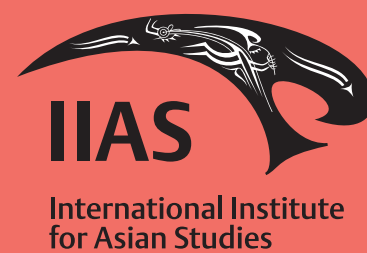


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# theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

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Theorizing  
Heritage



In this edition of **the Focus**, guest editor Adele Esposito introduces the research perspective developed by a group of young scholars and heritage practitioners involved in the new MA Program 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' (Leiden University). The first group of graduates, together with young scholars working on heritage in Asia, have collectively produced a 'manifesto' with the purpose of initiating a proactive and policy-oriented debate on the politics of heritage, to which all our readers are invited to contribute.

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## The Focus Theorizing Heritage

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Guest editor **Adele Esposito** introduces five articles that explore research on Asian heritages, both on a global and official level, and at a local and personal level. All contributors have in some way been involved with the new MA programme 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe', and together they have developed a 'manifesto' to which you as the reader are invited to respond.

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**Giulia Di Pietro's** essay presents emerging strategies of industrial heritage preservation in Asia through the artistic rehabilitation of abandoned and disused structures. By describing the trajectory of the 798 Dashanzi electronics factory in Beijing, she highlights the negotiations between grassroots community and top-down institutionalization and their implications for the preservation process.

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**Abby Hsian-huan Huang** shows how the World Heritage Discourse promoted by UNESCO's official documents has been appropriated by various social agents in Taiwan, to the point of being 'reversed' (diverted from its original presuppositions and objectives).

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'Local assemblages' of heritage cannot be explored through official texts alone; **Sadiyah Boonstra** demonstrates this by discussing the tactics that allow Wayang puppeteers in Indonesia to 'adapt and bend' official heritage discourses.

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**Sara Guagnini's** contribution highlights how state-owned heritage management has failed in protecting, recognizing and optimizing the use of the broader historical context of Borobudur Temple Compounds (Central Java) – World Heritage Site since 1991 – to the detriment of both people and nature in the surroundings.



# Taking Stock

With autumn 2014 arriving, it is time to take stock of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-supported programme 'Rethinking Asian Studies', which officially began earlier this year ([www.rethinking.asia](http://www.rethinking.asia)). After only a few months of activities, this experimental programme, aimed at redirecting Asian studies to better reflect the global consequences of new Asian modernities at play,\* has already positioned itself as one of our institute's driving intellectual engines. The unique programme seeks to foster new humanities-focused research and educational opportunities built upon an inclusive network of scholars, artists and other social leaders with their institutions in Asia, North America, Europe and Africa.

Philippe Peycam

ORGANISED INTO FIVE THEMATIC FORA, the programme should not only help us to decentralise knowledge about Asia, but also to decentre its intellectual practice by exploring alternative narratives of Asian agencies often found *beyond* academic representations – exemplified by traditional area studies whose orientations continue to be framed by national histories and geographies – as they often restrain our imaginations, with little room left to explore other possible histories and geographies.

One clear focus of the programme (forum 3) is to question our conventional spatial and geographical configurations of Asia; its three sub-fora comprise: 'The Bay of Bengal', a part and corner of the Indian Ocean world with the potential to erase 19th and 20th century configurations such as notions of 'South' and 'Southeast Asia' (a roundtable 'Belonging Across the Bay of Bengal: Migrations, Networks, Circulations' is being organised at Princeton University at the end of October). 'Central Asia' as an intellectual field is emerging out of Empire; yet, the question of where such an imagined realm begins and ends, and for whose interests, remains elusive (a roundtable was organised in Ulaanbaator, Mongolia, last August; it was preceded by an international conference co-organised by IIAS – see page 40 of this issue). A third sub-forum seeks to 'revisit state-society relations through the perspective of Borderlands' by precisely engaging these man-created spaces delineating national projects (these 'products of social and political negotiations of space'). A first meeting will be held in November, at the Institute of East-Asian Studies, in Lyon).

Another approach to these multiple (Asian) realities follows the intellectual project of introducing a diversity of interconnected views, considering lives and perspectives of social as well as ecological actors usually not heard 'from the bottom-up'. Two forums tackle this objective: one taking the City as a multi-levelled framework of knowledge, the other addressing craft as a unique, and potentially emancipating site of social mediation. Buzz concepts such as 'generic cities', 'smart cities' brandished by many Asian states – with their corollaries in terms of privatisation of urban spaces, ecological disasters and the negation of a community's 'right to flourish' – calls for a comprehensive, locally-sensitive approach, a new way of doing urban planning, as the August roundtable in New York suggested (see page 41 of this issue). It also calls for a different, 'subaltern' reading of the urban social landscape, a subject that will be explored in Mumbai in December.

The other socially-framed forum focuses on crafts and craftsmen/women. An IIAS Summer School entitled 'Reading Craft: Itineraries of Culture, Knowledge and Power in the Global Ecumene' was organised in August at the University of Chiang Mai (see page 42 of this issue). The training brought together

twenty-some PhD students from the world to creatively confront their research project with local situations as they are lived by northern Thai artisans. It was followed by a cross-sector roundtable on 'Cloth, Culture and Development', in which local weavers and other practitioners exchanged with Thai and international scholars. What emerged from these two exercises is that craft must be taken seriously as a truly integrative site of societal mediation. Craft forms indeed stand at the nexus of a multiplicity of interests ranging from those of artists/artisans, entrepreneurs, local communities (rural and urban), NGOs, and the State, with a capacity to bring together generations, genders, classes, urban and rural communities while triggering interactions between social groupings, and, in the realm of education, promoting a platform for trans-sectorial interdisciplinary 'artisanal knowledge transfer'. This latter idea of 'Craft as a Pedagogy' will be further explored in a workshop in Delhi in March 2015.

Then there is the forum on 'Artistic Interventions', which sets out to interrogate arts and artists and their social role as 'artist-citizens' engaged in artist-run spaces. The project wants to move beyond traditionally restrictive knowledge of art – as a reified *art pour l'art* form, too easily captured into becoming a commercial commodity – to consider it as another essential form of public knowledge that, in dialogue with traditional disciplinary area studies, has the potential to foster radically new ways of (re)imagining social times and spaces.

The fifth forum, 'Views of Asia from Africa', promises to be another breakthrough for it will help us in the Asian studies community to think in a more decentred, multi-vocal fashion, with fresh new intellectual paradigms and references to incorporate. This is a long-term process no doubt, but with over 300 already selected participants, and nearly 50 panels and roundtables accepted, our planned conference 'Asian Studies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interactions' is set to serve as a great catalyst likely to trigger new alignments in the ways regional studies are conducted, thereafter contributing to move Asian Studies beyond the old hierarchy of (intellectual) values I referred to earlier.

An important note must be made: due to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the conference in Accra (Ghana), originally set for January 2015, is being postponed to September 24-26, 2015 (see inset text right).

By opening these new spaces of intellectual interactions and maturation, I am confident that the 'Rethinking Asian Studies' programme can effectively help us shape a more globally connected network of individuals and institutions working concomitantly *on, with and in Asia in the global world*.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

## Postponement of the Africa-Asia Conference in Accra, 2015

WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU that after ample discussions among the organizing committee members and among partner institutions, we have decided to postpone the Conference.

The new dates will be 24-26 Sept 2015

The venue will remain unchanged: the University of Ghana at Legon, Accra, Ghana.

It should be noted that Ghana is not affected by Ebola. The country's capital, Accra was even chosen by the World Health Organisation as its regional centre from where it will co-ordinate its efforts (which is already underway) to fight the Ebola epidemic.

We understand, however, the worries conveyed to us by participants and partner institutions.

The postponement will offer us the opportunity to expand the conference's programme and to make it even more inclusive. Already over 50 panels and roundtables have been accepted, a sign of the resounding success of the initiative even before it actually takes place.

### New submission deadlines

The new deadline for panel and paper submissions is now 15 February 2015. The new deadline for submissions to the Asia-Africa Book Prize competition is now 15 March 2015.

### New registration deadlines

Confirmation of participation: 15 June 2015

### Registration fees

Early bird: 15 June 2015  
Regular rate: 31 August 2015  
On-site: 24 September 2015

For more information please visit our website [www.africas.asia](http://www.africas.asia). We thank you for your continuing support and we look forward to meeting you in Accra in September 2015!

### Conference Organising Committee

Webby Kalikiti A-ASIA  
Lloyd G. Adu Amoah A-ASIA  
Philippe Peycam IIAS/ICAS  
Paul van der Velde IIAS/ICAS

\*Appadurai, A. 1993. *Modernity at Large: the Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.



### 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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# IIAS Photo Contest: Picturing Asia

We are proud to announce the winners of the IIAS Photo Contest 2014. We received over 1000 photos, and after lengthy considerations the jury selected the 6 category winners, whilst the public voted for their favourite photo and awarded it the 'Public Vote'. View the winners online: <http://tinyurl.com/IIAScontest>.

AS WE WOULD ALSO LIKE to give proper credit to more than just the winning photos, we are currently preparing an exhibition featuring a large number of the contest entries. The exhibition is planned for March/April 2015 in Leiden, the Netherlands. More will be revealed in issue #70 (February) of The Newsletter and on the IIAS website.

### The contest

On the occasion of IIAS' 20th anniversary we considered a number of ways in which we could invite our readers and other interested parties to interact with us and our explorations of Asia in a fun and creative manner. As a result, at the beginning of 2014, we initiated a photo contest welcoming people around the world to submit their photos for 6 different categories. Six months later we had received a staggering number of more than 1000 photographs.

With so many entries, the jury faced quite a task. Firstly, they judged photos based on their relevance to the category; secondly, on their photographic quality; and thirdly on their originality. Long-lists were compiled by each jury member, and their combined selections (approximately 150 photos) were uploaded to Flickr.com, and made available to everyone to vote for the 'Public Vote' winner. The long-list album is still accessible at [www.tinyurl.com/iiasphotos](http://www.tinyurl.com/iiasphotos). Subsequently, the jury compiled shortlists for each category, and eventually whittled each list down to one winner.

### The categories

Anyone interested in submitting photos to the contest was invited to send a maximum of 5 entries. Participants were asked to 'tag' each of their photographs with one of the contest categories, which were as follows: *Asian Cities*, *Global Asia*, *Asian Heritages*, *Asia's Pop Culture*, *Everyday Life in Asia*, *Mobile Devices*.

### The jury

The Photo Contest jury comprised five members with different backgrounds, but all with a strong connection to visual content and/or Asia: *Dr John Kleinen*, Visual anthropologist and historian, associate professor emeritus at the University of Amsterdam, affiliated to the Amsterdam International School for Social Science Research (AISSR); *Dr David Odo*, Anthropologist and museum ethnographer, director of student programs and research curator of University Collections Initiatives at Harvard Art Museums; *Paul Oram*, Graphic designer, providing design and layout for The Newsletter; *Sandra Dehue*, Sinologist and editor at IIAS; *Sonja Zweegers*, Anthropologist and managing editor of The Newsletter.

### The winning photos

On these pages we present to you the category winners and the winner of the public vote. We congratulate all the winners and thank everyone who participated. Many of the entries will be published in future issues of The Newsletter to accompany articles or reviews. Each winning photograph is accompanied by a brief commentary from the jury.



#### 1. 'Big Boys' by Rajesh Dhar Winner in the category Asian Heritages

Caked in the sandy clay of the 'Akhara', the 'big boys' sharpen their skills. Following strict principles that focus on the building of strength and living a pure life, the practice is unfortunately in decline. The composition of this image is intriguing, with the figure in the foreground dramatically cropped. The torso draws us into the image. Each figure is cleverly 'framed' by the others to create various singular portraits – each a 'story' in its own right. As our eyes fall upon the figure furthest from us, poised with his batons on his shoulders, is he deep in concentration? Or has the photographer's very presence disturbed him? Does this tension make us question how we 'read' images that attempt to record some form of cultural heritage?

#### 2. 'Street Saloon' by Sudipto Das Winner in the category Asian Cities

This wonderfully composed photograph of a roadside barber trimming the beard of a client in Kolkata, India, makes dramatic use of the 'borrowed landscape' of an enormous film advertisement plastered against a wall to create a blood-filled, fiery, and altogether disconcerting image of what might otherwise be a simple glimpse of everyday life in the city. The red comb in the customer's black beard is reflected in the barber's mirror, linking the two subjects of the photograph to the oversaturated, bloody images behind them, even as an actor's gun appears to be pointed directly at the two men, confusing the line between the characters in the film and the photograph.

#### 3. 'Refreshments' by Janne Cress Winner in the category Global Asia

These young boys have just completed a horse race at the Naadam festival in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia). Even though the photo could be mistaken for a perfectly staged advertisement image for the well-known soft drink, it is in fact a candid shot that impeccably captures the emotional mix of exhaustion and excitement on the boys' faces. Furthermore, the juxtaposition presented by the young boys dressed in traditional garb consuming the global commercial phenomenon that is Coca-Cola, makes this photo a worthy winner of the category 'Global Asia'.

#### 4. 'Tokyo Subway, Japan' by Ross Tunney Winner in the category Mobile Devices

'Tokyo Subway' shows the urbanite in its own right. Unlike the stereotype of the Tokyo subway system, according to which people are squeezed into a tube, we are witness of a quiet resignation. Modernity is shown by four smartphones, but wait there is still hope. A newspaper is read by somebody who defies the media-literate lifestyle of his co-passengers. By putting him in the middle, the photographer shows the sacrifice to read a newspaper squeezed by others. He, the reader, is a survivor.



Above: Winner of the Public Vote 'Play with the Rain' by Froi Rivera



5. 'Brotherhood' by Yordan Ahmadinata  
Winner in the category Everyday Life

The palette of alternately intense and muted colors, the contrasting diagonal and curved lines, and incorporation of shadow and reflection, come together to create this beautiful photograph of two young boys. Given this picturesque but clearly impoverished setting, the photographer could have chosen to make a very different kind of picture, but the playfulness evident on the face of the younger child transcends the environment and delights the viewer.

6. 'Food not Bombs' by Emmanuel Maillard  
Winner in the category Pop Culture

This attractive picture not only successfully captures the style and rebellious energy of this Yangon punk band, but, by framing it against the 'food not bombs' graffiti background, also reveals its socio-political involvement. The different levels of energy of the various band members further add to the overall high quality of the picture.

# Vedic chanting in Kerala

On 7 November 2003 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the Tradition of Vedic Chanting (India) a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. According to Indian tradition, four Vedas – the Ṛgveda (hymns), the Yajurveda (sacrificial formulas), the Sāmaveda (chants) and the Atharvaveda (magical formulas) – are considered to be non-human in origin (*apauruṣeya*), beginningless (*anādi*) and eternal (*nitya*). This awareness prompted Brahmins of India to create unique methods for their preservation and transmission without even changing any of the accents. These methods are based on sophisticated mnemonic techniques and rely on different versions of repetitions.

Natalia Korneeva

ALONG WITH the two main powerful Vedic traditions (the Western tradition: Maharashtra, Saurashtra, Varanasi – and the Southern tradition: Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore) several isolated traditions have also survived: White Yajurveda tradition in Tamil Nadu; the rare Atharvaveda tradition of the Śaunaka recension in Saurashtra; the Paippalāda recension in Orissa; and the tradition of Malayalam-speaking Nambudiri Brahmins in Kerala.

The Nambudiri (Nampūtiri, Namboodiri, Namboothiri) tradition is rather different from other traditions. The Vedic recensions that Nambudiris follow are considered to be more ancient than other surviving versions, most of them not found anywhere else in India.<sup>1</sup> The ways in which the Nambudiris have preserved their Veda recitations, through their unique mnemonic techniques, have managed to conserve a number of distinctive and ancient features. It is a relatively small, but self-sufficient tradition, as it does not require officiating priests from elsewhere when rituals require several kind of priests.<sup>2</sup> Professor J.F. Staal studied this unique tradition profoundly and presented it in numerous works, including the outstanding *Agnicayana Project* – a unique documentary of the twelve-day Vedic śrauta ritual performed by Nambudiri Brahmins in 1975. A detailed illustrated description of this ritual was published in two massive volumes with audio and video recordings and the articles of leading scholars on the subject.<sup>3</sup> In 1999 the Calicut (Kozhikode)-based voluntary non-profit-oriented forum of Nambudiris launched the website: [www.namboothiri.com](http://www.namboothiri.com). The 750-page site, with the objective of documenting Nambudiri traditions, is administered by Dr P. Vinod Bhattathiripad<sup>4</sup> and has members from all over the world.

## The Nambudiri Brahmins of Kerala

Kerala is the region of Malayalam-speaking people in the southwest of India, on the Malabar coast. The Western Ghats formed a natural barrier to contacts from the rest of India and created the conditions for developing a unique culture, which preserved many archaic elements, while developing or adapting customs and rituals its own way.

The Nambudiri Brahmins of Kerala are rather small in number; they are still isolated from other Brahmins of India and differ from them in a number of customs, including marriage rituals, and their sense of purity and pollution. The Nambudiri Brahmins observe unique orthodox religious practices and have an influence over the social life and culture of the Malayāṭis (citizens of Kerala). The majority of Nambudiri Brahmins live in the countryside, outside the villages, and are considered refined and aristocratic, connoisseurs of literature, music and traditional arts.<sup>5</sup> Their peculiar system of inheritance determined, until 1933, that the eldest son inherited all family property and could only marry a woman of his own caste. This ruling worked to preserve the Nambudiri distribution of land (keeping it undivided); living as landed aristocracy left them more time for rituals, literature, and the arts.

Not all Nambudiri Brahmins were required to follow Vedic studies. Out of the ten Nambudiri classes (Aadu, Edu, Bhiksha, Picha, Othu, Saanthi, Adukkala, Arangu, Panthi, Kadavu), only the first five needed to memorise Veda and learn Vedic chanting, while the other five were exempted from Vedas for the purpose of attaining other skills. For instance, the Cātira Nambudiris (or to be clearer Adukkala and Arangu classes) engaged in military training and studied the use of weapons. The Aṣṭavaidyas – physicians (belonging to the Panthi class) – specialised in Ayurvedic medicine and studied the medical manual Aṣṭāṅghṛdaya of Vāgbhaṭa.

The Nambudiri tradition of Vedic recitations, their rituals, mnemonic techniques, and so forth, form an uninterrupted

living tradition, handed down orally from father to son, from teacher to student. As a living tradition, it demonstrates the differences between tradition and texts.<sup>6</sup>

## In danger of extinction

The Nambudiri Sāmaveda (chanting) tradition in Kerala is nearly extinct. There are now only four elderly Nambudiri Brahmins from two families who have learned Sāmaveda by heart the traditional way, and who can chant all the modes followed in Kerala: *Rk* (in Kerala it is called *Ārcika*), *Sāma* (or *Grāmageya*), *Candrāsyaṃa* (or *Āraṇyaka*), *Ūha* and *Ūṣāṇi*.<sup>7</sup>

In light of the danger that after these rather old Nambudiri Brahmins the Nambudiri's Sāmaveda chanting tradition of Kerala will become extinct, the School of Vedic Studies at the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit (in Kalady) has undertaken and successfully completed a project to preserve the Kerala Sāmaveda tradition in 95 hours of audio/video documentation. The entire project has been published on CDs and is available for study and reference from the University Library. Another project proposes to convert recordings into interactive CDs – the text in Sanskrit with English translation, transliteration, graphics and index of the Mantras.<sup>8</sup>

The Nambudiri Sāmaveda tradition in Kerala is of the Jaiminiya recension. This recension is also followed by Tamil Brahmins, originating from the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, but who re-located to Kerala long ago. Their village Kodunthirapully near Palakkad on Kerala's border with Tamil Nadu is a typical ancient Tamil Brahmin settlement (*agrahāra*). Most of these Tamil Brahmins use handwritten copybooks with the Sāmaveda text in Malayalam script.

## Schooling

The Nambudiri Ṛgveda tradition in Kerala has two schools, which differ only in a small number of mantras and syllables in some modifications of repetitions (*vikṛtis*). Each school had its own training centre (*maṭham*), one at the heart of Thrissur town and the other in the village of Thirunaavaaya on the banks of river Nila. The Thrissur maṭham is active; children learn Vedic chanting at this school. The Thirunaavaaya maṭham is not active; member families initiate their children into Vedic chanting in their own homes or send them to the Thrissur maṭham where they are trained in the Thirunaavaaya school style.

In early times Nambudiri boys began the study of reciting the Veda with *saṃhitā-pāṭha*<sup>9</sup> at home and were only admitted to the Brahmasvam maṭham for learning higher modes of chanting. However, with the weakening of the tradition almost all learning processes have moved into the Thrissur Brahmasvam maṭham. Moreover, if previously only the Ṛgveda (hymn) recitation was studied here, now the traditional training extends to the Yajurveda (sacrificial formulas) and the Sāmaveda (chanting). The students begin their traditional study at the age of seven or eight and for four years are taught the complete *saṃhitā-pāṭha*, studying from early morning to evening. Then they are admitted to general school and alongside modern education continue their traditional Vedic learning in the mornings, evenings and holidays. They study *pada-pāṭha*, *krama-pāṭha* and other higher modes of chanting that are practised in Kerala, namely *jaṭā-pāṭha* and *rathā-pāṭha*, which take another 12–15 years.<sup>10</sup>

During the period of Vedic study students must undergo rigorous activities and observe many strict rules. They bathe early in the morning and in the evening; in the morning they practise Sūrya Namaskāra or Sun Salutations, etc. In addition to the austerities, a number of particular vows are taken. Some vows can last up to a year, during which time the pupil has to restrict even his daily food. These austerities are common to all the Vedas.<sup>11</sup>



Left: A Vedic expert Sankaranarayan Akkithiripad from Kavapra Mana.

Below: Two students of the Trissur Brahmasvam Maṭham (the younger with his mother).



## The techniques

To memorise so much information – more than 10,500 mantras and different modes, with accents and tones – Nambudiri Brahmins have used different methods from ancient times, most of which were transmitted orally in Malayalam and Sanskrit. Some of them were published in Malayalam; some exist in manuscript form. In 2010, the Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University in Kalady published some of them in Sanskrit, in addition to several previously unpublished treatises, in the book *Preservation Techniques of the Ṛgveda Chanting of Kerala*.

At the beginning of a pupil's training (during the first six months), the accents are taught by an unusual method. The teacher physically moves the pupil's head with his right hand, in the following way: head straight – the *udātta* (raised accent, accented syllable), downward – the *anudātta* (syllable preceding the *udātta*, not-raised, not-accented), head to the right – the *svarita* (syllable following the *udātta*, sounding), to the left – the *pracaya* ('accumulated' accent). [See video 1]

The class always begins with the recitation of the sacred syllable Om by the teacher, followed by the students. During the next stage of the training the accents are stressed by placing the hands into particular positions (*mudras*): the hand up – the *udātta*, down – the *anudātta*, to the right – the *svarita*, to the left – the *pracaya*. [See video 2]

For the Ṛgveda recitation and the chanting of the Sāmaveda, Nambudiris use two sets of *mudras* or hand gestures. The Ṛgvedic *mudras*, besides stressing the accents, are used to indicate the ends of words of the *pada-pāṭha* or 'word-for-word' recitation, which clarifies obscure places in the text. The Sāmavedic *mudras* represent musical accents and phrases and are used less than the Ṛgvedic *mudras*.

Pupils learn the *saṃhitā-pāṭha* and the *pada-pāṭha* without knowing Sanskrit grammar or the rules of *sandhi*<sup>12</sup> – they learn these rules through practice involving the body. It should be



Top left:  
The Vedapāṭhasālā  
Brahmasvam  
Maṭham in Thrikkur.

Top right:  
Nambudiri Sāmaveda  
Brahmin with  
indologists in Pāññāl  
(Panjal) village,  
Thrikkur District –  
the place where in  
1975 the Vedic śrauta  
ritual Agnicayana  
was performed in  
the presence of  
foreign scholars for  
the first time and  
was documented  
by J.F. Staal.

Bottom left:  
Nambudiri Brahmin  
Kaimukku Raman  
Akkithiripad from  
Irinjalakuda village,  
belongs to the  
Baudhāyana Śākhā  
of Yajurveda, he  
is also the famous  
astrologer.

Bottom right:  
Tamil Brahmins  
from village  
Kodunthirapully  
near Palakkad.



noted that oral memory has a high somatic component and from all periods of time, across cultures, we have indications that traditional composition has been associated with hand activity.<sup>13</sup> According to Indian tradition, an endless mechanical repetition provides error-free memorisation.

The Nambudiris also follow unique techniques, which differ from mnemonic techniques elsewhere in India. Some of them are practised at traditional contests in the ceremonial chanting of the Ṛgveda (as Kadavallur Anyonyam in Sri Ramaswamy Temple at Kadavallur, Trissur District) and in various rituals. One traditional technique is called *vāram*. In this 'exercise', Nambudiris show their mastery of dividing the Ṛgveda text into *aṣṭakas*, *adhyāyas* and *vargas*,<sup>14</sup> their mastery of mudras, and mastery of reciting by heart the Vedic passages. During the *vāram* two participants randomly choose a ten *ṛks* sequence using twelve small stones placed in an eight stone circle with four stones inside the circle. One participant touches a stone in the outer circle; another participant then, without looking, touches a different stone in the same circle. By counting from the first to the second stone, they achieve the number of *aṣṭaka*. In the same way they choose *adhyāyas*. The *vargas* are chosen from the stones inside the circle. The third Nambudiri recites the chosen sequence of *ṛks*. [See video 3]

#### Scholars of the Veda

As was stated at the beginning of the article, according to Indian tradition, the Vedas are non-human in origin, beginningless and eternal; this means that people could never hope to understand them fully. Perhaps this is the reason that, along with the oral tradition of preserving and transmitting the sounds of the Vedas, there has been no similar tradition of preserving and transmitting the meaning of the Vedas. Over time, the meaning of the ancient Vedic language has been partially lost. The interpretation of the Vedas developed

another great intellectual tradition that has influenced all Indian culture. But, as pointed out by Frits Staal, the main purpose of reciting and repeating the Vedas is their preservation and transmission – not studying or researching – and without this “scholars of the Vedas would have nothing to be scholars of.”<sup>15</sup>

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**All photos and videos in this article were taken in traditional Brahmin villages in Kerala visited during the cultural tour following the 6th International Vedic Workshop (January 2014, Kozhikode). The videos referred to in the text can be viewed in the digital version of this issue of The Newsletter.**

#### References

- 1 Along with the Āśvalāyana school, the Nambudiri Ṛgveda is of the Śāṅkhāyana (Vāskala) recension, which is called Kauṣītaki in Kerala and now not found anywhere else in India. The Nambudiri Yajurveda is of the Taittirīya recension, but follows the closely related *sūtras* of Baudhāyana and Vādhūla, which is uncommon in the rest of South India, where the Taittirīya recension is rather common. The Nambudiri Sāmaveda belongs to the Jaiminiya recension and except for in a couple of isolated Tamil villages has not been found anywhere else. See Staal, F. 1961. *Nambudiri Veda Recitation*, The Hague: Mouton, p.53; Staal, F. & J. Levy. 1968. *The Four Vedas: The Oral tradition of Hymns, Chants, Sacrificial and Magical Formulas*, NY: Asch Records, p.3; Staal, F. 1983. *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Vol. I, pp.171-172
- 2 Staal, F. 1983. Vol.1, p.171
- 3 Staal, F. 1983. Volumes I-II
- 4 I am obliged to Dr P. Vinod Bhattathiripad who read the draft

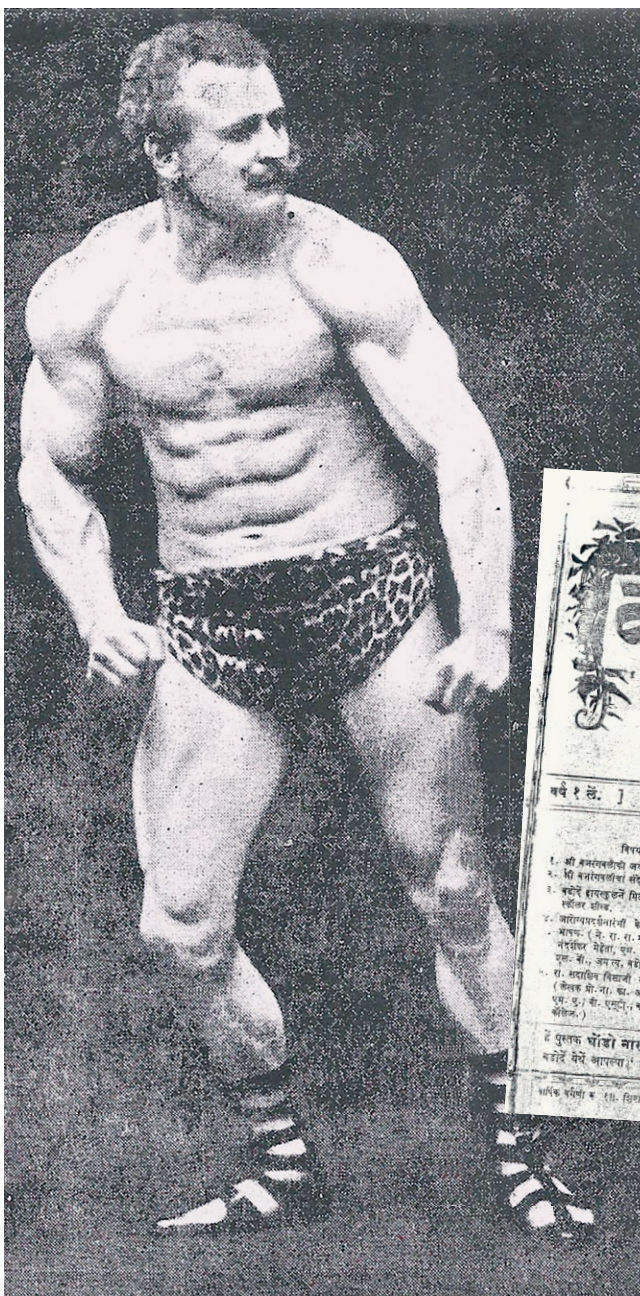
of this paper and made several important corrections. I am also happy to acknowledge him and other organisers of the 6th International Vedic Workshop (January 2014, Kozhikode) and the cultural tour that followed the workshop ([www.ivw2014.org](http://www.ivw2014.org)) for the opportunity to become acquainted with the unique traditions of Nambudiris.

- 5 Staal, F. 1983. Volume I, pp.167-168
- 6 Ibid, p.2
- 7 Neelakandhan, C.M. 2007. 'Ṛgvedic tradition of Kerala and Kadavallur Anyonyam', in Neelakandhan & Ravindran (eds.) *Veda Society and Modernity*, Kadavallur Anyonyaparishath Publications, see p.4
- 8 Ibid; also see Neelakandhan, C.M. & K.A. Ravindran (eds.) 2010. *Preservation Techniques of the Ṛgveda Chanting of Kerala*, Kalady, Kerala: Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, p.7
- 9 The Vedic texts are presented in two versions: the *saṃhitā-pāṭha* and the *pada-pāṭha*. *Saṃhitā* means 'conjunction', 'continuity'; the *saṃhitā-pāṭha* – the continuous text in which the phonological alterations (*sandhi*) apply between words. *Pada* means 'word'; the *pada-pāṭha* – 'word-for-word' text in which alterations (*sandhi*) are decomposed into separate words. The *pada-pāṭha* is a base for other modifications.
- 10 Neelakandhan, C.M. & K.A. Ravindran (eds.) 2010. pp.11-12
- 11 Neelakandhan, C.M. 2007. P.9
- 12 *Sandhi* – see note 9.
- 13 Ong, W.J. 1982. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, London: Methuen, pp.65-66
- 14 Along with the conventional division of the text of the Ṛgveda into *maṇḍalas*, *anuvākas*, *sūktas* and *mantras* or *ṛks*, Nambudiris also use another division of the Ṛgveda into *aṣṭakas*, *adhyāyas*, *vargas* and *mantras* for the purpose of memorisation and recitation (the colloquial pronunciation is *aṭṭam* for *aṣṭaka* and *varkam* for *varga*).
- 15 Staal, F. 1983. Volume I, pp.30-31

# Notes on *Vyayam*: a vernacular sports journal in western India

The initiation of vernacular press in western India was followed by the penetration of print and proliferation of a range of journalistic endeavours by the early twentieth century. While political journalism has had its share of historians, the story of sports journalism has remained rather under-researched and obscure in mainstream narratives of the subcontinent. In this article, I focus on the contents and policy of a unique Marathi language periodical, *Vyayam* [Exercise], which was launched in 1915 and was committed to the popularization of sport and physical culture especially among the educated middle classes of the region.

Namrata R. Ganneri



Above: *Vyayam* frontpiece, Eugene Sandow (June 1938).

Inset: *Vyayam* frontpiece (detail), inaugural issue (October 1915).

## A brief profile

*Vyayam* was a monthly that maintained steady circulation figures of 1000 through most of its life, though in 1926 the circulation reached an all-time high of 1500. It wound up in 1954 after uninterrupted publication for nearly four decades. Remarkably, this outstanding journal acquired legendary status even in its own day. The guiding spirit and mentor of *Vyayam* was Dattatreya Chintaman Mujumdar (1882-1954), the son of a leading notable and himself a pleader serving the princely state of Baroda. A sportsman trained in western as well as 'indigenous' sports,<sup>1</sup> Mujumdar was impelled to found a sports journal following a trip to Europe in 1913. The project involved considerable personal investment; his wife worked in the photography section, familial resources were funnelled into the venture to tide over financial losses, sometimes to the tune of a thousand rupees a year, and finally Mujumdar

availed of voluntary retirement from his service in 1931 to devote himself exclusively to writing and publishing. Since DC Mujumdar was in government service, he chose Dhondo Narayan Vidhwans, a friend and confidante, as the editor and in subsequent years, ND Mujumdar, a close kin, was appointed as the co-editor of this journal. It was published by the Shriramvijaya Printing Press, situated within the Mujumdar estate in Baroda. The ruling princes of Baroda, themselves sport enthusiasts, were ceremonial patrons, and offered financial support to select special issues.

The first issue of *Vyayam* rolled out on 15 October 1915, and all subsequent issues were published on the 15th of every month. It was a two-colour periodical, averaging 24 pages, with approximately eight contributions. The contents included articles and poems on the benefits of exercise, elaborate descriptions of newly opened gymnasias, short biographies of leading wrestlers and sportspersons, both Indian and foreign, rules of games, information and visual documentation of various sports. The column *Vyayamavrutta* [News], featured details of various inter-school and inter-collegiate tournaments, announcements of forthcoming wrestling bouts, and other on-going competitions, as well as physical education conferences. A formal editorial emerged only after a decade of its founding, though the editorial voice was present in dialogues that were interspersed with implicit and explicit editorial comments: for instance, dialogues between advocates and an opponents of exercise. In such dialogues, which very well may have stemmed from traditional oral narrative genres and then set in print, one character either provided instruction to the other or they both engaged in conversation about a controversial topic. Importantly, both sides were granted space to present different viewpoints. There existed a Baroda-based team of regular contributors to the journal, though articles from interested writers were actively solicited. Further, many pieces were translated from magazines coming from the North Atlantic region, and a comparison with the American magazine *Physical Culture* was a running theme right from the inaugural issue of the journal. *Vyayam* had evocative frontpieces as well as a plethora of photographs of renowned as well as upcoming wrestlers, physical culture and muscle training enthusiasts from various parts of western India, which in turn constitute a rich visual archive. Undoubtedly, the development of the new cult of the body was directly linked to novel ways in which the body could be viewed and 'consumed' through photography and mass media.

The journal was sustained primarily through subscription fees; a successful model of commercial publishing, including advertising, was never developed. The efforts to draw in British patronage came to nought, and municipal schools in Bombay Presidency could not be convinced to subscribe to *Vyayam*. Hence the editors routinely addressed existing subscribers at the conclusion of each year, lamenting rising costs of production, and reiterated their publishing agenda, that of seva [service] to the Marathi people.

## Scope

Right from the start, the journal seemed to court certain kinds of audiences. The objectives of the periodical, as presented in its inaugural editorial of October 1915, focused on physical training for the educated. "The main theme of our journal is 'Exercise' and its propagation. Upon meditating on one's worldly, spiritual and social desires, readers will recognize the importance of this issue ... In the present age people have acquired English education and ignored their physical well-being, especially physical training

... We have become weak in the past eight to ten years, and require exercise more than even English education." (p.6)

The journal sought to attract sufficient numbers of subscribers from the newly educated classes. Though the literate population was ever-expanding following the introduction of compulsory primary education, readers had since acquired a taste for novels and 'entertaining fiction' interspersed among the burgeoning Marathi periodicals of the times. Despite being a 'dull' read, subscribing to *Vyayam* was, then, presented as a panacea for all ills, and the journal's early proselytizing zeal was evident in aphorisms that appeared in the footer of each page in all issues of the first decade.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the inaugural issue clearly indicated that, while it accorded space to the contemporary (read: western) physical training regimens and sports, it also advocated the practice of 'indigenous' sports and games, and a debate between 'eastern' and 'western' ran like a red thread through into the 1940s. These debates were representative of a characteristic middle-class response and the 'cultural anxiety' surrounding the introduction of institutions of colonial modernity that was typified by colonial sports.

*Vyayam* had categorically asserted its stance to steer clear of political issues, most probably to avoid colonial surveillance and censorship. In actual practice, it did include biographical sketches of anti-colonial nationalists and also occasionally of foreign statesmen like Woodrow Wilson of the USA and Benito Mussolini of Italy. The journal disavowed commercial considerations, saw its primary task as that of 'instruction' on issues of physical fitness and general well-being. That debates about health were already circulating in the Marathi public sphere is evident from the response of one reader who argued in favour of the journal advocating the benefits of exercise for women in particular. Letters to the editor subsequently became a regular feature of the journal.

Indeed, the production and circulation of this journal has to be located in a range of publication processes that sought to textualise physical culture. Many people whose work featured in *Vyayam* were producing literature on sports, particularly indigenous sports in vernacular languages. Remarkably, British sports were introduced in Japan in a similar fashion through the creation of small pamphlets in Japanese, and described as the 'play' movement.

