



IIAS

International Institute  
for Asian Studies

# theNewsletter

Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

72  
The New  
Asia Scholar



## Who is the New Asia Scholar?

Perhaps a scholar who is, among others, responding to a developing Asia, to the evolving inclusiveness of Asian Studies, to the significance of language, and to the increasing demand for alternative scholarship.

We put this question to our colleagues; their answers can be found within the pages of our Focus.



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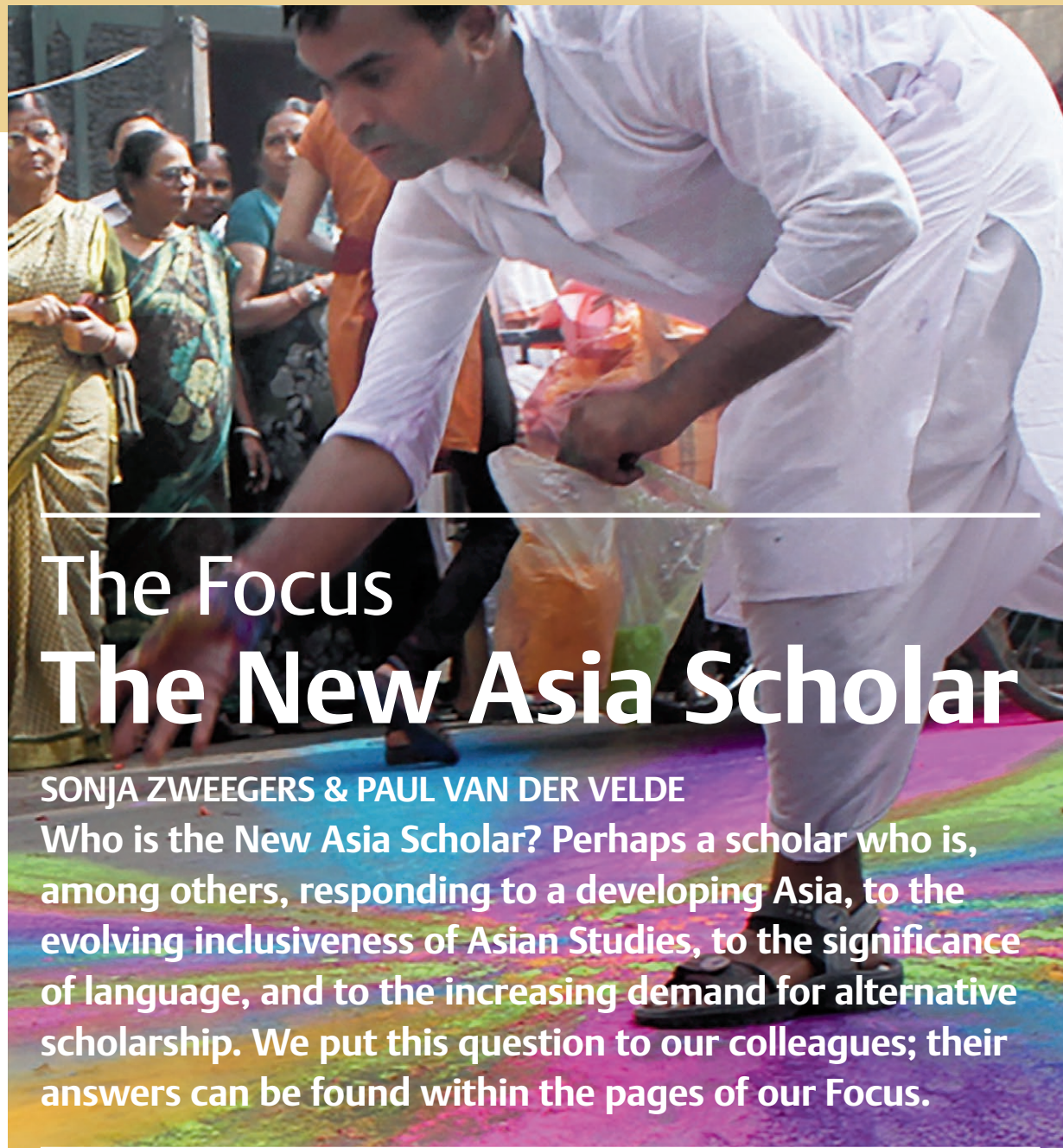
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## The Focus The New Asia Scholar

SONJA ZWEEGERS & PAUL VAN DER VELDE

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# Forging new connections

I am writing this just as we are completing, in collaboration with our African and international partners, what was perhaps the most daring initiative by IIAS or by an institute of its kind: the extraordinary conference 'Africa-Asia: A New Axis of Knowledge' (Accra, Ghana, 24-26 September 2015). With more than 300 participants coming from 30-plus countries, mainly from Africa and Asia, about 60 panels and roundtables focusing on as many subjects, and despite all the logistical difficulties such an undertaking entails, something quite special took place during these three magical days at the University of Ghana, exactly 60 years after the historic Bandung conference. An "epiphany", was how one of our Ghanaian hosts described it. The next issue of The Newsletter will go into further detail about this remarkable event.

Philippe Peycam

THE FOCUS SECTION of this current issue of The Newsletter is titled 'The New Asia Scholar', and has been compiled by my colleagues Sonja Zweegers and Paul van der Velde. What is apparent in this study is the ever more complex and plural nature of the field of Asian Studies. Not only has its transformation resulted from an exponential increase of voices from Asia and other non-Western regions or institutions, but the field itself is undergoing major epistemological shifts, as found in the multiplicity of approaches and themes chosen beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and even across professional sectors of knowledge. Asian Studies, moreover, is witnessing a blurring of its various geographic determinations, with the subdivisions 'Southeast Asian, East Asian, South Asian, Central Asian' becoming increasingly obsolete. As many scholars have long pointed out, even the concept of 'Asia' is problematic. Can it be geographically determined? Can it be said to represent a coherent historical system or rather a collection of interwoven genealogies or histories? If so, how deeply connected are these with other 'world regions' and their societies?

These issues are among those that the current IIAS-led Mellon-funded programme 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context' has been seeking to address, not only by exploring alternative geographic configurations of Asia, but also new spaces of academic engagement, like for instance the city and the study of Asia through an urban prism, or else, by including perspectives taken outside Asia or Europe, with for instance the Africa-Asia axis of knowledge interactions. The programme also seeks to explore other potential fields of intellectual inquiry, for instance those articulated by craft makers or artists, as both 'embodied' forms of knowledge, and their contributions, from the margin or below, to discourses on Asian cultures and heritages.

Because of the different alignments of its networks, IIAS is in an exceptional position to capture some of the transnational trends that somewhat define Asia taken "as a method", to quote Kwan Hsinh Chen. For instance, the massive urbanization phenomenon currently taking place in most Asian countries is one unique way to appreciate the new social patterns that are emerging in our age of global connectivity. If we just take China, 150 million people are to be forcefully urbanized within the next decade, with their lifestyles and social patterns changed forever; it's a phenomenon of unprecedented scale. This is a theme that will be discussed at an upcoming workshop in Shanghai, 'City Theory for the New Millennium' (October 2015). For almost four years of its existence, the 17 member institutions and over 100 researchers of the interdisciplinary trans-sector IIAS-led Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA), have been researching and exchanging knowledge regarding these transformations, interrogating what today's notion of 'city' now means, and for whom.



Above: Some of the participants at the 'Africa-Asia' conference in Ghana (September 2015).

Similarly, IIAS explores new spaces of social agency through its appreciation of patterns of cultural transformation and their uses. IIAS not only looks at how communities seek to withstand top down cultural discourses and policies imposed upon them (a theme covered by two international conferences, in Singapore in January 2014, in partnership with the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; and in Taipei in December 2014, with Academia Sinica), it also encourages critical explorations of cultural policies (see the upcoming conference 'Language, Power and Identity in Asia', in Leiden, March 2016, in partnership with the LeidenGlobal platform; and the 'Heritage as Aid and Diplomacy' conference, scheduled for May 2016, also in Leiden).

At all levels, creative forms of expressions and representations are being explored: from the invention of a 'heritage of shame' (Professor Jung-Sung Han's presentation 'Making of Dark Heritage in Contemporary Japan', September 2015, at IIAS), to the discovery of the multiplicity of identity in today's decentralized Indonesia (a collaboration between IIAS and the Indonesian Heritage Society BPP). If this recognition of multiple identities is somewhat familiar to the people of India, it is now fast becoming common in a number of Southeast and even Eastern Asian societies.

Another IIAS focus, on 'global Asia', interrogates the pervasiveness of Asia in the world, through Asian diaspora, Asian commodities, businesses, ideas, cultural productions, etc. What does this Asian ubiquity mean for the current trend of geopolitical realignment, with the erosion of Western references and models in all parts of the world? We consider this phenomenon by facilitating dialogue between African and Asian scholars (as per the Africa-Asia conference in Accra, and the A-Asia/IIAS roundtables 'Asia through an African Lens' and 'Towards a Sustainable Model of Asian Studies in Africa'), and, within Asia, by exploring communities beyond the state's reach, at the Asian Borderlands workshop and conference (Lyon, 2014 and Siem Reap, 2015).

This constantly shifting definition of Asian Studies is reflected in IIAS's flagship activities, including ICAS, the IIAS Summer/Winter Schools, and The Newsletter. These platforms of intellectual engagement seek to bring together local and global perspectives, to decentre their production, with the desire to promote new spaces of conviviality and sharing, and above all, an urge to weave together singular 'interstitial' elements with broader trends in time and space.

Take the IIAS Summer/Winter Schools. After a number of very successful instalments, IIAS is now receiving requests from numerous universities and their cities to host this intensive weeklong academic exercise. They seek access to the unusually diverse range of participants and academic conveners (selected by IIAS from its various networks), knowing that these participants and their conveners will not just engage with each other, but will equally interact with their hosts and the local place, to ultimately develop new knowledge and output. This is exactly what happened in Leiden in 2011 ('Heritage Conserved and Contested in Asia and Europe') and 2012 ('Migrations and Interactions'), in Macau in 2013 ('Postcolonial Urban Hybridity'), in Chiang Mai in 2014 ('Politics of Craft') and no doubt, what will happen in Kyoto in January 2015 ('Building Urban Societies through the Arts').

Out of these intensive training events, participants gain more than theoretical and factual content. They forge new and unexpected connections, thanks to the diversity of backgrounds and approaches, but also due to the places in which the Schools embed their activities. With some slight adjustments, I could say the same about the ICAS events or The Newsletter, all meant to serve as spaces of inclusive knowledge, exchanges, and shared experiences.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

## The Newsletter and IIAS

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

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

## IIAS Main Office

International Institute  
for Asian Studies  
PO Box 9500  
2300 RA Leiden  
The Netherlands

## Visitors

Rapenburg 59  
Leiden  
The Netherlands  
T +31 (0) 71-527 2227  
F +31 (0) 71-527 4162  
iias@iias.nl

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Editors of The Focus: Paul van der Velde & Sonja Zweegers  
Regional editors: Terence Chong (ISEAS) & Yunjeong Joo (SNUAC)  
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# ICAS 9 Adelaide

The 9th International Convention of Asia Scholars took place in Adelaide, from 5-9 July 2015. ICAS 9 was jointly hosted by South Australia's three public universities: the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the University of South Australia, and supported by the Asian Studies Association of Australia. The ICAS Secretariat is hosted by IIAS in Leiden.

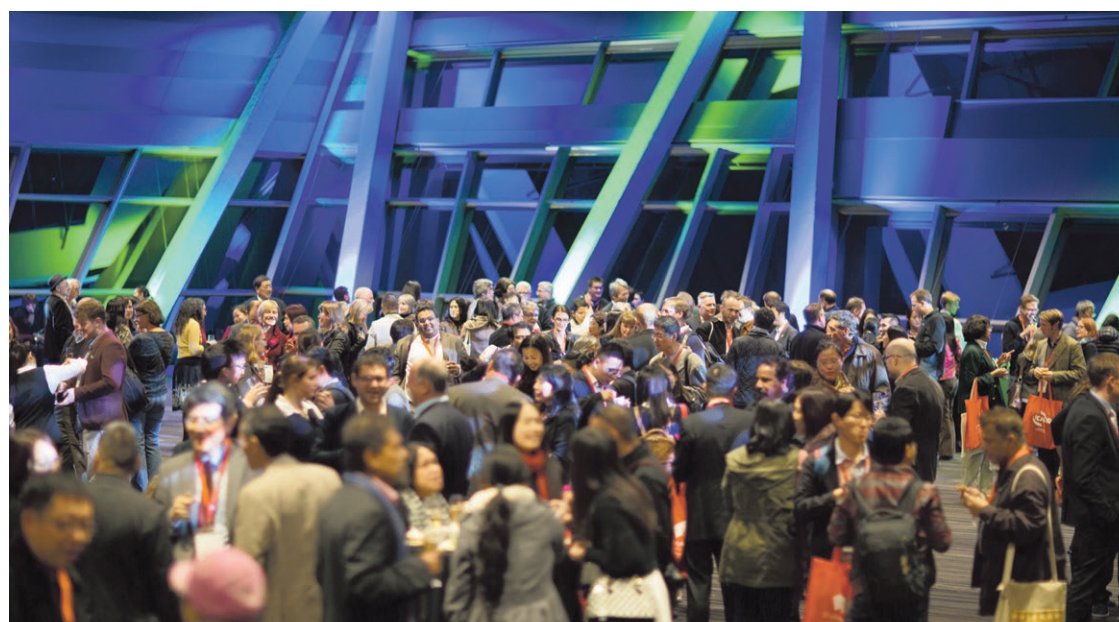
THE PROGRAMME drew over 1000 participants from some 60 countries and took place at the astounding multi-award winning Adelaide Convention Centre. "The programme not only ran very smoothly, it was also one of the most diverse ever", says Paul van der Velde, ICAS Secretary. The programme included more than 200 panels, a book and academic exhibition, Asian country updates, film screenings, cultural performances, receptions by the Governor of South Australia and the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, excursions, and of course, the 2015 ICAS Book Prize Award Ceremony. In addition to being a great academic and (social) networking success,

ICAS 9 was celebrated by the people of the Adelaide Convention Bureau, whose analysis report indicated the many local jobs created, and the very substantial income generated by the event for the city.

Embedded in the conference's final day, was the special public policy and action research summit 'InterculturAdelaide'. ICAS 9 was held under the theme of 'interculturality'. This relatively new term can be understood as *the encounter between hegemonic and non-dominant cultures as well as frictions, overlapping, interdependencies, potentials for conflict and mutual interference caused by this.*

For ICAS 9, the central question was how Interculturality and its principles can lead to new insights and under-standings about Asia, Asian inter-actions with the world and the world's interactions with Asia. Special attention was paid to how such academic insights can be used to help develop public policy in South Australia, while at the same time helping the general public to understand just how important academic insights can be in helping such policy development.

