.org/icas-book-prize-2015-rules-and-regulations

ICAS Book Presentation Carousel

This new element at the convention is aimed at Asia scholars who would like to present their books at ICAS 9 (titles must have been published within the period June 2013 to June 2015). Authors will be given one hour in a specially reserved meeting room to present their publication. There will also be time for a public discussion and book signing. Presenting a book does not exclude the author from participating in a panel or roundtable at ICAS 9.

www.icassecretariat.org/proposal-book-presentation

Exhibition Hall

ICAS attracts participants from over 60 countries to engage in global dialogues on Asia that transcend boundaries between academic disciplines and geographic areas. Since 1998, ICAS has brought more than 17,000 academics together at eight conventions. During the convention, publishers and (academic) organisations in the field of Asian studies have the opportunity to display their products in the ICAS Exhibition Hall, which is open to the public.

Exhibit at ICAS 9?
Find out how at: www.icas9.com



Submissions: www.icassecretariat.org
Event site: www.icas9.com

Adelaide
 Australia
exceptional!

A-ASIA Inaugural Conference Asian Studies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interactions

15-17 January 2015, Accra, Ghana

Organized by the Association of Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA) in cooperation with The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)

In 2015, the A-ASIA in cooperation with ICAS will organize its first biennial conference with the theme 'Asian Studies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interactions'. It will be the first conference held in Africa that will bring together a multidisciplinary ensemble of scholars and institutions from the continent and the rest of the world with a shared focus on Asia and Asia-Africa intellectual interactions.

The conference, 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 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? What is the current state of research on Africa-Asia (transnational) linkages?

A-ASIA/ICAS Africa-Asia Book Prize

The A-ASIA/ICAS Africa-Asia Book Prize (AABP) was established by the ICAS Secretariat and A-ASIA in 2013. The aim is to create, by way of a global competition, both an international focus for publications on Africa-Asia, while increasing their visibility worldwide.

Academic publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences which are eligible should either be written by an African scholar on an Asian topic or by any other author on Africa-Asia (transnational) linkages. Authors from Africa and Asia are strongly encouraged to submit their books. All academic books published in English, French and Portuguese between 2009 and 1 July 2014, on topics pertaining to Africa-Asia are eligible. The winner of the Prize will be invited to ICAS 9 in Adelaide (5-9 July 2015) to present his or her book during the ICAS Book Presentation Carrousel.

The deadline is 1 July 2014.
For further information, rules and regulations go to: <http://africas.asia/asia-icas-africa-asia-book-prize>

A-ASIA website: www.a-asia.org

Conference website: <http://africas.asia>



Announcements

International Conference

Changing Patterns of Power in Historical and Modern Central and Inner Asia

7-9 August, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

A THREE-DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE organised by the International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies (Ulaanbaatar), in collaboration with IIAS, and hosted by Ulaanbaatar University.

This conference aims to highlight the current state of knowledge in research on the history of Central and Inner Asia since the twelfth century until the present day, and to contribute to the debate on the role and position of Central and Inner Asia during much of the second millennium.

Among other things, the conference seeks to address how patterns of power are reflected in the process of social adaptation, how this process allows former elites to retain their privileged access to resources, material and ideological assets, and how it enables new elite groups to emerge. The organisers stress the trans-regional character of communication and exchange of the socio-political concepts and cultures between Central and Inner Asia and other world regions, because patterns of power exercised by the Central and Inner Asian ruling elites have been neither simply imposed by external players, nor generated by the society in isolation. The geographical scope of the conference is, understandably, large. The organisers construe Central and Inner Asia to refer to the huge expanse of land from the Urals in the west to beyond Mongolia and deep into modern China in the east.

Registration and information

The call for papers is closed. People interested in the subject and who would like to attend the conference can contact Ms Martina van den Haak at m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl

More information: <http://tinyurl.com/power-central-asia>

23rd Wertheim Lecture

When Village Meets Urban Tsunami: Cultivating Space, History and Cultural Belonging in South China

18 June 2014, 15:00-16:00

Agnietenkapel, Oudezijds Voorburgwal 229-231, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

THE 23RD WERTHEIM LECTURE will be held by Professor Helen Siu from Yale University. Based on archival research and fieldwork, she will focus on village life in a district of Guangzhou that has become a central business district. Villagers are rapidly absorbed by the thriving city while they cling onto collective rural statuses of a Maoist era. Excluded from city life for decades, they now carry a complicated historical baggage to join China's fast forward march to modernity. They shrewdly employ a rural legacy to game big time real estate, and create new livelihoods, sociality, and cultural belonging.