## Physical Culture Movement

In India, the introduction of colonial sports had multiple trajectories. Nevertheless, sport was not simply a vehicle for expressing anti-colonial and nationalist emotions; Alter draws attention to the myriad physical culture regimes that prevailed in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Although there is some empirical evidence of an increasing interest in sports, more interestingly, 'indigenous' sports were getting transformed in terms of patronage, space and spectatorship, through middle-class intervention. As games, particularly *kabaddi* and *kho kho*, evolved into organized competitive sports, the creation of a canon of Indian physical culture was an important concern of the publicists. Thus, the entire range of activities (from framing rules, publicising them to standardization and the promotion of various sports especially among young students – male as well as female), manifested in several rapidly proliferating gymnasiums and physical culture clubs called *akharas* and *vyayamshalas*, is described as the physical culture movement.<sup>4</sup> Youths were trained in all kinds of sports by certified instructors. The pedagogic models evolved by these new institutions were distinctly suited to being incorporated in the curriculum of most schools in the twentieth century, and eventually influenced the institutionalization of physical education. We encounter several such 'modern' institutions in the pages of *Vyayam*. Featuring debates and discussions about the ongoing movement, the journal itself constitutes a veritable archive of sporting activities in western India.

## Concluding comments

A survey of this lone sports periodical in Marathi seeks to go beyond underlining the importance of vernacular sources in writing the social history of sport. Neither does one propose to highlight the introduction of an 'exotic' genre to the literary landscape of Marathi periodicals, like women's periodicals or even cartoon-based humour magazines. A preliminary overview of the rich material contained in *Vyayam* in fact explicates how Indians negotiated with modernity, exemplified both through sport and print.

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## References

- 1 Some of the popular 'indigenous' sports in western India were wrestling and its allied exercises such as *dand* (jack-knifing push-ups), gymnastic sports like *mallakhamb* (exercises performed with a wooden pillar), martial sports like *lathi kathi* (stave training), and other team games like *atya patya* (game of militant chase) and *kabaddi* (a vigorous game of team tag).
- 2 For example, '*Bal ho! Vyayam che khel khelon aarogyā milva*', '*Tarun ho! Vyayam karoon aarogyā va shakti donhi kamva*', '*Vruddha ho! Vyayam karoon aarogyā rakshan kara*'. When roughly translated these read, 'O children! Play games so as to gain health', 'O Youth! Exercise so as to gain both health and strength', 'O elderly people! Exercise so as to preserve your health'.
- 3 Alter, J. 2007. "Physical education, sport and the intersection and articulation of 'modernities': The Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 24(9):1156-71
- 4 Of the many gymnasiums founded in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, the Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal (Amaravati), Samartha Vyayam Mandir (Bombay city, now Mumbai) and Maharashtra Mandir (Pune city), all in the modern state of Maharashtra, survive to this day.



# Mamun and the 'Kaum Imam San' of Cambodia

Discourse on syncretic Islam could, according to recent scholarship, explain the practices of a Cham community known as the 'Kaum Imam San' by some and the 'Bani of Cambodia' by others. This community, numbering about 50,000 today, has gained great attention; perhaps due to the following reasons. First, the community has attracted scholarly interest through the newfound efforts backed by the American embassy to increase basic literacy in the endangered Cham script. Second, the community has attracted the attentions of the purification efforts of Salafi- or Tablighi-influenced elements of Cambodia's Islamic community. Finally, it is likely that the Kaum Imam San have also attracted a potentially disproportionate amount of scholarly attention (per population) as a result of their vibrant religious traditions, which mix elements of Islamic, Khmer and ancestral worshipping practices with the unique historical memory of the saint named Kaum Imam San, in order to produce a truly lively experience.

William Noseworthy

A NUMBER OF SCHOLARS have written about elements of the 'Mawlut' and 'Chai' ceremonies of the Kaum Imam San, while only few have selected to study the 'Mamun' ceremony. *Mawlut* from Arabic *Mawlid* refers either to *Mawlidu N-Nabiyyi* – 'the birthday of the prophet' – or *Mawlid Imam San*, a potentially Sufi influenced ceremony celebrating the nineteenth century Imam who secured the recognition of the Kaum Imam San in Cambodia through his partnership with the Khmer king, Ang Duong. These ceremonies are calendar events and occur once a year. Meanwhile, *Chai* ceremonies have an added flare of Southeast Asian ancestor worship and spirit possession rituals. They can take place at any time and are more a matter of a family securing enough funds to put them on, in order to purify the spiritual and physical essence of a sick, terminally ill, or otherwise afflicted member of the family or village group. Although *Mamun* also features this distinct flare, it, like *Mawlut*, only occurs once a year: at the end of the rainy season, after the Khmer water festival, usually in conjunction with the boat race on the Mekong, just as the moon becomes full. As tradition has it, when the moon is right, the ancestors are ready.

## Mamun

Mamun is intended to be a celebration of the specifically Cham royal ancestry of the Kaum Imam San group. During Mamun the great ancestors of the Kaum Imam San come alive through spirit mediums. Meanwhile, during the days, Islamic rites are held to bless the Kaum Imam San villagers and lineage. It is traditionally a three day ceremony, continuing into the early hours of each morning. However, in recent years it seems that the ceremony has become shorter. This past year Mamun lasted only one full afternoon, evening and morning. Additionally, although reported that traditionally the Khmer Royal family also used to visit Mamun, this has not once occurred in recent memory. This year, Mamun happened to take place just after the Islamic ceremonies of 'Asura', which are celebrated by the Kaum Imam San, the Shafi'i Sunni mainstream Muslims, as well as the Tablighi- and Salafi-influenced elements of the community. Just two days after Asura, the ceremony began when the Kaum Imam San priests [*acar*] gathered under a small tent [*gaom Mamun*].

As with other ancestral worship ceremonies and religious occasions in Southeast Asia, food plays a central role in Mamun. It is the women (and predominantly elderly women [*muk*]) who busy themselves with the food preparation. In particular, the Cham concept of ancestor worship called *mbeng muk kei* includes the Cham word *mbeng*, which connotes consumption as well as celebration. The food being offered is for the ancestors to imbibe. Notably, unlike certain other Cham ceremonies in Vietnam where rice porridge [*abuh*] or cooked rice [*lisei*] is offered, during Mamun the central offering is rice noodles [*pachuk*]. The rice noodles are placed on a platter [*dalam lisei*] along with curry [*kari*] and a special green sauce [*aia danyrao*]. Chilies adorn the center of the platter for extra flavor.



## The opening

As the offering platters are slowly moved into the *gaom Mamun*, the *acar* gather. They are led in prayer by a head Imam from the community, which begins with the *Al-Fatihah* verse of the Qur'an (the opening). However, the tonal quality of what follows is of greatest interest. In Vietnam, the *Awal* (the 'Bani of Vietnam') have recently been noted to have a tonal quality to their chants that demonstrates a distinct Buddhist influence. The *Al-Fatiha* is recited in a lower register. Meanwhile, throughout Shafi'i Sunni Southeast Asia, the *Al-Fatiha* is generally recited in a comparatively higher register. The register of the Kaum Imam San prayers appears to be in the middle, occasionally leading observers to a state of surprise and wonder when they hear prayers being recited in a relatively high-pitch, forte, but with also a rhythm still showing some traces of potential influence from Buddhist chants. To learn more about the prayers that follow the *Al-Fatiha* during Mamun one should study *git* literature – a form of text that explains when to use certain verses [*surah*]. However, the *git* will only get one so far, as what follows the few *surah* that are recited during Mamun appears to have no written regulation, although it is guided by oral conceptions of Cham traditional practices [*adat*].

After the opening prayers of Mamun have been recited the offering platters are placed in front of the priests of the community, who eat first, followed by elder males, elder women and then younger members of the community. As the evening begins, the eldest females of the community take center stage, as it is only these priestesses that have the power to call upon the ancestor spirits ('Chai' and 'Po'). These aspects of the evening may also be compared to elements of the popular Chai ceremonies covered by other scholars – including the emphasis on the historical memory of the 'Kingdom of Champa', and how 5,000 members of the upper echelon and royal family moved to form the Cham community in Cambodia in 1692. Although they were joined by later migrations and more heavily influenced by Islam in Khmer territory, this memory of the Kingdom of Champa is critical.

## Origins and visitation of Po and Chai spirits

The oldest 'Po' and 'Chai' are said to have come from the Kingdom of Champa. Certain Po and Chai names – 'Po Lihan', 'Po Traong' and 'Muk Thang Ahaok', for example – can also be found in Cham ceremonies in Vietnam, although their forms, understandably, take on different apparitions during the Mamun ceremonies. First, almost all of the Po and Chai

spirits visit the ceremonies through the bodies of women. Second, as with Chai ceremonies, during Mamun there are a wealth of spirits. This can be explained in two ways. The first is through a sort of psychologizing of the post-Khmer Rouge experience of the Cham community. The second is through an oral narrative that states that the Kaum Imam San had an original flag from the Cham royal family in their possession. The flag was traditionally folded and held many Po and Chai spirits inside. Within recent memory (after 1993 – or on the verge of 'post-conflict Cambodia') this flag was opened and a whole new series of Po and Chai appeared.

The diversity of Po and Chai spirits present during the Mamun ceremonies certainly warrants further research, as does their potential connection to ceremonies in the Cham community of Vietnam that also include similar figures. Another aspect of the ceremonies that warrants further research is the collection of 'royal objects' that are brought out, ceremoniously blessed with aloes wood incense [*gahlau*], presented and paraded at different points of Mamun. It is possible to note that there are also two bunches of coconut [*baoh la-u*] and bananas [*baoh patei*] that are present in the Mamun ceremonies. Once the royal objects are brought back into the tent they are presented before the Po Traong and Muk Thang Ahaok several times to be blessed with aloes wood smoke and water. At this point lighted candles [*badien*] surround the platform where the Muk Thang Ahaok priestess sits and small platters of hard boiled eggs [*baoh manuk*] are present as well. As with other ancestor worship ceremonies, the presence of tobacco [*pakao*] and betel leaves [*la*] are also important. Once all these elements have been combined the ancestor spirits are invited to return to the community. There are three sessions of Cham music held, before a fourth session of Khmer folk music stretches into the early hours of the morning.

During the Cham folk music sessions there are a few instruments that are considered to be characteristically Cham rather than Khmer, or Muslim, etc. These are the *nang* drum and the *saranai* trumpet as well as a particular style of gong. The *nang* drum is played while sitting and typically two *nang* are played at the same time. The *saranai* trumpet of the Kaum Imam San is quite similar to the *saranai* of the Cham of Vietnam, with the major differences being that the pitch is lower and, in Cambodia, the *saranai* appears to be played with a less shrill tune. By the time that the Khmer folk music is played, the *saranai* is replaced by a traditional two-stringed instrument played with a bow [Khmer: *troh*, Cham: *rabaub*, Arabic: *rabab*], and a guitar.

## In closing

The final moments of Mamun occur the next morning. The royal objects are brought out again one last time and blessed, while the *muk* priestesses assist the *acar* priests in what appears to be an 'offering', or perhaps better said, an 'initiation' of three un-wed young men. During this point in the ceremony a traditional Cham manuscript, written in the Western Cham variant of the Cham script, is recited. It is a *saovada* text: a kind of lineage or history of the Cham ancestor royal ancestors, imbued with ethical guidance. Sections are read by the Imam and then repeated by the three boys as they symbolically offer rice noodles, packed cooked rice, vegetables and turtle meat to the ancestors, along with rice-wine [*alak*]. Each food element is treated with aloeswood smoke, and after the ceremonies are completed, the crowd breaks to eat the last *mbeng muk kei*.

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# The campaign against yaws in postcolonial Indonesia

In 1950, Prime Minister Abdul Halim's cabinet identified malaria, tuberculosis, yaws, and leprosy as the 'Big Four' endemic diseases [*Penjakit Rakjat*] that enervated the overall vitality of the country's population. Unlike leprosy, yaws is a disease that has escaped public consciousness worldwide. Although not fatal, the disease was the leading cause of disability in Indonesia during the 1950s. Indonesia's anti-yaws campaign, launched in 1950, was the world's most comprehensive attempt to combat this disease at the time. Yet to date, victory against yaws has remained elusive.

Vivek Neelakantan

YAWS, ALSO KNOWN AS *FRAMBÖSIE* IN DUTCH and *patek* in Bahasa Indonesia, is a neglected tropical disease that affects the skin, bones, and cartilage of the human body. The disease is caused by a spirochete *treponema pallidum pertenu*, a bacterium that is closely related to the bacterial family of treponemal infections, which cause syphilis. Yaws is transmitted through person-to-person non-sexual contact with fluid from the sores of the infected patient. Within two weeks after infection, individuals develop raspberry-like sores on the skin where the microbe initially entered the body. Soon, these sores disappear. Later, skin lesions appear all over the body. Other symptoms of yaws include bone pain and disfigurement of the skin. If the disease is not treated within five years of the initial infection, the nose and bones of the patient become disfigured.

Yaws has been metaphorically referred to in international health literature as a 'disease at the end of the road' – the road being the symbol of socio-economic development – and is deemed to be caused by inadequate hygiene. Since World-War II, yaws can be easily cured using penicillin, and the results of treatment are self-evident within a few days. During Indonesia's anti-yaws campaign, villagers uncritically accepted penicillin injections as a cure for the disease, but in the process, they failed to implement long-lasting preventative measures such as community hygiene.

## In search of a magic bullet

The World Health Organisation (WHO) was founded in 1948 with the utopian vision of building a decent, peaceful, and humane world through the deployment of medical science. Three of the most important medical discoveries during the 1940s – penicillin against yaws, streptomycin against tuberculosis, and dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) to protect against malaria – reinforced worldwide optimism that disease eradication was achievable through the deployment of the proverbial 'magic bullet'. But, speaking at the first WHA (World Health Assembly), in 1948, Andrija Štampar, a distinguished scholar of social medicine from Croatia, stressed that health is not merely a technical matter relegated to the control of individual diseases, but it has socio-political, economic, and cultural dimensions as well. Despite Štampar's contribution, WHO continued to emphasize mass campaigns against individual diseases. Between 1948 and 1969, the prevalent thinking within WHO was that disease created lethargy, robbed people of their vitality and resulted in under-development. The United Nations (UN) agencies quantified the benefits of disease eradication in purely economic terms, a trend visible in newly-decolonised nations of Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and the Philippines. The economic rationale of disease eradication was criticised within Indonesia by nationalist physician Boentaran Martoatmodjo, who served as Indonesia's first Health Minister between August and November 1945. Martoatmodjo argued to the effect that poverty was not caused by disease alone, but by prevailing socio-economic inequalities, political structures, and the environment.

## Raden Kodijat: architect of Indonesia's anti-yaws campaign

The global campaign to eradicate yaws began in Indonesia in 1950 as a national initiative, spearheaded by retired regency physician Raden Kodijat. Approximately 15% of Indonesians were afflicted by yaws in 1950; as a result of the campaign, its prevalence declined to infinitesimal levels by the early 1960s. The Indonesian anti-yaws campaign was successful, so much so that British Malaya – which was yaws-endemic at the time – appropriated the epidemiological strategies initiated by Kodijat.

Born in 1890 in central Java, Raden Kodijat was a product of the Dutch educational system in the Netherlands Indies. After graduating from the *School Tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen* [School for the Training of Native Doctors in the Dutch East Indies – STOVIA] in 1914, he earned a doctorate in Medicine from the University of Amsterdam in 1925. Subsequently, he returned to the Dutch East Indies to pursue a career as a regency doctor in Kediri (East Java) between 1930 and 1942. The Kodijat Method—born during his tenure as a regency doctor—aimed to prevent the recurrence of yaws in Kediri through the detection of the disease among the entire village population at intervals of six months. Only individual patients with actual yaws lesions (active yaws) and their immediate contacts were treated using neosalvarsan or arsenicals until their symptoms disappeared, reducing the overall prevalence of yaws in Kediri from 10.1% in 1934 to 1.7% in 1936. Unfortunately, villagers came to believe that neosalvarsan was a cure-all for every disease and began to approach polyclinics in large numbers. In addition, with just one salvarsan injection, yaws symptoms were reduced drastically. For this reason, several patients did not complete their treatment, and as a consequence, relapses of yaws occurred.

In 1950, a year after the transfer of political sovereignty to the Indonesian Republic, Indonesia implemented the Treponematoses Control Project (TCP), the focus of which was based on the control of yaws and congenital syphilis. At the time, Johannes Leimena (Indonesia's Minister of Health in Natsir's cabinet between 1950 and 1951) observed that the majority of those afflicted by yaws were children. Accordingly, he enlisted the financial support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The programme was initially executed in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, where congenital syphilis and yaws were treated with an injection of procaine penicillin G (particle size in oil) with 2% aluminium monostearite (PAM), as a one-shot treatment schedule that reduced the per-capita cost of the yaws treatment. The Indonesian government, under Soetopo's directive (Indonesia's Minister of Health in Abdul Halim's cabinet between January and June 1950) pursued a policy of mass treatment of entire village populations using penicillin, irrespective of whether or not villagers were infected with yaws. Kodijat, who opposed what he saw as the wasteful expenditure of UNICEF funds, advocated that penicillin should only be administered to patients with active yaws. He was aware of the potential side-effects that injections could induce in patients.

Initially, Soetopo questioned the feasibility of the Kodijat Method for two reasons: (a) the country suffered from an acute shortage of doctors and nurses needed to execute the anti-yaws campaign; and (b) the limitations placed on the Kodijat Method because of not treating latent yaws cases (patients who did not manifest evidence of yaws lesions), as the latent yaws cases constituted a potential reservoir for the transmission of future infections. In an attempt to remedy the perceived shortcomings of the Kodijat Method, Soetopo designed a two-pronged strategy, a modified version of the Kodijat Method, officially known as Treponematoses Control Programme Simplified (TCPS), which advocated: (a) that the Kodijat Method would be used for densely-populated Java; and (b) that total mass treatment (using penicillin injections) of all village residents would be undertaken in the Indonesian Outer Islands where the population was sparse and dispersed, and where distances covered by the TCPS teams were enormous. In order to overcome the acute shortage of physicians, Soetopo appointed *djuru pateks* (yaws scouts with elementary education) to detect yaws cases and administer treatment, conduct periodic resurveys of the population, and to follow up treated patients.



The TCPS was designed to fit into Indonesia's decentralised health services of the 1950s. The focal point of the anti-yaws campaign was the subdistrict [*ketjamatan*] polyclinics. Because they had financial backing from the regency administration [*Dewan Pemerintah Daerah*], they could finance the campaigns from their annual budget. Subsequent to the introduction of the TCPS in a given district, the regency medical officer would meet with subdistrict and village heads [*lurah*], provide education vis-à-vis yaws and enlist their support. *Mantris* (male nurses) supervised the implementation of the programme at the subdistrict level. The village headman assisted the TCPS by drawing up a census of the village population. In a normal working week, the TCPS operations would begin on a Monday morning: the villagers would assemble at the home of the *lurah* before the *djuru patek* arrived. Soon after the latter's arrival, which was signified by the striking of a wooden gong [*kenthongan*], the village secretary would call out the names of all families present in the village and mark their attendance. The *djuru pateks* would then examine the hands and feet of individual patients for symptoms of yaws, and note the names of those suspected to have been infected. The suspected patients were called together when the *mantris* arrived to administer penicillin injections. The *djuru pateks* and *mantris* would cover the subdistrict in less than eight months. Soon after the prevalence of yaws was determined, the infected patients would be treated with penicillin injections and resurveys were undertaken to anew determine the prevalence of the disease and the efficacy of treatment administered.

The highest incidence of active yaws occurred in boys between three and ten years old, as they were most prone to injuries sustained during sporting activities.<sup>1</sup> The yaws surveys and resurveys in the subdistrict Driyo – one of the first subdistricts in East Java to have witnessed implementation of the TCPS in 1951 – revealed a patchy prevalence of yaws, representative of Indonesia. For example, a village with a prevalence of 15% was found adjacent to a village with a prevalence of 7%. The prevalence of yaws was correlated to population density in Java, with densely-populated villages revealing a higher prevalence than others. Unlike the densely-populated Javanese villages, where it was easy to congregate villagers for yaws examinations, in the Outer Islands, settlements were dispersed and the distances covered by TCPS personnel were huge, yet prevalence was still high enough to warrant treatment. In such situations, hiring a full-time *djuru patek* engaged in yaws-surveillance became difficult and Total Mass Treatment of the entire population was the best option. This required administering full-penicillin doses to villagers with active yaws lesions and half-doses to uninfected individuals, latent yaws cases, and personal contacts of patients. To offset the lack of *mantris* and

Above:  
A young yaws patient with severe skin deformities in Ambon, Maluku (mid 1920s).  
Courtesy:  
Tropenmuseum Image Collection (The image is in the public domain).

# Forgotten disease, incomplete victories

paramedical personnel, *djuru pateks* were utilised not only to diagnose yaws, but also to administer penicillin injections.

Yaws eradication in Indonesia during the 1950s was internationally well-recognised. Soetopo was nominated as a member of the WHO Expert Committee on Venereal Diseases and Treponematoses in 1953, which was constituted by WHO to study the worldwide prevalence of yaws and venereal diseases, and to design suitable epidemiological interventions for affected countries. But, it was Kodijat who would become a national hero in Indonesia's campaign against yaws. He had the reputation of being soft-spoken, yet iron-willed. UNICEF had to convince him of the therapeutic efficacy of penicillin against yaws. Only after he had tested penicillin at his hospital in Yogyakarta, and had carefully analysed its effects, did he agree to accept penicillin in treating yaws patients. His painstaking experiments with penicillin used in the TCPS, and his immaculately-kept field data and survey maps, were a model for international epidemiologists. For his exemplary community leadership in organising the TCPS in Java, Kodijat was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Prize in 1961.

TCPS was a public health achievement for Indonesia in terms of reducing the overall prevalence of yaws from 16% in 1949 to approximately 0.58% in 1960. The TCPS was successful in remedying the acute shortage of skilled medical personnel throughout Indonesia through the recruitment of *djuru pateks* amongst villagers themselves. Once the prevalence of yaws in a given subdistrict had dropped below 0.5%, *djuru pateks* were additionally used to detect leprosy patients, as was the case in Kampong Melayu (Jakarta) and Menganti (East Java). The integration of leprosy control activities into the overall activities of the TCPS was successful in reducing the cost of TCPS activities fourfold.

## What went wrong?

By the late 1960s, the complete elimination of yaws in Indonesia seemed increasingly unattainable. Flawed epidemiological strategies and administrative bottlenecks emerged as the two most decisive factors contributing to the continuance of yaws across the Indonesian archipelago. Yaws detection and treatment were two components of the TCPS. Yaws detection was a weak arm of the programme in Java as the *mantris* and paramedical personnel were authorised only to treat active cases whereas patients without lesions (but possibly infected) were left untreated, thus contributing to a potential reservoir for future infections. *Mantris* and *djuru pateks* were not trained in how to contain importation of yaws cases from outside. The use of paramedical personnel, particularly *djuru pateks*, proved problematic for accurate diagnosis of yaws as there were discrepancies between the serological diagnoses made by doctors and diagnoses made by *djuru pateks* on the basis of clinical observations. During TCPS surveys and resurveys, individual villagers, often at the insistence of their families who had witnessed the therapeutic efficacy of penicillin injections

against yaws, presumed that a single injection would protect them against disease in general and were occasionally successful in having penicillin injections administered to them. But, WHO cautioned the Indonesian government that the supply of a wonder drug like penicillin was not in itself the sole decisive factor in ensuring the elimination of yaws from the country: other preventative health measures such as ensuring basic sanitation and hygiene, which were lacking in the rural areas, were also crucial.

The central government officially devolved the financing of the TCPS to the provinces and local governments. While the Indonesian government pledged one-third of the expected penicillin demand, the Indonesian Ministry of Finance did not cooperate with the Ministry of Health in funding the TCPS paramedical and medical personnel. The local governments and provincial governments were unable to fund the full cost of implementing the anti-yaws campaign. The Indonesian Ministry of Health and international agencies, UNICEF in particular, had to break with administrative protocols in order to facilitate the appointment of *mantris* and *djuru pateks*. But, due to the political uncertainties in Indonesia during the transition from the Soekarno to the Soeharto era (1965-1967), UNICEF suspended financial assistance to the TCPS, and the detection and treatment of yaws patients was consequently put on hold. By 1969, although the overall prevalence of yaws in Indonesia had been reduced to 0.44%, there were sharp discrepancies across the country's various provinces. Where the provinces of Java recorded an overall prevalence rate of 0.23%, in the Outer Island provinces, particularly West Irian, nearly 18% of the population was infected. The unsettled conditions during the 1960s, arising from the political differences between Java and the Outer Islands, impeded effective implementation of the TCPS in the latter.

## Relevance of the campaign

By the early 1990s, yaws had been banished to the status of a neglected tropical disease; few people were aware of it. The global anti-yaws campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s had decimated yaws to infinitesimal levels such that the campaign became a victim of its own success. Before long, eradication efforts were neglected in several countries, including Indonesia. Today, the disease retains a foothold in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Solomon Islands, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Congo, and Central African Republic. But, there is room for guarded optimism vis-à-vis eradicating yaws globally by 2020, as only humans (and no other animals) are the reservoir of the disease. Following the development in 2012 of an orally-administered antibiotic (azithromycin), WHO has again targeted the disease for eradication. Unlike the TCPS of the 1950s, which widely used penicillin injections in the treatment of yaws, the current WHO anti-yaws strategy envisions the use of a single dose of azithromycin to treat the disease. Azithromycin overcomes the logistical and medical

Raden Kodijat (1890-1968). Architect of Indonesia's Anti-Yaws Campaign. Courtesy: Ramon Magsaysay Foundation. (The image is in the Public Domain).



disadvantages of penicillin injections: it avoids the need for injection equipment and medically-trained personnel who could be scarce in countries like Indonesia with an overstretched public health infrastructure; it prevents the injection-related risks and side-effects; and, it can be safely administered to individuals with a penicillin allergy. Unfortunately, funding for the procurement of a generic version of the antibiotic is a serious problem for several countries; in addition, WHO has also expressed concerns that the bacterium causing yaws may turn resistant to azithromycin.

The Indonesian Ministry of Health's National Programme to Control Leprosy and Yaws has seen the number of yaws cases increase since 2001. By the end of 2009, there were 7751 cases of yaws, of which most of the cases (7400) were detected through yaws surveys carried out in six endemic districts of East Nusa Tenggara province only. Today, the anti-yaws campaign in Indonesia is paralysed by a lack of leadership. Again, as during the 1950s, the Indonesian Ministry of Health has entrusted yaws eradication to provincial and local governments. While administrative decentralisation may engender tailor-made interventions to local health problems, decentralisation also imposes bottlenecks on disease surveillance across political borders. Controlling yaws demands coordination between various levels of government across Indonesia that is lacking at present. Although the Indonesian TCPS of the 1950s may be relegated to history, elements of the TCPS survive in the Ministry of Health's current strategy, implemented since 2011: active case finding and treatment, mobilisation of community support, and capacity building of health staff in detection and management of yaws. It was hoped that Indonesia would eliminate yaws by 2013 as the Ministry of Health had aligned its anti-yaws strategy with WHO recommendations that advocated a search and treatment strategy of all yaws-suspected cases and contacts. Unfortunately, the scarcity of benzathine penicillin – currently still used in treating yaws cases in Indonesia – and the absence of a cheaper locally available generic version of the drug have yet again postponed complete yaws eradication.

Even today, yaws elimination continues to elude Indonesia. In this regard, the disease eradication campaigns of the 1950s have valuable lessons to offer. The TCPS, in particular, is instructive in terms of how to organise a mass disease control campaign with optimal utilisation of scarce financial resources in an archipelagic country with variable population densities, and, how to contend with epidemiological conditions in locales wherein a standard epidemiological strategy will not work. Although the Indonesian economy is performing relatively well today, compared to the 1950s and 1960s, the country continues to spend less on healthcare per capita than countries with a similar economic profile. Key health indicators such as ratio of physicians to the total population are also lagging. Indonesia's physicians seem to be prisoners of the country's bureaucracy that leaves little scope for individual initiatives in public health. To successfully eliminate yaws within the next five years, Indonesia would need to (a) balance on a knife edge the thoroughness required to track all suspected yaws cases in a community and the speed required to contain an outbreak; and (b) skilfully coordinate between various governmental levels.

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# Lifestyle migration in East Asia

Lifestyle migration involves relatively affluent people moving either part-time or full-time, permanently or temporarily, to places that they believe will offer them a better quality of life. There is usually an economic incentive to their mobility, but the search for the good life is paramount in their motivations. Lifestyle migration is an increasingly widespread phenomenon, with effects for migrants, locals, cultural life, and economic life. It has been studied quite widely in European and American contexts, but has been overlooked in an Asian setting. Our research project was thus designed to address these gaps in knowledge and to capture the incentives, experiences and outcomes of lifestyle migration in Thailand, Malaysia and China.<sup>1</sup>

Karen O'Reilly and Maggy Lee

RESEARCHERS SPENT A FEW WEEKS during 2012 with British lifestyle migrants in their homes and communities in Hua Hin, Thailand and Penang, Malaysia. Each location has experienced various forms of lifestyle migration, including retirees and second-home owners, self-employed, business expatriates, and those who married into local families. We carried out a total of 65 interviews using face-to-face, email, Skype and telephone interviewing. In addition, an online survey was completed by 112 people responding to questions about motivations and experiences of lifestyle migration in Thailand and Malaysia. We monitored a number of online expatriate discussion forums and analysed the content of several expatriate magazines, the membership and activities of many different organisations (e.g., St Patrick's Society of Selangor; International Women's Association, Penang), and the content of migrants' weblogs about life in East Asia. Lastly, we asked respondents to send us their own photos of life in Malaysia and Thailand.

In addition to studying British lifestyle migrants in Malaysia and Thailand, we collected stories from 31 Hong Kong lifestyle migrants in mainland China (including some families of married couples, fathers and sons). Some of our ethnographic fieldwork involved shadowing the lifestyle migrants and their friends in their cross-border activities and visiting a large-scale residential property aimed at Hong Kong second-home owners and the fast-growing middleclass in post-reform China.

## Attracting 'affluent' migrants

Both Thailand and Malaysia have been finding ways to attract relatively wealthy, especially retired, migrants to their countries as a way to create some stability in their economies.<sup>2</sup> Thailand is promoted as a good destination for international tourists and retirees, with excellent medical care and educational facilities. In particular, Hua Hin is marketed as a desirable location for retirement due to its temperate climate, range of leisure activities (e.g., 12 golf courses), and Western-style shopping and entertainment. Malaysia is promoted to would-be second-home owners and long-term visitors as multicultural, exotic, modern, friendly, and secure. It is also an important destination for medical tourism.

In Thailand, policy incentives to attract foreigners include the *'Non-immigrant O-A Long-stay Visa for a Retired Person'*, introduced in 1998 for foreigners over 50 years old who have a minimum of 800,000 THB to bring into Thailand. Estimates from 2009 show that 28,509 people are registered as retired (just under 1% of total in-migration to Thailand and almost 8% of the non-working foreign population). Similarly, Malaysia proudly offers the *'Malaysia my Second Home Visa' (MM2H)*, a renewable multiple entry social visit pass, initially granted as a 10-year permit. It is intended to draw retiree second-home owners, but is designed to also attract younger people of independent means. The current version of the programme has been running since 2002, and the top participating countries are (in order): China, Japan, Bangladesh, UK, Iran, Singapore, Taiwan, Pakistan, Korea, and India. Since 2002, over 22,000 people have registered in the programme. The visa comes with a variety of celebrated incentives: foreigners can buy property, can bring dependents and a car into the country, and incoming pensions are not taxed. The revenue the MM2H visa brings is thought to benefit the tourism, real estate and education sectors regularly and can be exceedingly complex, leading us to conclude that these states manage their in-migration to ensure they get the migrants they want and exclude those they don't, even in the case of these supposedly affluent 'expatriates'.

## Defining migrants: lifestyle migration and expatriates

All sorts of labels are used for migrants: immigrants, emigrants, refugees, labour migrants, expatriates, and residential tourists, to name just a few. Western migrants (and other relatively affluent migrants) have tended to be distinguished from other types of migrant by labelling them 'expatriates'. We find this a problematic term because it allocates them an elite

and privileged status that in fact they may not all possess. The term expatriate is more relevant for someone who has moved temporarily in the context of his or her work, perhaps with the buffer of an expatriate package (often including such incentives as high wages, school fees, health insurance, and a housing allowance). In this project we prefer to use the term 'lifestyle migration' because this term embraces retirees, early-retired, self-employed people, those who are in paid employment (for local or transnational companies), and those who are not working. Respondents to our survey were very diverse. Many were retired, but some worked. Others were looking after the home and family, working occasionally on a freelance basis, or running their own business.

Our respondents in Hong Kong also came from diverse backgrounds. They took advantage of the growth in cross-border movement and second-home ownership in China as a result of property rights and land reforms since the 1990s. By 2005, an estimated 190,000 households (approximately 8.3% of the total number of households in Hong Kong) had a second home in the mainland for different reasons.<sup>3</sup> While our middleclass lifestyle migrants have the resources to choose when and where to move (e.g., some of them have lived in UK, Australia or other parts of Asia), our working-class respondents have significantly fewer opportunities to travel abroad and were generally confined to their local neighbourhoods in their everyday routine. Crossing the border to the mainland becomes a significant act in itself, or an adventure in an otherwise monotonous daily life.

Those we interviewed in Thailand and Malaysia preferred the term 'lifestyle migrant' because they believed 'expatriate' has negative connotations: western, white, privileged individuals whose motivation is to make money, and who lack any interest in the local society. They felt that, for them, migration was as much about new experiences, getting to know the new society and perhaps making a new home. Indeed, many of our respondents were actively involved in the local communities through being members of committees, engaging in voluntary activities, making local friends and building long-term relationships (including marriage). Migrants also pointed out that in many cases expatriate packages are not as generous as they used to be, so that is no longer the driving force behind the move. Those who had migrated with their jobs often did not feel especially wealthy or privileged.

## Social exclusion

For lifestyle migrants, the complicated and regularly changing rules and policies in countries of destination can make their lives precarious. For example, many of our respondents regularly cross briefly into another country to have their visa renewed. In Malaysia, because the closest and easiest place to go for this can be Thailand, it is known colloquially as The Thai

Run. Because of the complexity of the rules, migrants may well not have access to proper health insurance, relying instead on travel insurance that is renewed through various complicated mechanisms, or choose to have no health insurance at all. One migration agent we spoke to told us he even advises his clients to not bother with health insurance, as the prices for local treatment and medicine are so cheap, migrants can afford to 'pay as you go'.

Similarly, insurance companies tend to not provide cover for the very old and the very needy. Some people we spoke to had difficulty qualifying for insurance due to their age or level of health. One 59-year old respondent's physical health upon arriving in Thailand has meant he is ineligible for health insurance, which leaves him and his wife waiting for medical cover and susceptible to large bills in the meantime. He told us, "The worst thing about it is medical costs. I've had problems with my throat, which cost me a fair bit of money. I'm still too heavy to get insured. Because of the operation I had I've lost about 10 stone, I'm still going down and I've got about 8 or 9 kilos to lose and then I get insured, until then I've got to pay for medical expenses and I can't insure my wife until I'm insured. They don't insure Thais. She can claim back on my insurance once I get it."

Social exclusion is 'the dynamic process of being shut out... from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society'.<sup>4</sup> It usually occurs as a combination of adverse social situations, for example unemployment, unfavourable work situation, low earnings, poor health and/or living conditions, and the inability to build social networks. Using this definition, there is a danger that some lifestyle migrants in East Asia suffer (or could suffer) from social exclusion. Some are living on 90-day visas with the insecurity of not knowing when they will be prevented from continually renewing their visas. Others are living with no (or with inadequate) health insurance, with all the risks that entails. Of course, if people are not helped to live safely and grow older comfortably, they may eventually return to the UK when their needs become too great to cope with. Similarly, many Hong Kong retired or elderly lifestyle migrants who relocated to take advantage of the low costs of living in the mainland a decade ago, now find they have to reconsider their options in the face of rising living costs and a growing lack of trust in China's medical health system.

Overall, we argue that lifestyle migration is a way to think about different forms of migration driven by the search for a better quality of life, by people who are not compelled to move because of difficult economic or security situations in their home country. Their stories also raise important questions about the ways in which lifestyle migration is being governed as states focus on attracting the 'right' migrants rather than serving their needs or protecting their rights.

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Below:  
History and diversity  
in Penang. (photo  
by Karen O'Reilly)



# Technology, magic, anthropology, Cambodia

*‘Technoscientific practices rely on their own kind of magic, such as translating ultrasound signals into the language of pregnant women, or data points into definitive outcomes.’<sup>1</sup>*

In her chapter, ‘Science and a little bit of magic’, Lynn Morgan writes that scientific knowledge and technologies of reproduction involve notions of magic and ‘irrationality’ – qualities for which other knowledge practices are disparaged – in addition to their more public qualities of rationality and objectivity.

Jenna Grant

I THOUGHT ABOUT THIS WHEN, after describing my research on ultrasound imaging in Phnom Penh, people in quite different contexts responded with the identical phrase: ultrasound “is the new magic” for Cambodians. One person who said this was an Australian working for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, then in the process of trying Duch, head of an infamous Khmer Rouge prison, for war crimes. Another was a Buddhist monk trained in Dubuque, Iowa (USA), who volunteered at the Phnom Penh Municipal Referral Hospital. I spoke with him while we were attending a ceremony celebrating the donation of biomedical technologies, including ultrasound machines. Another was a Dutch philosopher who focuses on medicine and the body. The first two, the ones who had spent many years in Cambodia, spoke of ‘magic’ in a tone that was disparaging towards Cambodians, whereas the Dutch philosopher I took to be more in line with Morgan, quoted above: ultrasound is magic, for almost everyone.

