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Militarized Borderlands in Asia

Even as borders are increasingly being bridged today through international cooperation, many border peoples across the world live precarious existences in military battle zones. Bringing together essays by anthropologists, historians, and ethnomusicologists, this Focus section refocuses the readers' gaze on militarized borderlands in Asia. The articles portray the far-reaching impacts of militarization on those who live in the immediate proximity of the border, as well as on those who move away. All the articles share a concern for the travails of the people living in militarized borders, and their attempts to cope or overcome, in symbolic, material, and imagined forms.

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Pages 24-25 Alexander Horstmann and **Tomas Cole** provide a gripping narrative of the plight of the Karen people, straddling the Thai-Burmese border, one of Asia's most battle-weary border regions. Trapped between rival militias and state militaries, Karen civilians wage a perpetual fight for survival, often in a no-win situation.

Pages 26-27 Ankur Datta's article traces how the border figures in the imaginations of Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits in the India-Pakistan border region of Kashmir. Coming at a time when debates are current regarding the proposed resettlement of Kashmiri Pandit migrants in areas they had been forced to flee, Datta's piece is timely.

Pages 28-29 Malini Sur's article underscores the violence of the border by drawing attention to a doomed crossing at the India-Bangladesh border – the shooting of a young girl by border security forces. Possessing neither legal nor financial wherewithal to pass through securitized checkpoints, many people negotiate the border under the threat of death.

Pages 30-31 Duncan McDui Ra's article reveals a different kind of border effect by connecting the surge in private schools in Manipur (northeast India) with the popular desire to flee a militarized borderland. Since a mainstream education holds the promise of geographical mobility, it fuels the demand for private schools in troubled peripheries.

Pages 32-33 Swargajyoti Gohain and **Kerstin Grothmann** focus on military renaming of places in a disputed India-China border. Renaming of places, although often accompanied by physical settlement of military troops, is in itself a powerful symbolic force and political act, for it changes the local culturescape, and integrates ambiguous state-spaces into the national space.

Pages 34-35 The Focus ends with **Masaya Shishikura's** article on the blending of diverse musical cultures in the militarized island of Ogasawara in Japan. Occupied and militarily settled by different political powers, Ogasawara nevertheless resists the epitaph of a remote and marginal border through its rich cross-border musical practices.

Reconsidering, intervening

With the two major IIAS-supported events of ICAS 9 (Adelaide) and the Africa-Asia Knowledge Axis (Accra) approaching, it is fitting for me to update The Newsletter readers on how our institute is progressing in its efforts to explore new research-led orientations through the programme 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context' and its five forums (urban, heritage, geographies, arts and Africa-Asia; more information can be found at www.rethinking.asia).

Philippe Peycam

THE LAST FOUR MONTHS have seen significant activities taking place, all aimed at opening new pedagogical perspectives in the field of Asian studies. I shall focus here on two recent events: 'Reconsidering Craft as a Pedagogy from Below', a roundtable held in Jaipur on 16-17 March 2015, and 'Artistic Interventions – Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia', a workshop followed by a roundtable, held in Hong Kong on 30 March-2 April 2015.

The Jaipur event was organized jointly with the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and the American Institute of Indian Studies (find reports and other information pertaining to this event at http://tinyurl.com/reconsideringpedagogy). It was the last of a series of activities under the programme's 'Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage' forum, which also included a Summer School (Chiang Mai, 2014) and a round-table on the 'Politics of Craft Textile' (Chiang Mai, 2014). In Jaipur, the outlines of an educational programme that could combine the use of craft in its cultural location as 'Asian' – as an alternative method of research and teaching knowledge – were explored. Discussions were multi-leveled. Most participants agreed that craft as an autonomous 'space of making' could well be mobilized as an integrative citizen-focused pedagogy. Notions of 'ecological sustainability', 'everyday life archives', or even the question of time as a non-quantifiable value necessary for the conception of knowledge, were brought up. The kind of pedagogies that should result from the encounter of artisans, scholars, designers, non-governmental organizations and govern-mental structures should effectively connect workshops, households and classrooms, not just in the transmission of craft knowledge, but also in the mapping of local traditions through a focus on historical case studies, with an emphasis on building a methodology where various forms of social knowledge could inform each other. The use of trans-local /regional networks like those supported by IIAS, as well as the possibility of e-academic platforms, could well help validate craft practices as ethically, economically and ecologically legitimate forms of knowledge of societies and their cultures. In sum, as one participant noted, the proposed process of learning should be understood as 'an integrated pedagogy framed through the idea of the right to livelihood'.

In many ways, the Hong Kong forum 'Artistic Interventions' reinforced the conclusions of the Jaipur event (please find reports and other information pertaining to this event at http://tinyurl.com/artisticinterventions). Resulting from a collaboration between IIAS, Hong Kong Baptist University, the Centre for Globalization Studies at Amsterdam University, California College for the Arts and One-A Space Gallery, as well as local civil society partners, the double event brought together participants from the academic, artistic and curatorial fields who set out to unravel the question of art and social inter-vention, as well as the way artists could define unconventional modes of reading the histories and cartographies of Asia. The first workshop saw artists and scholars interpreting each other's works in a dialogical fashion. The ensuing roundtable consisted of an interactive exercise that aimed to assemble concrete programmatic ideas. The various interventions sought to combine aesthetic and ethical exigencies, drawing on utopian thinking to question existing institutional constructions and established lines of social, cultural and political groupings. By transcending disciplinary borders, participants also sought to revisit the position of Asia as 'a mobile vessel of connections and dislocations, a political construction that can be deconstructed and re-created through artistic, curatorial, and scholarly practices', a point of 'alternative global imagination' to today's Western-dominated model and its present crisis.

More specifically, participants agreed that art should be viewed as a unique space capable of questioning the neoliberal ideological determinism that came into dominance in the 1980s. As it is itself produced under the constraints of financial cuts and institutional disadvantages, it is well placed to think creatively about the conditions of survival of humanistic knowledge, while it is also capable of expressing ambivalences against what could lead to exclusionary counter-determinisms. Discourses on art, moreover, should help to push the boundaries of regional politics by revealing hitherto unnoticed connections, often restrained by the nation-state model. Quite devoid of the self-centered aestheticism often found in certain art *milieux,* the Hong Kong discussions - perhaps inspired by the recent 'Umbrella movement' in the Territory - carried an interventionist intention that aimed to reach out to communities and their social lives, to engage spectators as participants. In so doing they rejected the high-modernist idea of an artificial autonomy of art. Like craft, moreover, 'artistic interventions' shared a place-based focus, bringing up local genealogies, narratives and experiences, that otherwise find themselves concealed by linear national histories.

Through these two rich intellectual exercises, the Mellon-supported programme 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context' is helping to deepen IIAS' intellectual humanistic commitment and providing it with potential future tracks of 'interventions'.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

Below: Participants of the Hong Kong workshop.

Disease eradication and national reconstruction

By the time Indonesia finally attained *de jure* independence in 1949, it had been devastated by warfare resulting from Japanese occupation (1942-45) and a revolutionary struggle against the Dutch (1945-49). In addition to many other worries, the country had to cope with the resurgence of epidemic and endemic diseases. President Soekarno declared that independence had ushered a new period of development in all fields, including health. He argued that, as the key problem of health was economic, Indonesians should focus their efforts on economic development. Similarly, in his First State of the Nation Address (1954), Filipino President Ramon Magsaysay asserted that no nation could go ahead if crippled by disease. The two declarations attest to the centrality of public health in the post-World War II national reconstructions of Indonesia and the Philippines.

Vivek Neelakantan

SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS BEEN A MICROCOSM of international health initiatives since 1945. Health conditions in this region were largely deplorable during the middle of the twentieth century, with a high prevalence of endemic diseases such as malaria, yaws, tuberculosis, leprosy, schistosomiasis, beriberi, and epidemics of communicable diseases such as smallpox and cholera.[1] Most of the countries in the region lacked adequate expertise and financial resources to combat these diseases. After wartime devastation, the problem of national reconstruction was exacerbated by political and ethnic conflicts, and poverty. At the time, Southeast Asia served as a theatre for superpower rivalry between the US and the USSR, for hegemony over the region. A comparative study of disease eradication campaigns in Indonesia and the Philippines could help identify overlaps between nation-building and Cold War politics.

The US, given its post-World War II economic dominance, overshadowed the USSR in extending economic and technical assistance to the newly-independent nations of Southeast Asia, provided as a part of its larger strategy to subvert the growth of communist ideology. The US contended that disease led to poverty and poverty was the breeding ground for communism. US Presidents, particularly Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, had foreseen the political capital derived from funding disease eradication campaigns: the political allegiances of Southeast Asian leaders. The leadership of newly-independent nations of the region were aware that the acceptance of financial and technical assistance for disease eradication – funnelled primarily through the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) – would have political ramifications. Whereas President Soekarno of Indonesia (1945-65) sought to achieve an equilibrium between the country's sovereignty in health and increased receptiveness of foreign aid, successive Filipino presidents (1946-65) – particularly Manuel Roxas, Elpidio Quirino, Magsaysay, Carlos Garcia, and Diosdado Macapagal – sought to align their health policies with US aid, with the view to lead their country towards a Western-led model of development.

This study offers an alternative to Randall Packard's argument that post-World War II disease eradication campaigns launched by international agencies, particularly WHO, reflected the growing ability of Western science to transform the underdeveloped world.[2] I would caution against presenting the history of disease eradication campaigns in such a simplistic fashion; it tends to overlook the geopolitics applied both within and outside WHO that affected the implementation of a regional health policy. Southeast Asia has lacked a fully effective institutional structure for regional cooperation in health. For historical and ideological reasons, WHO split Southeast Asia into two regions: the Southeast Asian Regional Office (SEARO), with its headquarters in New Delhi, and the West Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) headquartered in Manila. The split posed challenges to regional cohesion in policy.

Building a utopian world free of disease: WHO and international health

With the creation of WHO in 1948, the idea of a world free of disease started to take shape, supported by particular medical and technological advances, such as DDT against malaria, and BCG (Bacillus Calmette–Guérin) against tuberculosis. The preamble to the WHO Constitution was revolutionary as it stated that the achievement of the highest standard of health was a fundamental right of every person. Within WHO circles, planners had developed an economy-first policy. C.E.A. Winslow, who served as a consultant with the Public Health Administration for WHO, emphasised that public health was not limited to the control of diseases, but also sought to raise the general efficiency of the population.

In the 1950s, WHO approached the problem of public health in Southeast Asia through projects to control endemic diseases, particularly malaria and tuberculosis. These projects intended to provide a technological fix to the problem of disease.

However, between 1948 and early 1950s, coinciding with the Cold War, WHO was faced with the challenge of establishing its niche within the UN system as an apolitical specialised agency. To this end, it ironed over socio-economic causes of ill health,

and instead, diverted its attention to narrowly conceived disease eradication campaigns.[3] The geopolitics of the Cold War was in part responsible for WHO establishing six regional offices in Africa, the Americas, Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, Southeast Asia, and the West Pacific. Moreover, regional conflicts among nations led to some countries joining WHO offices outside their regions. In South Asia, owing to tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, the former joined the Southeast Asian Regional Office (SEARO), whereas the latter decided to join the East Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO), headquartered in Alexandria. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia signed up with SEARO in 1950 to cement further cooperation in health with India, with whom it shared a common antipathy towards new imperialism. In contrast, Malaya – engaged in a confrontation with Indonesia (1957-66) – decamped to the West Pacific Regional Office (WPRO).

The first regional WHO office was SEARO (1948), which, in the initial years, oversaw India, Ceylon, Nepal, Afghanistan, Burma, Indonesia, and Thailand.[4] WHO believed these countries to have a certain geographical unity shaped by tropical environment, poverty, and pathogenic conditions.[5] The SEARO assisted member states through the assignment of short-term project consultants for drawing up epidemiological strategies for controlling malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, and yaws. It identified malaria as the number one public health problem affecting member states. The WPRO (1951), with member states Japan, South Korea, Taiwan (Formosa), Malaya, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Australia, and New Zealand, experienced wide variations in health problems, quite unlike SEARO. Political disturbances in Malaya, Vietnam, and Cambodia were a major impediment to the development of public health services. For Southeast Asian member nations within its jurisdiction, the WPRO emphasised campaigns against malaria, tuberculosis, and yaws as these diseases debilitated the overall productivity of the population, and the after-effects of treatment were clearly visible.

Disease eradication in Indonesia: balancing national interests with international health

In 1950, Prime Minister Abdul Halim's cabinet identified malaria, tuberculosis, yaws and leprosy as the *penjakit rakjat* (the big four endemic diseases) that affected the overall vitality of the Indonesian population. National mobilisation around these diseases involved raising the living standards of Indonesians and presenting an image of the new Indonesian in accordance with *pembangunan* (nation-building ideology). Indonesian physicians adopted President Soekarno's nationalist rhetoric; they metaphorically depicted disease eradication campaigns as battles that would lead the nation to further victories against poverty and disease, and cultivate a strong and healthy population. Indonesians refashioned disease eradication campaigns to involve a balancing of national interests with the agenda of international agencies during the Cold War.

President Soekarno conceptualised *pembangunan* to articulate Indonesia's aspirations for a brighter future after nearly three-and-a-half centuries of Dutch colonialism. It envisioned the transformation of Indonesia into a just and prosperous society that also embraced advancements in public health. The disease aetiologies constructed by Indonesian physicians sought to rationalise the relationship between poverty, disease, and priorities of nation-building. Malaria, considered to be the *musuh nomor pertama* (the foremost enemy) of the newly-independent nation, was cast as a *hantu* (ghost) that haunted coastal areas causing malnutrition and infant mortality.

in Indonesia and the Philippines during the early decades of the Cold War

Between 1951 and 1956, Indonesia implemented malaria control projects with international support that sought to minimise the incidence of malaria using DDT. Unfortunately, malaria control operations were impeded as mosquitoes developed resistance to DDT. In response, between 1959 and 1965, Indonesia implemented malaria eradication – a permanent elimination of the disease even in the absence of control measures – that consisted of: (a) mapping out the prevalence of the disease using surveys, (b) determining the resistance of anopheline species to DDT, (c) treating suspected cases with chloroquine, and (d) spraying the affected houses with DDT.

The beginning of malaria eradication in Indonesia looked promising, with a sharp decline in the parasitic index of children from 22.5% in 1962 to less than 0.5% soon after spraying operations began in 1963. But, the programme failed to achieve the ultimate objective of eradication due to bureaucratic delays. Consequently, the US halved funding for the programme from \$ 10 million to \$ 5 million.[6] The US was disappointed that vehicles procured for the eradication campaign were purchased with ICA (International Cooperation Administration) funds, but then misallocated to doctors who did not participate in the programme. The ICA requested Prime Minister Djuanda to slow down the program, whilst the then Minister of Health Satrio was fighting to expand it. SEARO Director General C. Mani (1948-68) faced the delicate task of ensuring the Indonesian Health Ministry's compliance with ICA directives. Eventually, due to intense lobbying by the Indonesian Ministry of Health, Mani granted greater autonomy to the National Malaria Eradication Program, in line with Satrio's vision of expanding the coverage for malaria eradication.[7]

Tuberculosis was the second-most prevalent endemic disease in Indonesia during the 1950s. In 1952, with technical assistance from SEARO, the Indonesian Ministry of Health initiated a pilot tuberculosis control centre at Bandung. Financing the project was a thorny issue from the very start as the Tuberculosis Division under the Ministry of Health, which initially administered the project, devolved administrative control to the West Java Inspectorate of Health in 1954. But, the Bandung municipal health service was not involved in the execution of the project itself, as it lacked adequate funds. Concomitant with the establishment of the tuberculosis control project, the Ministry of Health initiated a campaign that involved the mass vaccinations of newborns with BCG (Bacillus Calmette–Guérin) as a prophylactic measure against tuberculosis. However, within a few months the BCG campaign ran into trouble as infants developed fever due to the poor efficacy of the vaccine, forcing then Minister of Health, Johannes Leimena, to reassess the long-term benefits of mass vaccinations.

The most influential political development that shaped the trajectory of disease eradication campaigns in Indonesia was the Bandung Conference of African and Asian nations held in 1955 that gave birth to the Non-Aligned Movement (a group of states not formally aligned with either the US or the USSR), and the idiomatic Bandung Spirit that advocated peaceful coexistence, liberation of the world from colonial and superpower hegemony, and solidarity with those who were weak and exploited. Health was related to the broader social and economic questions raised in the final communique of the Conference. The Eighth SEARO Session coincided with the Bandung Conference. At this session, Indonesians expressed optimism that rural development through public health could serve as a medium to diffuse worldwide tensions.

By 1960, the principle of non-alignment was already exerting a powerful influence on Indonesia's disease eradication programmes. At the Thirteenth SEARO Session in Bandung, Soekarno emphasised that while Indonesia was collaborating with other nations in the spirit of internationalism to eradicate disease, and even though it welcomed foreign aid, the country was capable of standing on its proverbial own two feet *(berdiri di atas kaki sendiri)* in achieving targets of malaria, tuberculosis, and yaws eradication.[8]

Disease eradication and Cold War in the Philippines

On 3 June 1946, a month before US colonialism finally ended in the Philippines, President Roxas, in his First State of the Nation Address, enumerated the challenges faced by the nascent nation. The Philippines was born amidst much political turmoil: (a) the Japanese occupation of the Philippine archipelago between 1942 and 1945, and (b) The *Hukbalahap* rebellion. The rebellion was a peasant-based guerrilla insurrection supported by the communists, which originated in Luzon to initially resist the Japanese during the War in the Pacific (1942-45). Between 1946 and 1954, the rebellion was again reorganised. But, this time it was redirected against the Filipino government before it was finally put down through rural reconstruction and military victories. In his address, President Roxas noted that the 'three great pests' of the Philippines – the rat, the mosquito and the locust – had threatened the nation with both disease and hunger. Control of the 'three great pests' had to be undertaken to prevent famine.[9] Between 1949 and 1957, the Filipinos were hopeful that, despite limited financial resources, the country was making satisfactory progress in achieving health outcomes. But, the initial optimism that characterised

public health in the Philippines during the first decade of independence soon paved way for despair in the late 1950s. This was due to a lack of coordination between the central government, provinces, municipalities, and the *barrios* (villages) in the implementation of a health policy. In short, the Filipino political leadership aligned the country's health policy with the US and WHO prescription of controlling endemic diseases – a calculated measure intended to substitute the shortfall of domestic spending on health with international aid.

Health policy in the Philippines during the 1950s bore the imprint of Magsaysay, who was the President between 1953 and 1957. He asserted that for the preservation of democratic values and to prevent the spread of communist ideology, the government had to assure its citizens favourable socio-economic conditions that would enable them to achieve freedom from disease, ignorance, and want. As nearly 75% of Filipinos lived in rural areas without access to essential medical services, Magsaysay focussed on using public health as the conduit to achieve rural reconstruction, with a health unit for each *barrio*. As Magsaysay's vision of rural reconstruction was congruent with the US objective of eliminating the social and economic foundations for communism, the ICA disbursed US\$10 million for rural reconstruction in the Philippines between 1955 and 1957.[10]

Between 1946 and 1952, large scale application of DDT to achieve malaria control reduced the morbidity from 1000.7 per 100,000 in 1946, to 252.4 per 100,000 by 1952. The early declines in malaria morbidity across the Philippines could be attributed to the application of DDT, malaria case detection, and treatment. At the time, a WPRO pilot malaria control project was underway on the island of Mindoro to determine the effectiveness of residual spraying of DDT in malaria control operations. However, by 1954, malariologists discovered that the mosquito *anopheles flavirostris,* the chief vector responsible for malaria in the Philippines (particularly in Mindoro), had developed resistance to DDT. In 1956, malaria eradication was extended nationwide, aided by large scale application of the insecticide dieldrin. Unfortunately, *anopheles flavirostris* developed resistance to dieldrin as well. In 1960, the Filipino government decentralised malaria control to regional health directors, because the Central Division of Malaria Eradication could not exercise technical authority over regional staff, and the organisational aspects of the eradication program deteriorated.

Pulmonary tuberculosis was the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the Philippines. In 1951, the US Public Health Service assisted the Filipino Department of Health in the establishment of a laboratory at Alabang for the domestic production of vaccines. Two years later, the country launched its first mass vaccination campaign against tuberculosis. In 1956, Philippines' first pilot project to control tuberculosis was launched in Ilocos Norte province with technical assistance from the ICA on the condition that tuberculosis control would be integrated into rural health services. While it was one thing to use mobile x-ray units to identify individual tuberculosis patients and treat them with isoniazid and other wonder-drugs, it was quite another to follow-up on their treatment. Surveillance was a weak arm of tuberculosis control in the Philippines, particularly in Ilocos Norte. No countrywide epidemiological surveys appertaining to the prevalence of tuberculosis were undertaken during the 1950s. Diagnosis for tuberculosis was based only on radiological findings and not bacteriological examinations. Patients could not follow-up on treatment as drugs were un-affordable. Tuberculosis treatment and control were divested to rural health units in the mid-1950s. With ever-expanding public health activities, such as administering smallpox vaccinations, public health education,

Above:
ICA malariologist Lee Howard (left) and his Philippine counterpart Dr. Villanueva from the Department of Health, study map of a malarious area sprayed with DDT (1960). Source: ICA Photo No. 60-277, United States Operation Mission to the Philippines. (reproduced with permission from the Manila Times Photo Morgue and Archives, the Ateneo de Manila Special Collections).

and environmental sanitation, the rural health units could not follow-up on treatment of individual tuberculosis patients. Thus, between 1954 and 1958, the national mortality rate attributed to tuberculosis registered only a marginal decline, from 114 to 104 deaths per 100,000.[11]

The previous paragraphs highlight that isolated disease eradication programmes dominated the public health landscape of the Philippines during the 1950s. Despite Magsaysay's advocacy for establishment of a rural health unit for each *barrio* at the local level, his vision for rural health appeared somewhat over-ambitious as it lacked adequate funding from the Department of Health. Rural health activities were confined to the *poblacion* (headquarters of the municipal district at the sub-provincial level) leaving adjacent *barrios* bereft of basic health facilities.

Conclusion

This study does not chronicle individual disease eradication campaigns across Indonesia and the Philippines. Instead, it reveals how the US used disease eradication as a bargaining chip to purchase the loyalties of newly-independent countries of Southeast Asia in its fight against communism and draws a contrast between Indonesian and Filipino engagement with international health. A comparison between disease eradication in Indonesia and the Philippines sheds light on the nature of postcolonial sovereignty in public health. Both in Indonesia and the Philippines, the state's sovereignty in health was fractured due to tensions between various levels of government that affected policy outcomes. In the public health histories of Indonesia and the Philippines, the 1950s will be remembered as an era of mass campaigns against endemic diseases that had a marginal impact on the overall well-being of the population. Nevertheless, even though the public health achievements of both countries during the 1950s were modest, the decade did manage to impart the political will to surmount problems associated with national reconstruction following World War II.

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1   See also Neelakantan, V. 2014. 'The Eradication of Smallpox in Indonesia,' in Harper, T. & S. Amrith (eds.) *Histories of Health in Southeast Asia: Perspectives on the Long Twentieth Century,* Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, pp.149-53.
2   Packard, R. 1997. 'Visions of Postwar Health and Development and their Impact on Public Health Interventions in Developing Countries,' in Packard, R. & F. Cooper (eds.) *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge,* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp.93-118.
3   Neelakantan, V. 2014. *Health and Medicine in Soekarno Era Indonesia: Social Medicine, Public Health and Medical Education, 1949-1967,* PhD Thesis, University of Sydney.
4   These were the constituent countries of SEARO at the time. It was a geopolitically complex region. Countries have been transferred from one WHO Region to another over the course of fifty years and new countries have been admitted. E.g., Afghanistan is no longer with SEARO. It transferred its membership to the East Mediterranean Regional Office recently. Timor Leste is a SEARO member state since its independence from Indonesia in 1999. Mongolia (a SEARO member state in the 1950s) transferred its membership to the WPRO recently. Maldives in the 1950s was a British protectorate. Bhutan was not yet a SEARO member state in the 1950s. North Korea has been a SEARO member state since 1973 due to its tensions with neighbouring South Korea.
5   Amrith, S. 2006. *Decolonising International Health: India and Southeast Asia, 1930-1965,* Basingstoke: Palgrave, p.82.
6   For details refer to Neelakantan, V. 2014. 'The Campaign Against the Big Four Endemic Diseases and Indonesia's Relations with the WHO during the Cold War, 1950s,' in Liping Bu & Ka-che Yip (eds.) *Public Health and National Reconstruction in Post-War Asia: International Influences, Local Transformations,* Abingdon: Routledge, pp.154-74.
7   'Letter from James Deeny, Area Representative of the WHO to C. Mani, Director General of the SEARO,' 22 June 1960, INO-MPD-001A, File 3 'Plans of Operations and Related Correspondence,' *Project Files,* WHO Archives, Geneva [Strictly Confidential].
8   'Speech by President Soekarno to Participants of the Southeast Asian Regional Conference of the WHO,' 28 August 1960, *Inventory Pidato Presiden Republik Indonesia* No. 209, ANRI (The National Archives of Indonesia).
9   Roxas, M. 1946. 'State of the Nation Address,' *Official Gazette of the Philippines* (www.gov.ph/past-sona).
10 'Telegram from Embassy of the Philippines to the Department of State,' 12 August 1955, *US Department of State Central Files* No. 411.9641/8-1255 (http://www.history.state.gov/ historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v22/d357).
11 Regional Committee for the West Pacific. 1961. 'Annual Report of the Director General,' Doc WP/RC 12/2, Manila: WPRO, *WPRO Historical Collections,* WPRO Library, Manila.

Impermanent frescoes

Unlike the handful of European texts that can truly claim global popularity, the influence of Valmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* has not been due to its 'permanence', but rather its flexibility. Hundreds of variations blossomed across South and Southeast Asia for the past two and a half millennia, making the *Rāmāyaṇa* one of the most accessible texts in the history of literature. Known as the *Ramakien* in Thailand, the *Rian Reamkerti* in Cambodia and the *Phra Lak Phra Lam* to the Lao people, the text has inspired popular performance traditions and several schools of painters who worked on the canvases of royal halls and temple walls.[1]

William Noseworthy

IN THE LATE 1960S, R.A. Olsson, one of the most renowned translators of the Thai *Ramakien* walked through the halls of Wat Pra Kaeo, in the royal palace in Bangkok. He marveled at the use of the magnificent paintings as prompts for parents orating the story to their children.[2] Today, visitors to Bangkok, Phnom Penh and Vientiane may be surprised by the remarkable similarities between the three royal palaces. All three palaces claim spiritual potency through the presence, historical or actual, of the famed Emerald Buddha relic, the presence of the localized version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the palace space as the center of a new-cosmologically rooted mandala, pivoting around the *sima* stones. There are, however, also some differences to be noted.

The paintings of the *Ramakien* at Wat Pra Kaeo are clearly influenced by Italian 'fresco' styles, as well as conceptions of landscape and perspective. Yet, they are darker in tone, with deep red hues and black appearing throughout. They also feature impressive golden highlights, used liberally to denote grandeur. By contrast, Cambodian versions are warmer in tone, closer in sensibilities to the Italian palate and, perhaps, more welcoming. The Cambodian *Rian Reamkerti*[3] can be found in at least three notable locations: Wat Bho in Siem Reap, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh and the Silver Pagoda at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.[4] Known as the Wat Preah Keo Morokot in Khmer, the Silver Pagoda also references the Emerald Buddha that moved from Laos to Bangkok as a result of Thai eighteenth century expansion.[5] There were once *Reamkerti* paintings at Wat Phnom Chisor (Takeo province), but these were destroyed during the coup that created the Khmer Republic under Lon Nol in 1970.[6] However, the Cambodian royal palace takes on a unique tone, even in comparison with other Khmer samples.

The painter of the *Reamkerti* panels, Oknha Tep Nimit Mak, would have been aware of the Thai equivalents that were created nearly a century earlier. Yet, he was so creative and influential that he was given due recognition through the establishment of his own 'school' of Cambodia's painters.[7] His three principal works were the Wat Preah Keo Morokot (1903, 642x3m), Wat Phnom Del (Kampong Cham) and Wat Sisowath Ratanam (south Kandal) murals. Like Thai painters from the same period, he was famous for his European influenced treatment of vegetation and perspective. Although Thai influence on Oknha Tep Nimit Mak has been acknowledged, he clearly had his own flare, preferring much brighter tones than most Thai murals from the same period.[8] Therefore, his work is memorable to anyone who encounters it.

Due to the tropical climate, lack of restoration funds and general neglect during decades of civil war that ravaged Cambodia from the mid to late twentieth century, the *Reamkerti* murals fell into disrepair. As a 'quick fix' solution, some of the panels were removed and placed in storage. A Polish team began to restore the murals in the 1980s, during the closing years of the civil war. Yet ironically, as peace was declared in 1993, Polish funding for the project ran out.[9] Furthermore, international aid at the time focused, necessarily, on abating the humanitarian crisis. Attention to the arts continued its long decline as the country initially began to recover. As stability gradually returned, attention to heritage sites increased; but Angkor and the tourist industry received the most attention. Even the once renowned Buddhist Institute was barely given credence. Under-supported library staff, the decay of collections and the shuttling of key works off to the National Library and National Archives of Cambodia to save them, combined with a further lack of appropriate funding commitments by government ministries, have added to the decline of the Buddhist Institute; corners of the original site have even been redeveloped as a hotel and casino, appropriately named 'Naga World' (a Khmer reference to 'the underworld'). Set against these realities, when wandering through the royal halls of Wat Preah Keo Morokot, visitors can begin to gain a sense of the intense cacophony of hybridity that gave birth to Oknha's impressive works.

Rian Reamkerti and the many *Rāmāyaṇas* of Southeast Asia
The murals of the *Rian Reamkerti,* as well as readings of the *Reamkerti* and the *Ramakien* versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, demonstrate a number of unique interpretations of Valmiki's text. For example, in the Valmiki text, the half-monkey half-god Hanuman is a partial incarnation of *Rudra Siva,* protector and demon-dispeller. It is generally assumed that he 'came from a bad family', since being reborn as a monkey would have been a low rebirth. In the sub-continent (South Asia) the deification of Hanuman occurred only from the tenth century onwards.[10] But in Cambodia the role of Hanuman is one of extremes. Hanuman's *kammic* rebirth is even lower, and hence, his debt to the king *Ream* (Rāma), even greater. His tendency for promiscuity also makes him, along with the monkey king

Below: "Assembling the troops". Monkey troops pictured at lower left. Wat Preah Keo Morokot (1903, Royal Palace, Phnom Penh, Cambodia). Photographed by author, 2014.

Localization of the Rāmāyaṇa in mainland Southeast Asia

Sugrib, a focal point of comedy in the epic. Hanuman is the unsung hero, dear friend of the noble *Sita* and loved even more greatly by the audience than *Ream*.[11]

Other Cambodian localizations include: the transformation of *Agni's* steed from a ram, as it appears in south Indian version, to a rhinoceros;[12] the absence of the 'death of *Ravana*' sequence;[13] and most notably, in the *Rian Reamkerti* Sita's fidelity is not judged in a trial by fire.[14] Hence, the *Rian Reamkerti* also contrasts strongly with renditions of the Thai *Ramakien* such as Olsson's[15] and Tipaya's[16] translations, which not only feature a trial by fire, but also include this scene as only one element of a quite extended series of trials to test Sita's fidelity. Meanwhile, in the *Rian Reamkerti* Sita becomes so furious with Ream that she disappears into the *naga* underworld, where the king of the nether-realm gives her a home. Ream attempts to trick her by faking his own death, however, Sita discovers this. Hence both Ream and Hanuman are no longer in Sita's favor by the end of the narrative.[17] The murals at the Silver Pagoda appear to parallel the *Rian Reamkerti* versions of the text. Furthermore, they are unique in that they appear to end with the narrative of Ream's conquests in the lands of the parents of Ravana, although it is possible that Sita's entry into the *naga* underworld was one of the removed panels mentioned earlier.[18]

Although there are clear differences between the *Rian Reamkerti* and *Ramakien* versions of Valmiki's text, there are also deeper shared elements across localizations of the Ramayana in Theravada Buddhist contexts, also present in Lao and Burmese versions of the narrative.[19] For example, the figure Rama is conflated with one of the early historical incarnations of Gautama Buddha. However, the specific vocabulary used to refer to the individual Buddha may differ from text to text. In the *Rian Reamkerti,* for example, the king *Ream* is said to be a literal Bodhisattva, a "bud of the Buddha", "omniscient", and "in possession of supernatural knowledge".[20] Further unpacking the origins of the *Rian Reamkerti* text may help to explain some of the variations that exist between the *Rian Reamkerti* and the *Ramakien.*

Exploring origins

Scholarly consensus regarding the relationship between the Khmer *Rian Reamkerti* and the Thai *Ramakien* has frequently responded to both Khmer and Thai historiographical conceptions of the loss of literature. As a result of the Thai conquest of Angkor in 1431/1432 and the particularly strong association between the *Ramakien* and the Thai (Siamese) Chakri dynasty, it is not uncommon to hear allusions to the 'theft of Khmer culture by Thai'. But the *Rāmāyaṇa* was venerated very early and widely in classical Southeast Asia. Perhaps the earliest at the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Champa civilization at Mỹ Sơn (now in Vietnam). Portrayals of the *Rāmāyaṇa* also appeared in the statuaries and latticework of the Angkoran complex as well as on the island of Java.[21] Meanwhile, in Thailand, the loss of Angkor to Thai conquest, has been recast through the narrative of 'shared loss,' after the Burmese defeat of the Thai royals and the conquest of their city of Prah Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (founded 1350). Hence the Thai murals, upon their creation, represented a revitalization of royal successes. Unlike ancient Khmer society, which drew origins of royal authority from a localization of a section of the *Mahabharata,* the Chakri dynasty literally and figuratively tied the position of the king to the text.[22] All kings have been named Rāma and the first version of the *Ramakien* was supposedly completed by King Rāma I in 1798. Tipaya[23] has argued that the naming of the Thai kings, combined with the shared imagery of the *Ramakien* murals at Wat Pra Kaeo in Bangkok and the famous temples of the Angkor complex and Bantey Srei, may be evidence of Thai borrowings from Khmer culture.[24] Yet, the historical imagination of the Chakri dynasty has elevated the *Rāmāyaṇa* to the highest off all positions in Southeast Asia. Hence, it would not be too far off of an assertion to suggest that the painting of the murals in Phnom Penh represented something of a 'reclamation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*' in response to the Okhna's awareness of an increasingly global audience that had been visiting the parallel murals in Bangkok.

Conclusion

The literary tropes of the Khmer *Rian Reamkerti* may have been present in the statuaries and epigraphy of Angkoran civilization [4th-15th centuries]. However, the *Reamkerti* also appears to have been more solidified as 'uniquely Khmer' with the composition of two texts, *Reamkerti I* and *Reamkerti II,* during the early modern period [15th-18th centuries]. Later in the nineteenth century, the tradition of representation moved further into the realm of court art, as professional dance troops became more organized and the commissioning of murals in the royal place occurred. Since they were commissioned by the royal house, the paintings represented a self-conscious claim toward 'originally Indic' influenced culture, in light of the nearly contemporaneous claims staked by the Chakri dynasty. The drive for originality may also be a factor that could explain the variations that are present in the Khmer Royal Palace. Furthermore, the functionalist explanation of the tints presented in the mural walls deserves a second glance.

Above: "The Bridge to Lanka". Panels tend to show most wear at lower portions. Wat Preah Keo Morokot (1903, Royal Palace, Phnom Penh, Cambodia). Photographed by author, 2014.

The dark tints of the Thai royal palace, constantly highlighted by an excess of gold, simply cannot compare to the soft, yet also, at times, vibrant pastels of the Khmer Royal Palace. While one is ominous and impressive, the other is warm and welcoming. These stark contrasts are of course by no means absolutes, but rather points of comparison that may be used to provoke more detailed studies by historians, art historians, or even just enthusiasts. Perhaps, rather than 'conclusions', these assertions simply provide lines of further inquiry into the role of the transnational epic in identity making. Encouraging further scholarly attention to these works, the history and the popular art of Cambodia, will continue to promote a greater understanding of the *Rāmāyaṇa* among a global and scholarly public, as efforts continue in an attempt to restore the impermanent frescoes in Phnom Penh.

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1 Thanks for this piece go to the staff of the Center for Khmer Studies (Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, Cambodia), to Professor Anne Hansen, to Frank Smith, and to Luke Schmidt, as well as the students from RS 101 in fall 2014.

2 Olsson, R.A. 1968. *The Ramakien: A Prose Translation of the Thai-Rāmāyaṇa,* Bangkok, Thailand: Praepittaya Company Limited Partnership.

3 Most titles imply 'The conquest of Rama', but *Rian Reamkerti* implies 'the glory of Ream'.

4 Lao murals also appear at Wat Oup Moung (Sahai, S. 1976. *Rāmāyaṇa in Laos: A Study in the Gvay Dvorahbi,* Delhi: BR Publishing, p.xiii). They were painted much later than the Thai and Khmer murals, however, 'with cheap house paints', but are also, seemingly contradictorily referred to as 'fresco' (ibid., pp.75-77).

5 Ibid., p.127.

6 Giteau, M. 2003. *Chefs d'ouvre de la peinture cambodgienne dans les monasteries bouddhiques post-angkoriens/Capolavori della pittura cambogiana nei monastery buddhisti di epoca pos-angkoriana,* Torino, Italy: Abaco Editori, pp.95-110.

7 His students went on to paint the Wat Kompong Tralach Krom (Kampong Chhnang) and Wat Kompong Traach Loeu murals as well.

8 Ibid., Giteau, M. 2003, pp. 114-115, 127, 129.

9 Dean, J.F. 1989. 'The Preservation of Books and Manuscripts in Cambodia', *The American Archivist* 53(2):282-297, see p.289.

10 Lutgendorf, P. 2002. 'Evolving a monkey: Hanuman, poster art and postcolonial anxiety', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 36(102):71-112, pp.74,77,100.

11 Pou, S. 1992. 'Indigenization of Rāmāyaṇa in Cambodia', *Asian Folklore Studies* 51(1):89-102, pp.96-98.

12 Agni upon a rhinoceros can be found at the Angkoran complex, as well as in the sixteenth and seventeenth versions of the text.

13 There is a 'funeral of Ravana' sequence in some versions of the text, however. A painting that was present in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, which disappeared after 1970, portrays the funeral of Ravana (Ibid., Giteau, M. 2003, Tav. 21 ill. 78).

14 Ibid., Pou, S. 1992, p.92; Marrison, G.E. 1989. 'Reamker (Ramakerti), The Cambodian Version of the Rāmāyaṇa. A Review Article', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 121(1):122-129.

15 Ibid., Olsson, R.A. 1968, pp.310-331, image 312.

16 Tipaya, M. (ed.) 1993. *Ramakien: The Thai Rāmāyaṇa,* Bangkok, Thailand: Naga Books, pp.145-146.

17 Ibid., Marrison, G.E. 1989; Jacob, J.M. 1986. *Reamker (Ramakerti): the Cambodian Version of the Rāmāyaṇa,* Oriental Translation Fund, New Series. Vol XLV, London: Royal Asiatic Society.

18 Ibid., Giteau, M. 2003, p.97.

19 The Lao text appears in several versions. The main text is the *Prah Lak Prah Lam.* A second text is the *Gvay Dvorahbi,* which appeared as a palm leaf manuscript from the royal collections in the twentieth century (Ibid., Sahai, S. 1976, p.xiii).

20 Ibid., Pou, S. 1992, p.93.

21 The popularization of the *Rāmāyaṇa* among Southeast Asian courts seems to closely coincide with a period of emergence in political discourse in central and western India, during the eleventh to the fourteenth century. See: Pollock, S. (1993) 'Ramayana and Political Imagination in India', *Journal of Asian Studies* 52(2): 261-297, p. 264 on the emergence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Indian political discourse wherein the text was used to suggest a cosmic dualism that ultimately would have reified political order.

22 This contestation, between the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, as the 'competing' to be the central text of a given court has also been recorded in India. See: Ibid., Pollock, S. (1993). 'Political Imagination', p. 269.

23 Ibid., Tipaya, M. (ed.) 1993, pp.11-12.

24 An example includes the combat of Sugriva against Valin, pictured from the third quarter of the tenth century (Ibid., Giteau, M. 2003, p.100).

For whom the wedding bells do not chime[1]

Nineteenth century India was characterised by a plethora of pell-mell events that was to decide the fate of an empire where the 'sun never set'. Administrative cracks and fissures had come to the fore after the decline of the Mughal power in the eighteenth century where large tracts of north India lay outside state control evoking the famous epithet 'limited Raj.'[2] Various exigencies both internal and external were weighing down on the metropole. Among others, it included the daunting socio-economic climate of the mother country and the pressure of accelerating 'moral and material progress' in her colonies through a new set of social and political policies.

Subir Rana

THIS ARTICLE deals with one such attempt at 'social engineering', namely the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871, and explores the manner in which this Act declared certain communities as 'habitual' and 'hereditary' criminals. It tells the past and the present of the Nat, originally a community of tramping entertainers who were labelled as a 'criminal tribe', and who today practise inter-generational prostitution in Bihar.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw a fragile British Raj tottering towards a major crisis after having faced intermittent rebellions, revolts and insurgencies against its oppressive policies, which finally culminated in the Revolt of 1857. Moreover, frontier zones that sprang up as a result of the disintegrated sovereignty between empires and subordinated states had unsettled the wheels of governance. Recurrent cycles of natural disasters and epidemics, coupled with harsh agrarian policies of the British Raj, had compelled restless bands of impoverished peasants, farmers and other disbanded groups to resort to 'social banditry'[3] as part of their survival strategy. However, it was the increasing rate of 'unexplained' and 'uncontrolled' crime against property and the milling around of 'suspicious' and 'anonymous' people on the fringes of the Empire that had perturbed the colonial state the most.

The Revolt of 1857 had put the Empire at peril and there was a felt need to administer it by 'categorising the vast social world' through certain 'investigative modalities'.[4] This 'knowledge production' led by colonial administrators inaugurated an era of intrusive research into the vast array of the indigene and their social, cultural, religious and economic practices. Further, by arming itself with 'penal modernity' and riding piggy back on colonial disciplines like anthropometry, anthropology, phrenology and ethnology, the Empire had embarked on the project of 'disciplining' the so called 'soiled identities' and turned India into an 'ethnographic state'.[5]

The transfer of sovereign power from the Company to the Crown after 1857 was marked by certain desperate measures meant to safeguard institutions of private property and control crime. Launching an imperial heuristic device or an 'information order'[6] to secure military, political and social information about its subjects, and the establishment of the 'new police' in the 1850s, were some of the steps towards strengthening and refining the state apparatus. The introduction of Western property rights in the form of Permanent Settlement of 1793, and the codification of law along essentially Western lines, was aimed at creating institutional mechanisms protective of British economic interests and embodied British perceptions of law and society. Others like the Cattle Trespass Act of 1871, Forest Laws of 1878, Game and Fish Preservation Act of 1879, the *Akbari Laws* of 1890 and the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 represented some of the most repressive legislations especially for the tribal and forest communities. Some, like the Female Infanticide Act of 1870 and the Criminal Tribes Act (henceforth CTA) XXVII of 1871, were sexist and racist legislations aimed at evoking changing notions of state power and the moral authority of the Victorian era.

The CTA marked a watershed in the popular understanding of crime and criminality in India and was predicated on the fear of the ambulators and their peregrinatory lifestyle. The Act was influenced by the socio-economic developments and political churnings in the Occident, which had led to legal injunctions against mobile communities in England and Europe in the past. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw an explosion of anti-Gypsy and anti-mobility laws being injected into the European body politic, so as to confine, control and forcibly sedentarise the ambulators. This had ripple effects in many other parts of the world too, and finally with the beginning of the era of high imperialism, an anti-mobility law was foisted on the colonial state.

Above: A group of elderly sex workers outside their home based brothels. Photo by Newsha Tawakolian.

Fear of the 'ambulators' and the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871

The nineteenth century witnessed the popularity of Galton's concept of Eugenics, or 'good gene', resulting in various eugenics 'societies' and 'clubs' in England and Europe that forcibly sterilised those carrying so called 'bad genes' or 'crime genes'. Moreover, social Darwinism and other pseudo-scientific theories had found favour among the masses creating an imagery of the 'civilised' and the 'savage'. Lombroso's concept of 'hereditary criminality', which was rooted in ethnology, intertwined race and genetics with crime, and affected a paradigm shift in the popular understanding of crime and criminals. These theoretical concoctions were responsible for birthing the notions of 'born prostitutes' and 'hereditary criminals' in India in the nineteenth century. In the meanwhile, European society was radically changing its socio-economic contours under the intellectual and scientific fervour of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, enmeshed with the new work ethics of the Industrial Revolution. Europe was also witnessing a 'second industrial revolution', which had quickened the pace of change as science, technology and industry spurred economic growth. However, this 'leap of progress', so to say, was accompanied by a surge in the crime rate in Europe.