The lecture identifies key features in China's expanding urbanities. It challenges linear categories of development and highlights the use of history and multiple cultural-referencing by local agents as they face global restructuring, embrace nationalist aspirations, and confront state-market interface in their daily lives.

Honouring the legacy of Professor Wim Wertheim, the founding father of Asian studies at the University of Amsterdam, the annual Wertheim Lecture is co-organised by the Moving Matters programme group of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), and the Graduate School for Social Sciences (GSSS) of the University of Amsterdam.

Registration (required)

There are limited seats available.

Please register online via: <http://tinyurl.com/wertheim23>

Professor Helen Siu



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.

The Award

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

Criteria

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

Submission

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

Deadline

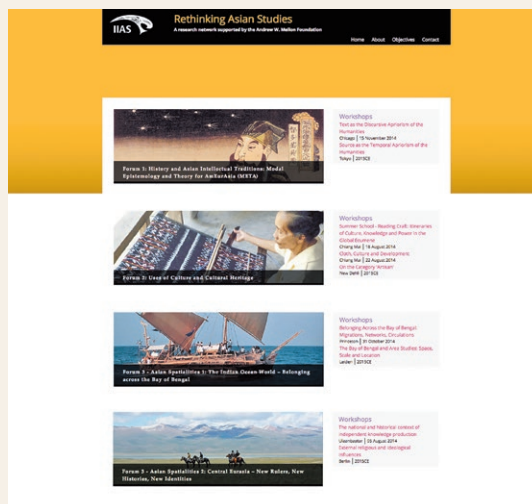
1 October 2014, 9.00 am
Submissions should be sent to:
Secretariat
International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9500
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
iias@iias.nl

Announcements *continued*

New Website

Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

It is our pleasure to invite you to visit the new website www.rethinking.asia



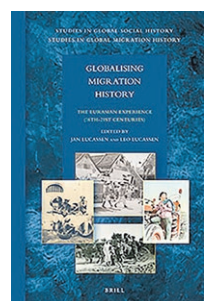
THIS WEBSITE IS DESIGNED to offer a platform for the wide and diverse research network involved in IIAS' three-year pilot programme Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context (2014-2016). Rethinking.asia will be used to inform you, your colleagues in the field and others interested in Asian Studies about the research network, the events and the educational opportunities involved.

As the programme evolves, the website will develop into a database on decentred knowledge of Asia in an interconnected global environment. In addition to the convenors, we will add the participants involved in each event and their biography and affiliations. The event reports will also be published on the website.

Coordinator: Titia van der Maas (t.van.der.maas@iias.nl)

New Publication

Globalising Migration History



Edited by Jan Lucassen (IISG) & Leo Lucassen (Leiden University), 2014
Globalising Migration History. The Eurasian Experience (16th-21st centuries)
 Published by Brill
 ISBN: 9789004271357
 500 pp.

THIS PUBLICATION is the result of the conference *Migration and Mobility in a Global Historical Perspective*, held at the National Taiwan University (NTU) in August 2010, and sponsored/organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the National Science Council (NSC) of Taiwan.

Globalising Migration History is a major step forward in comparative global migration history. Looking at the period 1500-2000 it presents a new universal method to quantify and qualify cross-cultural migrations, which makes it possible to detect regional trends and explain differences in migration patterns across the globe in the last half millennium. The contributions in this volume, written by specialists on Russia,

China, Japan, India, Indonesia and South East Asia, show that such a method offers a fruitful starting point for rigorous comparisons. Furthermore, the volume is an explicit invitation to other (economic, cultural, social and political) historians to include migration more explicitly and systematically in their analyses, and thus reach a deeper understanding of the impact of cross-cultural migrations on social change.

Contributors are: Sunil Amrith, Ulbe Bosma, Gijs Kessler, Jelle van Lottum, Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, Mireille Mazard, Adam McKeown, Atsushi Ota, Vijaya Ramaswamy, Osamu Saito, Jianfa Shen, Ryuto Shimada, Willard Sunderland, and Yuki Umeno.