What is it about technologies and Cambodians that leads us to talk of magic? Is magic a category of expected responses to technology, one that draws on a legacy of colonial and development encounters? Is it a category of possible beliefs, in this case about illness, medicine, or reproduction, that thus invites a classical anthropological explanation? Ultrasound imaging was not available in Cambodia until 1989 due to the effects of war and instability on the health system, and has since proliferated, particularly in the private sphere. The people I talked to in hospital imaging wards, as well as outside of clinical settings, did not speak of ultrasound in terms of magic, though its workings and effects were considered powerful and mysterious. They sit with the majority of those who have had an ultrasound transducer placed on their skin in not being able to articulate how sound waves translate into pictures of tissues ordinarily unseen, or fetal measurements previously unknown, or diagnoses unanticipated. What many of the patients did show me, though, was how imaging involves mediation, and how bodily interventions – diagnostic or therapeutic, magical and technical, Buddhist and biomedical – come in multiple forms.

Studies of biomedical imaging within cultural studies of science and anthropology show how imaging technologies configure scientific and medical professions, health care systems, and understandings of the body and disease.<sup>2</sup> They describe how doctors and technicians produce and interpret biomedical images, and how these images simultaneously produce and reveal natural facts about bodily interiors. Studies of prenatal ultrasound imaging illuminate how its uses and effects within prenatal care relate to culturally specific moral reasoning about life, death, and reproduction.<sup>3</sup> In these studies, technologies work, and biomedicine tends to have cultural authority in matters of illness and pregnancy. Less explored are how imaging technologies themselves may be unstable objects, because they may be second-hand or ‘donated’, or doctors may not be adequately trained to use them. In Phnom Penh, biomedicine and its technologies have long been the object of development and neglect,<sup>4</sup> and share their authority with other modes of understanding pregnancy and illness.

Perhaps, then, magic has to do with the notion that machines possess a transformative power that is independent and unpredictable. The ultrasound machine transforms a doctor into an imager who is better able to diagnose, or into an entrepreneur who can earn money. The ultrasound machine is transformed into a tool for diagnosis, or into a tool for making money. But doctors and ultrasound machines also have their autonomy. If the ultrasound machine is faulty, it will not transform the doctor into a diagnostic expert. If the doctor does not know how to use the machine, it will not become a tool for diagnosis. But we do not know what the transformation will be with respect to the machine or the diagnosis. And what if it involves more than just humans and machines, but also spirits, ancestors, or ghosts?

Magic, then, encompasses the inability to rationally comprehend or systematically predict the workings and effects of ultrasound machines folded into humans and others. Anthropological arguments stressing the indigenization of foreign technologies are an important corrective to simplistic ‘first contact’ stereotypes about people’s inability to understand technology. But as anthropologist Brian Larkin argues, they may end up downplaying “the autonomy of objects, and the very real uncertainties and epistemic instabilities of objects themselves”.<sup>5</sup> In the case of ultrasound imaging, uncertainty also relates to the ambiguity of images, and the challenges of interpretation. As Dr. Uch, a radiologist in Phnom Penh,<sup>6</sup> explained to me, *rien moel* [learning how to see] with ultrasound is a difficult and heterogeneous process: for older doctors it requires calibrating clinical experience with a new mode of seeing; for students, their clinical experience is configured through ultrasound. If some Cambodians seem mystified by machines, perhaps it is in response to uncertainties in what transformations they will perform, their instability and potential unreliability, or how clinical practice may be transformed.

### Technologies and beliefs

The following story speaks to a second category of magic, where technologies are taken up with other-than-biomedical understandings of life, death, and disease. I met Sarouen,<sup>7</sup> a 41-year-old woman with a calm intensity, at the public maternity hospital in Phnom Penh. She had come for her second ultrasound exam, and, as with her first, she had a precise expectation for what ultrasound visualization should do. She lived with her three daughters in the far northern suburbs of Phnom Penh. Her fourth child, a son, had died in a road accident. Sarouen was now pregnant with her fifth child. That morning she had bleeding and her doctor sent her to check the pregnancy with ultrasound. Sarouen told me and Sophea, my research assistant, that she believed this new child was her son who died, returning. In a dream, her son told her that he wants her as his mother again.<sup>8</sup> “It is him again! He asked to come back!” *Vea hneung haoey! Vea som mok nov vinh!* Her son had died one year ago exactly. She was worried about her bleeding because she could not bear to lose her son again. Sarouen was unlike many of the pregnant women I spoke to in that she did not seek out an ultrasound exam (or more than one) for any of her previous pregnancies. She had not participated in the widespread commercialization of this medical service. In her view, ultrasound exams were “not necessary” because her previous four children were born and lived healthily without them. She came for her first ultrasound scan because she wanted to confirm her dream as well as confirm that the pregnancy was still viable.

Sarouen’s story follows popular Buddhist notions of rebirth,<sup>9</sup> though in her case, it was a particular and familiar spirit. The spirit of her dead son returned, wanting her to be his mother again. Sarouen did not say that ultrasound would visualize the spirit of her dead son. This would not be ultrasound’s magic. Rather, the information from ultrasound worked in triangulation with information sensed from non-rational or unconscious ways of knowing. In her case these facts were in harmony, and I didn’t ask what she would have done if they were in contradiction. Sarouen’s story illustrates how ultrasound use may be motivated by desire for a certain kind of knowledge and reassurance, where past, present, and future family are at stake. Her story suggests that ultrasound imaging is a node of biomedical and other-than-biomedical understandings of pregnancy, and the entangled realities of dream worlds and waking worlds.

What, now, to make of the consistency in the comments about technology, Cambodians, and magic at the beginning of this article? In addition to the two loose categories I proposed – that in this context, ‘magic’ connotes a response to technologies, or to technologies cohabiting with



Above: Private clinic advertising its color, 3D, and 4D ultrasound services, Phnom Penh, 2010. (photo by author)

non-biomedical beliefs – I think these statements also reveal expectations of (medical) anthropology’s proper object. To some scholars and health professionals, both Cambodian and foreign, research that combines anthropology + Cambodia + biomedical technology was puzzling. Suggested alternatives varied by interlocutor. Anthropologist: Why not study traditional birth practices in the countryside? Public health researcher: Why not study health problems, such as maternal morality? Medical doctor: Are you studying misuse of technology? Development worker: How do we get more technologies into Cambodian hospitals to modernize medical care? Health official: But how do we regulate these technologies?

I hope my research will speak to at least some of these questions. But I also hope to show how anthropology can engage biomedicine and its technologies in places associated with their absence, such as Cambodia, as well as their abundance, such as Singapore or China. This can tell us something not just about Cambodia, but also about technologies, and how they are configured within particular economic and historical relations, and particular understandings of health and mediation.<sup>10</sup> Imaging technologies are constitutive of particular forms of modernity, and following the movements of imaging technologies and biomedical images is a way to study practices of making families, earning money, rebuilding health systems, and imagining futures.

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# A satellite's view of Nalanda's past

Nalanda is believed to have been the world's oldest residential monastic university, and a continually active Buddhist centre of learning from the 5th to the 12th centuries AD. This report describes how modern satellite technology can augment traditional archaeological efforts to shed light on Nalanda's past. It is an outcome of a multidisciplinary research project entitled *A study of Nalanda using GIS and remote-sensing*, conducted by the author under a Fellowship awarded by Nalanda University in 2013-2014. A detailed essay is under revision and review for *Archives of Asian Art*.

M.B. Rajani

### How large was Nalanda?

Xuan Zang, who resided at Nalanda between 635 AD and 641 AD, has made by far the most detailed record of the spatial layout of various structures within the complex. Translations of his description list structures such as monasteries, temples, images, stupas, a gate, walls, tanks, etc.<sup>1</sup> The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has conducted excavations in several phases. The excavated remains comprise sixteen large structures: a row of four temples or *Chaityas* on the west (numbered 3, 12, 13 and 14), a row of eight west-facing monasteries or *Viharas* (numbered 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) parallel to the temples, two smaller north-facing monasteries (numbered 1A and 1B), and to the east of Monastery 7 are Temple 2 and the Sarai temple (Fig.1).

Human enterprises on such spatiotemporal scales often leave impressions on the environment, which may be detectable when the region is studied holistically using space-based remote sensing technology (although they may be invisible to the naked eye or from the ground). This study has analysed images from the Landsat series of satellites, and also from the Indian Remote Sensing satellites Resourcesat1 and Cartosat1, and has found evidence for several buried features around the presently excavated site of Nalanda. This provides firm support for the hypothesis put forward by other investigators that the site was much larger than the currently exposed archaeological remains.<sup>2</sup>

### Footprints on the environment

A long-lasting residential establishment must draw resources from the local environment for its sustenance, with water being perhaps the most essential. A synoptic view from a satellite allows one to survey large swathes of land and identify present and, more interestingly, past sources of water. Careful examinations of coarse resolution satellite images (from Landsat) have shown an unusual cluster of such water bodies surrounding Nalanda in a pattern not seen elsewhere in the vicinity. This, together with their proximity, suggests that they may be associated with the site, and may therefore help trace its extent.

Fig.2 shows these water bodies surrounding the excavated site and neighbouring villages, and suggests an approximate boundary. Tanks in the vicinity of the site have been noticed and explicitly mentioned by Chinese travellers and, later, by British explorers. It is believed that these tanks were not primarily intended as reservoirs, but were dug for earth needed to make the enormous quantity of bricks required for building the monasteries and temple structures.<sup>3</sup> However, satellite image analysis shows that the shapes, location and layout of the tanks display careful planning; they are mostly geometrical (squares or rectangles), with sides roughly parallel to the four cardinal directions. Such precision may have been unnecessary if these tanks were excavated solely for mining earth for brick making. The largest tank, Dighi Pokhar, has a conspicuous eastward spread unlike the other large tanks (Indra Pokhar and Pansokar Pokhar), which snugly bound the area containing the remains (see Fig.2). Analysis of a Cartosat1 image reveals a 10 km long palaeochannel terminating at Dighi Pokhar's eastern end. At some time in the past, this palaeochannel would have been fed by water curving off from the nearby river Panchana. Further ground observations and archaeological explorations are necessary to establish whether the diversion was man-made or natural.

The cluster of water bodies around Nalanda suggests that the area within may have had a higher elevation. The present study analyses a Digital Elevation Model (DEM) –generated using a pair of stereo-images from Cartosat1–demonstrating that the topography within the proposed extent is not a single long ridge, but is comprised of two distinct clusters of mounds. The southern cluster is larger and comprises of the entire excavated area and adjacent regions, including the villages of Muzaffarpur, Kapatia, Surajpur and Baragaon. The northern cluster is smaller, covering Begumpur and her environs. For brevity, these clusters will be referred to as the southern and northern mounds. Both harbour several interesting details that are virtually impossible to discern at ground-level.

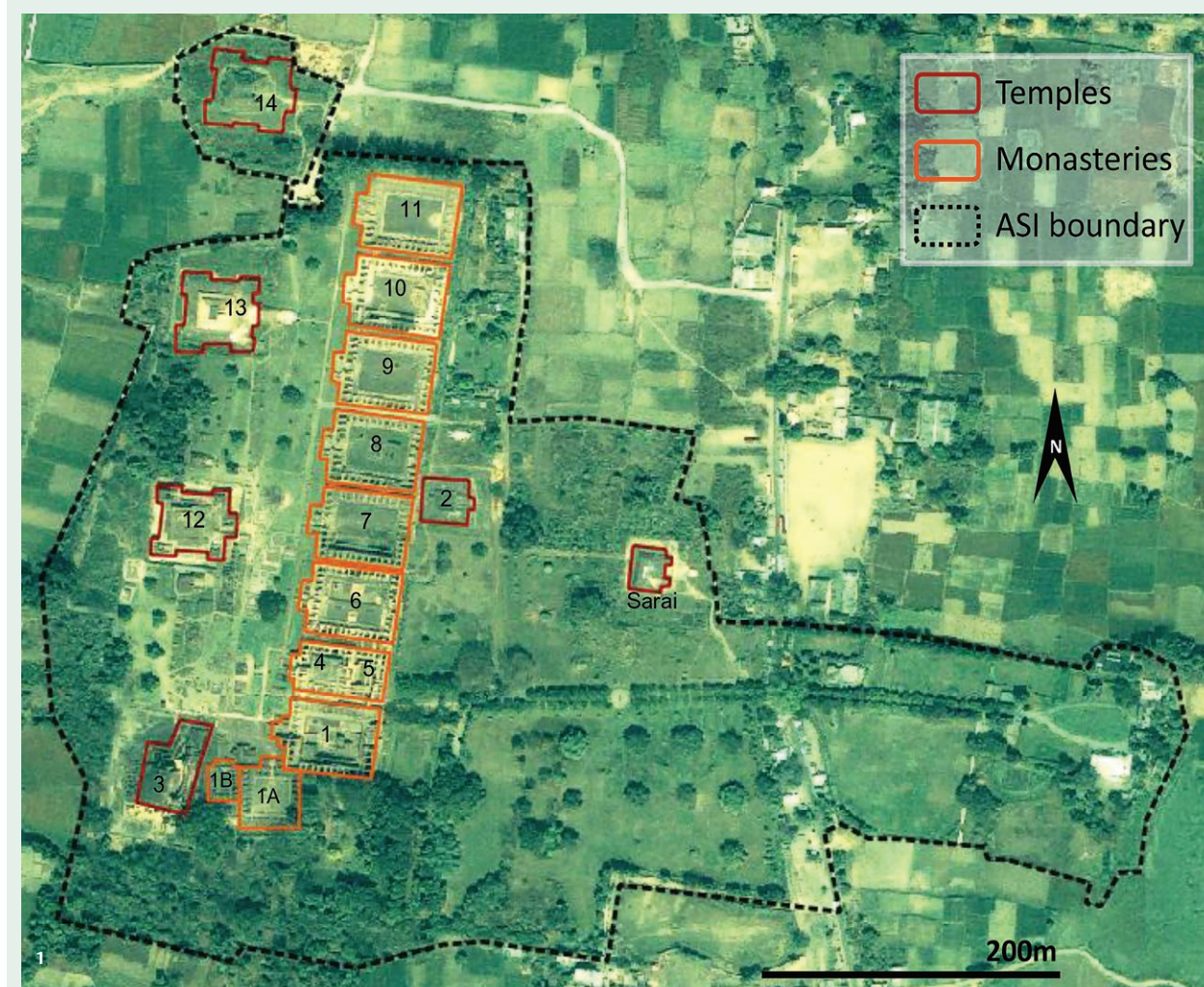


Fig.1 (left): Temples, Monasteries and ASI property boundary as seen on satellite image of 21 November 2006, Google Earth.

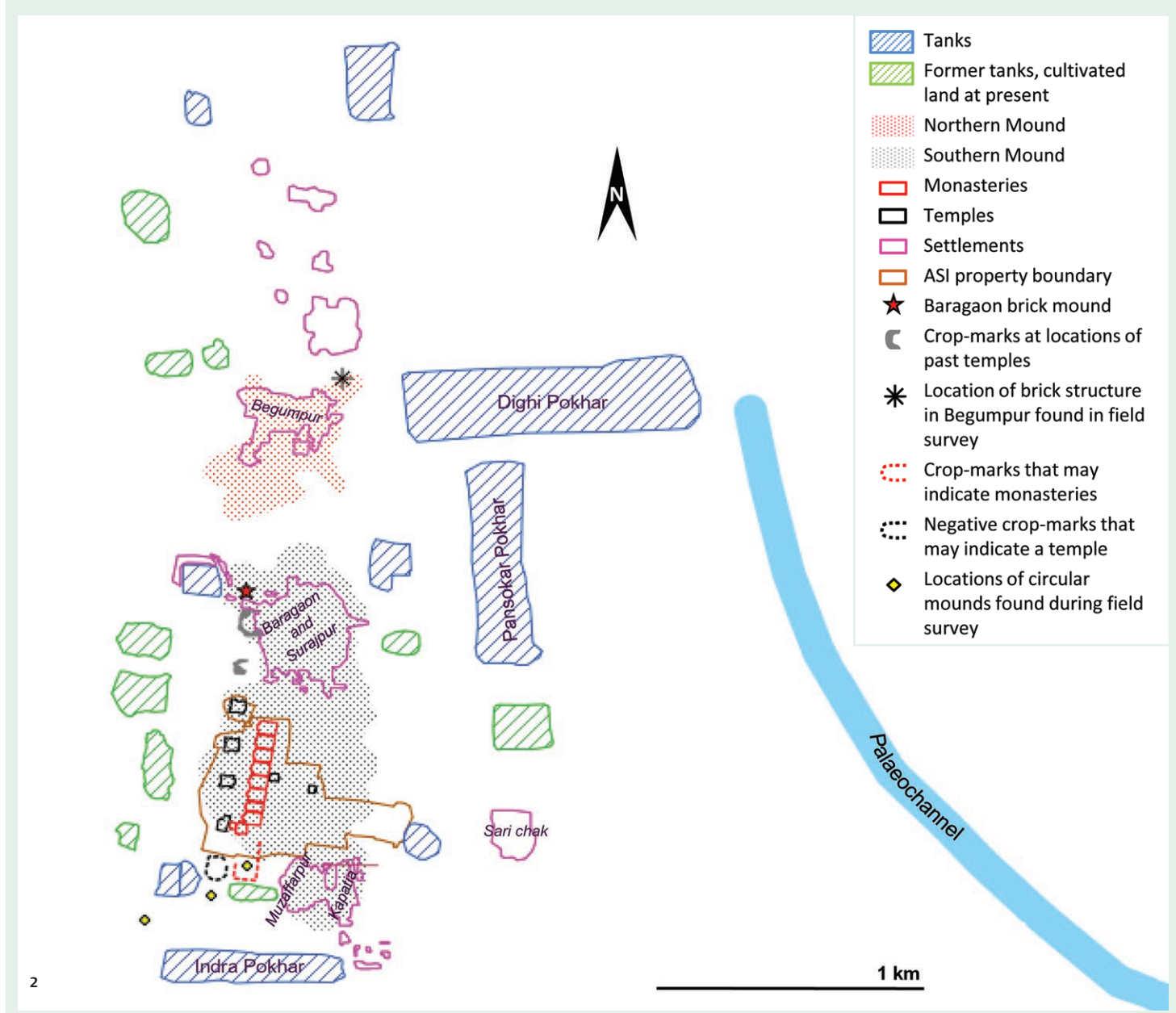


Fig.2 (below): Map showing Nalanda and environs with tanks, settlements excavated ruins of Nalanda together with features detected in satellite imagery.

### The southern mound

This is a long mound stretching 1.6 km in a north-south direction. The northern end is as wide as the settlement of Baragaon and Surajpur combined; the widest band is where Temples 2, 3, 12 and Sarai are located, and the southern end narrows, covering Kapatia and Muzaffarpur. Buried archaeological remains often affect the health of surface vegetation and create positive or negative 'crop-marks',<sup>4</sup> which reveal themselves as distinctive patterns when viewed from above. Vegetation patterns indicating subsurface archaeological remains may be seen only under certain weather/moisture conditions. Therefore, multispectral images (from Resourcesat1) from three dates, with seasonal variations, were analysed. These revealed two successive crop-marks north of Temple 14. It is interesting to note that when a line joining the centres of Temples 12, 13 and 14 is extended northwards, these two patches lie neatly along this axis. Two additional points of interest relate to this axis-line. First, a brick mound in Baragaon lies within a few metres of this axis-line. Misra has observed that this brick mound "...appears to have been a Chaitya in the row of the excavated Chaityas 3, 12, 13 and 14 of the Nalanda site".<sup>5</sup> The second noteworthy point is that the two crop-marks together with the brick mound lie at regular intervals along this axis-line, and the gaps between them are comparable to the gaps between Temples 12, 13 and 14. These observations suggest that the two crop-marks were locations of past temples. It is likely that these structures were subsequently quarried for bricks because they lie closest to the largest settlements in the region (Baragaon and Surajpur). The brick mound in Baragaon would have been the third victim to brick mining as noted by Cunningham: "From its close proximity to the village, this ruin has supplied materials for all the existing houses, and is consequently of much smaller dimensions..."<sup>6</sup> At present, the brick mound of Baragaon is used as a multi-tier terrace for grazing cattle, and for drying hay and grains. At ground-level it is not possible to identify these crop-marks as the location of past temples, as the land is now used for agriculture.

When the axis line is extended further south of Temple 3, there is a conspicuous gap in the tree canopy identifiable on the Cartosat1 image. Once again, this lies at a distance comparable to the intervals observed earlier between temples further north. On the ground, this area is flat and is used for agriculture. The subsurface here may have a tightly packed foundation – again suggestive of a buried structure – because of which large trees find it difficult to take root. To the south of Monastery 1, the vegetation pattern resembles three sides of a rectangle whose eastern and western edges align respectively with the eastern and western walls of Monasteries 1, 4, 6-11. This suggests that there may be additional similarly shaped

structures south of Monastery 1. A ground study showed undulations along this feature, as though the surface cover was hiding some structure underneath. Three circular mounds were found while exploring this area on the ground, one of which lies along the axis-line referenced above.

### The northern mound

The northern mound is much smaller than the southern one, but it has a very interesting shape. The northwest, northeast and southeast extremes of the mound form three corners of a four-pointed feature. This feature measures 450m (northeast-southeast corners) by 400m (northwest-northeast corners), but its elevation is only around 4-5m higher than the surrounding area. This mound lies to the west of Dighi Pokhar, and may correspond to Buchanan's observation when he approached this area from Bihar Sherif on 8 January 1812. He crossed the river Panchana and "About four miles from thence I came to a tank called merely Dighi, which is the commencement of the ruins... Immediately west from this tank is a very considerable space elevated with the fragments of brick".<sup>7</sup>

A field exploration was undertaken to seek evidence (undulated surfaces or exposed old walls, for instance) along the periphery of this feature. The residents of the village were inquisitive and perhaps apprehensive about the purpose of our visit. However, they were forthcoming with information, especially once they were invited to examine the 3D satellite image of their village and environs (Fig.3). As we probed them for information about any exposed old structures in the vicinity, one resident reported that a small trench had recently been dug on his land and offered to lead us there. As the team followed him, our GPS track traced northward, then eastward, and ended by the trench located almost precisely at the north-eastern corner of the northern mound. The asterisk in Fig.2 indicates this location, where a brick structure – perhaps only the pro-verbal tip of the iceberg – has been discovered. The massive structure one suspects lies hidden beneath the northern mound is comparable in size and shape to the Vihara quadrangles of Vikramasila (in Bihar) and Somapura (in Bangladesh).

### Conclusions

This study, using satellite images, has identified several features that are of archaeological interest in the environs of Nalanda. They are:

- The pattern of water bodies surrounding Nalanda, possibly indicating the site's extent and spread in south to north direction.
- A palaeochannel that drew water towards the site from the river Panchana, which intersects the site at the eastern end of Dighi Pokhar, and could explain why this tank extends significantly further east than other tanks.

Fig.3: Residents of Begumpur examining the 3D satellite image of their village and environs.

Fig.4: Monks worshipping on the north side of Temple 3.

Fig.5: Xuan Zang memorial at Nalanda.

- Within the proposed extent there are two separate (northern and southern) clusters of mounds.
- Vegetation patterns indicate that along the line of Temples 3, 12, 13 and 14, there may have been two additional temples to the north and one additional temple to the south. Similarly, an extension of the main row of monasteries to the south is hypothesized.
- The northern cluster of mounds includes Begumpur, and reveals a shape suggesting that the mound might be hiding remains of a large four-pointed structure. A field expedition has revealed that the location of the brick structure excavated recently in Begumpur coincides with the northeast corner of the four pointed subsurface structure.

These findings were presented at the international conference held in Rajgir (January, 2014), jointly organised by Nalanda University and IAS: "Cultural Heritage: Environment, Ecology and Inter-Asian Interactions".<sup>8</sup> The satellite data analysis was conducted in the laboratory facilities of Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (KRSRAC) Bangalore.

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# A musical journey towards trans-border humanity

Music travels as people migrate from one place to another. As a shared human activity, music often appeals to peoples of different ethnicities living in different places, and transcends various boundaries that are often defined by ethnicity, nation and religion. In this sense, music demonstrates 'trans-border humanity' or bonds amongst human beings in the midst of differences, conflicts, and transformation. This essay searches trans-border humanity by tracing music that has travelled with migrating peoples around Northeast Asia, and beyond.

Masaya Shishikura



CASE STUDIES OF TRAVELLING MUSIC exemplify shared sentiments, memories, and human sensibilities that illustrate chains of humanity beyond historical, cultural, and geo-political distances. Trans-border humanity may also contribute to solutions to international conflicts and antagonism caused by exclusivist ideologies based on nation, ethnicity or religion. It identifies human beings in diversity and multiplicity rather than in a single attribute, such as nationality or ethnicity, and proposes alternative views of people as mobile and in expanding networks across 'imagined' barriers.<sup>1</sup>

In search of trans-border humanity, I begin the musical journey in a small island group, called the Ogasawara Islands, where peoples from different places have intersected and created a unique musical culture, and then extend the scope to Japan, the Russian territory Primorsky Krai, and Central Asia.

## Ogasawara musical culture

The Ogasawara Islands (or Bonin Islands in English) are a cluster of small islands located in the Pacific Ocean south of Japan. A boat trip of 25.5 hours from the Tokyo metropolitan area is the only public access to this small place, where fewer than 2500 people reside today. These islands were uninhabited until 1830, when five Caucasians and some twenty people from Hawai'i first migrated to one of the islands, called Chichi Jima. Since then, the people in this small place have suffered various hardships, including Japanese colonisation (1860s-), discrimination at home, alienation amongst the islanders, colonial migration to Micronesia (1920s-), forced evacuation during the Pacific War (1944), segregated life under the US Navy (1946-1968), and reversion to Japanese administration (1968). Although island life has greatly improved since the reversion, the entangled history still casts a shadow on Ogasawara and its people.<sup>2</sup>

Reflecting the complexity of history and society, Ogasawara musical culture reveals diversity in its practices and performances. Migrants from different countries and islanders travelling around the Pacific Ocean have provided a variety of musical genres in this small remote community. For instance, colonial immigrants from Japan provided such performing arts as *taiko* drumming and *bon* dance in Ogasawara. When Japan established its mandate in the South Pacific (1922-1945), many islanders travelled around Micronesia and transmitted the dance called *Nanyō odori* (literally 'South Pacific dance') to Ogasawara. After the war, under the control of the US Navy, some islanders worked in Micronesia temporarily and encountered local songs with Japanese lyrics; they were possibly written by Micronesians, who had received Japanese education during the colonial period. The *Nanyō odori* and Micronesian songs are today recognised as Ogasawara cultural heritage. After the reversion to Japanese administration, many newcomers arrived on the islands and provided new musical genres, including choir singing, brass band music, steel orchestra, and Hawaiian hula. Although the island community remains small and relatively isolated, the people still live in the flow of globalisation and experience music of the world. For instance, the islanders utilise the African *djembe* drum and the steel pan, as well as the ukulele, electric guitar and bass guitar,

to accompany hula. Nowadays, the Ogasawara Islands are filled with various musical events and activities all year around.

On the surface level, the variety of songs and dances appears to represent a fracturing of memories and identity. However, I argue that island musical culture in fact embodies multiple 'bonds' to other places and peoples. The Ogasawara Islanders embrace their gratitude and affection to the peoples who have provided various musical activities in this small and remote place. Without multiple historical and cultural communications, Ogasawara musical culture would not exist as it is today. Immigrants from foreign countries, islanders travelling around the Pacific Ocean, anonymous Micronesian songwriters, newcomers after the reversion, and even temporary migrants or visitors:<sup>3</sup> all of them have contributed to Ogasawara musical culture. By performing songs and dances received from other places and peoples, the Ogasawara Islanders embrace multiple identities rather than a single nationality or ethnicity. In a sense, they inhabit trans-border humanity, that is, extensive webs of human beings that emancipate the Ogasawara Islanders from a minor/subordinate position defined by smallness, relative isolation, and the politics of nation-states.<sup>4</sup>

## Towards trans-border humanity

The musical journey continues from Ogasawara to many places in Northeast Asia, and beyond. There are numerous examples of music that have travelled around and appealed to various peoples living in different places. I recognise that music can be utilised to promote idiosyncratic nationalism and ethnocentrism that sometimes prevent trans-cultural communications and international conversations. Nevertheless, there are still cases of travelling music that have been transmitted against political and ideological manipulations.

The song *Imjin River* is a good example; it demonstrates music travelling despite arbitrary politics. In 1957, the North Korean government released the propaganda song *Imjin River* – the river that divides the homeland into two countries. The song became popular in North Korea and was also disseminated amongst *Zainichi* people (Koreans in Japan) through school education at *Chōsen Gakkō* (Korean Schools in Japan). Later, a Japanese songwriter Matsuyama Takeshi (b.1946) learnt the song from a *Zainichi* friend and translated the lyrics into Japanese for a commercial recording (1968). First, *Chongryon* (The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan) tried to utilise the opportunity for North Korean propaganda, and then the South Korean government expressed its concern about a North Korean song being widely disseminated in Japan. Under such political pressure, the recording was eventually withdrawn voluntarily from publication.<sup>5</sup> However, the song *Imjin River* strongly appealed to the sentiments of Japanese audiences, and thereafter various Japanese and also *Zainichi* artists frequently performed *Imjin River* as part of the Japanese music scene. In 2005, the movie *Pacchigi!* (*Break Through!*) was released featuring stories about the song *Imjin River*. Although the lyrics lament a homeland divided into two countries, the song itself has transcended political boundaries and manipulations, and achieved transnational popularity.

There are also cases of songs that have travelled from Japan to other places, including Primorsky Krai and Central Asia. The song *Urajio Bushi* (*Song of Vladivostok*) is one such example; it travelled from a rural area of Japan into continental Asia. The song is considered to be a variation of a local song from the Amakusa Islands, Japan. It tells about nostalgia for home: "Someday, I would like to return and disembark at the port of Nagasaki (located near Amakusa)." In 1881, a regular boat service opened between Nagasaki and Vladivostok, and many Japanese began to move to the Russian Far East. *Karayukisan* (Japanese overseas prostitutes, often hailing from the Amakusa area) were such migrants and disseminated the song about their home in Vladivostok. At that time, Vladivostok was a rapidly growing city, in which Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Russians, and other peoples from different regions intersected. Later, the song *Urajio Bushi* became popular throughout the Russian Far East and even in Manchuria, as *Karayukisan* had moved around these areas under the Japanese colonial scheme.<sup>6</sup>

Some *Koryo-saram* (ethnic Koreans in the post-Soviet States) also remember *Karayukisan* and their Japanese tunes – as part of their nostalgia for home in the Russian Far East. The study of *Koryo-saram* and their musical experiences could also be an interesting study for trans-border humanity. These people first migrated to Primorsky Krai after experiencing difficulties when the Joseon Dynasty of Korea (1392-1910) began to decline. Then, under the politics of the Soviet Union, they were forced to move to Central Asia during the late 1930s; they were suspected of being spies for Japan. After having experienced the pressures of various international politics, some *Koryo-saram* sing Japanese tunes with Korean lyrics.

In her books, *Zainichi* journalist Kyo Nobuko introduces *Koryo-saram* located in a village in Chirchiq (Uzbekistan), who sing a song of nostalgia, *Go Guk San Cheon* (*The Mountain and River of Home*), which is adapted from a Japanese popular tune *Ten'nen no Bi* (*The Beauty of Nature*) (2002, 2003).<sup>7</sup> They even perform the music with musical instruments such as the violin, accordion and mandolin, learnt from a similarly displaced Jewish musician. Kyo continues her story: in the village of nowhere, ethnic Koreans, who were displaced in different places, sang songs together, including Russian folk songs, Korean popular tunes, and *Go Guk San Cheon*. Trails of songs have been dispersed and separated, yet sometimes they turn around and cross over again – as if to confirm bonds of humanity.

## Epilogue

The study of trans-border humanity continues as musical journeys extend to many different places and peoples. In this on-going research, I will trace crossroads of songs and peoples, and explore shared sentiments and memories inscribed in trails of travelling music. It is important to seek trans-border humanity, because it illustrates 'bonds' amongst human beings within differences, conflicts and transformation, and proposes to us new visions for the future of a changing world. Current issues in international politics often highlight the 'differences' or 'contradictions' in asserting national legitimacy and benefit. However, through this research, I argue that we share a common humanity amongst apparent differences. By realising and respecting trans-border humanity, we can enable constructive 'conversations' for mutuality and global cooperation rather than pursue 'negotiations' primarily for one's own benefit. I believe that the research on trans-border humanity will inform us of a new and innovative knowledge that guides us to the future of a shifting world. Music travels as people migrate from one place to another, and the journey towards trans-border humanity continues to demonstrate the chains of humanity beyond great distances.

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Above:  
A boat leaving  
from the Ogasawara  
Islands. Photo  
by the author.



# Sinhalese and Tamil Catholics, different paths to reconciliation

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict has been characterized by the growing distance that separates Sinhalese Buddhists from Tamil Hindus. A look at the Catholic Church of the island nation shows that a similar lack of communication and indifference exists within a community united by religious faith but separated by politics, language and culture.

Bernardo Brown

ON JANUARY 8TH 2011, Rev. Rayappu Joseph, the Catholic Bishop of the Sri Lankan Province of Mannar, testified before the 'Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission' (LLRC) appointed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa after the military defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009. The aim of this commission was to inquire into the origins and consequences of the armed conflict that had confronted the Sri Lankan army and Tamil separatists since 1983. More specifically, the commission was set up to address the period between the years of 2002, when the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE signed a ceasefire brokered by Norway, and 2009, when the army delivered the decisive military blow against the LTTE in the northeastern district of Mullaitivu.

Despite the skepticism with which the commission was received by Tamils in the north and east of the country – and the widespread criticism it received from the international community for its lack of independence to investigate accusations of war crimes – Bishop Joseph and other members of the Catholic clergy offered their depositions in Mannar. Amongst the many grievances expressed by the Tamil population of Sri Lanka, which Bishop Joseph enumerated to the LLRC, he declared that 146,679 people remained unaccounted for from the last stages of the war (during the first half of 2009). This statement incensed the government in Colombo and led the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Sri Lankan Police to pay Bishop Joseph a visit and to question him over his sources of information.

A year later, briefly after the LLRC report was published, Bishop Joseph sent a letter addressed to President Rajapaksa and to the UN Human Rights Council in which he demanded the appointment of an independent investigation as it would be the only reliable approach to seek justice for Sri Lankan Tamils. The letter was endorsed by thirty Catholic priests from the Northern Province. Bishop Joseph wrote, "The LLRC has quite rightly identified abuses by the LTTE and also came up with some positive recommendations that have potential for reconciliation. But it has failed to address critical issues of truth-seeking and accountability, despite strong evidence and testimony presented before it. The record of various domestic bodies whose recommendations successive governments have ignored [...] have made us lose confidence that our concerns will be addressed through the LLRC."

On February 18th 2013, another letter was sent to the President and the UNHRC, this time signed by a staggering 133 members of the clergy, not only Catholics, but also Anglicans and Methodists, as well as 54 Catholic nuns working in different parts of the country. With this new letter, a broad inter-denominational Christian solidarity movement started to take shape and garnered support for Bishop Joseph's demands for justice and accountability. In this strongly worded and widely distributed public appeal, the signatories stated that, "In the last year, those criticizing and challenging the government in peaceful ways, including by engagement with the UN, have been assaulted, questioned, arrested, threatened, discredited and intimidated by government ministers, officials, military and police."

## Sinhalese Catholic response

While Bishop Joseph's concern for the humanitarian needs and civil rights of the people of Mannar received the support of many in the country and across the international community, it also generated cautious reactions amongst some Sri Lankan Christians who were anxious to publicly assert their allegiance to the victorious government forces. As Sri Lanka polarized over matters of human rights and terrorism, the ethnic



Above: *Our Lady of the Seas* in Negombo during its annual festival. Photo by author.

conflict continued to reconfigure identities, seeping through religious communities and nurturing antagonisms amongst the Christians of the country. This phenomenon was particularly significant amongst the multi-ethnic Catholic communities, as they are the only religious denomination that cuts across the linguistic and ethnic cleavages of Sri Lanka.

Many Sinhalese-speaking Catholics in the southern parts of the country sided with the Buddhist majority and were staunch supporters of the military push against the LTTE. Even amongst Catholic clergy, many Sinhalese priests were wary of supporting Bishop Joseph and considered that his outspoken stance was detrimental to the future of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. This lack of solidarity towards clergy in the dioceses of Mannar and Jaffna was even more disquieting considering that many Sinhalese and Tamil members of the clergy had spent long years living and studying side by side at institutions like the National Seminary in Ampitiya.

A Catholic activist in Colombo, whose work focuses on bridging the cultural, linguistic and political gulf that separates Sinhalese and Tamil Catholics, referred to the deep difficulties faced by his project of generating spaces for dialogue. A Sinhalese Catholic himself, who attends a parish in southern Colombo, he said, "Take, for instance, this parish. In the last stages of the war, the local priest would pray at every Sunday mass for the end of the war, for peace, he would even pray for the safety of the soldiers, but he not once mentioned the innocent civilians who were being bombed and displaced from their homes. It shouldn't make a difference, but the people being killed were Catholics just like us, and we wouldn't even pray for them."

The culminating event that alienated Catholics in the north from their Sinhalese counterparts took place in late 2008, when only five bishops agreed to sign a petition for a ceasefire that would last seven days between Christmas and New Year to evacuate civilians from the Vanni, where the Sri Lankan army was engaged in open combat with the retreating LTTE. Two of the signatories were Anglican, so only three Catholic bishops – out of fourteen in the entire country – were willing to petition the government for a ceasefire at Christmas that would play a fundamental humanitarian mission. This was interpreted by Tamil Catholics as a profound lack of compassion and solidarity on the part of Sinhalese Catholic clergy and laity.

In a conversation I had with Bishop Joseph in September 2013, he observed that Catholics in the south had shown very little concern for the plight of Tamil Catholics. The only exception to this situation that he could think of was provided by Sinhalese and Tamil seminarists who developed a genuine concern for the hardships of their brethren from other parts of the country during their years as students. But he also argued that this effort to cross ethnic and linguistic boundaries was not sustained beyond the seminary and as soon as young priests completed their training and were appointed to their own parishes, that compassionate sense of community seemed to disappear.