The rising crime rate in nineteenth century Europe left the continent awash with facts and fiction about crime, criminals, migrants and 'collective terror'. A new 'degeneration theory' was promulgated in France in the 1890s as a new class of *threatening people* or *classes dangereuses* were being held responsible for all kinds of crime. Mobility and vagrancy began to be construed as 'spatial errancy' and even a subversive act. Simultaneously, a strong hatred for ambulators like the Gypsies, tramps, nomads, vagabonds and drifters who formed the loose mass of 'cultural troublemakers' was gathering momentum in Europe. Increasingly, "mobility began to 'fall outside normal' as sedentary sites became authoritative locations for authentic identities."[7] It was therefore felt to be necessary to infuse homo domesticus among the ambulators in Europe and England; this had a contagious effect in the colonies, resulting in the introduction of the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871 in India.

The CTA was initially applied only to the Northwest Provinces, Oudh and Punjab, but an amendment in 1911 extended it to include Bombay and Madras Presidencies, providing greater judicial and police control over criminal tribes. The ostensible purpose of the CTA was to suppress 'hereditary criminal' sections of Indian society by way of internment and surveillance over their movement and control over their bodies. According to Radhakrishna, the CTA arose out of policies of political control, rather than social concerns for escalating crime.[8] She points out that the notion of 'hereditary criminality' was deployed in India, because any reference to genetics would have turned those involved beyond corrigibility, and therefore not amenable to an administrative resolution.

There are differing opinions among scholars regarding the intentions for imposing the CTA. These range from gaining control over the political terrain, to disciplining and policing those unwilling to accept the new moral order thrust upon rural society, and non-conformity to the colonial pattern of settled agriculture and wage labour. Further, the de-territorialised lifestyle of the ambulators was anti-capitalist in nature and went against the spirit of industrialism and the Victorian ethics of hard labour and disciplined life, thereby posing a veritable threat to public order. There was a looming fear in the heart of the Empire of an armed rebellion by roving bands of mendicants, fakirs, beggars and lepers in disguise, resulting from a nexus between the landed elite and local subaltern communities. The CTA in the end became an attempt to restrict and contain the flow of people, ideas, information, goods and gods.

The CTA underwent several amendments, and was finally repealed in 1952 by the Habitual Offenders Act, after which the so-called two hundred 'criminal tribes' came to be officially known as 'Denotified Nomadic Tribes (DNT)' or *Vimukta Jaatis* (liberated castes). The Nat are one such DNT; the tribe is spread over almost nineteen different Indian states, and members are compelled to live under the shadow of criminality, obscurity and fear.

A DNT called the Nat

The Naṭ: criminalised past/prostituted present

In popular acceptation, the word *naṭa* means an actor and corresponds to a juggler or buffoon who performs sleight of hand and exhibits feats of agility, especially on tight ropes and with poles. The generic meaning of the word *Naṭa* comes from the root *nṛt* and has different variations, like *naṭati,* which means to dance and *naṭyati,* to represent anything dramatically, act, perform, imitate. The Naṭ have been listed among the seven *antyajanya,* or lowest of the low in the caste hierarchy. With the passage of time, the meaning and the social stature of the Nat underwent a profound change due to the variable nature of their professional calling. It oscillated between degraded *Kshatriyas* (warrior caste) and degraded Brahmins (priestly class), to untouchables. The word *Naṭī* was feminine form and meant actress, courtesan or harlot,[9] and who according to Kauṭilya, were wanderlusts. In ancient times, those who earned their livelihood through acting were not kept in high esteem, so much so that Brahmans did not accept food from them. It was only when the actors started caricaturing *ṛṣis,* sages and saints, that they were degraded in the social stratification.[10]

During the Mughal period, however, the Nat enjoyed a position of eminence as trainers in music, dance and acrobatic performances, as elaborated in Abul Fazl's Ain-I-Akbari. The natwa also instructed their own girls in performance traditions, in addition to taking them to the nobles for their entertainment as 'nautch-girls', and profited by way of prostitution. According to origin myths, the Nat community in Rajasthan trace their lineage from Maharana Pratap, a legendary hero and warrior, and proudly proclaim their blue blood,[11] which is more a ploy toward upward social mobility.

The Nat was a porous community and a catch-all term to refer to all those who were engaged with travelling entertainment, such as acrobatics, jugglery, legerdemain, thimble-rigging, dancing and prostitution. However, while prostitution was never the sole profession of the Nat, the imposition of the CTA made it difficult to keep earning an ambulatory livelihood; and so the more sedentary sex trade appeared to be the logical next step. With an economic status below the poverty line and no prospects of a better life in sight, the trade very soon became inter-generational in nature.

According to historical sources, after being classified as a DNT by the authorities, the first batch of the Nat was despatched to Purnea, Araria and Katihar for cheap labour. Today, the Nat in Forbesganj and nearby areas like Araria, Dharamganj and Jogbani earn their livelihood through the sex trade, pimping, human trafficking and smuggling.

Below: A young sex worker (probably trafficked from Nepal) with her daughter; she pays a nanny to care for her child while she is 'at work'. Photo by Newsha Tawakolian.

The Nat of Forbesganj: inheritance of a trade

My doctoral fieldwork focussed on the Nat community involved in inter-generational prostitution in *Uttari Rampur,* which is a Red Light Area (RLA) in Forbesganj, Araria district, Bihar. *Uttari Rampur* is a squatter settlement in a remote corner of the village, on the *Mela* ground of Forbesganj, where Nat families live in home-based brothels on a small stretch of *pucca* road. The RLA is flanked by low lying fallow land, which becomes an open invitation to a range of diseases during monsoon. Basic infrastructural facilities, such as safe drinking water, electricity and septic tanks are non-existent, leading to a vast array of health issues in the community. The road that leads to the RLA has sprouted an array of medicine shops, specialised clinics, urological centres and X-Ray clinics for the treatment of ailments ranging from gynaecological issues to cardiovascular diseases.

Since Forbesganj lies near both the Nepal and Bangladesh borders, sex trade in this community often coalesces with human trafficking and bootlegging, given the Indo-Nepal border's notoriety as a haven for traffickers, pimps and peddlers of narcotics and contraband items. The region is a source, transit and destination point for trafficking of young girls who are later sold to the brothels of Kolkata, Mumbai and other Indian metropolises. Those with a fair complexion and Mongoloid features fetch good prices and are therefore trafficked to the Middle East.

The police and local administration, with the connivance of the *Nat Panchayat* (Council of the Elderly), ensure the successful continuance of prostitution and human trafficking. Young women and teenage girls from Nepal, Bangladesh and poorer regions of India are sold in the Nat community, and later prostituted in various *Prem Nagar Bastis* (Lover's Town). Besides Forbesganj, there are other nearby areas, like Dharamganj, Purnea, Araria, and Jogbani, where the Nat community is engaged in inter-generational prostitution. Among the red light areas, Purnea and Forbesganj are notorious for underage prostitution.

The Nat include both Hindus and Muslims, and their position in the caste ranking is predicated on their religious persuasion. They are Scheduled Castes (SCs) if they are Hindus and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) if they are Muslims. In Forbesganj, the Nat are *Shia* Muslims and thus fall within the OBC category. In Bihar, the Nat community has been included in the list of *Mahadalits* (Sl. No 19 of the SC/ST Schedule), a new social category to reach out to the poorest of the poor among the SC community through special allocations and governmental schemes and policies. The Nat community speaks a dialect that is a mix of Bengali and Maithili called *Kaithi* and which is written in the *Kaithi* or *Kayasthi* character prevalent in North India, primarily in Bihar.[12] The Nat have their own argot called *Narsi-Parsi,* they display elements of *sanskritisation,* including emulating certain aspects of Hindu customs and rituals, especially during the initiation ceremony of a young girl entering the trade, and adopt a mix of Hindu and Muslim names for their children. The notion of 'purity' and 'pollution' is a dominant principle in the lives of the Nat and they do not maintain dining relationships with castes lower than themselves, such as *dhobi, mochi,* and *dhanuk.* The Nat community has a clear division of labour, in which women are prostituted, while men are pimps for their own female kith and kin.

Between home and the skin

The Nat community in Forbesganj has been battling with abject poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and exclusion for a long time, and this has become their lived reality – their second skin. A major share of their earned money is spent on alcohol and gambling; the remaining sum is used to 'buy' girls, so as to have a reserve supply of 'sex slaves' to boost income and display strength in the community. Financial matters are handled by the eldest male member in the family; males form the 'leisure class', resulting in the 'masculinisation of wealth' and 'feminisation of poverty' among the Nat. Human beings are commoditised to an extreme level in the case of the Nat in Forbesganj. Money is earned through illicit means, such as trafficking, stealing and selling of new-born babies from the adjoining RLA hospital; some are even purchased in village fairs, in circus shows or *theatres* (peep show) at Dharamganj or during *Kali Puja* at the *Mela* grounds.

It is interesting to note the use of pronouns and other social identifiers within the community: 'us' vs. 'them', or 'insider' vs. 'outsider'. The female members with Nat blood relationship are called *mangtins,* and the males are referred to as *mangta.* Both the words owe their origin to the generic word *maango,* which means to beg. The female non-Nat – those trafficked from outside, bought and 'owned' by the Nat – are referred to as *kajins;* the non-Nat males, including the clientele, are referred to as *kajwa.*

The notion of *mangtins* and *kajins,* or 'insider' and 'outsider' respectively, is important in the context of trafficking and domestic violence. Those who are blood members of the Nat community are not treated badly, and domestic violence that might incur as a result of a female's inability to bring in enough clients is minimal. On the other hand, since the *kajins*

have been purchased, they are expected to deliver. Where *mangtins* enjoy the security of family in times of sickness or old age, *kajins* become deadweight as they grow old and maintain no significance.

In common parlance, prostitutes are referred to as *randi,* and clients as *passengers* who generally belong to the lower strata of the society in terms of class and caste, and are usually Muslims by faith. Clients vary greatly in age; they are either middle-aged and married, or else barely teenagers. Clients also come from across the border; these include military men from Nepal, or men from India who prefer 'kinky' or unprotected sex. The *gumtis* or small shops, located in front of the thatched houses, serve as information kiosks where one can enquire about the arrival of new girls or *fresh maal.*

The health situation in the Nat community in Forbesganj is challenging as there is a complete neglect of hygiene and diet. This has become even more entangled due to alcohol consumption and the use of mild stimulants like *paan* (betel leaves wrapped with tobacco), *gutka* (a mix of crushed tobacco, betel nut, and other intoxicants), and tobacco. The Nat also consume hallucinogenic substances like *ganja* (cannabis or marijuana) and *bhang* (a mild preparation of marijuana made from young leaves and stems of the Indian hemp), or large doses of cheap but strong sedatives and pain killers in order to numb their senses. In many cases, girls are drugged by family members to have sex with the clients. Terminally ill or frail children, and drunken prostitutes and men, are a common sight in the RLA. However, children from the Nat community in Forbesganj see a ray of hope in the crèche-cum-primary school run in the RLA by *Apne Aap Women Worldwide,* a Delhi based NGO, whose basic aim is to prevent child prostitution and child slavery.

Conclusion

The peregrination of the Nat, from being Notified Criminals to Denotified Offenders has been laden with stigma, exclusion and humiliation. While the world debates the legalisation of the sex trade and battles over 'respectful' terms with which to address women who are in the profession, the Nat community seems oblivious and far removed from all the clutter and cries of modernity and 'decent' work. Their lives undergo several bouts of surreal moments every day and just like the exchange of shell necklaces and armbands across Trobriand Islands, women folk in the Nat community keep circulating in the Kula ring of the sex trade. The Nat in Forbesganj struggle with the triple jeopardy of caste, gender and prostitution, in addition to enduring the stigma of criminality, which hinders their search for better future prospects. It remains to be seen whether the next generation of the Nat will inherit the same identity or a have renewed subjectivity.

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Decoding a mysterious pavilion
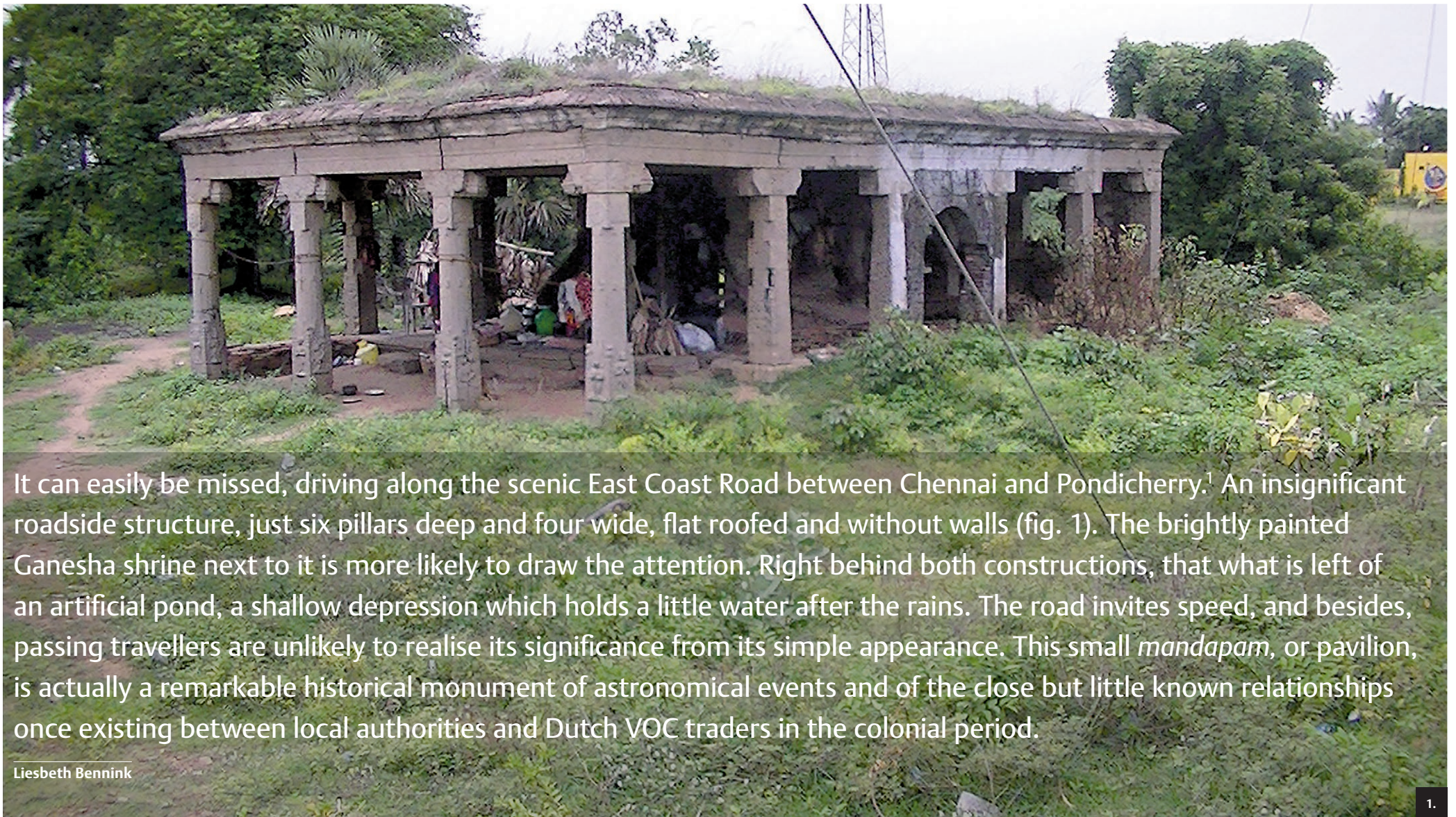
It can easily be missed, driving along the scenic East Coast Road between Chennai and Pondicherry.[1] An insignificant roadside structure, just six pillars deep and four wide, flat roofed and without walls (fig. 1). The brightly painted Ganesha shrine next to it is more likely to draw the attention. Right behind both constructions, that what is left of an artificial pond, a shallow depression which holds a little water after the rains. The road invites speed, and besides, passing travellers are unlikely to realise its significance from its simple appearance. This small *mandapam*, or pavilion, is actually a remarkable historical monument of astronomical events and of the close but little known relationships once existing between local authorities and Dutch VOC traders in the colonial period.

Liesbeth Bennink

1.

The pavilion

Even upon entering the open structure this significance does not become immediately apparent. We find the pillars are decorated with reliefs of an average quality depicting deities, people and symbols, including a few nice *maithuna*, or erotic scenes. There is no spectacular art and a casual visit is not likely to generate much further interest. To realise the significance we have to look up, at the ceiling.

The general style of the construction and sculpture indicates it was built during the period of the Nayaka dynasty (16-17th centuries). It is structurally divided in a front porch and an inner area with a raised floor and is otherwise empty. The Ganesha temple is aligned to the east, facing towards the nearby coast just a few kilometres away. The orientation of the *mandapam* is not aligned with the cardinal directions, very uncommon for Hindu constructions. It faces slightly west from south, with a declination of 200° 9'.

The pillars that form the front porch are decorated with images of gods and people. This is traditionally the place where donors were depicted.[2] Here we find the other aspect that makes this hall an important historical document. Among the human donors represented are two men in European dress, and their appearance takes pride of place. Altogether seven people are depicted. Three Indian males, accompanied by two Indian females, most likely two couples and an unmarried person. And two Western males dressed in full regalia of the highest authority and social status.

The donors

Portraiture is not very common among South Indian art, and the depiction of Westerners is actually very rare. Possibly because portraiture was mostly done as part of temple construction where the donors would be represented, sometimes in an almost abstract, general way. Only during the Nayaka period did the individual depiction of the kings and their wives and ministers as donors become a regular feature for temple construction. As can be seen for instance in the Bhuvaraha temple in Srimushnam. It could be argued that the Westerners depicted could be generic. The situation and the individual features are arguments against this.

The entrance would traditionally be the place where donors had themselves depicted as worshippers. Both the Indians and the Westerners portrayed show a large amount of individuality in dress and appearance. Even the two females can be easily distinguished on the bases of dress, hairstyle and jewellery. These donors have also been treated individually through their size (fig. 2). From left to right, the reliefs of the three Indian males and accompanying females become smaller in size and less well defined. Also on the basis of dress and attire it can be concluded that the couple on the pillar second from the S/W corner must have been persons with the highest status here. On the next pillar to the right the couple is slightly smaller. The third Indian subject on the S/E corner pillar is smallest and least well-dressed. He is also left unaccompanied by a female.

Fig. 1: Overview of the pavilion from the S/E.

Fig. 2: The four pillars forming the porch, showing most of the depicted donors.

Fig. 3: Westerner with round hat and turned walking stick.

(All photos by author)

One of the Westerners is placed facing west on the S/W corner pillar (fig. 3). Comparing this position to the placement and sculptural treatment of the Indian donors we can deduce that the Westerner held a higher status than the principle Indian donor. He wears a coat with a single row of four large buttons and a kind of clasp at the bottom, a hat with a narrow rim and a decoration on the front, and a spiralled walking stick. He wears his hair long and open and holds what could be a pair of gloves in his left hand.

The second Westerner is depicted on the corner pillar of the S/E corner, facing North (fig. 4). He wears a heavy coat with a row of clasps for closing and a simple collar, heavy high healed shoes, a walking stick and a cocked hat. What distinguishes him the most from the first gentleman is the sword he brandishes by his side. Only persons of the highest authority, such as the captains of ships, were permitted to wear swords. For all intents and purposes, these images show enough individuality of dress and appearance to suggest that the subjects stood as model and the artist depicted what he saw. Also, a generic 'Westerner' would not require two depictions. And the place of honour among the donors and deities on the frontal row of pillars would make such a generic depiction highly unlikely.

The conclusion would be that two Westerners were important participants in the construction of the pavilion, with its accompanying Ganesha temple and tank. Given the highest respect and honour through the inclusion of their portraits among the principal donors. Their dress exudes wealth and

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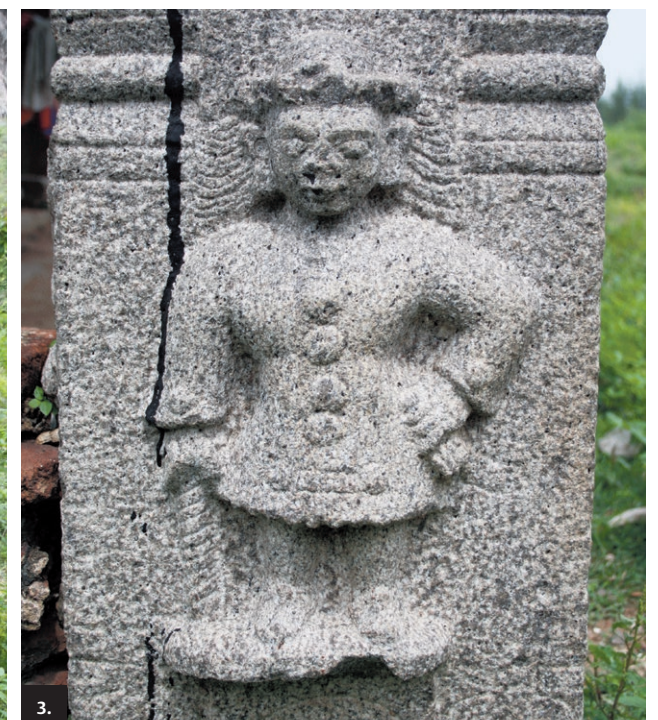
3.

How astronomy brought together local dignitaries and foreign traders

4.

5.

Fig. 4: Westerner with cocked hat and sword.

Fig. 5: Serpent chasing the moon with the lunar hare depicted in outline.

Fig. 6: Lotus medallion with Indian Sphinx and Saint Kanappa.
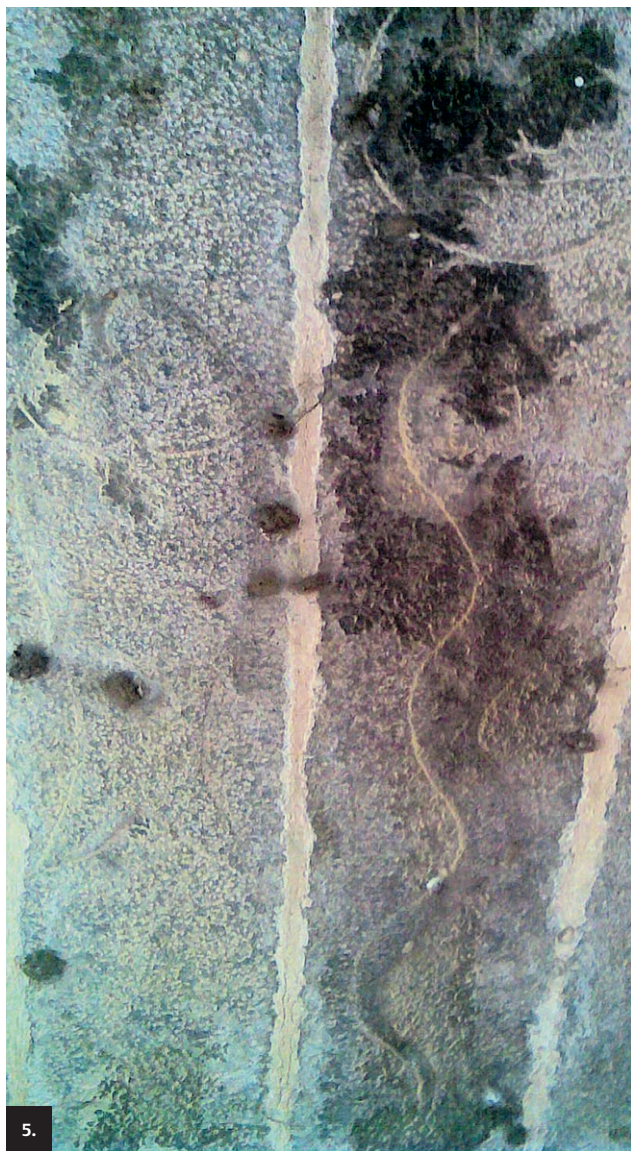
Fig. 7: Bodiless Asura Rahu, the ascending lunar node, causing the solar eclipse.

status through the way they have been portrayed by the Indian sculptor. So who could they be?

Just some ten kilometres away on the Coromandel Coast is the village of Sadras or Saduranga pattinam. Between 1612 and 1818 this was a *factorij*, or trading post, of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). It grew into a busy town with a large fort, the remains of which can be seen till today. The residents of this settlement have been known to frequently visit the nearby temple of Thirukallukundram, where they left their carved initials on the pillars and walls of a Pallava Rock temple.[3] As there were no other European settlements in this area, it is probable that the two gentlemen depicted were associated with Sadras, and were therefore VOC officials. On the pillars of the roadside *mandapam* we now find proof of extensive collaboration and interaction between the local population and authorities and the Dutch traders of the VOC.

Astronomical significance

The reason behind the construction of this pavilion makes this collaboration of even greater interest. Earlier I indicated that the uniqueness of the *mandapam* is defined by its ceiling. This ceiling presents an elaborate and intricate sculptural plan with an astronomical theme revolving around solar and lunar eclipses. In Indian ritual traditions lunar and solar eclipses are considered a time of great potential danger as well as power. Kings would offer large donations and aspirants would even seek to attain *Surya Loka* through self sacrifice.[4] This pavilion records as many as two lunar and two solar eclipses, possibly even more, through depictions of *nagas*, or serpents, approaching a lunar or solar disc (fig. 5). Such symbolic representations are known through the oral tradition to commemorate the occurrence of an eclipse. Other symbols have been found to occur on other similar pavilions and ceilings in temples in connection with eclipse depictions.[5]

The ground plan of four by six pillars divides the structure and the ceiling in a frontal porch and a raised platform with three wings or aisles. Each area has its own sculptural plan. The front porch has a central scene where a large lotus medallion is flanked by a *Purushamriga* (Indian Sphinx) and the saint Kanappa sacrificing his eye to the Shiva Linga (fig. 6). Further depictions to the east in this area include a large striped animal (possibly a tiger) chasing a small deer; a lunar eclipse (identifiable by the lunar sickle marked within the disc); a solar eclipse (where a *naga* approaches a disc); and a pair of fish facing each other. In the western section of the front porch we find reliefs of a Gandha Bherunda (two-headed eagle) and a scorpion with a human face flanking a small lotus medallion.

The reliefs on the ceiling covering the three aisles of the raised platform include depictions of a solar and a lunar eclipse (identifiable by the depiction of the lunar hare in the disc, fig. 5); a whale; a moray eel swallowing what could be a hare; some monkeys; (pairs of) fish; two turtles or tortoises; another human-faced scorpion; several lotus medallions; and a pair of *nagas* facing each other. The representation of Rahu, the demon who equals the ascending lunar node, further emphasizes the astronomical symbolism (fig. 7).

Since our discovery of this eclipse *mandapam* on the East Coast Road we have identified many similar pavilions. The sculptural program of these pavilions confirms a connection between depictions of eclipses through *nagas* chasing discs, and symbols such as (pairs of) fish, turtles or tortoises, *makaras* (mythical fish with elephant trunks) and whales, lotus medallions, and others. These pavilions were constructed in religiously inspired complexes that included the combination of a pavilion (usually with a raised floor, consisting of lay-outs of four by four or four by six pillars), a Ganesha temple, and a constructed *tirtha* (sacred pond) or sometimes a river.

We can conclude this small *mandapam* on what is today the East Coast Road (ECR) along the Coromandel Coast was originally intended for a ritual role related to the occurrence of eclipses. Probably a series of lunar and solar eclipses that would have been considered to be of some special significance.

The accurate prediction and ritual celebration of lunar and solar eclipses has been of prime importance in the calculation of sacred time in India. The discovery of many such eclipse related pavilions in the landscape of Southern India, that can be dated to the Nayaka period on the basis of their reliefs and structural design, underlines this. What makes this pavilion unique is the inclusion of two Westerners among the depicted donors.

Eclipses can be accurately dated, and are sufficiently rare to make a probable dating possible. And the VOC kept good track of the personnel that was stationed in the various trading posts and their movements. It should be possible to connect the eclipses for which this pavilion would have been constructed with the VOC staff present during that time in Sadras. This would make it possible to come up with a possible identification of the two people portrayed here as donor.

On the NASA website we can calculate the occurrence of eclipses for a particular spot on earth.[6] The generated list for the location of the pavilion on the ECR offers only one clear total solar eclipse for the two centuries between 1612 and 1800. In 1680 a total eclipse occurred on the 30th of march. Moreover, in 1676 (11 June) and 1688 (30 April) solar eclipses that were 80% total occurred as well. In 1687 (5 November) another solar eclipse occurred that was 50% total. Total lunar eclipses in that period occurred in 1675, twice in 1682, and once more in 1685. No other significant eclipse phenomena with such a high profile can be found for this location in the period 1612-1800.

The details of the dress of the two Western donors also point towards this era. Particularly the cocked hat, or *tricorne*, on the man with the sword indicates the timeframe. It evolved from the broad-brim hat of Spanish soldiers in the Eighty Years' War. By binding the brims it obtained a triangular shape called 'tri-corne'. The hat depicted here is broad brimmed and has been bounded at the front. This type of hat was especially popular for military wear all during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The question before us is, who could these two VOC officers who joined this astronomically inspired project as donors be? Could we find any references to the eclipses among VOC archives? The avid interest in scientific subjects among many of the VOC personnel is well documented. Could we also find these eclipses documented through references in personal reports? It must be emphasized that the VOC strictly forbade any participation in local religion. So this is all quite mysterious. We have been fascinated by these questions ever since we one day stopped our car and stepped into this pavilion on the East Coast Road. I am still pursuing the answer. My next stop is the VOC archives. And who knows, to be continued …

Liesbeth Bennink combined her history study at the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht (The Netherlands) with her training as Bharata Natyam dancer. Seeking a deeper understanding and knowledge of Indian dance in the context of the ancient traditions in which it is rooted she found a scholar and master who could open up this world to her in the person of Raja Deekshithar. He was also a member of the traditional community who are the custodians of the Shiva Nataraja temple in Chidambaram, India. Raja and Liesbeth commenced a cooperation that lasted for many years and only ended with Raja's sudden death in 2010.

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6 http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html. With my sincere acknowledgement and thanks to Mr. Fred Espenak of the NASA Eclipse website where all this information has been made available, and to NASA in general for allowing the copyright free use of its maps and images.

6.

7.

Of Spices & Botany, Sanskrit & Bollywood

"What other people has written its history in its art?" wrote the nineteenth-century critic-politician Theophile Thore, about the Dutch. Quoting him, Simon Schama, in his Introduction to *The Embarrassment of Riches,* points out that "the quality of social document inherent in much of Dutch art does indeed make it an irresistible source for the cultural historian."[1] If one has to tap that source, then the best place to visit is the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It is a veritable treasure-trove, housing more than two thousand Dutch master-pieces from the 17th century, the Dutch Golden Age. Some are more celebrated than others, making it into the popular museum 'Guidebook', whilst there are several that are neither acclaimed nor popular, yet which remain arresting nevertheless. Hendrik van Schuylenburg's 1665 painting *The Trading Post of the Dutch East India Company in Hooghly, Bengal,* is one such example.[2]

Rituparna Roy
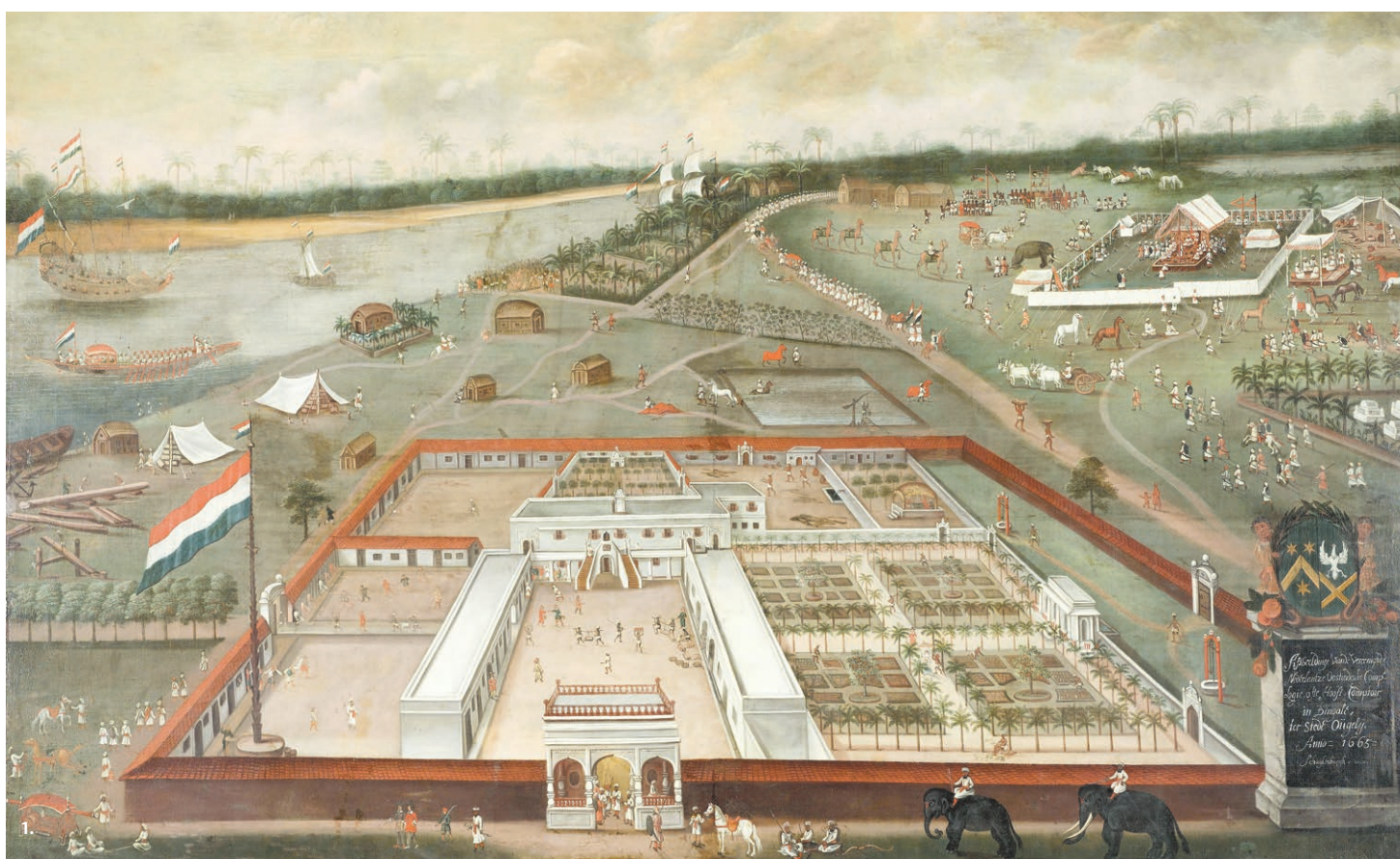
VOC: point of first contact

Trade was what made Amsterdam great, and this canvas – which happens to be one of the biggest paintings in the museum – is but a small representative of the people and places that could make that possible, India being one of them. It is testament to the maritime trade of the United Dutch East India Company, or VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), that was established in 1602, and encapsulates a very important chapter of the four centuries' old Indo-Dutch connection.

However, it was not only the Dutch who recorded their presence in India. Indian artists, too, shared in the enterprise. The Rajput painting *Maharana Sangram Singh of Udaipur enter-taining members of the Dutch East India Company led by Johan Josua Ketelaar* (c. 1711) is proof of that. Taken together, these pieces – one showing a coastal settlement, and the other a diplomatic meeting – illustrate important facets of the trade relationship between India and Holland in the 17th century.

India was one of the cornerstones in the all-Asia trading system that the VOC had developed during the 17th and 18th centuries. From here they exported pepper, cotton cloth, silk, opium and a host of other goods; and imported spices from the Moluccas, silver from Japan, and some European goods. Though this trading relationship with India did not evolve into a colonial relationship as was the case in Indonesia, it was undoubtedly important – especially along the coasts of (the modern Indian federal states of) Gujarat, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. In Bengal, for instance, thousands of weavers depended upon the VOC demand for cotton and silk; in Kerala, the VOC played a significant role in the politics of the day; and in Gujarat, it established itself as the largest foreign trader at a time of stiff competition from other trading companies.[3]

Company officials and cultural ties: Ketelaar, Drakenstein, and Haafner

The collapse of the VOC at the end of the eighteenth century marked the end of the formal Dutch presence in India. All that seemingly remained were factories, forts, churches, cemeteries and some garrisons. Seemingly, but not quite. For, though the relationship between India and the Netherlands started with trade, no doubt, it was later continued in other spheres. In fact, even *at* the time that the VOC was a strong presence in India, trade was not *all* that happened. As is so common in East-West encounters, trade actually became a starting point for eventual cultural ties. And this mostly happened through the conduit of Company officials.

In the case of the VOC in India, the first such figure was Johan Josua Ketelaar (1659-1718) mentioned in the Rajput painting above. He was a native of Poland, and an envoy of the Dutch East India Company in India. But apart from being a diplomat, he was also a scholar, and is today chiefly remembered for writing the oldest Hindi grammar, in Dutch in 1698. Interestingly, his seminal work was never published, and was, until the 1930s, considered to have been lost. There are now only three surviving copies of the manuscript, of which one lies in the state archives of The Hague.

Ketelaar was the first in a line of very distinguished VOC officials who used their time in the Company to increase the know-ledge of and understanding about the foreign lands in which they were stationed. After Ketelaar, Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede tot Drakenstein (1636-1691), a Utrecht nobleman, deserves special mention. As a VOC commander, Drakenstein compiled a series of books on the flora of Malabar (present federal State of Kerala), which were published between 1678-1703, under the title of *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus, Continents Regni Malabarici apud Indos celeberrimi omnis generis Plantas rariores,* usually referred to as just *Hortus Malabaricus.*

Hortus Malabaricus has become famous in the history of botany for various reasons – because of its ample size of twelve folio volumes, its detailed descriptions of plants, and its magnificently produced engravings; for the fascinating account of its genesis (which Drakenstein himself described in the preface to the third volume); but most importantly, for being one of Linnaeus' main resources for his knowledge of the tropical flora of Asia. Drakenstein's work was, and still is, consulted by taxonomists in their cultural studies of Linnaean species.[4] Drakenstein is usually discussed alongside his contemporaries and fellow-servants of the Company: the Ceylon botanist Pau Hermann and the Ambon naturalist Georg Everhard Rumphius. The three men laid the foundations for Dutch knowledge of the tropical flora of Asia.

Quite contrary to Ketelaar and Drakenstein's experiences as VOC officials, Jacob Gotfried Haafner (1755-1809), "witnessed the Dutch East India Company's death agony and demise." Haafner was German by birth, and quite early in life joined his surgeon father in the service of the VOC. While in India (in the 1780s and 90s) he served as a clerk of the Company, and later as a trader in Calcutta. He wrote proficiently during this time and produced a whole series of books about his adventures in late 18th century Malabar and Ceylon. During his lifetime, he published two travel stories on India, of which the two-volume *Travels in a Palanquin* is his key work. His biographer, Paul van der Velde says: "His direct, catchy way of writing and his adventurous life made him one of the most popular writers of the beginning of the 19th century in Holland. His books remain attractive to this very day … because of its lively descriptions of everyday life in the tropics."[5]

Four centuries of Indo-Dutch connection


3.

Smitten by ancient India: Sanskrit & monuments

After the collapse of the VOC, Indo-Dutch relations entered a whole new phase in the second half of the 19th century, starting with the establishment of the 'Sanskrit Chair' at Leiden University. This would have far-reaching consequences for future scholarly contact between the two countries, and its impact would continue well into the 21st century. This next phase of Indo-Dutch relations was significantly different from what had come before. The importance of 'spice and botany' in the trade/colonial phase of the Indo-Dutch connection had a kind of historical inevitability to it; given the moment in history, these were the most likely (or probably, only) possibilities of interaction. The whole trading enterprise of the Dutch in the 17th century began, after all, with the search for spice;[6] and botany, too, was part of a wider European interest in the natural sciences. Hence, what the Dutch officials did in these respects was nothing unique.

But the 'second wave' of Dutch officials in India brought the quality of *selfless scholarship* to their efforts to *understand* the sub-continent. The imperial logic, (i.e., the logic of colonizers to know more about the colonized in order to dominate them, which was the whole project of Orientalism according to Edward Said) no longer applied to the Dutch in India during the next, and more scholarly, phase. These extraordinary 19th and 20th century Dutch scholars worked with a totally different set of ideals, even though they were still placed within the British colonial framework.

One of these 'scholars extraordinaire' was Johan Hendrik Caspar Kern (1833-1917), who was the first to be appointed to the Chair of Sanskrit at Leiden University (in 1865). This happened shortly after his teaching stint in India, where he taught Sanskrit at Brahmana and Queen's Colleges in Benares (Varanasi), from 1863-1865. Kern was to teach at Leiden for almost four decades until his retirement in 1903. Together with Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk, he is regarded as one of the founding fathers of Oriental Studies in the Netherlands.

Kern's pioneering work would already have been sufficient, yet his real fame was ensured when two prominent Dutch archaeologists – Prof. Jean Philippe Vogel (1871-1958) and Nicolaas Johannes Krom (1883-1945) – decided to name an institute after him. Vogel and Krom founded 'The Kern Institute Association' in December 1924. The new institute was created to become Europe's first educational and research centre for Indian archaeology "in its widest possible sense," i.e., for the study of the antiquities of the Indian subcontinent and its sphere of influence in Southeast and Central Asia, as well as the study of the ancient history of these countries, the history of their arts, their epigraphy and numismatics.

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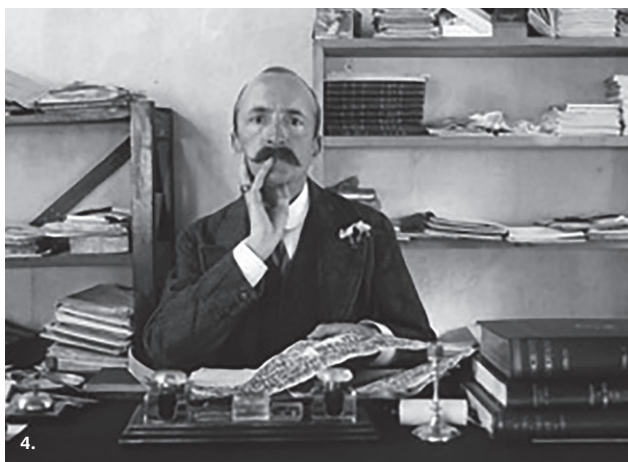
Jean Philippe Vogel (1871-1958) was an active archaeologist in India for more than a decade. As the art historian Gerda Theuns-de Boer says in *A Vision of Splendour: Indian Heritage in the Photographs of Jean Philippe Vogel, 1901-13:* "If it weren't for Vogel's years at the A.S.I. [Archaeological Survey of India], the Kern Institute would never have been founded – it grew out of a wonderful Netherlands-India archaeological cross-fertilization."[7] In the course of his 12 years at A.S.I. (1901-1912), Vogel had helped formulate the leading principles of monument care in India, been instrumental in increasing the number of protected monuments in the subcontinent, and had contributed to a growing awareness of and appreciation for the Indian heritage. Most importantly, he had excavated some of the main sites of Buddhism and Jainism and had carried out an in-depth epigraphical-archaeological study in Chamba.[8]

Back in the Netherlands, Vogel was fortunate to come across Krom. Krom was the first director of the Archaeological Service of the Netherlands East Indies, and shared both Vogel's passion for archaeology and vision about the institute they co-founded. In the initial years, both Vogel and Krom gave full priority to the acquisition of research materials, and through their efforts, the Kern Institute became a repository for books, manuscripts, lithographs, photographs and epigraphic rubbings. The acquisition of manuscripts for the Kern Institute reached its peak in 1928, when Tibetologist Johan van Manen added 380 manuscripts to the collection.

Johan van Manen (1877-1943) had a strong India connection, having spent half his lifetime in India – first in Madras and then Calcutta. In the words of his biographer, Peter Richardus, his was "a remarkable walk through life, which led from behind Dutch dikes to Himalayan heights." Initially, it was theosophy that bridged this expanse. In his youth, van Manen had become an active member of the theosophical movement, which introduced elements of both Hinduism and Buddhism to the public in the West. As private secretary to Charles W. Leadbeater, the ideologist of modern theosophy, van Manen set off for the Theosophical Society's International Headquarters at Adyar near Madras, where he officiated for six years (1910-1916) as an Assistant Director of the Adyar Library. The next phase of his life in India started when he then settled in the Darjeeling District of Bengal in order to dedicate himself to Tibetology, in which he had developed a great interest, with the assistance of native tutors. Van Manen later moved to Calcutta, where he successively held several important posts – first in the Imperial Library (1919-1921); then in the Indian Museum (1922); and finally, the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, to which he was elected General Secretary in 1923 and served until 1939.[9]

Diplomatic relations since 1947

From the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, the nature of the contact between India and the Netherlands had been primarily academic and cultural. However, diplomatic relations between the two countries entered a new era after India became independent in 1947. Their relation of six decades since then can be divided broadly into three periods: from 1947-62; the 1960s and 70s; and from the 1980s to the present time.

Indo-Dutch relations between 1947 and 1962 were generally distant and subdued. During this period both countries were busy recovering from their respective traumatic experiences, India from the partition of the country and the Netherlands from the ravages of the Second World War; consolidating their economies and rebuilding their respective institutions. During this period, whenever India faced a natural calamity or any other emergency, the Dutch lent India generous and spontaneous support.