Needless to say we are looking forward to the tenth edition of ICAS, to be held in Chiang Mai, Thailand (20-23 July 2017). We hope you will join us to yet again make ICAS a fantastic happening.





# ICAS Book Prize 2015

## The 2015 Jury Prizes and Accolades

THE ICAS BOOK PRIZE (IBP) award ceremony took place on 6 July 2015, during ICAS 9 in Adelaide, Australia.

Jury prizes were awarded to the best books and dissertations in both the humanities and social sciences, in addition to the Colleagues' Choice Award, which gives the academic community the opportunity to vote for their own favourite book.

Approximately 50 English-language dissertations, and more than 200 English-language books were submitted, by 58 publishers worldwide. We are now in the process of including new languages to the ICAS Book Prize. Starting with the IBP at ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai (2017) we will be welcoming Chinese, Japanese, French and German publications. This will mean taking a large step towards becoming a truly global competition that is not limited to the academic lingua franca English, but one in which all major languages with sufficient academic capacity can partake.

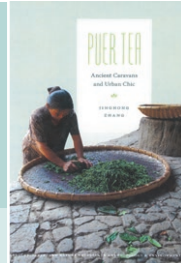
Below you will find the 2015 winning and shortlisted titles, in addition to the publications that received special accolades from the jury. The full list including all citations can be retrieved from [www.icas.asia/winners-and-accolades-ibp-2015](http://www.icas.asia/winners-and-accolades-ibp-2015).

Four of the five main prize winners are pictured opposite receiving their prize certificates. From top to bottom: Jinghong Zhang, Adam Clulow, Tutin Aryanti, Khoo Salma Nasution.

### Winner of the ICAS Book Prize 2015 'Social Sciences'

**Jinghong Zhang**

*Puer Tea. Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic*  
University of Washington Press: Seattle/London, 2014



*Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic* investigates the social life of a once-mundane commodity: puer tea. Taking readers from terraces to forests to luxury hotels, Jinghong Zhang uses classic anthropological methods and reflections on her attendant film-making alongside the powerful centralizing metaphor of *jianghu*, a kind of adjacent reality of murky truths, to relate unique insights into consumption, class, knowledge claims, and even online community in contemporary China. Perhaps most compelling are the ways the rise and fall of puer tea as a desired commodity provides an exploration of ethnicity, indigeneity, and the emergent significance of a supposedly underdeveloped region (Yunnan); all of which are bound up in puer tea, its packaging, its regulation, and the persistent pursuit of authenticity.

#### Shortlisted titles IBP 2015 'Social Sciences'

<b>Bridie Andrews</b> <i>The Making of Modern Chinese Medicine, 1850-1960.</i> UBC Press: Vancouver/Toronto, 2014.	<b>Manduhai Buyandelger</b> <i>Tragic Spirits, Shamanism, Memory &amp; Gender in Contemporary Mongolia.</i> The University of Chicago Press: Chicago/London, 2013.	<b>Robert Cribb, Helen Gilbert &amp; Helen Tiffin</b> <i>Wild Man from Borneo: A Cultural History of the Orangutan.</i> University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2014.	<b>Tina Harris</b> <i>Tibetan Trade, Global Transactions.</i> University of Georgia Press: Athens, 2013.	<b>Philip Taylor</b> <i>The Khmer Lands of Vietnam. Environment, Cosmology and Sovereignty.</i> NUS Press and NIAS Press: Singapore/Copenhagen, 2014.
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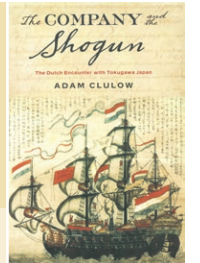
#### Accolades IBP 2015 'Social Sciences'

<b>Publishers Accolade for Outstanding Production Values</b> Alban von Stockhausen, <i>Imag(in)ing the Nagas: The Pictorial Ethnography of Hans-Eberhard Kauffmann and Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf.</i> Arnoldische Art Publishers: Stuttgart, 2014.	<b>Most Accessible and Captivating Work for the non-Specialist Reader Accolade</b> Robert Cribb, Helen Gilbert and Helen Tiffin, <i>Wild Man from Borneo: A Cultural History of the Orangutan.</i> University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2014.	<b>Best Teaching Tool Accolade</b> Li Narangoa and Robert Cribb, <i>Historical Atlas of Northeast Asia 1590-2010. Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, Eastern Siberia.</i> Columbia University Press: New York, 2014.	<b>Edited Volume Accolade</b> Niko Besnier and Kalissa Alexeyeff (eds.), <i>Gender on the Edge: Transgender, Gay, and Other Pacific Islanders.</i> University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2014.
<b>Specialist Publication Accolade</b> Hans Ulrich Vogel, <i>Marco Polo Was in China. New Evidence from Currencies, Salts and Revenues.</i> Brill: Leiden/Boston, 2013.	<b>Ground-Breaking Matter Accolade</b> Lynette J. Chua, <i>Mobilizing Gay Singapore. Rights and Resistance in an Authoritarian State.</i> Singapore. NUS Press, 2014.	<b>Best Art Book Accolade</b> Venka Purushothaman (ed.), <i>The Art of Sukumar Bose: Reflections on South and Southeast Asia.</i> ISEAS Press: Singapore, 2013.	

### Winner of the ICAS Book Prize 2015 'Humanities'

**Adam Clulow**

*The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan*  
Columbia University Press: New York, 2014



*The Company and the Shogun* takes a fresh approach to the study of European power in Asia during the early modern period. Thoroughly researched and thoughtfully argued, Clulow uses the case of the 17th century Dutch East Indies trade company interactions with Tokugawa Japan to interrogate European-centric historical tropes about the rise of the West and European conquest in Asia during this time. Clulow argues that rather than being aggressive merchant pirates who laid the groundwork for early colonialism, the Dutch became loyal vassals who were forced to adopt a subordinate role to the Shogun. With its accessible prose and important implications, this book should be a requirement for students of world history and all of those concerned with the issue of colonial encounters and east-west relations.

#### Shortlisted titles IBP 2015 'Humanities'

<b>Beverley Bossler</b> <i>Courtesans, Concubines, and the Cult of the Female Fidelity.</i> Harvard University Asia Center: Cambridge/London, 2013.	<b>Michelle Caswell</b> <i>Archiving the Unspeakable. Silence, Memory, Photographic Record in Cambodia.</i> The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, 2014.	<b>Theresia Hofer</b> <i>Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine.</i> University of Washington Press, in association with the Rubin Museum of Art: Seattle, 2014.	<b>John N. Miksic</b> <i>Singapore and the Silk Road of the Sea 1300-1800.</i> NUS Press and National Museum of Singapore: Singapore, 2013.	<b>Khoo Salma Nasution</b> <i>The Chulia in Penang: Patronage and Place-Making around the Kapitan Kling Mosque 1786-1957.</i> Areca Books: Penang, 2014.
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#### Accolades IBP 2015 'Humanities'

<b>Publishers Accolade for Outstanding Production Values</b> Inha Jung, <i>Architecture and Urbanism in Modern Korea.</i> University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2013.	<b>Most Accessible and Captivating Work for the non-Specialist Reader Accolade</b> Jeffrey W. Alexander, <i>Brewed in Japan: The Evolution of the Japanese Beer Industry.</i> University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2014.	<b>Best Teaching Tool Accolade</b> K.W. Taylor, <i>A History of the Vietnamese.</i> Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2013.	<b>Edited Volume Accolade</b> Oliver Pye and Jayati Bhattacharya, <i>The Palm Oil Controversy in Southeast Asia.</i> Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: Singapore, 2012.
<b>Specialist Publication Accolade</b> Daria Berg, <i>Women in the Literary World in Early Modern China.</i> Routledge: Oxon, 2013.	<b>Ground-Breaking Matter Accolade</b> Richard Pearson, <i>Ancient Ryukyu.</i> University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2013.	<b>Best Art Book Accolade</b> Theresia Hofer, <i>Bodies in Balance: the Art of Tibetan Medicine.</i> University of Washington Press: Seattle, 2014.	

### Winner of the IBP Dissertation Prize 2015 'Social Sciences'

**Tutin Aryanti**

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

This dissertation beautifully weaves together architectural analysis, ethnographic methods, postcolonial feminist theory, and poststructuralist visual theory to examine the mosques of Yogyakarta and the broader landscape of gendered social relations they constitute and are constituted by. In this rigorous and detailed account, the material and immaterial structures of gendered religious life appear as thoroughly intertwined sites of contestation, where notions of control, empowerment, representation, and transformation are negotiated through the politics of sex segregation. Aryanti puts forward a wonderfully multifaceted picture of religious space, complicating critical readings of the disciplinary functions of mosque architecture by shedding light on the understudied and hidden spatial practices of the women who occupy them.

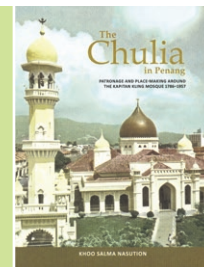
#### Shortlisted titles IBP Dissertation Prize 2015 'Social Sciences'

<b>Tallyn Gray</b> <i>Justice and Transition in Cambodia, 1979-2014: Process, Meaning, and Narrative</i>	<b>David Kloos</b> <i>Becoming Better Muslims: Religious Authority and Ethical Improvement in Aceh, Indonesia</i>
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#### Accolades IBP Dissertation Prize 2015 'Social Sciences'

<b>Most Accessible and Captivating</b> David Kloos, <i>Becoming Better Muslims: Religious Authority and Ethical Improvement in Aceh, Indonesia</i>	<b>Ground-Breaking Subject Matter</b> Tallyn Gray, <i>Justice and Transition in Cambodia, 1979-2014: Process, Meaning, and Narrative.</i>	<b>Specialist Publication</b> Anke Marion Hein, <i>Cultural Geography and Interregional Contacts in Prehistoric Liangshan.</i>
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### Winner of the IBP Colleagues' Choice Award 2015



**Khoo Salma Nasution**  
*The Chulia in Penang: Patronage and Place-Making around the Kapitan Kling Mosque 1786-1957*  
Areca Books: Penang, 2014.

This is a comprehensive study from multiple perspectives of the great mosque established by the Tamil Muslim community in Penang in the early 19th century. Primarily an engaging social history, it places the sacred site at the centre of a wide-ranging enquiry into the evolution of a diaspora and the role of the mosque as an expression of that community's identity. Issues of gender, diet, architecture, and many others are used to illustrate the social and economic worlds of the mosque, as well as its religious processes. Accessible to both students and scholars and illustrated with a wealth of historical photographs and drawings this is an important work, a model of its kind and one to enjoy as well to enlighten. The depth of research is remarkable, and the range of enquiry admirable.

### Winner of the IBP Dissertation Prize 2015 'Humanities'

**Deokhyo Choi**

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

This exceptionally rich study examines the complex interrelated histories of decolonization in Korea and Japan in relation to U.S.-Japan-South Korea Cold War containment policies. The dissertation is ground-breaking in its radical departure from conventional historiographies that analyse the U.S. and Soviet occupations of Korea (1945-1948) and the U.S./Allied occupation of Japan (1945-1952) as separate national histories. Instead, Choi takes the 'Korean minority question' as his primary methodological site, and convincingly shows how an inter- and transnational framework reveals fundamentally new insights into post-Empire Japan and Korea. The outcomes of his work will significantly impact the field of East Asian history at large.

#### Shortlisted titles IBP Dissertation Prize 2015 'Humanities'

<b>Vannessa Hearman</b> <i>Dismantling the 'Fortress': East Java and the Transition to Suharto's New Order Regime (1965-68)</i>	<b>Leonie Schmidt</b> <i>Visions of the Future: Imagining Islamic Modernities in Indonesian Islamic-themed post-Suharto Popular and Visual Culture</i>
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#### Accolades IBP Dissertation Prize 2015 'Humanities'

<b>Most Accessible and Captivating</b> Vannessa Hearman, <i>Dismantling the 'Fortress': East Java and the Transition to Suharto's New Order Regime (1965-68)</i>	<b>Ground-Breaking Subject Matter</b> Philip Bradford Yampolsky, <i>Music and Media in the Dutch East Indies: Gramophone Records and Radio in the Late Colonial Era, 1903-1942</i>	<b>Specialist Publication</b> Jamie Jungmin Yoo, <i>Materiality and Writing: Circulation of Texts, Reading and Reception, and Production of Literature in Late 18th-Century Korea</i>
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# The 2015 Africa-Asia Book Prize

The Africa-Asia Book Prize (AABP) was established by the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in 2013, in cooperation with the Association for Asian Studies in Africa (A-Asia). Its aim is to create an international focus for publications on Africa-Asia while increasing their worldwide visibility. Eligible academic books are those in the Humanities and Social Sciences, written either by an African scholar on an Asian topic or by any other author on Africa-Asia (transnational) linkages. The Africa-Asia Book Prize is awarded to outstanding English/French/Portuguese-language works in the field of Africa-Asian Studies.

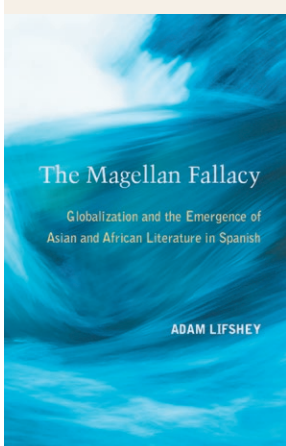
Paul van der Velde

THE 1ST AABP AWARD CEREMONY took place in Accra (Ghana) during the 'AFRICA-ASIA: A New Axis of Knowledge' conference in September. Publishers were permitted to submit books with 2009-2014 publication dates. 25 titles were entered in total. With the exception of one French title, all were English-language. The publications came from 14 commercial publishers and 8 institutional publishing houses. Of the 25 books, a quarter fell in the Humanities category and the rest in Social Sciences. The themes Economy/Development and International Relations were most common, with 8 and 7 books respectively. Diasporas /Migration, History and Society saw 4, 5 and 3 studies respectively, while the remaining categories Art/Culture, Environment, Health/Medicine, Literature, Religion and Urban were examined in just 1 or 2 studies.

Africa-Asian studies is an emerging field of studies. Most of the books in the running were published in the last two years and when looking through publishers' autumn catalogues one cannot fail to note that there are a lot of books in the pipeline that will be eligible for the second edition of the Africa-Asia Book Prize.



## The Winner of the 2015 Africa-Asia Book Prize



**Lifshey, A. 2012.**  
*The Magellan Fallacy: Globalization and the Emergence of Asian and African Literature in Spanish*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

THE STUDY CALLS attention to a part of Afro-Asia that has often escaped the gaze of Anglophone researchers: the Hispanophone world. In so doing, the study also brings Africa and Asia into the orbit of Hispanic Studies, globalizing a discipline which has hitherto focused on the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. This highly innovative work foregrounds literary sources and archival material in Spanish, revealing a richness of perspectives on this part of the world that lie at the intersection of language, literature, culture, and history. Through an insightful analysis of two marginalized literary traditions (the Philippine and Equatorial Guinean ones), the Magellan Fallacy challenges ideas and concepts we often take for granted. In other words, globalization has many parents, including the literary exertions of the colonized who, through their pens, imagined and re-imagined the world in the metropolises. This is a work masterfully rendered, witty, original in its central thesis and seminal in its scope. A classic in the making.