## Ethnicity and religion

That Catholics in the south consider themselves Sinhalese first and Catholics second is a widespread perception that started to take shape after the 1960s, when the historically privileged Catholic communities of Sri Lanka felt pressured to acquiesce to the demands imposed by the rising Sinhalese nationalism. After more than two decades of conflict over the administration of educational resources in independent Sri Lanka, Catholics finally ceded to nationalist pressures and many grew openly critical of Tamil political demands. If Catholics had been able to give up their positions of privilege and adapt to the new reality of the country – the argument went – Tamils should follow suit and find ways to adjust to life in a Sinhala dominated nation. As a Sinhalese Catholic teacher explained, "Catholics in the south do not want to 'strike' the Tamils as hard as the Buddhists do, they are more compassionate, but they will consistently stand on the side of Buddhists. They see themselves much closer to Buddhists than to Tamil Catholics, even though they practice the same religion."

In recent years, sectors of the Catholic Church that have endorsed the work of the government have indeed received a number of material benefits. These are especially concentrated in improved educational facilities and larger financial resources for reconstruction. Rev. Joseph Ponniah – Catholic Bishop of Batticaloa – praised President Rajapaksa as a "bridge builder" during a visit to the town of Vakara for the opening ceremony of the new St. Peter's Church in September 2013. By adopting a less confrontational attitude than Bishop Joseph, his diocese has not only been favored with support from the government but has also been commended for its efforts towards reconciliation. For the inauguration of the new church that was partially built with the labor of army personnel, Bishop Ponniah wrote to President Rajapaksa, "We want to show our gratitude and to honor you by inviting you for the solemn opening of this new Church [...] People of Vakara and my entire diocese will be ever grateful for your generous act."

Adopting a similar approach, the overwhelming majority of Sinhalese Catholics firmly supports the Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, who cultivates a cordial relationship with President Rajapaksa – allegedly facilitating Catholic alignment with the Sinhalese Buddhist majority of the country. From their perspective, Bishop Joseph does little for the benefit of Catholics, and is only mindful of "the fishermen of Mannar and human rights activists in Colombo."

Those who approve of the Archbishop's stance consider that his proximity with the President is instrumental to avoid the troubles currently faced by other minorities in the country. Recent attacks by radical Buddhist organizations like the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) on Sri Lankan Muslims have had deadly consequences – at least three men were killed in anti-Muslim riots last June in the coastal town of Aluthgama. These episodes have lent credibility to the anxieties of Catholics who cultivate a low profile and seek to further censor the declarations of Catholic activists and the activities of Christian humanitarian NGOs in the north of the country. In early August of this year, some of these fears materialized when a group of monks, followed by several dozen civilians, broke into a meeting of families of the disappeared in Colombo at the Center for Society and Religion (CSR). Although violence was kept at bay, it provided a disquieting reminder of the meager levels of tolerance that prevail in postwar Sri Lanka.

As political discrimination and the stigmatization of minorities have continued to characterize the country since the end of the armed conflict, the hope of peace and reconciliation harbored by many in Sri Lanka after 2009 is still a long way from reality. As a consequence of this lack of visible improvement, religious minorities have not only become increasingly weary of voicing dissent that can bring them unwelcome attention, but now also have strong evidence as to what responses they can expect to actions that attempt to question the government's human rights record.

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# Democracy on the march: dissecting India's 16th general elections



India, the largest democracy in the world, has achieved an enviable distinction in conducting free and fair elections regularly and making the transfer of political power a routine and smooth affair. Some may dismiss this as a mere demonstration of the success of procedural democracy, hiding its failure to achieve substantive democracy. True, Indian democracy falters on many counts – poverty, education, healthcare, employment and governance. But it is a little unfair to demonise this democratic deficit, taking into account India's gigantic size, population, poverty and enormous diversity in terms of language, region, religion and culture. Incidentally, no democratic country does epitomise perfection and India is no exception, particularly considering its unique features; rather, India's sanctimonious adherence to procedures needs to be seen as its solemn quest in the direction of perfection.

Pralay Kanungo

IN THIS CONTEXT, the recently conducted sixteenth general elections has not just been a mere mechanical transfer of power from the Manmohan Singh-led Congress to the Narendra Modi-led Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, but it has also been a site of engaging debates over the idea of democracy and its working – covering a range of issues like political leadership, secularism, development, entitlement and governance. No doubt, there was Modi magic all the way, but the magic was played out not in a world of fantasy or hallucination, but very much in the competitive arena of democracy.

The Congress party-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA), being in power for two-consecutive terms (2004-2014), was facing a strong anti-incumbency before going to the polls. UPA's 2004 victory over the Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was surprising. Soon after the results were out, the BJP and its ideological mentor the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) threatened agitation if Sonia Gandhi was installed as the Prime Minister, opposing her Italian origins. Sonia decided to opt out of the race, but played a master stroke by nominating a distinguished economist Manmohan Singh, who belonged to the minority Sikh community and was instrumental in the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the 1990s. She, however, remained the anchor of the coalition government as the Congress President and the UPA Chairperson, thereby setting the agenda of governance. The combination worked perfectly. Though critics raised fingers at a 'dual power centre', the electorate did not bother as the economy was doing well keeping the middle class happy, and progressive entitlement policies induced the marginalised in rural and urban areas. The second emphatic win for the Congress-led UPA in 2009 was a testimony to its credible performance and governance.

In the middle of the second stint, things started falling apart all of a sudden. The UPA II government developed so many snags at the same time – poor economy, high inflation,

mega scandals, mal-governance and policy paralysis.

The crisis deepened when the Prime Minister's integrity came into question; the impression spread that he was shielding his corrupt cabinet colleagues under coalition compulsion. Surprisingly, the Prime Minister, despite his personal honesty, appeared vulnerable as he never tried to clear the air of suspicion. Manmohan Singh's silence was construed as a spineless surrender of his authority before Sonia Gandhi. The 'dual power centre', which earlier had cut no ice, became a major issue; later, even a memoir by Manmohan's former staff, disclosed Sonia's routine access to government details in violation of confidentiality. The gentleman Prime Minister looked helpless and gradually started to lose control, not only over the cabinet members belonging to coalition partners, but also over his own party colleagues. The scams and irregularities came under severe public scrutiny – adverse comments by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to regular scathing attacks by a vibrant media. Thus, the Congress became demoralised and Sonia's grand plan of launching her son as the next Prime Minister went awry. Anticipating defeat, a shaky Congress could not muster the courage to declare Rahul as the Prime Ministerial candidate and the cadre became disheartened.

On the other hand, the BJP, after two consecutive defeats, was facing serious factionalism and a leadership crisis. However, BJP Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh were in firm control. More importantly, the RSS, as a no non-sense mentor, continuously worked on the party to keep it in proper shape for the next round. The moment Congress started dithering, the savvy RSS sensed a big political opportunity. Sensibly, it first went to settle the leadership issue as Congress was defensive and non-committal on Rahul. The first claimant was veteran L.K. Advani, the anchor of the *Ramjanmabhoomi* movement, who made it possible for the BJP to come to power in Delhi. In the RSS calculation, he was

no longer an asset since his failure to win in 2009; moreover, his old age would not inspire the young voters who were going to play a decisive role in this election.

Narendra Modi, the other claimant, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, being elected for third consecutive time, had huge mass appeal. Controversial for his role in the 2000 Gujarat riots, Modi had been subject to endless scrutiny and censure by civil society groups and media, both in India and abroad, despite the fact that the Court had never found him guilty. Without becoming entangled in this controversy, Modi had shrewdly deflected national attention towards the 'Gujarat Model of Development', which particularly appealed to the aspiring youth. Moreover, his strong leadership and winning spree had already made him the darling of the party cadre. Hence, the RSS sided with Modi and the BJP declared him the Prime Ministerial candidate.

A positive, confident and aggressive Modi went to the electorate with his mesmerizing oratory. Modi's speeches were well-crafted melodrama that kept the audience spellbound. While exposing Congress on delivery and governance, he was simultaneously entertaining the crowd with jibes at Sonia, Rahul and Manmohan Singh. Against the backdrop of Congress' failure, he was offering an alternative: 'Gujarat Model of Development' and good governance. Modi was consciously projecting himself as the icon of development – and not of Hindutva – by rousing slogans such as *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* [Together with All, Development for All]. Rahul Gandhi, in contrast, was no match for Modi's oratory and aggression; his speeches failed to inspire the youth as he was simply recounting the achievements of the government in the past; the youth was waiting for concrete opportunities for their futures, which he failed to offer.

Modi's campaign was unique in tone and tenor; the text changed with the shifting context. Initially, he called for a *Congress mukt Bharat* [Congress free India] and attacked the Gandhis. Next, he smartly switched over to good governance with a corresponding media campaign *achche din aane wale hain* [happy days are about to come], which became a big hit. His YouTube Campaign promised to end inflation, poverty and unemployment, guaranteed education for children, prosperity to farmers, women's security, transparency, welfare for all, dignity for the poor and respect for the nation. In the final stages, Modi's campaign focused on *Aab ki bar, Modi Sarkaar* [This Time, Modi Government].

Elections have always been spectacles in India, but Modi's campaign left all previous spectacles far behind, in terms of scale and grandeur. As the star campaigner and master communicator Modi travelled 300,000 km, including 410 hours of air-travel, addressed 437 public meetings in 25 states, addressed 2000 '3D rallies', 2 grand Road Shows in Varanasi and Vadodara, and 4000 innovative and interactive *chai pe charcha* [chat over tea] through video conferencing. Media – print, electronic, social – played an unprecedented role, never seen before; the BJP reportedly spent 5 billion rupees, very much close to Obama's election expenses.

Behind this glitter, there was another campaign being quietly undertaken by the RSS; this mammoth organisation mobilised its affiliates and a large number of committed cadres to reach out to each supporter and sympathiser; it also campaigned for high voter turn-out and brought voters to the polling booths. Out of a colossal 814 million electorate, 551 million exercised their franchise to elect 543 members of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament. This was the highest ever turn-out (66.3%) indicating popular yearning and aspirations. The RSS played a crucial role as it knew that high turn-out would go in BJP's favour.

The marathon exercise took place in 9 phases, extending for 36 days, whereby 1.8 million Electronic Voting Machines were used and millions of polling officials worked round the clock under the supervision and control of the Election Commission, perhaps the most trusted public institution in India with a glorious track record. A total number of 8251 candidates belonging to 1687 political parties (6 National, 54 State and 1627 Unrecognised) and independents contested; as 1650 parties failed to secure a seat, an introspection of the workings of the present multi-party democratic system is called for.

The outcome of this spectacle was a spectacular victory for the Narendra Modi-led BJP which captured 282 seats on its own. After three decades, a single party with an absolute majority is back in Parliament, thus signifying the return of 'national' and retreat of 'regional'; states like Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Odisha have been the exception, however. For Congress, it has been the worst debacle; with just 44 seats in its kitty it was not even eligible to lead the opposition. Modi has blunted the old identity politics based on caste, community and region to some extent, offering a new vision and new politics; although, during the campaign he did invoke his own backward caste identity at selective places and faintly remembered Hindutva on rare occasions. Thus, the decisive mandate he received is largely for development and governance. Expectations are very high and tasks are really tough! Can Modi deliver?

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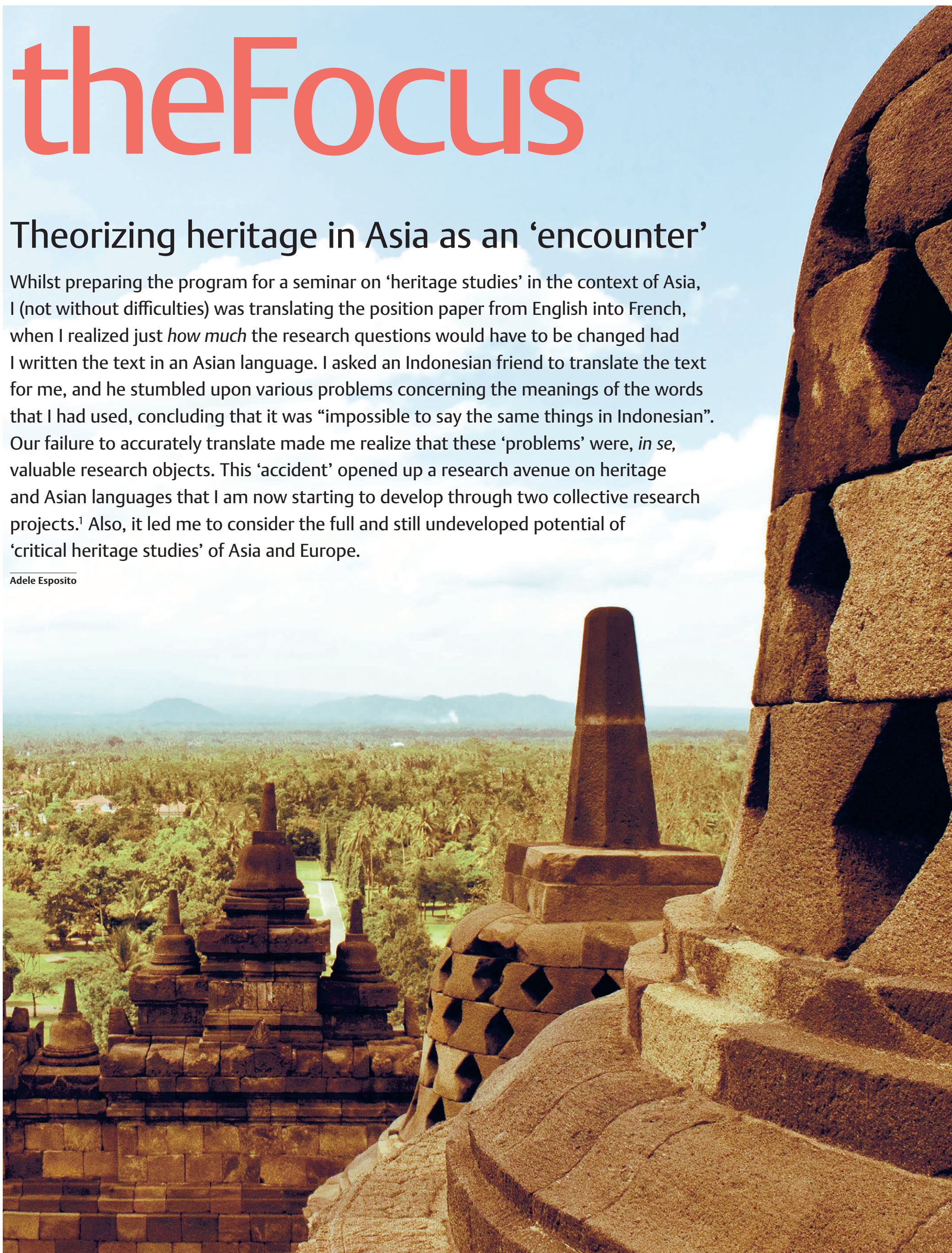
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# theFocus

## Theorizing heritage in Asia as an ‘encounter’

Whilst preparing the program for a seminar on ‘heritage studies’ in the context of Asia, I (not without difficulties) was translating the position paper from English into French, when I realized just *how much* the research questions would have to be changed had I written the text in an Asian language. I asked an Indonesian friend to translate the text for me, and he stumbled upon various problems concerning the meanings of the words that I had used, concluding that it was “impossible to say the same things in Indonesian”. Our failure to accurately translate made me realize that these ‘problems’ were, *in se*, valuable research objects. This ‘accident’ opened up a research avenue on heritage and Asian languages that I am now starting to develop through two collective research projects.<sup>1</sup> Also, it led me to consider the full and still undeveloped potential of ‘critical heritage studies’ of Asia and Europe.

Adele Esposito



## Theorizing heritage in Asia as an 'encounter' *continued*



CRITICAL HERITAGE STUDIES, as an epistemological extension of the Anglo-Saxon Cultural Studies, are an emerging and quickly expanding field of scholarship. Drawing on the pioneer work by Lowenthal *The Past is a Foreign Country*,<sup>2</sup> Smith<sup>3</sup> and Harrison,<sup>4</sup> two of the most renowned scholars in the field, have called into question the relevance of heritage notions shaped according to European cultures. They have shown at which point 'heritage' is a cultural construct, the result of a social process. Any expression of the past has value *per se*, but some individuals or groups claim that certain legacies have specific value for them, as they are used to define the group's identity, memory, affective attachment, and representations of history. Understanding the relative nature of the process of heritage recognition, Luxen has explained that the questions asked in heritage studies "have graduated from 'how to conserve?' to 'why conserve' and then to 'for whom to conserve'."<sup>5</sup> This reflexive approach has gained momentum in the social sciences during the last years; the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), created in 2011, has on a global scale gathered together hundreds of scholars working on heritage from a 'critical perspective'.

### Exported heritages

As heritage, as an institutional practice, has mainly been based on European understandings of values, scholars working on non-Western contexts have played a paramount role in deconstructing assumptions concerning notions and well-rooted practices of heritage management. In this framework, Asia has been considered as an irreplaceable source of research materials for addressing productive critiques of dominant heritage approaches. Developing this perspective, scholars focusing on various contexts have pursued two main avenues of investigation:<sup>6</sup> one the one hand, they have studied the conflicts between institutional approaches and the interests of other social groups (namely, local residents and associations) concerning the ownership and management of heritage; on the other hand, they have shed light on 'alternative' approaches to the legacies of the past that are rarely labeled 'heritage', as they are embedded in people's everyday lives.<sup>7</sup> Even if some of these authors have questioned the conceptual and geographical boundaries of Asia,<sup>8</sup> various initiatives in the field, including the publication of edited volumes and conferences, have considered Asia 'as a whole'.<sup>9</sup> By doing so, it has been implicitly assumed that there is something common to various case studies located in the continent that make it possible to put them together under the common umbrella of *Asian heritages* and to

imagine policies and measures that would specifically address this region. Of course, I appreciate that, as scholars and teachers, we must position ourselves in the international arena of area studies and we have to define our field of knowledge in order to raise the interests of our readers and students. However, by advancing in the exploration of the field, I have realized that theorizing the heritage of Asia is becoming a well-established avenue of inquiry. So, in this brief introduction to a Focus on 'critical approaches to heritage in Asia and Europe', I would like to raise two questions: first, *why* is scholarship in this field developing this common position?; and, second, *what* is specific to heritage in the contexts of Asia, *if not* its great diversity? I would like to suggest that future research queries the assumption of 'commonality' and 'singularity' of heritage in the context of Asia, through extensive ethnographic and comparative research. This is, in my view, one of the potential and promising developments of critical heritage studies in the context of Asia.

Heritage, as an institutional practice aiming for the conservation of selected remains from the past, was born in Western Europe, and was later 'exported' to the European colonies, and namely to Asia. Throughout the 20th century, international organizations, and especially UNESCO after its creation in 1946, have contributed to the dissemination of European-based notions of values on a global scale.<sup>10</sup> The impacts of this 'movement' – from Europe to Asia – have been widely addressed by scholars who have identified the discrepancies between an international heritage culture and local contexts.<sup>11</sup> As a reaction to the cumbersome presence of the West as a reified conceptual entity, however, the *critical* approach has sometimes reacted by stiffening Asia as a counter-category. It has contributed to the consideration of Asia as 'the other', to making Asia an all-encompassing category of thought, a premise of theories on heritage to be further developed. There is the risk of creating a new monolithic cultural construct to balance the power of the West; hence, to renew and strengthen the dualism between the East and the West, defining Asia as a source of *alternative* practices in the field of heritage (as it has been for *alternative modernities*<sup>12</sup>). Along with the category of Asia, contemporary research on heritage in the continent has widely focused on the 'people and the communities', and has produced relevant ethnographies.<sup>13</sup> Underpinned by the serious engagement (sometimes even the activism) of scholars and practitioners who want to give a voice to marginalized groups and approaches, this perspective tends to be rigidified in

a common place, which conflicts with 'Asian approaches' from the grassroots as diametrically opposed to Western understandings of heritage.

I would like to address this 'stiffening' of contemporary research on heritage around new categories, and to claim that scientific investigations in this field constantly have to re-question the general relevance of their findings in order to address, *critically*, a continent that is characterized by such a diversity. If Asian countries do have something in common in the field of heritage, this is, paradoxically, the presence of Europe, both as a colonial power and as the place of origin of the theories and practices, which have been disseminated throughout Asia starting from the second half of the 19th century. However, far from being a coherent system that is passively 'received', the 'micro-histories' of heritage conservation show that European cultures have been constantly renegotiated at various levels. Karlström has argued that, as a professional archaeologist in Laos, she had to adapt her technical knowledge and methodologies to local conceptions of sacredness that dictate *what* has to be conserved and *how*.<sup>14</sup> In this Focus section, Huang shows how the World Heritage Discourse promoted by UNESCO's official documents has been appropriated by various social agents in Taiwan, to the point of being 'reversed' (diverted from its original presuppositions and objectives). Di Pietro shows how the 'creative industry' policy, originating in Europe, is 'translated' in the context of China and is strategically used by governmental bodies and a community of artists for their own objectives. To what extent can we still speak about 'Eurocentric heritage cultures', when the elements that compose these cultures are readjusted and transformed?

### A field of encounters

Drawing on these examples, I would like to make one step forward and to approach heritage in the context of Asia as a field of multi-directional connections (rather than as the clash between two worldviews) that generate local assemblages of heritage notions, measures, and practices, coming from various backgrounds, and re-contextualized in the strategic agendas of the stakeholders involved in heritage conservation. Europeans have long been fascinated by the *alterity* that the 'East' represents, as shown by Orientalism and by the numerous influences in the field of the arts and spirituality. But, *vice versa*, Eastern cultures have (and are) attracted by what the 'West' represents for them. This is particularly true in the field of heritage where Europeans theorists, lawyers, and practitioners are seen

Above: Offerings at Wat Phnom, Cambodia (photo by author, July 2013).



Above: Ki Purbo Asmoro, Sragen 27 June 2010 (Photo by Sadiah Boonstra).

as breed authorities. Mutual fascination and influences help re-conceptualize heritage as a field of encounters, in a historical perspective. So, further research – and this is the perspective we develop in the framework of the MA Program ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’ (see ‘This Focus’ below) – shall investigate the encounters between different notions and approaches to heritage, which create the opportunities for productive exchanges (and sometimes for dynamic controversies) between cultures. These encounters are often changing and unstable; first of all because they result from daily practices of conservation and from the evolving dialogues between the people involved in specific heritage programs; and secondly, because in the present context of globalization, a large number of heritage notions, measures, and practices circulate quickly across the countries, and participate in the elaboration of syncretic heritage cultures. These ‘local assemblages’ are not visible to those who choose to study heritage only through the analysis of official texts (e.g., laws, conventions, policies, as they are described ‘on paper’), since they are produced in the ‘interstitial spaces’ where personal encounters take place and conflicting worldviews are put face to face.<sup>15</sup> For instance, they can be explored through the micro-negotiations engaged on a daily basis by the inhabitants living in the surroundings of protected areas (Guagnini, in this Focus); or through the tactics that allow the *Wayang* puppeteers in Indonesia to ‘adapt and bend’ official heritage discourses (Boonstra, in this Focus) for their own ends.

Acknowledging the interactive relationships of various social agents with ‘received’ European-based heritage framework, I argue that the specificity of heritage in the context of Asia is its inter-subjective nature, where the dialectic relationship with the *other* (and *what* defines the other) is regularly redefined as a result of evolving acculturation processes. This approach to the study of heritage strengthens its embodied nature and calls for the analysis of human interactions, in the way they define specific approaches to the past. Until now, research has addressed the political implications of heritage, focusing on the struggles for political representation of various stakeholders, at the national and international scale. However, power, as Jackson argued, is a wider concern in human societies: it is a *modus vivendi* “that is strived for in all contexts of human endeavour [...] a balance between what is given and what is chosen such that a person comes to experience the world as a subject and not solely as a contingent predicate”.<sup>17</sup> Drawing on this broad and

widespread idea of power, further research shall consider heritage as the ability to take root in space and time, and thus as a meaningful cause and a paramount arm in the vital negotiations of power in contemporary Asian societies.

#### This Focus

The aim of this Focus section is to give an account of the research perspective developed by a group of young scholars (MA students, PhD candidates, and post-doctoral fellows) and heritage practitioners who gravitate around the research cluster *Asian Heritages* of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the MA Program ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’. In 2013, IIAS and LIAS (Leiden University Institute for Area Studies) jointly launched this MA track to address the issue of Heritage in a pluri-disciplinary and interactive fashion, combining teaching, research and community engagement. In this program, students learn to articulate their own scholarly approach from a plurality of social and cultural aspirations and stakes, reflecting the inherently contentious nature of cultural heritage in any given context. They indeed also learn to elaborate contextualized (research-based) methodologies of heritage practice, including historically and culturally sensitive heritage management policies.

With the objective of decentering knowledge on heritage management practice, the program sets out to establish a trans-regional network involving four universities in Europe and Asia: Leiden University, National Taiwan University, Yonsei University, and Gadjah Mada University. Students who wish to obtain the MA degree at Leiden University can also engage in a Double Degree track by completing an additional year at one of the Asian university partners.

The organizers of the Double Degree MA program consider Asia fertile ground for new theoretical and methodological insights on this highly contested subject. Drawing on individual research located in various contexts of Asia, our first group of students (academic year 2013-2014), together with two young scholars who also work on heritage in Asia, have collectively produced a ‘manifesto’ with the purpose of initiating a proactive and policy-oriented debate on the politics of heritage, to which all our readers are invited to participate. Far from aspiring to speak about Asia as a whole, our statements wish to contribute to the field of heritage studies and are based on our knowledge of specific situations and places in Asia.

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- 2 Lowenthal, D. 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 3 Smith, L. 2006. *Uses of Heritage*, London-New York: Routledge.
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- 7 Chapagain & Silva. 2013.
- 8 See for example, Daly & Winter. 2011. pp.5-8
- 9 Such as the events mentioned by Chapagain (2013, pp.14-15).
- 10 Hall, M. 2011. *Towards World Heritage: international origins of the preservation movement, 1870-1930*, Farnham: Ashgate.
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- 17 *ibid.*, p.21

# Heritage beyond the boundaries: a manifesto

The notions of ‘heritage’, nowadays shared worldwide, were originally shaped following European cultural backgrounds and are mainly based on material authenticity, aesthetic qualities, and historical and artistic values. Disseminated on an international scale, first by the colonial powers, then by organizations such as UNESCO, and appropriated and reassembled by local agents, these notions deeply influence the way heritage is currently defined and managed on the global level. An emergent thinking developed by researchers, but also by international organizations, institutions, and practitioners in the field of *critical heritage studies* has recently started to call into question the dominant paradigms that influence heritage recognition, and to evaluate the relevance of these paradigms outside Europe, in particular in postcolonial contexts. We have observed that the current avenues of inquiry in heritage studies are keen on producing well-argued critiques of institutional heritage practices, but show some difficulties in proposing positive and forward-looking approaches for dealing with heritage in contemporary societies.

Compiled by: Joshua Chan (PhD. Candidate, LIAS/Leiden University); Ian Dull (Independent Researcher); Giulia Di Pietro (MA Student, Leiden University); Adèle Esposito; Sara Guagnini (MA Student, Leiden University); Abby Hsian-huan Huang (Research MA Student, Leiden University); Isaura van Den Berg (MA Student, Leiden University); Rita Wittek (Research MA Student, Leiden University).

## A manifesto

This text was generated in response to the manifesto produced by the *Association of Critical Heritage Studies* in 2011. A team of MA students and PhD candidates, enrolled in the Leiden University program *Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe* have compiled this text, with support from the MA program coordinator, Adèle Esposito, and independent researcher, Ian Dull. This manifesto aims to foster debates, raise critiques, and inspire new ideas that deepen the understanding of the complex phenomenon of heritage in contemporary societies. Based on our research in various contexts of Asia, we wish to make some preliminary statements, which may help to problematize contemporary heritage approaches and elaborate on policies and management measures.

Asia is characterized by a high diversity of religious, linguistic, and cultural contexts. We have observed that, while national institutions tend to endorse internationalized heritage discourses and to conceive heritage through the filter of postcolonial cultural influences, numerous social groups and individuals show an emerging concern for heritage and contest national policies. Productive confrontations – sometimes open conflicts – encourage us to critically address the politics of heritage in Asia and to consider this continent as an inexhaustible source for productive critics of current heritage assets.

## Plural views and dynamic struggles for power

Entering the 21st century, as an increasing number of Nation States implements heritage policies, official institutional apparatuses need to consider other ways to inform, interact and reassess with stakeholders, citizens and the public, regarding a shared but distinctively experienced heritage. Policies often remain embedded in too general conformist frameworks that are further restricted by diplomatic terminology. As a consequence, a statically upheld concept of heritage as apolitical is still disseminated in large parts of the world. We believe that in order to raise a general awareness of heritage as a fluid multivalent concept, it is necessary to reveal the politics underlying heritage in order to undercut the invention of tradition inherent in it and understand the different localized perspectives by policy-makers, governments and communities that continuously modify heritage-making processes. This can be achieved by incorporating legal inclusions of ethical argumentation in relation to heritage, with legal recognition of local, possibly ethnic, notions towards heritage.

Nationalistic discourses on heritage and assessment reports of institutional conservation projects generally hide conflicts: they reflect an artificial harmonious relationship between the stakeholders involved in heritage conservation, around a supposedly shared heritage culture. However, behind this cover, heritage is the playground of plural views and dynamic struggles for power. The denying of controversies perpetuates a superficial understanding of the politics of heritage and underestimates the creative potential of conflicts. We consider conflicts surrounding heritage as productive opportunities for engaging negotiations between the stakeholders. Far from being flattening compromises, negotiations and consultations that encourage all parties to include transparency and motivations of interest, are processes through which innovation is defined, by the combination of various meanings and approaches to heritage.

## Material stability and cultural anchors

Global heritage discourses emphasize heritage practices when they are associated with the conservation of physical artifacts. In these discourses, heritage conservation is described as *intrinsically ethical*, as it supports the construction of local identities and enhances tourism development. However, these

discourses rarely take into consideration the implications of heritage conservation for people who live in the proximity of celebrated heritage sites. Our research on Shangri-La (Tibet) and Borobudur (Java-Indonesia), has shown that villagers suffer disfranchisement and marginalization as a consequence of institutional heritage recognition and tourism-driven development (fig. 1). They lose the power to give voice to their cultural representations, to own, use, and benefit from the space where heritage is located. We argue that heritage sites must not only be considered as a cultural commodity, but also as the living environment of the inhabitants who seek material stability and cultural anchors. We defend the right of the people to achieve cultural and economic self-determination through the use of heritage.

## Ideas of authenticity

Heritage, as an institutional practice, is highly political and hierarchical. Dominant social agents, political and cultural elites, decide which legacies deserve special attention, while others – that may have fundamental values for other social groups – lie outside heritage recognition. Our research has shown that this selective process is particularly strong in the field of ‘intangible cultural heritages’. Why should a performative genre be superior to another within a cultural discourse? National institutions tend to overlook this question and to take superiority for granted, when providing a tentative list of ‘cultural masterpieces’ to UNESCO. When the Peking Opera was inscribed on the UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2010, for example, very little was said to argue for the genre’s preminent status (fig. 2). It was described as the national opera *par excellence*, based on the fact that Chinese intellectuals had invented this genre in the

early 20th century, with the ideology of cultural nationalism as a backdrop. These “politics of significance” (Herzfeld 2000) beg to be deconstructed. Institutional bodies must deepen their awareness of the regimes of values, which influence their selections.

‘Authenticity’ is an essential qualifying factor defining the value of cultural heritage. In institutional heritage conservation, and especially in those programs led by international organizations, judgments of authenticity mainly lie with the experience of the past in terms of the form, the function, as well as the material value, sometimes regardless of heritage evolution through time. In line with the Nara Document of Authenticity of 1994, we find there is a need to contribute to a broader understanding of this criterion by different population groups in different periods, and that the Asian contexts we have studied offer complex ideas of what *is* authentic and *why*. Authenticity shall be perceived in different contexts in which all kinds of interactions between heritage and people are taken into account. Our research on *Hallstaat See* in Guangdong has shown that the replica of the World Heritage Site of Hallstaat (an Austrian city) challenges the internationally shared notion of authenticity based on the cult of the ‘original’. We have discovered that the promoters and the users of the new city attach cultural meanings and social values to the ‘copy’ that are related to the fascination with foreign heritage and culture. Analyzing the case of *Hallstaat See*, authenticity and fakeness appear to be relative and questionable categories. This extreme example leads us to question the plurality of visions encompassed by the notion of authenticity. Yet previous research has often ridiculed and condemned these kinds of projects. Breaking with this judgmental attitude, we call for further research, aiming to understand the social, political, and cultural contexts, which give rise to specific, sometimes disruptive, ideas of authenticity.

Dear readers of The Newsletter,  
you too are welcome to respond to  
this manifesto. Do you work on heritage  
in the context of Asia? Would you like  
to make a statement drawing on your  
own research?

You are invited to submit a short article  
(max 400 words) before 15 Dec 2014,  
to the following email address:  
[criticalheritagestudies@gmail.com](mailto:criticalheritagestudies@gmail.com)

Selected contributions will be published  
in the next issue of The Newsletter  
(issue #70, February 2015).



**Condemnation of memory**

Institutional heritage in modern Western societies is a process of accumulation and classification of objects (Harrison 2013). In the contemporary world, which is already overwhelmed by data, the indiscriminate collection of heritage artifacts and sites might result in a sterile archival census of past remains. As argued by Harrison (2012), an artifact, despite being considered as valuable in the past, might have lost its qualities for present societies. For this reason, various social agencies must undertake a conscious and honest process of heritage assessment to judge *what* has value today, for *whom*, and *why*. We even assert further by saying that the results of this process may imply that certain legacies from the past can be destroyed, because they lack importance in contemporary times, or because they embody negative values that societies wish to ‘evacuate’. The history of humankind presents numerous cases in which heritage was deliberately negated. In the Roman Empire, this practice was defined as *damnatio memoriae* [the condemnation of memory] and was applied to people and objects representing dishonor or betrayal of the state. To us, this kind of approach is authoritarian and violent – it perpetrates a top-down perspective – yet we defend one’s right to get rid of negative heritage, as a conscious act. In Korea, for instance, the Government General Building, built by the Japanese administration in front of the *Geunjeongjeon* royal palace in Seoul, was demolished between 1995-1996 after a long debate because it represented a negative symbol of colonial imperialism (fig. 3). However, the dome and other parts of this building have been preserved inside the Independence Hall Museum of Cheonan. In this way the negative memory was not completely destroyed but consciously decontextualized and reinserted in a new narrative. We support conscious destruction as a practice diametrically opposed to manipulative and authoritarian oblivions, which avoid uncomfortable reflections on history and national traumas. Societies that are aware of what they destroy, and that present a collectively-shared reasoning behind these acts, should be respected.

**Taking stock of transformations**

Endowed with authenticity, conserving material heritage was long considered an end in itself. While that tradition is not over, critiques of it have meant that alternative justifications for heritage conservation are increasingly prevalent: identity, development, and tourism represent the most common few. Yet employing heritage to work for so many aims only reinforces the concept of its uniqueness. Indeed, what other cultural product is tasked with so much political and economic work? Nowhere is this truer than in cities, which serve as economic, political, cultural, and social hubs, and host any number of the diverse representations of these pillars of society. Where heritage once struggled to survive in cities facing development, ‘heritagization’ is now a default, with the use of heritage districts to promote urban economic development and revitalization for touristic pleasures an almost ubiquitous desire. In opposition to the diversity of city forms and the buildings within them, the logics, and the heritage they produce, stay the same. Gentrified streets reign, alienating residents from their cities, despite all of the talk of localized identity and development. The consistent use of these same logics worldwide represents a new form of authenticity. Where authenticity responded to scientific needs, identity, development, and tourism only respond to new incentives. Though the impact of heritage in a number of domains cannot be denied, why must heritage be a necessary discourse in every place? Heritage is no doubt one of the defining methods of our time for taking stock of geographical, social, and cultural transformations, yet, as with any methodology, we must inquire into which phenomena it is best suited to study. One cannot forget that heritage and the past it includes form only one portion of human lives in the present.

**A special thanks to Rebecca Bego, Siobhan Campbell, Sonja Laukkanen, and Non Arkaraprasertkul for their participation in our informal ‘Manifesto writing sessions’. And, last but not least, our gratitude to professor Michael Herzfeld for inspiring us.**

Non Arkaraprasertkul, from Harvard University, and a postdoctoral fellow at the New York University in Shanghai, has responded to this manifesto with the following text.

**Toward affordable and diverse urbanity: historic preservation of a global city**

My research deals with the preservation of historic housing in the center of Shanghai, known as *lilongs*. Shanghai’s government regards the historic preservation of select sites, including the *lilongs*, as essential to the branding of a city with global ambitions. Yet, there is little consideration for the ways in which existing residents of said ‘historical monuments’ fit into the overall architectural preservation of the sites. Hence, we are seeing an interest in architectural preservation rather than a preservation of culture and way of life. How did I arrive at such a conclusion? The answer to such a process lies in both the planning policy and the historic preservation program. You may wonder why designated historic structures are not clustered in groups but scattered around the city. That’s because the Shanghai government handpicks ‘worthy’ structures to preserve, making the ‘unworthy’ structures available for immediate bulldozing. As a result, you find many ‘preserved historic sites’ in the middle of surrounding high-rise buildings, and the remaining residents, who are mostly older, find such encroachment to be daunting. They are used to shopping at cheap street markets, but due to the new urban development, find themselves surrounded by ‘modern’ supermarkets where fruit and vegetables cost ten times more. The same changes apply to the residents’ social lives that they used to share with neighbors from nearby communities. Once the network of cross-community friendships and contacts is gone, remaining residents are unable to maintain the sense of a neighborhood, and they may eventually move.

I believe that there is a possibility for the preservation of both architecture and community culture. Even though Shanghai technically belongs to everyone, no one with an income lower than that of the upper middle class will want to travel to the city if it becomes too expensive. In addition, the monotony of having just one class of residents in a city is a kiss of death for urban livability. If the only method of preservation is one that emphasizes architecture at the expense of older residents who become displaced (even if they choose to be displaced for the money offered to them), we will end up with a proto-upper middle class city that lacks diversity and community culture. We should not just aim for preservation of architecture and culture, but we should aim for diversity. I believe that if we create a livable environment for the residents, they will want to stick around to tell stories of the past to the younger generations and the newcomers to the city. Isn’t that what preservation is all about?