The next phase of the relations between the two countries started in 1962, when the Netherlands joined the 'Aid India' consortium of countries and India became the first, and in time, the largest recipient of Dutch development assistance. In the 1970s, the Dutch chose to concentrate on a few development projects, which were valuable for India and for which Dutch resources and expertise could make a difference. The Dutch development co-operation projects in the states of Gujarat and Kerala are noteworthy in this regard.

The 1980s turned out to be a very fruitful period and was characterized by a number of high profile visits between India and the Netherlands. The Dutch Prince Claus visited India in 1981; Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, then Prime Minister of India, visited the Netherlands in October 1985; Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and Prince Claus visited India in January 1986; Mr. Ruud Lubbers, then Prime Minister of the Netherlands, paid a visit to India in March 1987; and then President of India,

Mr. Venkataraman, visited the Netherlands in October 1988. As a direct result of these and other intensive consultations, a number of important agreements between the two countries were signed – and this, in turn, increased the interaction between the two countries substantially.

Indians in the Netherlands

Ever since the inception of diplomatic relations in the middle of the 20th century, the Netherlands has been home to a sizable immigrant population from India. From 1950, an estimated 20,000 Indians have settled in the Netherlands. They are active in various professions and businesses – of late, particularly in the IT sector. In addition to the Indian population, there are about 150,000 persons of Indian origin who came to the Netherlands from Surinam, which was once a Dutch colony. They are Dutch citizens whose ancestors were taken from India to Surinam as indentured labourers, and have thus strong cultural bonds with India.

There has always been an active interest in Indian art and culture in the Netherlands and there are, in fact, several institutes of Indian music and dance in the country. Indian food is also popular with the Dutch, attested by the fact that there are more than 100 Indian restaurants in the Netherlands. In recent years, India has also become a popular tourist destination for Dutch people. However, the Indian cultural artefact that has most caught the imagination in the last few years is Bollywood. In this, it no doubt reflects a global trend, but the hosting of the IFFA Awards in Amsterdam in 2005 was also a contributory factor in garnering greater interest in Hindi films.

The first decade of the new millennium, in fact, saw several new things happen on the Indo-Dutch cultural front. The Amsterdam India Festival of 2008, which was the largest celebration of Indian art and culture in Amsterdam, deserves special mention. It was followed soon after by the creation of an 'India Chair' at Leiden University, by the ICC; and the inauguration of the Gandhi Centre in The Hague in 2012 after a year-long commemoration of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's 150th birth anniversary in the country.

The Indo-Dutch connection has come a long way from the trading of spices and cloth in the 17th century. Their association has embraced a wide range of culture since then, and it is hoped that the two nations will continue to forge many more ways of understanding, exchange and cooperation in the future.

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3 The most recent book to come out on the subject is Bauke Van Der Pol's *The Dutch East India Company in India: A heritage tour through Gujarat, Malabar, Coromandel and Bengal.* The launch of the book in India last year coincided with two significant initiatives, in two states where the Dutch had had a presence: the launch of the website 'The Dutch in Chinsurah', an initiative of the Digital Humanities Department of the Presidency University of Kolkata, West Bengal; and the digitisation and preservation of the Dutch records in the Tamil Nadu Archives. The latter initiative was funded by the Dutch Government.
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Return or circular migration?

Japanese Brazilians traveling from Brazil to Japan constitute an interesting example of return migration, involving descendants of former Japanese migrants who belonged to a diaspora that was established in the past. Even after several generations the descendants' identity is still primarily characterised by the preservation of elements that relate to their original Japanese heritage. Since 1990, following the reform of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in Japan, thousands of Japanese Brazilians were legally allowed to live and work in the country of their ancestors. In less than two decades, Japanese Brazilians became the third largest group of migrants in Japan, a status they would keep until 2007; the financial crisis of 2008 brought it to a halt. The drastic decline that followed shows that for the large majority of these return migrants the concept of 'return' has lost its significance.

Ingrid Van Rompay-Bartels

The Japanese migration to Brazil

From 1908 until the beginning of the 1970s Brazil was an important destination for Japanese migrants, and became the country outside Japan with the highest number of Japanese descendants in the world. The Japanese migration to Brazil has known different phases and different geographical concentrations. Many Japanese settled in the São Paulo province, and a smaller number settled at later stages in other regions, such as Paraná, Mato Grosso, Rio de Janeiro, and Pará. (fig. 1)

The migrants, mostly farmers, came to Brazil intending to stay for a short period of time, dreaming to go back to Japan with wealth. However, because of the difficulties they faced, slow returns on their agricultural investments, and the economic situation in Japan after losing World War II, the hope of return vanished for many Japanese. At the same time, a rising number of Nisei (second generation) succeeded in finding a way to settle in Brazil permanently and to adapt to Brazilian culture.[1] In fact, among today's second to fourth generations of descendants of Japanese immigrants, most are fluent only in Portuguese. Even though they still sustain ties that reflect their Japanese heritage, most are not familiar with the Japanese society and culture.[2]

Return migration

The return migration to Japan started in the 1980s. Brazil was suffering a severe economic crisis, political instability and hyperinflation, while Japan was enjoying a strong economic growth, an abundance of wealth, and a rising demand for unskilled labor. As a result, the country saw an influx of illegal foreign workers.[3] Japan's politicians responded to this situation with a new policy in the 1990 revision of the Japanese Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. With this amended law the government gave preference to ethnic return migration of the *Nikkei* (descendants of Japanese who are born and raised outside Japan). The law made it possible for second and third generation Japanese Brazilians, and their non-*nikkei* spouses and children, to obtain legal status in Japan, allowing them to stay up to three years with unlimited access to labor markets and with the possibility to renew their visas.[4] As a result Brazil, which had the largest number of Japanese immigrants and descendants overseas, started to see a dynamic inversion in the migration flows between the two countries.

The Japanese Brazilian migrants

For many Japanese Brazilians who migrated to Japan in 1990s, the motivation was based on a combination of factors, mostly related to the economic crisis in Brazil. This crisis affected the Japanese Brazilians belonging to the Brazilian middle and lower-middle class; their standard of life decreased and their expectations for the future vanished, regardless of their level of education. The lack of better prospects in Brazil

led to a situation of social and economic deprivation as well as estrangement, forcing people to leave the country and to find better opportunities elsewhere.

Most migrants, when they embarked for Japan in the 1990s, were well aware of the work and life situation that they were going to encounter as *dekasegi* (temporary workers) in Japan, about which they had been informed by their social network and intermediary agencies.[5] Their decisions were based on the calculation that they would earn more doing manual work in Japan than if they would stay in Brazil continuing their studies or jobs.[6] No wonder that, given the dire economic situation and political instability in Brazil, many Japanese Brazilians seized the opportunity to migrate.

The role of intermediary agencies

The Japanese Brazilians could rely on the intermediary agencies in Brazil to find temporary work and housing in Japan even before leaving the country. Once in Japan, most of them were contracted by the intermediary agencies, allowing Japanese firms to 'indirectly' recruit the migrants. The intermediary agencies support the migrants, and non-*nikkei* spouses, with work related issues and with problems arising in their daily lives in Japan, facilitating migrants to live and work in Japan without any command of the Japanese language. This indirect employment system has put the migrants in a vulnerable position allowing the Japanese firms to easily dismiss them as contract workers.

Despite the fact that most Japanese-Brazilian migrants had a short-term strategy when they first arrived in Japan, most of them, in particular those with families, did not succeed in earning the estimated amount of money in a short time, and to go back to Brazil. Due to their extended stay, many migrants started a family in Japan, thus creating a second generation of Japanese Brazilians born in Japan. Others became involved in a pendular movement between the two countries, returning to Brazil and coming back to Japan after a couple of years in Brazil.

The challenge of temporary migration

Migration means change. It affects the family structure and determines the future of successive generations of migrants. This is particularly the case when parents, who have a short-term strategy, are faced with the dilemma of choosing an education for their children. Japanese Brazilians have four options. One strategy is to send the children to a school in Brazil, where they are furthermore socially educated by family members, and thus become intimately familiar with the Brazilian language and culture. It appears that most of the parents who make this choice do not speak Japanese and do not intend to stay in Japan much longer. The other three options are situated inside Japan, namely, the Brazilian school, the Japanese public school, or no school at all.

Above: Japanese-Brazilians and non-Nikkei spouses during the World Cup in 2002. (Picture in Japan). Source: IPC World.

Despite the fact that the Brazilian schools in Japan are relatively expensive for the parents, not always easily accessible, and of doubtful quality due to their lack of resources, a number of parents do make this choice. Most of them are aware of this somewhat problematic situation, but they hold on to their dream of returning to Brazil and see their stay in Japan as temporary, while they continue to save money for their future in Brazil. Another reason why parents choose this option is that they feel their children cannot integrate well into the Japanese school system (see below).

However, most parents opt for the Japanese public schools, even if the children have already started their primary education in the Brazilian school system. The main reason for choosing the Japanese school system is the lower price and better quality, as well as the closer proximity to home. Some parents claim, however, that the decision for a Japanese school is related to the uncertainty about the future, as they still do not know whether the family will or will not stay in Japan. In the case of a future return to Brazil, they assume that their children will be able to adapt again to the Brazilian school system.

The difficulties of the second generation of migrants

The migrant children, some of whom started school at a late age, are at a disadvantage due to the absence of a basic familiarity with the Japanese language and culture. This shortcoming leads to problems such as alienation, marginalization and bullying, and, as a result, to a greater risk of dropout. Dropouts generally end up as the new generation of unskilled laborers in the factories.[7]

Finding a solution for these problems requires looking inside the family context of these children as well as into the schools. It turns out that most of these parents are not able to offer the necessary assistance to their children in the Japanese school. The reasons are their busy work schedule, deficient linguistic skills, and lack of familiarity with the Japanese education. Moreover, the education of the second generation of Japanese-Brazilian migrants becomes even more complicated when parents turn out to have expectations that are not compatible with the reality of the children. The parents expect the children to learn Japanese easily, as in their eyes they speak the language well. But they do not realize that speaking the Japanese language does not mean that the children have the same fluency in writing and reading. In the Japanese educational system, Japanese language proficiency is a challenge for the second generation of Japanese Brazilians. It has to be understood that the functional literacy that students should reach by high school corresponds to 2,136 characters (jōyō kanji). Part of the challenge is also the fact that Japanese schools are not well prepared to deal appropriately with the integration of children of Japanese-Brazilian migrants.[8]

The case of the Japanese Brazilians

It appears that the younger the children are when they enroll in the Japanese school, the better their chances are to integrate in the system and the more fluent they will be in Japanese. However, differences in cultural baggage and appearance have a significant impact on the integration as well. It is obvious that the process of integration is less difficult for migrant children who do not have conflicts concerning their identity. These are the children who have a Japanese appearance and a Japanese name and who master the Japanese language as their mother tongue. The way these migrant children act indicates that the focus of their identity construction is the Japanese society. Most of these second-generation migrants deliberately transcend the cultural differences that are associated with Brazilian culture. Children of families with only one parent of Japanese descent and children with foreign names do not have this option. In response, they will develop a strong awareness that they are different from the Japanese and are *gaikokujin* (foreigners). These children experience serious difficulties in their attempt to integrate into the Japanese school system. They are more likely to develop conflicts around their identity, mainly because of how they look and because of cultural differences.

It is still unclear how the future of this group of second-generation migrants will shape itself in Japan. Regardless of their outward appearance and culture, attending a Japanese school does not guarantee future success or an effective learning process, since retaking a class after failure is not an option in Japan until middle school. The future of these second-generation children will depend on how they develop their spoken language skills and, even more so, on their ability in writing and reading. Only when they fully master the language will this second generation be sufficiently equipped to compete with their Japanese peers.

Return or circular migrants
Migrants deploy different strategies that ultimately lead to either a permanent establishment in Japan or a decision to return temporarily or permanently to Brazil. A small proportion of Japanese-Brazilian migrants show clear signs of a more permanent residence in Japan, such as the purchase of their own house. These are the migrants who develop a certain degree of affinity with Japanese culture or who have been successful in adapting to life in Japan. They are the ones who have a positive perception of their life in Japan, even though most of them have remained in low-skilled jobs. They also have the expectation that Japan will offer better opportunities in the future for themselves and for their children.

However, for the many families who have opted for the education of children in the Brazilian private schools or in schools in Brazil, or even for a couple of years in the Japanese school, it still is a temporary migration. Their going back and forth between Japan and Brazil is characteristic of circular migration.

The world crisis and the circular migration
The financial crisis of 2008 marked the end of the peak of Japanese-Brazilian migration to Japan. Prior to the crisis, the number of migrants from Brazil had increased from 56,429 in 1990 to 316,967 in 2007. Starting in 2008 it declined every year – to 177,953 in June 2014 (fig. 2). The drastic decline involves a number of migrants who only had a short-term strategy anyway, but also includes Japanese Brazilians and their non-*nikkei* spouses who felt compelled to go back to Brazil despite their intentions to permanently settle in Japan.

Most of the temporary work in the manufacturing industry had been carried out by migrants contracted by intermediary agencies.[9] Despite their structurally vulnerable position as temporary contract workers, employment opportunities were plentiful until the world crisis hit Japan in 2008. As a result of the economic downturn the demand for manufactured products drastically decreased and these workers were the first to be dismissed.[10] After being laid off, many had no prospect of finding a new job. Due to the drop in demand, many intermediary agencies went bankrupt. Unexpectedly, many migrants found themselves in a desperate situation, as they lost their support (intermediary agencies), their jobs, and the hope of a better future in Japan.[11]

In response to the growing unemployment and problems among the migrants in Japan, the Japanese government worked out a plan for the *Nikkei* migrants and their non-*Nikkei* spouses who were willing to return to 'their' country. According to this plan, each Japanese Brazilian adult receives 300,000 yen (approximately US$3000) and each non-Nikkei spouse and each dependent receives 200,000 yen (US$2000) for the purchase of a one-way ticket to Brazil.[12] The migrants who accept this plan are not allowed to return to Japan, unless they receive explicit permission from the Japanese government.

Between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010, just over 20 thousand migrants from Brazil accepted the financial compensation to leave Japan. Since the crisis hit Japan, an additional 120 thousand Japanese-Brazilians and non-Nikkei spouses have left the country voluntarily, without the aid of this plan.

Conclusion
The Japanese-Brazilian migrants constitute a heterogeneous group and this heterogeneity affects the diverse intrinsic motivations and the many different facets that characterise their lives. For many Japanese Brazilians migration is a temporary transnational experience. This is particularly the case for those migrant families who invest in Brazilian education for their children in Japan, families who indicate their intention to return to Brazil after their children graduate from Japanese school and reach adulthood, or families who send their children to Brazil for education. For many of these migrants the initial goal of their temporary migration has not changed, only the period of their stay has been extended, mainly due to their family context and to the fact that they needed more time than anticipated to realise their plans.

The world financial crisis marked the end of the peak of the number of Japanese-Brazilian migrants and their non-Nikkei spouses in Japan. Since then, the wage difference between Japan and Brazil has become smaller. Moreover, high costs of life in Japan make it difficult to save extra money in Japan. Therefore, the motivation to prolong their stay in Japan disappears for many migrants *(dekasegi)* who came with the objective to accumulate capital and then migrate back to Brazil.

Of those who have remained in Japan, a number have obtained a permanent contract, even when this means that they continue to be employed as unskilled factory workers. In their eyes, they have found a stable financial situation and life with their children in Japan, even though it is not rare to hear that many still plan to retire in Brazil. For others, the permanent contract has come to symbolize the dream of achieving a better life in Japan. The permanent contract allows the migrants to get a mortgage to buy their own house. With their savings of years of hard work, these families are able to leave their small rented apartments and realize the dream of home ownership in Japan.

However, a significant number of Japanese Brazilians in Japan are still struggling in the search for a better life, wherever it may be, Japan or Brazil. Such cases remind us that the migration back and forth between the two countries can go on beyond the first generation of these migrants.

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Fig 1: Japanese residents in Brazil 1920-2000 Source: IBGE, Censo Demográfico 1920/2000[13]

	1920	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1991	2000
Brazil (i)	27976	144523	129192	155982	158087	139480	85571	70932
Pará	3	467	421	1216	3597	3046	1703	1790
Minas Gerais	1923	893	917	2964	1353	1923	1244	1088
Rio de Janeiro	313	918	1478	1794	2782	3949	1808	1801
São Paulo	24435	132216	108912	115752	119338	105196	63865	51445
Paraná	701	8064	15393	28158	21528	15771	9960	7994
Mato Grosso (ii)	510	1128	1172	4940	4025	2975	2290	1816

Including the Japanese-born naturalized in Brazil. Micro data from the respective censuses have been used since 1960. (i) Except dwellers of the Serra dos Aimorés area, a territory in dispute between the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo. (ii) Data of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul for years 1970-2000 have been aggregated. In *Resistance & integration: 100 years of Japanese immigration in Brazil* (2008).

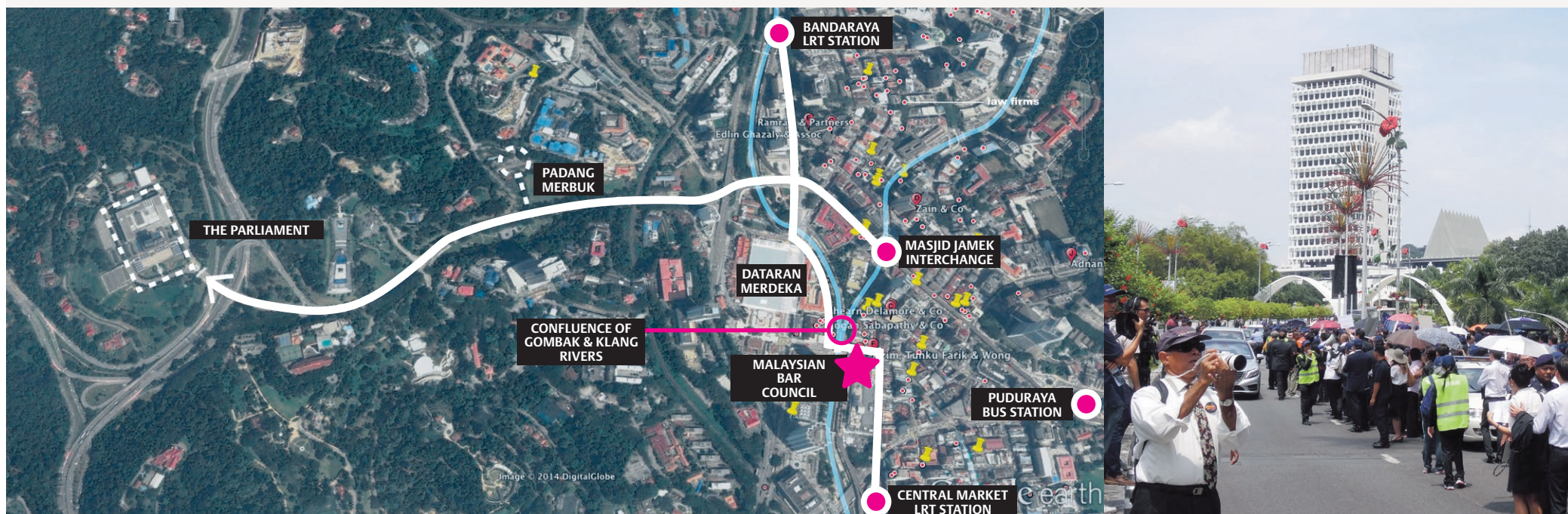Fig 2: Number of registered Brazilians in Japan 1988 - June 2014
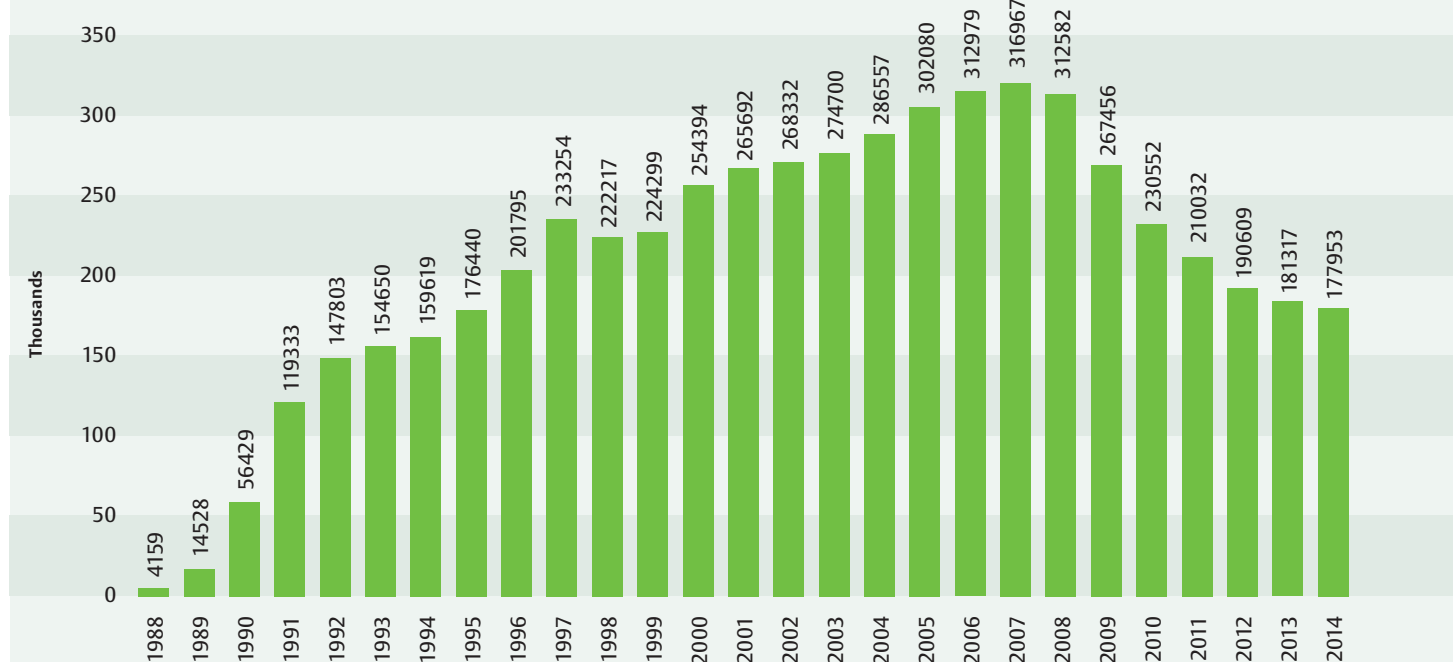
Source: Ministry of Justice of Japan

Protest and public space in Kuala Lumpur

'Mansuh! Mansuh! Akta Hasutan!' (Repeal! Repeal! The Sedition Act!) chanted the lawyers marching towards the Parliament in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 16 October 2014. This protest, organised by the Bar Council, was one of the latest events since the 2007 Bersih rally kick-started a renewed protest culture in Malaysia. Most of these protests happened in the streets of Kuala Lumpur, even though since 1998, most government functions have moved twenty-five kilometres away to Putrajaya, a purpose-built administrative capital built in the heyday of the mega-projects of the 1990s. Despite this, the wide boulevards of Putrajaya remain relatively bereft of public claim-making acts, save for a few protests now and then.

Nurul Azlan

Above left: A map illustrating the lawyers' Walk of Freedom on 16 October 2014, in Kuala Lumpur. Note how close the Parliament building is to the city centre.

Above right: The lawyers in front of the Malaysian Parliament building. Post-independence structure of national importance adopted Modernist architecture free from referencing other cultures. Putrajaya later reverted by referencing Middle Eastern architecture to portray Islam.

The world's first Intelligent Garden City

Political protests aimed clearly at particular authorities customarily take place where the authorities in question are. This is why protests take place in front of the White House or No. 10 Downing Street. In the Netherlands, which also has two 'capitals' like Malaysia, protests happen equally in The Hague, the seat of government and also in Amsterdam, the commercial capital, depending on the cause. Not so in Malaysia, where Putrajaya hardly ever invites those wishing to demonstrate. In this instance, the case of Putrajaya is more similar to that of Brasilia, the capital Brazil designed and built from scratch. Protests in Brazil also happen mostly in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paolo, and not in the Modernist capital of Brasilia.

An instant city built over the span of ten years, Putrajaya prides itself as the world's first Intelligent Garden City, claiming on its website that it advances Ebenezer Howard's concept of the 'garden city'. Just like Brasilia, Putrajaya is typically Modernist: the programs are separated accordingly in different precincts, and as an antidote to the notorious congestion of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya was planned with ease of driving (but not mass transit) in mind, hence a network of wide roads connecting the precincts. The centre of Putrajaya, a hundred metre wide boulevard, is lined with grand buildings which house ministries and government departments. A series of squares, or nodes, are placed intermittently along this strong axis, marking the importance of the Palace of Justice, the Ministry of Finance and finally the Prime Minister's Office Complex, which is preceded by Dataran Putra (Putra Square). An overcrowded mall, away from the boulevard, becomes a focal point of convergence for those living in Putrajaya, and the public transport interchange is situated on the outskirts of the city, serving both Putrajaya and its equally desolate neighbour Cyberjaya, once envisioned to be Malaysia's version of the Silicon Valley.

Activists and protesters in Malaysia informed me that even though the government sits there, Putrajaya is not the preferred location for protest because of the lack of accessibility, the single use of government functions, and also the coarse urban fabric of huge and ill-defined open spaces, made worse by the lack of shady trees. Dataran Putra is not really a square in the conventional sense, as its perimeters and form are not defined by the structures enclosing it, unlike Dataran Merdeka (Independence Square) in Kuala Lumpur which functions more like an outdoor room. The huge square, with its intricate Middle Eastern patterns, is best appreciated from above, but the quality of urban spaces is better measured at pedestrian level. A huge volume of people would be needed to fill in the spaces for the image to be impactful, and the logistics of moving a huge number of people to a place not accessible by public transportation is problematic, not to mention conspicuous. The single use program also means that before and after protest, protesters would not have anywhere to go for respite and refreshments. During protest, should a clash happen, the big wide spaces make it more difficult to escape and hide from the authorities.

The difficulty to protest there, and the fact that Putrajaya claims to be an Intelligent City, brings us to the current debate of the Smart Cities concept, where the drive to be efficient should not turn us into an Orwellian society. This analysis of high-tech surveillance to anticipate and avoid public disorder, however, does not apply to Putrajaya, which has managed to do it through town planning and with low-tech means.

Kuala Lumpur, the old capital

On the other hand, out-of-town protesters could take the night bus to Kuala Lumpur, arrive the next morning, do other activities while melting into the city crowd, attend the protest, get refreshments post-protest, and then take the night bus back to wherever they came from. Or they could stay in one of the many hotels in central KL. Thus, the organisers are free to focus all their attention on the running of the rally itself. This is all possible due to the accessibility; the bus station is within the protest area, and central KL is well-served by rail and town bus transports; the mix of programs allowing for other activities before and after protest; the tight urban form allowing easy walking distance and the maze of backstreets for escape.

Kuala Lumpur grew organically from a mining town founded in the mid-19th century into the capital of Malaysia. The centre of activities in the early days was at the confluence of Gombak and Klang Rivers, and it was from these river banks that the city grew. Its tight urban form was shaped by the fine-grained blocks of mixed-use shop-houses, and this was matched by the imposing British administrative buildings arranged around the Padang, a staid rectangular square, made all the more imposing due to the contrast with the narrow streets of old Kuala Lumpur. The Padang, renamed Dataran Merdeka (Independence Square), is one of the contested spaces of protest in Kuala Lumpur, along with other spaces of national importance such as Stadium Merdeka (Independence Stadium) and the Parliament, where the recent Sedition Act protest took place.

This is despite the speedy rate at which shopping malls have taken over as 'public spaces' (I am using the term very loosely here) for people living in Malaysian main cities (on the ExpatgoMalaysia website you will find a list of top twenty shopping malls in Kuala Lumpur). In the controlled pseudo-urban environs of Publika, one of the newer shopping malls (it is on the list), you can even sample a slice of vibrant 'public space', albeit without the mess and friction you would get on a real street. But protest in a shopping mall, no matter how much it looks like your bog standard public space, is almost impossible due to the private nature of the place. In 2011, protesters who gathered in Suria KLCC, the shopping mall at the base of the Petronas twin towers (once the world's tallest building between 1998 and 2004, the towers are also part of the mega-projects of the 1990s) were met with threats of legal action by the management of the shopping mall, citing that the protest disrupted the business operations

of their tenants. Ironically, the protest, called Kill the Bill, was about the Peaceful Assembly Act, which as the name suggests, regulates public gatherings in Malaysia.

Meanwhile, in addition to serving as the theatre of dissent for political protests, the urban spaces of old Kuala Lumpur continue to thrive as new immigrants use them as public spaces. The socio-spatial patterns of Kuala Lumpur have changed, and in doing so, it remains unchanged by delivering its historic functions of hosting new immigrants.

Public space, public life

Prior to protesting in front of the Parliament in October 2014, the lawyers had held a similar protest in Putrajaya in 2007. The busses carrying them were blocked by the police a few kilometres away from the centre, and as a result, the lawyers had had to walk longer to reach the Palace of Justice. Compare this to the 2014 event, the meeting place at Padang Merbuk was only one kilometre away from both the Parliament and the closest rail station, and the Bar Council office and many law firms are in this area. In Malaysia's often scorching heat, this difference is crucial for a good turnout. During my fieldwork, I alighted at the Masjid Jamek LRT (Light Rail Transit) Station at 10am, and joined the black and white throng heading towards Padang Merbuk. Shortly before 3pm, I took the LRT to Suria KLCC, for another meeting.

Accessibility, mixed-use programs, and well-defined and comfortable urban spaces are also criteria that define a good public space, although the discourse on liveability is normally framed in the perpetuity of everyday life; living, working, playing, and shopping. The notion that the ideal space for protest is the same ideal space for other urban activities, further cements the role of protest as an integral part of public life. One might argue about the effectiveness of treating protest as a day-outing, as those in Kuala Lumpur seem to do, but the point of a political protest is to broadcast grievances via disruption of the everyday, hence gaining the attention of the authorities in question, and also to instil awareness and hopefully gain support from those watching on the side. Being able to do this is part of public life, and as it also has the same spatial requirements of other urban activities, should be treated as such. The availability of high quality urban spaces, where public roles could be played, should take precedence over the proliferation of shopping malls. Perhaps by going to the streets to protest, the trend of substituting public space for shopping malls will start to reverse, and hence, the role of the public will change again from being consumers to citizens. Perhaps, the picturesque and 'intelligent' urban spaces of Putrajaya will also become actual public spaces.

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Revolt or evolve?

There are many myths about Myanmar that make it difficult for people to fully understand what is happening in the country, and what lays ahead. Through a mixed-method approach, *Myanmar's Transition,* edited by Nick Cheesman, Monique Skidmore and Trevor Wilson, provides alternative ways to counterbalance some of the beliefs held about Myanmar.

Reviewer: Kai Chen
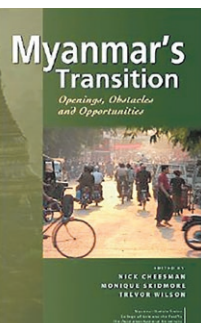
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Nick Cheesman, Monique Skidmore & Trevor Wilson. 2012. *Myanmar's Transition: Openings, Obstacles, and Opportunities,* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, ISBN 9789814414159

THIS COLLECTION OF ESSAYS features 7 thematic parts. In Parts I and 2, Monique Skidmore, Trevor Wilson and Thant Myint-U overview the historic transition in Myanmar, and outline the subsequent chapters. The next Part (chapters 3-6) covers the dynamics of Myanmar's politics following the 2010 elections: Richard Horsey asks if it will be a revolution or an evolution? Nicholas Farrelly discusses ethnic armed conflicts; Marie Lall and Hla Hla Win look at the concept of citizenship, and Renaud Egreteau explores Myanmar's gem trade with China.

In Part IV (chapters 7-9), Khin Maung Nyo, Sean Turnell and Tin Htut Oo examine the different aspects of the economic landscape in Myanmar. Part V evaluates the role of the media in counter-corruption and explores the perspective of the weekly news journals in Myanmar. The next Part (chapters 12-14) re-examines the critical challenges facing the rule of law in Myanmar (i.e., the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Tribunal), especially corruption. Finally, Part VII (chapters 15-18) focuses on the challenges facing international assistance and stakeholders (e.g., INGOs and the EU) in Myanmar, such as limited access and funding.

Different from many works on Myanmar, the editors of and contributors to this collection develop alternative opinions, which attempt to correct at least four myths about Myanmar in transition. First, there would be no lasting end to human rights abuses and skirmishes in Myanmar, while the ethnic-based militias still control sizable territories. Because no stakeholder could possibly bring the conflicting parties to understand each other's concerns and limits. Historically, the Myanmar military always operates above the law. Today, most members of Myanmar's current administration "are either former military officers or ministers from the

precious SPDC (State Peace and Development Council) regime" (p.139). Moreover, in many cases, security forces enjoy "impunity for human rights abuses carried out in the name of national security" (p.11). At the same time, the Myanmar government is unable to prevent the skirmishes between ethnic-based militias and the Burmese Army, especially in the border areas (e.g., Kachin State and Shan State), where there is "a mix of informal local autonomies with areas of government control" (p.30). With regard to Aung San Suu Kyi, although she is considered to be a "Burmese democracy icon" (p.127), and has called for a nationwide settlement of disputes, "it is far from clear that she will be able to contribute effectively to finding a solution unless all concerned can agree on a new strategy for this purpose" (p.9).

Second, it's increasingly hard to ignore the economic privatization in Myanmar, that is, "numerous state-owned enterprises under military control" (p.16). Few have realized that Myanmar's economic structure has been dominated by several large military economic corporations (e.g., Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings and Myanmar Economic Corporation) and private businesses operated by cronies, who were "able to influence some government decisions and regulations which benefited them monetarily"(p.122). Such a military-economic concoction is responsible for corruption and the distortion of national finances. For instance, the former military regime's cronies have been "receiving substantial transfers of state assets with little or no transparency" (p.16). Unfortunately, as yet no programme for removing this behemoth has been devised (p.17). As a result, many Burmese (especially relatively skilled workers) try to seek better paid jobs abroad, leading to "a scarcity of labour in Myanmar" (p.127). In addition, the contributors also notice that the Myanmar government has a "twofold purpose" in liberating the private media in Myanmar. On one hand, the government could persuade the pro-military journalists in the private media to coordinate public relations in favour of the government. On the other hand, the government would organize the pro-military journalists to deal with "its domestic and international rivals and critics" (p.192).

Third, the Western sanctions on Myanmar have been set back by the kin-based transnational networks on the Myanmar-China border, which are "consequently, extremely

Above:
Rangoon traffic.
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difficult to trace and control, for whoever aims to legally curb their activities" (p.105). In the case of the gem trade, it is increasingly based on transnational kinship networks, "with Myanmar and Chinese dealers having secured a quasi-monopoly" (p.107).

Fourth, in Myanmar, evolution is more likely (and more preferable) than revolution, which has "a rather violent and unsuccessful history in Myanmar" (p.50). As Sean Turnell argues, the current change in Myanmar "does not yet constitute a reform moment" (p.152). In an evolutionary context, it will be more likely to establish a mechanism through which a vulnerable population could voice their needs.

How to turn the present vicious cycle into a virtuous cycle? Urging the military elite or ethnic-based militias to abandon their vested interests would be no different than asking a tiger for its skin. Tin Htut Oo believes that it will be essential to turn to "an approach that coordinates public and private activities" (pp.167-168). In my view, this approach may refer to public-private partnership; i.e., the international community and Myanmar government should build a partnership with the private businesses operated by the military elites and their cronies. In the foreseeable future, no stakeholder could take over the role of the military-economic complex in Myanmar.

I think the collection could give more attention to the impact of ethnic-based militias. Some militias have established their own parallel systems, such as ethnic-based administrative structure, websites, NGOs, schools and business. What tensions and interconnections exist between the system dominated by the Burmese and the ethnic-based system? If the editors and contributors would take this into account, their arguments and policy recommendations would be more inclusive. In short, as a well-documented collection, *Myanmar's Transition* is timely enough to inspire scholars, students, and activists interested in Myanmar studies; it has provided a valuable addition to the literature on Myanmar, and has helpfully opened up more doors for future studies.

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Singapore turns 50: local issues in a global city

Singapore turns fifty this year. After a brief merger with and eventually an unfortunate expulsion from Malaysia, Singapore became an independent nation on 9 August 1965. These fifty years as an island-nation, city-state and ultimately one of the most 'global' of cities in the world have been marked by exceptionally rapid change. The week of mourning that followed the recent passing of Singapore's first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, who was at the helm of the country's spectacular transformation, once again brought to light the underlying narrative of survival in the Singapore story. The many reportages on TV and in newspapers that were united in their focus of 'Remembering Lee Kuan Yew' often revolved around how Singapore had faced its issues and challenges head-on from the start and how it had turned them into its advantage.

Michiel Baas

The Global City

Four books on Singapore

While Singapore is widely recognized as an incredible success story, the question of survival continues to be relevant to the policies and strategies it adopts as a city-state. *Can Singapore Survive?* is the fitting question Kishore Mahbubani, dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, also poses on the cover of his latest book. 'Can we survive as an independent city-state?' he wonders on the first page. In this article I will explore the implications of this question, and how it continues to guide the way Singapore reflects on itself, by engaging in three other recent publications on Singapore. What do these books reveal about the 'Singapore story' in terms of the country's history, present and future?

The first of these publication is Rajesh Rai's historical study *Indians in Singapore,* which covers the period of 1819-1945. Typically a history of arrival, departure and settlement its focus is on a 'diaspora' in the making, which would eventually become one of the four pillars on which modern-day multi-cultural Singapore firmly rests. This multicultural reality, however, has become considerably more complex in recent years with the arrival of an ever-increasing number of migrants. The second book, *Immigration in Singapore* (edited by Norman Vasu et al.), is particularly illuminating in this regard. It discusses the impact that waves of migrants have had on the socio-cultural landscape of Singapore and the growing voices of discontent. With respect to this, the third volume, *Mobilizing Gay Singapore,* not only provides a detailed account of how LGBT-rights have been negotiated, contested and pushed forward over time in Singapore, but also how through this a broader narrative emerges of the complexities of population management, sociocultural sensibilities and Singapore's quest for survival. As such, in the final section I will come back to the possible answers to Mahbubani's question – Yes, No, and Maybe – and how all three are part of the same ongoing story.

The arrival of (Indian) migrants

For most of the colonial period migrants saw their stay in Singapore as temporary, as Rajesh Rai explains in the Intro-duction of his book. "Toiling for years, often under arduous conditions, they held on to the glimmer of hope for a return to the warmth of their kith and kin, one day." (p. xv) It seems that many did eventually return but a minority didn't and it was here that the first seeds were planted of what would eventually grow into a sizable and highly visible Indian community. Rai's study is basically the first to provide a comprehensive overview of Indian arrivals in Singapore and the subsequent formation of a local diaspora.

The first Indians to arrive on the island of Singapore were the *lascars* and sepoys of the 2nd Battalion 20th (Marine) Regiment of the Bengal Native Infantry who accompanied Raffles himself in 1819 (p. 5). These 'Bengalis' generally hailed from what is now modern Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and com-prised mainly upper caste Hindus. However, Tamil Muslims from the Coromandel Coast had been active and influential in the Malay region as early as the fifteenth century and even occupied prominent positions in the Malacca Sultanate. As such they were in the vanguard when Raffles set foot on Singaporean soil (p. 8). Parsis, who had already begun to venture to the Chinese coast from the mid-18th century onwards, exporting cotton and opium (p. 10), started to arrive on the scene during this period as well. And so did Nattukottai Chettiars, a merchant class initially involved in the salt trade and later also in cotton, pear and rice. It was in particular through money lending schemes that the 'Chettiars' were able to amass considerable fortunes, something that also enabled them to make a more lasting imprint on Singapore's cultural landscape through the building of temples such as the Thendayuthapani temple located on Tank Road. During the annually held festival of Thaipusam, the 'Chettiar temple', as it is locally also referred to, continues to mark the destin-ation for devotees who have taken part in the four kilometre long procession from the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple in Little India. Piercing their bodies with spikes and carrying or dragging so-called *kavadis* adorned with images of Goddess Parvati and Lord Murugam, the devotees pay tribute to the spear (*vel,* also symbolic for 'knowledge') with which Goddess Parvati attributed her 'son' Lord Murugan and which allowed him to slay the demon Soorapadman, and as a result ridding the world of evil.

Rajesh Rai's well-researched study of how the idea of an 'Indian community' developed over time is not just revealing for the imprint it left on Singapore's geographical set-up, but also how it impacted the country's socio-cultural make-up. His narration takes us past such staging posts as Singapore's history as a penal colony (Indian convicts rarely exercised the option to return to India after completing their sentence); the employment of Indians in labour-intensive jobs by the Singapore harbour and river; the (initially unregulated) arrival of indentured labourers on the scene; and also the shift in attitudes to and heightened suspicion of Indians in Singapore after India's first war of independence in 1857 (and the growing preference for Sikh men for the maintenance of law and order in the colony); the concerns over Indian involvement in various
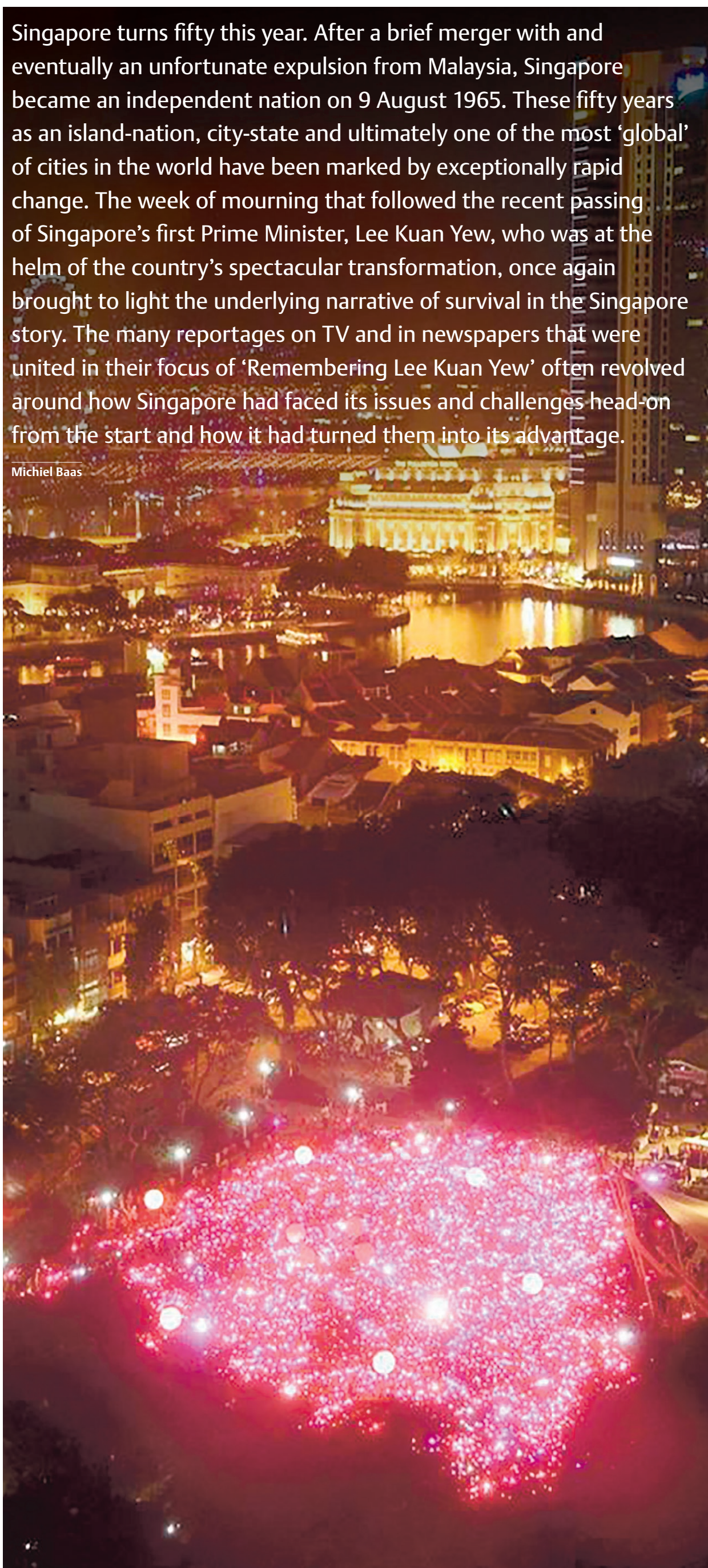
Chinese secret societies (at war with each other); and the impact made by the establishment of the Straits Settlements as a crown colony in 1867 (from which moment Singapore starts to assume a commercial position of global significance).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Indian social formations started transforming in terms of socio-economic profiles. As Rai explains, the port city became an important stopover for luminaries, preachers, and pilgrims, who brought with them not only skills, capital and labour power, but also ideas, cultural practices, sacred symbols and ways of life (p. 133). Although the period from the 1880s till WWI were relatively 'problem free', the gradual spread of education and the (easier) inflow of information from 'outside', most notably the Indian subcontinent, did have socio-political implications in the long run (p. 137). It was during this period that the first vernacular presses were established, for instance, and various new organizations were founded which made visible the diversity along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. The interwar period then sees the establishment of 'Indian outfits' that are directly influenced by political developments within the Subcontinent itself (p. 167). The influx of lower-caste and *Adi Dravida* labourers further adds to this as it lays bare caste divisions.