Series

This volume is the third in a series on Global Migration History, which started with *Migration History in World History* (edited by Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen & Patrick Manning, Brill 2010) and was recently followed by *Migration and Membership Regimes in Global and Historical Perspective* (edited by Ulbe Bosma, Gijs Kessler and Leo Lucassen, Brill 2013). These publications fit in the *Global Migration History Programme* of the International Institute of Social History (IISH) in Amsterdam and in the Leiden University interdisciplinary research profile *Global Interactions (LGI)*.

Film festival

37th Douarnenez Film Festival

22-30 August 2014, Douarnenez, France
www.festival-douarnenez.com



Photo: Still shot from 'Shape of the Moon' directed by Leonard Rettel Helmrich.

THE FIRST DOUARNENEZ FILM FESTIVAL in 1978 resulted from the mobilisation of a vast network of cultural, artistic and activist organisations. From the outset interest in world cultures led us towards the struggles and resistance of other peoples. The notion of cultural diversity, *the other, elsewhere*, was already meaningful 37 years ago well before negotiations led to the signing, a few years back, of the UNESCO charter for Cultural Diversity. This notion of *human heritage*, that of mankind, of language, of culture, of the particular expression of peoples and communities, underlay the festival from its inception, whether these peoples be marginalised or excluded, torn apart or deported, besieged or reduced to silence, dumped or displaced, colonised in manifold ways, dominated against their will or in rebellion. Many of these peoples are in a phase of reconstruction and are telling their own story through film, literature, photography and music. 37 years on, almost two generations later, the clamour of the world is still central to our

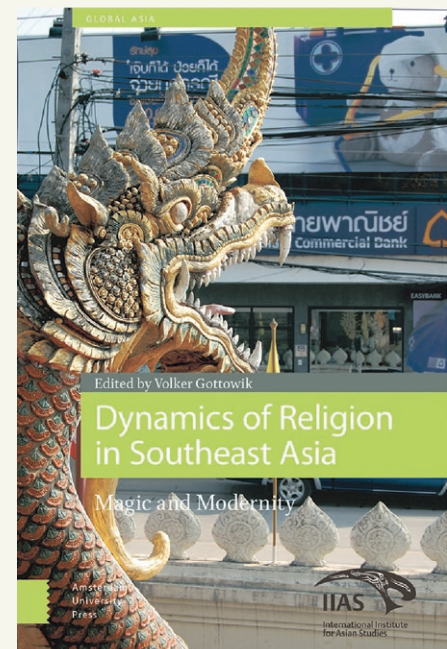
preoccupations. Douarnenez Film Festival is a major cinematographic event combining creativity and collective reflection, art and criticism to explore the complexity of the world.

This year's edition, taking place between 22-30 August, will be dedicated to the people from the Indonesian Archipelago, their culture, their rich history and the everyday struggle to preserve their identity. The Timorese people and Papuans will be equally honoured during the 9 days of the festival. Through the 60 to 70 films, features, documentaries, animation, short and long, the Douarnenez Film Festival will try to be a platform for these people and their culture. Among the guests will be filmmakers, journalists, writers, human rights activists, historians ... from Indonesia, Timor Leste, Western Papua as well as Europe.

IIAS publications

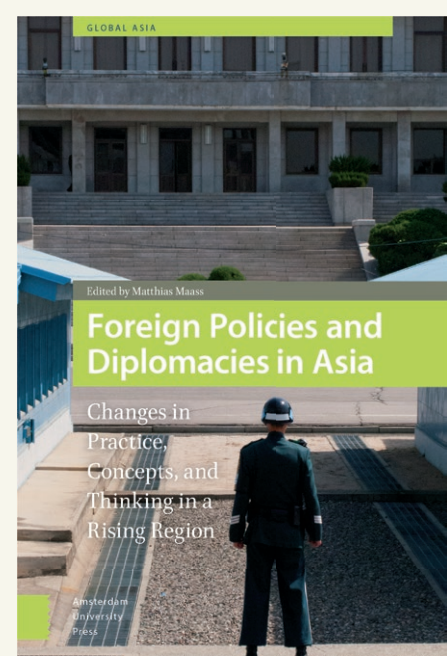
Global Asia book series

www.iias.nl/publications



Volker Gottowik, 2014
Dynamics of Religion in Southeast Asia. Magic and Modernity
 Amsterdam University Press, ISBN: 9789089644244
 225 pages, €79,00

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



Matthias Maass, 2014
Foreign Policies and Diplomacies in Asia. Changes in Practice, Concepts, and Thinking in a Rising Region
 Amsterdam University Press, ISBN: 9789089645401
 208 pages, €79,00

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

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. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics. Visit www.iias.nl for more information.