People criticize the ‘Disney Land’ approach to preservation because it only maintains the architectural façade, not the social structure. Thus, most people visiting a renovated *lilong* will know little, or nothing of the history of the place, and will simply see that it ‘looks old and different’. But I believe that the new and the old can co-exist. The old residents are also happy to see the city grow and develop, and they want to be a part of it despite their age. So it is unfair to think that because they are old and probably poor, they should not be living in the city center. In fact, because they are old and know the place well, they care most for the place. Going back to what the urbanist Jane Jacobs used to say, the sense of belonging ‘from within’ is precisely what creates the sense of safety and community – not the security cameras and guides in pretentious old-looking uniforms hired to symbolize, in the most superficial way, some sense of history.



Fig 1 (above): Family members at Karanganyar Village, Borobudur’s district (photo by S. Guagnini, July 2014).

Fig 2 (inset left): Chinese Opera. Image reproduced courtesy of a creative commons license by JaBB on Flickr.

Fig 3 (left): Sejong-daero, where the Japanese Government General Building was located before its dismantlement (photo A. Esposito, March 2014).

# 798: the re-evaluation of Beijing's industrial heritage in the



As testified by a UNESCO report on the Asia-Pacific region,<sup>1</sup> the preservation of industrial heritage in Asia is still at an early stage of application, and constitutes a controversial topic for many countries belonging to this region. The report makes the comparison with European countries' conservation practices and their relationship with their industrial past. Indeed, European countries have a common history of industrialisation that proceeded at a relatively homogenous pace. Moreover, industrialisation is now a relatively pleasant memory because the technological advancements it brought about have made many countries – the UK, for example – very proud of their industrial past and willing to considerate it part of their national heritage. For the countries included by UNESCO in the Asia-Pacific region,<sup>2</sup> however, this is not always the case.

Giulia Di Pietro

IN MANY COUNTRIES OF THIS AREA, industrialisation is still an ongoing process, often the outcome of a colonial domain, and presents many dark sides, such as pollution, environmental degradation and labour exploitation. Countries that have only recently achieved a high level of industrialisation, consider it too recent to be worth preserving. In fact, the World Heritage List counts only two industrial heritage sites in the whole Asia-Pacific region.<sup>3</sup> However, this does not mean that industrial heritage has been completely disregarded or abandoned in Asia. On the contrary, there are several stimulating instances of preservation of these kinds of structures; among them is a current trend that falls outside the heritage dominion into the dominion of cultural policies and urban redevelopments. The 798 Dashanzi Factory in Beijing is among the best examples of this trend.

#### Urban redevelopment

Considered among China's largest hubs for the exhibition and commercialisation of contemporary art (covering approximately 1.300 square kilometres), the 798 Dashanzi Factory (originally named 718) was founded in the 1950s in the district of Chaoyang (North-East Beijing) to produce electronic components for the military. At the end of the 1980s it was gradually dismantled as a consequence of the wave of deindustrialisation that followed Deng Xiaoping's reform period. At a stage of semi-abandonment, towards the end of the 1990s, the government-appointed owners of the factory, the Seven Stars Group (SSG), decided to rent out the empty spaces in order to collect money to pay the laid-off workers' pensions. Coincidentally, the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing was looking for large spaces to rent in order to hold sculpture workshops; the factory caught the CAFA's attention, not only because of the large space and low prices, but also because of the aesthetic value of the abandoned factory buildings. After the CAFA later left to its new official location, it was replaced by an impressive number of artists who decided to install their studios there, and who formed an artist village.

The industrial complex, which had formerly been split into smaller and more manageable units, now saw the merging of five of its six establishments under the name Seven Stars Science and Technology Co. Ltd. (also Seven Stars Group - SSG), one of the first high-tech companies in Beijing. In this context a greater role was being given by the government to financial institutions, real-estate developers and individuals. In Beijing, a new ring of buildings developed by this wave of urban redevelopment came to be added to existing assets that followed a concentric pattern around the city centre; from pre-1949 traditional buildings to socialist buildings developed by the Maoist government. Although redevelopment of dilapidated neighbourhoods and rural land for housing and business, on the one hand meant that people could improve their living conditions, on the other it also limited their improvement, because after redevelopment house prices were raised and, as the process of gentrification generally implies, parts of the population (mainly the lower classes) were pushed to the outskirts of the city due to financial constraints. As a consequence, the process of urban redevelopment has mostly facilitated the upper-middle classes in the purchasing of housing.

Effectively, after a few years of artistic activities, the SSG, a state-owned enterprise, had a plan approved by the city government to turn this area into a "heaven for new technology and commerce" – the Zhongguacun Electronics Park – by 2005,<sup>4</sup> and to develop the rest of the land into high-rise modern apartments.<sup>5</sup> This project would reflect the 'old glories' of the factory. As a consequence, the owners decided to evict the artists because the plans involved destroying the old buildings. Outraged by the threats of eviction and joining an emerging social concern in China against the demolition of ancient structures disguised as urban renewal, the artists, who believed the buildings had an immense historical and architectural value, started protesting in favour of the preservation of the 798 and the maintenance of the artist village as its occupying community. The artist community, which involved local artists but also external activists who protested against the government's architectural heritage destruction, formed an 'art advocacy group' called Thinking Hands (*sixiang shou*), which aimed at raising awareness of the area's potential destruction and promoted its dedication as a place for art expression.

#### Protest

One of the main reasons for the activism behind 798 was to impede the destruction of such an important historical site, for its cultural and symbolic value in Chinese recent history. As one of their first protest acts, the artist community established an International Dashanzi Art Festival. Subsequently, a book titled *Beijing 798*, edited by Huang Rui and Robert Barnell<sup>6</sup> – members of the community as well as activists committed to the 798 cause – was published to stress the importance of the area's architecture, history and artistic production. A counter-offensive was presented by the Seven Stars group in 2004 when, together with the local government, they realised that the protest might become a serious obstacle for their urban development plans. They started increasing rental prices and renting the venues to new tenants, to foreigners and to cultural-related organisations, in order to hinder the activities within the artist village. A year later, in a final attempt to protect the art villagers from eviction and to save the buildings from demolition, the local artists' organisation supported by Li Xiangqun, a local sculptor and Tsinghua University professor elected to the People's Congress in 2004, filed a proposal to the local government to turn 798 into an art district. The crucial element that helped them in attaining their goal and preserving the 798 was the introduction, in the same period, of 'creative industries' policies.

#### Creative industries

When China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, its administration of culture came to involve the idea of 'creativity as a source of innovation'. Scholars and important official figures, such as Li Wuwei,<sup>7</sup> became inspired by the 'creative industries' policies, promoted in 1998 by the British Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) at the end of the 1990s, and praised them as emblems of the new 'creative' path China was undertaking. Michael Keane stated that China has a 'creative complex' – compared to



# adoption of creative industries policies

other countries – because of its manufacturing role in the global markets and that the adoption of creative industries in China might be a consequence of this and a way to achieve the same innovation levels as other leading global powers.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, this strategy takes inspiration from John Howkins' theory of 'the creative economy',<sup>9</sup> which sees intellectual property as an element on which countries can capitalise and base their development strategies. His theory is complemented by Michael Porter's theories concerning the idea of 'clustering' – intended as a spatial agglomeration of firms doing business in compatible fields, as a competitive strategy for concentrating and improving creation of wealth in specific areas<sup>10</sup> – and the ideas of Richard Florida with regards to the 'creative city', assuming that currently there is a tendency that can be observed in the 'creative sector' of clustering in cities that favour the three Ts (talent, technology and tolerance).<sup>11</sup> This issue of 'clustering' has been widely debated among scholars who dismiss its assumptions as a neoliberalist way of dealing with the issue of creativity in relation to cultural policy and economic development<sup>12</sup> and of facilitating the gentrification of degraded urban areas and neighbourhoods.<sup>13,14</sup>

In ideological terms, these policies were aimed at reversing the image of China as a manufacturing country, one that imported ideas and 'copied' from the West, into a producer of innovation and lifestyle. In practical terms, the promotion of the creative industries also involved benefits such as a tax reduction of 15-20%, residence subsidies for talents up to 20% and free advertisement for those who embraced them. By the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen had already embraced the creative industries as a local development strategy and in Beijing there were already ten established creative clusters.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, this project was involved in administrative plans for urban redevelopments scheduled in view of the 2008 Olympics, and has been strongly endorsed and advertised by the government. In 2008 these clusters' revenue accounted for 10% of Beijing's internal GDP.<sup>16</sup>

## 798 Art Zone

The adoption of the label '798 Dashanzi Art Zone' happened in 2005, and coincided with the Beijing municipal government's recognition of the area as 'a modern heritage'.<sup>17</sup> Finally, in 2011, the local government established an institution "for the strategic planning and preservation of 798 as a national hub of contemporary arts",<sup>18</sup> which downsized the role of administrative intervention to daily management, but ultimately shifted most of the power into the hands of the local government. This meant that the local community no longer had a voice in the decision-making. Thus, the institutionalisation of creative industries became a crucial element for the government to regulate the new paths of culture in 798, but at the same time guaranteed the role of the CCP in directing them.

On the one hand, the loss of the art community through gentrification, meant a dramatic loss of appeal of the 798 as an underground environment, which is clearly reflected by the adoption of the term 'Art Zone', replacing 'artist village'. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the government's plan to economically develop the area proved effective, since not only did 798 become a symbol of well-functioning creative industry, increasing the local economy, but the institutionalisation of 798 as a creative industry also allowed for the maintenance of its structures, which remain stable and in good order. Indeed, most of the original members of the artist community left the village or were indirectly evicted by rising rents. Nevertheless, many members also benefited from the development process: they became well-known, were provided a larger pool to whom they can show their works, and made a sufficient amount of money to



A sculpture by Liu Bolin, titled 'Fist', standing in one of the alleys of the current Art Zone.

keep their studios as showrooms in 798. Those artists who were deeply outraged by the commercialised track undertaken, did not return after its officialisation, and have now moved to other, lesser known, artist villages and keep producing their works there.

For centuries, China has experienced a dynastic history of systematically destroying the remains of previous generations: a Maoist period that demolished most ancient structures to achieve its industrial dream; or the contemporary socialist-capitalist period, in which technological advancement and economic development has supplanted all regards for urban conservation. In addition, the urban population of China holds many contrasting opinions with regards to their industrial heritage. To conclude, despite the regretfully negative outcome for many of the original members of the 798 art community (before its officialisation), and without sharing the theoretical assumptions of the creative industries as a whole, I do believe that the 'creative industries' discourse has been cleverly appropriated by the original grassroots movement and has been instrumental in preserving the 798 buildings and avoiding their demolition.

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Left: An exhibition hall within 798 Dashanzi Art Zone's main building.

All photos: courtesy Virginia Fontanelli, July 2010.

# World Heritage in reverse



Since UNESCO launched the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1972, it has not only built up a platform for transnational cooperation in heritage protection, preservation, and education, but has also created a powerful international reference for heritage definition. Scholars have criticised the paradigms<sup>1</sup> used by UNESCO for universalising the definitions and typologies of heritage and standardising the conservation approaches based on European philosophy, without taking into account different interpretations in diverse cultural contexts.<sup>2</sup>

Abby Hsian-huan Huang

WHILE UNESCO HAS BECOME a single target in “authorized heritage discourse”,<sup>3</sup> and its formulated heritage paradigms have been criticised as a globalising program to local contexts,<sup>4</sup> it is also important to recognise that UNESCO is an inter-governmental organisation composed of States Parties<sup>5</sup> and to acknowledge in what ways it has been manipulated by them. Askew and Logan both point out that States Parties have used UNESCO and the World Heritage List for their national interests;<sup>6</sup> Long & Labadi assert that States Parties use the World Heritage List as “a form of soft power”, “a means of communicating their cultural, social and even environmental credentials to the world”;<sup>7</sup> Tim Winter demonstrates how countries in Asia (China, Japan, Korea and India) have used heritage aids as their international relations strategy.<sup>8</sup> They all show how UNESCO might indeed be forcedly imposing its Eurocentric and state-centric paradigms on States Parties, but also that it is noteworthy to study how the States Parties possibly manipulate UNESCO’s paradigms and World Heritage status for their own ends.

This article explores two ways in which the World Heritage system can be *reversed*: in application, the international conventions can be reversed to national heritage policy; in principle, the goal of safeguarding heritage of mankind can be reversed to fulfil the nationalist’s agenda.

#### Taiwan focus

Taiwan lost its UN membership in 1971 to the People’s Republic of China, and has since been ineligible to join affiliated organisations, including UNESCO’s *Convention*. Nevertheless, UNESCO has indirectly played an important role in Taiwan. The Council for Cultural Affairs (文建會, hereinafter referred to as CCA)<sup>9</sup> asserted that Taiwan, as a member of the ‘global village’, should not be excluded from UNESCO’s World Heritage affairs just because of its unrecognised status. As a consequence of its lengthy exclusion, Taiwan has fallen ‘behind’ the world trend in heritage protection and regulation by almost 30 years

(dated back to the year when the *Convention* was launched). In an attempt to catch up with current trends, to update fellow countrymen with the concept of World Heritage, and to learn methods of protecting cultural and natural heritage, CCA has organised a series of World Heritage forums in Taiwan since 2001.<sup>10</sup> It also joined ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)<sup>11</sup> in 2003 through the Bureau of Cultural Heritage (文資處) as an Institutional Member, and Dr Fu Chao-ching (傅朝卿) as an Individual Member.

In 2012, the Ministry of Culture (文化部, formerly CCA, hereinafter referred to as MOC) organised the first TICCIH<sup>12</sup> congress in Asia. After the four-day assembly, the participants issued the *Taipei Declaration for Asian Industrial Heritage*, based on an agreement on the particularity of Asian industrial heritage and on the promotion of further conservation.<sup>13</sup> It is noteworthy that such an important declaration was launched in Taiwan, a country not even recognised as a state by the UN (or UNESCO). Moreover, Taiwan has even referred to UNESCO’s conventions in law making. The Taiwanese national law, *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* (文化資產保存法, 1982), was modelled after UNESCO’s *Convention* and has been modified over the years under the influence of UNESCO’s developing paradigms. The 1982 version of the Act was antique-centred, starting with the definition and related regulations of ‘antique’ (*guwu* 古物).<sup>14</sup> In the 2005 version, the notion of ‘cultural asset’ was developed from antique-centred to monument-centred, with an increasing number of the articles concerning monuments (*guji* 古蹟). New categories ‘historic building’ and ‘cultural landscape’ were added to the Act in 2000 and 2005 to include more diverse types of cultural assets. In the latest Draft Revision of the Act (2013), ‘intangible heritage’ is officially differentiated from ‘tangible heritage’. Drawing on the definition of UNESCO’s *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) article 2,<sup>15</sup> the Taiwanese draft includes five categories: ‘traditional performing arts’, ‘traditional craft art’, ‘folk customs’, ‘oral tradition’ and ‘traditional knowledge and practices’.

Zhaishan 翟山 tunnel in Kinmen. Located in the southwest of Kinmen Island, it was built in 1960s for military purposes. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of 夏天 on flickr.

# Study on how Taiwan used World Heritage paradigms in national law and foreign diplomacy

## Heritage diplomacy of Taiwan

Taiwan does not always passively accept UNESCO's paradigms, but has also financially contributed to restoration projects. In 2004, the government of Taiwan funded approximately US\$700,000 for two restoration projects in Antigua Guatemala (capital city of the former Spanish colony Captaincy-General of Guatemala): the Las Capuchinas monastery and the Sor Juana de Maldonado monastery. Founded in the early 16th century, the city is known for its rich Spanish colonial architecture and was inscribed as a World Heritage site in 1979. The total amount of financial assistance UNESCO allocated to Antigua is US\$ 96,016 (1979-1999).<sup>16</sup> The Taiwanese government not only provided a large grant, but also sent a research group from National Cheng Kung University to assist in the restoration work. The assistance was not through UNESCO, but was arranged between the Taiwanese and Guatemalan governments, with the goal to benefit their relationship.

The diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Guatemala is complicated. Recently (in 2014), the former Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo was caught using a bank account in New York City to launder money that he had received as a bribe from Taiwan. Portillo admitted that he had accepted the money in exchange for a promise that his country would continue to recognise Taiwan diplomatically while he was in office from 2000 to 2004.<sup>17</sup> Taiwan has diplomatic ties with only twenty countries in the world, most of which are in Central America. To preserve these ties, the Taiwanese government has executed the strategy of 'dollar diplomacy', whereby 'heritage' has become a new tool. Former vice-president Lu Hsiu-lien (呂秀蓮) signed a letter of intent in 2005, promising that Taiwan would provide aid to restore historical sites in Antigua, thereby further developing Taiwan's diplomatic relations with Guatemala.<sup>18</sup>

One may conclude that Taiwan has been exploited by Guatemala, for its skills and resources; yet Taiwan has, by participating in this heritage project, found a way to promote itself as a nation. When the Las Capuchinas monastery re-opened as a museum, Taiwan's contribution to the restoration was signposted in Chinese, Spanish and English, and Taiwan's national flag was seen flying over the new museum. By showing locals and visitors how Taiwan is capable of undertaking such restoration projects, the project coordinator believes the project will be a stepping-stone for Taiwan towards more international collaboration projects in the future.<sup>19</sup>

It is also interesting to see how an excluded state such as Taiwan positions itself in a World Heritage restoration project. The case shows the inconsistency in UNESCO's conventions and its practices: although UNESCO claims to preserve the world heritage of mankind as a whole, it does not include heritage of all states, nor does it give sufficient assistance, even to those who are already inscribed on the World Heritage List. This could be attributed to UNESCO's structure as an inter-governmental organisation, whereby it is largely reliant upon the participation and donation of States Parties.

## Potential world heritage in Taiwan

In 2002, CCA initiated the *Potential World Heritage Sites in Taiwan* program. Although the government acknowledges the fact that the potential sites cannot be listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, it still wishes to award sites with an equivalent to the UNESCO World Heritage designation. The program started by asking for domestic recommendations from local governments, experts and historians, resulting in eleven sites of value as potential world heritage sites. Later in the year, CCA invited foreign experts to visit the eleven sites and to assess them for their potential as World Heritage sites.<sup>20</sup> One of these experts, an Australian architect, commented: "Everyone wanted to please and inform in the hope that their site might be considered of World Heritage significance even though some people may not have realised the implications of the designation other than in potential tourism and monetary terms. The government's policy is to double tourism in Taiwan by 2008."<sup>21</sup>

Fu suggested four benefits of becoming a World Heritage site: at the national level, by means of nominating properties in Taiwan for the World Heritage List, the concept of World Heritage will be introduced and disseminated in Taiwan; also, local identity will be reinforced in preparing the Tentative List. At the international level, joining UNESCO is an opportunity for Taiwan to attract global attention and to increase the income of tourism industry.<sup>22</sup> To the Taiwanese government, gaining a World Heritage site is not only beneficial to the tourism industry, it can also be used as a diplomatic strategy. As Chiang indicated, the plan of preparing Taiwan to join UNESCO-based international heritage affairs in the future is "in line with Taiwan's search for a position in the global arena".<sup>23</sup> Taiwan has long been absent from international affairs, and is thus under-represented as a nation. This absence results in a lack of opportunities for Taiwan to participate in worldwide issues or to receive international aid; and it means that Taiwanese culture remains underrepresented in the world.

## Can the serial transnational nomination be an icebreaker?

Despite its exclusion from the UNESCO World Heritage list, the state of Taiwan does not give up. The desperate state has even considered a serial transnational nomination as a strategy to have Taiwan locations inscribed.<sup>24</sup> On 12 December 2013, the MOC Minister Long Ying-tai (龍應台) proposed that Taiwan collaborate with China to nominate properties together. Long's statement set off a firestorm of debate, not only among officials, but also in the media and on the Internet. At the Legislative Yuan, there are two different opinions held about the idea of preparing the nomination of serial transnational properties together with China. The sovereignty of Taiwan is the main concern. Some legislators pointed out that, since Taiwan is not a member of the UN (or UNESCO), there is a risk that any Taiwanese property will end up being inscribed as China's, instead of being shared by two states. As a result, the inscription may incorrectly infer that Taiwan is part of China. One legislator even argued that Taiwan could be named 'Taiwan, China' in the nomination document, similar to when it joined the WTO.<sup>25</sup> Yet, some legislators share Minister Long's sentiment, and believe that UNESCO's World Heritage is about preserving the heritage of mankind, which is beyond politics.

The sensitive nature of a Taiwan(ROC)-China(PRC) collaborated nomination stems from the decades-long conflict between the two states over which is the 'true heir' of traditional Chinese Culture. The competition is not only fought out in military style, but on a cultural level too. To exacerbate matters, the specific Taiwanese location that Long suggested for nomination (together with China), was once the military frontline of the cross-strait conflict, Kinmen, where numerous battles took place during the post-Cold war era (second half of 20th century) between the PRC and the ROC. Yet, in the eyes of the Taiwanese government, the negative past of Kinmen and its military remains have been transformed into a peace memorial and are valuable for present tourism. The battlefield remains in Kinmen and Xiamen (in China) are living museums of the cold war history; together, they are witness to the fact that the intense cross-strait relations have become peaceful.

Importantly though, is the idea of sharing heritage between Taiwan and China really about protecting serial transnational properties, or is it about respective interests? To date, China has 47 properties on the World Heritage list and 38 elements on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list; thus, unlike Taiwan, it has no need to collaborate with other states to have locations inscribed. Why would China agree to 'share' heritage with Taiwan? It would see little benefit in the arrangement. And, would a collaboration reflect a cross-strait reconciliation, as the Taiwan government puts it, or would it simply risk Taiwan's sovereignty on the world stage? I leave these questions open for further research.

## Conclusion

Scholars have pointed out that "UNESCO World Heritage interventions are judged by observers on the basis of their impact in introducing (or imposing) external values, which would undermine local ways of coping with the past, memory and transmission of culture."<sup>26</sup> But the Taiwan case study shows that UNESCO criteria can also be appropriated by local contexts and that UNESCO's World Heritage project and status can in fact be used for national interests. Becoming a world heritage site should not be simplified as a homogenising trend of globalisation; the designation provides a platform for nations to promote their national distinctiveness and compete with others. Not only does the 'local' have to find a way to apply global policies to a local context, and to represent local culture within the global framework (i.e., UNESCO's criteria for selection), but the 'global' is also appropriated to meet the needs of the 'local'. Hereby, the translation of World Heritage paradigms is mutual, and worthy of further investigation in future critical heritage studies.

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The history vestage of Kinmen. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Llee Wu on flickr.



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- I use the term 'paradigms' here to refer to the ideas of heritage and the models of heritage conservation endorsed by UNESCO. Even within UNESCO, there is no single and coherent paradigm of 'the heritage', so I use a plural noun that refers to the concepts of heritage, the criteria for the inscription of World Heritage, and the principle of the UNESCO's World Heritage centre, that are stated in the *Convention* and the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2013).
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- States that have signed the agreement of the *Convention* are States Parties in UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. In 2012 there were 191.
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- Winter, T. 2014. 'Heritage conservation futures in an age of shifting global power', *Journal of Social Archaeology* (<http://tinyurl.com/shiftingpower>)
- The Council for Cultural Affairs was the council for cultural infrastructure in Taiwan, including promoting national and local culture and making cultural policies. In 2012 it was upgraded as a larger organization, the Ministry of Culture.
- White Paper of Cultural Policies 文化白皮書 (2004), p. 106.
- ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a non-governmental international organization dedicated to the conservation of the monuments and sites of the world. It is one of the Advisor Bodies to the World Heritage Committee to evaluate the nominated properties for World Heritage inscription. Unlike UNESCO's World Heritage *Convention*, which is ratified by States only, ICOMOS also accepts support from individuals and institutions.
- TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage) is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to the study and preservation of industrial heritage. In 2000, TICCIH became ICOMOS's designated consultant in assessing industrial sites for the World Heritage List. Taiwan has joined TICCIH as a country.
- The *Taipei Declaration* can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/taiwandeclaration>
- In the *Cultural Heritage Preservation Act* (1982), 'cultural assets' refer to assets having historic, cultural and artistic value: *guwu* (antiquities), *guji* (monuments, including ancient buildings and archaeological sites), folk arts, folk customs and related artefacts, and natural cultural landscapes.
- The 'intangible cultural heritage' is manifested *inter alia* in the following domains: (a)oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b)performing arts; (c)social practices, rituals and festive events; (d)knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e)traditional craftsmanship.
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- 'Serial transnational nomination' was added to the UNESCO *Operational Guideline* at the 7th extraordinary session in 2004, referring to a series of properties located in the territory of different State Parties, which do not need to be contiguous but that are nominated with the consent of all State Parties concerned.
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# The paradox of UNESCO's Masterpieces

Cultural heritage is often associated with something from the past, but labelling something from the past as 'heritage' is a way of dealing with the past in the present. Cultural heritage can be seen as a process in which the meaning and value of the past in the present is created and re-created, authorized and re-authorized by those who have the power to do so.<sup>1</sup> Such negotiations often deal with issues of political, national, religious, and ethnic identity issues, linked to local, national and world value systems for culture. These values and meanings of culture are not static, but change over time; the addition of the concept 'intangible' cultural heritage to the heritage vocabulary attests to this.

Sadiyah Boonstra



IN 2001, UNESCO LAUNCHED the project 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' with the objective to encourage the identification, preservation, and promotion of cultural expressions, such as language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture, and other arts, as well as traditional forms of communication and information. As a listing system similar to the World Heritage List, the – at the time – new heritage concept aimed to balance the focus of UNESCO's concept of the 1972 World Heritage Convention on tangible remains from the past, such as monuments and buildings, and to make the heritage concept less Eurocentric and more representative of its member states. The first nineteen Masterpieces were proclaimed in 2001; two years later 28 Masterpieces were added, among which The Wayang Puppet Theater of Indonesia.<sup>2</sup> In the same year UNESCO adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

To shed light on how the process of heritage formation developed, this article will discuss the case of the wayang performance tradition, from colonial to postcolonial times in Indonesia. It will discuss the relationship between colonial and postcolonial power structures, legacies of the colonial past and contemporary heritage formation, specifically the concept of intangible cultural heritage in the Masterpiece program.<sup>3</sup>

## Wayang

The word wayang is a general word that is applied to many kinds of traditional theatre in Java, Bali, Lombok, and some other parts of Indonesia and other countries of Southeast Asia. It can mean a (wayang) performance, (wayang) puppet, or (wayang) character. The two most widespread forms are wayang kulit and wayang golek. Wayang kulit is played with carved and painted flat puppets made of water buffalo hide, against a screen that is illuminated by a lamp throwing shadows and is watched from both in front and from behind the screen. Wayang golek uses wooden doll-like rod puppets without a screen.<sup>4</sup> The telling of wayang stories – the most popular being the Mahabharata and Ramayana – is supported by music from the gamelan orchestra and singers.

Although wayang can be traced to the tenth century, detailed Javanese, Dutch, and English descriptions of wayang date only from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to historian L.J. Sears, "The shadow theater, as it is known today, developed within an atmosphere where 19th century discourses of science and progress were percolating, both contributing to and drawing from Javanese and Dutch intellectual exchanges."<sup>5</sup> The study and development of wayang is thus intertwined with the political context of colonialism and its power relations. Consequently, wayang has been incorporated in a western body of scientific colonial knowledge and has come to refer to an 'authentic' indigenous past. It has become a symbol of Java or Bali or Indonesia or the East Indies. Wayang puppets are depicted on book covers, exhibition posters, on the walls of Indonesian restaurants, and can be found in oriental antique stores and food shops. With the submission and proclamation of the wayang puppet theatre as a UNESCO Masterpiece, both the Indonesian state and UNESCO confirm this essentialist connotation in the context of the nation.

## The Masterpiece candidature file

The national wayang organizations Sena Wangi (*Sekretariat Nasional Pewayangan Indonesia*, or National Wayang Secretariat) and Pepadi (*Persatuan Pedalangan Indonesia*, or the Indonesian Puppeteers/Pedalangan Union) prepared Indonesia's 'candidature file' for wayang, according to the UNESCO *Guidelines for the Submission of the Second Proclamation of Masterpieces in 2002*.<sup>6</sup> The candidature file entitled WAYANG. *The Traditional Puppetry and Drama of Indonesia* comprises the initial file, a later-sent addendum including a five year action plan for the preservation and development of wayang, as well as a ten-minute video. The candidature file describes five forms – Wayang Bali, Bali; Wayang Kulit Purwa, Central Java; Wayang Golek Sunda, West Java; Wayang Banjar, South Kalimantan; Wayang Palembang; South Sumatra – as a "representative 'self-portrait' to present a glimpse of the growth and development of Indonesian wayang up till this time."<sup>7</sup>



An international jury evaluated the candidature file based on criteria of outstanding cultural value found in either "a high concentration of outstanding intangible cultural heritage or an outstanding value from a historical, artistic, ethnological, sociological, anthropological, linguistic or literary point of view."<sup>8</sup> The candidature file argues for the outstanding value of wayang because "it has succeeded in achieving high artistic quality" as it is "an art which has the qualities of adiluhung (very noble) and edipeni (very beautiful), or ethical and aesthetic." This argument is strengthened with the statement that "Western culture experts have even admired wayang", and that wayang is "...the most complex and sophisticated theatrical form in the world." The international value of wayang is confirmed with the enumeration of Western scholars who conducted research, indicating that wayang is "very attractive to foreign audiences."<sup>9</sup>

The description of wayang in the candidature file can be regarded as a compilation of previous discourses about wayang. Colonial scholars in interaction with the Javanese elite developed a discourse that became the standard or traditional idea of wayang by the end of the 1930s; it was one that emphasized philosophical and mystical elements and focused on wayang's deeper meaning as a mirror of life. This discourse proved to be foundational. Although it acquired new elements under President Sukarno (1945-1966) and President Suharto (1967-1998), they also both re-authorized and reiterated the existing discourse. The discourse developed in colonial times can be found in the candidature file, which calls wayang "adiluhung (very noble) and edipeni (very beautiful)" and "not simply an entertainment [...] because wayang is an illustration of human life."<sup>10</sup> The file continues by arguing that "The wayang stories and all their paraphernalia effectively express the entirety of human life [...] the wayang performance is an illustration of a spiritual journey to understand the meaning of life and the process of approaching the Supreme God."<sup>11</sup> As such, the discourse in Indonesia's candidature file for wayang can be regarded as another authorization of colonial and postcolonial discourses.

The need for safeguarding and conservation of wayang is emphasized as it is arguably on the verge of extinction. The accompanying preservation plan *Panca Krida* [Five Actions] aims "to revitalize wayang in ways desired by individuals and communities involved in wayang."<sup>12</sup> Measures include Membership Cards for Pepadi members, the establishment of a Code of Ethics for dalang [puppeteers] (enforced in 1996), and the exercise of "care and quality control with regards to groups of individuals wishing to perform wayang overseas, both in terms of content of the performances, as well as regarding the artists involved."<sup>13</sup> To guarantee the transmission of wayang skills and knowledge Sena Wangi and Pepadi designed a plan to promote wayang preservation and development at traditional wayang schools, and at formal educational institutions such as ISI Surakarta, Denpasar, and Bandung.<sup>14</sup> The plan furthermore proposes an inventory, documentation and information on classical and new wayang forms; education through training and seminars; development of organizations, and institutions, development of wayang artists, experts and aficionados, and development of a wide range of collaborations with overseas organizations and individual experts.<sup>15</sup>

Above:  
Ki Enthus Susmono,  
Amsterdam 2009.  
Courtesy of  
P. Westerkamp/  
Tropenmuseum.

Right:  
Ki Manteb Soed-  
harsono, Ngawi.  
24 July 2010. Photo  
by Sadiyah Boonstra.

# The case of Wayang

## Heritage paradoxes

However, the real motive behind the safeguarding rhetoric of wayang's nomination is national identity building. "The vision of Sena Wangi is the desire to make wayang one of the pillars of national culture"<sup>16</sup> as "this appreciation is a source of great pride for all those involved in wayang and indeed for the entire Indonesian nation."<sup>17</sup> The proclamation should turn wayang into a pillar of national culture, and should improve Indonesia's image on an international level. Wayang as an expression of Javanese culture is affirmed as national culture, and vice versa, Indonesian national culture is argued to be Javanese culture. This notion of Indonesian culture directly relates to Sukarno's and Suharto's postcolonial nationalist discourses, which entailed that being Javanese was the best way of being Indonesian, which in turn is related to the Javanese cultural nationalist discourse of the early twentieth century. Wayang is framed in the international heritage discourse by its proclamation as a UNESCO Masterpiece, and is used to show the world Indonesia's great cultural achievement. The international acknowledgement is used as an affirmation of Javanese identity on a national level. In other words, the nationalist discourse about wayang acquired backing through international acclaim of Javanese culture. The international heritage discourse thus anchors wayang in a national context. Consequently, the proclamation of wayang as a Masterpiece does not make it part of global heritage, but rather secures it in a national political discourse that finds its roots in colonial and postcolonial power relations.

This means that although UNESCO aims to highlight global cultural diversification, State Parties utilize UNESCO's standard setting policies such as the *Convention for Intangible Heritage* for their nationalist agendas. Although the heritage discourse incorporates all previous discourses of wayang, the proclamation of wayang as a UNESCO Masterpiece in my view further fixes the already entrenched colonial and nationalist discourses. Starting in colonial times, the documentation of wayang inadvertently established guidelines for the performance tradition, by producing texts and other forms of registration, such as cassettes, video's, DVD's and VCD's. In effect, the documentation created tangible forms of what is celebrated as intangible cultural heritage. The candidature file and the following proclamation of wayang is yet another text about wayang, but this time authorized by UNESCO, a standard-setting organization with a global authority in the field of cultural heritage. Consequently, anyone who reads the candidature file will likely evaluate the wayang performance practice based on the text in the file. The effect is that approaches or discourses that fall outside the description in the file might be judged as 'not correct'. This has happened since the start of the wayang documentation. Heritage discourse of wayang thus produces tangible forms of documentation, which function as a frame of reference and at the same time invoke a legitimacy for the preservationist attitude seen earlier in Dutch orientalist scholars, the Javanese courts in the 1920s and 1930s, and the rigid national cultural approach of Suharto's New Order. This stance seems to be driven by an anxiety that old wayang forms are disappearing and nothing new that is worthwhile is replacing them.



## Conclusion

This is in my view a deficient way of thinking and denotes a deep pessimism about culture and the creative ability of dalang. Wayang is far more dynamic in real life than reflected in official heritage discourse and policies. While authorized discourse, such as the candidature file, functions as a controlling force that establishes guidelines and rules for wayang, individual dalang adapt and bend them to their individual interests. Superstar dalang juggle politics, commerce, and audience appreciation, and apply different strategies to deal with official heritage discourse. Some dalang, such as Ki [The Honorable] Purbo Asmoro (b.1966), support and reinforce official discourse with the performance of academic standards, and are increasingly popular. Ki Manteb Soedharsono's (b.1948) performance practice became representative of the dominant wayang style as a result of the authoritative force of commerce. Others, such as Ki Enthus Susmono (b.1966), choose a more subversive stance and challenge dominant discourse with the creation of new wayang genres, such as *Wayang Santri*, that prove to be instantly popular with new audiences. Seen from this perspective, heritage discourse appears to be only of limited influence on wayang performance practice and is just one element with which dalang have to deal. They utilize it when needed or when it offers them something, but otherwise it is ignored.<sup>18</sup>

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- 15 *ibid.*, pp.21-22
- 16 *The Development of Wayang Indonesia as a Humanistic Cultural Heritage*, Exhibition Catalogue. Jakarta: GRAMEDIA Printing Group: 2004 (p.34)
- 17 *Candidature File*, p.7
- 18 During this research, which took place between 2009 and 2011, several superstar dalang allowed me to follow them and were willing to talk to me about their performance practice and views on wayang.

Above: Ki Manteb Soedharsono, Semarang. 30 October 2010. Photo by Sadiah Boonstra.



# Borobudur saujana: as far as you can(not) see

*Saujana*, which literally means *as far as you can see*, is the Indonesian translation for the UNESCO category acknowledged in the World Heritage Convention (WHC) as cultural landscape (CL). The term is defined in the Indonesian Charter for Heritage Conservation as the inextricable unity between nature and manmade heritage in space and time.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, of the 66 designated world cultural heritage landscapes, only one is located in Indonesia. This is despite the fact that CLs in Indonesia have the same outstanding characteristics when compared with others on the UNESCO list. Borobudur Temple Compounds (Central Java, Indonesia) – a World Heritage Site since 1991 – is an ‘outstanding’ example of how ineffective is the application of the WHC in Indonesia, as it does not take into account the local notion of *saujana*.

Sara Guagnini



DURING MY FIELDWORK in the summer of 2014 I was astonished by the interconnections between the landscape and human settlements established around the Borobudur compounds. Nonetheless, the government’s attention has been given just to the temple itself, while Borobudur’s surroundings have not been extensively studied nor promoted as a touristic destination. Local activists believe that the government does not consider the temple’s surroundings as ‘heritage’, because it would then be obliged to involve the district residents in the tourism management and share with them the profits. The residents, meanwhile, are calling for a more responsible and integrated management of the temple and its surroundings that prioritizes cultural and educational values instead of finance.

My research is in line with previous studies on the imbalance of the geographical distribution of sites recorded as CL on the World Heritage List (WHL). Akagawa and Sirisrisak discuss this imbalance by applying numerical data, criticizing the Eurocentric nature of the WHC and questioning the etymological meaning of cultural landscape as an outstanding worldwide value. According to these authors, WH nominations depend on the efforts of each nation-state, which means that political and economic factors play a key role in safeguarding heritage. I have found that the Indonesian government, by disregarding the landscape as the contextual setting of the Borobudur Temple Compounds, has endangered the site’s conservation, to the detriment of its living culture. The situation is quite common among former colonies, in which governments – involved in nationalist politics – are likely to ignore the on-going relationships between heritage and local cultural traditions. In defence of CL, this article argues that “the notion of cultural landscape gives one of the frameworks to manage a place by embracing a place in its wider context”.<sup>2</sup> CL takes into account the inextricable legacies between people, heritage, and landscape and opens up the way to a more democratic management of heritage sites.