In the final section of *Indians in Singapore* Rajesh Rai turns to the Japanese Occupation, a three year period during which Singapore became the nerve centre for the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia. In those three years Singapore played host to the Indian Independence League, the civilian-political arm of the Movement, and the Indian National Army, its military wing. Mid-1943 this would also bring the renowned Indian nationalist leader, (Netaji) Subhas Chandra Bose, to Singapore. The end of the Japanese Occupation in August 1945 marked the start of a ten-year period during which Singapore moved to partial internal self-governance. Independent Malaysia, the product of a merger between the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo and Sarawak, grudgingly also welcomed Singapore on-board when it was formed on 16 September 1963. However, an unstable arrangement from the start, Singapore was expulsed less than two years later and had to face the reality of being an independent nation.

Migration society and national identity

Immigration in Singapore, the edited volume by Norman Vasu, Yeap Su Yin and Chan Wen Ling, provides an important insight into how Singapore subsequently developed post-1965, particularly with respect to its population strategy. Initially faced with high unemployment and a severe housing crisis the People's Action Party (PAP), under the leadership of its first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, embarked on an ambitious program to address these issues. With demand for labour quickly growing, the initially strict immigration rules – implemented to reinforce the idea of an independent and sovereign state – were relaxed and in the subsequent decades the arrival of an ever-growing stream of newcomers became key to the country's economic growth. Now firmly recognized as one of the greatest economic success stories, Singapore is also frequently referred to as one of the most globalized, open and competitive economies, one of the world's richest nations, and one that ranks in the top of various quality of living indexes. What then to make of the approximately four thousand Singaporeans who joined a protest held at Hong Lim Park in 2013? The impetus for the protest, which various contributors in Immigration in Singapore also refer to, was the recently released 'White Paper on Population' in which the government proposed to increase the country's population from 5.3 to 6.9 million by 2030.[1] Citing concerns over an aging population and declining fertility rates, the Paper was widely understood as a plan to further increase the inflow of new immigrants.

The Introduction of Immigration in Singapore opens with a quote from the former Minister for Trade and Industry, George Yeo (2000), which argues that Singapore has become a migration society all over again, referring to the fact that not only one in four marriages in Singapore is to a foreigner, but also that for every two babies born one permanent resident is welcomed (p. 8). In discussing Singapore's ongoing history with immigration, a 'global city' narrative is never far away. Yet as the first contributions in the volume also make clear, Singapore's ambitions of becoming and maintaining its position as a global city and its large migrant labour force does not always agree with the country's nation-state building efforts (p. 10). As such, the influx of new migrants has considerably complicated the original multi-ethnic make-up of Singapore (a carefully managed mix of four ethnically diverse groups – Chinese, Eurasian, Indian and Malay – each with their own 'national' language: Chinese, English, Tamil and Bahasa Melayu). It seems that part of the opposition to increasing Singapore's population further can be explained by, as Eugene K.B. Tan argues, a lack of an 'affective connection' with the country's immigration policies. While the focus is largely on 'material and pragmatic' explanations for the policies (aging population, low fertility rates, global competitiveness), Tan argues that "[t]here is limited appeal to the affective
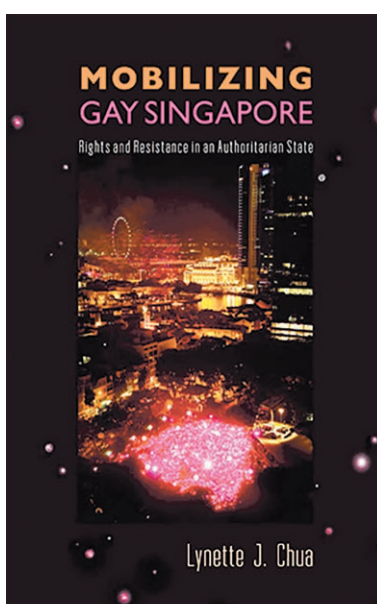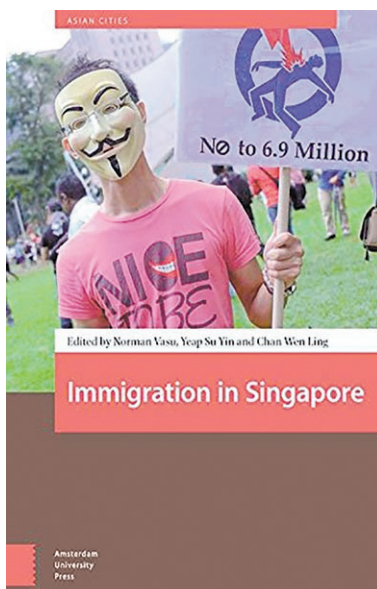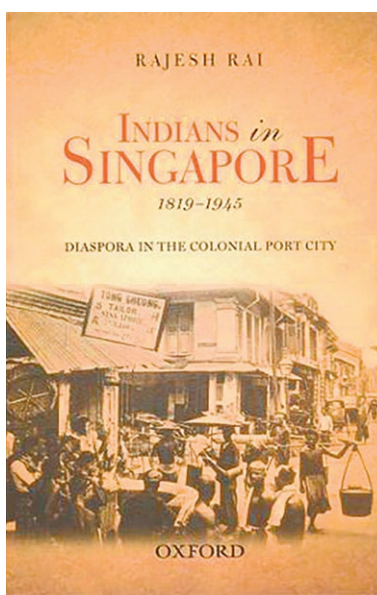
dimension that a contested major public policy like immigration is so badly in need of." (p. 55) Singapore's nation-state building efforts, which have fostered a growing sense of national identity and belonging, plays a part in this as well. Signs baring slogans such as 'Singapore for Singaporeans' and 'I Miss Singapore' indicate an affective relationship with the national identity, which newcomers may not necessarily share.

In an important chapter, Bilveer Singh unpacks the politics of immigration with respect to both official (PAP) policy and opposition received. It confirms the impression that an increasing number of Singaporeans appear to feel threatened by the policies implemented (p. 74) and that this is fuelled by integration-related issues. Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho's chapter makes this particularly 'visible' by discussing how this plays out in Singapore's so-called Heartlands. Ho raises the question how migration impacts the cultural landscape and in what ways these features of landscapes are called forth to impact upon other social relations and processes in Singapore (p. 116). As such, she argues, that within the context of the Heartlands, spatial proximity fails to promote meaningful social interaction and fosters stereotypes that fuel social tensions (p. 115). Ho's focus is particularly rewarding as it regards the often-overlooked middle ground of migrants and locals who exist in-between the realities and narratives of low- and highly-skilled migration; each category coming with its own concomitant associations and expectations. It is here that we realize how much Singapore's multicultural landscape has changed. No longer is the divide simply one of Bangladeshi and Tamil migrant workers (employed in construction and the harbour) on the one hand, and highly-skilled 'expat' professionals from Western nations on the other hand; the arrival of mainland PRC Chinese, Indians, and also those from Western nations competing with local Singaporeans for mid-level skilled jobs is clearly impacting dynamics between locals and newcomers. In the discussion that frames this conundrum the Heartland has come to stand for the ordinary Singapore of everyday, the embodied collocation of which is represented by Singapore as a global city, actively seeking out to bring in 'global talent' (p. 124).

Pragmatic resistance in a 'global' city

The site of the 2013 protests over the White Paper, Hong Lim Park, is also the location for the annually held Pink Dot, which raises awareness for LGBT-related issues in Singapore. Lynnette J. Chua's account of *Mobilizing Gay Singapore* not only provides a fascinating account of how LGBT-activism and politics have developed in Singapore over time, but in more general terms is also revealing in terms of how opposition and dissent are mediated within the context of a nation that witnessed rapid economic growth, but also seeks to strike a balance between its local ('Heartland') identity and 'global city' aspirations.

Central to Chua's exploration in Mobilizing Gay Singapore is the concept of 'pragmatic resistance'. Section 377A of the Penal Code, a colonial left-over, criminalizes 'gross indecency' between men and effectively makes homosexual acts illegal in Singapore. Although not actively maintained as such, members of the LGBT 'community' in Singapore face various challenges such as getting access to public housing, in which the majority of Singaporeans live; but more generally, receiving recognition of issues and challenges faced. The ban on publicly 'pro-moting' or 'glamorizing' LGBT 'lifestyles' further complicates matters (p. 39).

The annually held Pink Dot is an intriguing deviation from the norm.

Internationally recognized as an important 'gay pride' event, not just for Singapore but for Asia in general as well, the slogans and formulations that provide a frame for the event – such as 'Supporting the Freedom to Love' – actively appeal to Singaporean mainstream family values. Chua argues that Pink Dot can be interpreted as a pragmatic way of resisting opposition from, for instance, Christian movements and the authorities, which have (partly successfully) hindered earlier attempts to organize gay rights events (such as a Pink Picnic and the Pink Run). As only Singaporean permanent residents and citizens can participate, Pink Dot is also a 'decidedly' local Singaporean event. This is further emphasized by the use of the color pink, which the organization suggests is a blend between red and white, the colors of Singapore's flag. In addition, the name 'Pink Dot' clearly references Singapore's epithet 'Little Red Dot.' Publicity material furthermore underlines that Pink Dot is not a political event or protest.

While Pink Dot has faced growing opposition from religious groups over the years it not only continues to 'survive', but as the stunning aerial photographs made each year illustrate (main image), the event continues to grow in size as well. Building upon Richard Florida's well-known argument of creative cities, Pink Dot can also be understood to enhance Singapore's image of a global city that actively seeks to attract talent migrants who will find a welcome and stimulating home there. Attracting these migrants is part of Singapore's on-going quest for survival, one that will continue to influence strategies and policies in the years to come.

The survival of the Little Red Dot

In relation to the question of survival Kishore Mahbubani provides three potential answers: yes, no, maybe. While it is obviously the 'maybe' that guides Singapore's engagement with the future, it is 'no' that succinctly symbolizes how the unlikeliness of the city-state's survival guided policy and politics over time. The unequivocal 'yes', which percolates throughout Mahbubani's decidedly optimistic text, however, resonates with how Singapore likes to celebrate its own success-story as one of the wealthiest, healthiest, safest, cleanest and most competitive nations in the world. Mahbubani's focus is, in that sense, very much on the resources and knowhow available in Singapore, an obvious indicator of the country's ability to cope and deal with issues raised.

Yet taking all four studies together a more complex image emerges of a country that will increasingly be confronted with the challenge of striking the right balance between global city aspirations on the one hand, and 'local' issues and sentiments on the other. As much as Singapore appears to be a unique case in terms of its size and position, other highly-developed nations appear to face comparative issues. Singapore's issues with its limited space, scarce resources, dependence on migrants and those that emerge from increasing population density and multicultural complexities, are not only comparable to issues that other city/states such as Hong Kong or Dubai face, but also, for instance, much larger countries such as Australia and Canada. In that sense, it would be a mistake to simply 'read' Singapore as an exceptional case because of its unique socio-political setup, small size and short history.

Singapore turns fifty this year. But even if this year the celebrations zoom in on Singapore's fifty years as an independent nation, four years from now it is likely the city will pay attention to the fact that Raffles arrived on its shore two hundred years ago. Meanwhile the National Museum has recently opened an exhibition that provides an overview of 700 years of 'Singapura'. Taking such 'temporal' matters into account reminds us of the fact that although Singapore is a relatively young nation, its recent history is connected to, as well as the product of, a much longer and more complex story. As one of the world's leading 'global cities' there is no doubt that Singapore's on-going story will likely provide fertile ground for future research in terms of how it negotiates and engages with globalizing influences and local realities.

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1 In response to the protests the Singapore Government now argues that it does not see the number of 6.9 million as a target per se and will again review the situation in 2020.

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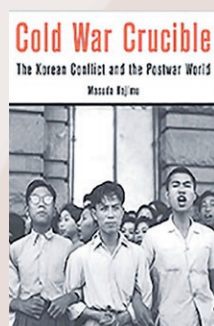
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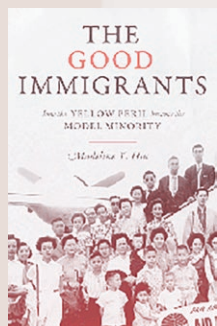
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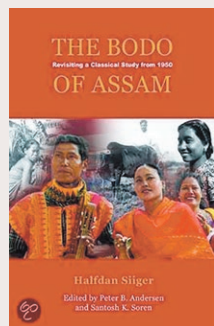
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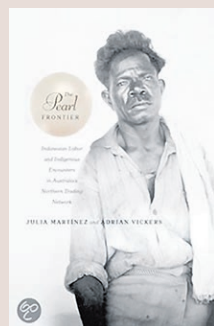
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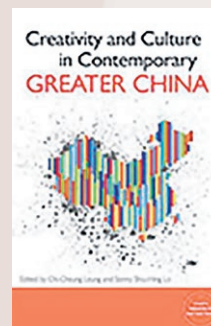
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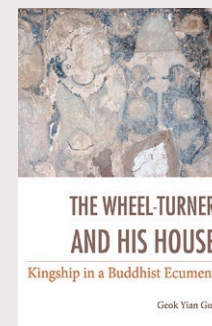
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Pull-out supplement

theFocus

Himalaya

New Delhi

Islamabad

Lahore

The line of lights, with a distinctly orange hue, snakes from north to south. It appears to be more continuous and brighter than most highways in the view. This is the fenced and floodlit border zone between India (to the left of the line) and Pakistan (to the right). The fence is designed to discourage smuggling and arms trafficking. A similar fenced zone separates India's eastern border from Bangladesh.

Militarized Borderlands in Asia

Philosopher Georg Simmel uses 'the door' as a powerful metaphor of conscious borders.[1] The door is an active boundary, for it can be closed and opened at will. While the closure of the door reinforces the feeling of separation, the fact that it can be opened symbolizes the freedom to transcend boundaries.[2] The closed door quality of borders is most apparent in disputed territories and frontier conflict zones, where military structures and technologies of surveillance, such as border fences and security cameras, materially reorder space as well as reify the border in people's minds and lives through psycho-sociological processes.

Swargajyoti Gohain

Militarized Borderlands in Asia *continued*

This Focus of The Newsletter looks at militarized border regions in Asia. Militarized borderlands are distinguished from militarization in that the latter is a process and condition in which the state justifies the presence and command of military troops as an insurance against foreign territorial threats, illegal immigration, illicit flows of arms and drugs or internal dissent from local militias. Militarized borderlands are those borders or national peripheries, where militarization has become a permanent feature. Here we examine how people living in militarized borderlands negotiate every day life, their fears, insecurities, and strategies of accommodation and acceptance, as well as their imaginations and aspirations for transformation.
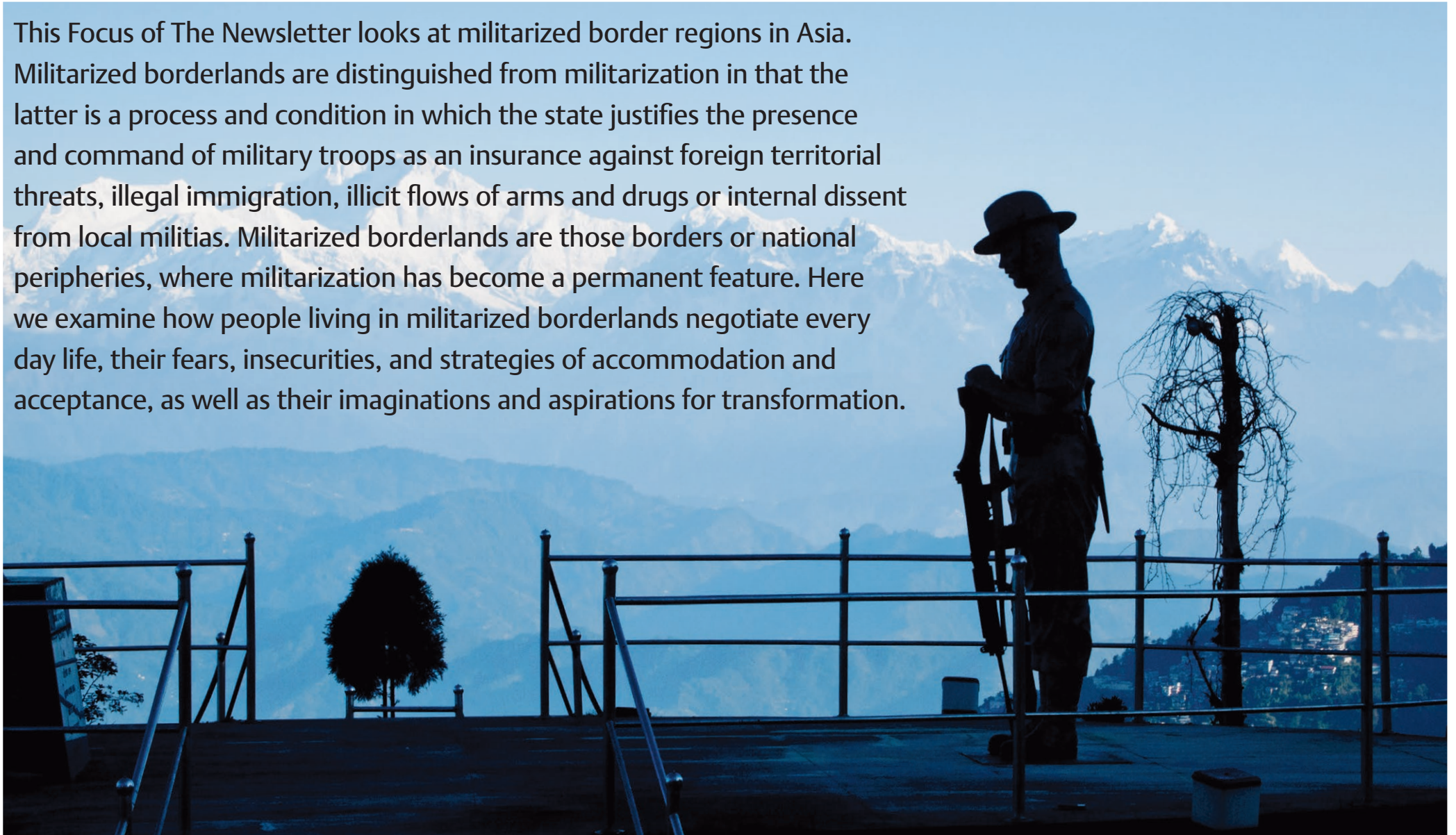
Above:
Indian Border guard, Darjeeling. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of Frederik Rowing on Flickr.

Militarization without immediate threat

Often, when we speak of militarization, we assume that it is a natural process of securitization, and is somehow independent of political interest. That is, militarization is perceived to be a natural consequence for societies at war, internal or external. However, to recapitulate Michel Foucault's argument: sovereignty, discipline and security are different economies of power that are exercised over different types of spaces with the intent of maximising efficient state control.[3] That is why militarization can exist even when there are no external or internal security threats.

For example, US militarization was justified in the post-Cold War period by moving the military into areas once considered civilian functions.[4] By expanding the frontiers of military intervention and deploying military troops in evacuation operations, disaster relief, famine relief and such activities, the military and its industries were saved from decimation. Tisaranee Gunasekara shows how similar militarization in Sri Lanka today is aided through the 'humanitarian' discourse.[5] Following the military ouster of the rebel outfit, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), from their stronghold in Northeast Sri Lanka in 2009, the then president Mahinda Rajapaksa increased military presence in these areas. While during the period of internecine war, the image of the Sri Lankan military as a good, efficient and law-abiding entity was necessary to sustain the myth of a 'humanitarian' operation with 'zero civilian casualties', after the war this image was maintained to justify the continued militarization of society. Sri Lanka was turned into a garrison state in order to serve the interests of a national government, despite the absence of an external or internal enemy. However, with the election of the new president, Maithripala Sirisena in January 2015, militarization might be reversed. In India, militarization has been associated with both external and internal security matters. In the latter context, it is pertinent to mention the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act or AFSPA, a controversial act which prohibits the assembly of five or more persons and empowers members of the armed forces with the right to open fire at anybody thought to be violating the law in areas deemed as 'disturbed areas'.[6] In many instances, this has enabled routine violence by military and paramilitary forces in everyday 'encounters' – a euphemistic term used in South Asia to define extra-judicial killings – with people suspected to harbour anti-national intentions. Quite recently, on 19 April 2015, a Kashmiri teenager was killed when police forces fired at a civilian protest.[7]

The nation-state project

It is clear that the military has to be seen as an appendage of the state and an apparatus of rule, and not an extension of a disinterested executive. Our focus on militarized borders brings to light the many ways in which militarization aids the nation-state project in the national peripheries. The project of the nation-state is to shape territorial subjectivities in conformity with the national geography,[8] and its territorial anxieties are played out most forcefully at its borders. In this sense, border regions, far from being peripheral to the nation-state, are sites where the nation is experienced most intimately;[9] and the military, as an agent of the state, is directly involved in the process of constituting national subjects.

Militarization is more than the aggregation of military forces in a territory. It is simultaneously a discursive process, involving a shift in general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force and the organization of large standing armies.[10] It has powerful spatial and ideological effects, changing the visual landscape, the language and social norms, and the local and global economy.[11] Militarization imparts a physicality to the border as a line of division; I have characterized this particular spatial practice of normalizing the border, the 'border-normative vision', which becomes particularly forceful in situations of conflict. The military enforces the border-normative vision through various spatial strategies, which include both physical and symbolic transformations of landscape.

Historical and arbitrary constructs

This Focus on militarized borderlands also allows us to revisit the scholarship on borders through a particular optic. Growing critical perspectives on borders since the 1990s have encouraged a view of borders as historical and arbitrary constructs, which divide up formerly conjoined areas or forcibly amalgamate previously separate and hostile territories.[12] The huge labour migrations and inter-mixtures of people accelerated through colonialism, mass movements of refugees in the postcolonial context, the migrations of professionals and transnational businessmen through economic globalization, and the rise of transnational networks and supra-national organizations, have all contributed to the erosion of homogenous national identities.[13] Such denationalised existences and experiences made it possible to question territoriality as a basis of identity and to deconstruct borders.

When borders are no longer seen as inflexible boundary lines, it seemed fruitful to highlight crossing, more than containment, and to see borders as zones of blending, fluidity and creativity.[14] Literary and cultural studies added to the idea of the border the metaphor of hybridity and in-betweenness, where the border may be embodied in particular border crossing figures, such as, for instance, a Mexican-American from Texas who rises to the rank of general in the U.S army.[15]

Bordering practices

However, the articles in this Focus remind us that while travel, crossing, and movement between borders is important in order to denaturalise borders, it is equally true that 'bordering' ideologies and border-making practices persist.[16] The constructed border may be an imaginative, mental border but no less potent in its effects and consequences.[17] How is the consciousness of difference produced through systematic incursions of state machinery, such as the military, or through semiotic codes disseminated by selected images, memories, and metaphors?[18]

Baud and van Schendel argue that border spaces acquire their character from the triangular interactions of state, regional elite and local people.[19] Border dynamics are affected by networks that lie on the other side too, so that the border becomes the intersecting zone between a 'double triangle'. What, then, are the kind of dynamics produced in militarized border zones, where state control is much stronger, and where the role of local people and regional elite – the other two points of the triad – diminishes considerably? How does the state take a pro-active stance in dissuading relations with the national Other through surveillance and cultural politics?

The six papers in this Focus show that in militarized borderlands, the split between the two sides of the border occasions certain spatial and social practices that constitute different kinds of adaptation strategies. Borderland strategies rest on "defiance and accommodation" where border people both accept the conditions of bordered, restricted existence, and creatively seek to defy/cross the border for economic and commercial gain, often through the complicity of border guards.[20] According to Van Schendel, clandestine border-crossing activities (smuggling, illegal immigration) constitute a border effect that counters the state effect (of surveillance, patrol, territorial control).

Several scholars have attempted to understand border lives in militarized zones. Smadar Lavie's work among the Mzeinis of South Sinai is a classic study of a border region under occupation that had to shed previous elements of social life in order to adapt to life under two hostile nations.[21] In the Arab-Israeli conflict in the twentieth century, the South Sinai was a "political football tossed at least five times between Egypt and Israel".[22] The Mzeini Bedouins of South Sinai could not maintain an independent Bedouin identity, because they were disenfranchised on their own land by continual military occupations, and could only perform their nomadic Bedouin identity allegorically; "for Mzeinis to openly confront any armed or unarmed occupier could mean beatings, jail, even death".[23] In today's Palestine, protest poetry is often the expressive release from oppressive conditions of military occupation.

The Focus papers continue the engagement with militarized borders by looking both at state efforts to govern borderlands through military settlement as well as the strategies of accommodation or expressions of defiance devised by border people to deal with militarization.

This Focus

The paper by Horstmann and Cole describes the tangible and very poignant effects of the militarized Thai-Burmese border on the Karen civilians trapped in between. The most telling, and chilling, evidence of hyper-militarization is the proliferation of prosthetic limbs; everyday villagers are confronted with the dangers of the 'killing minefields' where state military and rebel militias wage battle. Escape remains a dream as even those who manage to cross over to the Thai side remain caught between the two warring armies.

Ankur Datta, discussing the Kashmir border, shows how militarization has far-reaching effects. He describes the border almost as if it has a radiating aura, expanding its sphere of influence and casting its shadow over a people who have been displaced far away from the zone of army occupation. The border is embodied in these people, and even as they move away and into non-militarized zones, they carry with them the traces, fears and insecurities of militarized existences for "the border came alive for them in terms of sightings and accounts of the movement of 'unknown men' with weapons".

A different kind of embodiment is highlighted by Malini Sur in her discussion of the India-Bangladesh border, described as a 'killer border' by Willem Van Schendel, because of the frequent killings, by security forces, of civilians trying to cross this border. Retrieving the story of Felani – a young woman shot by border guards as she was crossing into Bangladesh from India – from amidst the faceless statistics of undocumented migrants, Sur shows how studies of the border must take into account the lives of those who straddle divided worlds, and who, in negotiating and crossing these boundary divisions on an everyday basis "for trade, to shop or to maintain kinship ties", physically encounter the violence that is the border. In embodying the border divisions, enforced by state security apparatuses, they are 'divided bodies'.

Duncan McDui Ra's article shows how geographical mobility is often the chosen strategy for the beleaguered inhabitants of Manipur on India's Northeast frontier. For these people, acquiring a mainstream education becomes an unlikely ally – unlikely, because the military also represents the mainstream state. On the surface, one may not perceive the boom in private schools in Manipur, excellently detailed by McDui Ra, as a border effect. But gaining a mainstream education, supplied by private schools at a time when public schools have failed to deliver, is often the straw that people will clutch at, in order to escape conditions of entrapment.

Gohain and Grothmann's paper focuses on culturally Tibetan Buddhist regions in Arunachal Pradesh in India, bordering China, the subject of a protracted Sino-Indian border dispute for more than half a century now. They show how military settlements, as well as practices of renaming local place names, map these areas as Indian territory, while marking them as discontinuous with cross-border circuits. But the state effect here, as elsewhere, is not a totalizing project, as defiance emerges in surprising ways.

Shishikura's article has a different cast. He shows how on the military island base of Ogasawara, people creatively defy the statist appropriation of the border and injunctions on cross-border settlement by fusing musical practices divided by history and territory. Hybridity is not metaphorical but a lived experience here.

The papers show how strategies of adaptation can range from the poetic to the practical. In trying to find ways to attenuate existences circumscribed by military occupation, borderlanders may opt for physical flight, or propose counter-narratives through poetry and music; yet they do not always find the refuge they seek.

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Below:
Virgin Mary above a Karenni refugee camp along the border with Myanmar. The Karennis were converted to Christianity in Myanmar and have fled to escape the current regime. Mae Hong Song province, Thailand. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of Alex Wright on Flickr.

State violence, state building

Militarized borderlands come into being through a plethora of social, political, and economic processes. We see the borders of Europe, Australia and the US being militarized in response to the perceived threat of illegal immigrants. In Asia, too, we find a wealth of examples of militarized borders, yet these often emerge through different processes. In many cases the borderlands between two or more Asian countries become militarized where borderlines are highly contested such as the India-Pakistan border, the Korean peninsula or the sea border between China and Taiwan. In other instances, through the expansionist ambitions of the state and the suppression of ethnic minorities at its fringes, certain groups are caught in an Agambian state of exception.[1] This is the case of the Karen and Karenni in southeastern Burma.

Alexander Horstmann and Tomas Cole

MILITARIZATION regularly follows violent armed conflict, which is exactly what occurred at Burma's southeastern border when some elements of the Karen nationalist movement, the largest minority group residing here, took up arms in reaction to growing tensions with the emerging Burmese state. The state retaliated through a series of brutal massacres of the civil Karen population in 1948. The subsequent civil war turned southeastern Burma into a war zone and transformed the nationalist movement into a non-state armed movement, which at one time controlled large tracts of land adjacent to the Thai border that it calls 'liberated zones'. After a decade of instability the state of Burma came under a military regime in 1962 after a coup led by influential military general Ne Win. The new junta invested heavily in the military leaving little in state coffers to spend on health, education and infrastructure. Indeed, by 2012 Qatar was the only country in the world that spent less on healthcare than Burma.[2] The small trickle of funds that remained would inevitably run dry long before reaching the borderlands, leaving the Karen and the many other minorities residing here (e.g., Karenni, the Pa-O and the Shan), with practically little or no access to healthcare and education. A corollary of this exponential growth of military spending was an increased militarization of the borderlands, indexed by the high presence and visibility of the state military, the Tatmadaw.

In the 1970s, the military regime redoubled the militarization of these borderlands and launched its 'four-cuts' counter-insurgency strategy. This involved the forceful relocation of huge numbers of Karen villages (effectively camps) into areas under the sphere of Tatmadaw control, known as 'white zones'. The intention was to cut off support from the villagers to the largest non-government armed group, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). This mass relocation was conducted by serving villagers with relocation notices, before bombarding their villages with mortars, then burning down their homes and fields and littering the ground with landmines to prohibit their return. Those relocated to white zones, already greatly weakened by being unable to return to their farmlands to grow food, were subjected to heavy taxing and conscription for infrastructural services and recruited as porters to carry arms and to guide Tatmadaw troops safely though areas with high concentrations of KNLA troops and mines. Such coercive measures increased the suffering of the villagers to an unendurable degree. These offensives were, however, launched solely in the dry season, with the Tatmadaw troops retreating again every wet season.

The villagers reacted to this arbitrary violence by escaping into the forests and higher altitudes, hiding rice-barns or fleeing over the border to Thailand. Many of the villagers

**Above:
Karen nationalism
in Southeastern
Myanmar, photo
taken by Alexander
Horstmann.**

and community leaders either fought on the KNLA side or organized themselves into NGOs and benefitted from Western donors who had established themselves on the Thai border. Villagers also regularly participated in the emerging community based organizations that crossed the border illegally to provide assistance to the wounded and displaced. Their humanitarian engagement was impressive, organizing emergency healthcare and mobile schools for displaced Karen. As civil society organizations came under Tatmadaw surveillance and harassment, it was mainly Karen Buddhist monasteries that provided sanctuary for displaced villagers. Local missionaries also risked their lives by staying in villages as local development volunteers, engaging in teaching, medical assistance and rural development.

This perpetuating war slowly worked its way into people's everyday lives, spurring a parallel process of militarization in Karen society. The KNLA regularly extracted taxes and food from the villagers residing in areas under their control, so called 'black zones', and levied one male child from every family to serve as a soldier in the army, much like their counterparts in the *Tatmadaw*.

In the 1980s, the Burmese state mobilized the army en masse and began to continue its offensives throughout the wet season, pushing the KNLA ever closer to the border and the elite from its political wing, the Karen National Union (KNU), into Thailand. Moreover, as is often the fate of militarized and violent borderlands, the population became squeezed between different armies. These factors, along with strong internal conflicts and tensions, led many Buddhist soldiers and monks to feel alienated from the predominantly Christian KNU/KNLA and thus they began to form a splinter group, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). The emerging DKBA quickly allied with the Tatmadaw, sounding the death knell for the already greatly weakened KNLA. From this point on, the civil population of the borderlands was forced to feed and provide taxes and free labor to an ever-growing multitude of armed factions and Karen militias in addition to the Tatmadaw. The increasing militarization and violence, together with the heavy taxations levied on villagers, caused a humanitarian and food crisis. It pushed people away from their homes and across the border into the Thai refugee camps.

When the first wave of refugees came over to Thailand they succeeded in bringing their communities largely intact. The strong local security networks and a high degree of cohesion and social organization that characterized most Karen communities allowed for the smooth day-to-day administration of the refugee camps in Thailand, with little interference from Thai authorities. However, as the war wore on, the KNLA established a growing presence in these camps. While partnering with international humanitarian organizations that provided vital material support, the KNLA largely controlled the camp population and recruited widely from the refugee households. Young boys disappearing from the camps became a regular phenomena.

With greater state suppression of the Karen national movement inside Burma, the process of the militarization of the camps in Thailand was exacerbated; increasingly more KNLA offensives were staged from within Thailand. Largely in reaction to this, between 1995 and 1998, both Tatmadaw and DKBA forces periodically targeted the camps in Thailand, attacking refugees and burning down their shelters. This provoked the Royal Thai government to enact a process of camp consolidations, stationing large numbers of soldiers around these new camps, and placing considerable restriction on inhabitants' movement and livelihood activities (such as foraging in the surrounding jungle, farming and engaging in casual labor). The state effect was completed by encasing these areas in mile upon mile of barbed-wire fencing. The militarization of the camps and the borderlands on the Thai side was not so much curbed as steadily handed over to Thai paramilitary units.

The most visible indicator of the continued militarization of Karen land is the proliferation of prosthetic limbs that people have received from clinics supported by NGOs and CBOs in the refugee camps and on the border. In the camps alone, over 300 people are registered as disabled by landmines, whereas within Burma these numbers increase exponentially with 3450 recorded cases of either death or injury by landmines since 1999.[3] This borderland is arguably the most landmine contaminated area in the world today.[4] The responsibility for this immensely dense concentration of landmines falls not only on the Tatmadaw but also on the non-state armies and villagers themselves who stubbornly continue to use mines on the grounds of self-protection. Landmine contamination is a major hazard in these borderlands and contributes to the general sense of insecurity and fear. Landmines are often seen as cheap soldiers, the poor man's weapon; yet their victims are predominantly villagers and their livestock who regularly stumble on their 'own' landmines. The main objective of landmines is not so much to kill as to mutilate and cause disabilities; the idea is that an injured soldier is more of a burden for an army than a dead one. Moreover, whereas the improvised devices deployed by the KNLA rarely endure the wet season, the Chinese manufactured mines laid by the Tatmadaw and its allies can remain

Civilian responses among the Karen of southeast Burma

Above: Map of the Thai-Burmese Borderland with Karen Refugee Camps, Courtesy of Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG).

active for up to 70 years and are exceedingly difficult to detect. In this light, the landmine contamination of the borderlands continues to cause untold hardships on the civilian population, crippling livelihoods by prohibiting people both physically and psychologically from working on their farms and in forests to make ends meet.

These techniques and technologies of militarization have served to compound the misery inflicted by the Tatmadaw who are also known to use humiliation, torture and arbitrary violence against civil populations. Moreover, mass rape has been wielded as a systematic weapon of war to humiliate the Karen and to show the men that they are not able to defend their women. For the women, the consequences of having to live with the trauma are often disastrous. Besides, the Tatmadaw is also known for human rights violations against their own kind, especially against child soldiers who are unable to perform as they are ordered.

In this manner, the militarization of the borderlands has forced huge swathes of the civilian population in the Karen lands to live, as they often phrase it: day-by-day, hand to mouth. Taking into account these factors, what we find most revealing in this case is how war is organized and what responses it evokes on the side of the civil population that is squeezed between different conflicting parties, trapped between militarized zones. It is to this we turn now.

Militarization of borders as state building
Despite a ceasefire being signed between all non-government armed groups (NGAG) and the Burmese state in 2012, a sustainable peace treaty has yet to be agreed upon at the time of writing. Conflict and/or the threat thereof continue to linger constantly on the horizon. As a consequence, militias persist, and thus, continue the need to feed their soldiers and provide them with some form of reimbursement in order to maintain their loyalty. Fighting in the Karen borderlands has become a mode of livelihood and the war is profitable for many, allowing for gains in status, power and money, placing many militias in fierce competition for the control of territory. Earlier the KNU/KNLA financed its war through the extraction of natural resources, especially teak logging, giving away large concessions to Thai logging companies, such that whole areas became deforested. Following this, one of the most important forest reserves in mainland Southeast Asia and greater Himalaya has become depleted. These deforested mountain strands have been replanted with rubber plantations that, while being of little help to the environment, are an important source of income for warlords. The Burmese state's strategy for appeasing the different military factions is giving them business concessions and turning a blind eye to their black market activities across different borders, such as their participating in the production and trafficking of drugs like amphetamines.

Right: Baptism in Mae Ra Ma Luang Camp, New Year 2010, photo taken by Alexander Horstmann.

How then can we understand the continued militarization of the borderlands between Burma and Thailand three years on from the ceasefire? Decha Tangseefa has posited that the Karen national movement presented, and continues to present "a threat to the territorial integrity of both Thailand and Burma" as well as to their "imagined communities."[5] From here it follows that the militarization of these borderlands is a strategy enacted by these states to tame this threat by placing the people residing here in "states of exception", placed "beyond the law" – repeatedly demonstrating this with acts of state terror and economic exploitation. As Giorgio Agamben argues, the ability to exclude certain lives from the sphere of law is the "hidden foundation of sovereignty"[6] that substantiates the very power and territorial claims of the state. Moreover, as James C. Scott has argued, militarized zones often function as a "buffer zone" that mediate the relationship between two states. In this light, the Burmese government's strategy of appeasing the different military factions and the Thai government's strategy, until recently, of oblique support to the KNU, both politically and financially, which perpetuates the militarization of this area can be seen as a form of state building. The continued militarization of the southeastern Burmese border acts to simultaneously demonstrate the Burmese state's ability as a sovereign to place certain lives in "states of exception" and to maintain a "buffer zone" that provides protection from Thai aggression. To this end, the Karen militias appear to have entered a kind of Faustian deal and impasse with the Burmese and Thai governments in which they are permitted a certain degree of self-governance on the grounds that they continue to figure as exceptions to state control, subject to state violence that substantiates its territorial claims.

Civilian responses and migrant imaginations in states of war
For the civilian women and men living in zones of chronic militarization and conflict, life has to go on. People somehow have to develop strategies to live with the war and to navigate therein. Those that can, continue to grow rice, while many others take up jobs as day laborers or forage the steadily depleting forests for bamboo and other jungle products to earn money to buy food and to rebuild their shelters. Many find it imperative to scrape enough money together to continue attending Buddhist rituals and preparing marriage ceremonies and funerals as a way of staying sane and holding the social fabric of society intact.

Migration has become a major strategy to access sources of income that can no longer be generated at home. This strategy is especially prevalent among young people who traverse the borderlands in search of jobs in factories and as maids in Bangkok and other towns of Thailand. Moreover, the zone adjacent to Thailand has become a Thai currency zone, where it is common to pay with Thai *baht* rather than with the Burmese *kyat*. This has led to parallel levels of internal migration, where droves of both disenfranchised young Karen and Burmese flock to the former outposts of the ethno-nationalist movement on the border in search of work that will earn them Thai *baht* and access to Thai goods they otherwise could neither obtain nor afford. Through these translocal entanglements young Karen have become used to Thai TV and are literate in the Thai language. Many leave their young children with their parents and other siblings in search of work in Thailand or in the booming Burmese towns in the Thai currency zone. For young migrants religion is an important resource, spiritually as much as materially, and plays a key role in their itinerary. Migrants and refugees often depend on religious networks to support them in their new places of residence to procure jobs, lodgings and a community.

Conclusion
In this piece, we have explored issues that look into the continuous presence of military forces, both from the Burmese governmental armed forces as well as the increasingly powerful Karen militia after the ceasefire. Our questions concern the slow recovery of the civil population and the role that translocal entanglements with the international community, humanitarian organizations, and diaspora play in the reconstruction process. Some of the most pertinent questions in relation to this include the repatriation in regard to the eventual closure of the eleven refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border and the vast numbers of Karen diaspora living around the world, the question of transitional justice, and crucially, the question of ownership of the peace process. The state-led peace-building initiative, the Myanmar Peace Center, supported by the Norwegian government, somewhat naively aims to integrate unarmed and powerless communities into the peace process, raising the question of how far the communities are able to put pressure on the different armed factions.

Alexander Horstmann's projects have focused so far on the navigation of the civil Karen populations in the militarized borderlands and the engagement of Karen in alternative forms of governance, social support and security networks. In recent publications, he has examined the effects of the humanitarian economy and the role of religious groups and networks in delivering crucial social services and resources to the populations. Together, the aim of our project is to explore to what extent, and through which modalities, local and translocal communities can put pressure on armed groups and shape peace-building. The authors hope to contribute to a design of the future for young Karen migrants and hope that repatriation can be carried out with a human face. De-militarization will be a long and painful process and the question is whether or not former human rights violations and impunity of the state in Myanmar can be discussed in public.

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Far away, so close

According to Willem Van Schendel, the South Asian sub-continent has been marked by the *Wagah syndrome,* "a show of aggressive territoriality based on frail sovereignty, developed to compensate for this frustration."[1] Wagah is the border crossing between Amritsar, Punjab in India and Lahore, Punjab in Pakistan. Van Schendel breaks the Wagah syndrome into further forms including *Kashmirian* issues. This article is an attempt to consider the ways in which the Kashmir border is imagined by two communities from the Kashmir Valley.

Ankur Datta

THE KASHMIR BORDER is one of the many sites where national sovereignty, especially of the Indian state, is enacted. The border between Indian and Pakistani administered Jammu and Kashmir, delineated by the infamous Line of Control (LOC), features regularly in regional media. Reports of shelling by opposing armies, or the killing of suspected infiltrators, are but episodes in the theatre of the Indian and Pakistani states. While the Kashmir border is a paradigm of sorts, it is marked by a tension, common to borders in general, between its use of state ideology and practices, and the arbitrariness of the latter's effects on everyday life.[2]

The Kashmirian paradigm emerged during the end of colonialism in India, in 1947, and the consequent conflict between the new states of India and Pakistan regarding the accession of the former kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir to either state. From 1989-90 onwards, the Kashmir valley in Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir has been caught in a conflict between a nationalist/secessionist movement – that finds expression in the form of a popular movement and activities by militant/insurgent groups – and the Indian state. I shall be looking at the period since 1990.

Due to geo-political formations in Kashmir, there has been a large presence of both Indian and Pakistani military forces in this region. In Indian administered Kashmir, military presence has expanded since 1989, ostensibly to maintain law and order, resulting in the highest soldier to civilian ratio in the world; with 1 soldier estimated for every 20 civilians.[3] This has produced what Haley Duschinski calls "destiny effects" in Kashmir,[4] which include, for example, constant frisking of civilians by soldiers, the possibility of being arrested without a warrant, or being forced indoors during curfews or strikes. Everyday life is thus transformed by extraordinary processes. I am especially interested here in communities that do not necessarily live on or close to a militarized border,[5] but whose lives are affected by processes of militarization and conflict that spread from borders to interior areas. Even at a distance, the border figures in their imaginations as a transformative factor in their lives.

Writing from the valley
Since 2008, Kashmiri nationalist aspirations have been expressed through mass protests, spreading like wildfire across the valley. The figure of the 'stone pelter' – teenage boys and young men hurling stones and other projectiles at security forces and other symbols of Indian authority – has come to represent the face of Kashmiri nationalism. However, within the Indian mainstream, the dominant symbols of the conflict are the different militant groups that have been active from 1990. These militant groups, comprising Kashmiri men and foreign fighters, received training and support from the Pakistani state in camps and bases located in Pakistani administered Kashmir, or *Azad*

Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Within the narratives of militancy and revolution, is the recurring presence of the border. *Sarhad paar* (the act of crossing the border) forms a trope in the Kashmiri imagination.

Kashmiris have been a part of border crossings in the face of conflict for some time.[6] Crossing the border was a fact of daily life for pastoralists like the Bakerwals who, with the militarization of the LOC, suddenly found themselves cut off from areas they would seasonally migrate to in search of pastures.[7] There have also been the occasional state measures to promote peaceful relations between India and Pakistan, such as cross-border bus services to facilitate trade relations and perhaps contact between communities on either side of the line.