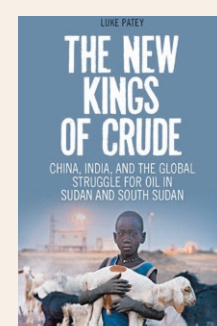
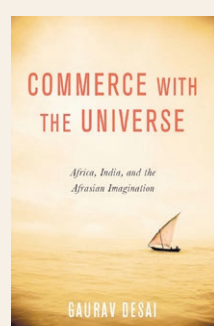
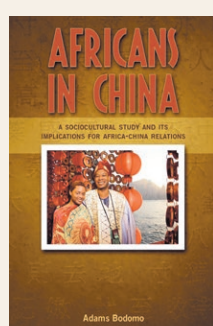
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# Syncretic heritage of Africans in India: Identity and acculturation



What often constitutes a surprise for Africans and many Indians is the discovery of largely forgotten settlements of Siddis, descendants of African diaspora in India, who number around forty-five thousand and live in closely knit communities spread out in the states of Gujarat, Karnataka and Telangana. Siddis possess a lively culture as revealed in their famous dance *Dhamal* and are often seen as symbolic of the rich, syncretic heritage of India. The cultural heritage of these Siddis is located within the historical process of their migration into the socio-economic landscape of India and has been reshaped by strong currents of acculturation and synthesis.

Karan Singh

## Arrivals

The ethnonym Siddi, used for African communities living in India, is considered a derivative of either 'Saydi', signifying a captive of war in Arabic, or 'Sayyid', an honorific term for a person of noble descent.<sup>1</sup> *Sayyid*, as a root of their ethnic name, also refers to Bilal, the first African disciple of Prophet Muhammad, while simultaneously designating owners of African slaves under the Omani Sultanate. Siddis are often called Siddi *Badshah* by local communities, a term that indicates their carefree, pleasant nature, though sometimes it may also carry connotations of carelessness and lack of responsibility.

Although largely a consequence of Indian Ocean World (IOW) slave trade, Siddis arrived in India as mercenaries, sailors and traders also. During the peak of IOW slave trade, African slaves were transported to India through ports of Cambay, Cutch, Bharuch, Surat, Diu, Cochin, Goa, etc., from different entrepôts on the coastal areas of East and Northeastern Africa, the Horn of Africa as well as through the Red Sea. Some of the slaves entered India via the Middle East, in the company of Mughal and Turk armies, as elite soldier slaves or as domestic slaves, purchased by Muslim nobles from markets in Oman, Yemen, Baghdad or Mecca. Some of these elite soldier slaves played quite an important role in the history of India and their presence was felt in five major regimes of Medieval India: the Deccan states of the Bahmani (1347-1538), Bijapur (1580-1627), Nizam Shahi (1589-1626), Delhi Sultanate (1399-1440) and Bengal (1486-1493). Malik Ambar, perhaps the most famous Siddi elite slave became regent of Ahmednagar Sultanate and successfully resisted the attempts of powerful Mughals to annex the kingdom during his lifetime.

## Deities and dancing

There is a remarkable vein of syncretism in the religious beliefs and cultural values of Siddis, who frequently married with native communities in India and participated in regional cultural and political systems. In Gujarat, the shrine of Bava Gor situated at Ratanpur, near Bharuch, constitutes a nucleus of the religious beliefs of the community and is a mosaic of elements from Brahmanic Hinduism, Sufi traditions, tribal beliefs and Zoroastrianism. Bava Gor, who has been mythologized as an Abyssinian commander is credited with the defeat of a local demon Makkhan devi with the help of his brother Bava

Habsh and sister Mai Mishra. Bava Gor is also believed to be a merchant who pioneered the agate bead industry in Gujarat and his shrine is located next to mountains of Agate stones. The memory of Bava Gor is commemorated by wandering ascetics belonging to the Siddi fakir tradition, who sing devotional songs about him.

The shrine of Bava Gor in Ratanpur has three main functions: the curing of spirit possession, removal of barrenness and impotency in devotees, and delivering of justice through ordeals of truth. The shrine is visited by Siddhis, Muslims, Hindus, and Parsis who seek blessings from the saint. The eclectic nature of the shrine attained the limelight when a court case was filed by some Siddi ritual specialists for greater control of the shrine. Their main contention was that Siddis assumed a distinct caste, separate from the more orthodox Muslim communities like Bohras, because of their closeness to eclectic syncretic traditions. The cult of Bava Gor thus gives Siddis a ritual power and cements their identity as a part of local milieu. While Muslim devotees see Bava Gor as a Sufi saint, Hindus see him as a *bhagat*, a spirit medium who exorcises evil spirits. At the same time the ritual fire burning in the shrine reveals Zoroastrian traces. Through the appropriation of common religious vocabulary and rituals, Siddis in Gujarat assert their right to reinterpret beliefs and ideas from different communities in a common symbolic language. Helene Basu rightly notes that by "eclectically combining and mixing Sufi, Bhil, Hindu and African cultural elements, the cult of Gori Pir can be understood as a new, uniquely creolized cultural production that has been brought about by the interactions of Sidi with their social environment."<sup>2</sup>

Siddi Nash is another celebrated community deity in Karnataka, whose annual festival in Satunbail is attended by Siddis of all faiths – Muslims, Christians and Hindus. Siddi Nash is a consortium of three deities: male deity Nash, female deity Achakane and their disciple Bhanta. The three deities are symbolized by stones with Tulsi plant separating them. While Tulsi has a mythical connection with Vishnu in Hinduism, the stones of Siddi Nash resemble Shiv linga, a phallic representation of the Hindu god Shiva. Siddis have contested and amalgamated some of the mythical elements from the host culture with insertions of their own rituals from their tribal past, such as offerings of blood sacrifices, cigarettes and

alcoholic drinks during the annual festival of Nash. The spirit possession on this occasion is used as a medium to stimulate common identity concerns among Siddis. The audience is often reminded by the priests that they have come from Africa and through their worship of ancestors (*Hiriyaru*), they empower one another.<sup>3</sup> The festival of Siddi Nash has acquired a multi-faith and poly-functional significance for the African Indians who assert their individual and collective identity through it.

One of the most illustrious markers of Siddi identity in India is their well-known dance called *Dhamal* or Siddi Goma. *Dhamal* has been projected as a symbol of the diverse cultural heritage of India on Republic Day celebrations as well as in the advertisements undertaken by Gujarat tourism to attract foreign tourists. *Dhamal* has many similarities with the East African Swahili *Ngoma* tradition in its presentation, use of instruments as well as conception. The dance is traditionally used for annual *urs* by Siddi fakirs and thus also has a historical connection with the Sufi syncretic tradition of associating virtue and sacred breath. During *Dhamal* there is a use of musical instruments such as *Mugarman* (drum), *Malunga* (musical bow) and *Mai Mishra* (coconut rattle). *Mugarman* and *Ngoma* drums are constructed on similar principles, both are long wooden drums, open at one end, with heads attached by pegs. *Malunga*, which is a musical bow, has also many similarities with various African instruments such as *Lungunga* of Bembe (eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and western Tanzania), *Malongu* of Blesé people of Congo and *Mbulumbumba* of Angolans.

## 'Creation' of an identity

The Afro-Asian heritage of Siddis is a complex structure, with manifold layers, due to an inter-mingling of Africans in the Indian culture, as well as due to multiple migrations of Africans from different regions and tribes in Africa. It was further reshaped by their settlements in Central Asian communities, the multi-religious nature of Indian society and the diverse nature of their masters under the slavery system. Syncretism in Siddis can be read in consonance with the fluidity of their identity formation in a socio-cultural space of shifting locations, multiple religious affiliations and a sense of dislocation. This conflict and consequent alignment between ethnic African identity and normative Islam, Christianity and Hinduism has many similarities with liminal communities living on the Swahili coast of East Africa. Here the contestation between *dini* and *mila*, theological orthodoxy of 'Arab' culture with African tribal past, typifies on a macro level the conflict between local and African heritages in the Indian cultural space. Further, since the experience of slavery deeply mutated the language, dress, custom and religious beliefs of Africans who underwent this cataclysmic process, the survival and eventual celebration of African heritage in Siddis becomes a vehicle for their search for identity in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural space of India.

Spurred by recent academic interest in the 'genuine' African identity of Siddis, African-Indians are becoming increasingly conscious of their African roots. It has led to a situation wherein critics have started to decry the 'creation' of this identity as reactionary and reductionist in its hampering of the process of assimilation and integration of Siddis in Indian cultural space.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the enthusiasm for distinctiveness of African identity needs to be carefully tempered with their integration in local communities, otherwise it might become detrimental to their socio-economic development in their adopted land. The integration of Siddis in local community space must take place in harmony with their sense of uniqueness within the history of India, as it would then be able to ameliorate their social and political exclusion. It would save them from the dangers of exclusionary identity politics, which carries social, political and economic risks by alienating them from the local communities. A recognition of the syncretic heritage of Siddis would make them partners in the mosaic of communities in the Indian nation and would preserve their identity not in separation but as a part of the assimilative process.

Karan Singh is Associate Professor in the department of English at Government College Mahendergarh, M.D. University (Rohtak, Haryana, India). He was an IAS-ASC Affiliated Fellow in May-June 2015 (vikramveer23@gmail.com).

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Above:  
Dhamal Dance.



# The Cold War as social mechanism



What was the Cold War? The simple definition would likely be a 20th century international confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States, which involved first Europe, and then Asia, Africa, and Latin America, eventually dividing the world into two camps. The key players of this global conflict are generally noted as a number of high-ranking policymakers, including Harry S. Truman, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong. We know this story. However, the full story is not so simple. It is time to change our ways of thinking about the Cold War.

Masuda Hajimu

THE PROBLEM WITH EXISTING LITERATURE is that there is a general tendency toward a particular division of labor among scholars. Diplomatic historians attempting to elucidate the shaping of the Cold War normally focus on policymakers' calculations, while social and cultural historians focus on the effects of the Cold War on society, culture, and the daily lives of ordinary people. Likewise, Asian specialists look for elements of the Cold War in Asia, exploring how the global conflict impacted that continent without contemplating what the Cold War really was. Looking at these trends, therefore, one might end up with the following impressions: policymakers' conduct shaped the Cold War, which, in turn, had enormous aftereffects on ordinary people's daily lives, and Asia was an end recipient of the global confrontation.

Yet, more needs to be examined, because such impressions are largely myths. I would like to discuss why we should think about an analysis of 'Cold War Asia' (Asia during the Cold War), instead of the conventional approach of examining the *Cold War in Asia*. In doing so, I will discuss how such an analysis will be useful for the reexamination and reinterpretation of the global Cold War, itself. This article may also suggest one possible direction for rethinking Asian Studies, as a whole, within a global context.<sup>1</sup> Before discussing the Cold War, however, let us look at what was going on in postwar-Asia.

## Reconsidering the Red Purge in Japan

At 3pm on 28 July 1950, thirty-one employees at *Mainichi Shinbun* in Tokyo were called into their bosses' offices, most of them individually, and told that they were fired, on the spot. The only reason provided was that the news media had an important responsibility to drive out communists and communist sympathizers from the company. Similar notifications were conveyed to a total of 704 employees at fifty newspaper companies nationwide, ranging from major newspapers like *Asahi Shinbun* (104 dismissed out of 5,200) and *Yomiuri Shinbun* (34 of 2,200), to small local newspapers such as *Nihonkai Shinbun* (9 of 90) in Tottori, as well as *Shinyo Shinbun* (1 of 50) in Matsumoto. This was the beginning of the waves of mass dismissals, commonly known as the 'Red Purge', in which roughly 13,000 people were fired from various industries, including not only media, but also coal, steel, shipbuilding, chemistry, railways, and mining.<sup>2</sup>

As the name 'Red Purge' suggests, the mass dismissals have been viewed through a Cold War lens. The traditional understanding is that this was a purge of communists

conducted by the United States, in order to create an anti-communist country in East Asia. However, once we remove the Cold War lens, the mass firings of 1950 appear to be something else. To be sure, the very first wave of mass dismissals in the newspaper industry was initiated through General Douglas MacArthur's directive. Yet, there was no single order issued by the US Occupation General Headquarters (GHQ), let alone from Washington, to conduct further mass firings in other industries, which accounted for the large majority of dismissals that made up the phenomenon we now call the Red Purge.

In most cases, actually, dismissals were planned and conducted by individual companies, and each had its own criteria for who should be fired. The Mitsui Miike Coal Mine, the largest mining company in Japan, for instance, compiled a long list of criteria composed of twenty-two itemized categories, targeting communists – including not only current communist party members but also those who had left or been removed from the party – as well as various 'sympathizers' who had tried to help those who were fired. The list targeted even those who *might* have behaved like sympathizers or who *might* have hindered the company's operations.<sup>3</sup> With criteria so broad and vague, how exactly was the Red Purge being executed? When we look more closely at who was fired and why, we can see that communists and communist sympathizers were not the only targets, and that the GHQ was not necessarily controlling the development of the Red Purge.

## Local dynamics under the Cold War narrative

Take one case as an example: that of *Nippon Kokan* (Nippon Steel Tube Company), which fired 190 workers in the fall of 1950. The dispute began with an announcement on 23 October by the company president, Kawata Shige, that he was compelled to discharge workers "who hindered the smooth operation of the company's business or refused to cooperate with the company."<sup>4</sup> Even GHQ officials, often considered operators of the Red Purge, were alarmed by this announcement; one staff member, for example, described it as an "abuse of the Red Purge." Robert Amis, a chief of the Labor Division, warned the *Nippon Kokan* management accordingly: "What I have said before is not being followed by the management. It seems to me that the management is taking advantage. Concrete reasons for dismissal should be given. If reasons for dismissal cannot be cited correctly, defer the discharge."<sup>5</sup>

Fig. 1 (Above left): The fear of World War III that spread particularly during the Korean War consolidated the belief in the imagined reality of the Cold War, and created a wartime atmosphere, which, in turn, made it easy to silence a multitude of social and cultural disagreements in the name of national security. "Hiroshima U.S.A." (Illustration by Chesley Bonestell. Reprinted with permission. New-York Historical Society. No. 1956.7).

Fig. 2 (Above right): The sudden revival and development of labor activism was one of the representative issues that shook social order in many parts of the world, not just in Japan and the United States but also in other European and Asian countries. "May Day Demonstration in Tokyo, May 1952." (Reprinted with permission. MacArthur Memorial Archives, Photographic Collection of Georges Dimitria Boria, No. PHB0167).