## The notion of ‘cultural landscape’

In 1992, the World Heritage Convention (WHC, founded in 1972 to recognize and protect the world’s natural and cultural heritage of ‘outstanding universal value’), became the first international legal instrument to recognize and protect cultural landscapes.<sup>3</sup> The WHC Committee defines CL as the “combined works of nature and of man”. Unfortunately, the category of CL has turned out to be rather problematic; perhaps because summing up such a broad concept through categories and sub-categories weakens the concept itself, resulting in wasted efforts? Or, perhaps because the fluidity of the term CL makes it extremely difficult to translate into an effective practice? And surely, each landscape is relevant for and valued by somebody? So how then to give significance to any one particular landscape? In addition, the categories of ‘cultural’ and ‘natural’ heritage enounced in the WHC date from 1972, when the Convention was first signed, and reflect the Eurocentric perception that man and nature are two separated entities. As a result, the preservation of monuments has often led to the marginalization of the people who live in and/or around heritage sites. I would like to see ‘man and nature’ inextricably linked and thus argue for the revision of the management system for those WH sites where people, heritage and nature can be considered as a whole.

## An ‘outstanding mistake’

Borobudur Temple Compounds, added to the WHL in 1991 as a “masterpiece of monumental art”, is a telling example of why heritage sites should be considered in their wider context. In order to develop the temple compounds as a tourist destination, the nearby villages of Ngaran, Krajan and Kenayan, were forced to move. In 1991, a presidential decree assigned a number of local/national government groups and state-owned companies to manage the preservation of the compounds. Borobudur’s inhabitants were not convinced and believe the government and companies to be ignorant and corrupt. Instead of cultural integrity, these authorities are accused of undertaking national objectives to the detriment of local populations. Marginalized in both economic and spatial terms, the local inhabitants of Borobudur district do not share in any of the profits from mass tourism, yet they are forced to suffer the negative impacts, such as increased pollution, depletion of natural resources (especially water) and the degradation of the natural environment. Regrettably, Soeroso,<sup>4</sup> Rhami,<sup>5</sup> village chiefs, heritage activists and members of the NGO JAKER (*Jaringan Kepariwisata Borobudur* – Borobudur Tourism Network) have all put forth that heritage tourism at Borobudur could in fact be turned into an asset for conservation and economic development for the *whole* district, if only the tourism management integrated the inhabitants and acknowledged the values of the landscape.

To differentiate from the static images of ancient Buddhist temples, promoted through touristic brochures, these groups argue for a ‘dynamic’ conception of heritage. They explain that the Borobudur compounds listed as world heritage sites represent the center of a *mandala* – an integrated cosmological representation of the world organized around a unifying center. The *mandala* is a Buddhist concept and a Javanese philosophy based on the achievement of a harmonious relationship between humans, nature and God. According to the local activists, Borobudur is now a ‘broken mandala’, which needs to be fixed in order to achieve harmony once again. The Borobudur compounds are at the center of an integrated system, from which energy is dispersed into the surroundings. In this system, all the stakeholders are given a specific position and power within the *mandala*, and all of them will have to share responsibility to achieve balance. They argue that the notion of a *mandala* could be integrated in the description of Borobudur as a cultural landscape. They explain that tourism programs targeting the area bounded by the *mandala* would help to grow the local economy in the temple’s surroundings. Only then will local inhabitants have the means to preserve their environment, no longer being compelled to sell their land to developers who build luxury resorts that disrespectfully exploit natural resources. Hence, the harmony will be restored.

## Borobudur’s mandala’s outstanding values

Although the idea that the Borobudur Temple Compounds represent a *mandala* has received great scholarly attention,<sup>6</sup> the volumes dedicated to Borobudur have not stressed the link between the temple architecture and the surrounding landscape. Borobudur lies in the Kedu Plain, embraced by four volcanoes: Merapi, Merbabu, Sumbing and Sundoro. The nearby Setumbu Hill is the ideal place from which to observe Borobudur from a distance; in the early morning the temple appears to rise out of the mist, like a floating lotus.

Even though the ancient lake has disappeared, you can still see Borobudur floating like a lotus. Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of Indra Kurniawan on Flickr.

At the center of the Borobudur area, we find two Buddhist compounds, Mendut and Pawon, which together with the main temple were listed as world heritage sites in 1991. The area also contains other Hindu and Buddhist archeological remains (Selogriyo, Ngawen, Asu and Gunungsari). The land comprises dry fields, gardens, plantations and human settlements; nine varieties of bamboo, raw materials for medicines, and the planting patterns found in the area still adhere to Javanese traditions. Many of the activities carried out by Borobudur’s inhabitants relate to the landscape; besides farming, people use natural resources for pottery making, crafts and traditional cooking. The integration between nature and humans is also seen in local traditions and ceremonies, such as traditional dances, music and visual arts. The value of Borobudur’s landscape appears in the diversity of its natural beauty, rural scenery and its inhabitants’ livelihoods, which are all connected and cannot be understood as separate entities.

## Borobudur saujana

According to the Indonesian Charter for Heritage Conservation, Indonesian heritage is the legacy of nature, culture and *saujana* [lit: ‘as far as you can see’], which is a weave of the two. However, because heritage originally related to only historical remains or natural areas, the management of the combination of the two – *saujana* – lacks effectiveness. For instance, the Borobudur state-sponsored preservation is focused just on Borobudur Temple, which is classified as a ‘masterpiece of monumental art’, but not as a cultural landscape. This omission prevents one from recognizing how Borobudur temple is at the center of a bigger structure, of which the inhabitants and their daily activities are integrated parts. Embracing the temple compounds in its wider context and recognizing the role of its inhabitants are crucial steps if integrated conservation wants to be accomplished. After all, who can better express the outstanding value of a place, if not a person who is part of the place itself? These people do not yet have a voice, and are consequently marginalized in the name of development. Along with their identity, the ‘outstanding’ value given to some heritage sites by the WHC vanishes.

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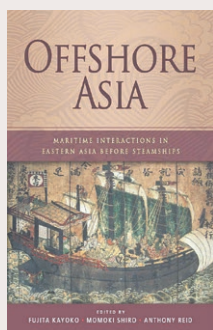
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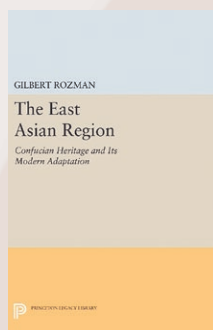
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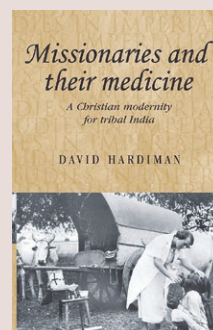
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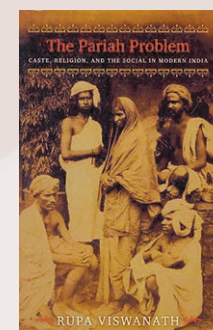
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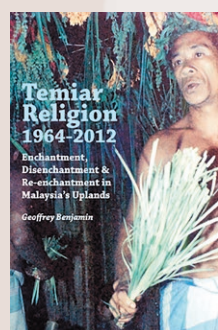
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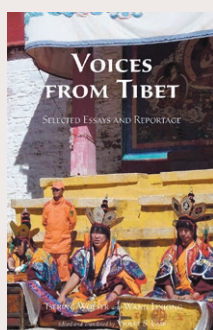
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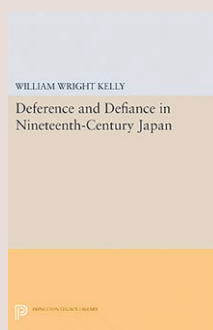
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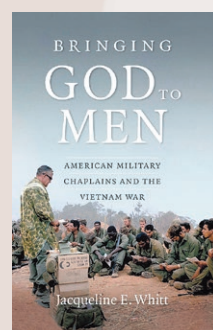
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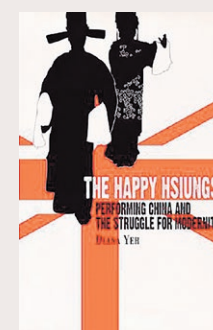
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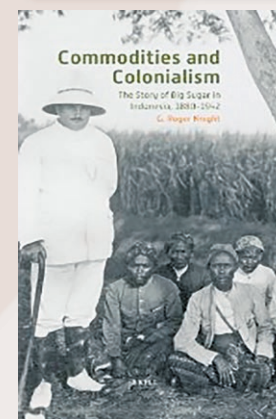
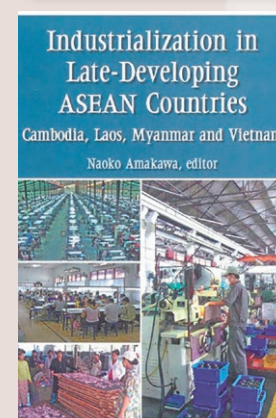
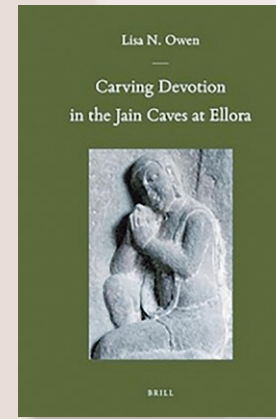
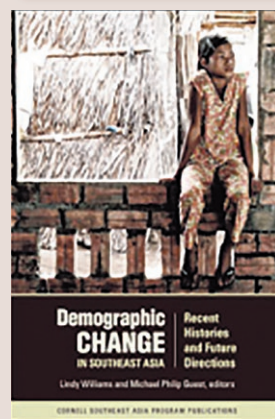
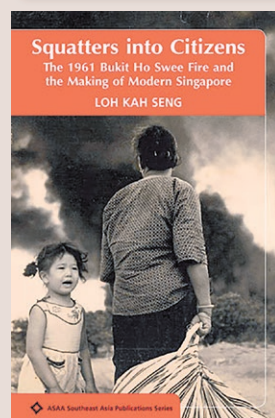
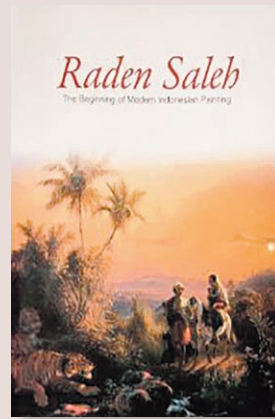
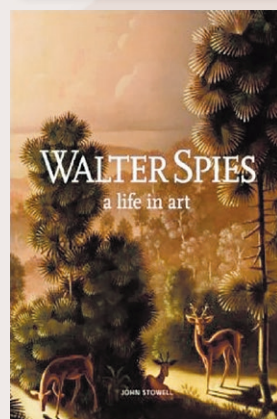
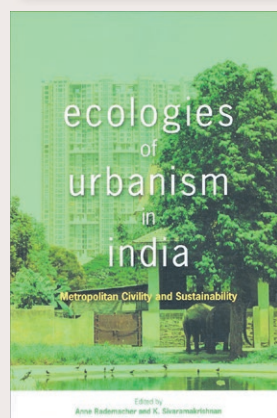
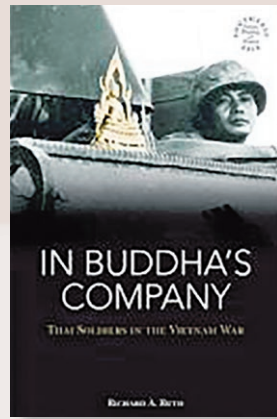
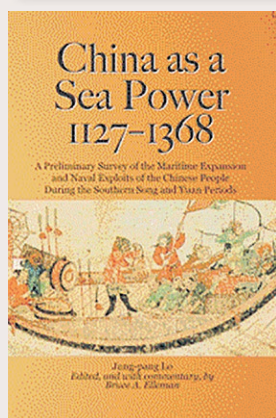
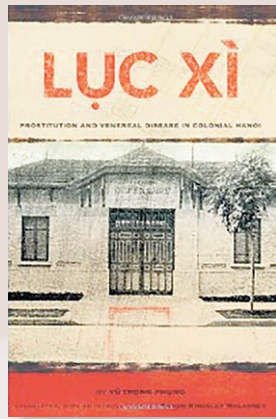
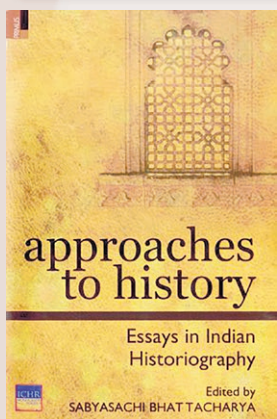
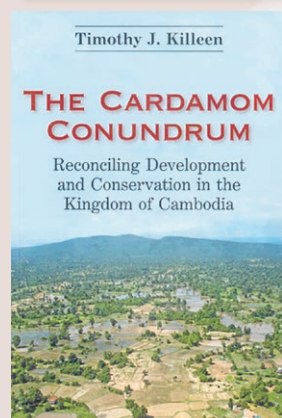
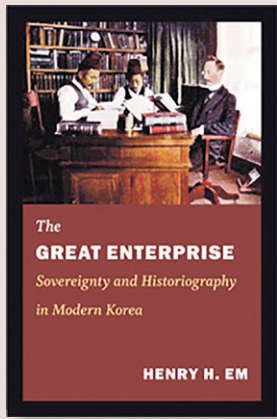


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# Filipino Ilustrado scholarship: boding the nation?

The attention that Filipino scholarship at the end of the 19th century critically deserves has finally arrived in this work, although Resil B. Mojares' *Brains of the Nation* (2008)<sup>1</sup> has provided the necessary route for a more nuanced and sustained study on the subject. The rather long, to some extent vague title should have been replaced with an accurate expression that could have rendered the contents satisfactorily. In fact, can we really say that these Filipino scholars were Orientalists, practitioners of Orientalism as a discipline? Or is it better to situate their intellectual production not as Orientalism *per se*, but as modern knowledge in aid of *Ilustrado* propaganda? This latter, however, circumscribes the rather different politics not limited to propaganda that each of these authors offer in their respective works. It goes to show that labelling their works is as difficult as giving title to the whole. Why "and the end of Spanish colonialism"? Did these scholarly works prefigure the closing of a dying empire?

Erwin S. Fernandez

## Reviewed publication:

Thomas, M.C. 2012. *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, ISBN: 9780816671977

THAT YOUNG FILIPINOS were engaging in scholarly polemics shows how sophisticated these cultivated minds were. Educated either in Manila or in Madrid or both, they were the *crème de la crème* of their generation who had mastered the language of their colonial superiors and began to interest their selves in the affairs of their country. One of the very first to display competent knowledge was Gregorio Sancianco (1852-1897), a Chinese mestizo, who wrote the *El Progreso de Filipinas* (1881),<sup>2</sup> a treatise urging for economic reforms and dedicating it "to the Filipino proprietors." He lamented among other things the lack of "centers of instruction necessary for their [Filipinos] moral and intellectual conditions" and that "educational services are absolutely indispensable for the moral and material state" of the country (viii, ix). Citing the very few Filipinos who were studying in Madrid, including a certain Pedro Paterno and Juan Luna, he concluded that the country needs centers of instruction and education to develop young minds. Unfortunately, Thomas failed to include Sancianco in her study or to even mention him.

## Young Filipino scholars for (and against) the nation

These scholars, namely Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925), Pedro Paterno (1858-1911), Jose Rizal (1861-1896), Isabelo de los Reyes (1864-1938), Mariano Ponce (1863-1918) and Pedro Serrano Laktaw (1853-1928), constitute the *terra firma* of Philippine scholarship that creatively engaged with modern scholarly knowledge embracing Orientalism, ethnology, folklore, philology and history. While traditional Philippine historiography would lump *Ilustrado* writings as composing the literature that articulated the 'nation', Thomas stresses a valid point that "the *ilustrados*' aims...may not have been clearly 'nationalist' or even clearly 'anti-colonial'" (12). There were divergences and inconsistencies that were apparent in the so-called 'nationalist' movement that seemed at first to appear as monolithic. Thomas' work focuses on the scholarly writings and the different political projects and possibilities that these authors herald or map for the Philippines.

She begins by placing them in the context of the history of Orientalism, how India captivated the Orientalist imagination and the parallels and distinctions between Philippine and Indian intellectual experiences. The crucial difference between the two, as she pointed out, was while India could argue for a narrative of decline from ancient greatness with surfeit of antique sources of texts, Filipino intellectuals had ingeniously invented a plot of decay from limited and even lack of pre-colonial texts, a discussion tackled deftly in chapter five. It is not entirely correct to say "lack of surviving 'original' texts" (33), as the Laguna Copperplate Inscription (LCI) proves, but the validity of conclusions on the migration of Hindus to the archipelago is not far-fetched and confirms the soundness of Pardo de Tavera's methods. The dearth of Spanish scholarship on the Philippines forced these young cosmopolitan Filipino intellectuals to pioneer in ethnological and folklore studies, subjects that were treated in depth in chapters two and three. In chapter four, Thomas fascinatingly examines the origins and effects of an orthographic revolution in which a revised orthographic reform of Tagalog effectively challenged the old and antiquated Spanish orthography, which resonated with the prime movers of the Philippine revolution. Again in chapter five, Thomas keenly observes the notable absence of Muslims in *Ilustrado* conception of Philippine history and that the Moros were "an unsettling presence for an idea of the Filipino people or nation" (175).



Above: A 'calesa', a horse-drawn rig, standing in front of one of Manila's oldest churches, The Binondo Church. Photo reproduced courtesy of Allan Jay Quesada.

Still why would these scholars engage in such disparate scholarly enterprise? Thomas was not categorical in her answer: "Not all of them set out to lay the scholarly foundations for a Filipino 'nation' as such..." but she adds that, "When taken as a whole (and only when taken as a whole), the writings made it possible to think with certainty and a sense of inevitability of 'Filipinos' as a distinct ethnic people with ancient roots, an emerging modernity, and a political future" (203).

## Contesting friar-scholars?

The book's five neat chapters seem not enough and beg for more. I am still wondering about the reasons these young Filipino scholars would write or were able to write books on their homeland. Part of the answer might be found in the state of higher education in the Philippines before 1872, which is not examined as rigorously as possible. The effect of Maura law on educational reforms should not be underestimated particularly the teaching of Spanish to Filipino children. The events leading to the 1872 mutiny, though mentioned, is not tackled as much as it should; Sancianco (1881) did reference and was fully cognizant of them. Also, anti-friar sentiments prevalent among the *Ilustrados*, one that accused the orders as purveyors of obscurantism in the country, did not receive the thorough discussion that they deserve. Did these Filipino scholars want to challenge the dominance of friars in knowledge production so as to replace them as an authority regarding their country?

The friars in their chronicles of their religious orders posited a number of theories on the origin of Philippine peoples. It was not Ferdinand Blumentritt (1882)<sup>3</sup> who originated the series of migrations that would explain the diversity of Philippine population. One of the latest was Fr. Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga (1803)<sup>4</sup> who said that Philippine languages were dialects of one language superfamily from Madagascar to Christmas Island and that Philippine natives were descendants of people from South America. Sinibaldo de Mas (1843)<sup>5</sup> theorized that Philippine languages belonged to a bigger family than Malay, called Oceania, and that two types of races existed in the Philippines, the aborigines and the immigrants, so that intermarriages between the two produced mestizos and mulattos better known as Malays. Thus, Fr. Francisco Baranera, author of the *Compendio de la historia de Filipinas* (1878), as cited by Thomas (61) was not the first to adopt Malay nor to propound these racial waves

of migration. Were De los Reyes and Paterno, who cited Baranera, attempting to supplant the role of the friar-scholars who came to dominate both backward and advance scholarship on the Philippines?

Although approaching a subject "with attention to how different local contexts have global links" (210) is a good piece of advice, any serious scholar should know this beforehand and that he or she must be able to discern connections to unravel the meanings or explain what really happened.

## Thomas' work

This significant work by Thomas should be welcomed in an effort to re-acquaint the present generation of Filipinos and non-Filipinos with the rich legacy of 19th century Philippine scholarship in our post-colonial age. That there was a rich body of Philippine studies in Spanish by Filipino scholars could have boded the establishment of a Philippine university manned by Filipinos, an event that occurred in the creation in 1898 of the *Universidad Científica Literaria de Filipinas*, which eventually closed upon the outbreak and escalation of the Philippine-American War. And irony of ironies is that an American scholar would help in the resurrection of this body of Filipino scholarship that had become unreadable to an English- and Tagalog-speaking generation of Filipinos, with no small thanks to American imperialism that gave birth to a fascist ethnocentric state.

Erwin S. Fernandez is presently affiliated with **Abung na Panagbasay Pangasinan [House of Pangasinan Studies]** ([win1tree@yahoo.com](mailto:win1tree@yahoo.com))

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# On top of the world

Clare E. Harris begins *Museum on the Roof of the World* by juxtaposing two striking quotes, one from a member of the British imperialist Younghusband Expedition of 1904, who declares: “Every Tibetan ... ought to be in a museum,” and the other from a Chinese blogger in 2008, who threatens that the Chinese will put Tibetan culture in a museum, “if you [Tibetans] behave badly” (1). Harris’ point is hard to miss: for some British then and some Chinese now, museums were/are understood to be effective tools of control over the Tibetan population.

Jeff Kyong-McClain



## Reviewed publication:

Harris, C.E. 2012. *The Museum on the Roof of the World: Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ISBN: 0226317471 (hb)

## Barbarians or Shangri-La?

Reflecting on this situation, Harris further notes that, “the position of Tibet in the twentieth century can be described as doubly colonial,” as most artifacts of Tibetan heritage remain to this day under the control of people other than Tibetans (5). Through extensive use of archival sources, as well as interviews with interested parties around the globe, and of course the ‘art’ itself (the volume is amply illustrated with black-and-white images throughout as well as a generous selection of color plates), Harris proceeds to investigate the contested nature of Tibetan art, culture and national identity. Although packed full with many fascinating asides, the main trajectory of the volume is to show how Westerners (usually the British) first used museums to create an image of a barbaric Tibet, which was later spectacularly transformed into its opposite: Tibet as ‘Shangri-La’. Just as this more positive, though equally mythic, construction was taking root in the West, Chinese nationalists picked up on the power of museum display and began to present and interpret artifacts in such a way to show traditional Tibet as a theocratic and oppressive land, in need of liberation from outside. Finally, Harris closes with case studies of several contemporary Tibetan artists, who are trying to resist the ‘museum effect’, and maintain instead a living Tibetan culture into the twenty-first century.

As Harris convincingly tells it, in the earlier stages of modern Western-Tibetan artistic encounter, Western art collectors and museum curators typically saw Tibetan artifacts as representative of a credulous people, a people totally given over to their superstitions. Museum displays in the West reflected this viewpoint. The image of the ‘superstitious’

Tibetan was born in part from Protestant missionaries of the late nineteenth century, who aimed to convert supposed Tibetan idolaters to their modernized, capitalist and nation-state-friendly version of Christianity. The superstition angle also fit nicely with more secular views in the West, prominent in other quarters, that societies could be ranked on a social evolutionary scale, with ‘superstition’ being one of the indicators of low status on that scale. So it was that Tibet was displayed as a backwards place in need of transformation.

## The invention of art

Interestingly, the Younghusband Expedition marked something of a turning point to a more cheerful interpretation of Tibet. Harris carefully dissects the writings of members of the expedition who gathered Tibetan objects and shipped them back to Britain, and shows that in their view the former ‘idols’ could also be cast as native ‘art’, a category to be appreciated, not denigrated (though Harris also exposes the rampant looting that went on during the Expedition, in the name of knowledge production). This invention of ‘Tibetan national art’ eventually led Western scholars to suppose there might be a nation deserving of self-determination, which combined with the whimsy of post-WWI Western spiritual seekers to lay the groundwork for the more fantastic interpretations of Tibetan culture now famously emanating from Hollywood.

After China’s fancifully-named ‘peaceful liberation of Tibet’ in 1951, museum representation of Tibet once again soured. Tibetan artifacts, and eventually the Potala Palace itself, were, at best, “downgraded to the level of ‘folk culture’” and said to be the work of a “decadent elite” (157). In all displays there was and is a strong emphasis on the “inalienable connection between China and Tibet” (189), and Tibetans who think otherwise have no voice. Such being the case, Harris notes an odd twist on the debate of repatriation of artifacts, as there are currently very few Tibetans calling for the return of artifacts from Western museums to Tibet. The last two chapters

Tibetan man at a pass near Nyalam in Tsang. Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of Desmond Kavanagh on Flickr.

consider the case of ethnic Tibetan contemporary artists, active both within and without of China, who attempt to use their art to challenge both Chinese control over their culture but also Western ‘Shangri-La’ distortions, and meet on equal footing with artists from around the world. Some of these oppose the idea of museums outright, as invariably restrictive to their ruminations on Tibetan cultural identity.

There is much to recommend and very little to criticize in Harris’ volume. If I were to nit-pick, Harris is plainly sympathetic (and with good reason) to the Tibetans who are not permitted to represent themselves. None-the-less, for the most part she remains even-handed in her description of Chinese interests and activities in the area, but occasionally she seems to see ethnic oppression where there may well be other explanations. For instance, that the Chinese state disapproves of ‘common people’ in Tibet possessing ‘relics’ may not be, as she suggests, a question of ethnicity, but one of state control over the past more generally, applicable to Tibetans and Chinese equally (185); or another, the desacralization of the Potala Palace could perhaps be juxtaposed with the desacralization of the Forbidden City, in which case the question would be one of the modern world’s attack on divine kingship, not China on Tibet (195-99). These points and others, of course, could be debated, and Harris’ writing style is clear and engaging, and the text would surely provoke fascinating and productive debate in upper level Asian History and Art History classes, and among educated laypeople in general. *The Museum on the Roof of the World* is a welcome addition to the literature on museums and nationalism, and makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of how the leadership of the modern Chinese state used European imperialist techniques, like building museums, to gain control of the multi-ethnic Qing territories.

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# Ghosts of the past

From time to time, an edited volume comes along whose table of contents and list of authors are simply exciting. *Ghosts of the Past in Southern Thailand* is one such volume. Editor Patrick Jory is joined by twelve eminent scholars to uncover not only the history of southern Thailand, but more specifically, its historiography, noting how local nationalists approach the history of Patani.

Shane Barter

## Reviewed publication:

Jory, P. (ed.) 2013. *Ghosts of the Past in Southern Thailand: Essays on the History and Historiography of Patani*. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, ISBN: 9789971696351

THE AUTHORS ENGAGE with a great range of topics, from royal Malay symbols, to early Chinese sources, Islamic networks, and contemporary militancy. The reader is treated to newly-uncovered primary documents and fresh insight into older ones. But while the parts of the book are impressive, the whole of it is at times disappointing, suffering from some overlap and incoherence. The forest does not do justice to its trees.

*Ghosts of the Past in Southern Thailand* is much more than a recount of historical events. It provides in-depth analysis of historical sources, emphasizing how history has been written and then used by various writers in Patani, including those close to the Patani conflict. The chapters are grouped into four parts: historical pluralism, Islamic networks, perspectives on Patani’s decline, and contemporary uses of history. Anthony Reid’s opening contribution resituates Patani away from being a problematic borderland and toward being seen as a centre, a historical crossroads home to intensely cosmopolitan societies. Reid uses first-hand European descriptions, and includes one such primary account as an appendix, to communicate just how international the Patani Sultanate was in its heyday.

Christopher Joll’s chapter on Patani’s creole ambassadors extends this theme of pluralism. While we tend to understand

# Illicit dancing

On Tuesday 16 July 2013, the Supreme Court in Mumbai upheld a high court verdict from 2006, which had quashed the Maharashtra state government's order to ban dance bars in the state. This fact, and the research that will undoubtedly follow it, are all sequels to Anna Morcom's brilliant new book, which went to press before the Supreme Court had reached its verdict. After seven years of being banned, dance bars were allowed to open again. This was certainly good news for the tens of thousands of women who had been employed in these bars, and whose loss of livelihood as performers had catapulted many of them into the very sex work from which the ban was supposed to save them.

Lalita du Perron

## Reviewed publication:

Morcom, A. 2013. *Illicit worlds of Indian dance: cultures of exclusion*, London: Hurst & Co., ISBN: 9781849042796

INDEED, BOTH DEFENDERS AND OPPONENTS of the ban used similar imagery to make their case to be one of 'saving' the women from victimhood: while the ban's advocates said that dance bars were a cover for prostitution and trafficking rackets, those against the ban claimed that without legal places to dance, most of these women would end up as transactional sex workers. In both sides of the debate, therefore, the dancers' right to lifestyles that could meet the various criteria of respectability in bourgeois society was paramount.

## Skilled or victim?

Anyone familiar with the history of the *tawaif* in North India and the *devadasi* in the South will spot the uncanny similarities with late nineteenth and early twentieth-century campaigns to gentrify the performing arts, turning them into palatable cultural forms that could be mobilized for the nationalist endeavor. As with the dance bar ban, in the earlier debates the art of dancing was largely if not entirely removed from its context of being a hereditary *skill*, and was reframed as a victimizing activity in which women were forced to flaunt their bodies and be akin to, or actually be, prostitutes. The perceived connection between dance and prostitution has been widely discussed in various scholarly works on the performing arts in South Asia. Morcom's analysis of the dance bar ban acutely reveals how the debate surrounding female performers and dance has not actually moved on much in over a hundred years. Although what used to be the moral issue of 'prostitution' is now the development issue of 'sex work' and HIV/AIDS, in many ways the debate remains framed in terms of women having improved lives if they do not have to dance. This framing of dance as part of sex work entirely denies the reality that for most of the performers, dancing is their trade, their labor, their skill, their family tradition, and indeed has been for centuries.

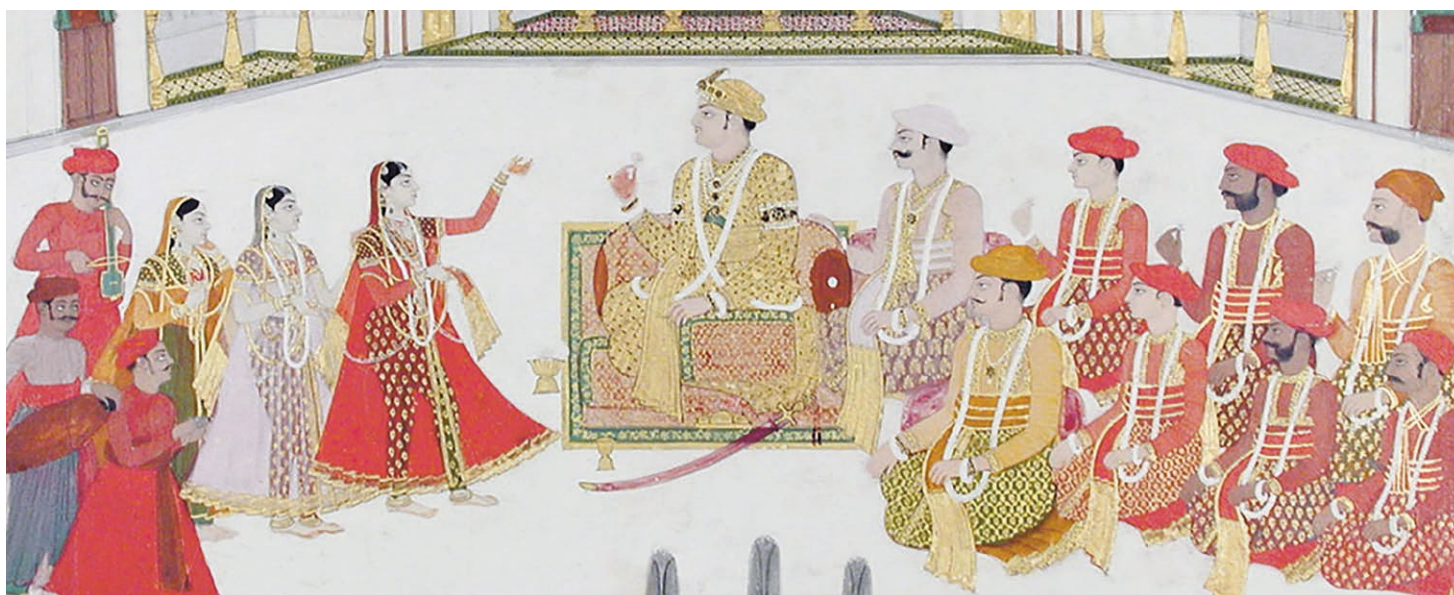
## Woman(-identified) performers

The book starts with a somewhat disappointing introduction. While most of us who teach or present on courtesan culture have used movies to give our audience a taste of what performance may have looked like, opening a book of this caliber with an analysis of the film *Pakeezah* seems superfluous. However, by the end of the introduction it is entirely clear

that this is a book based on rigorous and broad scholarship. Morcom includes a historical overview of female hereditary performers in chapter one, an analysis of the castes and communities of these performers in chapter two, and in the third chapter she introduces her reader to transgender and women-identified performers in a historical context. She then shifts the focus to the twenty-first century, and examines in chapter four how even sexy Bollywood dancing has made it into the acceptable realm of the middle-classes, juxtaposing this with the ongoing stigmatization of hereditary performers. In chapter five we learn about the bar girls, the ramifications of the dance bar ban, and the necessity to frame arguments both for and against the ban in terms of labor and human rights. In her final chapter, Morcom returns to women-identified performers and the way their lives and livelihoods have been affected by NGOs, community-based organizations, and an increasing globalized awareness of 'gay rights'.

One of Morcom's radical additions to scholarship on dance in India is that she includes in her analyses *kothis*, a term she never fully defines but which usually refers to woman-identified assigned-at-birth men who live as men in their daily lives but present as women when performing. *Kothis* are increasingly conflated with *hijras* (transgender women who were born assigned-at-birth men), in part because *kothis*' lack of access to appropriate performing spaces leaves them in need of other

Below: Section of 'Shahriyar-al Mulk, Mansur-al Mulk and courtiers watch a dance'. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, ca. 1800, Deccani School, Andhra Pradesh, India. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection. Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of the Asian Curator at The San Diego Museum of Art on Flickr.



leading *ulama* in Patani as Indian or Arab, they were more mixed, bringing knowledge from the Muslim world to Patani, but also returning with Southeast Asian knowledge to produce new syntheses. One particularly impressive chapter is Francis Bradley's study of the Siamese conquest of Patani. Bradley uses primary sources to document this violent episode, but also places these findings in a convincing theoretical shell, challenging the long-standing idea of low-casualty traditional warfare in Southeast Asia. From this point, the chapters progress more or less chronologically, concluding with Duncan McCargo's insightful analysis of militant leaflets.

Despite several wonderful chapters, the book as a whole suffers from some shortcomings. One drawback is its repetition, as several chapters recount the same historical events. For example, Kobkua Suwabbathat-Pian's chapter on recent Patani nationalist writing begins with an overview of Patani history. It is not that the overview is not well-written, but it was not necessary this late in an edited volume, taking space that could have been used to extend the author's impressive research. Related to this, several historical documents, namely *Hikayat Patani* and Ibrahim Syukri's *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, are analysed anew by several chapters.

Each chapter repeats the background of the texts and the authors fail to build from previous chapters. Such organizational issues are laid bare in Dennis Walker's sprawling chapter on national formation. The chapter once again relates historical events, but also jumps between past and present. More substantively, it can be difficult to distinguish between the nationalist texts reviewed and the author's own position, especially in statements such as "the Thai military and intelligence are acutely aware of what strength the Patanian psyche draws from the oneness of Islam with the memory of a glorious past" (206). The chapter's chaotic organization is exemplified by a long section on the final conquest of Patani, which wanders to include a paragraph on Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, a contemporary politician. While the chapter includes some impressive and interesting discussions, it was difficult to locate a take-away point.

A second concern is how the volume links to the present, especially since this link is used to centre the entire collection. The back cover reads that historical relations between Malays and the Thai Kingdom rest "at the heart of the ongoing armed conflict", a sentiment echoed throughout the book. No evidence is provided for this assertion beyond the lone chapter on the current violence by Duncan McCargo, which shows how anonymous leaflets credited to the militants mention historical events. Perhaps a more accurate statement would be that ongoing ethnic tensions and mistrust among Thai and Malay communities are premised on divergent understandings of history, but this is not the same as a violent conflict characterized by anonymous terrorist strikes. The violence in Patani is treated as if it is led by a traditional ethno-secessionist rebel group, such as those in Aceh, Mindanao, or even

earnings, which they can often acquire through association with *hijras*. Morcom's inclusion of women-identified and transgender performers alongside cisgender female dancers is quite revolutionary, and very much appreciated. Although Morcom herself occasionally stumbles on terminology (her uncritiqued use of the term 'effeminate' is somewhat grating, and terms such as 'transvestite', used to distinguish from 'transgender', could have been explored more), her work also highlights how unhelpful 'Western' and development-related language can be. The term MSM (men who have sex with men) is often used in discourses on non-Western societies, allowing for the fact that the term 'gay' and attendant identity politics are irrelevant in many cultures. However, as Morcom points out, the term MSM nevertheless ties itself to the binary gender division of male/female, a division that many *kothis* do not recognize. Modern feminist discourse may want to take note of how Morcom includes all women-identified dancers in her analyses, and while she does separate her discussion into cisgender (a term which, incidentally, she never uses) and transgender performers, her narrative flows easily and inclusively, without any hint of sensationalism.

## Sense of déjà-vu

Anyone working in the field of South Asian performing arts needs to read this book, as should those interested in the lives of female and women-identified performers. However, Morcom's scholarship reaches far beyond the arts, and this book reveals the contradictory forces of modernity in illuminating yet, actually, predictable ways. Morcom herself refers to her 'shock' (27) at realizing that there continues to exist a dimension of Indian culture that involves hereditary female performers. However, more surprising than many of Morcom's conclusions as to the ongoing detriment of the post-colonial project to hereditary female-identified performance is the fact that so many of us who work in this field had not realized or verbalized it before. In that sense, the experience of reading Morcom's book is similar to watching a movie you have seen but which no longer lingers in your consciousness: a sense of déjà-vu combined with not being all that surprised at any of the revelations. Morcom shows that history unfortunately does repeat itself, though she also offers positive interpretations and analyses. This book is a unique addition to the scholarship on performance, and Morcom has written it in a highly erudite, well-researched, yet extremely readable manner.

Lalita du Perron, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
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Patani in the 1970s. It is not clear how a conflict which lacks an identifiable insurgent group, and where Malays are targeted as much as Thais, can be assumed to be a conflict over competing interpretations of history. Related to this, the contributors fail to gauge the extent to which the historiographies they analyse really matter. Who is reading these essays and blogs? While not the case for some texts, such as Ibrahim Syukri's widely-read polemic, the magnitude and readership of nationalist historiographies are not clear. It is one thing to identify ghosts of the past, but we need to know who sees them and who is haunted by them.