However, during the early 1990s, the border came to signify something else for Kashmiri youths. It was by crossing the border that one could reach a camp to receive military training, and return to fight the Indian state as a revolutionary. The act of crossing the border was a source of excitement. This is evident in a memoir by Kashmiri writer Basharat Peer. One of the episodes he writes about features his cousin Tariq, who had crossed the border into AJK to become a guerrilla. Tariq's decision resulted in trepidation among family members, who would eagerly await news through a radio programme broadcast from Pakistan, known for playing song requests as a way to transmit coded messages. "One day after dinner, Shabnam (Tariq's brother) was lying on his bed, holding the radio like a pillow and listening to the show. I was talking to his roommate....And then a sudden, loud thump startled Shabnam's roommate and me; he had jumped off the bed and stood a few feet away, holding the radio in his hand. It is Tariq! Shabnam was shouting. It is Tariq! Basharat, he really is alive! It said Tariq Peer from Salia, Islamabad likes the show and requests this song."[8] This message signalled to Tariq's family that he was indeed alive and well on the other side of the border. He eventually returned as a guerrilla. Family, friends and acquaintances would visit him to listen to stories of his travels to treacherous territories in dangerous conditions, which included the weather, terrain and the possibility of being caught by Indian soldiers. His return was a moment of excitement for those who listened to his stories, as if he was a 'Marco Polo' like figure.[9]

One text that gives a sense of the scene in the early 1990s is the novel *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed. Waheed's novel introduces us to the

THE COLLABORATOR
Mirza Waheed

'I loved it. The voice is lyrical, to match the beauty of Kashmir, and yet it is tinged with melancholy and grief, as is the story it tells'
Nadeem Aslam, author of *Maps for Lost Lovers*

border through the eyes of his protagonist, a young Gujjar from a village close to the border on the Indian side. The protagonist is coerced to collaborate with the local Indian army unit tasked with eliminating threats from across the border, including young Kashmiri men returning to fight. One passage is especially revealing: "There was this time, not too long ago, just two or three years ago, when everyone wanted to go *sarhad paar,* to cross over and become a famous freedom fighter. Hordes and hordes went in the early days, everyone wanted to return and be a commander, a masked legend in their own right, a liberator of the Kashmiri, a hero. Busloads of city boys would be dropped off at the last bus stop in Kupwara, I got to know later – for months bus conductors in many towns were heard yelling their hearts out, 'Pindi, Pindi, anyone for Rawalpindi?'"[10]

In other words, one crossed the border to become a militant, a revolutionary and a liberator. This transformation is brought about by crossing the border – first to get to the other side to receive training and skills and secondly, to return and fight the oppressors. If we treat this journey as akin to a transformative ritual process or a pilgrimage, as suggested in the work of the anthropologist Victor Turner, the border is a 'liminal zone'.[11] It is by passing through the border, like initiates taking their rites of passage, that young Kashmiri men become revolutionaries.

Nation-states with their cartographic logic can only recognize discrete lines, causing communities who cross borders to remain in a position of liminality or in a state of "being neither here nor there", a point raised by Liisa Malkki in her work on Burundian Hutu refugees.[12] Waheed's protagonist gives another sense of the border, especially when he is forced by the local army commander to scour the landscape for bodies of men killed as militants by the Indian army, scavenging for weapons and documents, while leaving behind the corpses and items like clothes, family photographs and anything lacking *strategic value*.[13] In Heonik Kwon's study of the afterlife of the Vietnam War, areas that were once battlefields, where countless people perished, are now home to the spirits of the dead. The spirits were Vietnamese, American and French, soldiers and civilians, who now inhabit these spaces together in a cosmopolis, respected by those who survived war.[14] Waheed's narrator, however, sees the dead as being trapped in a spiritual and physical landscape that has been transformed into a space of death. The dead lie, unclaimed and rotting, until at the end of the novel he liberates them by burning the bodies. Here the border traps one into liminality.

A view from the displaced
My doctoral research explored the experiences of the Kashmiri Pandits, the Hindu minority of the Kashmir valley who had been displaced from their homes with the outbreak
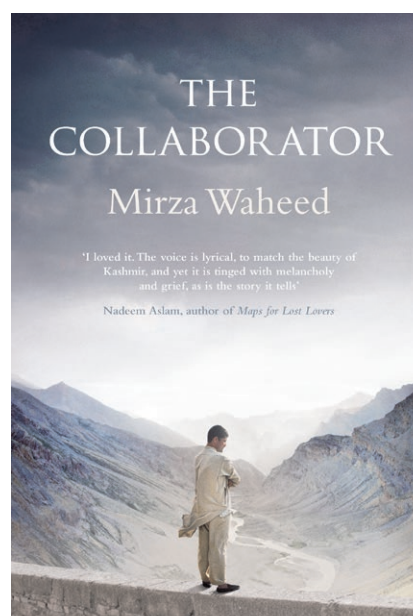
Imagining the border with two Kashmiri communities

of conflict. During the first year of the conflict, the vast majority of Pandits fled from their homes in the Kashmir valley to safe havens, such as the cities of Jammu and New Delhi. The exodus of the Pandits is a controversial chapter in the recent history of Kashmir. One set of explanations state that the Pandit exodus took place as they were targeted by militants and secessionists for their faith affiliation and their perceived support for the Indian state. Another perspective argues that the exodus of the Pandits was facilitated by the Indian state to discredit the movement.[15] Pandits are officially labelled as 'migrants', which is the official nomenclature for communities displaced by conflict and disasters in Jammu and Kashmir. My work paid special attention to Pandits who relocated to displaced persons camps in Jammu that were in existence from 1990-2011. Here I explore how the Kashmiri Pandits bring their own view of borders to the table.

During the time I spent conducting my research in Jammu, the city was seemingly in line with the Indian mainstream. As a Kashmiri acquaintance of mine had put it, "we in Srinagar are on this bank of the river and the people in Jammu are on the other side." However, the border lurks in the background, surfacing in snatches of conversations, and occasionally spilling into local papers. The violence of the border is largely represented in the conditions of villages and communities close to the border who are displaced from time to time due to the exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani forces.[16] In some cases, villagers were forced to leave their homes and seek sanctuary in Jammu city; they carried with them their experiences. The violence on the border thus intrude into the city with the arrival of these 'border migrants'.[17]

There are other ways in which the border features in conversations with Kashmiri Pandits. In my work, conversations at first took place with reference to those who came from districts such as Kupwara and Baramullah, which lay on the border. For these Pandits, the border came alive through sightings of 'unknown men' with weapons. The border was the source of something incomprehensible and dangerous, and this perspective travelled with them to Jammu where they encountered reports of conflict along the border. Hence, casual reports of border politics merged with memories of the early days of the conflict in Kashmir before the Pandit exodus.

However, my first engagement with Pandit approaches to the border really emerged in a conversation with a middle aged man who wanted to know my ethnicity. When I informed him that I was Bengali, he started to speak of cross border movements between Bangladesh and India, which often figure in the Indian media: "All these Bangladeshis cross over. Illegally. You must know that. We see it in the news. You Bengalis are not doing your duty. You should be catching these Bangladeshis. Otherwise you will face what we have faced here. We know. We know what such people do!" Hence, while I conducted my research in a city away from the border, the border was still a part of their lives.

Pandits had to contend with borders in other ways, such as the presence of 'border migrants'. I once met with Neeru, a Kashmiri Pandit migrant, at her office.[18] While waiting for her to arrive, I chatted with her colleague, who belonged to the local Dogra Hindu community. He asked me where I had come from and I explained that I came to Jammu to do research on Kashmiri Pandit migrants. The following is from my field notes: "While we spoke, he asked me whether I am looking at all migrants or specialising only on Kashmiris. The moment I nodded … he started to speak of border migrants in Akhnur … He spoke of what little relief they get as opposed to the KPs (Kashmiri Pandits). He stated that this was unfair and that KPs get preferential treatment." When he noticed Neeru returning, he quickly told me not to tell her of our conversation and left the room.[19] The conversation that followed with Neeru interestingly included a discussion of a book that grouped both Kashmiri Pandits and border migrants together. She was critical of the book for, in her view, Kashmiri Pandit migrants and border migrants are not comparable groups. I faced similar encounters on other occasions, which revealed how one community's imagination of the border clashed with that of others. The border may be located miles away, but the effects are often difficult to predict or discuss.

Relating imaginations

Other scholars have explored the lives of communities living close to the border in Jammu and Kashmir, who have been subject to violence perpetrated by both the Indian security forces and militant groups, and larger discourses of security.[20] This article tried to understand how different Kashmiris, even those living *at a distance* from the border, differently imagine it. For young Kashmiri Muslim men in the early 1990s, crossing the border served as part of a journey of transformation whereby they became liberators and revolutionaries. For Kashmiri Pandits, on the other hand, the border represented a source of danger that transformed their lives from its settled quality to one of dispersion.

Yet imaginations do not remain static. The nature of militancy in Kashmir has changed over the years with many

groups that draw their membership from Kashmiris, such as the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), eschewing violence in favour of non-violent oppositional politics. In the absence of the figure of the militant fighter as hero, the imagination of the border or border crossing as heroic among Kashmiri Muslims in the valley may change too. Similarly, the Pandits find that their notions of the border compete with those of other groups with a comparatively recent history of border politics, as the brief conversation with the Dogra revealed. Local discourse in Jammu presents the Pandits as recipients of greater state recognition in contrast to other village communities along the border. The Pandits' imaginations of the border as a source of danger also fall in line with the Indian state's discourse. These different imaginations help us to consider how borders affect the lives and ways of thinking of communities affected by conflict. The border is never truly far away even if its effects vary from one group to another.

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**Above:
Kashmiri Pandit migrant camp in Jammu. Photograph reproduced with permisision by the Author.**

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Spectacles of militarization[1]

In September 2013, a United Nations population factsheet reported that Asia hosted the second-highest number of international migrants (after Europe) and the largest number of refugees.[2] The factsheet contributed to explosive debates on the India-Bangladesh border, a product of political events in 1947 and 1971. It corroborated that there were 3.2 million Bangladeshis residing in India. Indian political parties quickly used this data to validate India's fear of 'infiltrating' Bangladeshis. Bangladesh predictably rejected the statistics. The release of the UN report in 2013 coincided with civil society protests in Bangladesh over India's 'shoot to kill' policy at the border. The same month, an Indian border constable, Amiya Ghosh, who had shot fifteen-year-old Felani Khatun, was acquitted. Felani's body hung from India's new border fence with Bangladesh. The fence – a project under construction – substantially re-configures the border landscape that cuts across heavily militarized northeast India, which shares complicated boundaries with Bangladesh.

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IN UNDERSCORING THAT nine out of ten refugees were located within a small group of developing states, the UN report echoed what Aristide Zolberg argued thirty years ago. He advanced that tensions produced by the disintegration of imperial states and the emergence of new post-colonial states in the mid-20th century were refugee-producing processes and accounted for the large number of refugees in developing regions.[3] Joya Chatterji, in her recent historiography of the Bengali diaspora, agrees with Zolberg. She convincingly shows that the partition of the Indian subcontinent (in August 1947) and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent Bengali nation state (in 1971) led to significant internal displacement and international migration in South Asia. These population movements were greater in scale than from South Asia's devastated borders to Britain and other advanced economies.[4]

Given the global emergence of high security barriers and deep suspicion of Muslim migrants, it is important to realise that everyday mobility, political violence and territoriality need to be investigated in one analytic frame. Despite prolific scholarship on the partition of the Indian subcontinent that attend to violence, trauma and agency,[5] the narration of border-crossings as interweaving locations of loss and abjection on the one hand, and material and social possibilities on the other, remains challenging. How do we write about people who cross borders without documentation, who experience state violence but also 'work the border'? How do we engage with violence through bodies that move across borders as much as those that are trapped in abjection and inertia? How do we condemn border violence in one voice in regions where maps and migration precariously divide states and militarize small regions, adding to multiple border predicaments?

I suggest that the term 'divided bodies' may be useful to engage with the socio-political and intellectual possibilities that are derived from unscripted/unofficial border-crossings in militarized borders. Without necessarily denoting causality, this indicates that border-crossers fall back on the structural deficiencies of barriers, while simultaneously being at the receiving end of state repression. Divided bodies enable scholars and activists to respond to the grief and loss that structure migrant lives, interrogate fragmented statistics and fractured solidarities, and critique cultures of militarization. I will briefly engage with these themes along the border zone straddling northeast India and Bangladesh, whose old and new maps deeply trouble me. I will begin with Felani's life.

Missing bodies
Felani's life was unexceptional. Like many adolescents in South Asia, she had dropped out of school. Given the region's interlinked geographies, her adolescence in India was to lead to an early marriage in Bangladesh. On a cold

and foggy January morning in 2011, Felani was travelling with her father Nurul Islam, who lived in Assam in northeast India. Islam had paid money to border brokers for the journey.[6] If Indian border guards had not shot her, she would have added another number to the United Nations' population data on international migration and to the undifferentiated statistics of Bangladeshis in India. But her violent killing exposes how the United Nations' classification of 'international' and 'bilateral' erases differences that shape migratory regimes and their precarious outcomes.

Hilary Cunningham and Josiah Heyman have convincingly brought these distinctions to bear upon migration studies. They argue that since movement stands at the cross-roads of power and resources, it shapes mobility and enclosures. They also remind us that the opening and closing of borders testify to differential privileges and rights.[7] While it is true that the lives of Bangladeshis and Indians with advanced degrees are vastly different from those of their less privileged counterparts, it is clear that the outcomes of their border-crossings label them as 'knowledge' and 'labour' migrants. With the United Nations computing 'international' and 'bilateral' migrant stock on the basis of where people were born and have come to reside, we are left speculating about their affluence, deprivation and injuries. Furthermore, since intellectual division of labour in computing data on migrants is based on the living versus the dead, migrants who face torture and die while crossing borders form another set of statistics gathered by human rights organizations.

Although borders that divide states such as Bangladesh and India are legacies of shared pasts, migration figures and questions of legality lead to explosive political debates. Bangladesh has questioned the United Nation's enumeration on the grounds that it merely reproduced biased official Indian projections. Tellingly, apart from Indians imprisoned in Bangladesh, there is no discussion on unauthorized border-crossings from India to Bangladesh, despite the large numbers that travel for trade, to shop or to maintain kinship ties. The relative porosity of the border ensures that those escaping political persecution and natural disasters, or migrating for work (travelling without legal documentation) collapse in predicament and statistics.

In this unstable landscape, India is constructing a new border fence with Bangladesh. The fence effortlessly shape-shifts from a matrix of wires and metal pillars through which Indians and Bangladeshis enquire about divided families and gossip, into a site of closure and suffering.[8] An infrastructure of violence, it shapes migrant bodies, and reinstates Hastings Donnan and Thomas Wilson's compelling formulation that in national cartographies impinging upon bodies, 'border maps' are also 'body maps'.[9] Mutilated and dead bodies are found along the fence, bodies that are being increasingly photographed and digitally circulated.

Above: India's new border fence with Bangladesh under construction in Meghalaya, Northeast India (2007) Photograph: Malini Sur

Digital bodies
Bangladeshi activists circulated digital images of Felani's tortured body with captions describing her journey from northeast India to Bangladesh, cross-border firings, injuries, postmortem and burial. These images disrupted sequence and temporality, and Felani surfaced in various frames. A bleeding upside down female body on a fence; a body with hands and legs tied to bamboo poles; a horizontal body with a bullet to the chest; a dangling body and a ladder next to it; a partly stitched swollen body covered with a plastic sheet; a border guard looking away from the hanging body.

Felani's tortured form supported a Human Rights Watch report. Aptly entitled 'Trigger Happy', the report underscores excessive militarization along the India-Bangladesh border and documents India's indiscriminate use of force. It estimates that Indian border guards have shot dead at least 1000 undocumented travellers in the past decade.[10] Felani's post mortem, which revealed a bullet to her chest is condemnable, given the large number of two-way crossings at the India-Bangladesh border.[11] The statistics were alarming because the study was limited to a little more than half of the 4,096 kilometre boundary, excluded the heavily militarized border regions of northeast India and failed to investigate human rights abuses committed by Bangladeshi border guards. Willem van Schendel called the India-Bangladesh border a 'killer border' long before Felani's gruesome end due to excessive political violence, and Indian and Bangladeshi border guards' use of excessive force on both sides. Advancing that borders between 'friendly states' generate extreme violence, the author calculated 2,428 cases of injury, abduction and killings, including that of border guards, within a short span of five years.[12]

In projecting border violence and militarization as recent, escalating and limited to the Indian side, we forget that what is today the India-Bangladesh border, sits uncomfortably on a troubled zone. For centuries, this region has been armed in various ways, even as suspected traitors and dissidents were disarmed. Here, rebels and militias have sought refuge, smaller territories have been coercively appended, and border guards and peasants have raided granaries and cattle. Village elders as well as the archives remind us that militias, the police, dissidents and border residents have battled each other along these political margins, even as they collaborated on border vigilance.[13]

Furthermore, the zone straddling northeast India and the foothills and plains of Bangladesh is central for an understanding of the India-Bangladesh borderland as a zone of affinity and contestation. India and Bangladesh officially sanctioned the first experimental border market the same year Felani Khatun was shot.[14] A legacy of old trade routes, in weekly markets known as border *haats,* bordering the state of Meghalaya (northeast India) and Kurigram (Bangladesh), trans-border traders legally conduct business up to a maximum of $50 and officially travel without passports.[15]

Many refugees such as Nurul Islam, Felani's father, have made a home in Assam, long after India and Bangladesh mutually consented to a legal cut-off date to end unauthorised migration (March 25, 1971). In the case of older settlers in this region and immigrants who have acquired Indian citizenship in Assam, frenzied detection drives and judicial trials of 'suspected Bangladeshis' add layers of ambiguity rather than fix the boundary between citizens and foreigners. Migration, land grabs and settlement issues unfortunately recur in gruesome violence such as in Nellie (1983) and Kokrajhar (2012) in Assam. These further complicate Assam's external and internal borders, especially since northeast India has been under prolonged military scrutiny and marginalized in India.[16]

Divided citizens

State repression at the India-Bangladesh border have brought about new forms of virtual protest, similar to social media-led anti-regime protests in Africa and West Asia. As India's cross-border shootings featured on conventional diplomatic platforms, cyber warfare raged over Felani's death. Appearing in early 2011 in 'Yahoo Answers' under the label of 'Government and Politics' and the subcategory 'Military', Amak (a pseudonym) protested Felani's killing to illustrate India's atrocities against Bangladeshis. While the responses to his post confirmed such atrocities, one counter held that Bangladeshis entered India without legal authorization. Yahoo presented a summary of questions that included, "How does it feel to kill someone?"

However, cyber activism also includes critical deletions, which do not preclude state surveillance. For instance, 'Ajay 1694' fleetingly surfaced on Wikipedia's India Border Security Forces page in 2012, requesting deletion of the section on Felani's image and killing. In his assertion that this impaired ties between friendly neighbours, he unknowingly echoed Bangladesh's initial disinclination to recognize Felani as a Bangladeshi citizen.[17] As Ajay1694 disappeared, so did Felani's photograph. Images of Indian border guards and officers, and ammunition took precedence on the Wikipedia page. In September 2013, after the acquittal of the BSF constable who fired at Felani, a new Wikipedia page, entitled 'Killing of Felani', surfaced and along with it new writing on virtual walls. In January 2014, the 'Bangladesh Grey Hat Hackers' and the 'Bangladesh Cyber Army' attacked fourteen hundred Indian websites (including intelligence websites) to protest Felani's killing.

Felani's graphically photographed hanging body came to exemplify Bangladesh's geo-body and its unequal relationship with India. This was made explicit in a poster pasted on the walls of Dhaka in 2011. "Stop Border Killings" at the upper outer margin of the poster frames Felani's hanging image. Two subtexts are scripted along the lower margins. The first emphatically states, "Felani does not hang Bangladesh hangs"; the second subtext ambiguously attributes the authorship of the poster to the "public of Bangladesh" (both translated from Bengali). Bangladeshi activists ranging from cyber hackers and human rights organisations, to religious and political interest groups, ensured that Felani was recognised as a Bangladeshi citizen. Unlike digital images and texts that created and deleted evidence and left uneven trails, the poster of Felani's killing had concrete shape and form. However, its textual preciseness eroded Felani's trans-border identity and ironically disrupted the momentum her body had gained in photographs.

Wide-ranging protests in Bangladesh failed to make a significant impact in India. Felani's proximity to the international boundary encouraged Bangladeshi activists representing diverse interests to appropriate her as a Bangladeshi subject and refugee. However, in India, border policies are considered largely a matter of national security and 'Islamic' terrorism, and obliterated any claims to Felani being an Indian Muslim citizen or even a Bangladeshi migrant whose killing merited protest. Furthermore, her in-between status as neither an adult nor a child, and neither a victim of human and sexual trafficking nor an innocent Bangladeshi 'juvenile' who accidentally crossed borders, meant that she slipped from Indian interventions that privilege recovery and repatriation. If protests in Bangladesh took on bilateral colours as opposed to humanitarian ones, India's silence affirmed the inequality of its relationship with Bangladesh and its lack of commit-ment to zero border killings promised earlier. Above all, it conveyed smug superiority and denial of Indian 'Felanis' who cross borders without authorisation and labour under disconcerting conditions.

Unfortunately, digital images and cyber activism assumed similar connotations as problematic statistics, and cemented old rivalries and denials. These shifted attention away from urgent issues of livelihood and made people forget that even today, many angry teenagers march across the border for no other reason than angst against their parents. As a divided citi-zen, Felani's status was sidelined in Bangladesh, which claimed her as a victim of Indian atrocities, and in India, which ignored her predicament. Activists failed to recognise the conflicted narratives that border societies such as Indian and Bangladeshi enclave dwellers use to give meaning to their territorialities,

life circumstances and dilemmas even as they engage in para-legal activities,[18] predicaments that structure lives like Nurul's and Felani's. Even if India's promised retrial of Felani's case leads to a conviction, it may not resolve the issues of everyday travel and the livelihood of border residents, and trans-border and mobile communities such as fisher folk and coal miners.[19] Border residents' dependence on predatory brokers and guards will persist till issues including de-centralized passports, trans-border identity cards and work permits for labour migrants - proposed long ago - are tabled for discussion again.[20]

Conclusion

Felani reminds us that migrants include those travelling under precarious conditions alongside legally protected travellers. She compels us to recognize that scholarship and protest must engage with complicated and transnational lives that link homes, workstations and trading hubs straddling border fences. Felani's tortured form correlates short and hurried walks through rice fields and forests that separate India and Bangladesh with migrant burial grounds in scalding deserts that form a part of the United States-Mexico border. Since the term international migration obscures critical distinctions and profiles migrants on the basis of the living, the dead, refugees and others, scholars and activists must read across distinct statistical slots to compile and read migration-related data. Added, rather than subtracted, this will inform us about the diversity of moving, settling down, dying and grieving that shape migratory regimes. Felani epitomises South Asia's complex games of territoriality and links Bangladesh's troubled geography with Assam's post-colonial history. As India and Bangladesh orchestrate joint parades along a border that was never a conventional war theatre, we are reminded once again that this border rests on uneasy friendships. Till we expand our dissenting horizons, images of Felani's tortured body will continue to sporadically haunt our collective conscience.

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Below: Agricultural fields along the Northeast India-Bangladesh border - the elevated mud path indicates the international boundary (2008) Photograph: Malini Sur

School versus paddy: education and mobility in Manipur

Imphal, the capital city of Manipur – a former kingdom turned federal state currently situated on India's border with Myanmar – is experiencing a private education boom. The boom appears counterintuitive. Imphal is a militarized and often dysfunctional city, yet enormous swathes of land are now occupied by relatively expensive private schools that draw pupils from all over the city and from other parts of the state. Private coaching classes are run out of homes. Education agents all over the city offer admission to universities and colleges in South India, Thailand, and Eastern Europe. Education providers from outside Manipur, mostly from other parts of India, recruit students from Manipur – most noticeably at the large education fairs held in Imphal in the spring such as Edufest, Edu-options, and Edu-expo.

Duncan McDuie-Ra [1]

PROVIDERS AND USERS OF PRIVATE EDUCATION usually discuss its growth as a necessity, a way of making do in response to the rotten and corrupt public system; though clearly the private sector has its fair share of corruption in different ways. Yet the idea of cleansing, of starting anew, is very powerful. A kind of accidental liberalization is evident – part pragmatism, part opportunism. Various ways of imagining the borderland pitch Imphal as the 'gateway' to Southeast Asia and stress the cross-border 'potential' of connectivity.[2] In contrast, the education sector is symptomatic of, and instrumental in producing a counter directional flow towards India.

The boom in private education cannot be appreciated without some sense of what ails the public system. Friends in Imphal would always begin telling me about the problem by discussing the ways jobs are acquired. A post in a school is advertised and the Department of Education is flooded with applications. To secure the post, applicants must pay a bribe (between 1000 and 5000 USD). With lots of people offering bribes, it is possible to offer a large sum and still miss out. The more desirable the post, the higher the amount needed, particularly if it is in the city. If an applicant does not have the necessary qualifications then the amount will be higher still. Applicants thus need to secure a large sum of money to land the post. In order to do this, many, though certainly not all, applicants or their families borrow money or sell assets. Once the post is secured, some – though not all, it must be stressed – teachers either do not attend their jobs, sporadically attend, or attend for only parts of the day. Often they work as private tutors or teachers in private schools while still drawing their public salary. A teacher may spend the day working elsewhere, or not at all, and pay another person a portion of their salary to appear at the school. In many cases, the proxy is unqualified and has little incentive to actually teach. The Manipur Government has attempted to deal with the problem

by steadily increasing teacher salaries in the public system, though this seems to have raised the stakes for securing a post, besides providing teachers with more salary to distribute to proxies. Proxies do not exactly live a comfortable life – they face a continual anxiety of being found out, or of losing their income, if the person who actually holds the job disappears or dies – not an uncommon occurrence in Imphal where disappearances and extra judicial killings have marred everyday life for the past three decades.[3]

With the increase in the problem, the naming and shaming of teachers who do not report for work or appoint proxies have also become more common, especially in the print media. Furthermore, non-state actors, including student unions and some underground groups undertake physical inspections of schools in various towns and urban localities and take action against absentee teachers directly or report them to the government and monitor the response. The most well-known and sustained campaign is the *Eikhoi Lairik Ningthina Tamsi* (loosely translated as 'Let's Study Correctly') run by the Manipur Students Federation since 2007. If we add to this scenario, the practice of teachers requesting money or 'presents' to award high marks, teachers leaving the state to work in other parts of the borderland and beyond where the employment conditions are more stable, routine closures of schools for bandhs (strikes), and schools closing during block-ades (Imphal city was blocked off from the rest of the country for over three months in both 2010 and 2011 by protestors demanding long-denied autonomy in hill areas of the state), and it becomes clear why the public school system in Manipur has been declared "near impossible to run".[4]

The issue is not a lack of schools. Indeed Manipur has a relatively high number of schools per 100,000 head of population: 150 elementary and 31 secondary compared to a national average of 97 elementary and 14 secondary.[5] The issue is the quality of education and facilities, attributes

that the Manipur Government attempts to address by allocating funding, but which either fail to materialize in schools or even if they do, end up having minimal impact on the demand for private schooling. Demand for learning the national curriculum, especially at the higher secondary level (class 11 and 12), is a crucial factor in the boom. The national curriculum is needed to qualify for tertiary study in other parts of India. It is an illustration of the inward pull of citizenship, significant in the present conjuncture given the long history of resistance to Indian citizenship in Manipur.[6]

Transforming the landscape
The boom in private education has transformed Imphal, especially in the southwest. The main area being transformed lies between three main roads that run southwest and south out of the city: National Highway 150, Mayai Lambi Road, and the Indo-Myanmar Road. Peri-urban farmland has become a dense conglomeration of schools, hostels, and small shops. Infrastructure has been slow to catch up and brand new schools with four floors of reflective blue glass can be found at the end of muddy tracks across waterlogged rice fields. Since the mid-2000s, the epicentre of the boom has been Sangaiprou, where the oldest and most reputable catholic secondary schools are located. Much of this area lies beyond the municipal limits, crossing into the so-called 'outgrowth' area (Naoriya Pakhanglakpa, a 'Census Town'), as well as into areas of paddy fields and small farms.

Many of the entrepreneurs who started schools in Sangaiprou are returnee migrants. Having spent time outside Manipur studying and working in other parts of India, returnees with some capital come back and invest in the sector. Many of those involved with starting schools have studied business or worked in marketing or similar fields outside the state. Returnees have a social standing in Imphal that helps facilitate trust, gain access to loans and finance, and open doors with officials. Of course, a great many migrants return unemployed, in debt, and with few connections to make anything happen at all. However the relationship between returnees and the booming private education sector is significant.

Walking through the back blocks of Sangaiprou between the main roads, the various stages of the education boom are revealed. At one end of the scale, ground is being broken, or more accurately filled, for new schools. Labourers shovel soil and stones into former rice fields and swampy wasteland. Corrugated iron sheets, steel construction rods, and bricks lie in piles at the edge of unsealed roads. Completed and semi-completed schools loom behind painted brick walls with broken glass and nails embedded in cement along the top. Functioning schools with names like Herbert, Zenith, Children Ideal, Comet, Modern English, Little Flower, Shemrock Bubbles, Standard Robert English, and Kids Foundation occupy buildings of various sizes and styles; some with brightly painted bricks, others with mirrored glass, others with patterned concrete and tiles. Hostels are found in similar buildings with walls, gates and guards and also within local houses. Some houses advertising hostel accommodation have extra floors or outbuildings added. Electricity poles and walls are plastered with advertisements for tuitions and hostel rooms. There is also evidence of

Above:
A billboard for
Edu Expo 2013.
Khoyathong,
Imphal. June 2013.
Photo by author.

a bust accompanying the boom. Empty buildings with the school or hostel name faded or painted over, buildings sinking into the soil or with parts of wall missing, and vegetation and cattle reclaiming seldom used lots.

Costs for a year at a private school vary dramatically depending on the school, whether a pupil is a day student or boarder, and the grade they are in; from less than 3000 rupees a year (50 USD) for a day student in primary school to as high as 72,000 rupees a year (1200 USD) for a top higher secondary including hostel costs. With so many schools it is difficult to know what is typical, or indeed if there is such a thing. Furthermore, it is difficult to gauge what kind of a financial burden this is for families. Wages in Manipur are very difficult to track given the size of the informal sector, the supplementary income earned through other work and through corruption, and remittances from relatives working outside the state.

Given the high level of competition among private schools, attracting students depends upon showcasing success by profiling one or two high achieving students in the most recent exams or advertising the number of 'first divisioners'. The top students become well known faces in the city following exam results. Schools take out advertisements in newspapers, billboards, and banners to profile these students. Neighbourhood associations do the same, erecting banners and even billboards to congratulate the successful students from a particular locality, thereby perpetuating the culture of high achievement. Local celebrities, usually actors and sportspersons, also bequeath awards to high achieving students. The government holds ceremonies for rank-holders and gives scholarships to study outside the state. Even the maligned Indian armed forces present awards to the top students. My respondents from the private school industry noted that established schools screen applicants very carefully so that their overall performance does not lag and they can produce more 'first divisioners'. Thus competition to get into schools is fierce. Parents of poorly performing students have a difficult time gaining admission for their wards to some schools and either offer to pay higher tuition or turn to newer schools that need to build up their student numbers.

Decaying public schools visible throughout the city provide a stark contrast: buildings in poor condition, few pupils, and sometimes just a caretaker and no teachers; although some public secondary schools and colleges prove to be exemptions. City residents make money from running hostels in their houses, opening shops near schools and hostels, offering extra coaching, and as agents helping students apply for further study outside. The flipside of

the boom is much less visible; household debt, education scams, qualified young adults with no work, and the loss of peri-urban farmland. Even less visible is the murky world of land transactions, corruption in school licensing, and taxes paid to underground groups. The biggest cost to starting a school is acquiring land. And conversely those able to supply land, usually by first acquiring it at a low cost, are believed to make the most money in the industry.

Schools versus paddy

Diminishing agricultural land is a contentious issue throughout Manipur exacerbated by overlapping systems of land tenure, poor record keeping, and the closure of the Manipur State Land Use Board, and a history of mass land acquisitions by the Indian government; mostly for military use, and the government of Manipur; for development projects.[7] The Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act was implemented in 1960 to make title and transfer of land simpler in the Imphal valley. Various attempts have been made to extend the law to the hill areas, which tribal communities in these areas have strongly opposed.[8] A 2014 amendment to the act makes it easier to convert agricultural land of half a hectare or less for non-agricultural purposes by putting the decision for or against conversion ('diversion' in the policy) to a district committee to assess the 'likely benefits' and legislating only minor penalties for violations.[9] However no rules are applicable in the case of acquisition of agricultural land by the state government.[10]

Somewhat contradictorily, the Manipur Legislative Assembly passed the draft Manipur Conservation of Paddy Land Billing July 2014. The bill seeks to prevent paddy land being used for another purpose, paddy land being different-iated from other forms of agricultural production. Critics have argued that the bill does not provide protection for land that is not classified as paddy but used for food production and that it encourages the conversion of forest and wetlands into food growing areas.[11]

In the last decade, several groups have taken action on declining agricultural land, most notably the Heingang Kendra Loumi Lup. Most recently the Conservation of Paddy Lands and Natural Resources Protection Committee (CPL) was formed to fight for paddy land. The CPL mentions "the rampant construction of schools, brick fields, hospitals, development of roads by farm lands, and even churches" that have rendered high yielding farmland useless.[12] Some of these structures are illegal or have been purchased from someone other than the rightful landowner, usually referred to as 'land-grabbing' in Imphal.

Some transactions are legal, some illegal, and others are legal on paper but involve some coercion. Much of the agricultural land is not being transferred from smallholders to commercial entities on a large scale, as in other contexts where land-grabbing is studied[13] – it is being transferred from small holders to other smallholders for a completely different usage. Manipur is already dependent on imported agricultural produce, a highly vulnerable position for residents in Imphal when the city has been cut off for months at a time during blockades. The profusion of imported rice, much of it from faraway states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, and the difficulties of finding local rice varieties in the markets, exemplify the issue for many Imphal residents. Incidentally the rice yield in Manipur is 2100 kilograms per hectare and only slightly below the national average,[14] but the area under cultivation is small and the accuracy of figures is continually disputed. The trade in food from outside the state has long been dominated by non-Manipuris, and thus food insecurity and identity insecurity are intertwined. Dependency on non-Manipuris for food is often raised in arguments for instating the Inner Line Permit (ILP) to restrict entry and settlement of non-Manipuris in the state. Cheap food, mostly packaged, comes from across the border with Myanmar and includes food manufactured there as well as from Thailand, China, and even Korea (the stock of Choco-pie biscuits in Imphal appears never-ending).

In areas like Sangaiprou notices pasted onto walls of granaries and warehouses interspersed among the new school buildings read 'Save Agricultural Lands. Save Manipur'. The same signs can be found in other areas on the edges of the city where farmland is being redeveloped. The issue highlights sharp divisions between the agrarian population of the valley, especially on the outskirts of the city, and the new purveyors of private capital investing in education and also hospitals, spiritual retreats, and shopping malls.

The boom in the private education sector is driven by the desire of residents to leave Manipur and pursue aspirations for a better life in other parts of India. The desire to leave is also symptomatic of life in this part of the borderland where violence, surveillance, insecurity and limited livelihood opportunities (or perceptions thereof) push many young people to leave, and a higher secondary education, as well as vocational training, is a crucial component. The privatization of the education sector stems, in part, from the dysfunctional state apparatus and the other sources of power that make things happen in Imphal. In other words, it is doubtful whether such a boom would be possible without the "transgression and erosion" of sovereign power that characterise life in Imphal.[15]

Below:
CPL poster on a granary. Chingol Leikai, Imphal. May 2014. Photo by author.

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SAVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS

SAVE MANIPUR

Publicity:
Conservation Of Paddy Lands and Natural Resources' Protection Committee, Manipur

Renaming as integration

Stories define the landscape in oral societies. Where landscape is named, each name expresses a meaning, and embeds a story. When names are changed, stories are forgotten, and histories are erased. This article draws on fieldwork conducted in Tawang and West Kameng districts of west Arunachal Pradesh (by Swargajyoti Gohain)[1] and West Siang district of central Arunachal Pradesh (by Kerstin Grothmann)[2] to show how militarization transforms landscape in the north-eastern border region of India. Physical settlement of military forces and renaming of local place names by the Indian army have symbolically and materially altered the local landscape in these regions. Unlike the majority of the population of Arunachal Pradesh, who follow various indigenous faiths, with a sizeable percentage among them being Christian converts, the inhabitants of the two regions discussed here are culturally Tibetan Buddhist, with a history of association with Tibet through trade, tax, and government.

Swargajyoti Gohain and Kerstin Grothmann

WEST KAMENG AND TAWANG on the western part of Arunachal Pradesh, traditionally known as Monyul, were part of the Tibetan state for nearly three centuries; the local Monpa communities paid taxes to the Tibetan state until 1951 when the postcolonial Indian government put an end to Tibetan taxation by establishing the first political offices in the area. The central part of Arunachal Pradesh, especially Mechukha, traditionally known as Pachakshiri, also has a significant Tibetan Buddhist presence as many of the Memba inhabitants migrated from Tibet in the early eighteenth century in search of a Tibetan promised land.

The cave of the Gurus

For the Membas, *Pema Shelphug* [Lotus Crystal Cave] is one of the most important holy places in Mechukha valley. According to Memba oral tradition, Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, who propagated Buddhism in Tibet, once came to the valley and recognized its extraordinary qualities for providing refuge for the followers of Buddhist teachings. He concealed it to be discovered at a certain time in future by a preordained Buddhist master (Tertön). The valley became known as the 'Hidden Land of Pachakshiri'. For the Membas, Pema Shelphug cave is the place where this foundation myth of Pachakshiri is located. This cave connects the Membas with their past, and their homeland from which their ancestors once migrated, and where their belief system and moral values originated. It is a symbolic representation of what constitutes Memba society and Memba identity.

The annual pilgrimage to the cave is a major event for the Buddhist Membas. Along the circumambulation path are several spots that are connected to Padmasambhava's sojourn in Pema Shelphug. The pilgrims stop at each site to present ritual offerings and prayers and then gather near the cave to enjoy the day with a picnic. Today, however, this cave has been re-invented as a retreat of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion. In February 2007, Grothmann reached Pema Shelphug, accompanied by a Lama, a religious expert who is also knowledgeable about Pachakshiri's religious history. They were welcomed by a signboard over the entrance gate to the cave that carried the Hindi words, 'Taposthan Shri Guru Nanak Devji' (Meditation place of the divine and venerable Guru Nanak). On climbing the hill, they came upon a small cement platform in front of a wooden shed that was wrapped in Tibetan prayer flags. In the middle of the enclosed space was a table and underneath, a signboard in English that said 'Taposthan Sahib – Shri Guru Nanak Devji'. In the centre of the table was a picture of Guru Nanak and to the right a smaller one depicting Guru Rinpoche. In front of these two images was a plate with incense sticks. The Lama wiped the dust from the table and re-arranged the picture of Guru Rinpoche, placing it more to the centre of the table, and then burned some incense and offered prayers.

As Grothmann wondered aloud about Guru Nanak being worshiped here, the Lama replied shortly, and with an obvious expression of dissatisfaction, that the Sikhs from the Mechukha military base claim that their Guru once stayed here and therefore, they come to this holy place to worship him. Discouraging any further questions, he parted the curtain at the back of the cave to reveal rock imprints of Guru Rinpoche's and his consorts' heads.

The gradual takeover of the cave by the Sikhs began in 1986-87 when Colonel (retd.) Dr. Dalvinder Singh Grewal was posted as a Major at the army outpost in Mechukha. In an article first published in the *Sikh Review* in 1987,[3] which also appeared in different reworked versions in several other Sikh publications and on the internet, Grewal details how he came to know of the Guru's cave and how he forged out a plan to construct a proper place of worship there, including the establishment of a *Gurudwara* (place of worship for Sikhs) a short distance down the slope from the cave. As Grewal writes, the local people even agreed to donate land for the new structure; with their help and the support of the administration and the Indian Army and Air Force the work progressed quickly.

Signboard battle

Two months after Grothmann's first visit, two signboards of almost the same size had been erected next to the entrance gate: a wooden plate reading 'Gurudwara Taposthan' and next to it, a yellow metal sign on which the Memba community welcomed all visitors to 'The holy place of the Lotus Crystal Cave', with the notification of the location written in Tibetan script below. The Lama accompanying Grothmann appeared quite proud of the sign and said that although they cannot expel the Sikhs from the cave, they, that is, the Membas, at least had a sign now that justified their claims to the cave. Six months later, the board announcing the Gurudwara was replaced by a green metal sign reading 'Shri Guru Granth Sahibji', and the signboard of the Memba community had been taken down.

In January 2008 again, the former green metal sign was repainted in yellow with the caption 'Shri Taposthan Shri Guru Nanak Dev' in Hindi and English. There was still no new signboard indicating that the cave is also a place of Buddhist veneration. In October 2009, all sides of the shed had been enclosed with planks, a door was affixed, and next to it, a board strategically placed to catch the visitor's attention announced in Hindi that Guru Maharaja once visited the place and hence it is a sacrosanct place. The picture of Guru Nanak was now placed in a shrine box decorated with artificial flower garlands and the image of Guru Rinpoche hung on the wall instead of its former place at the centre of the table. The only representation of the Buddhist community on the table was a picture of Tertön Chöwang Kunsang Dechen Rangdrol, who

was the last but one in a long line of Buddhist spiritual masters for the Membas of the valley. However, his picture too was later replaced by an image of Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Sikh Gurus, so that in January 2013, there was hardly any evidence left of any Buddhist claims to the cave.

Colonel Grewal's euphoric account of close inter-cultural and interreligious cooperation between the Sikhs of the Indian Army and the Memba community during the construction of the 'Guru Nanak Taposthan' stands in contrast both to the Lama's murmur of disapproval and facial expressions, and to the 'signboard battle' to which Grothmann was witness. In taking territorial control of the cave and renaming it, the Sikhs of the Mechukha regiment privilege their worldview over that of the local Buddhist community. Yet, even though they have subordinated parts of local history, they were not able to completely silence it. The Membas still perform their annual pilgrimage to the cave, and in recent times, have started to promote their religious and cultural heritage to attract domestic and foreign tourists. In this context, it might be possible for the Membas to re-evoke, to some extent, the powerful images and connotations connected with the Lotus Crystal Cave, and with that re-create the latter's history and preserve it for future generations.

Bollywood at the border

Gohain found similar politics of naming in Monyul, western Arunachal Pradesh. Monyul was a stage for the Sino-Indian war of 1962, when Chinese troops attacked several posts on the border, and overran Monyul for three months before they were called back. Monyul has been of particular strategic importance in the Sino-Indian border dispute, given that this region was ruled by Tibet for nearly three centuries following a 1680 edict by the Fifth Dalai Lama proclaiming Tibetan control of the land.[4] Monyul was divided into three tax posts from which taxes in the form of grains and yak butter or cheese were carried to Tibet, in relay form, and the local Monpa communities were subject to Tibetan jurisdiction. After 1962, with the military closure of borders, the Monpas were barred from crossing over to Tibet for trade or pilgrimage. The army has since occupied vast stretches of prime land and grazing pastures for use as cantonment areas and firing ranges. More significantly, the army has renamed local villages and natural landmarks on the grounds that the mostly Hindi-speaking soldiers are unable to pronounce Tibetan-based toponyms, so much so that the new army-given names have replaced older ones in postal addresses. In some cases, patriotic zeal combines with narratives from Bollywood, the Indian film industry, to create new legends of touristic appeal.

A case in point is the Zela Pass, a mountain pass that needs to be crossed in order to reach Tawang district, bordering Tibet, from the adjoining West Kameng district to its south. According to Tsering, headman of Senge village which directly overlooks the pass, Zela is a mountain god who resides on the pass; if the god hears noises, he causes rain to fall.[5] Zela now has been distorted to Sela, and while the name change was initiated by the British colonial rulers, it has acquired a new significance through a legend that soldiers are fond of telling. When Gohain travelled in 2006 to Tawang, she was served tea at a small shed by two friendly sentries who enthusiastically showed her the memorial built in the name of Jaswant Singh, the Indian soldier who singlehandedly battled with Chinese soldiers before being killed. The legend of the brave Jaswant Singh has been embellished today. In the soldiers' account, Jaswant was assisted in his valiant battle by two local girls

called Sela and Nura. The mountain pass where Sela gave her life is now named after her, and a second place, Nuranang, is named after Nura. This is a popular story and no one knows how it originated. Whether or not army officers would validate the new version, it still circulates – among tourists, taxi-drivers and lonely soldiers stationed in misty outposts who further help to circulate the story among fresh tourists. The old headman protests such acts of renaming, and yet, travellers from other parts of India are more impressed by the story of a possible romance between an Indian soldier and local girl than the story of an obscure mountain god. The new legend, not surprisingly, greatly resembles the plot of a classic Bollywood war film *Haqeeqat,* in which an Indian soldier, played by the dashing Dharmendra, stationed in Leh during the India-China war of 1962 is aided by a local girl, played by beautiful actress Priya who dies alongside him in battle.[6]

A second instance of Bollywood influence is the name change of lake Tshongatser. According to local memory, the lake was formed after an earthquake created a crater on land traditionally used as grazing pastures. It is now popularly known as Madhuri Lake, after top Bollywood actress Madhuri Dixit shot for a Hindi film *Koyla* at the lake site in 1996. As local army men, taxi drivers and others serving the tourist business started referring to the lake as Madhuri Lake, the new name gradually took over.

Several people have objected to military renaming practices, spurred by the fiery speeches of Buddhist spiritual leader Tsona Gontse Rinpoche, who was a staunch advocate of Tibetan Buddhist cultural preservation in Monyul before his untimely death in April 2013. A few individuals and organizations have taken upon themselves the task of systematically compiling and documenting older place names, before they are lost in oblivion. Yet, army-given names proliferate. These names, which either recall military figures (for example, Jinda Pahar, literally translated as 'living hill', was apparently named after an army man called Jinda) or Hindu gods and goddesses (for example, Rama camp in Monyul or Hanuman camp in Mechukha) re-order space by transforming Monyul into a (north)Indian culture-scape.