The company simply ignored this warning. Meanwhile, a 27-year-old worker, Ishijima Seiichi, wrote a lengthy petition to Amis to ask for help, explaining that, although he was an active union member, he had never been a communist nor communist sympathizer. The letter, which included a detailed counterargument against the company's charges, was translated and taken seriously. Amis examined the genuineness of Ishijima's letter with the help of Japan's Labor Ministry, which had one of its officials interview Ishijima. The official concluded that he was not a communist. Based on this information, Amis met with company officers and urged them to re-employ Ishijima. The company reacted by inviting Ishijima to a dinner and admitting that he was not a communist. Yet it still refused to re-employ him, instead offering him a deal, involving a sum of 250,000 yen – more than the average yearly income at that time – on the condition that he not challenge the management again before the GHQ or the public. Ishijima was in a tough spot. Having a wife and children, and no possibility of returning to the company, he apparently accepted this offer. We do not have any further records involving him. GHQ officials were confused and disturbed by the company's refusal to rehire Ishijima, in spite of their repeated warnings. One Japanese official at the Labor Ministry explained that, even though Ishijima was not a communist, he might be considered a 'troublemaker' because, as one of the founding organizers of a union at his factory in Tsurumi in the postwar years, he had actively criticized the management.<sup>6</sup>

## Silencing troublemakers and creating domestic tranquility

Such cases, in which companies took advantage of this vague definition of 'troublemakers', are numerous. One is that of *Niigata Tekkoshu*, a small ironworks in Niigata Prefecture, where three dozen workers, mostly active union members, were fired for being "uncooperative, disturbing, and undesirable" elements at the company. One worker noticed that dismissals of workers were especially numerous where labor-management negotiations had been contentious.<sup>7</sup> Another case was that of *Nittsu*, a major transport company, where 800 'reds' were fired. Many, actually, were guilty only of participating in wildcat strikes earlier in the summer of 1950. In the case of *Dai Nippon Boseki* [Dai Nippon Spinning Company], their actions were so conspicuous that a GHQ official described the company as "one of the worst offenders in the field of textiles in taking advantage of [the] 'red purge' to dismiss anti-communists who were, in fact, aggressive union officers."<sup>8</sup>



# Toward an analysis of Cold War Asia, not of the Cold War in Asia

As this comment shows, the implementation of the Red Purge went far beyond the control of the GHQ and, in practice, covered up what were, in reality, labor and social disputes. Moreover, in most cases the mass firings actually involved a filtering out of troublemakers, nonconformists, dissenters, and malcontents. It is reasonable to suggest that the Red Purge developed less through the conduct of the GHQ and Washington than through local dynamics on the ground.

This re-examination of agency in the Red Purge leads us to reconsider the nature of events. That is to say, was it really a 'red' purge at all? In some cases, events fit well with the conventional Red Purge model, but a large majority of other cases are better conceived broadly as social repression conducted by nameless and numberless local people in attempts to restrain social disagreements. Viewed in this way, the Red Purge no longer appears to be a mere result of the Cold War; rather it can be seen as part of a conservative backlash that silenced disagreements and created domestic tranquility, for which the 'reality' of the Cold War was necessitated.

Here we can develop our thinking by asking whether this situation was unique to postwar Japan or not. The answer is, of course, not. Similar suppressions and purges, indeed, simultaneously swept over many parts of the world: the suppression of counterrevolutionaries in China, the White Terror in Taiwan, the crackdown on 'un-Filipino' activities in the Philippines, and anti-communist campaigns in Western societies, such as McCarthyism in the United States. Conventionally, these events have been viewed through a Cold War lens, and thus treated as end results of the global Cold War confrontation on the ground. Yet, removing the lens allows us to identify a different pattern of commonalities: a global phenomenon of purification and ordering in a chaotic postwar world.

## Reconsidering the White Terror in Taiwan

While we cannot examine all of these cases here, let us briefly look at some examples that we usually think of as typical cases of Cold War suppression. Taiwan, for example, similarly underwent waves of 'anti-communist' suppression in the early 1950s, commonly known as the White Terror; an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 people were executed, and 8,000 were imprisoned for decades. Studies of the White Terror have increased in Taiwan since the 1990s, but it has received relatively little attention compared to the large volume of research on the "2.28 Incident", a series of mass uprisings against the Nationalist Party (GMD) government and subsequent repression in the weeks following 28 February 1947. Furthermore, as the name suggests, the White Terror has been commonly considered a case of state violence, the GMD government's political campaign to eliminate communists and communist sympathizers in Taiwan. Ordinary people have been described merely as victims under the storm of political repression.

Yet, the White Terror deserves more attention and fundamental reconsideration. To begin with, a large proportion of those repressed were neither communists nor communist sympathizers, but diverse groups of people, including members of local social elites, such as intellectuals, doctors, lawyers, journalists, teachers, college students, and the literati. What these groups represented was not simply a particular ideology, but a desire to make social and political changes in postwar Taiwan following the end of Japanese colonialism. The crux of the matter, in short, was not so much a Cold War struggle, as it was a struggle concerning the kind of society Taiwan would have.

As a matter of fact, even the Nationalist Party's own actions showed that this series of violent suppressions was not merely a part of an anti-communist movement, but rather a campaign to create a new social and political order, with the purpose of building a nation-state in Taiwan. For instance, commonplace GMD slogans, "Counterattack the Mainland" and "Eliminate Communists", appeared frequently, but were usually accompanied by others such as "Build Taiwan", "Stop Luxury and Extravagance", "Be Punctual", "Keep Order", and so on. Similar examples are numerous in the GMD's mass campaigns during this period, including the Wartime Life Movement, the Opposing Communists and Resisting Russians Movement, and the Campaign to Promote Public Order.<sup>9</sup> This tendency implies that the real issues of contention had less to do with global and ideological conflicts, than with the process of silencing disagreements and creating tranquility at home. In such processes, ordinary people were not merely victims, but they in fact participated in various ways.

## Reconsidering the suppression of counterrevolutionaries in China

In the People's Republic of China, we see a similar pattern of domestic purges, commonly known as the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, in which more than 700,000 people were executed and more than 1 million imprisoned. Conventionally, the movement has been

described as the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) top-down, coercive, political-cleansing campaign, aimed at eliminating former Nationalist Party members and sympathizers. Yet, this needs to be further examined, as the CCP was not always the only actor, and the nature of the phenomenon was not necessarily a mere political cleansing campaign. After all, if it had been purely a matter of political repression carried out by the CCP and aimed at the elimination of adversaries, those who were suppressed should have been mostly *political* and *ideological* 'enemies', such as landlords and businessmen, as well as former Nationalist Party members and sympathizers. Yet, a large number of people in those categories, particularly those who had worked under the GMD government, including bureaucrats, policemen, teachers, and lower-ranking officials, were in fact allowed to retain their positions, and continued to work. Actually, those suppressed and eliminated included much broader and more diverse groups of people, which better fit the category of 'social' enemies than that of 'political' enemies: local gang members and bandits, brothel keepers, and common criminals, such as persons convicted of murder, rape, robbery, as well as wartime collaborators and members of religious cults and secret societies. These people did not, apparently, share a single ideology. To the contrary, their heterogeneity suggests that we reconsider the nature of this entire phenomenon.

Let us look at how the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries functioned in a local context. The Association of Street Vendors in Beijing, for example, implemented the campaign in its markets in the spring of 1951. In doing so, however, they used it to their own purposes of enforcing morality and creating order among their members. The slogans for their version of the Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries included: "No delay of tax payments", "Do not cheat customers", "Always issue a receipt", "Use standardized measuring instruments", "Do not set artificially raised prices", and "Keep street stalls clean". Another slogan adopted in this counterrevolutionary campaign was: "No pee and no shit on roadside and inside stalls". Clearly, these issues had nothing to do with the CCP's struggles against counterrevolutionaries, and yet, interestingly and importantly, these street vendors' campaigns were framed, conducted, and carried out as if they were. It was claimed that street vendors were fighting a different kind of war on the home front, that cooperation among vendors could stabilize the Chinese economy and maintain public order, and that their tax payments would support the fight against *Meidi* [American Imperialism] on the frontlines in Korea. This example shows how local people adapted and developed the CCP's campaign to meet their own needs: as a mechanism of 'social cleansing', to restore and maintain order in their communities.

## Reconsidering McCarthyism in the United States

How can we understand the similarities and simultaneity of these suppressions in postwar Asia? In order to further consider this point, let us briefly look at one more case, the phenomenon commonly known as McCarthyism in the United States. McCarthyism has generally been considered as an anti-communist movement, an example of the 'Cold War at Home'. By calling this phenomenon McCarthyism, however, our attentions are focused on Senator Joseph McCarthy and congressional hearings, such as the HUAC hearings. By labeling and perceiving the phenomenon as such we miss other diverse social suppressions that silenced various local struggles, involving, for instance, racial, labor, and gender tensions.

As a matter of fact, victims during this so-called McCarthy period included not only communists and communist sympathizers, but African Americans, civil rights activists, labor movement activists, feminist activists, gays and lesbians, as well as advocates of various New Deal programs, such as public housing and universal health care. What these groups represented was not communist ideology, but elements of social change, which emerged from the experiences of the Great Depression and World War II. The rhetoric of anti-communism functioned very well in containing these elements of postwar change, and the 'reality' of the Cold War

Fig. 3 (Below left): Anti-Red Purge agitation spread among high school and college students in the fall of 1950. "Students' Demonstration Opposing the Red Purge at the University of Tokyo." *Mainichi Shinbun*, 5 October 1950. (Reprinted with permission, *Mainichi Shinbun*).

Fig. 4 (Below right): The general reaction toward anti-Red Purge movements was one of disinterest and disdain. The *Mainichi Shinbun* reported the news of anti-Red Purge demonstration at Waseda University on 17 October 1950 as an "unprecedented scandal." (Author's photograph. *Mainichi Shinbun*, 18 October 1950).

was not just useful but necessary to continue silencing such disagreements at home. Many suppressions were in fact carried out not by official committees, but by ordinary people on local and community levels.<sup>10</sup>

## Ordinary people's wars at home

These examples reveal certain commonalities. First, all of these suppressions escalated simultaneously against the background of the Korean War that sparked a fear of a World War III. Second, the Cold War narrative was efficiently utilized in each case to suppress what were actually social and cultural disagreements, under the banner of national security. Third, the crux of the matter in each case was how to deal with social and cultural changes that had emerged from the chaotic experiences of World War II. Fourth, in these suppressions, the participants were not only powerful policymakers, but also ordinary people who engaged in the creation and maintenance of social order. Taken together, the wave of domestic purges in many parts of the world can be seen as a global phenomenon of nativist backlashes – a sort of social conservatism – that operated to contain and silence disagreements in a chaotic post-WWII world.

What becomes clear is the actuality of local conflicts, and the constructed nature of the global Cold War, as well as the social needs of such a reality to overcome 'war' at home. In this sense, the Cold War divide that emerged during the Korean War existed less between East and West than it did within each society; and each society required the continuation of the Cold War to maintain 'harmonious' order at home. So perhaps the Cold War was more than rivalry among superpowers at the international level. Conceivably, it could be better understood as an imagined reality that took on a role of social tranquilizer, pacifying various disagreements in the aftermath of World War II. And with ordinary people participating in the maintenance of social order, justified by this imagined reality, the Cold War was perhaps not only about East-West confrontations or a balance of global power, but also about local struggles in many parts of the world. It was, in essence, ordinary people's wars at home.

## Conclusion

What I have tried to do here is to relativize the importance of the Cold War and reinterpret its meanings through an analysis of what we usually think of as the Cold War in Asia. Our analysis of various 'Cold War' suppressions shows that the issues that mattered most had less to do with the global struggle than with local and social conflicts at home. In other words, this analysis of Cold War Asia (Asia during the Cold War) gives us a chance to reconsider its very adjective, providing an opportunity to raise questions about the Cold War lens, and, thus, forcing us to see much more locally the specific realities in respective regions in the chaotic postwar period.

In presenting this analysis, I have also suggested a possible direction for thinking about the meanings of Asian Studies as a whole in global and comparative contexts. While only a few cases can be discussed in this article, a similar pattern might be observable in other places, particularly in the regions and countries that have often been viewed through the Cold War lens, including, for instance, France and Italy, Greece and Iran, Kenya and South Africa, Thailand and Vietnam, and Guatemala and Mexico, as well as the Soviet Union. An examination of Cold War Asia, in short, might be able to shed new light on the post-1945 histories of many parts of the world. While we have seen quite a few new approaches and findings in studies of the Cold War in the past two decades, more is yet to come. Thus, let us continue to ask these questions: What was the essence of Cold War Asia? And what, really, was the Cold War?

Masuda Hajimu is Assistant Professor of History at the National University of Singapore (hishm@nus.edu.sg).