Global Asia

THE GLOBAL ASIA CLUSTER addresses contemporary issues related to trans-national 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.

Asian Borderlands Research Network (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)

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. EPA's current and second joint comparative research programme with the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is entitled *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 programme will analyse China's increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil. It seeks to determine patterns of interaction between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects, and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economies. This programme is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS. **Coordinators:** M. Amineh, Programme Director EPA-IIAS (m.p.amineh@uva.nl or m.p.amineh@iias.nl), Y. Guang, Programme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance

The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its 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 research projects fall within the following interlocking areas: State licensing, market closure, and rent seeking; Regulation of intra-governmental conflicts; State restructuring and rescaling; and Regulatory governance under institutional voids.

Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo (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 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 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'. 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 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 programme examines the postcolonial cities of South, East and South-East Asia, and how some of them have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right. Intended as an interdisciplinary research endeavour, the Postcolonial Global City has 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.

Coordinator: Greg Bracken (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.

For a full list of UKNA Partners please refer to the UKNA website (www.ukna.asia)

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

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.

MA Courses on Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

Over the last few years, IIAS has been intensively engaged with the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and targeted Asian partners in the development of a programme that combines two interrelated master's in heritage studies, at Leiden University and an Asian partner university, respectively. As of September 2013 students can opt for the focus on Critical heritage studies of Asia and Europe within the Leiden University MA in Asian Studies. Students can obtain the MA degree from Leiden University but can also engage in a Double Degree, offered by Leiden University and one of the Asian partners (currently National Taiwan University in Taipei, Yonsei University in Seoul, and Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta).

The heritages focus is supervised by Dr Adèle Esposito (IIAS/LIAS). Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard University) is guest teacher for one of the courses and Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative of IIAS.

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) 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)

Open Cluster

Ageing in Asia and Europe

This research programme sheds light on how both Asian and European nations are reviewing the social contract with their elderly citizens. Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l'Age, la Citoyenneté et l'Intégration Socio-économique (REIACTIS).

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

Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

WITH THE OBJECTIVE of reshaping the field of Asian Studies by adapting it to the new conditions of a more interconnected global environment, the three-year pilot programme Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context (2014-2016) seeks to foster new humanities-focused research and educational opportunities by selecting cross-disciplinary methodological questions likely to shift scholarly paradigms as they pertain to Asia. In practice, the programme is built on a wide, transregional network of academics and practitioners from Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa.

The programme is incorporated in the overall research strategy of the IIAS, which focuses on three thematic clusters, namely Asian Cities, Asian Heritages and Global Asia. It includes a range of scholarly activities such as workshops, conferences and summer schools in five topical areas, or fora, that cut across regions and disciplines:

1. Artistic interventions: history, maps and politics in Asia
2. Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage
3. Asian Spatialities: i) Indian Ocean World, ii) Central Eurasia, iii) Southeast Asian Borderlands
4. Idea of the City in Asian Contexts
5. Views of Asia from Africa

The programme is coordinated by the IIAS, with the participation of numerous institutions in Asia, the United States and Europe, and is funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York.

Coordinator: Titia van der Maas (t.van.der.maas@iias.nl) www.rethinking.asia

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, 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

Mehdi Amineh

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

Gregory Bracken

Coordinator 'The Postcolonial Global City'
Colonial-era Shanghai as an urban model for the 21st century
1 Sept 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 July 2014

Yung-mau CHAO

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

Young Chul CHO

Visiting Professor, Korea Studies Chair (Korea Foundation)
i) Nationalism and cultures of (in)security in East Asia
ii) Indigenous IR theory production in Asia
1 Sept 2013–30 June 2014

Romain Dittgen

Spatial aspects of the Chinese presence in Sub-Saharan Africa
2 Jan–30 June 2014

Ana Dragojlovic

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

Swargajyoti Gohain

Imagined places: politics and narratives in a disputed Indo-Tibetan borderland
1 Sept 2013 – 30 June 2014