*Ghosts of the Past in Southern Thailand* is notable for its sophisticated use of primary historical sources. Those interested in southern Thailand, Southeast Asian history, or historiography should read this book. The individual chapters are interesting and exceptionally well-researched. Taken as a whole though, the volume may fail to live up to the expectations generated by its list of gifted authors.

Shane J. Barter, Associate Director, Pacific Basin Research Center; Assistant Professor, Soka University of America  
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# IIAS Publication Series

In 2014, IIAS replaced its existing IIAS and ICAS publication series with three new IIAS publication series: 'Global Asia', 'Asian Cities' and 'Asian Heritages'. Each series has its own editor and editorial board. As before, the books are published by Amsterdam University Press (AUP). If you are interested in publishing a book in one of our series, then please do not hesitate to contact its editor.

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## Global Asia

**Series editor:** Tak-Wing Ngo, Professor of Political Science, University of Macau, China ([takwingngo@gmail.com](mailto:takwingngo@gmail.com))

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

The series aims to publish timely and well-researched books that will have the cumulative effect of developing new perspectives and theories on global Asia.

## Asian Cities

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

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

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

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## New Titles

### Immigration in Singapore

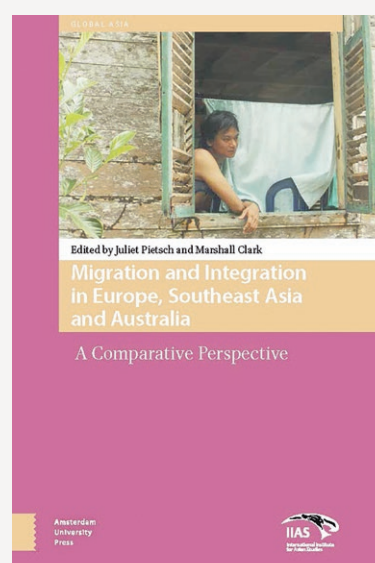


**Author:** Norman Vasu  
**Editors:** Wen Ling Chan & Su Yin Yeap  
**ISBN:** 9789089646651  
**Release date:** 01-11-2014  
**Series:** Asian Cities

THIS STUDY TRACES the socio-political effects of immigration on Singapore and its population, a topic that has been the subject of intense debate in the nation as its population grows increasingly diverse. Beyond the logic of economic imperatives, the book aims to explore the larger consequences of taking in large number of immigrants, and its analysis should appeal to scholars of migration, social change, and public policy.

Norman Vasu is Senior Fellow and Deputy Head at the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His most recent publications include an edited book with Yolanda Chin and Law Kam-ye, titled 'Nations, National Narratives and Communities in the Asia Pacific' (London and New York: Routledge, 2013) and the article with Damien D. Cheong: 'Immigration and the National Narrative: Rethinking Corporatism in Singapore', *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 31(1), 2013, pp. 5-28.

### Migration and Integration in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia: A Comparative Perspective



**Authors:** Marshall Clark & Juliet Pietsch  
**ISBN:** 9789089645388  
**Release date:** 01-11-2014  
**Series:** Global Asia

THIS VOLUME BRINGS TOGETHER a group of scholars from a wide range of disciplines to address crucial questions of migration flows and integration in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Comparative analysis of the three regions and their differing approaches and outcomes yields important insights for each region, as well as provokes new questions and suggests future avenues of study.

Marshall Clark is a Senior Lecturer at the Research School of Humanities and the Arts of the Australian National University in Canberra.

Juliet Pietsch is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University.

**From Padi States to Commercial States: Reflections on Identity and the Social Construction Space in the Borderlands of Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar, Global Asia**

**Authors:** Frédéric Bourdier, Maxime Boutry, Jacques Ivanoff  
**ISBN:** 9789089646590  
**Release date:** 01-11-2014  
**Series:** Global Asia

**Pacific Strife: The Great Powers and their Political and Economic Rivalries in Asia and the Western Pacific, 1870-1914**

**Author:** Kees van Dijk  
**ISBN:** 9789089644206  
**Release date:** 01-12-2014  
**Series:** Global Asia

Kees van Dijk is emeritus professor of the History of Modern Islam in Indonesia at Leiden University and former senior researcher of the KITLV/Royal Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies.

**Transnational Migration and Asia: The Question of Return**

**Author:** Michiel Baas  
**ISBN:** 9789089646583  
**Release date:** 01-12-2014  
**Series:** Global Asia

THIS VOLUME BRINGS TOGETHER case studies from Asia that explore the meaning, question and (im)possibility of return for (transnational) migrants. Ethnographic and historical case studies include among others: Burmese-Rohingya refugees in Pakistan; Japanese-Brazilian transmigrants; highly-skilled Indian returnees and Vietnamese students in France during colonial times.

Michiel Baas is a research fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

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# Announcements

## Artistic Interventions. Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia

Two-day workshop, 30-31 March 2015, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, China  
Call for papers: deadline 15 November 2014

ORGANISED by IIAS, the Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands) and Hong Kong Baptist University. This event is part of the research network 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context', funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York and coordinated by IIAS in collaboration with numerous institutions in Asia, the United States, Europe and Africa (see p45 of this issue; [www.rethinking.asia](http://www.rethinking.asia))

This call for papers and art projects is for PhD students and artists to submit their abstract for a two-day workshop to be held on 30 and 31 March 2015 at Hong Kong Baptist University.

The workshop aims to move beyond the traditional paradigms of western scientific representation by re-examining the fundamental concepts of time and space in the construction of knowledge of and from Asia. During the first day of the workshop, leading scholars in the field of history and cultural studies, and artists from different localities in Asia, including Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia and South Korea, will question the politics of history and cartography and explore new possible forms of knowledge.

This call for papers and art projects concerns the second day, during which PhD students and artists are invited to present and discuss their work with these scholars. Limited funding for travel and accommodation is available. The workshop itself will be free of charge.

### The Workshop

The Artistic Intervention workshop aims to critically interrogate prevailing categorisations of the history and cartography of Asia as institutionalised in Western humanities and open up alternative and new forms of knowledge and practices. During the two days we will discuss the fundamental concepts of time and space in the construction of knowledge of and from Asia. While area studies continue the endeavors of knowledge production, its inevitably intricate connections with national histories and geographies are increasingly foregrounded.

### Call for papers and art projects for PhD students and artists

Applications should include:  
an abstract of your paper, max. 300 words  
a one-page CV, including contact details of two referees

Applications should be sent by 15 November 2014  
to Ms. Miyan Cheung c/o Dr. Chow Yiu Fai at  
[miyancheung@gmail.com](mailto:miyancheung@gmail.com)  
Selected candidates will be notified by 15 December 2014.

Knowledge of Asia is still very much constructed by temporal narratives as vigorously and imaginatively as by spatial fixations: in other words, by their histories and geographies. Given that national histories are often deeply entrenched in authoritative discourses that maintain the imagined boundaries of the nation-state, and thereby erase or silence other possible histories and geographies, Prasenjit Duara's call to rescue history – and geography, we add – from the nation, remains as urgent as ever.

We think of the arts, the role of artists, artist-activists and artist run spaces, as a potential rescue tool, capable of moving beyond traditional paradigms of Western scientific representation. The workshop aims to question how artistic practices can help reimagine both time and space in the context of Asia, when put into an intimate dialogue with area studies and related methodologies and disciplines, such as anthropology, art history, cultural studies and so on. The alleged 'rise of Asia' feeds into different nationalisms in the region and beyond, making such reimaginings even more urgent. Its dependency on a meta-discourse on development and modernity are resonances of concepts that are deeply entrenched in social Darwinism, making this discourse on 'the rise of Asia' all the more complicated, especially in its denial of human complexity and a human craving for aesthetic and political aspirations.

The workshop seeks to probe into artistic and activist practices that proffer alternate histories, as well as processes that present different mappings of the world, the country or the city; these will be put in dialogue with area studies knowledge production that also seeks to destabilise existing cartographies and historical

accounts. A transnational and diasporic remapping of Asia, in conjunction with exploring its multiple histories, holds the potential to question if not undermine emerging nationalisms and prevailing reifications of the idea of 'national cultures'.

### Confirmed speakers

- Dr. Zheng Bo (Assistant professor at the School of Creative Media, specializes in socially engaged art, City University of Hong Kong)
- Zoe Butt (Executive Director and Curator of Sàn Art, Ho Chi Minh City)
- Tiffany Chung (Artist, Ho Chi Minh City)
- Xing Danwen (Artist, Beijing)
- Gridthiya Gaweewong (Artistic director of the Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok)
- Edwin Jurriëns (Lecturer in Indonesian Studies at the Asia Institute, Faculty of Arts, the University of Melbourne)
- Dr. Anson Mak (Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University and artist)
- Prof. Eva Man (Executive Associate Dean of Graduate School & Professor in Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University)
- Tozer Pak Sheung-Chuen (Conceptual artist, Hong Kong)
- Dr. Y-Dang Troeung (Assistant professor, specializes in contemporary literature, film, and cultural studies in English, City University of Hong Kong)

### Organisers

- Dr. Sadiyah Boonstra (IIAS) [s.n.boonstra@vu.nl](mailto:s.n.boonstra@vu.nl)
- Dr. Yiu Fai Chow (Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University) [yfchow@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:yfchow@hkbu.edu.hk)
- Prof. Jeroen de Kloet (Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies, University of Amsterdam) [b.j.dekloet@uva.nl](mailto:b.j.dekloet@uva.nl)
- Dr. Viêt Lê (Visual Studies Program | Visual + Critical Studies Graduate Program, California College of the Arts) [vle@cca.edu](mailto:vle@cca.edu)



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# News from Southeast Asia

# ISEAS

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

**Research.  
Scholarship.  
Policy.**

These pages offer thematic essays from ISEAS Fellows and researchers. In this issue, the focus is on the recently concluded Indonesian Presidential elections. These essays are personal accounts of ISEAS researchers as they followed the ups and downs of the campaigning.



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

**Publication Frequency: three times a year  
(March, July and November)**



## The twists and turns to the presidency

Ulla Fionna

NEVER BEFORE HAVE I EXPERIENCED such a roller-coaster elections in Indonesia. I was excited when I began observing the campaign in March 2014. It seemed like Indonesia's democracy was maturing. Parties used sophisticated campaign methods, there were fewer traffic-stopping mass rallies and evidence of more direct approach to voters. The Jokowi-popularised *blusukan* [impromptu visits] taught voters to demand more from their candidates and these visits certainly dominated the campaigns signifying the maturing of voters as well. Massive vote-buying was still rampant but overall progress could clearly be felt.

When the results of the legislative election came out in May I was a little puzzled and disappointed that Jokowi's fame could not propel PDIP to nominate him themselves. Many had thought that the momentum behind his rising star was enough, but it became clear that the party machinery failed. Instead the candidate-centred trend within Indonesian political parties proved too strong yet again, with candidates promoting only him or herself, and not the party, and certainly not Jokowi. This compelled Jokowi to rally more support to run as presidential candidate.

It was a positive sign that candidates with questionable track-records such as Golkar's Aburizal Bakrie struggled for support, despite his party coming strong in second place with 14.75 percent votes. His image suffered badly because of his inability to solve the Lapindo case, and despite his party's solid machinery, he becomes the first Golkar chairman not nominated as either presidential or vice-presidential candidate since the first direct presidential election in 2004. Jokowi's only serious rival was Prabowo Subianto, an ambitious former military general whose name has been closely linked with the disappearance of student activists in 1998.

Prabowo ran and lost alongside Megawati in 2009, but his Gerindra Party did well with 11.8 percent in the April legislative election. Head-to-head, Jokowi had a comfortable lead against Prabowo. In mid-May, most surveys put Jokowi in front with twice as much support for Prabowo. After the deadline for nominating candidates passed, only two names remained: Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto. Almost immediately, Prabowo demonstrated the formidable capacity of his campaign team. With the financial backing of his businessman brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, and coterie of experienced international

**Jokowi For President!**  
Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of M.C. Eduardo on Flickr.

campaign professionals, he managed to cut Jokowi's lead quickly. By mid-June, Prabowo's poll numbers increased significantly to 38 percent, while Jokowi's hovered at 44 %. The former managed to convince many voters that he was the decisive leader that the country most needed. At this point, I was still optimistic that most Indonesians would not want to vote for Prabowo, whose 'decisive' image also carried the risk of a democratic rollback and even a return to authoritarianism.

However, by early July, I was concerned and frustrated. It was nearing polling day and it looked likely that many Indonesians would be swayed towards Prabowo. Experts and observers were clearly apprehensive. Even Jokowi's early critics, who initially disparaged his lack of clarity on campaign issues, started to campaign against Prabowo. The prevailing mantra was that while Jokowi may not be the best person to be President he was surely better than the alternative. To make matters worse, Jokowi's campaign lacked coordination. In stark contrast, the Prabowo camp was successful in starting several rumours including the possibility that Jokowi may be Megawati's puppet, a non-Muslim, a Chinese, was under foreign influence, or even communist. The man who barely three months ago looked set to waltz his way to the presidency was suddenly looking weak and helpless against a team who did not shy from dirty campaign tricks.

Depressed and preparing for the worst, I rationalised that if Prabowo were elected, it would be a wake-up call for Indonesia from complacency. If so, Indonesia would soon realise its mistake and vote him out in the next election. However, a couple of days before polling day the momentum began to swing back again to Jokowi. Whether it was because voters saw beyond the smear campaign, Jokowi's convincing debate performances, or the middle ground swaying back towards Jokowi, it began to look likely that Jokowi would pull it off after all. Still, when polling day came, uncertainties remained. Only after the booths were closed, and exit polls slowly started to point to Jokowi as the next president, could I breathe a sigh of relief.

But losing proved hard to accept. Prabowo, using some non-credible poll results, insisted that he had won. Then, hours before the official results were announced on 22nd July, he withdrew from the election causing confusion over what that meant for the results. After the results were announced, Prabowo brought the case to the Constitutional Court citing massive fraud by KPU as the cause for his loss. The Courts rejected his request after he failed to produce credible proof.

Although Prabowo continues in his search for other avenues to appeal the decision, I am, once again, a confident and proud Indonesian. We dodged a bullet with this election. The risk of a democratic rollback is still real. The road ahead is bumpy but we have a strong democracy that has withstood some challenging tests. It is now up to Jokowi to use this momentum to bring Indonesia forward.

**Ulla Fionna, Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies**

# The role of the internet and social media in the 2014 Indonesian elections

Kathleen Azali

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY of Indonesian presidential elections, the 2014 elections witnessed just two candidates: Prabowo Subianto and Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo. It was also the first time the internet and social media played such a consequential part in the process.

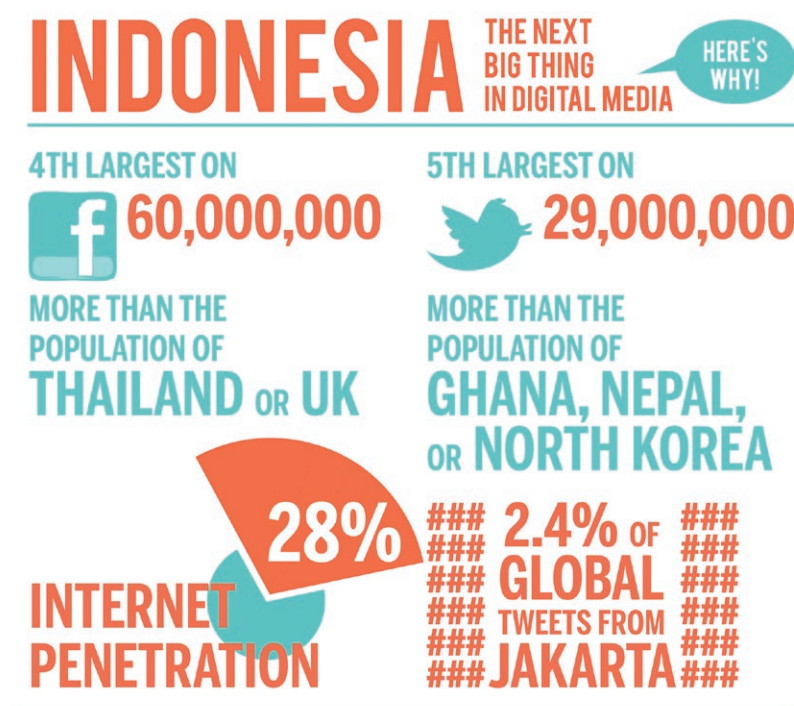
Only 70 million, out of 250 million citizens in Indonesia, are reported to have regular internet access. However, as more and more Indonesians use low-cost mobile devices, internet penetration has increased from less than 1% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2012. Indonesia also has the fifth highest number of social media users worldwide, following the US, Brazil, Japan, and the UK. According to research by SemioCast in 2012, Jakarta is the world's most active Twitter city, surpassing London and Tokyo, while Bandung ranked sixth. Facebook recorded more than 200 million interactions related to the Indonesian elections between March and July 2014, while Twitter recorded nearly 95 million tweets on the subject, starting at the beginning of 2014. This activity intensified during the final weeks of the elections, with a number of elections-related hashtags, such as #Jokowi9Juli or #Pilih\_No1\_PrabowoHatta, reaching worldwide trends. It must be remembered, however, that massive uses of bots and hacking attempts to manipulate social media have also been reported from both sides; these trending topics must thus be interpreted with caution as increased mentions or followers on social media do not necessarily translate to increased popularity. After all, one can buy 1,000 Twitter followers in Indonesia for IDR 15-50,000 (US\$1-5).

Both candidates used social media extensively, though many have noted that Prabowo's campaign was far more systematic and highly coordinated. Jokowi's campaign, in contrast, was less coordinated with different messages and accounts driven by random and unpaid volunteers. There might have been more than 1,000 disparate initiatives supporting Jokowi, resulting in a cacophony of diverse voices that made campaign messaging fragmented and

Interesting statistics on social media use in Indonesia. Adapted Infographic reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of Trixia on Flickr.

incomprehensible. Nevertheless, despite this fragmentation, many came to rely more on their social media rather than on official news outlets for the latest political updates. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and mobile text messages also played a crucial role in the organization of events, like rallies and concerts.

The role of social media did not end even after ballots had been cast. Crowdsourcing was crucial in the monitoring of the ballot-counting process. With the General Election



Commission uploading scanned tabulation forms from 486,000 voting stations across the nation onto its website, many ordinary voters could check them online, scrutinise and point out strange counts and possible manipulation. Some initiated crowdsourcing projects to monitor the election. One tumblr account, c1yanganeh.tumblr.com, was set up to compile and list suspicious tabulation forms. MataMassa.org was set up by the Jakarta Independent Journalist Alliance (AJI) and iLab, and later endorsed by the General Election Commission, to collate and verify reports of electoral manipulation, intimidation, or any sorts of infringement. KawalPemilu.org, which emerged a few days after the election, gained the most attention with its real time display of robust tabulation. Interestingly, the website Kawal Pemilu [lit: to guard the election] was not established by a think-tank or governance-related organisation, but by an Indonesian citizen working overseas for a technology company. Ainun Najib created the website with the help of his Indonesian friends, all working in private technology companies in different overseas countries, in two days. Through Facebook he enlisted 700 volunteers to manually tally the 486,000 scanned forms and release the count results in real time. This attempt to maintain transparency over the vote tabulation process contributed significantly to the prevention of possible manipulation. This type of online crowd-sourced monitoring is now being considered for future regional elections.

The internet and social media have thus provided an avenue for citizen participation that was not available before. Nevertheless, the internet is not open, neutral, or free from barriers or censorship. Access to the internet and mobile gadgets in Indonesia is still limited to less than 30% of the population. At the same time, it would be short-sighted to limit the analysis of its potential to only those with direct access to the internet, since the networks of those potentially influenced by the information can be larger. For example, many issues raised online and on social media eventually crossed into mass media outlets like television and newspaper, where they gained significantly more attention. Ultimately, political participation and new media should not be separated from the society and media landscape that they are situated in.

Kathleen Azali, Research Associate, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

# Campaign culture: the strange and the bizarre

Gwenaël Njoto-Feillard

THIS YEAR'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS in Indonesia have been defined as the most important political event of the country's recent history. And yet in the background of this momentous event was a strange and bizarre culture of political campaigning. Joko Widodo, Governor of Jakarta, a self-made entrepreneur from the town of Solo, won with more than 53 percent of the vote share against Prabowo Subianto, the former son-in-law of President Suharto. But the race turned out to be much closer than thought. Helped by Rob Allyn, a well-known American consultant,<sup>1</sup> the Prabowo camp crafted a no-holds-barred campaign that some observers say was a masterful display of political strategy. This strategy triggered a most bizarre series of events.

The first of these was at the start of the campaign when Prabowo paraded in Jakarta's main sports arena (GBK, Gelora Bung Karno) on a pure-bred stallion. Clad in 'safari' attire and a kris (traditional dagger) strapped to his thigh, he reviewed his 'troops' in front of thousands of supporters. While his former post as commander of the Special Forces (Kopassus) during the Suharto years explains the militaristic penchant, it signaled a deeper meaning for many. It showed that Prabowo had, very early on, understood the longing for authority in large sectors of the population who saw in the country's recent democratic experiment a threat to national integrity and a way for a corrupt and decentralized bureaucracy to accumulate astronomical sums of money.

However, the GBK event also made clear to observers and the general public that Prabowo truly believed in his own 'manifest destiny'. After all, there were claims that he was a descendent of the legendary Javanese war leader Diponegoro (1785-1855), an illustrious heritage that made Jokowi's modest background look even duller. The Prabowo camp also tried to show through the newspaper *Obor Rakyat* (The People's Torch), published specially for the campaign, that Jokowi was, in fact, a Christian-Chinese, working for Israel, America and the Vatican – in short an infidel and an enemy of Islam. The newspaper also stated that Jokowi's party, the PDIP, was the 'Party of the Cross' (*Partai salib*) working towards the Christianization of Indonesia. No doubt these 'revelations'



Ambassador Marciel Joins Governor Joko Widodo for Kampung Visit. Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of US Embassy, Jakarta on Flickr.

played a part in lowering Jokowi's standing in Muslim circles, particularly in the Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) of East Java, where the newspaper was largely distributed.

On the evening of Election Day, after the quick-count results came in, Prabowo appeared on TV declaring that he would not recognize the results of the seven institutes that had declared Jokowi the winner. After all, four other institutes had announced results showing that he himself had won (although none of these four made their data public). Prabowo declared that he would retract from the process. A day later, he announced that he was taking the case to the Constitutional Court. According to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), an Islamist party and staunch supporter of Prabowo, his victory was solid. The party's real count results were exactly the same as the nation-wide poll it made on the

5th of July! The PKS gathered ten trucks of documents, a set of data that showed "massive, structured and systematic" cheating by the Jokowi camp. However, these trucks disappeared and the Prabowo legal team was left with two cartons of documents to present in the Constitutional Court.

In the meantime, Prabowo supporters gathered in front of the Court's office to vent their anger and protest against a purportedly stolen election. Young supporters wearing iPods, dark glasses and Nazi Swastika-themed attire mingled with upper middle-class housewives (*ibu-ibu*) donning Hermes luxury bags. Orators shouted their disapproval of the Electoral Commission (KPU), while declaring that the Red Garuda (Gerindra symbol) would rise again, because Indonesians were the "best race" in Asia (it is not known which of the 300 or more ethnic groups they were referring to). In some dark corner, a local shaman (*dukun*) made offerings to spirits to support Prabowo's initiative at the Court. In hindsight, this ludicrousness was, in fact, very rational. Joko Widodo's election signaled an enormous transfer of economic power in Indonesia. All those who, for years, had benefited from access to the state to build their fortunes, such as tycoon Abu Rizal Bakrie, through legal or not so legal means for some, felt they had no choice but to push for a Prabowo victory, by all means necessary.

In one of the many paradoxes that characterize Indonesia, these elections have been free, fair and relatively well-organized for a democratically young country. Jokowi's new style of politics, and the antics of Prabowo, mobilized a whole new generation of Indonesian youth through open public debates and an intensive campaign. With popular initiatives such as the kawalpemilu.org website, hundreds of volunteers accompanied the election process by using social media to guarantee the fairness of the final results. For these youths, the election was an essential moment in realizing the importance of the 'common good' and the ways through which it should be strived for and protected.

Gwenaël Njoto-Feillard, Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

## Reference

1 Rob Allyn is known to have participated in the campaign to discredit the Democratic Party's candidate, John Kerry, during the US presidential election in 2000.

# IIAS reports

## Changing patterns of power in historical and modern Central and Inner Asia

Conference, 7-9 August 2014, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia  
Organised by the International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies (IUCIAS), IIAS, and Ulaanbaatar University.

Irina Morozova and Willem Vogelsang



IN AUGUST 2012, AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP on 'The legacy of perestroika discourses in knowledge production on Central and Inner Asia' was organised by the Humboldt University in Berlin, Volkswagen Foundation, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the National Institutes for the Humanities (Japan), the Union of the Historians of Mongolia and hosted by Ulaanbaatar University in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. During the workshop, a small number of scholars in the field of Central and Inner Asian Studies held a separate meeting to discuss a plan to establish an international association for the study of Central and Inner Asia and to organise an international conference to bring together a large group of researchers from all over the world to discuss various issues in a field of research that, especially over the last two decades, has gone through a number of rapid developments and changes. The intention was to especially focus on participation by Asian scholars, to give them an opportunity to discuss their work and research results in an international context.

The major developments and changes that occurred in the area include: the period of perestroika; the demise of the Soviet Union; the establishment of a number of new independent states; shifting geo-political alignments; a new approach to their history by many of these new states; the challenges posed by more ethno-nationalistic historiography; and added to all that, a growing awareness that Central and Inner Asia are inexorably linked to developments elsewhere in the world. These changes contribute to the situation, felt by many, that an international dialogue between scholars from all over the world to discuss the role, the position, and the history of such a large part of the Eurasian landmass was sorely needed.

The small group that met in Ulaanbaatar in 2012 decided to seek the establishment of the 'International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies' (IUCIAS) and subsequently received the support from IIAS (Leiden, the Netherlands) and Ulaanbaatar University, to organise an international conference, with the result that between 7 and 9 August 2014 some one hundred scholars from all over the world, and especially from Asia, came together in the brand new premises of Ulaanbaatar University. The international academic committee of the conference established by the Unit, together with IIAS, proposed the conference topic: 'Changing patterns of power in historical and modern Central and Inner Asia'.

The conference aimed 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. Understanding various patterns of power in a historical context, including their meanings, concepts and semantics, their competition, appropriation and exchange, as well as institutions and schemes of redistribution, is vital in this

respect. The conference addressed 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 conference programme was convened by Professor J. Boldbaatar (Ulaanbaatar University), Dr Irina Morozova (Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany / IUCIAS) and Dr Willem Vogelsang (IIAS). For the three days of the conference, a large number of broad themes were discussed, ranging from the structure of the medieval Mongolian Empire and its impact on society, to specific case studies of modern developments in some of the new states of the area. The setup of the conference followed the well-established pattern of many conferences organised by IIAS, namely a series of parallel sessions of one and a half or two hours each in which three or four contributors present their paper, an abstract of which is sent to all participants well in advance. To improve communication between all participants, simultaneous translation was provided in English, Mongolian and Russian.

The first morning of the conference, after a series of welcoming words by, among others, the Rector of Ulaanbaatar University and host of the conference, Professor Oh Deok Kyo, the floor was opened to key-note lectures by two distinguished scholars in the field. The first, Academician Sh.Bira, addressed a historical topic by discussing Mongolian Tenggerism. The second speaker was Academician Nikolai Kradin, who talked about the academic study, over time, of the historical dynamics in the succession of Inner nomadic empires.

Academician Bira (Ulaanbaatar University), in his talk on Tenggerism, discussed the development of this belief (roughly translated as 'heavenism'), which inspired and motivated the unprecedented rise of the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries. In its final form, after it had absorbed many aspects of Buddhism, Tenggerism became the official ideology of the Mongol Empire. This phase is related to the reign of Khubilai Khan, under whose rule the Mongolian Empire reached its greatest extent and universal character.

Academician Kradin (Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok, Russia), addressed the nature of the dynamics of different cultural, economic, and social processes among the ancient and medieval nomadic empires of Central and Inner Asia. In doing so, he outlined the changing approaches to the study of nomadic societies over time, and the different factors that determined the structure of these nomadic and semi-nomadic societies:

environmental conditions, the near-proximity of agricultural communities, contacts with settled societies far beyond, technological changes, writing systems, etc.

The subsequent 27 panels covered a wide range of subjects. Nation building of the new states was an important topic that was discussed in many panels, and so was the role of informal structures. In this context, one of the panels focused on 'State-building in post-socialist Central and Inner Asia: propaganda, regional politics and *mafias*.' Also of particular interest were two consecutive panels on the subject of the dynamics of Mongolian pastoralists, organised and led by a number of Japanese scholars, led by Dr Hiroyoshi Karashima (Hokkaido University), and including Dr Yuki Konagaya (National Institutes for the Humanities in Japan, and co-organiser of the conference). Two other panels, chaired by Dr Zanaa Jurmed (Center for Citizen's Alliance, Mongolia), addressed the issue of power and gender in Central and Inner Asia.

An important part of the programme was a podium discussion on the subject of 'Eurasian frontiers and borderlands: the continuity and change of power models'. The discussion, moderated by Dr Irina Morozova (Humboldt University, Berlin), was conducted by Academician Bira, Academician Kradin, and Professor Morris Rossabi (Columbia University, New York).

Conferences are places where people meet and become acquainted with each other's work and background. The informal part of a conference is therefore very important. Ulaanbaatar University took this point very seriously, and with great hospitality they organised the joint lunches every day, and invited all participants to a dinner on the first evening. This dinner was particularly fascinating since it was enlightened by a singing performance of one of the organisers, Academician Boldbaatar, who together with Mrs L. Chuluunchimeg, a famous singer, introduced the participants to a number of Mongolian songs that told the story of the rich Mongolian past.

The first general meeting of the International Unit for the Study of Central and Inner Asia took place at the conference. The first set of Statutes of the Unit was adopted, as well as the membership regulations followed by the scholars' joining the Unit as new members. The Unit aims at networking and institutionalisation, stimulating research programmes and organising academic meetings, and seeks to involve professional individuals and scholars on the basis of their academic qualifications and potentials, regardless of their national affiliations.

For more information, please contact Dr Irina Morozova at [iucias.ub@gmail.com](mailto:iucias.ub@gmail.com)

Top: Giant statue of Genghis Khan. Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of Ludovic Hirlimann on Flickr.

Below: Academician Sh.Bira.





# Critical reflections on the future of planning

*Public City, Private City* workshop  
27-28 August 2014, New York City

Paul Rabé

ON 27 AND 28 AUGUST 2014, Paul Rabé, Coordinator of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) at IIAS, and Anupama Rao, Associate Professor of History at Barnard College/Columbia University, convened a workshop entitled *Public City, Private City* at the Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University.

The workshop was the first of three to be organised as part of the urban component of the *Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context* programme. Funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York and coordinated by IIAS, this programme aims to generate new humanities-focused research and knowledge in the field of Asian studies and urban studies by stimulating discussions between a range of different scholars and researchers in Asia, the United States and Europe.

The overarching theme of the New York workshop was the role of planning in the production of the built environment. Traditionally a public task, justified by the assumption that government is better able to protect the public interest, urban planning is increasingly being devolved to private parties, particularly in many South and Southeast Asian cities. In this context, the workshop considered the impact of these new planning forms, many of which are accompanied by high degrees of speculation and the privatisation of public space. The workshop conveners sought to analyse the implications of these shifts through structured discussions around four main topics:

1. The rise of the 'generic' city: the long-term consequences of modern city-making in Asia and beyond
2. The past and future of planning
3. Alternate modes of city-making
4. What role for urban knowledge?

Discussions centred on the politics of planning (from the physicality of plans to their modes of 'visibilization' and on the way in which historical legacies of planning, spatial segregation, and informality challenge contemporary arguments about urban convergence. The focus was on contemporary Asian cities, but insights on comparative urbanism from other parts of the world – especially the United States – featured prominently in the analyses.

### The participants

Workshop participants comprised a mix of architects, planners, academics in the humanities and social sciences, lawyers, artists and PhD students (for the full list of names please refer to [www.rethinking.asia/event/public-city-private-city](http://www.rethinking.asia/event/public-city-private-city)). The workshop also featured two prominent special guests: Ritchie Torres, member of the New York City Council representing the Central Bronx; and Arjun Appadurai, professor of Media, Culture, and Communication (NYU).



### Public housing in the Bronx

Council member Ritchie Torres (left) was elected to office in November 2013 and is the youngest member of the New York City Council. Torres applied the discussions on the crisis in planning very concretely to the situation of public housing in the New York borough of the Bronx. His message was two-fold: first, that public housing in the Bronx is too big to fail – with over 600,000 people living in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing developments in the Bronx alone – and second, that it is in fact failing, due to severe fiscal problems besetting NYCHA and 'catastrophic', long-term disinvestment in public housing units. As a citizen of the borough who grew up and lived most of his life in NYCHA developments, Torres explained that his upbringing in the area and his personal experience propelled him to office with a mission to address the problems facing NYCHA and, more broadly, to advocate on behalf of public housing in a political climate of mounting criticism of government services and public agencies.



### Global finance

Arjun Appadurai (left), a world renowned author and expert on the cultural dynamics of globalisation, delivered the workshop's keynote address on

*Asian Cities: Connectivity and Comparisons*. The thought-provoking keynote outlined Appadurai's current interests in the sociology and ideology of global finance and its impact on housing markets in the West and, more recently, Asia. The monetisation of risk, through the growing use of derivatives, has a very direct impact on the health and growth of cities through the sub-prime mortgage market. As is well known by now, this led ultimately to the financial crises in the United States and Europe in the late 2000s. What is less well known, Appadurai explained, is that this industry and culture of 'numerically manipulable risk' is now spreading fast in China and India as well. The consequences of this, Appadurai suggests, are spectacular housing booms (particularly in China, for now) and massive urbanisation driven by housing developments – rather than the other way around. The result is a bi-polar world characterized by a high-end global financial economy, on the one hand, and an underclass of millions of labourers, on the other, and a wealth production machine that represents an almost completely different economy from the larger economy.

### Next workshop

The theme of the bi-polar economy will be further explored in the second workshop to be convened by Paul Rabé and Anupama Rao in the context of the *Rethinking Asian Studies* programme. The second workshop will explore current thinking, research and practice on 'subaltern urbanism' in the global economy and will be held at the Columbia Global Center in Mumbai, India, on 10-11 December 2014.

For more information about the *Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context* programme: see page 45 of this issue as well as visit the website [www.rethinking.asia](http://www.rethinking.asia)



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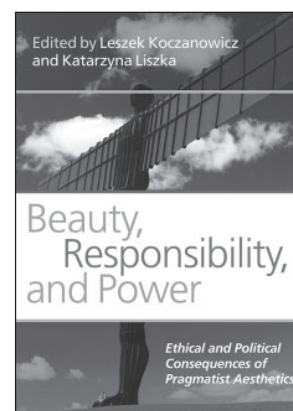
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## Beauty, Responsibility, and Power

*Ethical and Political Consequences of Pragmatist Aesthetics*

Edited by  
Leszek Koczanowicz  
and Katarzyna Liszka



This book addresses the interrelations between aesthetics, ethics, and politics in the framework of pragmatist aesthetics, offering a comprehensive panorama of the ways and fields in which pragmatist aesthetics ties in with vital social and ethical problems of modernity. Most of the contributors refer to the model propounded by Richard Shusterman. Following in Dewey's footsteps, Shusterman

has elaborated and expanded his concept, adding new dimensions to it. The most important supplement is the idea of aesthetic experience being constituted by our bodiliness. In *somaesthetics*, pragmatism has acquired a new dimension – a fully developed, comprehensive aesthetic theory. Pragmatist aesthetics with its essential notion of the body engages in critical dialogue with many key concepts of modernity which locate the body in social and cultural frameworks. The articles collected in this volume illustrate the complex range of pragmatist aesthetics and its impact on the understanding of crucial issues in social and moral philosophy.

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2014. VI, 195 pp. (Value  
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IIAS reports *continued*

## Reading craft in the global ecumene

IIAS Summer School 2014, 18-22 August 2014, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Organised by IIAS in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences at Chiang Mai University and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (New York).

Bryce Beemer &amp; Chanjittra (Baitong) Chanorn

THIS AUGUST, THE IIAS SUMMER SCHOOL, entitled 'Reading craft: itineraries of culture, knowledge and power in the global ecumene', convened in one of Southeast Asia's most renowned centers of skilled craft production, Chiang Mai, a city of almost one million people located in northern Thailand. The program drew 24 graduate students from American, European and Asian universities whose focus on craft and craft production ranged across numerous disciplines. This is the second time that the IIAS Summer /Winter School has ventured away from the Netherlands, and the decision proved to be an inspired choice. The Chiang Mai location allowed participants to engage in exciting and rewarding field visits to craft sites where they could learn from skilled Thai artisans through participation, observation, and interviews. This hands-on exploration into craft production was the highlight of the 'school', which was five days of intense reading and discussion that primed participants to interact with craft in new and intellectually stimulating ways. The participating graduate students roundly admired the Summer School's innovative field research component and the chance to learn craft from some of Chiang Mai's most skilled and respected artisans.

**Presentations and discussions**

On Monday, the school began with individual presentations by graduate students on their doctoral research projects and introductions from the programs five co-conveners: Aarti Kawlra (Anthropology, Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi); Chayan Vaddhanaphuti (Anthropology, Chiang Mai University); Françoise Vergès (Political Science, Goldsmiths College, University of London); Michael Herzfeld (Anthropology, Harvard University); and Pamela H. Smith (History, Columbia University).

The second day of the conference was organized around several in-depth lectures on the history of Thailand and the role of craft in economic policy, heritage production and ethnic identity. These lectures were followed by intensive, critical discussion amongst participants. The diversity of the lectures assisted students whose research backgrounds were in countries other than Thailand to develop a more sophisticated and critical perspective on the place of craft and 'traditional' culture in Thailand's currently tumultuous political environment. Michael Herzfeld discussed the way that Thailand's economic development projects that support the production of 'local' and regional products for national consumption can be counterproductive. There is a danger of creating static models of rural culture and they can work to collapse diverse craft industries in favor of a single, nationally approved product that is said to represent the local culture.