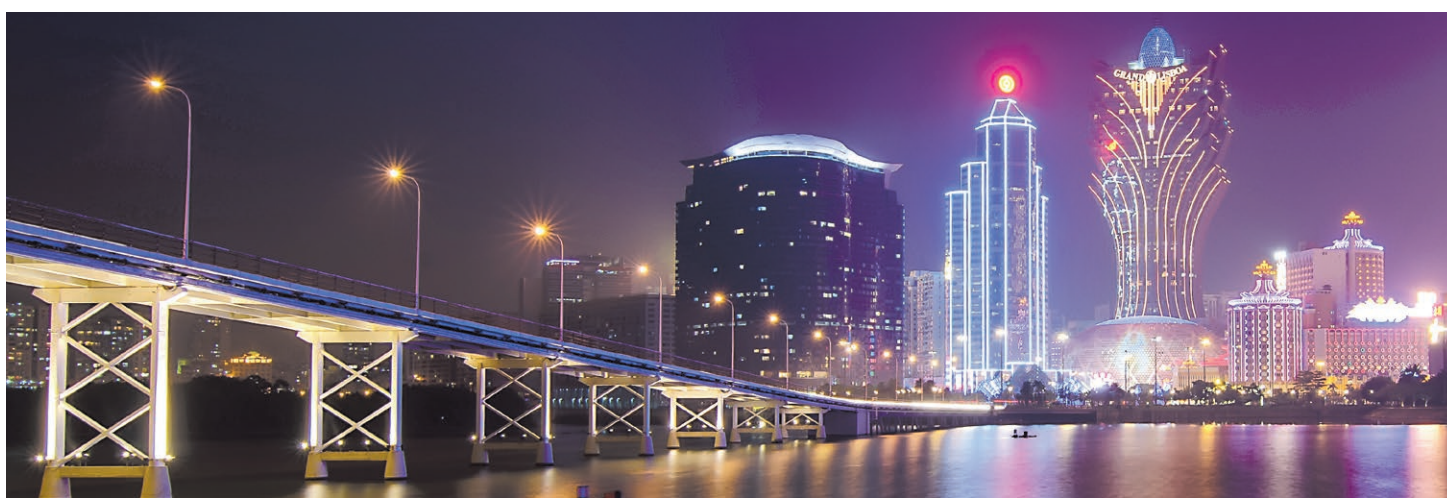
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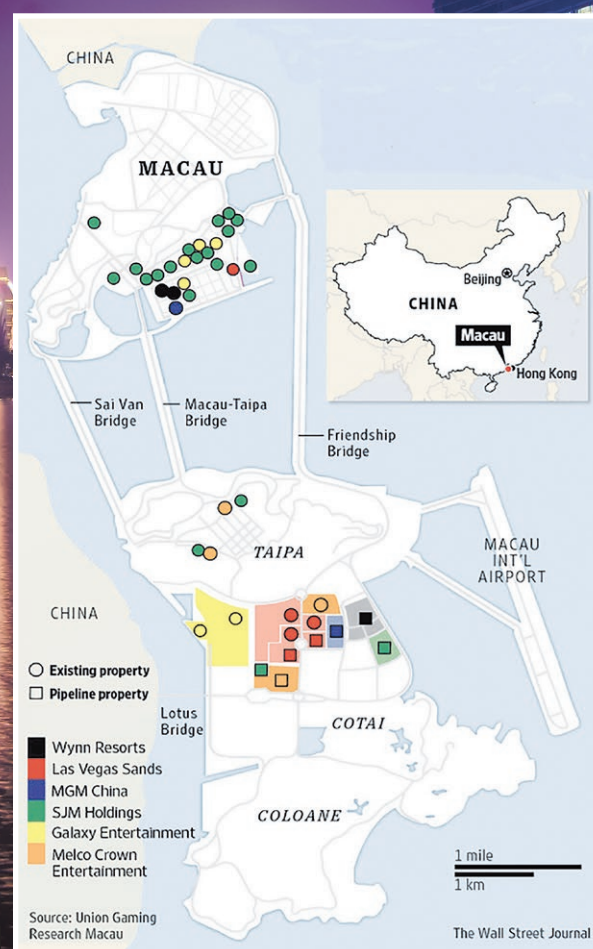


# Casino development and urban transformation in Macau



In 2008, *Grand Lisboa* casino opened its doors in downtown Macau. The eye-catching structure, radiant gold and ‘pineapple-shaped’, as residents mused, was one of the city’s newest gambling venues since the sector opened to foreign competition in 2002 (Fig. 1). It was but a glimpse of the extent of the urban and socio-economic transformations on which the city had embarked since it departed the Portuguese colonial era and became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China (RPC) in 1999.

Sheyla S. Zandonai



## Gambling liberalization

Gambling is not new in Macau. It has been a regulated economic activity since the mid-nineteenth century, when the incipient Portuguese colonial administration sought, via the legalization of a then very popular practice,<sup>1</sup> a means to buy its way out of bankruptcy following the domination of Hong Kong by the British in 1843. The decision to use gambling as a policy to raise public revenue thus responded to the loss of Macau’s strategic position as a port city in the South of China. In this modern form, the commercial exploration of gambling developed initially under individual contracts over specific games. The first licences were granted in 1849 to the game of *Fantán*, then one of the most popular games in South China, and in 1851 to the Chinese lottery.<sup>2</sup> From 1930 onwards, gambling licences took the form of monopoly contracts over clusters of games, which have passed through the hands of three different groups until the sector was recently open to foreign competition. Hou Heng Company, headed by Fok Chi Ting, was the first to win the monopoly licence for the operation of all forms of approved casino games in 1930. Seven years later, the government licence changed hands, being granted to Tai Heng Company, headed by Fu Tak Long and Kou Ho Neng. Finally, in 1962, the *Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau* (STDM), controlled by Stanley Ho Hung-sun, won the bid for a monopoly gambling contract that would last forty years, the longest that existed in Macau.

The liberalization (*liberalização do jogo*, 賭權開放), as the change in Macau’s gambling regulatory framework has come to be known, fundamentally changed the profile of an activity with more than a century of local history. Launched in 2001, it put an end to the monopoly held by Stanley Ho, opening up the once-exclusive realm of a tycoon, who became popularly known as the ‘King of gambling’, to other casino barons. The market was deregulated to allow foreign capital investment and development through the granting of new gambling licences (usually referred to as *concessions* in Macau) to several groups, which were permitted to began their operations in 2002. Harking back to a law that was drafted and approved under the former Portuguese administration in 1986 (Law 10/86/M), the liberalization act defined that concessions to the commercial exploitation of gambling should be limited to three holders. Initially, gambling licences were granted to the *Sociedade de Jogos de Macau* (SJM), former STDM; to Wynn Resorts, headed by Steve Wynn, from North America; and to Galaxy Casino, from Hong Kong. However, and albeit not originally envisioned by the liberalization act, three other licences, termed ‘sub-concessions’, have been authorized by the government. When Galaxy Casino broke with precedent by granting a licence to Sheldon Adelson’s Las Vegas Sands (USA), the initiative was followed by the other primary gambling licence holders; SJM and Wynn Resorts, respectively, granted sub-concessions to MGM Grand Paradise (USA) and the Australian group Melco Crown (former Melco PBL). This change evolved, in part, from a political dysfunction ensuing from the involvement of the then Secretary for Transport and Public Works (DSSOPT), Ao Man Long, in the illegal granting of investment rights and allocation of public

land to gambling developers.<sup>3</sup> It sparked a hot debate in Macau and ended up paralyzing the administration for years to come after the Secretary was accused and condemned for wrongdoing in 2006.

Political havoc has not, however, hindered the gambling economy’s ability to thrive. In 2006, two years after the first casino after the liberalization, The Sands, opened its doors at the Outer Harbour, Macau was already the world’s richest gambling platform, beating Las Vegas at a game it has dominated for decades. Actively contributing to the average of 15 per cent growth Macau has enjoyed over the last ten years,<sup>4</sup> the sector has rapidly transformed the dragging and morose economy that marked its handover to China in 1999. Macau’s economy relies predominantly on the tertiary sector. In 2013, services corresponded to 94.3 per cent of the city’s industrial structure, with gambling making up 46.1 per cent of the total.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, gross gambling revenues generated MOP109,826 million (approximately US\$14 billion), then corresponding to 65.4 per cent of Macau’s GDP, estimated that same year at MOP166,265 million (US\$21 billion). Five years later, in 2013, gross gambling revenues had soared, generating MOP361,866 million (nearly US\$47 billion), which corresponded to roughly 88 per cent of Macau’s GDP, estimated at MOP413,471 million that same year (nearly US\$53 billion).<sup>6</sup> While fostering economic growth, gambling became a strong engine for Macau’s tourism industry. It has stimulated the development of other related economic sectors and activities, hotels, renting and construction, restaurants, finance, and real estate, to name only a few, sustaining an economy increasingly focused on consumption rather than production (Fig. 2 Inset).

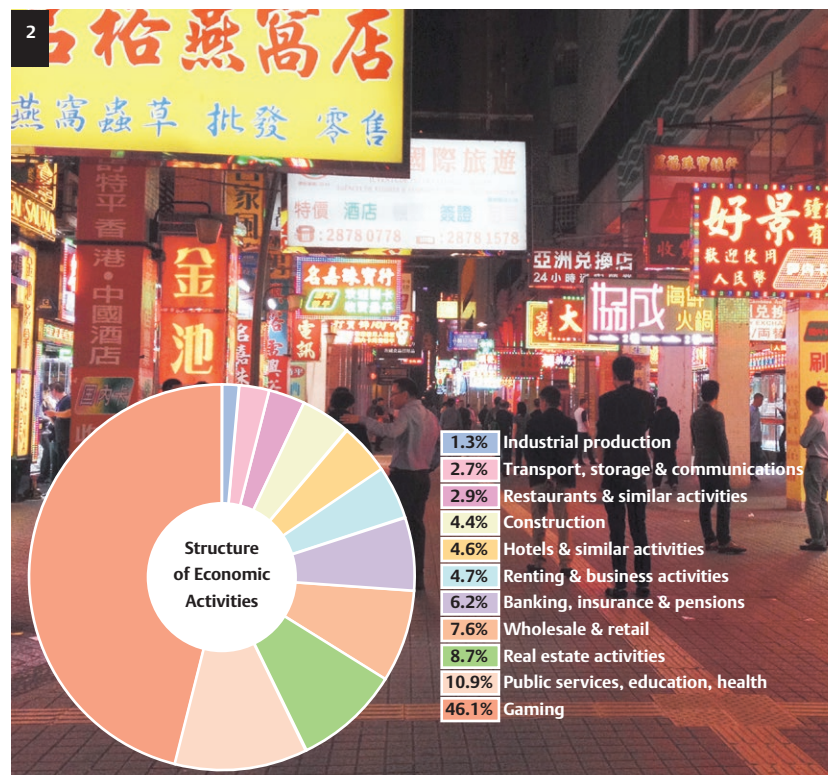


Fig. 1: Grand Lisboa at the heart of Macau. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of SoulScape on flickr. (Inset): Map showing all the Casino Districts.

Fig. 2: Old casino district, (Inset): Structure of economic activities, Macao Industrial Structure 2013, DSEC.

## The global economy of tourism

The expansion of Macau’s gambling-led economy has strengthened the city’s global position as an entertainment destination in the new urban economy of tourism.<sup>7</sup> Different from a time when gambling parlours were controlled by local monopoly groups and relied almost exclusively on visitors from Hong Kong, the latest phase of Macau’s casino development could be described as one simultaneously tied to an inflow of foreign capital and transnational elites, and to an emergent regional market, just across its northern border with mainland China. In truth, since the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) banned any form of gambling activity in the mainland in 1949, Macau has virtually held the exclusive control of legalized gambling in Chinese territory.<sup>8</sup> However, it was only when the Chinese central authorities enacted the individual visa scheme in 2003, allowing Mainland Chinese to visit the city, that the sector would broadly benefit from Macau’s strategic position in the highly populated area of the Pearl River Delta (PRD). We can find examples in history in which gambling has been introduced as a strategy to capture economic benefits from ‘exporting’ games of chance to customers from neighbouring areas where the activity is otherwise prohibited.<sup>9</sup>

With the launching of post-Mao economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping’s leadership in 1978, China’s population, increasingly concentrated in the country’s coastal regions, subsequent to the development of the Special Economic Zones (SEZ), has steadily made the journey from field to factory building up an urban and avid class of consumers. In the 1990s, China’s economy was already growing at a pace more than twice as fast as Europe and North America.<sup>10</sup> Given the rise of Macau’s gambling revenues at an exponential rate over the past decade, and considering that the majority of visitors to the city come from mainland China (64 per cent of the total, followed by Hong Kong visitors, with 23 per cent),<sup>11</sup> we can trace a direct parallel between China’s changing socio-economic conditions and economic growth in Macau. Today, in spite of the fact that other countries in Southeast Asia have joined the club of casino destinations by legalizing some forms of gambling (e.g., Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore), Macau’s gambling sector seems to have been less subject to competition, at least in the PRD area. And if gambling revenues have slightly tumbled since the third quarter of 2014, it is mostly because China’s President, Xi Jinping, has launched a vast campaign against national corruption, calling for a tighter control of suspicious and illegal financial transactions in Macau.

It has been argued that in no other era has gambling developed and institutionalized so fast around the world.<sup>12</sup> Increasing political efforts from governments worldwide to pass legislation that draws on the relaxation of gambling prohibition and/or strict control, signals the increasing reliance of national and local governments on gambling revenues to support public functions. In gambling, they see a new means of economic stimulation, job creation, and enhancement of tax revenues. This formula seems to have paid off quite well in Macau. Full employment was reached shortly after the liberalization and local wages progressively achieved higher standards. In 2014, Macau’s GDP per capita reached three times that of Hong Kong and nearly the double of Singapore’s,



sitting ahead most of the developed world, and falling behind only a handful of locations, kingdoms or countries, with international offshore reputations and bank secrecy traditions, e.g., Monaco, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg.<sup>13</sup> The local government collected three times more tax revenue in 2013 than it did in 2008 (US\$5.55 billion and US\$17 billion, respectively).<sup>14</sup> With 40 per cent tax over all casino revenue swelling the public coffers, the administration has been able to consolidate a number of social welfare programs – although residents complain its view has been rather narrow, say, in public health matters. For instance, a system of distribution of government subsidies based on socio-economic criteria enabled the implantation in 2008 of a nearly free-cost education program up to high school level for Macau residents (i.e., those in possession of the Macau Resident's Card).

**Gambling sprawls**

With clear indications of rocketing economic growth, the liberalization pushed Macau's development to another dimension, clearly wealthier, but also more hectic and eventually problematic with regard to the scale of social and urban transformations it has entailed in its course. Residents pondered, arguing that, for better or worse, it has been overwhelming. From the onset, migrant workers from mainland China, the Philippines, and Indonesia, to name only a few, flooded into the city on a regular basis,<sup>15</sup> occupying, among other, the ranks of low-paid, semi-legal job contracts at multiplying construction sites destined to accommodate casino projects. At the same time, Macau received large numbers of visitors, which increased by the millions from the second half of 2000 onwards.<sup>16</sup> Today, nearly 30 million people visit the city every year. While these population movements slowly began to transform the human topography of Macau, heavy investments in casino development entailed drastic material changes, casting architectural excess, chaos and extravagance into the cityscape (Fig. 2).

Recent casino projects have been settled in two different zones. Initially, they were established in the southeast part of the Macau peninsula, a densely populated area that has traditionally accommodated casino developments. Here, with casinos old and new squeezed into the urban fabric, intertwined with the lives of ordinary citizens, this kind of implantation distinguishes itself from the model espoused by Las Vegas and/or the Indian reservations in the United States. The second area, more akin to the latter examples, was developed in a rather remote, enclave-like territory known as the Cotai strip (路氹城), a chunk of land reclaimed during the Portuguese administration between the islands of Coloane and Taipa, south of the peninsula (Fig. 1 Inset). Casinos are, thus, geographically and physically defined entities, somewhat allocated to specific sites of the Macau SAR territory. Indeed, they are *places* within the city that can be visited and abandoned at any time. Yet the impact generated by the lucrative casino economy reaches far beyond those sections in which they are designated to operate. As major urban developments, they have, for one, transformed Macau's landscape and morphology, breeding a towering skyline, with buildings rising ever-higher and more fantastically ornamented, but also a city more congested and contradictorily continental, now partly unrecognizable to its residents. Other far-reaching and, arguably, more disruptive effects have been equally felt in the lives of ordinary people as Macau's gambling-led development, while taking over the urban space, began to transform 'non-casino' spaces.