Jenna Grant

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

Pralay Kanungo

Visiting Professor, ICCR Chair for the Study of Contemporary India
Indian Politics
1 Sept 2013–31 Aug 2015

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

Duccio Lelli

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

Rohit Negi

Parks or forests? A situated political ecology of the Delhi ridge
21 Mar–15 June 2014

Tak-wing Ngo

Extraordinary Chair at Erasmus University 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 Sept 2012–31 July 2014

Gerard Persoon

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

Saraju Rath

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

Carla Risseuw

Coordinator:
'Ageing in East and West'
1 Jan 2008–30 June 2014

Masaya Shishikura

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

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Jenna Grant

Technology, Clarity, and Uncertainty: Biomedical Imaging in Phnom Penh



I AM WORKING on a book manuscript about biomedicine and technology in Cambodia, provisionally titled, *Technology, Clarity, and Uncertainty: Biomedical Imaging in Phnom Penh*. This project is based on ethnographic and archival research on imaging practices, primarily ultrasound imaging, in clinical settings, and in relation to uneven health-related development efforts since Independence. I have also begun work towards a new project on drug resistant malaria in Cambodia. Across these projects is an interest in relations between knowledge and uncertainty, technologies and modernities, and in practices through which things become tied to a particular place and time, or not.

In the book manuscript, I use the framework of circulation to approach two key questions about imaging practices: First, how do biomedical images work in contexts where biomedicine's authority is unstable? By tracing image production in ultrasound wards and movements outside clinical settings, into personal medical files, fading family albums, and pagodas, I show how the promise of diagnostic clarity about illness or pregnancy is qualified by uncertainties. In different ways, doctors and patients are concerned about the quality of ultrasound images and interpretations, as well as how to relate biomedical images to other modes of knowing what happens inside the body. A second key question is: How does the current proliferation of imaging technologies relate to other postcolonial moments? A not-so-long *durée* of health-related development projects, such as hospital building by the USSR in the 1960s and US corporate philanthropy in the early 2000s, illustrates how technologies configure biomedical modernity despite vastly different imaginaries of public and private good.

It has been a vibrant spring, both in terms of the urban greenery (I grew up in arid Southern California) and the intellectual environment. I have benefited from meeting with faculty and attending workshops and conferences at Leiden University and University of Amsterdam. A program of the 'Bring Your Images' working group and sub_Stage at Museum Volkenkunde provoked thinking about images as relations, and papers at the 'Buddhism and Social Justice' conference pushed me to reconsider the relation between material and moral goods in Theravada contexts. An invitation to give a talk at the Institute for Social Studies in The Hague allowed me to experiment with the ethnography of biomedical technology 'hand-over' ceremonies as development rituals that illustrates tensions between charity and business.

Being at IIAS has generated collaborations, too. IIAS fellow Doreen Lee and I co-organized a panel, 'Technology, Technique and Techne in Southeast Asia', for the 2014 American Anthropological Association meetings. By attending to specific temporalities, we hope this panel will shift debates about technology and modernity at the interface of anthropology and science studies. IIAS itself is a wonderful place for independent research, and I am grateful to staff for creating an open and flexible environment in which to work, and for sharing their insider knowledge of Leiden.

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



Swargajyoti Gohain

Himalaya Bound: Culture, Politics and Imagined Geographies in India's Northeast Frontier



MY PROJECT AT IIAS is to revise my doctoral dissertation into a book manuscript for publication. After my PhD (Emory University, USA) I was searching for a research position that would support full-time work on my book, and IIAS provided the perfect opportunity. My book *Himalaya Bound: Culture, Politics and Imagined Geographies in India's Northeast Frontier*, now under review with a press, is an ethnographic study concerning culture, identity, and politics in Monyul, a peripheral border region in the Northeast frontier of India. Set against the backdrop of an unresolved border dispute between India and China, my book explores how the minority Monpas of this region seek to alleviate current marginality by imagining community with other Tibetan Buddhists of the Himalayas, invoking a common Tibetan Buddhist cultural past. Drawing on theories from anthropology, cultural geography, and cultural studies, and based on the notion that social and spatial relations are inter-connected, my book shows how contemporary cultural politics in Monyul, led by influential monk Tsona Gontse Rinpoche, imaginatively transform Monyul into a Buddhist place, and part of an inter-connected Himalayan Buddhist circuit. Yet, following "anti-essentialist" notions of space, my book also analyses oppositional forces that undercut singular imaginations of Monyul, such as internal divisions among the Monpas, their regional and national allegiances, as well as the suspicions they negotiate as inhabitants of a disputed territory.