Contested stories

For the sake of brevity and space, this article cannot touch on all dimensions of military renaming in Arunachal Pradesh. But it calls attention to renaming as a symbolic act of contestation over space. The contest over place-names or politics of toponymy may be compared with the politics of repatriation. Repatriation of material culture involves justifying rights over material heritage by tracing both membership in and lineage from the original, ancestral community, such as the Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) for Native Americans in North America.

Local assertions over places and place names may be considered as the repatriation claims of non-material culture or intangible heritage. If repatriation of material artefacts to native communities constitutes an answer, although partial, to material claims over space, what could the solution to military renaming of local places be?

Naming in the post-colony, more often than not, has been a political act. Naming and re-naming of public spots, institutions, monuments, streets or natural landmarks aid the project of nationalist memorialization by commemorating a political leader or event in national history. In India, as in several erstwhile colonies, place-names bear the imprint of colonial rule, and cities, in particular, abound with colonially given names. In many instances, these names were given to commemorate a foundational act. Victoria Memorial in Kolkata built in 1921 stands as a famous insignia of British rule in India even today. In postcolonial India, therefore, renaming formerly colonial place names with new ones is an act of con-testation, whereby history is reclaimed from the colonizers by the previously colonized. A good example is Connaught Place in the heart of Delhi city, which was renamed in the 1990s by the then Congress government as 'Rajiv Gandhi Chowk' after Rajiv Gandhi, scion of the ruling Gandhi dynasty who was assassinated by a suicide bomber in Colombo, and who represented modern India.[7] The symbolism of names becomes obvious in this case. While Connaught Place calls to mind the colonial past, a bygone era, Rajiv Gandhi Chowk locates Delhi very centrally in an Indian modernity, and in the political now.

Renaming of border areas by the Indian army is similarly loaded with political symbolism. If military naming serves the purpose of nationalist integration, through claiming an area as continuous with the nation's cultural geography, or in the case of the Guru Nanak's cave, with the sacred geography of the Indian nation, resistance to renaming, such as the 'signboard battle' detailed by Grothmann or the documenting of older names, identified by Gohain, constitute opposite claims over space. In Mechukha and Monyul, people retain a strong territory based identity, where place-names call forth a collective identity, and prescribe a moral code for conduct.[8] Renaming breaks these metonymic connections between name and identity by cutting the thread of oral lore that linked them in people's minds. Elder people still remember the older stories today, but only few among the younger generation do.

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The view from the islands

This article aims to present an alternative way to see the borderland beyond national boundaries.[1] Through the case of the Ogasawara Islands, it explicates 'the view from the islands' that contests with the concept of the border defined by the nation-state. Just like many places in so-called borderland regions, the Ogasawara Islands have been marginalized and militarized for many years, and a major military base of Japan Self-Defense Forces still remains there. From the point of view of the state, it is crucial to militarily secure these islands, which lie on the edge of Japanese territory, for reasons of defense. However, in the islanders' view, Ogasawara has never been located at the periphery of one single nation, preserving its own expanding locus towards many others. To clarify this view from the islands, the article suggests utilizing music and dance, vital media to illustrate human bonds that transcend national borders. Ogasawara musical culture exemplifies multiple connections of the islands with other places and peoples, and suggests an alternative vision of the borderland that celebrates crossing, mobility, and trans-border networks.

Masaya Shishikura

Below:
Students' hula performance at the annual Ogasawara hula festival 'Ohana 2011. Photo by the author.

Musical crossings of the Ogasawara Islands

Military history

Located in the Pacific Ocean south of Japan, the Ogasawara Islands (or 'Bonin Islands' in English) have been continuously marginalized by different political regimes. Five Westerners and some 20 people from Hawai'i first settled in the uninhabited islands of Ogasawara in 1830, and were later followed by more migrants from Western countries as well as Micronesia. Since then, the island people have suffered various political manipulations and militarization. For instance, when the Japanese government began its colonial scheme of Ogasawara, the Westerner/Pacific Islander residents were forced to be Japanese *shinmin* ('obedient citizens'), and yet were labeled and marginalized as *ijin* (literally meaning 'different people,' but has connotation of 'aliens'). During the Pacific War (1941-45), the islands were fortified against the impeding US military campaign; one of the islands Iwo Tō ('Iwo Jima' in English) became the place for the fierce Battle of Iwo Jima (19 February-26 March 1945). All the civilians were forced to evacuate to the unfamiliar land of mainland Japan, and to live desperate hand to mouth existences. Then, after the war, the US Navy took control of Ogasawara, together with Okinawa, Amami, Tokara, and other islands in Micronesia, and allowed only Western descendants to return to the islands.[2] The Japanese settlers of the islands were excluded from their home and became refugees in mainland Japan. During this period, against the Japanese non-nuclear policy, the US Navy deployed nuclear weapons on the islands of Chichi Jima and Iwo Tō.[3] In 1968, the islands were returned to Japanese administration. The reversion again troubled the Western descendants, who experienced difficulties and discrimination with the newly introduced social system. Today, the Ogasawara Islands are basically safe and at peace, but some social problems due to the fringed locality still remain unresolved. For instance, after the reversion, the Japanese government maintained the island of Iwo Tō for military and other strategic purposes. So, the former Iwo Tō residents are still unable to return to the island even after 70 years; many who remained in exile died amidst nostalgia for home.

Militarization and marginalization of Ogasawara also appear in the politics of memory. Again, the island of Iwo Tō is a good example. Since the Pacific War, a substantial number of records about the Battle of Iwo Jima has been collected, including detailed statistics of the battle and strategies against the US military campaign. Yet little is known today about daily life on the island before the war; it is acknowledged, however, that the unique lifestyle and cultural activities were closely associated with the locality and landscape. For instance, as there was no stream or pond for fresh water on the island of Iwo Tō, the people collected rainwater in huge tanks, in which goldfish were released to remove wigglers. Interestingly, there was little need to provide water for farms, which obtained enough moisture from the morning dew caused by the temperature differences between day and night. There were also rich and diverse cultural activities, including *bon* dance conventions during summertime, *sumō* wrestling tournaments dedicated to the Iwo Tō shrine, film viewing in the elementary school's courtyard, and dance events derived from Micronesia where many Iwo Tō islanders worked before the Pacific War. Former Iwo Tō residents, who currently live in Chichi Jima, Ogasawara, revealed these facts during interviews.[4] Interestingly, they all confessed to finding it difficult to recollect past stories without friends and family with whom to share memories

of pre-war Iwo Tō life, and who constitute the missing link in their narratives. Today, the airbase of the Japan Self-Defense Forces occupies most of the past Motoyama district, which was previously the largest residential area, in ironic representation of how the politics of memory acts.

Dynamic 'frontier'

The case of Iwo Tō is an extreme example, but the Ogasawara Islands too remain on the periphery of Japan within the conventional nation-state gaze. Within broader national discourses, the borderland is often located in a subordinate position, which is manipulated and militarized to accommodate a national ideology and security policy. To overcome this unequal status in politics, historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki proposes the "view from the frontier" that contests with the concept of national border.[5] The national border is the line that must be protected by the law and forces, otherwise it could be overrun. As appears in this Focus of the Newsletter, the borderland is often secured and militarized, regardless of the crossing and mobility of people, their life and culture. In contrast to the national border, Morris-Suzuki conceptualizes the 'frontier' as a spatial designation that retains its own dynamic locus with living and moving people. The frontier is not a definite space enclosed by a line and forces, and connects places and peoples beyond imagined boundaries. The frontier is, thus, a more productive and fruitful space. In reality, as in the other articles of this section, the borderland remains under the control of national security policy and strategies. Nevertheless, it is still important to have the transposed view from the frontier, because it frees us from the confined discourses and suggests a recognition of the complicated webs of peoples crossing the borderlands.

In the case of Ogasawara, it is true that the islands are like many other borderlands. For instance, public access to this remote place is limited; a boat trip of 25.5 hours from Tokyo metropolitan is the only way to the islands, which is available only once a week. The major armed forces that have remained on the islands of Chichi Jima and Iwo Tō change the look of the landscape with their warships, helicopters, and military personnel. However, in their own view, Ogasawara people are never located in a marginalized border, and see themselves connected to many others.

Musical culture

The consciousness of Ogasawara's expanding locus typically appears in their musical activities. For instance, the islanders perform *taiko* drumming, *bon* dance, and shrine festival music with respect to the Japanese immigrants who began various cultural activities in this place of isolation and solitude. They also enjoy songs and dance derived from Micronesia (currently recognized as Ogasawara cultural heritage), and extend their sentiments towards past islanders who travelled around the Pacific, subject to the politics of different nation-states.[6] The summer rock music festival Jammin' is a legacy of the American period; the so-called Western descendants islanders played rock 'n' roll and country music during the US Navy era, and these activities continued and expanded on the islands after the reversion. The current Ogasawara residents even practice hula, in which they embrace nostalgia for the early Hawaiian migrants and their cultural practices that still remain on the islands today.[7]

In their variety of musical activities, the Ogasawara Islanders preserve gratitude and affinity to many peoples: the early

settlers who created a community in the middle of nowhere; Japanese immigrants who enriched the islands with music and dance; anonymous Micronesians who inherited the cultural heritage of Ogasawara; and numerous other migrants who crossed boundaries to bring a wide diversity of musical culture to this small and remote community. Without these multiple narratives of crossing, the variety of musical activities would never appear as it does today on the Ogasawara Islands.[8] In the plurality of history and culture, Ogasawara people find sympathy and rapport with many others and identify themselves beyond the border or boundaries of a single nation-state.
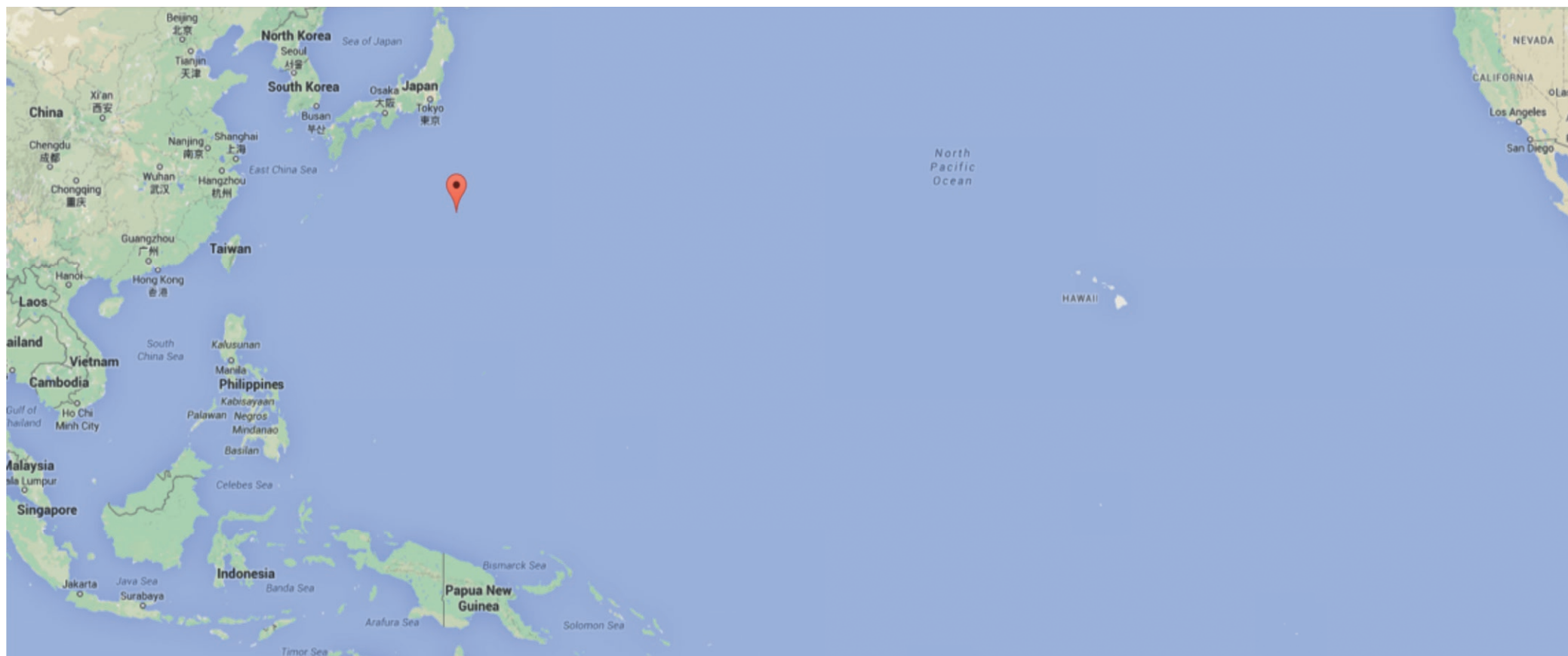
The border imagined through the nation and international politics creates tangible boundaries: fences, walls, and security gates with soldiers and militarized equipment. Even though national borders are imaginary and imagined constructs, they eventually regulate people's crossing and mobility, and further confine our mentality to see the borderlands within one-sided nation-based discourses. However, as shown in the case of Ogasawara, people living in the borderlands indeed live beyond these boundaries. They may not be able to escape appropriation by the wider discourses and ideology of nation-states; nevertheless, we still recognize local collective politics that attempt to overcome the conventional gaze towards the borderlands. The view from the islands allows us to realize the borderlands in an alternative way in which music helps us to see crossing and multiple interactions of people beyond boundaries.
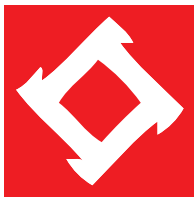
Masaya Shishikura is an ethnomusicologist, who conducts research on 'music, travel and translation towards trans-border humanity'. A former IIAS fellow, he now holds a research fellowship at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Study, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India (shishikuramasaya@gmail.com).

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1 This article is revised from a paper presented at an IIAS Lunch Lecture on 18 November 2014.
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Below:
Map showing the remote location of the Ogasawara Islands.
(Google maps)

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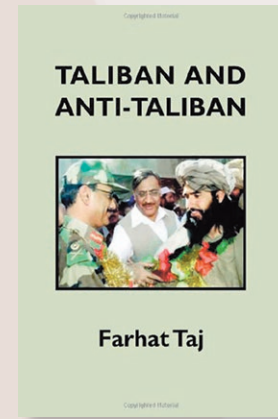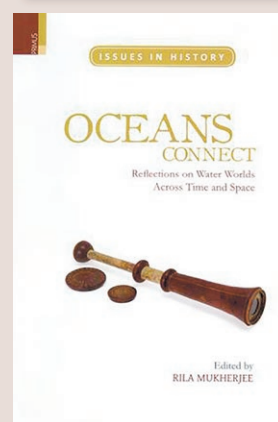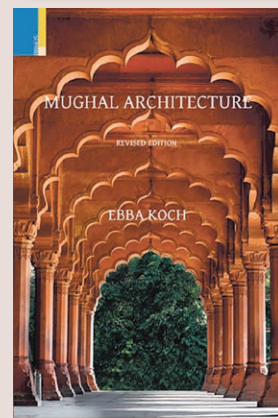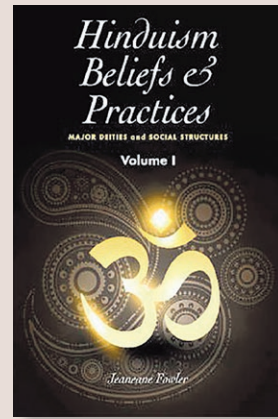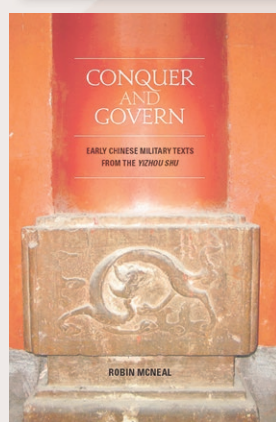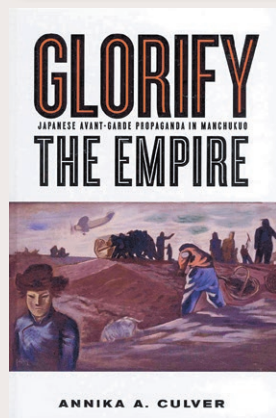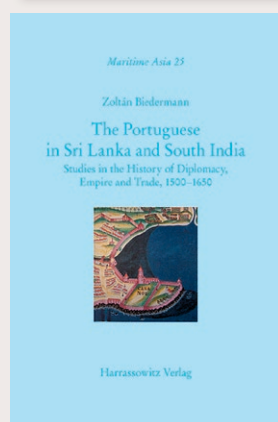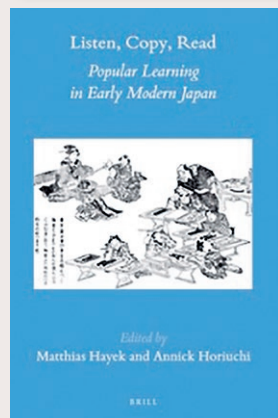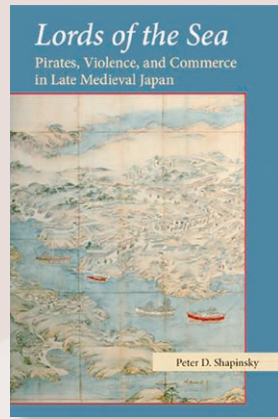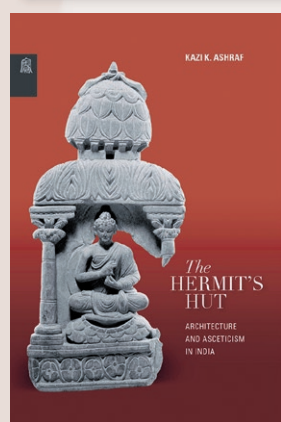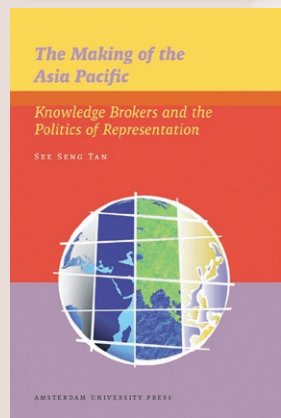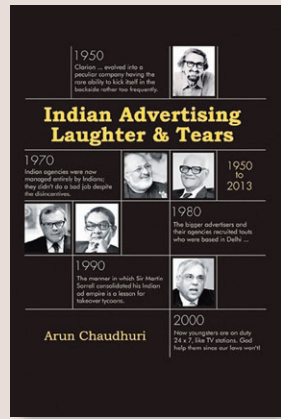
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Two views about China's spreading influence

The two books under discussion here were written by investigative journalists, and it is clear that the authors endured many discomforts and dangers in their pursuit of information in parts of the world where travel is difficult and even dangerous. Cardenal and Araújo claim to have undertaken eighty flights pursuing investigations for their book, conducting more than 500 interviews. French provides a map showing his routes through twelve African countries. All three speak several languages, e.g., English, French, Mandarin, Portuguese and Spanish, which clearly helped their research. Both books deal with China's expanding influence around the world; specifically in Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Asia. The main theme is China's struggle to secure supplies of natural resources, open new markets for its products and create strong alliances. There is a sense throughout that this is an existential struggle for the Chinese as individuals and as a nation. Chinese emigrants have consistently displayed the ability to make great sacrifices, work extremely hard, and take audacious risks. Chinese people also have a traditional system of lending money to each other and an ethic of repaying it. This gives them great economic power.

Reviewer: Julia Read
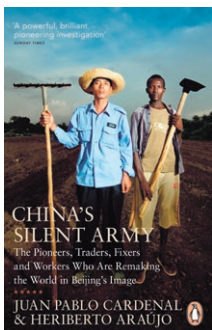
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Cardenal, J.P. & H. Araújo. 2014.
(translated by Catherine Mansfield;
first published in Spanish as
La sclenciosa conquista China, 2011)
*China's Silent Army: The Pioneers,
Traders, Fixers and Workers Who Are
Remaking the World in Beijing's Image,*
London: Penguin Books, ISBN
9780241957530

China's silent army

The idea behind *China's Silent Army* came in 2009 when Juan Pablo Cardenal and Heriberto Araújo became fascinated by the magnitude of China's phenomenal economic expansion and decided to carry out an investigation on the ground, which took two years – though they state the English edition is thoroughly updated. They suggest that the Beijing Olympics in 2008 was a watershed event because it rehabilitated China in the eyes of the world, eclipsing issues like the Tiananmen Square massacre and persecution of Falun Gong members. This gave China a better public image and more credibility, and since then Chinese expansion of trade and influence has not received much interference from international scrutiny because the West has been preoccupied by the GFC and its aftermath. This book is critical of what the authors describe as unprincipled activities by Chinese authorities and individual emigrants – the 'silent army'.

Cardenal and Araújo accuse China of harming the environment of its neighbours and trading partners. For example, the four provinces of northern China that border Russia have a population of 132 million people and a great need for natural resources. On the other side, a vast territory is home to just 6 million people with abundant natural resources needed by the Chinese: water, wood, oil and fertile land. Since the collapse of the USSR, Siberian forests have been subjected to unsustainable looting of trees and forest products for an increasingly anarchic unregulated trade with China. In Kazakhstan, cheap Chinese products have flooded its markets – in the process destroying its industries – in exchange for oil, which is piped into China.

In Central Asia, the hereditary ruler of Turkmenistan is richly rewarded by China for supplying gas. In Iran – while supporting US efforts to stop Iran developing a nuclear arsenal – China has played an important role in Tehran's ambitions to develop a medium-range ballistic missile (capable of carrying a nuclear warhead) by supplying components, materials and chemicals through third countries. China also sells arms to Iran and enables Iranian exports via Hong Kong, despite international sanctions.

Chinese goods are sold in every corner of Africa, from Cape Verde to South Africa. A good proportion of the 750,000 official Chinese immigrants in Africa have gone into retail business, setting up shops in all the urban hubs and conquering the sector, which until recently was generally dominated by local business-men or more traditional immigrants. This has been possible because of China's acceptance into the World Trade Organi-sation in 2001 – with support of the US, which hoped to sell its products to China, but with the result that Chinese products have taken over world markets through WTO negotiations.

In Latin America, a Chinese state company now controls 320,000 hectares of Argentinian agricultural land. Argentina is now China's third biggest food supplier and the Chinese have also created an empire of over 8,900 supermarkets in the country. In Peru, Shougeng – a Chinese iron and steel producer – owns a concession covering 670 square kilometres, including the original town, and "treats the local residents like unwanted guests", while the Peruvian government gets rich dividends and ignores the problem.

Worldwide, China makes up for some technology it lacks with political connections and financial clout. Developing countries (such as Angola, which urgently needed to rebuild its basic infrastructure but did not have access to a qualified work-force, let alone the necessary funding) can obtain quick results and highly favourable financing on the basis of a simple pact: Chinese construction companies carry on projects across the country and receive payment directly from the Chinese Exim Bank, while the borrowing country supplies China with natural resources to pay the Chinese loan. In this way the leaders of the borrowing country are prevented from misusing the loan money and the project is assured of completion. While state-owned Chinese businesses have considerable resources, both financial and political, the authors also put a human face on the individual efforts and sacrifices of the labourers, engineers, tradespeople and entrepreneurs who are the unsung heroes and in many ways also the victims of China's global expansion. The indigenous workers on the projects in most cases are victims too, because they are badly paid, work in dangerous conditions and are not given training by Chinese contractors. The extractive industries employ few locals and only in menial positions. It works very much like classical colonialism.

These are only a few of many stories in *China's Silent Army*. This book is a fascinating roller-coaster ride, but it is clear that as the authors were researching, they were publishing numerous articles, which largely make up the book. This makes it hard to come to grips with the implications and suggestions that continually pop up and get swept aside in the onward rush. It is, after all, journalism, albeit investigative, rather than scholarship. However, investigative journalists often uncover things that point the way for scholars who might otherwise be unaware of them.

Quo Vadis China?

The discussion of China's growing prominence in international life attracts increasing attention from publics, policy-makers, and scholars alike. Usually sidelined by the mainstream, such interest in China's roles and attitudes on the world stage has grown exponentially in the context of the deepening concomitant economic, social, political crises across Europe and North America – which, until very recently, have been considered the traditional locales of powers and influence in world politics. Indicative of the emergent weight and significance of non-Western actors on the global stage, the trend set by China seems to challenge the conven-tional frameworks of both the study and practice of International Relations (IR).

Reviewer: Emilian Kavalski

Reviewed publication
Shao Binhong. 2013.
*China and the World: Balance, Imbalance,
Rebalance,* Leiden/Boston: Brill, Series:
'China in the World: A Survey of
Chinese Perspectives on International
Politics and Economics', Volume 1,
ISBN 9780739178508

IN THIS SETTING, most commentators suggest a nascent 'Sinicization' of global politics – seemingly confirmed by China's extensive involvement not just in the developing world, but also its palpable outreach to all regions on the globe. According to a number of commentators, back-stopping such a drive are the perceived and actual aspirations of Beijing's external outlook. Thus, more often than not, the contention in the literature is that regardless of whether China chooses to develop a cooperative or conflictual stance, it will nevertheless have an important bearing on the patterns and practices of world affairs. The volume edited by Shao Binhong goes to the heart of this conversation. It brings together a diversity of Chinese perspectives on the trans-formations in and the transformative potential of Chinese foreign policy. In this respect, the collection offers invaluable insight into the concerns, challenges, and hopes of the Chinese academic and policy community.

Reviewed title
French, H.W. 2014.
*China's Second Continent:
How a Million Migrants Are
Building a New Empire in Africa,*
New York: Alfred A. Knopf,
ISBN 9780307056989

China's second continent

China's Second Continent explores the Chinese impact on Zambia, Senegal, Liberian, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mali, Ghana, Mozambique and Namibia. Howard French's major interest is in Africa's evolution and the relationship between Africa and China, which he predicts will be one of the most crucial relationships of the 21st century. French became fascinated by China's rise because he was struck by the omnipresence of Chinese immigrants throughout Africa. There is more focus in this book on individual Africans and Chinese and their interactions and mutual misunderstandings. French's account is nuanced; he attempts to analyse what makes it possible for people from these two very different cultures to work together, and what impedes successful collaboration between them.

French believes that there is an "unstudied human factor in the equation" because he estimates at least a million private Chinese citizens in the past decade have chosen to seek a new future for themselves on African soil, many of them pulling up stakes in China entirely of their own initiative. The way the individuals who make up this enormous unguided

Above:Detail - China's
Silent Army cover.

horde have gone about their lives and businesses, and their general behaviour and the relationships they have formed, are all shaping China's image in Africa and conditioning its ties with Africa, but, he claims, have largely escaped scrutiny to date because of their unofficial nature.

Chinese people, French reminds us, have been emigrating for hundreds of years, fleeing hunger, war, repression and social conflict. Many factors have contributed to China's having one of the largest emigrant populations in history, with around 35 million people of Chinese ethnicity (mostly from the Han ethnic group) scattered around the planet. They have consistently shown the ability to make great sacrifices, work extremely hard, and take audacious risks. Their capacity for hard work and saving money, as well as their sharp business sense, are handed down from generation to generation. There are numerous stories in both these books of heroic self-sacrifice and incredible efforts by individual Chinese people, which made me gasp in awe.

But these are not the only factors. Chinese people also have a traditional system of lending money to each other and an ethic of always repaying it. This gives Chinese communities great economic power. Emigrants can access a network of connections which amounts to a global enterprise, linked by a multifunctioning business network, with high mobility and dense flows of capital goods and information, while they retain a marginal social status or low profile within the local societies in which they live. With time, they intermingle and become active participants, contributing to the local community, but they remain conscious of carrying a legacy and certain values that must be passed down to future generations.

French stresses the point that Africa is at a critical juncture in its history when a combination of demographics, education and communication technologies have begun to open up possibilities for a number of African countries to break with their poverty and underdevelopment and rise into the ranks of middle-income countries. In terms of overall growth, Africa has nearly matched Asia and (based on current trends) is expected to take over the global lead, with the continent's population set to double from one to two billion by the middle of this century, placing most of it squarely in a zone known as the 'demographic dividend' where young, working-age people outnumber unproductive dependents.

However, growth and development are not the same thing, and French's concern is that while some well-governed African nations will leverage natural resources and population growth in ways that will lead to prosperity in the next 50 years, others who have fewer resources or are badly served by their leaders will end up nightmarishly crowded and politically unstable, with depleted resources and destroyed environments. Strong demand and plentiful investment from China could fuel growth and expand opportunities in Africa; or China's voracious appetites could lead to harmful subjugation and exploitation.

Having had access to American advisers and diplomats over the years, French has some interesting comments on American attitudes and policies towards Africa. Five years earlier a US Ambassador to Chad had made light of China's

mounting profile in Africa, exhibiting an attitude that was both dismissive and patronising. "It is ridiculous to think of China challenging the United States!" he had said in exasperation. But French felt a widespread and growing sense that China, at least in economic terms, was on its way to becoming the indispensable and expeditious new partner that could change the direction of nations in ways that the West with its countless rules and procedural demands had promised but never seemed to get around to. He says the Americans "always seemed to have bigger fish to fry".

French relates that countless conversations with Africans have suggested to him that they see the United States as the epitome of all their disappointments. Africans feel let down by the Americans, who make beautiful, principled speeches and impose countless conditions on all manner of things – in the end, seeming to move the ball very slowly. Americans regard Africa not as a terrain of opportunity, or even as a morally compelling challenge to humanity, but as a burden – and largely as one to be evaded if possible. He was told American builders show no interest in working on big projects in Africa. They fear high operating costs and all they can imagine is violence, corruption and disease. The Chinese are able to capture market share from Western business by cheaper financing from Chinese state banks, cheaper Chinese materials and cheaper Chinese labour.

Summary

These two books raise many questions. They show the thin line between the positive and negative implications of China's enormous population and energy. Both books examine the consequences of all this activity for the countries receiving money, support (e.g., construction of roads and hospitals) and investment from China. Cardenal and Araújo posit that China's conquest of the rest of the world is now entering a phase of penetration of Western markets, armed with cash, diplomacy, tireless entrepreneurs, and a massive, varied flood of products that are becoming progressively more difficult to compete with. They see Chinese expansion as an unstoppable force. French's concern is that the Chinese expansion is very much like the earlier European colonial expansion: dominated by greed, haphazard, wasteful, wanton, and likely to leave Africa, in many ways, worse off.

China's Silent Army has a worldwide scope and contains only a 5-page index, but 180 pages of copious notes with detailed references, sources and resources make it a very useful resource for those interested in politics, development, economics, and the future of the planet as a whole. *China's Second Continent,* shorter and with a narrower scope, has a more comprehensive index but only five pages of notes, making it a more limited resource, but highly relevant for people interested in African development. Both books should be of considerable interest to people in the field of intercultural communication.

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Dissecting China's international outreach

The growing propensity and willingness of China's international outreach presents an intriguing intersection of the discursive memory of the past with the dynamic contexts of the present and the anticipated tasks of the future. By bringing together Chinese-language sources rarely referenced in Western IR literature, the contributors to Shao's volume manage to construct a thoughtful and extremely vivid picture of the complexity and diversity that mark Chinese IR scholarship. In fact, many readers would perhaps be surprised by the lack of a uniform and centralized IR discourse in China. As Shao's collection deftly demonstrate such a surprise is reflective of particularly Orientalizing ways of imagining China in the West, which tend to remain detached from the nuanced socio-political, historic, and regional contexts of Chinese IR literature.

The collection includes a number of studies exploring the domestic and international changes and challenges impacting China's worldviews. At the same time, other analyses probe a diversity of perspectives on the so-called nascent 'China Model' (p.69) of world affairs. According to its interlocutors, the China Model has simultaneously economic, financial, security, global governance dimensions. These dimensions – either individually or in tandem – are made apparent in the process and context of specific topics and practices of China's international out-reach. The contributors to the collection also discuss at length China's interactions with a variety of partners – located both in China's immediate vicinity and further away. In either case, perceptions of proximity appear to be created not according

to the geographic distance from Beijing, but on contextual interpretations of the historical, cultural and socio-political record. Perhaps, unexpectedly, the topic of power transition and the alleged waning of American global power provide an important undercurrent of this conversation. The final section of the volume offers a stimulating forum on the likely trajectories of Sino-American relations in the next decade.

The accounts of China's international affairs included in the collection edited by Shao testify to the vim and vigor of Chinese IR scholarship. At the same time, the vibrant analyses provided by the contributors to the volume demonstrate what might be termed as the two salient features underlying Chinese assessments of world affairs: their subjectivity and preoccupation with ensuring China's national interest. The collection therefore demonstrates that IR scholars in China are, on the one hand, much more forthcoming about their own personal predilections and, on the other hand, quite explicit that their theoretical peregrinations in IR are intent on strengthening China's international status. This appears to be the key distinction from Western IR theory, where the explanation and understanding of any school is expected to conform to a particular understanding of objectivity and scientific method. Not surprisingly, therefore, many of the analyses included in the collection are underpinned by strong normative commitments, prescribing unequivocally that China "should behave as a responsible power" (p.123).

Whither IR with Chinese characteristics?

The collection edited by Shao offers ample evidence of the contested nature of Chinese discourses on international affairs. What emerges is a framing of world affairs premised on the fusion of complex innovation and its creative contextualization within the idiosyncratic experience of China. In this respect, the contributors to Shao's volume make a timely and extremely pertinent contribution to the discussion of Chinese (and, more broadly, non-Western) approaches to world politics. The erudite analyses included in the volume offer a much needed contextual understanding of how China views and interprets the world. In this way, the collection edited by Shao has succeeded to provide refreshing perspectives on the content, scope, and implications of Chinese IR scholarship. The accounts provided by the contributes make available thoughtful reconsiderations of China's global roles as well as offer a wealth of solid knowledge and perceptive insights into the evolution, patterns and practices of China's foreign policy. To the experts of China's international interactions, Shao's volume grants unparalleled access both to comprehensive overviews and a much-needed reassessments of the conceptual outlines of Beijing's nascent global agency. To the beginners, it makes available accessible, yet rigorous, analytical and empirical engagements with the discourses animating Chinese IR thinking.

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I Gusti Nyoman Lempad

I Gusti Nyoman Lempad is a remarkable figure from the advent of what is now known as Modern Balinese Art. He lived a very long life. He was born in Bedulu in Central Bali around 1862 and he died in 1978 in Ubud, at the astonishing age of 116 years. During his lifetime, Bali changed from a feudal island ruled by 9 kings, to a small part of the Dutch colonial empire, to finally a small province of the Republic of Indonesia. Not only that, from a predominantly rural and agrarian island it changed into what is popularly called a resort, attracting millions of tourists and other visitors each year. Bali was lost to itself; an intricate web of myths, stories and down-right lies increasingly came to change a once vibrant living culture into a living museum, all the while obscuring the real life and needs of a large part of its indigenous population. Although many Balinese reap the fruits of modern developments, it is astonishing that most Balinese, who do not live in paradisiacal conditions – what with poverty, unending traffic jams and horrendous pollution – have not loudly protested against this resort fantasy.

Reviewer: Dick van der Meij

1.

2.

Reviewed publication:
Carpenter, B.W. et al. 2014.
Lempad of Bali. The illuminating Line,
Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, ISBN: 9789814385978

THE ACCEPTED PICTURE is that when Bali found itself under Dutch colonial rule, the role of the ruling classes changed dramatically, causing a gradual decline in palace arts. In the late 1920s and 1930s Balinese traditional sacred and feudal art changed into tourist junk, but also into some of the most exciting pieces of painting art to come out of the vast Indonesian archipelago. Time and again three foreign painters are mentioned in connection with this important change: the Dutch painter Rudolf Bonnet, the Russian-born German painter Walter Spies and, in the later period, Arie Smit. Much has been written about these three in the recent past, each having been awarded virtual hagiographic works and by so doing turning them into the almost untouchable patrons of Balinese art.

So, where were the Balinese in all this? They were the makers of the paintings, but not necessarily the main beneficiaries of their own labors, especially now when early works make fortunes on the international art market. The painters were criticized for their lack of skill and knowledge of traditional, mainly European painting traditions and perspective (by Bonnet), adored fellow artists to be left to their own devices (Spies) or as painters to be just coached to do what they like best (Smit). One of the most extraordinary Balinese artists in this configuration is I Gusti Nyoman Lempad. He was initially a sculptor, who adorned Balinese temples in the Ubud area of Bali with the necessary gods, demons and story reliefs, and a carver of wooden masks and cremation sarcophagi. Later he also turned to painting with astonishing success. Foreigners liked his work because it was different, highly decorative and at times downright porno-graphic and thus naughty and liked for that reason as well. Another reason that he was admired is that he allowed his fantasy to run wild, and by doing so he was able to transform traditional ways of depiction into something completely novel.

Six international authors on Balinese art have been given the opportunity to write short introductory essays for the catalogue of Lempad's work: John Darling, Hedi Hinzler, Kaja McGowan, Soemantri Widagdo, Bruce Carpenter, and Adrian Vickers. If anything, they show that Balinese art is still a puzzle and that much scholarly work remains to be undertaken to do the paintings and Lempad's technique the honor they probably deserve. As it stands, like with so many works on Balinese art, the essays navigate between the anecdotic and the obscure, and many of them present the same information. The editing of the book has not paid tribute to the authors of the articles and that is a pity. However, since they only concern the first 70 of the 424 pages of the book this is not a serious problem. It is indeed the first time that so many of his paintings and drawings are presented in one volume and thus now available for scholarly exploration. The book's main interest lies undeniably in the catalogue part, which shows much more than paintings inspired by narrative. Many paintings depict scenes of daily life and thus give great insights.

As a traditional Balinese lower aristocrat he was versed in indigenous Balinese stories and in the Hindu epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and he drew heavily on them for his pictorial art. The extent to which he used these stories can expertly be seen in the present book where the narrative paintings are discussed and the stories they depict explained.

It would be, as in many other cases as well, incorrect to think that Lempad made all his drawings and paintings on his own accord. From the book it becomes clear that many foreigners commissioned his work and, sometimes, even had their own ideas of what he should make. Helene Potjewijd ordered 25 drawings of stories as early as the 1930s, as did Margaret Mead in 1938. Spies ordered a series of drawings of the Balinese story Brayut – of the husband and wife with countless unruly sons and daughters – Christiaan Hooykaas and his wife commissioned drawings that illustrated folktales, which is interesting because it might mean that the artist himself was probably not

The first *catalogue raisonné* of Balinese painting

Fig. 1 (top left):
Garuda Devours
the Tortoise and
Elephant. Lois
Bateson Collection.
Ex-collection
Bateson and Mead.
Ink, cinnabar and
gold leaf on paper,
35 x 26.5 cm,
dated 1936, p. 125.

Fig. 2 (below left):
Ni Bawang
Decorated by Birds
of the Forest. Vienna
World Museum.
Ex-collection
Helene Potjewyd.
Ink, cinnabar and
gold leaf on paper,
28 x 21 cm, 1930s,
p. 233.

Fig. 3 (top right):
Kecak Dance.
Ganesha Collection,
USA. Ink, cinnabar
and gold leaf on
paper, 35 x 35 cm,
1930s, p. 404.

Fig. 4 (below right):
Dancer Emerging
from Trance.
Dance Museum of
Sweden, Stockholm.
Ex-collection
Rolf de Maré.
Ink, cinnabar and
gold leaf on paper,
28.9 x 37.5 cm,
dated 1937, p. 384.

inclined to do so himself. The relationship between the Hindu epics and so-called 'folktales' has never been properly explored but textual relationships, or absence thereof, may in fact be reflected in narrative painting art as well. For example, illustrated palm leaf manuscripts almost invariably depict stories from the Hindu epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana or texts directly based on them, rather than folktales. The difference between the depiction of the epic heroes, which is standardized throughout the arts, be they painting or sculpture, and the depiction of folktale characters, may be illuminating, especially since the latter tend towards standardization as well, but still offer the artist all the opportunities he needs to use his imagination.

Perhaps this juncture is the most interesting one. Not only was Lempad a painter who 'made to order' and who was thus inspired by foreign ideas of what to depict, he also had to find out how to do it. The astonishing difference in quality and craftsmanship between the makers of traditional sculpture and painting and those who started to make more naturalistic works of art is often overlooked in art history on the island. Perhaps by looking closely at how Lempad managed to bridge the gap, much may be learned from what really happened in the Balinese arts, in the 1930 up to now.

The book presents a 'catalogue raisonné', yet not all of Lempad's works are reproduced in the book. Balinese social dynamics have gotten in the way. More comprehensive works on Indonesian painters must be published, to ensure that the study of the Indonesian painting traditions and modern paintings are paid their dues. As it stands, with the increasing international attention for and sales of Indonesian painting art it would perhaps be an idea to move them from museums of ethnology to art museums, also in the West?

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The creoleness of Betawi culture

Megacities of the 21st century have become contact zones where various cultures meet. These become places where not only commercial exchanges take place, but also where linguistic and cultural traits are translated between one culture and another. It is remarkable how often these sites of cultural translation include the great port cities of the age of colonization – like Lagos, Mumbai and the former capital of the Dutch East Indies, Batavia, present day Jakarta.

Reviewer: Paul Doolan
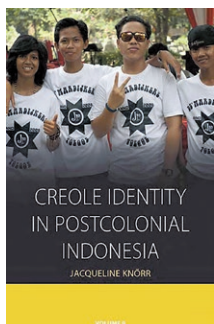
Reviewed publication
Jacqueline Knörr.2014.
Creole Identity in Postcolonial Indonesia,
New York/Oxford: Berghahn,
ISBN 9781782382683

THE TERM "CREOLIZATION" has long been used to describe the phenomenon in the Americas whereby the languages of the children of immigrants and native languages merge within a contact zone, but equally, when the cultures converge to form new, hybrid cultures. Although a minority of scholars would like to restrict the use of the term to the Americas, or, even to the Caribbean only, there is a growing consensus that creolization is a useful heuristic concept that can be applied to the study of a variety of historical periods and in a variety of different places.

Cultural Anthropologist Jacqueline Knörr already applied the concept to West Africa; in this work she turns her focus to Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, the old Batavia. She thoroughly and convincingly reveals the political, social and economic forces that underpin a specific example of creolization that today is at the heart of Indonesia's official "Unity through Diversity" ideology. This is an important work as it exposes the lines along which creolization takes place and Knörr demonstrates how creolization comes to be instrumentalized by the creole group, when they reap the benefits of being recognized as a unique group. Furthermore, she argues that this process is supported by the Indonesian state authorities, who use the creole group, (by definition a unique group but of mixed ethnic heritage) as an exemplar around which this ethnically mixed nation can rally.

The creole group in question are the Betawi, a people descended from various 17th and 18th century immigrant groups from the Indonesian archipelago and elsewhere in Asia, but who are now "regarded as the original inhabitants of Jakarta" (p.11). Although most of them do not like to be reminded of the fact, they are descended from slaves of the Dutch, and this is a key to the low social status they were long held in, in independent Indonesia, further aggravated by their low level of education. In the first decades after independence their colonial heritage and low social origins "made them incompatible with (Javanese) constructs of a precolonial cultural community of Indonesians" (p. 64). Knörr puts forth that attitudes common among the Betawi - shunning education, deep religiosity, lack of investment in the future, a high regard for the simple life and an aversion towards official institutes - contributed to their further marginalization. But Knörr argues that a change occurred among the central authorities in the late 1960s and, by the end of the 20th century Betawi culture had been rediscovered, revived and was being actively promoted, leading to what she calls "a social upgrading of the Betawi" (p.130). This process has contributed to a new national consciousness, a growing sense of Jakartan identity and has proved popular in the tourist industry, Betawi culture now being one of the city's attractions.

Most interesting about this process, is how other marginalized groups, whose mixed origins also stretch back to colonial Batavia, have come to attach themselves to the Betawi and have even been incorporated within the Betawi, hence enriching "the internal diversity of the Betawi as a whole" (p.121). This is central to the Betawi integrative function, where "creoleness, on top of indigeneity, may significantly increase the potential for transethnic identification" (p.188). Knörr argues, and convinces this reader, that the creoleness of Betawi culture is what allows the non-Betawi inhabitants of Jakarta to identify with Betawi culture, "irrespective of their own identities." (p.187) In other words, the Betawi have flourished recently because they are sufficiently unique as to be defined as a culture, but mixed enough and open enough, so that other groups can recognize something of themselves in the Betawi. Consequently, Betawiness is in fashion, it provides Jakarta with something special. Plus, it draws in the tourists.

This just skims the surface of what Professor Knörr has to say and her book contains much more of interest, including theoretical remarks on creoleness that are to be applauded for their clarity. But I do feel compelled to add a number of critical remarks, alas. While these remarks may seem severe, let me repeat that this is a work that rewards close reading and will enhance the reader's knowledge of contemporary Jakartan ethnic politics. But allow me three points of criticism.

Firstly, there is the title of the work. Despite a chapter that deals with the relationship between the situation in Jakarta and national unity (and which makes up less than a tenth of the book), this is not a book about Indonesia, as the title implies. Indeed Knörr basically admits as much in the introduction: "We are concerned here with phenomena that exist in Jakarta and pertain to Jakarta." (p.7) Regions beyond Java are ignored, other cities on Java are glossed over. Then why in heaven's name does the title plainly say "Indonesia"?