The immediate surroundings of the many gambling establishments that sit on the Macau peninsula have been consistently transformed to attend to the preferences of the casinos' clientele. Where there used to be grocery stores, tailor shops, and restaurants offering different cuisines (Portuguese, Vietnamese, etc.), residents now claim there are only pawnshops and money exchange services. Generalizations notwithstanding, there is a specific type of economy sprawling around casinos that indulges tourist patrons: Chinese restaurants, improvised food stalls, hotels, pawnshops, banks, and jewellery stores. Even cabdrivers serving casino areas prefer tourist customers, to the despair of residents often tired of waiting to get on public transportation packed with immigrant workers returning to mainland China after a work shift. The old casino district, stretching eastward between *Rua de Pequim* (北京街) and *Avenida da Amizade* (友誼大馬路), is a space characteristic of this gravitational pull casinos exert over whole streets and surrounding areas, converting them into 'generic' or standardized neighbourhoods. However, with time this configuration has ceased to be specific to the casinos' vicinity.



As it spreads to other parts of the city, we should hence look beyond the initial gambling-led sprawls, to the broader economy of tourism.

Fig. 3 (above): Old buildings on San Ma Lo

**Touristed spaces**

Pushed by the economic boom that took over Macau after the liberalization, the development of other modalities of tourism has greatly benefited from the yearly arrival of millions of visitors to the city, enabled by the relaxation of human movement controls between Macau and mainland China. Although the majority of visitors seem to spend their time and money in casinos and related amenities, and that phenomena such as real estate speculation, which arose from the liberalization, stem from economic growth in general rather than from the gambling economy in particular, the development of other sectors has contributed its share in transforming the cityscape. With thousands of people reaching places outside the casinos enclaves every day, namely, historic sites designated World Heritage in 2005, 'cultural' or heritage tourism, for instance, has also emerged as a dynamic economic activity, casting different, but seemingly lasting material effects. Looking into space is thus a good way to grapple with the extension and impact of change, economic, social or other, notwithstanding the type of development or political economic project that is being enacted in the city.

San Ma Lo (新馬路, new road), a modern rectilinear artery cutting across the medieval portion of Macau's urban fabric, is a good example of how economic growth and the expansion of mass tourism have affected sites otherwise geographically unrelated to casino enclaves. An act of modern urban planning, San Ma Lo – also known as Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro – was

Fig. 4 (below): New shops on San Ma Lo



built nearly a century ago to connect Macau's Inner and Outer harbours, linking at the same time the former Portuguese and Chinese settlements.<sup>17</sup> Primarily a commercial street, it has until recently provided residents with an eclectic array of services: tailors have established trade there, lawyers have opened offices, pharmacies and small grocery stores have served families for generations. Now, because the bulk of patrons come from mainland China, this change of demographics has been followed by fierce business competition and increasing real estate prices. Whereas several former commercial outlets remain closed, a series of new stores have emerged to serve the Chinese middle-class' relentless demand for commodified and luxury goods. Old remaining shops, usually family-run, have thus either adapted to the change of clientele, in the attempt to capitalize on the new tourist trade, or risk the cessation of activities (Figs. 3 & 4).

A similar trend has overtaken the Senado Square (議事亭前地), one of Macau's largest public spaces and a favourite tourism spot, contiguous to San Ma Lo. Here, heritage-classified buildings have lent their interiors and façades to sell fast food and foreign brands of cosmetics, jewellery, and apparel. People in Macau complain that this central area of the city was converted into a site for tourists, and many have been alienated by their influx. Residents recall places of their childhood and young adult life that have disappeared along with the city's laid-back atmosphere, now agitated by a frenzied crowd. In the meantime, traditional services are vanishing. Many teahouses, Chinese pharmacies, antique stores, and toyshops, had to close their doors due not only to changing demands in consumption and prohibitive leasing prices, but also to the pressure of corporate competition and the loss of workforce to the casinos.

No doubt, gambling and tourism developments have boosted Macau's economy. But they have also weakened the range of its economic activities, dragging with it the livelihood of small and medium enterprises. In gradually converting parts of the city into *touristed* spaces, they have emptied the urban space from prior social, commercial, and symbolic functions that were more closely tied to the residents' sense of place and cultural experiences of the city.

**Sheyla S. Zandonai, Research associate, Laboratoire Architecture Anthropologie (LAA), Paris; Postdoctoral fellow, University of Macau, China (sheyla.zandonai@gmail.com)**

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# Travels & tourists in the Middle Kingdom: two insider perspectives

Phenomena can be studied both as numeric data (trends) as well as practices, that is, cultural tendencies. When it comes to tourism in relation to China the first approach manifests a clear symptom: China is more and more at the centre of the global tourism sector, either as a tourism destination, or as the source of an increasing number of outbound tourists.

Stefano Calzati

ACCORDING TO THE MOST RECENT UN report,<sup>1</sup> “tourist arrivals reached 1,138 million in 2014, a 4.7% increase over the previous year. (...) The best performance was recorded in North-East Asia and South Asia (both +7%).” In particular, the World Tourism Barometer registers that “the total number of trips abroad from China is estimated to have increased by 11 million to 109 million in 2014,” which makes of the Middle Kingdom “the world’s largest outbound market since 2012 with a total expenditure of US\$129 billion in 2013.” In other words, the new Chinese middleclass – although still a privileged minority – is on a march; a global march.

However significant numeric data may be, the underpinning cultural framework of this phenomenon is more challenging to encapsulate. During my three-month PhD fieldwork,<sup>2</sup> first at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and later around China, I met with a number of travel writers, travel bloggers and experts on China’s travel practices. The aim was to explore how and why Chinese people travel, within their own country or abroad, and how they subsequently represent their travel experiences (e.g., in ‘classic’ travel books or online travel blogs). The interviews I had with travel photographer Leong Ka Tai, author of *On China: One to Twenty Four* (1988),<sup>3</sup> and travel curator Zhang Mei, founder of the agency *Wild China Travel*,<sup>4</sup> were among the most significant encounters during my fieldwork; the former offers the solo travel experience of an artist, the latter the testimony of an insider within the tourism sector.

## The travelling artist

Leong has exhibited his works around the world, and in 1991 he received the Best Hong Kong Artist of the Year award.<sup>5</sup> A native Hongkonger, Leong moved to the UK to work as an engineer in the 1970s, but soon abandoned his job and moved to Paris, in order to study photography. This was the decision that would change the course of his life. After three years of apprenticeship, he moved back to Hong Kong, where he opened his own studio. A few years later the peripatetic nature of his photographic activity came into being when he decided to embark on a long journey around Mainland China. In Leong’s *On China: One to Twenty Four* he grouped a strict selection of twenty-four snapshots taken during his wanderings, at a time in which the Middle Kingdom had just opened its doors to the world and Mao’s influence was still strongly felt around the country. Moreover, each snapshot is accompanied by a short poem in Chinese written by author Leong Ping Kwan (who passed away in 2013), and translated into English by Leong himself.

I met Leong at the Foreigners’ Correspondent Club in Hong Kong. Leong is a rather shy person and his photos convey this same introversion through the delicate investigation of everyday ordinariness. However, I soon realised that his inhibition during the interview was not a haughty disposition, but rather a self-protecting sentiment that needed to melt gradually. I asked him about his reasons for closing the studio in Hong Kong and travelling to Mainland China. “In the beginning,” he said, “I had planned to travel a few weeks, but then I went on, and on, and on... the book, in fact, is only one of the projects that came out from this experience; it is a sort of spin-off of an in progress experience.”

*How was it to travel in China at that time?* - “It was more difficult and slower. You needed patience and I had a lot of it. Patience and time. Hong Kong shares so many things with China, this is certainly true. But then, the first time I went there I realized that what I had learnt in schoolbooks about our common cultural and historical background was to remain on paper... They are so different! I felt as a stranger in some areas... Apart from that, differences are probably milder now. I think China has changed a lot recently, but mainly on a material level. I believe that the attitude and the spirit of Chinese people has not changed that much, after all.”

*Each snapshot is accompanied by a short poem; what do you think the relation is between pictures and words?* - “I believe that Ping Kwan’s words help to see the photos from a different angle. It was actually Ping Kwan’s suggestion to accompany the pictures with poems and I found this idea very effective, insofar as it added a layer to the possible meaning of the photo. There is this photo, for instance, of a man standing on the front balcony of his house; the house is painted in yellow, while the sky is deep blue and cloudless. The poem reads: ‘The bright

blue sky is boundless/You lit a cigarette at dusk/Looking at the yellow earth under your feet, the yellow walls/The yellow desert is boundless too/With bowed head you think of the distant hills beyond the distant hills/The ancient Yellow River meandering towards the bright blue sky.’ Well, that picture was taken in Ninxia, near the Yellow River. So, you could say that it is only through the poem that the proximity of the house to the great river is explicated.”

*What are your projects now?* - “I have been travelling in South America with my wife for five months. Nowadays, many people travel, even Chinese people. What still makes a difference are patience and time; the time and the patience you need for a good snapshot. And I have a lot of both, thankfully.”

## The expert traveller

I met with Zhang Mei in a coffee shop in Cheoyang, a rather wealthy area of Beijing where her office is also located. Zhang was born and raised in Dali, Yunnan, in the south-western part of China. *Wild China* is a travel company born out of Zhang’s goal to promote China as a tourist destination. The company aims at providing customized and off-the-beaten-track trips around the Middle Kingdom to foreigners and Chinese people alike. Talking with Zhang helped me to better understand how Chinese people (and westerners) see China and how they consider travelling as a practice.

“I come from Dali, in Yunnan. When I founded *Wild China* 15 years ago my goal was to sustainably promote cities like Dali as a tourist destination, because I felt that China could not be reduced to the classic itinerary Hangzhou-Shanghai-Xian-Beijing. China is much more than that; it is much more composite and contradictory, although these destinations still remain on the list.” Having read an interview that Zhang gave to *Forbes* in 2013,<sup>6</sup> in which she suggested that the tendency of Chinese tourists was to travel in groups, I was curious to hear if this is still the case: “Today it is no longer true that Chinese people travel only in groups. Maybe this is true for older people because they feel more secure, but as soon as you look at those Chinese tourists who are now in their forties and fifties things are different: more and more often Chinese travellers want to go where other people have never gone before and do what others cannot do.” I asked Zhang whether she agreed with my suspicions that this approach to travel and life is, in a way, ideologically imported from the West, and a consequence of the spreading of wealth at various levels within the Chinese society. “Chinese society is and has always been very competitive. You always hear that family is at the core of the Chinese society, which is true, but the individual too has his importance. Both in the past and in the present, there were and there are plenty of ways to seek to express one’s own individuality; for instance, by trying to be the best on the workplace, or the richest in your neighbourhood... Travelling differently, adventurously, is an option that has come up in the last few decades, but it is part of the same discourse...”

How then to keep a balance between the bursting tourism sector and the saturation of those places around the country that attract a multitude of visitors? What about that never-ending debate between tourism and travel, between the massified and the ‘authentic’ experiences. “If you are asking me about authenticity, I do not believe that visiting, let’s say, the Forbidden City is not an authentic experience: it is Beijing, it is China, you cannot avoid it. But Beijing is also Sanlitun and Chaoyang, two very wealthy and modern areas. Authenticity, then, can be found both in the different perspective from which you look at the Forbidden City, as well as in the overall travel experience that derives from all these apparent paradoxes. Many tourists, mainly foreigners, think of China in terms of its imperial past; my goal is to show them that besides this legacy, China is something else nowadays.”

I was curious about differences, if any, between the Western and the Chinese (self)perception of the Middle Kingdom: “Here you have to make some distinctions. As I said, foreigners who come to China for the first time have an already formed imagery of it; one that needs, to some extent, to be shaken. Their impressions of the country undergo a shift: in the beginning they usually have a very positive attitude towards the Chinese, then with the passing of weeks they begin to see those petty anomalies and annoying defects that are part of our society as they are part of any society... As for the Chinese people looking at themselves, I think we are very critical towards ourselves. The level of tolerance is much lower than with foreigners, but then, it is also true that if you, as a foreigner, ask a Chinese person what he thinks of China, they will always show you a great patriotic spirit. These are the contradictions we are caught in!”

*What do you, as an expert traveller, look for when on the road?* - “I mainly look for traditions, that is, all those disappearing everyday practices that are often enshrined in small towns and villages. Let me be honest: when it comes to Chinese big cities, they are all alike. It is in small realities that you can find differences. I am writing a book now, which is in a way a travel book, although I am not a fan of the genre, maybe because I know China too well and when I begin reading one of them I rarely finish it ... Anyway, this book is about the production of local ham in a Yunnan community. You know, food is a central topic anywhere you go in China, but understanding how it is made is something we tend to forget or overlook. So I went to this village and I talked to people, I stayed in their houses, I learnt from them. They live such different lives from mine, although we are not that far culturally speaking. This, for me, is the most enriching way of travelling. But you need time and knowledge to accomplish it.”

Stefano Calzati, PhD Candidate in Cultural Studies, University of Leeds (fhscc@leeds.ac.uk)

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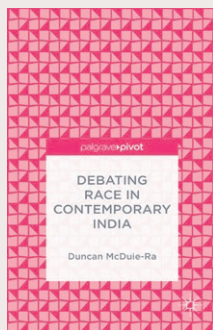


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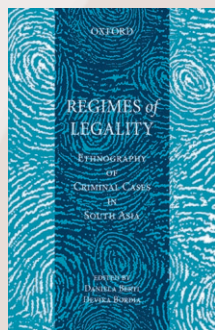
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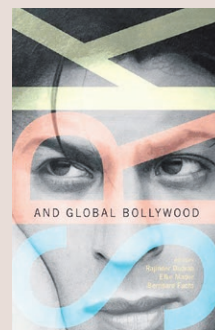
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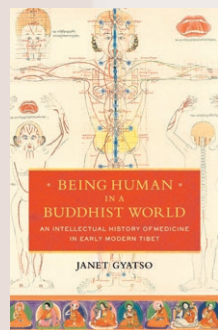
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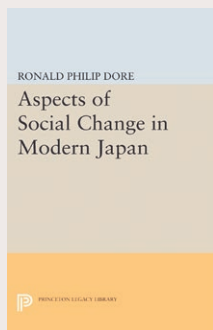
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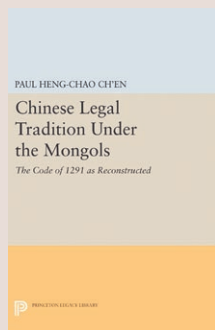
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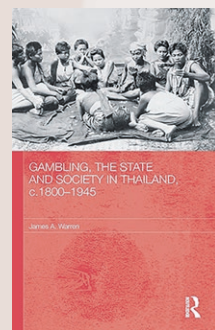
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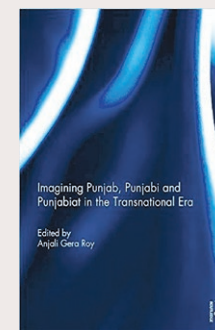
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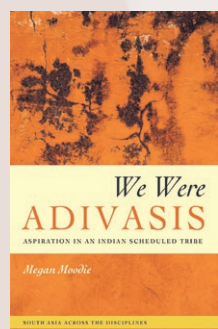
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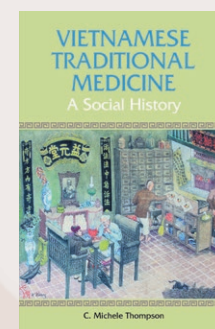
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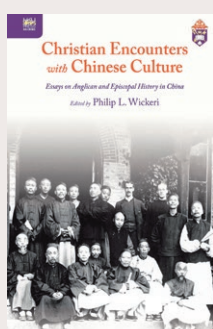
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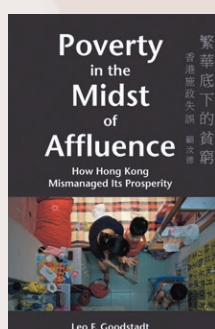
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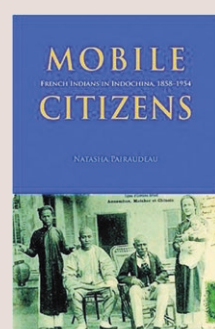
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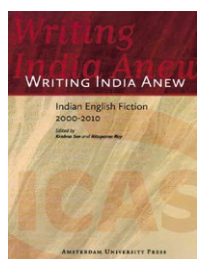
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# India: a watershed decade

This collection of fourteen critical essays is an eclectic mix of scholarship which addresses, in the editors' words, "the new corpus of writing" (9) in Indian English fiction (IEF). This 'new corpus' refers to contemporary IEF, that which emerged in the first decade of this millennium and can be distinguished from seminal novels such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and the work of well-known authors like Vikram Seth, Anita Desai or Shashi Tharoor. The editors suggest in their introduction that contemporary IEF has freed itself from the shackles of traditional theoretical categorization including 'postcolonialism' or 'postmodernism', yet they acknowledge that it is evidently concerned with the issue of transculturalism and mobility as international borders, both real and imagined, become increasingly porous.