A guest lecture by the anthropologist Alexandra Denes (Chiang Mai University) discussed the festivals and ceremonies of Thailand's minority Khmer population. These ceremonies, many supported by the Thai state, promote the cultural practices of these minority communities, but always in ways that frame this ethnic group as a *Thai* minority. State support for non-Thai culture groups can also be read as a tool for taming challenges to Thai identity and pre-empting the formation of unruly non-Thai identities that could provoke challenges for the Thai state. Both days included time for students to meet with the five conveners to receive critical advice and guidance on the subject of their Ph.D. research.

Wednesday, the third day, was given over to group discussions with three of the co-conveners. Discussions were grounded in readings selected and distributed by the conveners that bring out particular methods for analyzing and interpreting craft. Pamela Smith's discussion sessions were devoted to understanding craft as a knowledge system, a knowledge system that is mediated by the teaching relationship that exists between the master and the apprentice. Discussion groups considered the advantages that can accrue to scholars when they devote themselves to learning the very skills that they write about in their scholarship.

Françoise Vergès led students in discussions that framed the production of craft within global capitalism, and within a global system of values that can transform craft producers into anonymous workers producing objects for a global market. Aarti Kawlra asked students to consider the ways that crafts become signifiers within national discourse over authenticity, origins, cultural aesthetics, and ethnic identity. A related question was also asked: if the artisans themselves are subalterns, how might histories of these peoples disrupt national discourses on craft and identity?

**Field visits**

Armed with these new research perspectives, students and conveners spent the fourth day of the school, Thursday, conducting a field visit to one of seven pre-selected field sites. These field visits required a great deal of pre-planning by organizers. Assistance provided by staff at Chiang Mai University (CMU), particularly from co-convenor Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, who directs two institutions associated with Chiang Mai University, The Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development and Center for Ethnic Studies and Development (CESD), was instrumental in the success of these visits. CMU Anthropology grad student Chanjittra (Baitong) Chanorn, who assisted in organizing the Summer School and was also a participant, described the months of work spent locating craft production sites, making preliminary visits, and selecting artisans who

could inform students about craft production from a variety of angles. "We [the CMU organizers] have been amazed by the number of artisans and the variety of crafts," Baitong reports, "I have to confess that even though I am a Thai PhD candidate who is working on craft, I had no idea that there is this great a variety of craft production in Chiang Mai." Moreover, survey trips were a pleasure because the "artisans are amazingly proficient and the crafts are wonderful, and, more importantly, they [the artisans] are very happy in what they are doing."

The seven selected craft sites included the following: Indigo dyeing and weaving at the village Bang Tung Hua Chang; traditional wood carving in Ban Tawai; commercial wood carving also in Ban Tawai; silver/metal embossing in the Ban Wua Lai neighborhood of Chiang Mai; lacquerware in Ban Wua Lai; bronze ware, gold engraving, and tiered umbrella manufacture in Chiang Mai; and Buddha image molding also in Chiang Mai.

**Chiang Mai, craft city**

The northern Thai city of Chiang Mai was founded at the end of the 13th century and quickly became a center for commerce and religious pilgrimage. Its power ebbed and flowed, in some periods Chiang Mai's power extended throughout northern Thailand, in others it was colonized by neighboring Burma, but in all of these periods it was an important intercultural crossroads that facilitated interactions with the artistic practices from Sri Lanka, India, China, Burma, Laos, and Central and Southern Thailand. The kings of Chiang Mai, like monarchs through much of this region, organized artisans into urban districts and villages. These communities have certainly been transformed by Thailand's rapid economic development over the last four decades and by Chiang Mai's global position as a premiere tourist destination, but they have not been displaced. Buddha molding, woodcarving, silver working, and many other arts are still being practiced in the zones established by Chiang Mai's past monarchs. Many in these communities see themselves as carrying on artistic traditions that are many hundreds (if not thousands) of years old.

The site visits encouraged deeper interaction with the themes of the Summer School. Chiang Mai's craft production centers are grounded in artisanal traditions and modes of training and rituals that are many, many hundreds of years old. Yet, they are almost entirely broken away from old economic systems of patronage and sacred and royal production. Chiang Mai woodcarvers, for example, continue to take commissions from Buddhist temples, but the bulk of their production is for the global market, particularly for sale to tourists in the many night markets and bazaars that are prevalent in northern Thailand. However, the relationships between master and apprentices, the modes of training, and the community-building rituals that woodcarvers engage in, simultaneously situate wood carving in the social and cultural world that existed long before the global commodification of Thai woodcarving. Participants at each of the seven site visits encountered similarly complex examples of the way that craft production is at the intersection of multiple, often contradictory, global and local forces.

Participants who visited the silver embossing community at Ban Wua Lai encountered a community of silver workers, who in coordination with their community temple, were able to tap into state and local resources to help promote and strengthen the craft of silver work. Thai state discourses in support of local cultural practices, the preservation of traditional arts, and economic development became tools through which this community could garner governmental support and elite patronage for its activities. Through these channels a new silver working training center was organized in the community and study modules on silver work, including hands-on training, were incorporated into the nearby rural school system. More impressive still, the community received the financial support necessary to begin the construction of the world's first silver temple, an impressive building that when completed will be completely covered, inside and out, with embossed decoration in silver, aluminum and zinc. The Ban Wua Lai artisan community, like the others, is complexly situated within the processes of revival, tradition, reinvention, state discourse, identity, the global, and the local.

**Diversity**

Students benefited from the extreme diversity of the participants' and co-conveners' disciplines. The fields of history, anthropology, sociology, political science, archaeology, design studies, art history, philosophy, performing arts and religion were all represented. This diversity strengthened field visits, in which participants approached the study of craft from very different disciplinary vantage points. This diversity may also have contributed to the spirited and somewhat fractious debates that dominated the last day of the Summer School as students struggled with the most appropriate or most valid way to represent and describe the field research of the previous day. The debate itself spoke to the deeply felt experiences that were generated by the IIAS Summer School 'Reading craft: itineraries of culture, knowledge and power in the global ecumene' and to the vibrant interactions that can develop in this kind of valuable multidisciplinary setting.

Below: Hands-on woodcarving experience at Baan Tipmanee, Thailand (Photo by Henrik Møller).



# Special report: the Bandung Conference sixty years on

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, a seminar was organised on 27 June 2014 at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne by CHAC (*Centre d'Histoire de l'Asie Contemporaine, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne*) and GRIC (*Groupe de Recherches Identités et Cultures, Université du Havre*). It was attended by around 30 participants including 12 presenters. A more complete report in French is available at [www.bandungspirit.org](http://www.bandungspirit.org). The complete proceedings of the seminar will be published in 2015.

Darwis Khudori

## Bandung Conference, Bandung Spirit, Bandung Era

The 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference was a turning point in world history. For the first time representatives of the former colonised nations united forces and proposed alternatives to the world order dominated by the superpowers. It was the birthday of the so-called Third World, a term indicating the willingness to take up position outside the two blocks of superpowers. The conference triggered solidarity movements among the peoples, countries, states and nations of Africa and Asia. It made possible the representation of African and Asian countries in the UN, and the recognition of the voice of colonised peoples in the world order. It accelerated the complete re-conquest of independence of Africa and Asia. It led to the Non-Aligned Movement between the two blocks of superpowers. It allowed the newly independent countries to lead a development based on *their* national, popular and sovereign interests. It contributed enormously to the prevention of a possible third world war and to the evolution of humanity, towards a more just and peaceful world.

The Bandung Conference also gave birth to an idiom: 'Bandung Spirit', which can be summarised as a call 1) for a peaceful coexistence between nations, 2) for the liberation of the world from the hegemony of any superpower, from colonialism, from imperialism, from any kind of domination of one country by another, and 3) for building solidarity towards the poor, the colonised, the exploited, the weak and those being weakened by the world order of the day, and for their emancipation.

However, the period of development generated by the Bandung Conference known as the 'Bandung Era' was ended tragically around 1970 by the overthrow of the leaders inspired by the Bandung Spirit, the abortion of their development projects and the entry of their country into the Western Block circle.

Now, almost 60 years after the Bandung Conference, colonisation has officially disappeared, the Cold War has ended, and the Non-Aligned Movement has almost lost its *raison d'être*. Yet, similar systems of domination by the powerful in the world order persist, wars continue to threaten humanity, mass hunger, diseases and poverty still characterise many parts of the world, and injustice has appeared in more sophisticated forms and larger dimensions. On the other hand, some countries have been considered to be 'emerging', such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (known as BRICS), but also Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey – which have been included in the G20, the 20 largest economies in the world. So, what assessment can be made of the Bandung Conference?

## Speakers and topics

After a welcoming word by the host Hugues Tertrais, director of CHAC, and an introduction by the seminar's initiator and coordinator Darwis Khudori, lecturer and researcher at GRIC, the day started with four short documentary films on the Bandung Conference, followed by comments and discussion. This was followed by three successive panel discussions, each consisting of paper presentations by the speakers and a plenary discussion.

The first panel dealt with the Bandung Conference and its impacts. The five speakers were: Darwis Khudori (*Written works related to the Bandung Conference: state of knowledge*), Samir Amin (*Deployment and erosion of the Bandung project*), Boutros Labaki (*Context and impact of Bandung on Arab East*), Amzat Boukari-Yabara (*From Richard Wright to Malcolm X: vision and influence of Bandung on the Afro-American struggle*) and Adams Bodomu (*Africa-Asia relations: How Bandung redefined area and international studies*).

The three speakers of the second panel discussed the follow-up of the Bandung Conference in Africa and Asia: Lazare Ki-Zerbo (*Experience of the International South Group Network under the light of Bandung*), Youcef Benabdallah (*Experience of development in Africa and Asia: the logics of development through the case of Algeria, Korea and China*) and Nadia Chettab (*Africa and the economic locomotives of the South: reality and perspectives*).

The third panel was dedicated to the development in Africa, Asia and Latin America in connection with the Bandung Conference. The three speakers were: Ricardo Parvex (*These last seventy years in Latino-American continent: between the Non-Alignment and the Cold War*), Omar Benderra (*From Bandung to BRICS: a Fanonian outlook on the multipolarity*) and Nguyen Dac Nhu-Mai (*New Bandung Spirit: an opportunity for the renaissance of a multipolar world*), followed by a plenary discussion.

## Main issues of the discussions

The discussions following the paper presentations allowed for a deepening and extension of the theme of the day. The most important issues discussed, were:

### 1. The assessment of Bandung 60 years on

Statements such as 'Bandung has failed' or 'Bandung did not keep its promises' or 'Bandung did not give any alternative to the hegemony of superpowers it denounced', are not relevant. 'Bandung' (in the sense of the Conference itself and the dynamic of development that followed it) has demonstrated immense achievements. The proofs are numerous. However, Bandung has its limits that explain its erosion. It is these limits that should be studied.

### 2. The essence of the Bandung Spirit

The essence of the Bandung Spirit was and is 'non-alignment'. Non-alignment to the hegemony of the two blocks of superpowers of that day – West and East – who unilaterally and for their own benefits imposed their rules on the whole world. Today, one hegemonic block remains: the economic triad of USA, EU and Japan (and industrialised Southeast Asia), which imposes a 'neo-liberal globalisation' on the whole world. The Bandung Spirit is to be interpreted today as non-alignment to neo-liberal globalisation.

### 3. France and Bandung

The hostility of the Western Block (USA, UK, France, etc.) towards the Bandung Conference has been revealed in various books. The French diplomatic archives show that France as a colonial power, was very concerned by the Conference (the Vietnam affair was not totally settled; North Africa claimed their independence; Algerian war had just started; Sub-Saharan Africa started to move). The archives show that France closely followed the Conference and its constellation (Bogor, Bandung, Cairo, Conakry, Beograd, Moshi, Algiers...) from its preparation in 1954 to its end in 1965.

### 4. The world without Bandung

What would be of the world if Bandung had not taken place? The Bandung Era, between 1945 and 1990, was the first wave of the rise of the peoples of the South forcing the North to adjust itself to the requests of the South. Today, while the

North has taken back its control over the world through neo-liberal globalisation, there are signs of affirmation of the rights of the peoples, nations and states of Africa, Asia and Latin America that could be considered as the second wave of the rise of the South. At an academic level, without Bandung, there would have been no area studies linking Africa-Asia, and Africa-Asia-Latin America.

### 5. The enlargement of Bandung

Latin America has been aligned with the Bandung movement from the 1960s (with the foundation of Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and the Tricontinental Conference in Havana 1966), but the Non-Aligned Movement only really took off after 2000. Now, the time seems to have arrived for a larger alliance of peoples, nations and states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The position of the peoples of the North is crucial. Do they remain silent by supporting de facto the imperialist politics of their leaders? Or, are they willing to align with the enlarged alliance of Bandung? Bandung was a world political success because it was led by the states. In order to make the second Bandung or the second wave of the rise of the South a success, the alliance of the peoples of the South and the North has to grow into an alliance of the states.

### 6. The 'emerging' countries

The term BRICS to represent a group of 'emerging' countries does not correspond to reality as it involves two contradictory phenomena: 'lumpen development' and 'emergence'. The first is characterised by economic growth accompanied by pauperisation of the population, while 'emergence' is characterised by a sovereign construction of a coherent, integrated and efficient national productive system capable of competition and exportation, accompanied by a rural development allowing an equal access to land for the rural population and a guarantee of national food sovereignty. According to these criteria, the only country really 'emerging' is China. Some countries only have certain elements of emergence (Brazil, India), while many do not have any elements of emergence at all: they are more accurately 'submerging', and suffering from lumpen development, a development mainly based on the exploitation of natural resources and characterised by a widening gap between the rich and the poor.

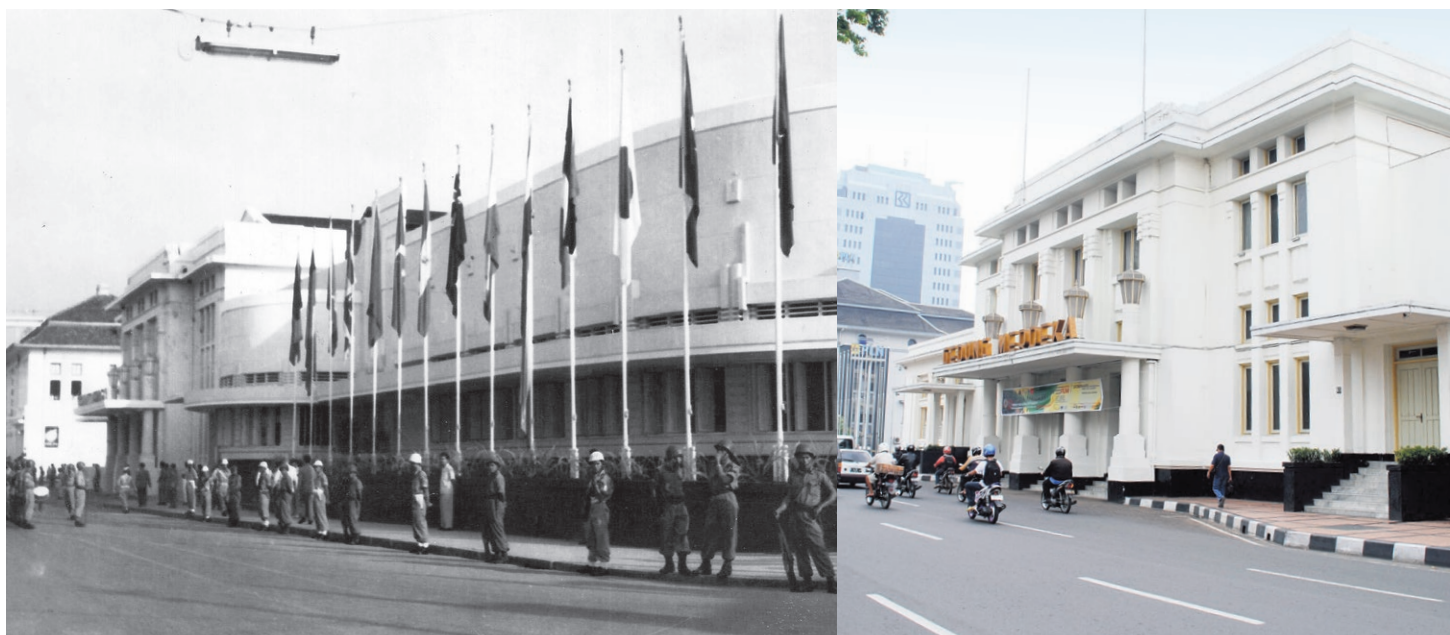
### 7. The China-Africa relationship

In response to the call of the Bandung Final Communiqué, China is the only country that has been developing an economic and cultural cooperation with Africa in a methodical, systematic, consistent and continuous way since the end of the 1950s up to the present. Its approach is completely different from that of G7, which takes a position of 'donor', imposing severe conditions (especially liberalisation and privatisation) that jeopardise the national sovereignty of those African countries wishing to receive their 'aid'. On the other hand, the Chinese 'win-win' approach does not impose any conditions. Meanwhile, Chinese actions in Africa are often critiqued by representatives of the North, especially since China became Africa's primary trading partner in 2008, overtaking USA and EU. This issue should be watched carefully by using rigorous scientific approaches.

### 8. Other issues

A number of other issues were raised without further discussion that may be addressed in future meetings. These included: a) The African problem (the relationship between Africa and the world reveals the weakness of Africa and there is a risk that the destiny of Africa continues to be decided by others. Why is this?); b) China: sovereign or imperialist? (For example, the sovereignty claimed by China over almost all of the Eastern Sea or the South China Sea); c) The reunification of Korea; d) The women question; e) The question of religious diversity tearing up Africa and Asia; f) The question of arms control; g) The question of Palestine.

Below: The venue photographed in 1955 (left) and again in 2000 (right).



# IIAS outreach

## Time for Tea

6 Sept 2014 – 31 May 2015

Exhibition at the Prinsessehof National Museum of Ceramics, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. For further information and a full programme of related activities go to [www.prinsessehof.nl](http://www.prinsessehof.nl)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME FOR TEA at the Prinsessehof this autumn? Starting on 6 September, the Prinsessehof National Museum of Ceramics in Leeuwarden is laying on a spread with the exhibition 'Time for Tea'. The exhibition explores various tea cultures and includes nearly 1000 objects that reveal the diversity of ceramic objects used for serving and drinking tea. Complete tea sets, exquisite bowls and cups, unique teapots and beautiful tea caddies convey the history of tea in China, Japan, England and the Netherlands.

### Tea cultures

Tea has a unique history. 'Time for Tea' transports visitors through different countries, periods and tea cultures in China, Japan, and the Netherlands during the 17th and 18th centuries, England in the 18th and 19th centuries, and again in the Netherlands during the 20th and 21st centuries. The journey begins in China, where tea drinking originated. Tea was initially regarded as a medicine, but a rich tradition surrounding social tea drinking soon arose. Buddhist monks introduced tea to Japan, eventually giving rise to the Japanese tea ceremony; even today, serving tea correctly in Japan is considered as something of an art. In the early 17th century, the Dutch East India Company brought tea and associated ceramic wares to the Netherlands. At first, the hot drink was a luxury beverage enjoyed by high society, but before long tea became a social event for people from all walks of life. Over the years, tea became interwoven with daily life: nowadays it is served and drunk everywhere, and the

culture of tea shows no signs of abating. Chatting with friends over high tea, with trendy teahouses popping up everywhere and deliveries of fresh mint struggling to meet demand: tea is hot!

### Ceramics

The exhibition 'Time for Tea' includes an enormous diversity of ceramics made for serving and drinking tea. The museum's sizeable collection is complemented with objects loaned from other museums and private collections. From China, we have the austere pottery of the Chinese Buddhists and the famous blue-and-white porcelain used by the Ming Dynasty elite. The refined Japanese style is characterised by its simplicity. The Netherlands also has a grand and very varied assortment of tea wares, ranging from industrial to artisan and bold design.

### Activities

The Prinsessehof National Museum of Ceramics has compiled a comprehensive and appealing programme of activities to accompany the exhibition. Adults can enjoy tea ceremonies, tastings and guided tours. There are also lectures about tea, tea culture and ceramics, opportunities to consult with antiques specialists, and a valuation day. During the holidays in autumn, at Christmas and at New Year, children can participate in creative workshops such as making and painting teacups. In short, there are plenty of activities for young and old during 'Time for Tea'.



### IIAS Outreach Lecture

## De vroege wereldreizen van een theekopje

13 Feb 2015, 14:00 - 15:30

To compliment the exhibition an IIAS Outreach lecture by Prof. Anne Gerritsen will be held at the museum. Please note the lecture will be given in Dutch.

### The lecture

How and why did people drink tea in the past? This seemingly innocent question can only be answered by looking not only a long way into the past, but also across a wide geographical expanse. When tea first arrived in Europe, it already had a long history within Asia. Tea leaves, but also the material culture associated with the production and consumption of tea, had in fact travelled across long distances, and had created connections between disparate parts of Asia. This talk will explore the early history of tea culture in Asia, with special attention given to the emergence of brown teaware in southern China during the Song dynasty, and the desire for these brown wares in Japan, where they became highly sought-after cultural objects.



### Anne Gerritsen

Anne Gerritsen holds the Kikkoman Chair of Asia-Europe Intercultural Dynamics at Leiden University, with special attention for material culture, art and human development; a position funded by the Kikkoman Foundation and the Association of Friends of Asian Art (VVAK). She was trained as a sinologist in Leiden, Cambridge and at Harvard University, and has published in the fields of global and local history with special attention given to early modern China, women and gender, and material culture, especially porcelain. She is in the process of completing a book-length study on the history of Jingdezhen, the city where most of the porcelain in the early modern world was manufactured.

# 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](http://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](http://www.asianborderlands.net))

The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. The fourth conference, organised with the Southeast Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong will take place from 8-10 December 2014 in Hong Kong, and is entitled: 'Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships'.

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

### Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

The EPA-research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. 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](mailto:m.p.amineh@uva.nl) or [m.p.amineh@iias.nl](mailto:m.p.amineh@iias.nl)), Y. Guang, Programme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS [www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa](http://www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa)**

### IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance

The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the 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](mailto:t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl))**

### Asian Studies in Africa

Since 2010, IIAS and other partners from Africa, Asia and the USA have been working on an initiative to promote the study of and teaching on Asia at African universities and, equally, to promote African Studies in Asia. The 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 24-26 Sept 2015 in Accra, Ghana, under the title: 'Asian Studies in Africa: The 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.

**More information: [www.africas.asia](http://www.africas.asia)**

## 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, socio-logists 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](mailto:gregory@cortlever.com))**

### Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)

Consisting of over 100 researchers from 14 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest global academic network on Asian cities. UKNA's objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities, and seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. To this aim, the programme hosts a variety of research projects through the exchange of researchers of the participating institutions, focusing on the three research themes: 1. Ideas of the city; 2. Cities by and for the people; and 3. Future of the cities.

UKNA is funded by a grant awarded by the EU and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IIAS is the coordinating institute in the network and administrator of the programme.

**For a full list of UKNA Partners please refer to the UKNA website ([www.ukna.asia](http://www.ukna.asia))**

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

## 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.

### Graduate Programme in Critical Heritage Studies

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 special master's and PhD track in the field of 'Critical Heritage Studies'. The uniqueness of this initiative is that the MA/PhD in Leiden will be combined with a parallel set of courses at a number of Asian universities, allowing for the students to obtain a double (MA and PhD) degree at the end of their training. Students can already opt for the focus on 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' within the Leiden MA in Asian Studies, 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 MA heritages focus is supervised by Dr Adèle Esposito (IIAS/LIAS). Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard) is a guest teacher and the 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](http://www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage)) for collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds.

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

## Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

### A research network supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

With the objective of reshaping the field of Asian Studies, the three-year pilot programme (2014-2016) 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context' seeks to foster new humanities-focused research. In practice, this means adapting Asian Studies to an interconnected global environment built on a network of academics and practitioners from Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa. Educational opportunities are created by selecting cross-disciplinary methodological questions likely to shift scholarly paradigms as they pertain to Asia. In the process, the initiative seeks to shape academic communities around new themes of research, emphasising the inclusion of young and aspiring scholars from the four world-regions and beyond.

The initiative is coordinated by IIAS, in collaboration with numerous institutions in Asia, the United States, Europe and Africa, and is funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York. The pilot programme 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: Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia
2. Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage
3. Asian Spatialities: the Indian Ocean World, Central Eurasia and Southeast Asian Borderlands
4. Idea of the City in Asian Contexts
5. Views of Asia from Africa

**Coordinator: Titia van der Maas ([t.van.der.maas@iias.nl](mailto:t.van.der.maas@iias.nl))**

**Website: [www.rethinking.asia](http://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

### Roslina Abu Bakr

*Social interactions in the Malay Manuscripts*  
1 Nov 2014–1 Nov 2016

### 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

### Chunhong CHEN

The research of protection and development to Chinese historic blocks  
1 Aug 2014–31 Jan 2015

### Mo CHEN

Energy Programme Asia (EPA) scholar  
1–30 Sept 2014

### Juliette (Yuehtsen) Chung

Visiting Professor, Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies  
1 Sept 2014–30 June 2015

### Hui GAO

UKNA scholar  
Oct–Dec 2014

### Jenna Grant

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

### Dorothea Rosa Herliany

*A History of Indo People in Politionele Actie time*  
5 Sept–15 Nov 2014

### Mariko Hirose

15 Oct 2014–31 Mar 2015

### Yike HU

*Quantitative study of the Urban National Park, boundary marking, design and management*  
Dec 2014–Dec 2015

### Nirajan Kafle

*Critical edition and annotated translation of the Nisvāsamukha*  
1 Sept 2014–1 Jan 2015

### Pralay Kanungo

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

### Shonaleeka Kaul

*Revisiting the Rajatarangini: Sanskrit and the making of a region in Early Medieval India*  
23 May–15 Aug 2014

### Yongwoo Lee

*Postwar mediascape and the acoustic modernities in East Asia*  
15 Sept 2014–15 Sept 2015

### Ghulam Nadri

*Political Economy of Eighteenth-century Gujarat; History of Indigo in Colonial India*  
29 July–28 Aug 2014

### Tak-wing Ngo

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

### Lance Nolde

*A history of the Sama Bajo sea peoples of eastern Indonesia during the early modern period*  
1 Aug 2014–30 May 2015

### Elena Paskaleva

*Reading the architecture of paradise: the Timurid Kosh*  
1 Sept 2012–31 July 2014

### Saraju Rath

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

### Dang RUI

*Methods and strategies of stimulation and optimization for building and environment based on comfort and energy consumption*  
1 June–30 Nov 2014

### Masaya Shishikura

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

### Thabita Speelman

2014 MA Thesis Prize Winner  
*High-speed rail development in China*  
1 Aug–31 Oct 2014

### Hongbo SUN

Energy Programme Asia (EPA) scholar  
26 Nov–5 Dec 2014

### Yi WANG

Cataloguing the Van Gulik Collection  
11 Oct 2014–11 Feb 2015

### Juan WU

*A Study of Legends of King Ajātasatru/Kūṇika in Indian Buddhist and Jaina Traditions*  
1 Jan 2014–30 June 2015

### Liang XU

Scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences  
1–30 Sept 2014

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



### Lance Nolde

**Changing tides: a history of power, trade, and transformation among the Sama Bajo sea peoples of eastern Indonesia in the early modern period**

THE SAMA BAJO SEA PEOPLES of eastern Indonesia have for centuries captured the attention of passing observers. Because of their semi-nomadic lifestyle and unique adaptation to the marine environment, the Sama Bajo fascinated those who crossed their path and sparked interest in their history and culture. Despite centuries of such interest, our understanding of the Sama Bajo's past remains limited. The most common historical characterization of the Sama Bajo portrays them as simple nomads of the sea who roamed the Indonesian archipelago in small family units, living on their boats, engaging in subsistence fishing, and trading sea products with exploitative middlemen. In this view, the Sama Bajo were without a known homeland, without a tradition of writing, and lacking any form of sociopolitical organization that could unify the numerous groups scattered throughout the region. As timid, dispersed, and leaderless fisher folk, Sama Bajo peoples were therefore easily subjugated and made slaves of the large landed kingdoms of the archipelago.

The book manuscript that I am working on (based on my PhD dissertation) offers a thoroughly different understanding of Sama Bajo history. Drawing on Sama Bajo oral and written traditions, Bugis-Makassarese historical manuscripts, and the records of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), my work reconstructs a history of the Sama Bajo people during the period of their greatest strength and influence (roughly 1300-1800). My manuscript looks specifically at the important roles played by the Sama Bajo in eastern Indonesian politics and trade in these centuries, and examines for the first time the existence of two large and well-organized Sama Bajo polities, each of which was comprised of numerous smaller Sama Bajo communities united across vast areas of seaspace by kinship, culture, and a hierarchical structure of leaders. Through their intimate relationship to the sea the Sama Bajo developed an impressive range of skills in fishing, hunting, diving, sailing, navigation, and maritime warfare, and these abilities made them extremely valuable in the economic and political networks of eastern Indonesia beginning around the mid-thirteenth century. The Sama Bajo's mastery of the seas also assured them positions of power and prestige in their relationships with the various landed populations of the region throughout this period. They were not only the primary collectors of the sea products that were so prized in regional and global trade markets but the Sama Bajo also served as navigators and explorers, as traders and merchants, as captains of naval fleets, as seaborne raiders, as nobles and figures of authority within landed polities, and even as territorial powers in their own right. For these reasons the Sama Bajo of eastern Indonesia were essential to the creation, expansion, and maintenance of some of the region's most powerful polities and trading networks.

During my fellowship period at IIAS I will be preparing my book manuscript and writing articles connected to my dissertation research, including a historical study of Sama Bajo sung epics known as iko-iko. Being at IIAS in Leiden allows me to conduct further research in the special collections of the Leiden university library and the KITLV, as well as in the VOC archives in Den Haag. IIAS also provides an ideal platform to interact with and present my work to scholars working in various fields of Asian studies. I look forward to being a part of the stimulating work environment IIAS provides, and of the network of Asia scholars based in the Netherlands more broadly.

## ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme

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

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

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



African  
Studies  
Centre



IIAS  
International Institute  
for Asian Studies



## Tabitha Speelman

High-speed rail development in China  
2014 MA Thesis Prize Winner

CHINA IS BUILDING THE WORLD'S LARGEST and most advanced high-speed rail (HSR) network. And it is doing it fast. Its first high-speed rail connection opened in 2008, by the end of 2013 it had over 11,000km of dedicated high-speed train tracks, and by next year this number should be up to 18,000km. But are all aboard? Contrasting state and citizen perspectives, my MA thesis *Fast and Forward? High-speed rail reform in China and what it costs to whom* (2012) looked into a transportation revolution based on seemingly self-evident narratives of progress and speed.

After a deadly train crash in 2011, the HSR and the overheated development it had come to symbolize, was widely questioned. During my 2012 fieldwork, respondents overwhelmingly pointed to the importance of a safe and sustainable mode of development that should take things a bit slower and that put travelers' needs at the center of policy making. In addition, as a mode of transportation set to replace the much more affordable regular rail, HSR also reinforces and actively enlarges social inequalities. Suddenly, many were forced onto bullet trains – with train personnel walking through the aisles selling Haagen-Dazs ice-cream and microwave popcorn – they simply cannot afford.

The state responded to some of these criticisms, for example by slowing down the driving speed of HSR trains by about 50km/h on most trajectories and dismantling the Ministry of Railways, an institution known for its corruption. But overall the blueprint stands unchanged, slowly integrating into Chinese society and winning fans abroad. With premier Li Keqiang as its 'chief salesman,' Chinese HSR technology is being bought by an increasing number of countries, a phenomenon that has been dubbed 'high speed rail diplomacy'. By way of comparison, China's major state newspaper the *People's Daily* recently ran an article on US high-speed rail development titled: *America's 'High-speed Dream' – a Worldwide Joke*.

Seemingly primarily an issue of spatial restructuring, HSR development in China extends into cultural, social, and ideological territory. Who gets to define what modernity in China should look like? How do considerations of costs and benefits to different parts of the population feature in the state's setting of China's reform agenda? What is the significance of Chinese HSR development, both to China and to the rest of the world?

Being awarded a 3-month fellowship at IIAS through the IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize gives me the opportunity to return to this topic. Academic coverage of China's transportation reform has been sparse, and during my time here, I hope to integrate my 2012 and 2014 fieldwork findings into a preliminary study on the social impact of high speed rail reform in China. Based on public opinion survey and participant observation on trains and buses in Jiangsu and Guizhou – two provinces showcasing the variety of development speeds in contemporary China – I argue that the ideologically motivated HSR strategy displays both structural strengths and weaknesses of China's adaptive authoritarianism.

# IIAS FELLOWSHIPS

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

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

### Asian Cities

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

### Asian Heritages

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

### Global Asia

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

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

For information on the research clusters and application form visit our website:

[www.iias.nl](http://www.iias.nl)



# Beginning of the Becoming: Batak sculpture from northern Sumatra

The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) in Singapore is currently presenting an exhibit that examines the extraordinary sculptural traditions of the Batak people, who live in the mountain heartlands around Lake Toba. This striking environment has nurtured an intriguing culture rooted in early Austronesian traditions including animism and ancestor veneration.

David Alan Henkel



THE COLLECTION OF BATAK SCULPTURE and other ritual or daily use objects began in the mid-to late 19th century as part of what was then the emerging science of ethnology. Inspired by the principles of Linnaean classification, colonial officials, missionaries and museums began obtaining and exhibiting these objects, not as art, but as artefacts of what they viewed as primitive, backward societies. It was believed that these objects could shed light on the communities as well as the history of man. Over the course of the twentieth century attitudes toward ethnographic art began to change and some collectors began selecting works based on their aesthetic merit.

## Art or ethnography

This exhibition at the ACM – titled ‘Beginning of the Becoming’, which is a literal translation of the name of the Batak’s supreme god *Mula Jadi Na Bolon* – is more art historical than ethnographic and focuses on sculptural works. Many of these sculptures were made by the *datu*, an important functionary who served Batak society as a sort of shaman, priest, ritual practitioner and healer. The works were largely made for ritual purposes and had to conform to formal standards in order to be effective. However, given the great variety and creativity of these sculptures it is also clear that there was substantial leeway for the carver to express their imagination and creativity. Scholars argue about the relative importance of aesthetics in tribal art, but this exhibition suggests that Batak sculptors meant for their works to be beautiful, even as they were also meant to be ritually powerful.

A wide variety of three-dimensional human figures or *gana-gana*, were produced by the Batak sculptor. These included *debata idup*, literally ‘living ancestors’, which represent departed relatives and sometimes came in male and female pairs. *Pangulubalang* figures on the other hand were carvings of dead spirits enlisted by the *datu* to protect the community and ward off supernatural attacks. They can usually be identified because they are charged with *pupuk*, a magic substance inserted into a cavity carved into the figure and plugged with a peg or with resin. *Pagar* figures were also protective and were meant to ward off malevolent spirits. The most important item in a *datu*’s paraphernalia was certainly his staff. These come in two main forms, the *tungkot malehat*, which is characterised by a large human figure usually shown riding atop a mythical *singa* or lion. He is usually surrounded by other smaller figures with their hands pressed together in what appears to be a sign of obeisance. The totem pole-like *tunggal panaluan* on the other hand is characteristically topped by a male figure, usually shown standing over a female figure with a descending series of human and animal figures including, lions, buffaloes, horses, elephants, dogs, snakes, lizards and crocodiles.

## Magic and mythic

The *datu* needed to produce a wide variety of medicinal concoctions both for use in healing and for the animation of protective amulets and figures. The most infamous of these were a class of magic substances known as *pupuk* made from disagreeable substances such as rotten leaves, soil from the site where two animals had fought or the itchy scales of the sugar palm. The *datu* stored his concoctions in ceramic or earthen



Top left: Introductory section of the exhibition highlighting masterpieces of Batak sculptural art.

Centre: Magic staff (*tungkot malehat*) Karo Batak, late 19th century Mandala Foundation Collection.

Bottom right: Seated male figure Toba Batak, 17th or 18th century Mandala Foundation Collection.

jars with carved wooden stoppers, known as *guri-guri*, or in lidded wooden or bamboo containers called *perminaken*. Often these were imported stoneware or ceramic jars from China and Southeast Asia which were highly prized as heirlooms. Medicine horns known as *sahan* were containers for *raja ni pagar*, or ‘the king of protective medicine’, one of the most powerful magic substances in the *datu*’s pharmacopeia. They were made from the hollow horn of a water buffalo with a wood stopper that is often carved with elaborate *naga morsarang*, a powerful mythical dragon-like creature.

Mythical creatures such as the *singa* and *naga* are common in Batak carving and often adorn containers or the handles of tools and weapons. Lizard images were regarded as protective and are often carved on house doors or covers of boxes and other containers. Aside from mythical creatures though, carved, three dimensional figures of animals are comparatively rare in Batak art. Among the more intriguing are large bird figures called *manuk manuk*, which appear to have been suspended, probably in the rafters of the traditional clan houses. These almost certainly relate back to an almost ubiquitous Austronesian belief in a spirit bird that could communicate with the gods and ancestors in heaven.

Not all forms of art in Batak society were strictly the province of the *datu*. Some craftsmen specialised in making *hasapi* lutes and other musical instruments. Iron smiths forged beautiful yet functional weapons, bronze smiths cast containers, tools and decorative handles or finials and gold and silver

smiths produced jewellery and added decorative touches to a host of other objects such as the sheaths of swords and daggers. Weaving was the province of Batak women and the most skilled of these were much admired for their dexterity. Houses were built by specialists known as *pande rumah* (literally house building masters) who specialised in the construction and decoration of these often immense structures. The most skilful were widely celebrated and richly rewarded for their work and were in constant demand among the wealthier clans.

## The exhibition

This exhibition challenges preconceptions and asserts a rightful place for Batak sculpture in the global artistic canon. It includes over 80 works in wood, stone, and bronze, most on loan from the famous Mandala Foundation collection, including 20 objects that have been generously donated to the ACM by the foundation. The show will be on view at the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, until 29 March 2015.

David Alan Henkel,  
curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum  
(David\_Alan\_Henkel@nhb.gov.sg)