In the last nine months (and one more to go) at IIAS, I have met scholars of South, East, and Southeast Asia, working on different book projects, some on their first book and others on their third or fourth; and my interactions and exchanges with them have vastly helped me, initially, to conceive my book proposal, and later, to restructure my dissertation into book form. The monthly research presentations by fellows at IIAS are a useful forum to compare writing projects with colleagues engaged in similar tasks. My associations with the faculty and involvement with the activities of the Modern South Asia and Buddhist Studies programs in Leiden University, and the University of Amsterdam have been highly beneficial intellectually. Following my term at IIAS, I will be a resident Ratan Tata fellow at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University, India, where I will continue work on my book, as well as start a new project on oral history and urban transformations in the disputed Northeast frontier of India.

Romain Dittgen

**(IIAS-ASC joint fellow)
From enclaves to new spaces of interactions: hybrid Chinese dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa**



THE RECENT ACCELERATION of Sino-African ties is often depicted as a reflection of China's economic rise and a sign of the constant expansion of global interconnectedness. The flow of capital, products and people from China to Africa has not only generated tangible impacts, but has also introduced visible alterations in host environments. Over the last years, few topics, dealing with China's increasing role on the international stage, have raised the same amount of attention than the growing Chinese presence in Africa. This interest has led to a significant growth of the body of literature on China-Africa, both scholarly and non-academic. However, while the majority of publications have primarily focused on political and socio-economic aspects, there have been very few in-depth studies and ethnographies.

The book manuscript I am working on (based on my PhD thesis) adopts a geographical perspective, often neglected or simply left out, and focuses specifically on the spatial forms and dynamics of Chinese economic ventures in Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on two empirical case studies, my research explores the way in which different Chinese entities – a state-owned oil company and privately owned malls – relate to their respective host environment and how these activities evolve over time. Whereas often portrayed as disconnected or "disembedded", not only physically but also metaphorically, I argue that both selected examples are simultaneously characterised by closure and interaction.

My joint six-month fellowship at IIAS and the African Studies Centre provides a stimulating and collaborative work environment to exchange with scholars and widen my understanding of Sino-African links. In addition to the diversity of regular seminars, workshops and roundtables, I particularly enjoy the community of peers and staff with whom I have been able to engage across the institutes and various university departments. Having recently participated in a workshop at Peking University with the ASC and ahead of the Association of Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA) Inaugural Conference in Accra in January 2015 (co-organised by IIAS/ICAS), the opportunities and experiences I am able to gain from my inclusion in this community can only deepen the quality of my research.

IIAS FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULES



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.