Secondly, among the many works of her own that she lists in the bibliography, Professor Knörr includes her book *Kreolität und postkoloniale Gesellschaft: Integration und Differenzierung in Jakarta*. One immediately notices the term "Jakarta" in the title, far more accurate (dare I say honest) than the newer work. But my criticism goes deeper. The work being presently reviewed is, to a large extent, a translation of the earlier German language work. Some chapters are near identical, even using the same maps and illustrations. Yet nowhere, neither in the acknowledgments nor in the small print, are we informed that what we are dealing with here is, to a large extent, not a new work but a translation. Had I bought the original German language book, and then bought the present English language book, I would have that same feeling as when one arrives home from the department-store, having purchased one item, only to discover when checking my receipt that I had been charged twice for the same item. I would feel cheated.

Thirdly, Knörr makes her argument with clarity and coherence, but I frequently found myself longing for punctuation. I failed to find a single semi-colon in the entire book; I'm sure there must be one or two. But even commas are used sparingly. The following sentence will serve as an example: "Thus, in the context of the Betawi revival it is above all those who on account of their relatively high social status or because they wanted to maintain or achieve such status used to conceal their Betawi identity who nowadays due to their social status are most likely to gain prominent positions both within the Betawi community and the public sphere more generally." (p.102)

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Above:
Ondel-ondel,
Jakarta's icon.
Male version. Image
reproduced under
a creative commons
license, courtesy
of Johanes Randy
Prakoso on flickr.

Documents as artefacts

For someone who has spent time consumed by the craft of making paper, in Tibetan Studies scholarship, and who has lived as a monk in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery (albeit a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Scotland), *The Archaeology of Tibetan Books* provides fascinating insights into the science, aesthetics and tradition of making books in Tibet. Helman-Ważny's approach is exhaustive, and it is her ability to make engrossing even the most detailed and painstaking analysis of manuscripts as the physical manifestation of fibre and ink that renders her book essential to the study, not only of Tibetan material culture and textuality, but of Tibetan culture as a whole.

Reviewer: Simon Wickhamsmith
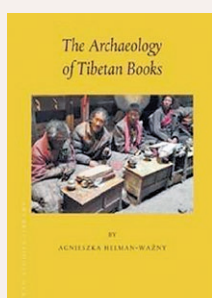
Reviewed publication
Helman-Ważny, A. 2014.
The Archaeology of Tibetan Books,
Leiden: Brill, ISBN 97890042

Functional and spiritually inspiring
Her intriguing use of the term 'archaeology' focuses on the fact that written documents can be read as artefacts, whose "physical properties can be studied using methods similar to those used to study sculpture, painting or common material objects."(p.2) Using this as a basis for reading texts, Helman-Ważny reveals a new dimension of Tibetan scholarship, showing not only how evidence regarding paper and ink manufacture can assist in establishing the date and provenance of texts, but also how issues of tradition, climate and locale have affected the creation, design and preservation of these manuscripts.

In considering the trajectory of the book, I was taken by how the author moved from the biological structure of plant fibres to the myriad technical processes in the design and printing of texts, from the sourcing of inks (a particularly arresting chapter, on illuminated manuscripts, is entitled "Indigo, Gold and Human Blood") to the detective work required in analysis of papers for the cataloguing of individual texts. The breadth of interdisciplinary scholarship represented here acts as an ideal vehicle to show how the relationship between artisans, scholars and plant scientists created texts which were durable and functional, as well as frequently attractive, desirable and spiritually inspiring.

More than book-making
Tibetan book culture has dealt almost exclusively with religious texts, and it is their ability to inspire devotion and to encourage deeper meditation practise which makes these books so much more than books, and this book in particular so much more than a work on book-making. In considering the materiality of these texts, we have to consider also their metaphysics. The sacred nature of the texts renders them, like statues, *thangka,* and offerings placed upon an altar, a medium which connects the practitioner with his or her Buddha-nature. When someone allows a text, or even a single page, to touch the ground, they raise it immediately to the crown of their head, an act of veneration and of blessing. The religious symbolism and cultural significance of books in Tibet makes the implications of Western intervention, and of analytical and conservation research such as Helman-Ważny's, all the more complex; she argues persuasively for

Collaborative creativity

At the heart of Ian Condry's stimulating exploration of anime's global success is his attention to how the medium thrives through "collaborative creativity": various forms of social engagement and energy investment undertaken by individuals who operate on both the production and consumption sides of anime-related industries.

Reviewer: Matthew Fraleigh
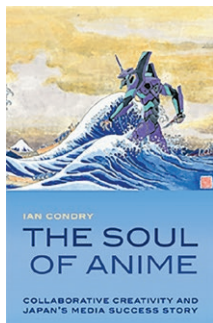
WHEREAS SEVERAL of the pioneering academic treatments of anime have focused their analyses on the narrative content of specific works, the visual styles of particular directors, or the aesthetic features of the animated medium more generally, Condry is less concerned with a retrospective consideration of finished products than with the dynamic social processes by which they are created and consumed. This ethnographic approach is informed by several periods of fieldwork he carried out in Tokyo animation studios between 2004 and 2010, his interviews with numerous directors, artists, and other animation industry workers, as well as participant observations he undertook at fan conventions held in both Japan and the United States.

Condry begins with an account of the production of director Hosoda Mamoru's 2009 anime feature film, *Summer Wars.* He observes that rather than being focused on the actions of a single hero, this film is structured around the collective efforts of its various characters toward a common goal. The film's wealth of idiosyncratic characters furnishes a diverse range of viewers with multiple potential points of entry into the story: an effect only heightened by the director's decision to make the characters' design simple, thereby affording viewers the opportunity to contribute something of their own. Paralleling the inter-character cooperation depicted on screen is thus a process by which the viewers of the film are induced to participate actively as well: developing forms of connection with the work that ultimately produce a sense of "joint ownership". Moreover, Condry identifies further forms of such creative collaboration taking place on the production side as well: in the discussions among directors, designers, and animators, as well as in the creative staff's engagement with its source materials.

Turning to Hosoda's earlier film, *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time* (2006), for example, he notes how Hosoda introduced changes to the 1967 work of fiction by Tsutsui Yasutaka on which the film is based, making it more open-ended.

Condry's behind-the-scenes attention to the negotiations occurring among those involved in creating a work of anime continues in his second chapter, which focuses on the production of several animated TV series. Whereas the intricacy of anime narratives is often adduced as the major reason for their popularity, Condry's real-time observation of the deliberations taking place at these shows' regular planning sessions leads him to conclude that elaborately-conceived narrative lines may be less important in guiding a work through the development process than other factors – chiefly the creators' basic conceptions of the work's characters and their interconnections. It is not surprising that distinctive characters, rather than narrative arcs, would be the principal factor in some of the very short animated shows Condry considers, but he also offers examples of longer-format series in which

Below: The Girl Who Leapt Through Time.

a work's complete narrative has yet to be determined (or even glimpsed), and yet the work begins to take shape around its distinctive characters, premises, and worlds. An argument that Condry introduces and continues to develop over the remaining chapters of the book is that the anime character can fruitfully be considered a generative platform itself, conducive to migration across diverse media.

While much of Condry's analysis focuses on the production and consumption of anime in the early twenty-first century, he also endeavors to place contemporary Japan's anime industry in both historical and comparative contexts. In the third chapter, for example, he discusses the postwar development of Japanese anime, focusing especially on the work of Tezuka Osamu. Rejecting accounts of modern Japanese anime that would describe it mainly as an autonomous outgrowth of earlier domestic visual traditions, he identifies various ways in which Japanese animators saw American animated films as both sources of inspiration and targets of rivalry: the Tōei studio, for example, explicitly aspired to become the "Disney of the East". Attending to the embeddedness of the Japanese anime industry in this larger context, Condry also notes variant features of the production process that distinguish American and Japanese animated films. In the fourth chapter as well, Condry adopts a longer chronological view in recounting how Bandai was able to obtain the rights to producing Gundam plastic models in the 1970s and to unexpectedly transform a toy that had prematurely been judged a failure into one of its most popular products. Condry emphasizes the role that small networks of fans and the media that connected them played in achieving this remarkable success.

One of Condry's most interesting chapters concerns the practice of fansubbing: overseas fans' cooperative production of subtitled versions of anime works. While such activity is unmistakably prohibited by copyright law, Condry vividly demonstrates how many producers of fansubs understand themselves to be acting in the service of anime rather than counter to the interests of anime producers. He describes these fansubbers' meticulousness and attention to detail, showing how they add value, for example, through annotation of supplementary historical or cultural information. Observing that some remove their fansubs from circulation once subtitled commercial versions are available, he argues that a set of ethical principles underlies their efforts.

Throughout *The Soul of Anime,* Condry shows how the anime production process often opens up various kinds of "empty spaces" that facilitate idiosyncratic forms of creative engagement and consumption. With its equal attentiveness to the industry and to its fans, Condry's book is a timely addition that helps elucidate how the "collaborative creativity" that characterizes producers and consumers alike lies behind anime's success.

Matthew Fraleigh, Associate Professor of East Asian Literature and Culture, Brandeis University (fraleigh@brandeis.edu).

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respecting Tibetan practices, in which texts are not conserved or restored but allowed to give themselves up to the elements, and writes that "[w]e would have to be able to point to great advances in knowledge to be gained by desecrating their sacred objects through conservation treatment in order to even begin to justify that practice." (p.202) It is especially powerful that this should have been written by a specialist in paper and the book arts, and indicates the challenges posed to anthropologists, artists, scientists and cultural historians,

Below:
Holy scriptures in the Pelkor Chöde monastary of Gyantse in Tibet. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of Thriol on flickr.

both Tibetans and non-Tibetans, in determining the most suitable way to preserve the material artefacts of Tibetan book-production.

Tibetan orthography

This is a very fine book, and I can find very little about which to complain. However, given the importance of the written text in Tibetan culture, I would have appreciated more space being devoted to the carving of xylographs and to the scribal arts. While Bacot's 1912 essay on *dbu med* script[1] remains one of a very few scholarly treatments of Tibetan orthography, it would have been valuable to have had a more extensive discussion here of the practise of carving, technical descriptions of the various different scripts employed, and perhaps even a brief foray into marginalia. The orthographic and design choices which we make when writing even the most trivial of texts – or even in preparing a text file on computer – make their own individual contributions to the final product, and I would welcome perhaps a follow-up paper analysing the physical construction of letters in order to better understand its role in the Tibetan book arts.

Book reviews don't generally consider the book-as-artefact, but in reviewing this particular book, it would seem apposite to remark that, as always, Brill has produced a beautiful addition to its extensive Tibetan Studies Library. The quality of paper and the photographic reproductions are exemplary, and both the heft and character of the object are conducive to contemplating what, if produced with less concern for readability and aesthetics, might have become, given the nature of its technical and scientific content, a considerably less enjoyable read, at least for those not familiar with the arcane study of the book arts.

Explorations of Tibetan book culture

In recent years, the invaluable work of Gene Smith and the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (www.tbrc.org) has made it possible for Tibetan texts to be reproduced digitally and reprinted endlessly on-demand. However, the TBRC's work preserves the ideas held within a text and its literary style, and not the text itself. The engaging explorations of Tibetan book culture, however, as presented in *The Archaeology of Tibetan Books,* celebrate the tactile nature of these artefacts, the physical act of holding and turning the pages, an act that leaves over time the marks of many fingers, the extensive quality control issues in selecting fibres and writing materials for different types of text, the religious and cultural vitality of texts, and the devoted commitment to aesthetics and textual accuracy of the various scribes, wood-carvers, editors and printers. The decoding of these elements is a vital aspect of a deeper understanding of Tibetan culture, and Helman-Ważny's research offers a most welcome contribution to this important work.

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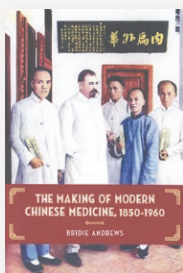
ICAS

The ICAS Book Prize 2015 Shortlists

It is our pleasure to announce the shortlists of the IBP 2015. The prize winners will be announced during the opening ceremony of ICAS 9 in Adelaide on 6 July 2015.
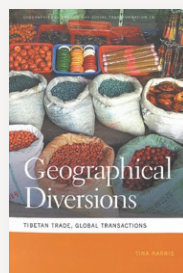
Social Sciences

Bridie Andrews
The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960.
UBC Press: Vancouver /Toronto 2014.

Tina Harris
Geographical Diversions: Tibetan Trade, Global Transactions.
University of Georgia Press: Athens 2013.

Manduhai Buyandelger
Tragic Spirits, Shamanism, Memory, & Gender in Contemporary Mongolia. University of Chicago Press: Chicago/London 2013.

Philip Taylor
The Khmer Lands of Vietnam. Environment, Cosmology and Sovereignty.
NUS Press & NIAS Press: Singapore /Copenhagen 2014. ASAA.
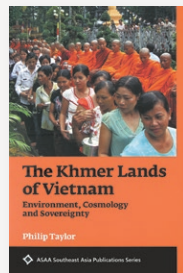
Robert Cribb, Helen Gilbert and Helen Tiffin
Wild Man from Borneo: A Cultural History of the Orangutan.
University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu 2014.
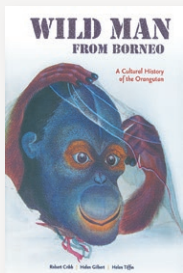
Jinghong Zhang
Puer Tea. Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic. University of Washington Press: Seattle/London 2014.
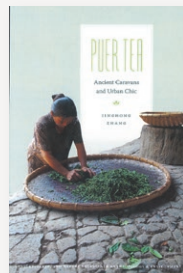
Humanities

Beverly Bossler
Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of the Female Fidelity.
Harvard University Asia Center: Cambridge /London 2013.

Theresia Hofer
Bodies in Balance: the Art of Tibetan Medicine.
University of Washington Press: Washington 2014.

Michelle Caswell
Archiving the Unspeakable. Silence, Memory, Photographic Record in Cambodia.
The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison.

John N. Miksic
Singapore & The Silk Road of the Sea 1300-1800.
NUS Press: Singapore 2013.
National Museum of Singapore.

Adam Clulow
The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan.
Columbia University press: New York 2014.
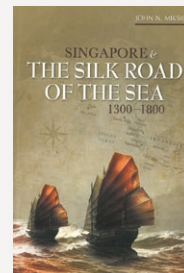
Khoo Salma Nasution
The Chulia in Penang: Patronage and Place-Making around the Kapitan Kling Mosque 1786-1957.
Areca Books: Penang 2014.
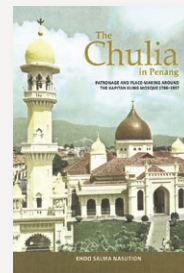
Dissertations

Social Sciences

Tutin Aryanti
Breaking the Wall, Preserving the Barrier: Gender, Space, and Power in Contemporary Mosque Architecture in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Tallyn Gray
Justice and Transition in Cambodia, (1979-2014): Process, Meaning, and Narrative.

David Kloos
Becoming Better Muslims: Religious Authority and Ethical Improvement in Aceh, Indonesia.

Humanities

Deokhyo Choi
Crucible of the Post-Empire: Decolonization, Race, and Cold War Politics in U.S.-Japan-Korea Relations, (1945-1952).

Vannessa Hearman
Dismantling the 'Fortress': East Java and the Transition to Suharto's New Order Regime, (1965-1968).

Leonie Schmidt
Visions of the Future: Imagining Islamic Modernities in Indonesian Islamic-themed post-Suharto Popular and Visual Culture.

Announcements

Call for Papers
Political participation in Asia: defining and deploying political space

Conference venue: Stockholm University
Date: 22-24 Nov 2015

Organizers: Eva Hansson, Stockholm University, Stockholm
Meredith Weiss, University at Albany, State University
of New York

ASIA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IS IN FLUX. Conventional, institutional taxonomies are limiting: classifying regimes along an authoritarian-democratic continuum suggests a static, homogenous categorization that aligns imperfectly with the experience of most citizens. Policy access, civil liberties, and political empowerment are less broadly disseminated in the illiberal regimes predominant across Asia than in liberal democracies, however, unequal even in the latter.

Authoritarianism cannot preclude political participation but may push other types of participation into informal, less visible, more creative, less readily suppressed niches. Even in more liberal politics, the core attributes of 'democracy' are unevenly distributed; not all actors have equal chance of being heard or influential. What most characterizes these struggles across regimes is the asymmetry of resources, options and alliances available to each side. Moreover, a dichotomous division of civil society and political society fits poorly at best where new online media, transnational networks, and other dimensions of political space transcend or sidestep both territorial and institutional boundaries.

In the face of these changes, political space – the discursive and material terrain of politics – bears closer examination. That need is especially keen in authoritarian or hybrid (electoral authoritarian or semi-democratic) contexts, where political space may be obscured, manipulated, inconsistently influential, or subject to novel or subtle means of construction, policing, and constraint.

This conference aims to deconstruct and disentangle political space across interactive subnational, national and transnational scales; across categories of individuals and groups, including those with greater or lesser access to decision-making power; and across modes and media, from street protests and rallies, to documentary film and graffiti, to petitions and press conferences. Our focus is primarily outside formal, or electoral politics, although a given actor or group may also use available institutional channels for influence.

Among the key questions we aim to explore are: What actors benefit from new technologies of participation, and in what ways? How do categorical inequalities structure access to voice, given changes in available political space and allies? Who creates, controls, and polices political space – as some of these arenas may be outside the purview of the state itself? How does the interconnection or interplay of scales for political engagement change the distribution of channels and voice (though we are less interested in transnational civil society per se than in domestic implications)? How homogenous is authoritarianism, in the sense of state capacity to patrol or structure engagement, given economic development patterns, proximity to capital cities, or geo-strategic considerations? To what extent are the repertoires or symbols that characterize political spaces path-dependent or modular – should we look for certain forms of engagement or discourses in certain places or arenas? Given the mutability of political space, how do we best conceptualize patterns of participation and representation across Asian political regimes?

Information on registration and conference updates will be available at http://www.asianstudies.su.se

Please direct any questions to Eva Hansson (eva.hansson@statsvet.su.se) or Meredith Weiss (mweiss@albany.edu).

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News from Southeast Asia

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This section offers thematic essays from ISEAS Fellows and researchers. This issue features perspectives on contemporary politics from the Malaysian Studies Programme. For more information on the Malaysian Studies Programme please visit: http://www.iseas.edu.sg/malaysia-studies-programme.cfm

Testing the political waters: PAS's *hudud* proposal and its impact

Norshahril Saat

ON 19 MARCH 2015, the Kelantan Legislative Assembly amended the Syariah Criminal Code. This move was unanimously supported by both the state's ruling party, PAS (Islamic Party of Malaysia), and opposition UMNO (United Malays National Organization). This was yet another attempt by the PAS Kelantan government to implement *hudud* laws in the state, something it has sought to accomplish since 1990. However, one more hurdle stands in its way before the laws can be implemented, namely, amendment to the Syariah Courts Act in the Federal Constitution. With this last obstacle comes another challenge for PAS. The secular DAP (Democratic Action Party) and non-Muslim parties (from East Malaysia) in the federal parliament would definitely oppose the move. PAS faces an arduous task to convince its partners to support *hudud*.

Knowing how difficult it would be to garner the required federal parliament support, what then is PAS's agenda in bringing up the *hudud* issue again? There are two plausible reasons. First, PAS is testing the leaders of the ruling BN (National Front) and opposition PR (People's Coalition) to see if they are sincere in their support for PAS's brand of *shariah*. Second, the ulama (religious scholars) faction in PAS seeks to strengthen its grip in the party. During the recently concluded 61 PAS Muktamar (Congress), the ulama secured key leadership posts of the party.

History of PAS *hudud*
PAS was registered as a political party in 1951. In the first three decades of its formation, hudud was not its primary agenda; it was mainly an Islamist-nationalist anti-colonial party.[1] In fact, in 1974, it joined the ruling BN coalition. Due to political differences with UMNO and internal fragmentation, PAS left BN in 1978. In the 1980s, the party struggled to regain voters' support and performed abysmally in the two elections held in that decade.[2] In 1990, PAS took Malaysian politics to a new level and regained control of Kelantan. But unlike in previous elections, the party, then controlled by the ulama faction, ran on an Islamist agenda. It made Islamic state and *hudud* its primary agenda.

In 1993, the Kelantan Legislative Assembly passed the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code Bill to allow for *hudud* to be implemented. *Hudud* offences include theft, robbery, unlawful sexual intercourse, liquor intoxication, and apostasy. Punishments to these offences include stoning, whipping, and mutilation of hands and feet. Commenting on the need to implement *hudud,* Kelantan Chief Minister and PAS Spiritual Guide, the late Nik Aziz, said, "PAS has only existed for 51 years. *Hudud* laws have been in the Quran for more than 1400 years. PAS did not create it!"[3] The legislation, however, was not implemented in the state because the federal government deemed the move unconstitutional.

Despite the failure to implement *hudud* in Kelantan, the PAS government in Terengganu, which took control of the state after the 1999 elections, later pushed the same agenda. In 2002, it passed the Terengganu Syariah Criminal Offences Bill. This move was again unsuccessful because they were rejected by the federal government. After these failures, PAS changed its tactics and sought to socialize the masses with its *hudud* agenda. In 2003, PAS issued *Dokumen Negara Islam* (Islamic State document), which indicates that it is obligatory for *hudud* laws to be implemented because the Quran says, "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: punishment by way of example, from Allah. For their crime: and Allah is exalted in power, full of wisdom." [4]

In the run up to the 2008 elections, PAS softened its push for *hudud,* calling for *Negara Kebajikan* (Benevolent State). This led to the party forming the PR with the DAP and PKR (People's Justice Party) after the elections. This co-operation remained intact, and PR secured an improved performance in the 2013 elections, where BN lost popular votes.[5] In 2014, to the surprise of its PR partners, PAS proposed an amendment to the constitution to allow hudud to be implemented in Kelantan. The proposal was not carried out, but it resurfaced in 2015.

Hudud timing and its impact
Arguably, there is no correlation between *hudud* and PAS's electoral performances. For instance, PAS introduced the 1993 Kelantan Criminal Code and 2002 Terengganu Syariah Criminal Offences Bill after the party showed strong performance during elections. Yet, the current introduction of *hudud* bill occurred when PAS was at its weakest. PAS suffered huge losses in the 2013 elections even though PR recorded its best victory. PAS lost Kedah to BN, failed to regain Terengganu, and performed poorly in its Kelantan stronghold. There is a strong evidence to suggest that PAS championed *hudud* for religious reasons. The ulama faction has been consistent about *hudud*. Even at the time when PR was speaking about *Negara Kebajikan,* PAS ulama reiterated that it was committed to *hudud* and Islamic state. In 2013, Ustaz Haron Din, who recently took over as PAS Spiritual Guide, published *Hukum Hudud: Dalam Perundangan Islam* (*Hudud* Laws According to Islam).[6]

I contend that this is the best time for PAS to raise the *hudud* debate because of the fragmentation in BN and PR. PAS timed the *hudud* issue to test the loyalty of its members, its coalition partners, and UMNO's commitment to Islam. PAS leaders know that any amendments to the constitution are unlikely. Even if PAS received the support of all Muslim members in parliament, it would still be short of an absolute majority. It is unlikely that BN politicians from Sabah and Sarawak would support the amendment to the constitution.

In light of its response, PR coalition has failed the *hudud* test. It confirms the coalition is a marriage of convenience. The PR's slogan – 'agree to disagree' - has reached its threshold and it is not realistic to abide by such a slogan if the coalition wants to form government. To its credit, the DAP has made clear that it is against *hudud*. DAP leaders have severed ties with Abdul Hadi over his move to amend the Kelantan legislation, and also plans to send a private member's bill in parliament.[7] DAP is adamant that Malaysia remain a secular state. The Malaysian public now knows that DAP's secularism and PAS's Islamism is a complete mismatch. PKR, on the other hand, has been flip-flopping over the issue. It was reported that PKR has privately apologized to PAS for not supporting the hudud agenda earlier.[8] If the report is true, PKR wanted PAS's help in its *Permatang Pauh* by-elections campaign (held on 7 May 2015).

The *hudud* debate is a huge test for Prime Minister Najib's BN coalition, which is already facing internal problems. The Prime Minister has so far demurred from taking a stand on the issue, and it is uncertain if he eventually will. If Najib supports the hudud move, he would be seen as betraying BN's partners in Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). He would also depart from his predecessors who maintained that Malaysia should always remain secular. Furthermore, he would be seen as a weak leader who succumbed to pressure from the Islamists, and contradicted his campaign to build a 'One Malaysia' and Islam *Wasatiyyah* (Moderate Islam) when he became Prime Minister in 2009. On the other hand, his rejection of the *hudud* discourse would signal that his talk of a Malay unity government with PAS is empty. Ultimately, the timing of PAS *hudud* proposal is a test of sincerity for both PR and BN in implementing *shariah* in Malaysia. It could make or break existing coalitions.

Norshahril Saat is a Fellow at ISEAS. He is completing his PhD with the Department of Political and Social Change, Australian National University (ANU).

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5 See Saat, N. 2014. "Modern Laws can be religious too," Today, 13 May 2014, http://tinyurl.com/modernlaws (accessed on 19 May 2015).
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7 Fractions within PR are also seen in the so-called *kajang* move. In 2014, PR moved to remove the Selangor Chief Minister Khalid Ibrahim and replace him with Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar was later disqualified to run for the seat. DAP, PKR and PAS could not agree on who should replace Khalid as Chief Minister.
8 The Straits Times, 'MCA shocked that PKR apologized to PAS over kelantan's *hudud* issue', 25 April 2015, http://tinyurl.com/MCAshocked (accessed on 19 May 2015).

The ethnic party system in Malaysia

Lee Hock Guan

IN MALAYSIA, political expediency and racial demography during decolonization led to the emergence of an ethnically dominated party system. An ethnic party typically champions the interests of a particular ethnic group. To gain political support ethnic parties would typically manipulate ethnic ties and raise fears of ethnic outsiders, whereby ensuring that voting choice becomes bounded by ethnicity. When voting choice becomes circumscribed by ethnicity, it reduces competition for electoral support to within ethnic groups and not across ethnic groups. Thus, "each party, recognizing that it cannot count on defections from members of the other ethnic groups, has the incentive to solidify the support of its own group".[1] The prevalence of ethnic voting hence will marginalize parties which organize and campaign along non-ethnic lines.

The Malaysian authoritarian regime has been aptly characterized as an 'electoral one-party state' where a dominant ruling coalition has won every election held since Independence and is habitually "equated with the state".[2] The ruling coalition is composed of ethnic parties where each of which still profess to be working for the interests of its own ethnic group. The coalition party formula was stumbled upon by the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay(si)an Chinese Association (MCA) in the 1952 Kuala Lumpur municipal election. As society was ethnically segregated and with voting on a wholly ethnic basis, the coalition formula helped UMNO and MCA to pool their respective ethnic group support. This vote pooling strategy enabled the two parties to convincingly defeat the non-ethnic Independence of Malaya Party. Thus a multi-ethnic coalition would gain from vote pooling by allowing each component party to cast itself as an ethnic party representing the interests of its own ethnic group while remaining in the coalition.

Subsequently, the ruling coalition's electoral success was largely as a multi-ethnic coalition, which could time and again capture the middle ground and thereby reduce the opposition ethnic parties to challenging the coalition at the ethnic 'flanks' of the political spectrum. To win votes the opposition ethnic parties devolved into an ethnic outbidding contest that resulted in their adopting more ethnically extreme positions. Since the opposition ethnic parties could mostly appeal to one ethnic group as they failed to convince the other ethnic groups to vote for them, it meant that they remain a

Above:
Malaysian General Election, 2013. Image reproduced under a creative Commons License, courtesy of Firdaus Latif on Flickr.

threat to the ruling coalition only in seats with a large ethnic majority. In seats where no one ethnic group voters dominate, vote pooling would greatly advantage the ruling coalition.

From 1972 to 1995, the prevailing ethnic voting preference and vote pooling advantaged the ruling coalition National Front (BN). UMNO electoral dominance was supported by the party always winning a majority of Malay vote, by the mal-apportionment of seats that disproportionately advantaged the Malay community, and by gerrymandering the electoral system to increase disproportionately the number of seats with Malay majority relative to their electoral percentage. The Pan Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) was only a threat to BN in Malay majority seats especially in the Malay heartland states and the Chinese dominated Democratic Action Party (DAP) a threat to BN in Chinese majority seats. For BN to

counter the electoral threat posed by PAS and DAP, the most effective way was to reduce the number of Malay and Chinese majority seats. The results of the 1999 election showed how risky the situation could be for BN in Malay majority seats when the Malay vote swung to the opposition parties. It would seem then the best strategy for BN to counter the opposition threats would be to increase the number of mixed constituencies where no one ethnic group voters dominate.

Thus the 2002 redelineation exercise "reduced the ethnic bias of the electoral system" by "replacing it with a more direct political bias in favor of the BN".[3] It reduced the previously "pro-Malay bias in the electoral system" in view of the fragmentation of the Malay vote whereby BN was no longer assured of winning in many of the Malay majority seats. Conversely, the 2002 redelineation exercise "increase the weightage of mixed" constituencies to capitalize on the BN's vote pooling advantage over the Opposition. Since the 1999 election then, apart from the heavily pro-Malay gerrymandered electoral system, the BN winning formula had depended on winning the majority of Malay and Indian votes and close to 50 percent of the Chinese vote and on the opposition parties remaining fragmented and unable to overcome the cross-ethnic voting barrier.

Since the 2008 election, however, the ethnic voting pattern has changed in that a huge majority of Chinese voters, more than 50 percent Indian voters, and nearly 40 percent Malay voters have switched to supporting the Opposition. Most importantly, the opposition parties PAS, DAP and the Malay-dominated Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) have formed a coalition, the Pakatan Rakyat (PR), that has successfully overcome the cross-ethnic voting barrier. The vote pooling advantage now favours the PR such that the opposition coalition defeated BN in nearly all the mixed constituencies. In the 2013 election, because of the mal-apportionment and gerrymandering strategies of creating smaller electorate-sized seats to entrench BN's electoral power, it resulted in a situation where PR won the popular vote but BN won the election.

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The 1MDB controversy in Malaysia

Cassey Lee

ONE OF THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES confronting Malaysia's ruling political coalition, Barisan Nasional, is the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). Technically, the 1MDB is a private corporation wholly-owned by the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia. It was established in 2009 by converting a state sovereign fund, the Terengganu Investment Authority, into a federal entity. The 1MDB was assigned the role of a strategic investment company with the mission "to drive sustainable economic development by forging strategic global partnerships and promoting FDI".[1]

To fulfil its mission, 1MDB has invested in two key sectors, namely power (electricity generation) and real estate. In the power sector, 1MDB has acquired three power plants at the cost of about RM12 billion and has won another RM8.1 billion greenfield power project (Project Track 3B). In the real estate sector, 1MDB has already acquired land at the cost of around RM2 billion for the building of the Tun Razak Exchange (a RM26 billion financial hub). It is also investing in Bandar Malaysia (a commercial and housing project) and a project for affordable housing in Air Itam, Penang.

The 1MDB has become a controversial issue in Malaysia mainly because of its financing aspects. These include the size and nature of 1MDB's debt as well as how it has used its funds. To date, 1MDB has borrowed to the tune of RM 41.9 billion

(in the year ending 31 March 2015). Right from the very beginning, there have been allegations of financial impropriety involving 1MDB's borrowings of US$700 million in 2009. The media has also pointed out the high cost of borrowings and the maturity mismatch between its assets and liabilities. The latter has affected 1MDB's debt servicing ability to the extent that it sought two extensions for loan repayment in November 2013 and December 2013. With the third deadline looming in February 2014, 1MDB had sought the assistance of a local tycoon, Ananda Krishnan, to settle the RM2 billion loan owed to local banks. This has not solved 1MDB's liquidity problems completely as analysts have pointed out that 1MDB's annual debt servicing continues to exceed its cash flow.

Whilst 1MDB appears to have some liquidity problems, some have gone further by questioning its solvency. Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has pointed out that there appears to be a gap of RM27 billion between 1MDB's total liabilities (borrowings) and the total value of its assets. Related to this problem is the lack of transparency and the consistency of information on how the borrowings have been utilized. One widely discussed topic relates to the placement of US$2.32 billion funds (from redeemed investments) in the Cayman Islands.

Above:
Frame from the Tun Razak Exchange promotional Video, publically available to view via YouTube.

Uncertainty and speculations over 1MDB's insolvency have also raised the spectre of a government bailout. Aside from the fact that the Ministry of Finance is the sole owner of 1MDB, the government has also extended letters of support for which it could be liable for up to US$3 billion. Subsequently, a request for a government loan of RM3 billion was rejected by the Malaysian Government Cabinet in late February 2015. However, the Cabinet subsequently approved a RM970 million loan to 1MDB two weeks later. Coinciding with this was the call by the Prime Minister Najib Razak himself and the Public Accounts Committee for the Auditor-General to probe into 1MDB's accounts.

The 1MDB's strategy forward appears to be one involving the unwinding of its assets by monetizing some of its landed assets to reduce its financial liabilities (especially short-term ones). The maturity mismatch between its assets and liabilities clearly caused some liquidity problems. This has affected its plans to list its energy assets via an initial public offering. The on-going restructuring of 1MDB assets and liabilities continue to court controversies such as the recent sale of 1MDB land to Lembaga Tabung Haji (LTH). Critics have pointed out that the land was originally bought by 1MDB from the government for RM74.20 (psf) and was sold to LTH for RM2,779 (psf). The prime minister subsequently suggested that LTH sell the land to other parties for a profit.

The 1MDB has clearly become a political liability for the Najib Administration. Critics have attempted to link 1MDB's financial woes to allegations of corruption and fraud. These have been accompanied by the media's recent exposé on the lavish lifestyle of ruling-party politicians and their family members. The negative public reactions and responses to the 1MDB issue, at least in the urban areas, have been further amplified by the rising cost of living and dissatisfaction with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax. The political fall-out from 1MDB is still uncertain. The current government is saddled with the unenviable task of unwinding a grand investment strategy that has clearly gone awry.

Cassey Lee is Senior Fellow at ISEAS.

References
1 http://www.1mdb.com.my/about-us/mission-vision

Reports

Sailing the waves of convergence: cultural links and continuities across the Bay of Bengal

Tom Hoogervorst

Symposium
3 December 2014, KITLV, Leiden

AMIDST THE GLOBAL DECLINE OF AREA STUDIES, the Bay of Bengal is booming. The past decade has seen numerous monographs, seminars and conferences devoted to this part of Asia, often with titles containing the words 'crossing', 'transcending', 'crossroads' or 'passageways'. Indeed, in order to make sense of the past and present of this vibrant part of the world – encompassing Asia's two largest democracies and a range of states long thought of as 'problematic', yet currently lifted by the optimism of economic development and democratization – it has proven essential to cross the boundaries of nation-states as well as academic disciplines.

The one-day symposium *Sailing the Waves of Convergence* was another modest step in this direction. This event served as an opportunity for a group of predominantly early-career scholars to present their research on transnational networks and cultural contact across the Bay of Bengal, foregrounding agents that have largely remained outside the European gaze and, therefore, outside the canon of conventional historiography. With a slight predilection to pre-modern and early modern times, the participants shared a refreshing mix of perspectives on the dispersal of religions, ideologies, artefacts, language and literature and their genealogies to better documented times. Presenters covered a wide range of geographical and disciplinary backgrounds, yet were connected by a shared desire to bring focus to the full range of human activities connecting the shores, harbours and riversides of South and Southeast Asia.

Below: An Islamic manuscript partly in Tamil and partly in Malay (Leiden University Library)

Transnational connections explored

Introducing pre-modern religious contacts, Munzir Hitami and Siti Aisyah (UIN SUSKA Riau) examined the oldest known Qur'anic exegesis *(tafsīr)* of the Malay World. This manuscript – written on late 16th century European paper and kept at the Cambridge University Library – contains a Malay commentary on the *Sūrat al-Kahf*. The text displays some Ṣūfī influence. The Dutch merchant Pieter Willemsz van Elbinck has been identified as the copyist, but a closer analysis of the handwriting contradicts this theory. Although its original author remains unknown, the work must be considered the earliest documented effort to introduce Qur'anic exegesis to a Malay readership. Subsequently, pre-Islamic networks of religious and cultural exchange were highlighted by Natalie Ong (National University of Singapore). Focusing on the temple reliefs of the Borobudur and Prambanan, she offered a reconstruction of daily life in pre-colonial Java through an iconographic analysis. The localized narratives from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Lalitavistara* contain detailed depictions of sartorial styles, enabling an informed identification of different social ranks and political hierarchies through a comparative study of attire, ornaments, archaeological and textual insights.

The sites of Hindu-Buddhist grandeur retained their relevance in colonial and post-colonial times. Marieke Bloembergen (KITLV) situated Java's past within the larger framework of Greater India, an 'imagined geography' of spiritual enlightenment. The island's pre-Islamic heritage was contextualized in different ways by members of the Theosophical Society, Indonesian elites, Buddhist revivalists, and advocates of pan-Asianism, all entitled to competing notions of regionalism, spirituality, knowledge, and the role of the museum. Yet the discourse on classical antiquity was equally shaped by moving objects, in some cases across the length and breadth of the Bay of Bengal. Sraman Mukherjee (Nalanda University) illustrated this point by calling attention to the early 20th century excavation of Buddhist relics at the ruins of Shāh-jī-kī-Ḍherī on the outskirts of Peshawar. Among the findings was a casket containing bones associated with Buddha Śākyamuni. These bone remains were transferred across various sites and eventually ended up in a pagoda in the city of Mandalay, where they were entrusted to the Burmese Buddhist community on the eastern frontier of British India.

For more than two millennia, the interethnic networks that took shape across the Bay of Bengal fuelled the cross-fertilization of the spoken and written word. Tom Hoogervorst (KITLV) provided a scholarly overview of language contact between India, Sri Lanka and the Malay World, also calling attention to examples of Southeast Asian influence that spread westward. The poorly documented vernacular languages and literatures of South and Southeast Asia contain valuable new clues to the nature of interethnic contact and everyday life. This was substantiated by Siti Aisyah (UIN SUSKA Riau), who approached Islamic connections of the early 20th-century through the lens of a recently discovered manuscript. The story of this quadrilingual word-list (Arabic, Malay, Urdu and Tamil) reaches far beyond the area of Kampar, where it was found, and provides a vista into the religious, commercial and cosmological ideas of its compiler. This isolated instantiation of multilingualism must be situated within the wider context of scholarly networks. The distribution of Arabic-derived writing systems across the Indian Ocean World corroborates the interconnectedness of its languages and literatures in pre- and early modern times. In exploring this issue further, Abdur Rahoof Ottathingal (Leiden University) traced the development of several vernacular writing styles and called attention to a set of shared local innovations specific to South India and Southeast Asia.

In many cases, philological approaches are the only way to obtain an informed picture of cultural history and interethnic contact between non-European societies. Maria Packman (UC Berkeley) demonstrated this through a compelling case study on the widespread Islamic tale of the wedding between 'Alī and Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. The Tamil version of this story displays numerous instances of localization, including the adoption of several Hindu elements. Many other similarities surface upon comparing this version with its Malay equivalent. Both exhibit a number of Shī'ī characteristics, revealing a diverse Islamic landscape in early modern times that was largely erased by more recent developments. A similar point was made with regard to Islamic legal traditions across the Bay of Bengal. Mahmood Kooria (Leiden University) took issue with the Middle East-centric notion of a monolithic legalist picture, problematizing the historical dominance

of the Shāfi'ī school in this part of the world. Instead, he underscored the role of Ḥanafīsm and Shī'ism in 16th century Indonesia, revealing a peaceful coexistence of legal schools in the pre-modern Indian Ocean rim.

Studying the Bay of Bengal

Cumulatively, the presentations and the ensuing discussion demonstrated the strength of bringing together researchers from different backgrounds to address the shared histories of South and Southeast Asia. One of the main intellectual challenges of examining so culturally diverse a region is to talk *with* each other, not *past* each other, and produce research that appeals to scholars across nation-states and in a wide range of disciplines, each entitled to their own conventions and interpretations of such key concepts as 'culture', 'transnational connections', 'networks', 'directionality', and 'power dynamics'. In-depth cultural knowledge – a skill quickly disappearing from the toolkit of area studies – is often the only way to access perspectives other than those left to us by the European colonial project and post-independence nation-states. In the absence of written records, clues to the history of daily life can be found in the rites of religions, the reliefs and relics of temples, and the vocabulary of languages. Linguists, philologists, archaeologists, art historians, and religious studies scholars could therefore be more vocal in ensuring that cultural and region-specific perspectives are not overlooked inside the cockpit of 'big history'. In addition, we need the insights of maritime historians and archaeologists to sharpen our picture of the aquatic dimensions of the Bay of Bengal, including the very ships aboard which the foundations of interethnic contact were laid. The latter challenge was not met by this symposium, but ample opportunities remain in the future.

Several participants underlined the importance of looking at the oft-neglected communities on the lower rungs of power structures. Non-state agents in particular – be they geographically mobile scholars, semi-sedentary coastal populations, or labour migrants – impacted profoundly on the transnational history of the Bay of Bengal, yet their importance is not always clearly articulated in the wider literature. Furthermore, the presentations on Islamic connections between South and Southeast Asia revealed a more prominent place of Shī'ism, Ṣūfism and non-Shāfi'ī legal schools in the religious landscapes of the region. Equally vital were the roles played by a diverse range of Hindu and Buddhist communities. Against the backdrop of reactionary Hindu nationalism in India and Sunnī reformation movements in the Malay World, this diversity is in danger of becoming eclipsed in historiographies that suit the narratives of present-day political elites.

The issue of mobility, too, was questioned from a variety of angles. Bearing in mind cheap airfare and globalization, but also passports and immigration detention, we asked ourselves whether the Bay of Bengal is more interconnected now than it has been historically. If yes, how does this translate into academic interconnectedness? South and Southeast Asia share palpable cultural and historical roots, yet scholars from either region – with some notable exceptions – have been reticent to study this legacy institutionally, collaboratively, and on equal footing. As a result, much historical scholarship on the Bay of Bengal is yet to move beyond a long-established focus on Indian diasporas in Southeast Asia and re-imaginations of Greater India. Both themes, useful as they are, inadvertently perpetuate the colonial narrative in which Southeast Asia was "civilized" from India in a unidirectional fashion, leaving its indigenous peoples marginalized from their own past.

Upon moving away – as many scholars are – from the conventionally demarcated spaces of South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, are we not awkwardly trying to create a new area? If the Bay of Bengal is to be seen as a conceptually meaningful region, who determines its research agenda and where are the 'archives' of its researchers? Can Leiden, in the light of its monumental library collections and long-standing pedigree in the study of Asia, play a prominent role in addressing these issues? Its department of South and Southeast Asian Studies is undeniably born out of pragmatic downsizing, yet this 'new region' is hardly a cartographic convenience. People, commodities, and ideas have travelled back and forth along the eastern rim of the Indian Ocean with a remarkable degree of historical continuity. These linkages continue to inform notions of cultural identification and national belonging in one of the most heavily populated parts of the world. Exciting further opportunities for innovative research await.