Louise Harrington



Reviewed title:  
Sen, K. & R. Roy (eds.) 2013.  
*Writing India Anew: Indian English Fiction 2000-2010*,  
Amsterdam University Press,  
ISBN 9789089645333

THE 'STUDY OF A DECADE' approach of this edited collection is an attractive one and will be of interest to those readers looking for a broad impression of IEF in the years 2000-2010. This book joins two other notable publications which employ the same approach and coincidentally were published in the same year (2013): E. Dawson Varughese's *Reading New India: Post-Millennial Indian Fiction and The Indian English Novel of the New Millennium* edited by Prabhat K. Singh. There is considerable overlap across these three publications with Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, the motivational writing of Chetan Bhagat, and graphic novels all emerging as common subject matter. Nonetheless, such exciting scholarship on new and emerging literary genres along with critical discussions of how IEF has changed in the last decade are most welcome in the ever-expanding field of critical writing on fiction from or about India in the English language.

## Charting new territory

The introductory chapter from the editors of this book provides a review of criticism on IEF from 2000-2010, focusing on three categories of publications: broad overviews of literature, books on single authors or texts, and those on specific themes. After detailing a comprehensive list of the current critical field, the editors suggest that their publication adds to the extensive canon by revealing how critical material on IEF in the decade of 2000-2010, "a watershed in India's history", might write India anew (13).

This aim seems to be borne out of a desire to argue for the current, or lasting, importance of IEF with the goal of exposing the present trends and preoccupations in fiction writing from India as it evolves alongside the country itself. The reader gathers this intention because, on the first page, the Introduction asserts that IEF has been "dismissed as derivative or dispossessed" (9); it does not however provide a reference for such criticism, thus leaving it unclear to which scholars or publications this edited collection is responding. Despite this, those interested in Anglophone fiction will have no doubt that IEF continues to break new ground and that it offers inventive and varied creative readings of modern India.

*Writing India Anew* is also framed as charting new territory in IEF since, in the decade under review, fiction writers are suggested to have now moved on from the long-held obsession

with imperialism and nationalism. Indeed, empire and its effects are mentioned frequently throughout the Introduction as being irrelevant to contemporary IEF. This is an interesting observation that begs the question – what is the role of Empire in India or in Indian writing in English in the present period? IEF may have moved beyond a committed focus on the Raj, but clear connections to this historical period are apparent in many of the essays in this collection. For instance, among the themes discussed in the various chapters are India's relationship with Britain and America, the ever-shifting forms of Indian nationalism, crises in national identity, language politics, class and gender inequalities, and India in a global context. Significantly, Bill Ashcroft, in his opening essay 'Re-writing India', explores the idea of the nation in post-Independence India, engaging largely with matters of (anti-)nationalism and (post-)colonialism in novels including *Midnight's Children*. From the outset of this volume, then, it would seem that the legacy of imperialism continues to feature in critical material from this recent decade.

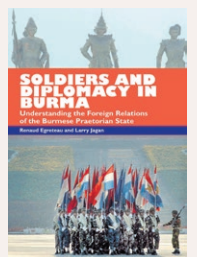
## Identifying trends in the new canon

The edited collection is divided into four sections: Re-Imagining the Nation; Revisiting the Past; Reviewing the Present; Reinscribing Home. These sections are not all created equally since they contain four, two, six, and two essays respectively. 'Reviewing the Present' is the longest section with six essays,

# Burma's foreign relations

In recent decades, few regimes have been as secretive and reclusive as Burma's. However, this pariah is hardly cut-off from the outside world, as the recent volume by Renaud Egreteau and Larry Jagan make clear.

Shane J. Barter and Yuko Nakajima



Reviewed title:  
Egreteau, R. & L. Jagan. 2013.  
*Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma: Understanding the Foreign Relations of the Burmese Praetorian State*,  
Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, ISBN 9789971696733

*Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma* provides a thorough examination of contemporary and historical foreign relations between Burma and a variety of global actors. This sometimes sprawling volume brings together an impressive range of materials while remaining accessible to a variety of readers, making this the definitive account of Burma's foreign relations.

The book's core argument is that, while the country's foreign policy has changed significantly between periods of openness in the immediate postcolonial era, isolation under Ne Win, and now something in between, a constant throughout Burma's postcolonial history has been the praetorian role of the military. The authors argue convincingly that Burma represents a praetorian state instead of a junta, militaristic, authoritarian, or pseudo-civilian state. The army pervades the state and society, serving as guardians of their national vision against various threats. The authors explain that praetorian regimes tend not to respond to international threats with military force, preferring instead to remain isolated; "praetorians are more concerned with political power and leadership than the systematic use of force, conflict and/or domestic repression – although they are ready to use them to achieve their goals" (29). This constant in Burmese politics suggests that, despite meaningful reforms, we should expect that the military retain a guardian rule for the foreseeable future.

*Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma* unfolds through five chapters. Chapter one categorizes the regime while providing an extensive review of the related literature. Chapter two provides a historical survey of post-colonial foreign relations, moving from U Nu's early internationalism to Ne Win's isolation and recent openings. The U Nu era in particular provides a useful history lesson, as Burma was at one point an outspoken international actor and a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. From here, the book examines Burma's relations with specific countries, especially China, India, the ASEAN nations, and the United States, as well as the United Nations, Japan, and several Western countries. The discussions of country dyads are fascinating, especially the unique ways that Japan and India approach Burmese issues in ways that are distinct from their allies.

While maintaining an international focus, Egreteau and Jagan never lose sight of domestic politics, noting the centrality of factionalism within the country's security forces and the ways that personal connections drive foreign policy. The authors are quick to point out that much of Burma's post-2010 opening must be explained by domestic factors. The book also delves into the ideational aspects of Burma's security apparatus, noting the extreme xenophobic nationalism that reinforces the country's isolationist tendencies. The book contains many policy insights. The authors suggest that the so-called great game between India and China, as well as the formidable Chinese influence in Burma, are exaggerated. Chinese investment in Burma is relatively limited, although it dwarfs that of other countries and provides Beijing with considerable influence. Burmese leaders recognize this and have worked to retain their autonomy, namely by purging pro-Beijing intelligence officers and pivoting towards the West. Burma does not appear to be divided between pro-China

and pro-Western camps, but instead pro-foreign and pro-isolation ones, meaning that those who favour expanding interactions with Beijing also favour doing so with Washington, Bangkok, Tokyo, and Brussels.

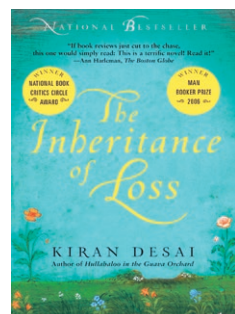
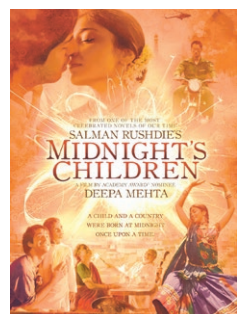
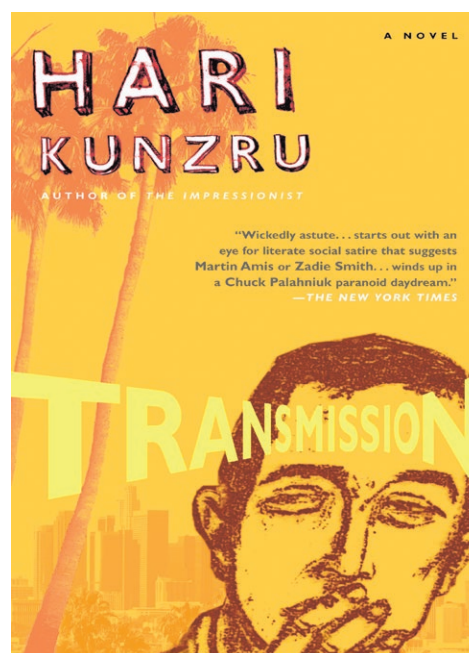
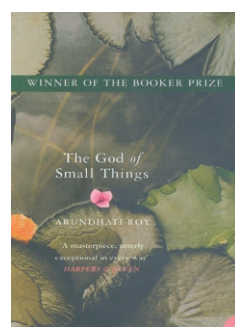
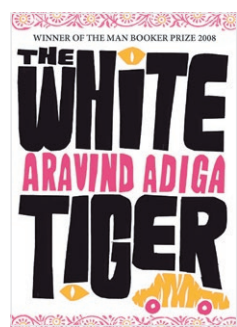
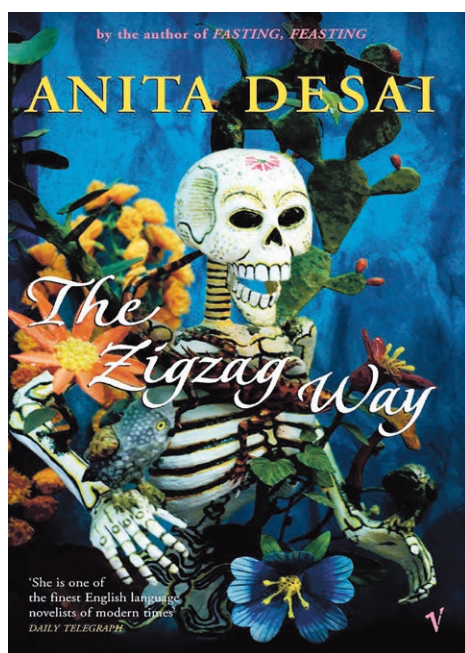
While mostly impressive, *Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma* falls short in some respects. The book feels quite long due to impressive details, but also some poor organization and editing. The book's chapters run over 100 pages long with only a few section breaks per chapter and seemingly distinct topics lumped within each section. Several parts of the book could have been trimmed, as discussions of many events and concepts are repeated at several points, such as Burma leaving the non-aligned movement, Ne Win's anger towards North Korea after a 1983 attack on South Korean citizens, Russia's Rangoon Embassy, Israel's complex relations with Burma, and Khin Nyunt's 2004 purging. Next, while discussions of bilateral relations are interesting, it is not clear whether Burma's relations with the Ukraine, Canada, or New Zealand demand dedicated discussions, let alone repeated ones. Another area that could have probably been trimmed relates to the authors' tendency to incorporate literature reviews throughout the book, breaking from their own analyses to provide long, encyclopedic surveys. The authors also opt for a journalistic style, introducing writers in terms of their nationalities, professions, and sometimes home institution when making citations, despite already having footnotes. This is especially strange when authors are referred to repeatedly, such as Andrew Selth, described as an "Australian veteran watcher of Burmese affairs" (8), "a prominent *Tatmadaw* specialist" (38, 52, 138), and "Australian academic" (66, 155, 334). While Selth and others are indeed noted experts, the repeated in-text introductions become tiring. This and other editorial decisions add unnecessary length to an already long manuscript.

The major substantive quibble we found was with the book's treatment of history. The authors refer to colonial traumas to explain Burmese xenophobia. Pre-colonial history is absent, save for a brief mention in Thai-Burmese relations and in discussing the shift to the new capital of Nyapyidaw. It might have been interesting to have some discussion on precolonial Burmese politics, namely the role of the military, a dominant institution well before the arrival of Europeans. Some brief mention of previous historical eras would also help explain contemporary ethnic dynamics, which were exacerbated, but not caused, by colonial experiences. Even if one is critical of colonialism, starting history with it may exaggerate its effect, blurring efforts to discover the roots of this praetorian system.

These quibbles aside, *Soldiers and Diplomacy in Burma* remains an impressive achievement. This is essential reading for those seeking to comprehend not only Burma's politics and foreign relations. The product of a decade of research, the authors must be commended for unearthing a range of fascinating points and assembling such a detailed story of the foreign relations of this pariah.

Yuko Nakajima, Soka University of America (yuko.jtc@gmail.com);  
Shane J. Barter, Soka University of America (sbarter@soka.edu).





and perhaps is the most true to the book's overarching purpose of exposing the latest trends in IEF, since it includes scholarship on science fiction, graphic novels and the effects of globalisation. Himansu S. Mohapatra's critique of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is effective in debunking some of the claims of the novel and its supporters, while Nandana Dutta's essay is thought-provoking on the topic of the everyday in women's writing and the significance of small stories in the "post-postcolonial" novel (149). The four remaining chapters of the section are notable in their innovative approach to IEF. Subir Dhar's focus is on the inspirational writing – 'inspi-lit' – of bestseller Chetan Bhagat; Sreemati Mukherjee's subject is cyber-literature and the novel *Tokyo Cancelled* by Rana Dasgupta; Abhijit Gupta's piece offers an overview of the current state of Indian science fiction; and Rimi B. Chatterjee gives a comprehensive survey of comics and graphic novels and speaks to the potential for this genre in India. All of these essays are refreshing in their engagement with, what many readers will identify as, distinctly contemporary concerns and undoubtedly distinguishes them from the IEF of the 1980s for instance.