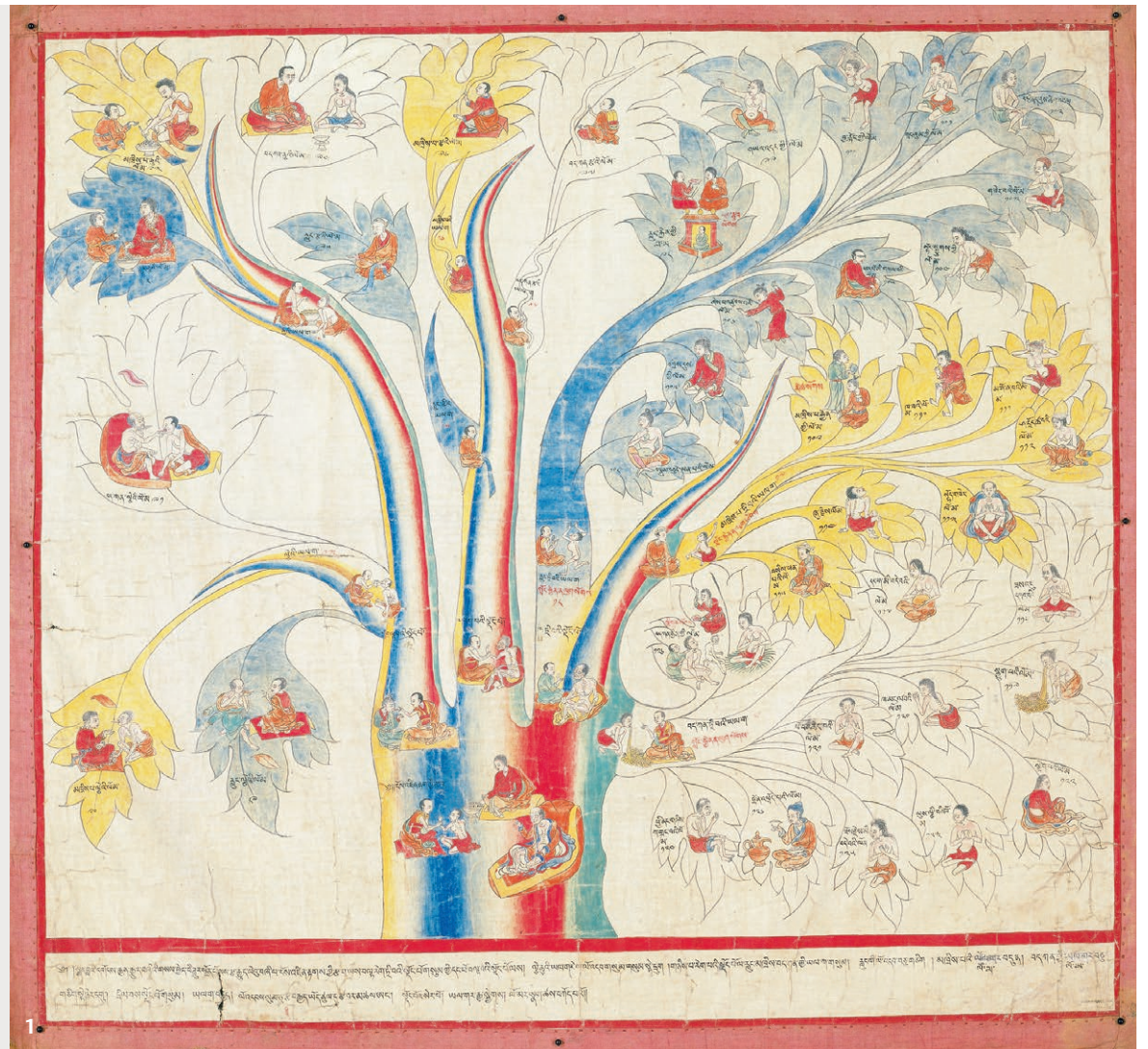
For information on the research clusters and application form go to: www.iias.nl

Bodies in Balance – The Art of Tibetan Medicine

‘Every physical substance on earth is a medicine’.

This core Tibetan medical principle promises enormous potential as much as it raises profound questions: To what extent is food medicine? What about poisons – do Tibetan doctors use these in their medicines? How do they come up with a placebo when testing Tibetan drugs today? As in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, Tibetan medicine holds that the entire universe is made up of five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. Within the body Tibetan doctors (*amchi*) recognise three *nyepas* – the ‘forces’ of wind, bile and phlegm – that are specific combinations of the five elements.

Theresia Hofer



EVERY INDIVIDUAL FROM BIRTH, and each disease, comes with a particular elemental composition. Within this broad and interconnected medical and philosophical context, doctors and pharmacists have sought to understand how body and mind relate and how they interact with the environment. A crucial means to do so has been through taste. Sweet, sour, salty and hot tasting substances counteract wind disorders and reduce the wind *nyepa*; bitter, sweet and astringent tasting materials cure bile related disorders; and hot, sour and salty tasting substances cure phlegm ailments.

Curating an exhibition on Tibetan medicine was never going to be easy; just consider the fact that its practitioners study the mere basics over a period of at least four years. What helped in making this complex medical system accessible to visitors, and introducing them to some of Tibetan medicine's core ideas, were the existing Tibetan medical illustrations used to instruct students and doctors: the so-called ‘medical trees’ (Fig. 1). These ‘trees’, through their trunks, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, detail the first few chapters of the core medical text, the *Four Tantras*, and aid students in memorizing and recalling the contents during exams and practical work. In the exhibition we present different iterations of these trees and utilise their colour scheme to guide visitors throughout: pale blue for wind, yellow for bile and white for phlegm.