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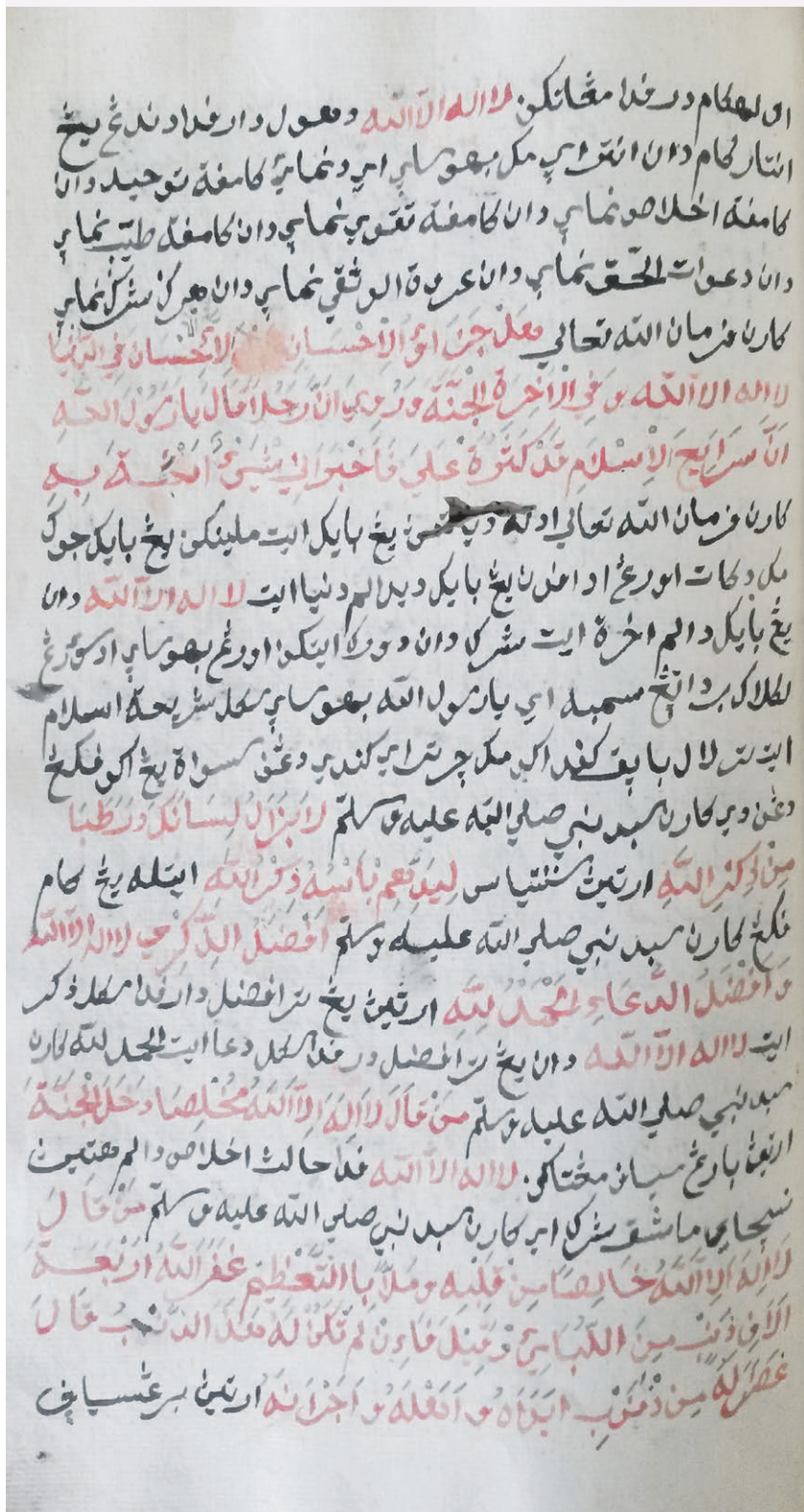
Steppe and the Silk Roads, China's Interactions with its Neighbours

Elena Paskaleva

Lecture series delivered by Professor Jessica Rawson 4-9 May 2015

DAME JESSICA RAWSON, Professor of Chinese Art and Archaeology at University of Oxford delivered a series of lectures in Leiden and Amsterdam, from 4-9 May 2015, entitled 'Steppe and the Silk Roads, China's Interactions with its Neighbours'. The series was initiated and organized by the Leiden University research cluster Asian Modernities and Traditions. The last lecture in Amsterdam at the Rijksmuseum was co-organized by the International Institute for Asian Studies and the Friends of Asian Arts Association. The lectures were part of the new initiative on Central Asia at Leiden University, funded by Asian Modernities and Traditions.

Professor Jessica Rawson

Professor Rawson currently holds a five year (2011-2016) Leverhulme Trust grant at Oxford University on *China and Inner Asia, 1000-200 BC: Interactions that Changed China.* Before moving to Oxford in 1994, she worked at the British Museum, where she became Deputy Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities in 1976 and Keeper of the Department in 1987. Jessica Rawson was the Warden of Merton College, Oxford from 1994 until her retirement in 2010. She was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2002 for services to oriental studies.

The research interests of Professor Rawson involve perceptions of beauty and changing beliefs in Chinese society from 1500 BC to AD 1000. She also focuses on the archaeology of China and Inner Asia, on early Chinese material culture as indication for religious concepts and beliefs, and on the development and function of ornament in all parts of Eurasia. Currently, Professor Rawson works on interactions between central China and Inner Asia in the Zhou (c. 1045- 221 BC), Qin (221-210 BC) and Han (206 BC-AD 220) periods; on the structure and contents of Chinese tombs; and on exoticism in the Han to Tang periods (200 BC-AD 900).

Professor Rawson has organized numerous exhibitions in London at the British Museum and at the Royal Academy: *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing and Mysteries of Ancient China; China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795; Treasures of Ancient Chinese, Bronze and Jades from Shanghai.* She also made major contributions to exhibitions of the Qin dynasty Terracotta Warriors at the British Museum, 2006-2007 and at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities at Stockholm, 2010. In addition to catalogues of these exhibitions, her books include studies of Chinese bronzes and jades: *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (1990), *Treasures from Shanghai: ancient Chinese bronzes and jades* (2009), *Chinese Jade, from the Neolithic to the Qing* (1995), and discussions of Chinese ornament and design, *Chinese Ornament, the Lotus and the Dragon* (1984).Together with Evelyn Rawski, Jessica Rawson edited the volume *China: The Three Emperors, 1662-1795* (2005).

Steppe and the Silk Roads, China's Interactions with its Neighbours

In the Leiden lecture series, Professor Rawson talked about the ways in which China's art and culture were transformed through contacts across the steppe and along the Silk Roads. She pointed out that China was immensely enriched and not impoverished through the cultural interactions with the arc, a broad area of desert, highland and mountains between central China, the steppe, and Tibet. She highlighted the importance of the relationship between ancient China and its mobile and semi-sedentary neighbours in the steppe and semi-desert landscapes which surround the Central Plain.

According to Professor Rawson, the interaction with the border peoples was inevitable and created huge political and military upheavals. Warfare, trade and religious proselytization changed China, bringing with them metallurgy, the chariot, sculpture and stone. But the ancient Chinese reinvented these outside contributions in new ways. They made magnificent bronze vessels for offerings, but few fine bronze weapons; they worked on a huge scale in creating chariots as ritual gifts from the king. And the same massive scale was employed for the production of the Terracotta Warriors. Full-sized sculpture in stone and bronze only took off with the introduction of Buddhism across Central Asia from the fourth century AD. The success of Buddhism was dependent on the foreign rulers of north China. Indeed, even with the reunification of China under the Tang in the seventh century, the imperial house maintained close relations with their neighbours, the Turkish peoples of the steppe, and created a hybrid culture drawn from native Chinese and foreign traditions. As the northern peoples became all the more powerful and overwhelmed China in later centuries, Chinese inventions travelled west, above all guns and gunpowder, porcelain and paper.

Monday 4 May, Leiden: Warfare, Beauty and Belief, Bridging Eurasia
The opening lecture by Professor Rawson took place at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. In this talk she introduced her overarching ideas and showed how she applies them in different periods to illustrate the ways in which central China was forced to interact, especially with the northern neighbours. This interaction resulted in the creation of new technologies, artefacts and ideas, which China then changed and adapted within the Chinese cultural framework.

Professor Rawson introduced the term arc – a wide territory surrounding the Central Plains to the north and west that shared many characteristics of the steppe; the arc was quite closely linked to Siberia. Based on recent archaeological excavations she discussed the role of the arc by mapping artefacts across Eurasia. In these discussions, she also stressed the importance of the horse as a unifying feature of the steppe and of armour, an element that was also brought from the steppe. Professor Rawson pointed out that China has the largest number of chariot burials in the world. According to her, the chariots had been also introduced from the steppe regions. Further, she focused on the craftsmanship of jade, largely used in burial rituals, and on the ritualizing of weaponry.

Wednesday 6 May, Leiden: The Lure of Iron and Gold, Interactions with the Steppe in the First Millennium BC.
The second lecture by Professor Rawson took place in the Small Auditorium at the Academy Building. In this talk she concentrated on the impact of military interactions across Eurasia. As riding on horseback changed the structure of the lives and warfare of the mobile peoples in Eurasia, all settled states, including central China, were forced to adapt to these challenges and change their own methods of warfare, affecting society as a whole.

Friday 8 May, Leiden: Sculpture and Stone in the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220)
The last lecture in Leiden was also held in the main Academy Building. Professor Rawson drew comparisons between the usage of sculpture in the west and across Eurasia. Although sculpture and stone are major features of Western Asian city culture, the early Chinese did not make use of either. Following the innovations of the First Emperor and the creation of the Terracotta Warriors, which owed their inspiration to both Western Asia and different steppe peoples, the Han emperors adopted both the sculpture and stone, primarily in burial contexts. Professor Rawson argues that stone armour, fitting mostly representatives of the highest rank, can only be understood in its relation to death rituals. These innovations then filtered down to lower levels of the elite, but again in the context of tombs.

Saturday 9 May, Amsterdam: Tents, Tombs and Horse Trade, the Tang (AD 618-906) and the Turks
The last lecture took place at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The Tang period is renowned for its glittering court and the so-called Silk Road, bringing many merchants and foreign goods to the capital, Chang'an. The talk illustrated the very fine artefacts of this period in a much wider context. The Tang were embattled with several Turkish empires, at that period occupying large areas of the steppe. The Chinese were forced to purchase horses to engage with these mounted warriors, and they paid for the horses, coming from the steppe, in silk. This silk drove the silk trade, mainly in the hands of an Iranian people, the Sogdians. Today we have much evidence from archaeological excavations of the lives of the Sogdians who settled in China in the sixth to eighth century. Professor Rawson presented the fascinating scenes of these merchants and officials documented in carvings on their coffins buried within the confines of Tang China. The Tang period, renowned for its art and poetry, is now much better known, according to Rawson, and even more colourful for the multiple engagements that we now know the court had with its neighbours.

Elena Paskaleva is a post-doctoral researcher working on Central Asian architecture and material culture. She is the coordinator of the Central Asia initiative at Leiden University (elpask@gmail.com).

Above:
Detail Hall of the Ambassadors, Afrasiab. 7th-century Sogdian murals, discovered in 1965 in Samarqand (photo by author).

Below:
Camel with rider, earthenware, Tang Dynasty.

IIAS Announcements

Call for Papers
Heritage as aid and diplomacy in Asia

Application deadline: 1 November 2015
Conference dates: 26-28 May 2016
Venue: Leiden, the Netherlands

Organisation: Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan; Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore; International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the Netherlands

About the conference
In spite of a growing academic interest in the politics of heritage in Asia, few studies have directly questioned the role of international and transnational cooperation in the field of heritage conservation. First, even though the literature has widely addressed the role of UNESCO as a powerful disseminator of international standards of conservation (e.g., Askew 2010; Daly and Winter 2012), it has not yet tackled UNESCO's sociological and institutional complexity, and the full history of the organisation. Secondly, the social sciences have largely neglected other international structures – such as the World Bank, the European Union, USAid, the Asian Development Bank and many others – that have their own engagements in the conservation of heritage in Asia. These organisations often collaborate with UNESCO or participate in bilateral or multilateral initiatives. Many of these initiatives are carried out by states (or regions or cities). Cultural (heritage) diplomacy is a well-thought strategy carried out by some states. Pioneer countries in cultural diplomacy include France, Italy, the Netherlands but also India and Japan. Today, most Asian states are following on that path: in the past years, China, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia have considerably strengthened their investment in regional 'heritage cooperation'. Some of them, like India or Japan, have had a long history of cultural international intervention.

Thirdly, private 'philanthropic' programs like the Agha Khan Foundation, the World Monuments Fund and the Getty Trust have long had a major impact in the management of heritage in Asia. They are now joined by newly established Asia-based foundations, such as Korea's Samsung Foundation, to mention just one. Finally, new connections have recently been drawn between market-driven 'development' schemes explicitly linking 'culture' and 'economic opportunities', as part of the global capital-driven developmentalist discourse, as when World Heritage sites become objects of mass tourism and urban areas are labelled as 'creative'. This new model of 'culturo-capitalism' is fast becoming prominent, as is the global campaign of systematic digitisation of library collections by the multinational Google, 'responsible capitalism', or micro-credit schemes. These essentially capitalist constructions now co-exist with the more traditional state-sponsored heritage practices and with elite-originated private cultural philanthropy.

The relative shortage of historical, sociological, political, and ethnographic research on these multiple incarnations of 'heritage as aid or as diplomacy' is all the more surprising when we consider how cultural and heritage management represents a major area of international cooperation as well as a powerful instrument of 'soft' influence by states, corporate forces and social elites on Asia-based heritage practices. This conference will address the relevant inter-national and transnational actors as objects of study and will engage in a threefold exploration (see website for details):
1. Knowledge production
2. Geopolitics of heritage as diplomacy
3. Ethnographies of international agents and 'cultural experts'
The three themes outlined above chart the area we wish to call 'heritage as aid and diplomacy'.

Topics for papers
Please refer to the website for a list of possible topics to explore in your paper.

Requirements
Paper proposals should include a title, name of author, institutional affiliation, email address, an abstract (300 words) and a brief personal biography (150 words). The proposal should be submitted via the form available on the IIAS website at http://www.iias.nl/heritageaid by 1 November 2015. Successful applicants will be notified by 20 December 2015 and will be required to send a draft paper (6000 - 8000 words) by 15 April 2016. Four nights' accommodation and a (partial) travel grant will be provided for all accepted participants.

Conveners
Dr Philippe Peycam, Director, International Institute for Asian Studies, The Netherlands
Professor Michael Hsiao, Distinguished Research Fellow and Director, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan
Dr Hui Yew-Foong, Senior Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

Conference series
This conference is the last in a series of three, jointly organised by the above mentioned institutions. For information on the series, see the website.

Contact
For enquires about the conference, please contact Ms. Martina van den Haak at m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl

Website: www.iias.nl/heritageaid

A-ASIA Inaugural Conference
Asian Studies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Interactions
24-26 September 2015, Accra, Ghana

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

In 2015, the A-ASIA in cooperation with ICAS will organize its first biennial conference. It will be the first conference held in Africa that will bring together a multidisciplinary ensemble of more than 300 scholars from all over the world with a shared focus on Asia and Asia-Africa intellectual interactions.

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

Registration
If you would like to attend this conference as an observer, register via the form provided at: http://www.africas.asia/registration-0

Call for Abstracts
Indian medicine: between state and village

Application deadline: 1 October 2015
Workshop dates: 23-24 June 2016
Venue: Leiden, the Netherlands

Convener: Dr Maarten Bode, Adjunct Research Faculty at the Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam (UvA), the Netherlands, and Adjunct Faculty at the Institute of Trans-disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology, Bangalore, India. Organisation: International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)

About the workshop
The workshop takes the sensibilities of Indian medicines as its point of departure. Themes to be discussed in the workshop are: Indian medicines as tangible and intangible heritage; Indian medicines as health security for

Ballimaran public Ayurvedic hospital in Delhi.

the poor; Indian medicines as identity markers (for the nation, for local communities, and for Westerners in search of Indian spirituality). An important cross-cutting theme is the quest for legitimation and acceptance. For example by linking Indian medicines to the global project of 'Evidence-based Medicine' and to Indian knowledge systems. Contributions from medical anthropology (the actors' point of view) and Science and Technology Studies (social construction of medical knowledge) are especially welcome. However, papers from other theoretical orientations are also greeted.

An important question is if and how Indian nationalist politics affect the recognition, ownership, and management of the wide spectrum of traditional medicines in contemporary India. Social-cultural research shows that on the national level we see debatable – either unintentional or intentional – attempts at reifying, ossifying and nationalizing Indian medicines as Ayurveda. The suggestion is that Ayurveda as India's national medicine is a discrete medical system and that it provides the codified substrate for the many local forms of herbal based Indian medicine practiced today. Though this perspective has been contested as an act of appropriation, labelling local forms of Indian medicine as Ayurveda can also be seen as an act of empowerment. What is needed is a dialogue between two important stakeholders: the Indian state and local communities. By discussing the interactions between global, national and local forms of Indian medicine the workshop wants to contribute to such a dialogue.

The meeting, organized by the International Institute for Asian Studies, the Netherlands, will take the form of a series of discussions of new academic papers, submitted in advance of the workshop. A peer-reviewed selection of the (revised) papers will subsequently be prepared for publication in the scholarly journal *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* (IASTAM, Brill).

Submission details
Abstracts of no more than 300 words, with a short CV, should be submitted via the form available on the IIAS website at http://www.iias.nl/indianmedicine before 1 October 2015. You will be informed before 1 November 2015 if your abstract has been accepted. Selected participants are expected to submit their completed papers before 15 April 2016.

Ayurvedic stress treatment.

Travel and accommodation
The International Institute for Asian Studies provides hotel accommodation for three nights to all selected participants. Participants are expected to cover their own travel expenses. Very limited financial support may be made available to specific scholars residing in Asia and some junior or low-income scholars from other parts of the world. If you would like to be considered for financial support, please submit the Grant Application form in which you state your motivation for your request. Please note that the workshop operates on a limited budget, and we will not normally be able to provide more than a partial coverage of the travel expenses. The form should be submitted before 1 October 2015. Requests for funding received after this date will not be taken into consideration.

Contact
For enquires about the workshop, please contact Ms. Martina van den Haak at m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl

Website: www.iias.nl/indianmedicine

Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

DURING THE UPCOMING MONTHS several exciting and promising events will take place within the framework of the IIAS pilot-programme Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context.

The 'Rethinking Asian Studies' programme is 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. Its overarching objective is to reconsider conventional area studies and (as part of this effort) to enrich area study disciplines by fostering a greater appreciation for the humanities, in order to overcome what is considered to be a 'general devaluation' of the humanistic disciplines in the U.S., Europe and many parts of Asia.

More information: www.rethinking.asia

Upcoming workshops

Sharpening the Edges: Instating State and Power in Indian Ocean History. An Agenda for Critical Research and Teaching

Date: 17 August 2015
Place: Leiden, The Netherlands

Co-conveners:
Prof. Michael Laffan, Princeton University, USA;
Prof. Nira Wickramasinghe, Leiden University
Institute for Area Studies (LIAS).

THIS WORKSHOP will bring together a group of fifteen scholars, some invited and others selected through a call for papers to discuss the state of research and teaching in the burgeoning field of Indian Ocean history. For historical reasons linked to former colonial empires and continued relations between them and their erstwhile colonies, interest in the Indian Ocean is more visible in the fields of teaching and research in institutions in Europe and Asia, than in the USA. In keeping with the overall Mellon programme, 'Rethinking Asian Studies', the workshop aims at triangulating a dialogue between Euro-American and South and Southeast Asian scholars.

Beyond the State's Reach: Casino Spaces as Enclaves of Development or Lawlessness?

Date: 21-22 August 2015
Place: Siem Reap, Cambodia

Co-conveners:
Dr. Danielle Tan, Lyon Institute of East Asian Studies (IAO-CNRS); Prof. Brenda Yeoh, Asian Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore; Prof. Tak Wing Ngo, University of Macau.

Partner and host:
Dr. Krisna Uk, Center for Khmer Studies (CKS)
Siem Reap, Cambodia.

THIS PART OF THE PROGRAMME aims at studying Southeast Asia based on networks, processes, transitions, polyvalence, and fluidity, in opposition to the concepts of the 'nation-state' or the 'region'. This workshop seeks to better understand the 'transitional zones' that have emerged in the wake of the encounter between local communities, new migratory circulations and the global economy. The multiplication of mega casino resorts in Asia is emblematic of these new spaces created across local and global scales. Over the past few years, the belief has taken root that the gaming industry is a powerful tool for economic development. The workshop purposes to bring together scholars from different fields and theoretical approaches to interrogates the immediate and long-term socio-political impacts of casino-oriented development in Singapore, Macau, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia, where migration, employment, economic aspiration and social cohesion have been issues of contention.

City Theory for the New Millennium

Date: 20-21 October 2015
Place: Shanghai, China

Convenors:
International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS);
Dr. Paul Rabé, Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA);
Prof. Anupama Rao, Columbia University/Barnard College;
Dr. Philippe Peycam, International Institute for
Asian Studies (IIAS).

Partner and host:
Prof. Tu Qiyu, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS)
Shanghai, China.

THE FOCUS OF THIS EVENT will be the knowledge about cities (research approaches, theories, curricula, literature), specifically cities in Asia. At issue is how urban expertise can be framed in a more integrated fashion, by joining social sciences with humanities-based knowledge, to inform applied expertise, and vice versa. A second objective is to explore how these new forms of city knowledge and theory can contribute to re-shaping humanistic higher education including culturally and historically-grounded 'regional studies'.

New IIAS Publications
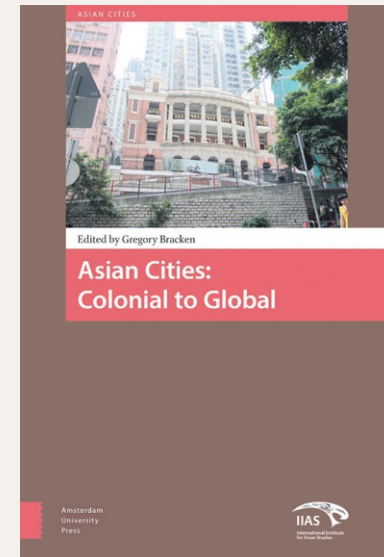
Asian Cities: Colonial to Global

Gregory Bracken (ed.)
ISBN: 9789089649317
Release date: 15-06-2015
Amsterdam University Press; Series: Asian Cities

WHEN PEOPLE LOOK AT success stories among postcolonial nations, the focus almost always turns to Asia, where many cities in former colonies have become key locations of international commerce and culture. This book brings together a stellar group of scholars from a number of disciplines to explore the rise of Asian cities, including Singapore, Macau, Hong Kong, and more. Dealing with history, geography, culture, architecture, urbanism, and other topics, the book attempts to formulate a new understanding of what makes Asian cities such global leaders.

Gregory Bracken is an Assistant Professor at the Architecture Faculty of Delft University of Technology and a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).
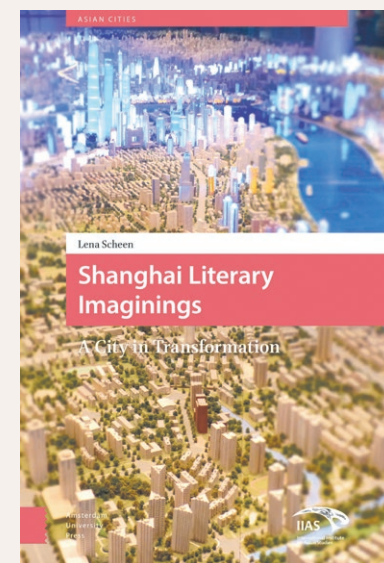
Shanghai Literary Imaginings

Lena Scheen
ISBN: 9789089645876
Release date: 15-06-2015
Amsterdam University Press; Series: Asian Cities

THIS BOOK DRAWS ON a wide range of methods – including approaches from literary studies, cultural studies, and urban sociology – to analyse the transformation of Shanghai through rapid growth and widespread urban renewal. Lena Scheen explores the literary imaginings of the city, its past, present, and future, in order to understand the effects of that urban transformation on both the psychological state of Shanghai's citizens and their perception of the spaces they inhabit.

Lena Scheen is assistant professor/faculty fellow at New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai).

For ordering information go to:
www.iias.nl/publications

Christina Firpo

Christina Firpo is an Associate Professor of History at CalPoly University in San Luis Obispo, California. She was a fellow at IIAS during Spring-Summer 2013 and a fellow at the KITLV during Summer 2014. Her book, *The Uprooted: Race and Childhood in Colonial Indochina, 1890-1975,* will be published by the University of Hawai'i Press in 2016.

The Alumnus

IN MAY 2013, I ARRIVED in Leiden where I would spend the last four months of my sabbatical at IIAS. My task was to finish writing my book on mixed-race children in 19th and 20th century Vietnam. IIAS provided a perfect writing atmosphere, and more. I was immediately charmed by Leiden, its museums, and the 19th century café that served delicate meringues. To my delight, I learned that the institute was located in a 16th century house on the elegant Rapenburg canal. The story goes that after the residents of Leiden resisted the Spanish, William of Orange rewarded them with a choice of either tax exemption or a university. They chose the latter—a people after my own heart. The original University building is a church converted into a lecture hall, symbolizing the sacrosanctity of knowledge in Leiden's community.

At the Rapenburg office, I settled into a third floor workspace where I had a bird's eye view of the canal below. Within a few weeks of arriving, I was entertained by watching a barge come through to pull rusty bicycles out of the canal—and it had a heaping pile. As the Spring set in, crocuses broke through the ground, the weather warmed up, and the sun set later each day. My new friends and I took advantage of the northern latitude to enjoy late drinks along the canal, discussing our research.

My fellowship at IIAS was fruitful. The institute was impressively organized: they took care of fellows' housing, organized talks and field trips, and gave us helpful tips for getting around the Netherlands. The most valuable aspect of the IIAS fellowship was the intellectual community that the institute fostered. Director Philippe Peycam, also an historian of colonial Vietnam, offered me sage professional advice and introduced fellows to important contacts within the University of Leiden and the KITLV. He went above and beyond his duties as director to cook dinner for fellows, share his vast collection of mid-century Japanese music, and entertain us with jokes and slang in flawless Vietnamese. Paul Rabé introduced me to new ways of approaching my

second book project on illegal prostitution in the major cities in colonial Vietnam; and I continue to work with Paul van der Velde on the ICAS book prize committee. I also made lasting friendships with other fellows who also took up temporary residence at IIAS. A dynamic cohort quickly formed, and included scholars from the US, India, Japan, Italy, France, and local Dutch scholars. The scholars in our group studied a variety of disciplines and countries: history of science in Japan, political science in Laos, art history of India, Sanskrit and Indonesian linguistics, city planning in Mumbai, heritage conservation in Cambodia, and I studied history of Vietnam. The intellectual connection was valuable for everyone. We listened to presentations, read each others' work, offered valuable suggestions, and gave professional advice. The exposure to varied types of research forced us to think about our work in broader Asian terms and from an interdisciplinary perspective. When we weren't working hard, we geeked out, goofed off, and gobbled up the delights from the Wednesday market.

IIAS offered more than the four walls of Rapenburg 59. I took advantage of the University of Leiden library and the KITLV collection. I made trips to The Hague to admire the architecture and visit museums. I took boat rides and tested every local cheese in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Haarlem, and other cities. I quickly fell in love with the complexity of the Dutch culture's perfect simplicity.

The fellowship at IIAS also proved fruitful in ways that I could never have predicted. Writing flowed from my fingertips. Before I knew it, my book was finished and it will be

published with the University of Hawai'i Press in Spring 2016. In addition to finishing my first book, while at IIAS I made substantial headway on chapters for my second book on clandestine prostitution in colonial Vietnam. Through my contacts at IIAS, in the summer of 2014 I was invited to work on my second book at the KITLV. I also joined the book prize committee for the International Conference of Asian Scholars (ICAS) taking place in Adelaide, in July of this year. I see staff members almost every year at the Association of Asian Studies conference and other conferences. I look forward to seeing them again at ICAS 9, where my cohort will have a reunion in Australia.

Christina Firpo, Associate Professor of History, CalPoly University, San Luis Obispo, California. (cfirpo@calpoly.edu).

Top:
Christina Firpo.

Below:
Christina with other fellows at IIAS.

IIAS research and projects

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

Global Asia

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

Asian Borderlands Research Network (www.asianborderlands.net)
The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner.
Coordinator: Eric de Maaker (maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)
The EPA-research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. EPA's current and second joint comparative research programme with the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is entitled *The Transnationalization of China's Oil Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017).* Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this programme will analyse China's increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil. It seeks to determine patterns of interaction between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects, and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economies. This programme is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS.
Coordinators: M. Amineh, Programme Director EPA-IIAS (m.p.amineh@uva.nl or m.p.amineh@iias.nl), Y. Guang, Progamme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance
The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the research projects fall within the following interlocking areas: State licensing, market closure, and rent seeking; Regulation of intra-governmental conflicts; State restructuring and rescaling; and Regulatory governance under institutional voids.
Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo (t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Asian Studies in Africa
Since 2010, IIAS and other partners from Africa, Asia and the USA have been working on an initiative to promote the study of and teaching on Asia at African universities and, equally, to promote African Studies in Asia. The initiative constitutes a first attempt to sustain a humanities-informed South-South knowledge platform with connections between other academic centers in Europe and North America, but also Latin-America and Oceania.

In 2012, a roundtable in Chisamba, Zambia, led to the establishment of the pan-African 'Association of Asian Studies in Africa' (A-ASIA). A-ASIA's development is headed by a steering committee of scholars, mainly from Africa and Asia. A-ASIA's inaugural conference will take place from 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

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 thesuccessful 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. Latest publication: Bracken, G. 'Asian Cities: Colonial to Global', June 2015.
Coordinator: Greg Bracken (gregory@cortlever.com)

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
Consisting of over 100 researchers with affiliations at 17 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, seeking to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. To this aim, the programme hosts a variety of research projects through the exchange of researchers of the participating institutions, focusing on the three research themes: 1. Ideas of the city; 2. Cities by and for the people; and 3. Future of the cities.

UKNA is funded by a grant awarded by the EU and runs from April 2012 until April 2016. IIAS is the coordinating institute in the network and administrator of the programme.
For a full list of UKNA Partners please refer to the UKNA website (www.ukna.asia) Coordinators: Paul Rabé (p.e.rabe@iias.nl) and Gien San Tan (g.s.tan@iias.nl)

Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER critically addresses cultural heritage practices in Asia. It 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, Unanitibb, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage) for collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds.

A workshop, entitled, 'Indian medicine: Between state and village' will take place in Leiden, The Netherlands on 23-24 June 2016. Abstracts can be submitted until 1 October 2015. See: www.iias.nl/indianmedicine.
Coordinator: Maarten Bode (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 inter-connected 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) Website: 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

Hajime Akitomi
The comparative study of labor, employment & globalization labor between the Netherlands & Japan
1 Apr 2015 – 1 Apr 2016

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

Samson Bezabeh
Reshaping of state-society interaction in the Horn of Africa by the presence of Chinese sponsored cross-border infrastructure projects
1 May – 31 Dec 2015

Gregory Bracken
Coordinator 'The Postcolonial Global City'
Colonial-era Shanghai as an urban model for the 21st Century
1 Sep 2009 – 31 Aug 2015

Hannah Bulloch
Intimate relationships & the politics of personhood in the Philippines
13 Apr – 12 May 2015

Chunhong CHEN
Urban heritage preservation in China
1 Sep 2014 – 31 Aug 2015

Sayandeb Chowdhury
Photographic practices & regimes in colonial Calcutta
15 Apr – 9 Jul 2015

Yuehtsen (Juliette) Chung
Visiting Professor, Taiwanese Chair of Chinese Studies
1 Sep 2014 – 30 Jun 2015

Farabi Fakih
Colonial participation of the creation of urban spaces. The municipality of Bandung in the early 20th century
1 Jun – 31 Aug 2015

Valérie Gelézeau
New geographies of urban cultures in the Korean world – convergence and divergence
1 Mar 2015 – 29 Feb 2016

David Geary
The limits of heritage and the making of a World Buddhist Centre in Bodh Gaya
1 Jul – 31 Aug 2015

Haoqun GONG
Practising (Patibad) Buddhism: Body techniques & religious publicity in urban Thailand
1 Aug 2015 – 31 Jul 2016

Jenna Grant
Technology, clarity, & uncertainty: an ethno-graphy of biomedical imaging in Phnom Penh
20 Jan 2014 – 30 Sep 2015

Jie GUO
Spectacular embodiments: British & Chinese representations of colonial encounters in the Yunnan-Burma borderlands, 1880-1945
1 May – 15 Aug 2015

Yike HU
Quantitative study of the urban national park, boundary marketing, design & management
20 Mar – 19 Sep 2015

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

Nicolay Kradin
Nomadic imperial urbanization & movement of people, empires, & technologies in Mongolian Far East
1 Mar – 31 May 2015

Hao LI
Urbanisation strategy of China's western region
1 Feb – 30 Apr 2015

Julia Martínez
Chinese indentured labour in the French Congo
1 Apr – 30 Jun 2015

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

Thien-Huong Ninh
The new chosen people: Religion & race in the Vietnamese diaspora?
1 Aug – 30 Sept 2015

Saraju Rath
Indian manuscripts in the Netherlands: from forgotten treasures to accessible archives
5 Jan 2004 – 31 Jan 2016

Tina Shrestha
Transnational suffering narratives: Documenting Nepali migrant-communities in Europe & Southeast Asia
1 Mar – 31 Dec 2015

Bal Gopal Shrestha
Religiosity among the Nepalese Diaspora
1 Jan – 30 Jun 2015

Karan Singh
Syncretic heritage: Sidhis of India (A diasporic African community in India)
1 May – 30 Jun 2015

Shilpa Sumant
Preparing the second volume of the critical edition of Śrīdhara's Karmapañjikā – Jātasaṃsthāḥ: basic rituals for one who has been born
1 May – 31 Oct 2015

Lei WANG
The transformation & development of the old industrial city
1 Mar – 30 May 2015

Juan WU
A Study of Legends of King Ajātaśatru/Kūṇika in Indian Buddhist & Jaina Traditions
1 Jan 2015 – 30 Jun 2015

Hui XU
The optimal allocation of public facilities, especially in the process of urban renewal, urban integration & urban combination
2 Mar – 29 May 2015

Xiaomei ZHAO
Spirit of urban heritage: Place-making in the metropolis in the globalized age
26 Jan – 8 Mar 2015
& 20 Jul – 30 Sep 2015

ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme

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

THIS FELLOWSHIP is intended for researchers specialising in Asian-African interactions. It 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

African Studies Centre

IIAS
International Institute for Asian Studies

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Valérie Gelézeau

Blooming time for my 'New geographies of urban cultures in Korea'

AS A KOREAN STUDIES SCHOLAR, I was already acquainted with IIAS publications, events, and bustling activities. But only recently did I decide to apply for a fellowship; after several effervescent years engaged at my mother institution, the EHESS in Paris, I longed for a few months to concentrate on a new project. Arriving in Leiden when the 'Keukenhof' is in full bloom, when other fellows arrive from all over the world, and with this project to focus on, seems just a dream come true!

Combining the perspectives of cultural geography and Korean studies, my project seeks to better problematize what I call the 'Korean world' (North and South Korea, and the Korean diaspora) by entering the urban terrain comparatively. That North and South Korea greatly diverge is only too well-known by both common and scientific knowledge. Yet locally, I rather observe the convergence: the importance of apartments as housing form, the planning and use of public parks, where having a picnic *(sop'ung)* is a popular Sunday event for middle class families, the rehabilitation of the riverbanks in Seoul and Pyongyang, the importance of new history museums that tell a different story of the nation. At all those intertwined levels of urban space and practice, comparison triggers questions about how the fabric of cities articulates with two societies that share a common urban history on the *longue durée,* but chose radically opposite ways to modernize and urbanize since the division occurred midway through the 20th century.

While the main purpose and ultimate goal of this IIAS fellowship project is to elaborate the synopsis of a monograph on urban cultures in the Koreas (which will be my third singled-authored book), this project rests on three simultaneous works in progress. The first topic leads me to analyze scholarly geographical discourses on capitals in South Korea; I discuss how the Korean case challenges the capital as a single static center and the matrix/product of the territorial dynamics of nation-states. This chapter in the making will stand in a volume that I am currently editing on Korean capital cities, which will be published in the fall by the new Korean Studies series of the Collège de France in Paris.

In the second topic, an ongoing fieldwork, I focus on the development since 2003 of an urban mega-project (Songdo City in South Korea), studying residential neighborhoods where the planning of housing and public spaces meets the actual urban experience of the original residents. The final focus is grounded on very long term efforts to prepare the condition for a first comparative seminar on city planning in North Korea.

Like many scholars, I have several things growing in my garden, which will blossom during my stay at IIAS. The intellectual environment in Leiden seems perfect for that; I can develop long standing connections with Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), and benefit from the exceptional resources of the East Asian library, especially the one developed on North Korea. Within IIAS, I also look forward to developing new active collaboration with scholars engaged like myself in the Asian Cities cluster, but also with other IIAS clusters (Global Asia, and Asian Heritages).

My term here only just started and it has been a blooming time for my research – and not only because the IIAS organized a friendly May 1st outing at the Keukenhof gardens! Already, the presentation I delivered on Songdo in March gave me useful feedback. I meet every day dynamic international scholars, with equally fascinating projects. Learning more about them at the IIAS lunch lectures is a pleasure. Now that I think of it, the intense colors of the Keukenhof's tulips are indeed a perfect symbol of my stay here, and I am extremely grateful to both the IIAS for granting me this fellowship, and the EHESS for letting me seize this great opportunity.

Tina Shrestha

Transnational suffering narrative: documenting Nepali migrant-communities in Southeast Asia and Europe

MY AIM AT IIAS IS TWOFOLD. First, I am working to convert my doctoral dissertation into a book manuscript *Working the Paper: Nepali Suffering Narration, Compassion, and the US Asylum Process* for publication. This project is based on 24 months of ethnographic fieldwork (among Nepali migrants and asylum seekers and their legal advocates in New York City) on socio-legal practices, particularly the co-production of suffering-testimonials and narratives. Second, I am initiating a new project—building on the theoretical foundations laid by my dissertation—on the emergence and conceptualization of *dukkha,* or suffering, at the intersection of specific transnational migration of Nepalis to Europe and Southeast Asia.

In the book manuscript, I bring into conversation the scholarly literature on contemporary U.S. immigration and critical asylum regimes, using the frameworks in legal anthropology, humanitarianism, and phenomenology.

My analysis centers on two key issues: 1) the formation of diverse migrant subjectivities as refugees and asylum seekers in the US are forged in a dialectic between people negotiating the socio-legal category of 'asylum seeker' and integrating into the US society as 'migrant workers'; and 2) the contemporary US asylum process as a paradigmatic case for the co-production of 'suffering testimonials', where asylum advocates and legal experts employ, embody, and self-consciously reproduce rationales to practice compassion as an important extension of the everyday performance of membership in a liberal, democratic state.

The new project expands the argument in my dissertation on the conceptualization of suffering as an unstable category that Nepalis adhere to through shared social practices—as a concrete moral responsibility and an outcome of negotiating competing socio-existential values. In particular, it draws on phenomenological approaches and debates on suffering by re-thinking the conceptual divide between the moral and the material examine the specific ways that the term *dukkha* itself may extend across distinctly situated ambiguities and continuum in the context of transnational Nepali migration. More broadly, suffering as-a-lived-experience and a powerful narrative within the contexts of Nepali migration to Europe and Southeast Asia is of primary interest for me.

Being at IIAS has provided me with a vibrant intellectual community and a collegial atmosphere to pursue my writing and engage with scholars. Since being at IIAS, I have attended several academic events, including the Photo Exhibition titled *Picturing Asia,* the Asian Modernities and Traditions talk, and monthly presentations by IIAS fellows. An invitation to give a talk (last month) allowed me to share my research with other fellows, where I received helpful comments and participated in an engaging conversation afterward. At the University of Amsterdam (UvA), I have also the opportunity to meet scholars working on their book projects and migration-related projects in Europe. I currently attended workshops organized by MoMat *(Moving Matters)* that bring together advanced graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and junior scholars working on the themes of migration. Recently, I was an invited guest speaker in the course titled *Asian Perspectives* in the Anthropology Department at UvA.

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. However, some positions will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed.

Asian Cities

The Asian Cities cluster explores modes of urban development, and deals with cities and urban cultures with related issues of flows and fluxes, ideas and goods, cosmopolitism and connectivity at their core, framing the existence of vibrant 'civil societies' and political micro-cultures. Through an international knowledge network, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities 'in context' and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

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This cluster focuses on the politics of culture and cultural heritages in Asia. It addresses a variety of definitions associated with cultural heritage and their implications for social agency. In general, the cluster engages with a broad range of concepts and issues related to culture and cultural heritage, and their importance in defining one's identity vis-à-vis those of others.

Global Asia

The Global Asia cluster 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.

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Guan Di and Tin Mountain: Chinese temples in Northeast Tasmania

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) in Launceston, Tasmania, houses a surprising collection. In a specially built room in the Art Gallery building is a Temple containing items from six Chinese temples from Tasmania's northeast region.

Jon Addison

Guan Di Temple – ongoing exhibition
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery
Launceston, Tasmania
http://www.qvmag.tas.gov.au/

DURING THE 19TH CENTURY, increasing unrest within China with the destabilisation of the Qing led to waves of overseas migration, with the American and Australian Gold Rushes providing a great impetus. Chinese people were rare in Tasmania[1] until the Australian Gold Rush started to attract Chinese miners to the goldfields on the mainland. This led to a small number of Chinese miners arriving in Tasmania in the 1860s to search for gold. However, it was tin rather than gold that eventually led to a genuine influx of miners, both European and Chinese. America had its 'Gold Mountain', mainland Australia its 'New Gold Mountain', and similarly, Tasmania became popular for its 'Tin Mountain'. By 1891 the Chinese population in Tasmania – mostly young men – was almost 1000, which although appearing small by modern standards, represented a significant proportion of the entire population of Tasmania's North East, as this region was difficult country with limited road and track access, and was extremely sparsely populated.

In Tasmania, unusually, the Chinese were largely accepted by Europeans. The levels of antagonism experienced by Chinese miners on the Australian mainland were far less in evidence in Tasmania, although there was some conflict. Some leaders, such as Maa Mon Chinn (马振 / 馬振 / Ma Zhen) of Weldborough and Chin Kaw (陈高 / 陳高 / Chen Gao) of Launceston, became highly respected members of the community. For the most part this lack of antipathy in Tasmania was less a sign of tolerance and more likely a reflection of the fact that the tin fields of the North East were extremely marginal mining areas, and many of the claims worked by the Chinese were not considered a good economic proposition by European prospectors. It was the Chinese system of community organisation and support that enabled them to make profits from these claims, where European miners working entirely independently would have found this difficult.

Virtually all of the miners who came to Tasmania were recruited from Guangdong Province (广东 / 廣東) in southeastern China. They travelled on a 'credit-ticket' system run by a Chinese creditor who already lived in Australia. Their similarity of geographical origin gave them a greater sense of group identity, and meant that communication in one's local dialect was still possible. The few women who migrated came as wives of the more influential and educated community leaders. The lack of Chinese women in the community led to many miners marrying or co-habiting with European women, and this probably led to many Chinese immigrants remaining in the colony even after the decline of small-scale alluvial mining. The Chinese population gradually reduced as this type of mining was displaced by larger-scale industrial operations; in addition, in 1887 the government introduced immigration restrictions. By 1921, 234 Chinese people remained in Tasmania. Most had left mining to run small businesses such as market gardens, laundries or general stores. Descendants of these pioneers can still be found in Tasmania and other States.

On arrival Chinese groups would set up portable shrines. These would serve as centres for religious observance, but once made more permanent, would become the base for community activities and administration. Europeans called these temples 'Joss Houses'. There were six known temples in Tasmania's northeast; they were at Weldborough, Garibaldi, Branxholm, Moorina, Gladstone, and Lefroy. All were in tin-mining areas, although Lefroy began as a gold-mining settlement. The temples were small wooden buildings, whose humble external appearances belied the wealth accumulated within.

All known Tasmanian temples were built during the 1880s, and all were dedicated to Guan Di. Guan Di worship appears to have been almost universal amongst Australian overseas Chinese. The majority of immigrants were poor, illiterate manual labourers, and Guan Di worship was extremely popular in southern China amongst labourers. Guan Di as a deity also offered a number of other advantages to immigrant Chinese. As well as being a highly regarded 'Emperor' figure within the Taoist/Buddhist pantheon, with the ability to cast out demons, Guan Di has the key attribute of fostering brotherhood. This had great appeal in communities separated from their homes by both distance and cultural practices.

The 'Joss House', or Guan Di Temple (关帝庙 / 關帝廟 Guan Di Miao) at QVMAG holds the contents of a number of temples from north-eastern Tasmanian mining towns. As the Chinese

Above left:
A figure from one of two sets of Chinese Opera figurines in the temple collection. Photo: John Leeming

Above right: The front and main altars of the temple, with the large main shrine. Photo: John Leeming

Below: Chinese and Europeans on 'Tin Pot Row', Garibaldi, Tasmania, 1914. Garibaldi was one of the major Chinese mining towns, and had its own temple. Photo: QVMAG Collection QVM:1983:P:1619

population gradually declined and many smaller towns were abandoned, the temples closed and key items from each were brought together, eventually ending up in Weldborough. When the Weldborough temple closed in 1934, the custodian transferred custody to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, as a working temple for the Launceston Chinese community.

The temple collection is a fascinating snapshot into the importance of religion as a social glue for the Chinese of Tin Mountain. Despite the buildings being simple weatherboard constructions, their contents reflect considerable expenditures. The inscriptions on many of the items in this temple tell us that they were donated by individuals, surname lodges, lodges of the Hong Men (洪门 / 洪門) or district associations. Chinese on the Tasmanian tin fields would use membership of groups such as 'surname lodges' for support in hard conditions, and to provide some measure of social cohesion and sense of belonging in a strange and difficult new place. Some were part of brotherhoods or secret societies such as the Hong Men, which began in the mid-1600s in China as a revolutionary group. In Southeast Asia, they developed into the 'Triad' criminal organisation. In Australia Hong Men became more of a benevolent association, eventually forming Chinese Masonic lodges.

The items in the current temple collection mostly date from the 1880s. Items were given to these temples by those who had 'received benefits and favour' from the gods, and wished to reciprocate through the bestowing of high-value material. Items range from carved and painted plaques to incense pots and candles, textile banners, large decorative floats of golden palaces, small shrines and ceremonial weapons. The collection also includes two significant sets of Chinese opera figurines, which probably relate to the visit of a Chinese Opera company to the north of Tasmania in 1891. Some items also show evidence of local manufacture, such as a gong frame made from a bicycle rim, and a western rocking horse used to represent Guan Di's mount, Red Hare.

QVMAG's temple collection is a rare survivor of a fascinating period in Tasmania's history, and an insight into Chinese religious practices in Australia in the 1880s.

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References
1 Nine Chinese carpenters were brought to the colony as skilled labourers in 1830. They were probably the first Chinese people in Northern Tasmania. However, few other Chinese immigrants appear before the 1860s, and these early immigrants are not representative of the later influx of Chinese miners.