Simultaneously, this exhibition also aims to present a range of truly outstanding works of art, medical instruments and texts – 140 in total – that have been, and still are being used and produced in connection with this learned tradition, which has spread alongside Tibetan Buddhism across the Tibetan plateau, the Himalayas and to Mongolia and Buryatia, on its way adapting to vastly different ‘social ecologies’ (*Healing Elements*, by Sienna Craig, University of California Press, 2012) and artistic conventions.

The exhibition begins on floor five of the museum with a section on the Medicine Buddha, a pivotal figure in the Mahayana Buddhist world who many Tibetan doctors still see as the divine source of the *Four Tantras* text. We present for the very first time an exquisite Sino-Tibetan silk painting of the Medicine Buddha and Bodhisattvas from Dunhuang, dated to 836 CE. It has a named artist, whose purpose in creating the painting is clearly stated in a central caption: “to improve health and transfer merit to all living beings”. This piece from the British Museum is shown in the context of other paintings and statues of this Buddha in different materials and conventions, and from diverse origins (Fig. 2), now held in private and institutional collections worldwide.

The next section on this floor focuses on the foundational *Four Tantras* work, and its diverse cultural and medical influences from India, China, Persia and the Tibetan plateau. Yuthog Yontan Gonpo, a Tibetan from the 12th century, is presented as its author although the work itself states the Medicine Buddha as the source, a means of lending it authority. Another key figure in the history of this tradition was Sangye Gyatso, the Regent to the Fifth Dalai Lama in 17th century Tibet. He embarked on the unparalleled endeavour of

illustrating the entire medical system on 79 large paintings, each corresponding to one or more chapters of his commentary on the *Four Tantras*. They were used in the Chagpori Medical College he established. His work is presented here alongside other scholars and their contributions.

The 4th floor of the museum is entirely devoted to the theoretical foundations and practical application of medical procedures. The first section on this floor explores different representations of Tibetan medical and Buddhist understanding of how body and mind work – including the ‘tree of the body in health and illness’, a copy of Sangye Gyatso’s painting on embryological development and a range of anatomical charts. There follows a section on diagnosis, focusing on the pulse, and then three sections on Tibetan medical therapies, its general principles, pharmacology and external treatments. Last is a section that explores links between medicine and astrology, where amulets and a finely detailed and colourfully illustrated manuscript of Sangye Gyatso’s *White Beryl* (a text on astrology and divination) are displayed. In an interactive area of this floor, we feature a multi-media installation with videos and photographs from 17 places around the globe exploring how Tibetan medical practitioners adapt their work to new places and people (It can also be accessed online <http://balance.rubinmuseum.org/take-the-tour>).

Throughout both floors we present several key Tibetan medical compounds, displaying their delightfully diverse ingredients in glass jars (Fig. 3). To start with the most basic Tibetan medical compound, ‘Three Fruits’, with 3 constituents; increasing in complexity to medicines with 5, 8, 11, 15 ingredients. It ends with a turquoise coloured silk-wrapped ‘precious pill’, which contains herbs and minerals, as well as precious substances, some of which have undergone complex chemical procedures to qualify as medicine. Present-day Tibetan doctors contributed directly to this part of the exhibition, bringing these medicines as well as 35 kinds of ready-made pills and powders, labelling each in Tibetan and English.

The exhibition is presented in such a way that visitors are free to choose their own path through the floors and sections. Visitors can also take a quiz that helps them determine their constitution and then follow a colour-coded path relating to their dominant *nyepa* force, thus personalising their exhibition experience.

Bodies in Balance is open until 8 September 2014 at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, 150 West 17th Street, Chelsea. (www.rubinmuseum.org) The exhibition is curated by Theresia Hofer (University of Oslo) with the assistance of Elena Pakhoutova (Rubin Museum of Art).

The exhibition catalogue, *Bodies in Balance – The Art of Tibetan Medicine*, edited by Theresia Hofer, features essays by leading historians, anthropologists, and practitioners of Tibetan medicine. It is a richly-illustrated volume, co-published by the Rubin Museum of Art and the University of Washington Press.

Fig 1. (above): ‘Tree of Diagnosis’, Tibet or Mongolia; date unknown. Pritzker Collection, Chicago.

Fig. 2 (right): Medicine Buddha Bhaisajyaguru with an entourage of eight Bodhisattvas. Tibet; 12th century. Private Collection.

Fig. 3 (below): Jars with ingredients and medicines in the galleries.