While the remaining sections of the book are less obviously connected to what the novelty of the decade 2000-2010 might be, Bill Ashcroft's opening essay is commendable. His reasoned piece on contemporary Indian English novels is most effective in its argument that, following the (seldom-observed) anti-nationalist utopianism of Tagore and Gandhi, prominent novels and novelists reveal a deep skepticism about the idea of the nation state in independent India. Taking Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as a starting point, Ashcroft discusses some "inheritors of Rushdie's prize-winning revolution" (29), that is, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Hari Kunzru's *Transmission*. He contends that three themes emerge in how these novels express their resistance to nationalism: class and socio-economic inequality, inherited colonial borders and boundaries, and mobility in the global era. The author concludes that the historical skepticism of nationalism evident in the writings of Tagore and Gandhi abounds in contemporary literature, while it simultaneously maintains an eye on the past and the future, the home and the world.

Another compelling chapter which delves into theories about the nation-state in India, national allegory and literature is Krishna Sen's discussion of Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* and M.G. Vassanji's *The Assassin's Song*. Her argument is that the concept of 'desh' – "the land or place of one's birth or familial origin, and therefore of one's ancestral heritage and spiritual and cultural belonging" (76) – is more relevant when reading IEF, such as the novels above, than Western models of the homogenous nation. The two essays in the section called 'Revisiting the Past' are also stimulating in their engagement with the historical. Paul Sharrad explains how some contemporary writers have tried (with little success) to rework classics like the Mahabharata for audiences today, while Rituparna Roy considers Mughal India and art in her reading of Kunal Basu's novel *The Miniaturist*. In the latter essay, Roy interestingly contends that a turn towards historical fiction is a "new trend of the decade 2000-2010" (112), as writers move past their preoccupation with the colonial in favour of the pre-colonial period. Unfortunately, there is little development of this claim which leaves the reader wishing for more, particularly because the edited collection as a whole often mentions potential trends in the recent canon of IEF without drawing any unified conclusions.

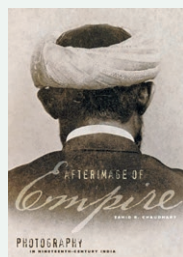
In the absence of editorial interludes at the beginning of each new section to create an argument for the book as a whole and to link the ideas within the diverse essays, it becomes somewhat unclear what the critical or theoretical trajectory of the collection is. It would have been useful to have some guidance on how these fourteen disparate essays address the editors' initial questions: what makes this decade special? What is new about their approach? Alternatively, a concluding chapter would have been most valuable in answering the above questions and in offering the reader a cohesive analysis of these contemporary essays on Indian English fiction in light of India's altered landscape in the first decade of the new millennium. As individual chapters, however, many of these essays will be of interest to general readers, as well as to students and scholars of the individual authors and texts. The list of references at the end of the book is also a useful resource on contemporary writing from India and literary theory.

Dr. Louise Harrington, Dept of English and Film Studies,  
University of Alberta (louise.harrington@ualberta.ca)

## Photography in nineteenth-century India

*Afterimage of Empire* is a rich and thought-provoking study of early colonial photography in the Indian subcontinent, drawing on extensive theoretical observations and interdisciplinary methods.

Eve Tignol



**Reviewed title:**  
Chaudhary, Z.R. 2012.  
*Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India*,  
Minneapolis: Minnesota Press,  
ISBN 9780816677498

THE BOOK, BORN OUT of Chaudhary's doctoral dissertation at Cornell University, contributes to scholarship on Indian colonial photography notably developed in J. Gutman's, J. Falconer's and C. Pinney's works. Rather than proposing a descriptive historical account of photographic practice, this book explores the role of photography in the way people sensed (and made sense of) the world in history and inquires its social implications in the modern world. As the author explains in the introduction, the primary focus of the book is "what the colonial history of the medium [photography] may have to teach us about the making of modern perceptual apparatus, of the links between perception and meaning, and of the transformation of aesthetic experience itself". Interested in how this particular media is influenced by history and, in turn, influences history, Chaudhary starts his ambitious investigation with the arrival of photography in India (about the same time as it develops in Britain) and divides his argument into four thematic chapters, each relying on different material and exploring particular aspects of colonial photographic practices.

Chapters one and two are both devoted to the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 and its echoes in colonialist photography. In chapter one, "Death and the Rhetoric of Photography: X marks the spot", Chaudhary studies post-Rebellion

photographs by John Dannenberg and Harriet Tytler who memorialize British loss and death by reproducing in pictures the now empty spaces where tragic events had taken place, thus repeating patterns of traumatic shock. Chaudhary here addresses the "indexical" power of photography, which persuades us that the things photographed did really take place, in showing that photography is allegorical (and polysemic), and works along the same dynamics as those of rumour. Despite its assumed objectivity, the author argues that the photographic media is in fact a technology of propaganda which does not provide any narrative in itself but needs "captions"; here colonialist ones.

In chapter two, "Anaesthesia and Violence: a colonial History of shock", Chaudhary continues his analysis of post-Rebellion photography through the work of commercial photographer Felice Beato. In pictures of unearthed bones and hung rebels, Chaudhary sees what he calls, in Walter Benjamin's terms, a "phantasmagoric aesthetic". As the author argues, photography participates in the "dialectics of (in)visibility" which enable the viewers to experience the violence of their own destruction and transform it into a commodity. This process, which compensates the bodily shock of modernity and negotiates relations of domination by "managing" the colonized, is, for the author, symptomatic of a change in colonial ordering and "governmentality", to borrow Foucault's words. Here, Chaudhary argues that photographic practice has a crucial role in the production of colonial knowledge and is instrumental to colonial governmentality: it perceptually alienates the colonials and the colonized and justifies the ideology of the colonial state's civilizing mission.

Chapter three, "Armour and Aesthetics: The Picturesque in Difference", examines the picturesque aesthetic and the nostalgia for home that unfolds in Samuel Bourne's landscape photography in the 1860s. By converting the Indian landscape into the familiar through the resort to picturesque conventions, colonial photography reveals a perceptual change insofar as the world was increasingly appreciated as "picture-like". This chapter also investigates the works of Indian photographers Lala Deen Dayal, Darogha Abbas Ali and Ahmed Ali Khan and their adoption of the picturesque aesthetic. Instead of seeing traces of resistance in photographic practices, Chaudhary emphasizes the differences displayed in Indian photographs by reading them as attempts to mould themselves in the

terms of English picturesque conventions, while the continued invocation and re-adaptation of local artistic traditions are considered as examples of the evolution of Indian aesthetic expressions.

In chapter four, "Famine and the Reproduction of Affect: Pleas for Sympathy", Chaudhary explores the role of photography in stimulating emotions and sympathy especially through photographs taken by Captain Wallace Hooper during the Madras famine in the late 1870s. The author argues that such photographs enabled an identification with others that shaped English subjects through a sense of belonging to a "benevolent nation", and thus served social cohesion.

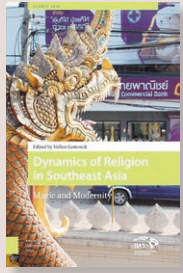
In *Afterimage of Empire*, Chaudhary impressively juggles both theoretical and historical material. Photographic evidence is also always echoed by other contemporary sources like travel writings, memoirs, or newspaper articles which render the narrative lively. The author's detailed studies are insightful; chapter three and the analysis of the work of Indian photographers – notably his investigation of albums containing blanked "photographs" of *pardanashin* women – are particularly captivating. Chaudhary's arguments, choice of examples and selection of photographs, compiled in a glossy edition, render the book an engaging read. The reader may find the author's theoretical explanations relying on specialized jargon hard to follow, and a proper conclusion, rather than a brief coda, would have helped bring together the different aspects addressed in the book. Moreover, while Chaudhary certainly emphasizes the importance of history and of historical determination in his study of the phenomenological impact of photography in the late nineteenth-century, there is relatively little detailed analysis of the photographs reproduced and of their historical context. More attention to the context in which those photographs circulated as well as to the intentions of the photographers, and to the reception and use of photography by various audiences would have further enhanced the study. Chaudhary's *Afterimage of Empire* is nonetheless an extensive study which undoubtedly opens up reflection not only on the role of photography in the Indian subcontinent but on the cultural and sensorial changes brought by modernity both in the Western and non-Western worlds.

Eve Tignol, Royal Holloway University of London  
(eve.tignol.2012@rhul.ac.uk)



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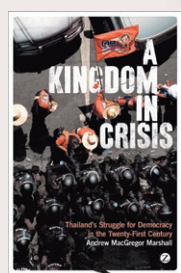
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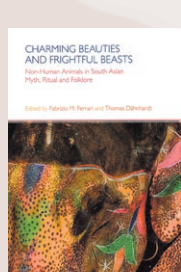
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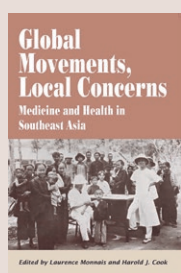
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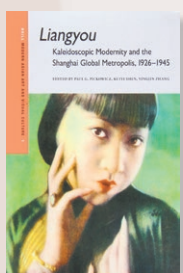
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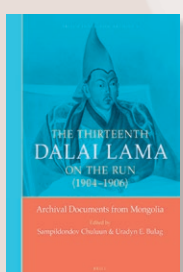
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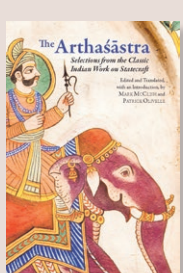
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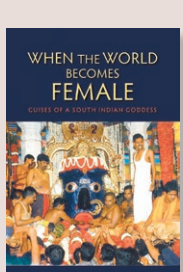
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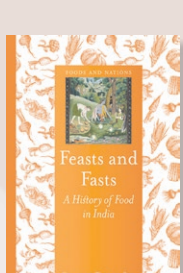
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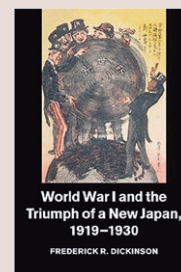
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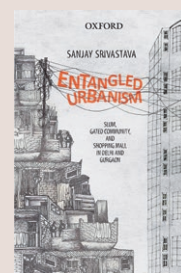
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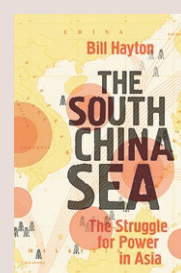
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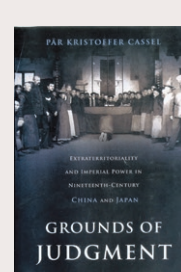
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## Pull-out supplement

# theFocus

## The New Asia Scholar

There have been many developments in the field of Asian Studies and among its scholars during the last few decades, and we have been taking note. Our particular observatory has been the biennial meetings of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), which had its first assembly in 1998, and its most recent earlier this year. After the first two meetings in Europe (Leiden and Berlin), ICAS was moved into Asia (with two diversions: Honolulu and Adelaide), not only to further increase participation of scholars from Asia, but also with the idea that the Asian case provides an ideal breeding ground to refine existing theories and to develop new ones.

Unlike other Asian Studies conferences, where the majority of participants come from the United States and Europe, ICAS boasts the greatest diversified cross-continental representation, and most of its participants come from Asian countries. One of our most obvious observations has been that Asian Studies is now more and more being produced in Asia. New ideas and research findings are discussed not only among researchers who study Asia, but also among scholars who live in Asia. This is important because so far the conceptual lexicons and theoretical tools used in social sciences and humanities have been derived almost exclusively from the West. Although these theories and methods have been applied throughout the world with considerable success, their limitations are increasingly apparent, especially in a place like Asia (or Africa for that matter) with its long indigenous traditions of organising social relations, its own norms concerning power and order, and its legacies of implementing rule.

Sonja Zweegers & Paul van der Velde



Adams Bodomo (University of Vienna), shortlisted for the Africa-Asia Book Prize 2015, and here seen speaking at the Africa-Asia conference.



# The New Asia Scholar *continued*

## Reverse and inclusive discourses

As Asian countries emerge to become prominent players in the world, here comes the point when we recognise that the region has something to offer for knowledge production. In his contribution to this Focus, in which various academics have joined our discussion of the current field of Asian Studies and the scholars involved, Tak-Wing Ngo (University of Macau and local host of ICAS 8), comments on this realisation. He signals that, recently, there has been an increasing demand for alternative scholarship within Asian Studies, for a move away from Western theory, and “for the development of ‘reverse discourses’ in order for non-Western scholarship to theorize back at the West”. But as local Asian centres and networks of knowledge emerge, seeking to interact with the rest of the academic world, they encounter the problem of language. And now the challenge has come to continue to judge scholarship according to quality not quantity, and to, in Tak-Wing’s words “encourage internationalization without compromising indigenous scholarship”.

Not only is Asia a breeding ground for new knowledge and theory, it is also a new home for the many foreign Asia Scholars who wish to ‘get up close’ to the discussion. Lena Scheen (New York University Shanghai), a sinologist from Leiden University, moved to Shanghai so that she could experience the benefits of being among her research subjects, but has now also been forced to learn how to deal with becoming part of her own research field. Essentially, she considers it to be a benefit: “to be required to consistently question your surroundings and yourself in it, creating never-ending opportunities to learn”.

Besides the refreshing reversal of roles and locations, we are also seeing a new inclusiveness in many areas of research. In her autobiographical introduction, Priya Maholay-Jaradi (National University of Singapore) presents herself and her professional career path, as exemplary of a new Asia scholar involved in the arts. She discusses how, as museums and university programmes draw closer together, their shared resources are resulting in new pedagogical tools and exhibition programmes; new media, such as video and digital archives, are gradually becoming part of a new arc of ‘scholarship-archives-museum-publications-teaching’; and the politics and poetics of culture are being implemented as tools for development and community activism. As museum theory is being linked with practice, academic research on museums becomes more socially relevant to local communities, “in an academic climate where researchers are increasingly encouraged to demonstrate the social impact of their research” (Yunci Cai quoted by Priya Jaradi).

## Towards a multilingual level-playing field

A highlight of every ICAS is its Book Prize and accompanying award ceremony (see pages 4-5 in this issue). The ICAS Book Prize (IBP) has progressed from an experimental fledgling in 2005, with just 3 prizes awarded, to an established institution in 2015, with 5 main prizes and 20 accolades. The first IBP attracted 50 books, whilst this latest event (IBP 6) received 250 book and dissertations submissions, a clear testament to the growth of the study of Asia. IBP 6 (prizes awarded at ICAS 9 in Adelaide) presented us with wonderful opportunities for observation: the first unmistakable development has been a shift from humanities to social sciences; the second is the rise of Asian contributors from 20 to nearly 50 percent (compared to the first edition). This also mirrors the development outlined earlier: from western-based Asian Studies to studies coming from the region itself, enriched by indigenous research traditions.

The IBP organisers have recognised the growing ‘problem of language’ (discussed by numerous of our contributors to this Focus), and in response will be adding five eligible languages for the IBP’s seventh edition (prizes will be awarded during ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai, 20-23 July 2017): Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French and German. To celebrate this development we will be organizing the first Asian Studies Book Fair during ICAS 10, involving not just English language publications, but also those in the five languages listed above. This will hopefully make apparent that English language publications are but an iceberg slowly melting into an ocean of multilingual Asian Studies.

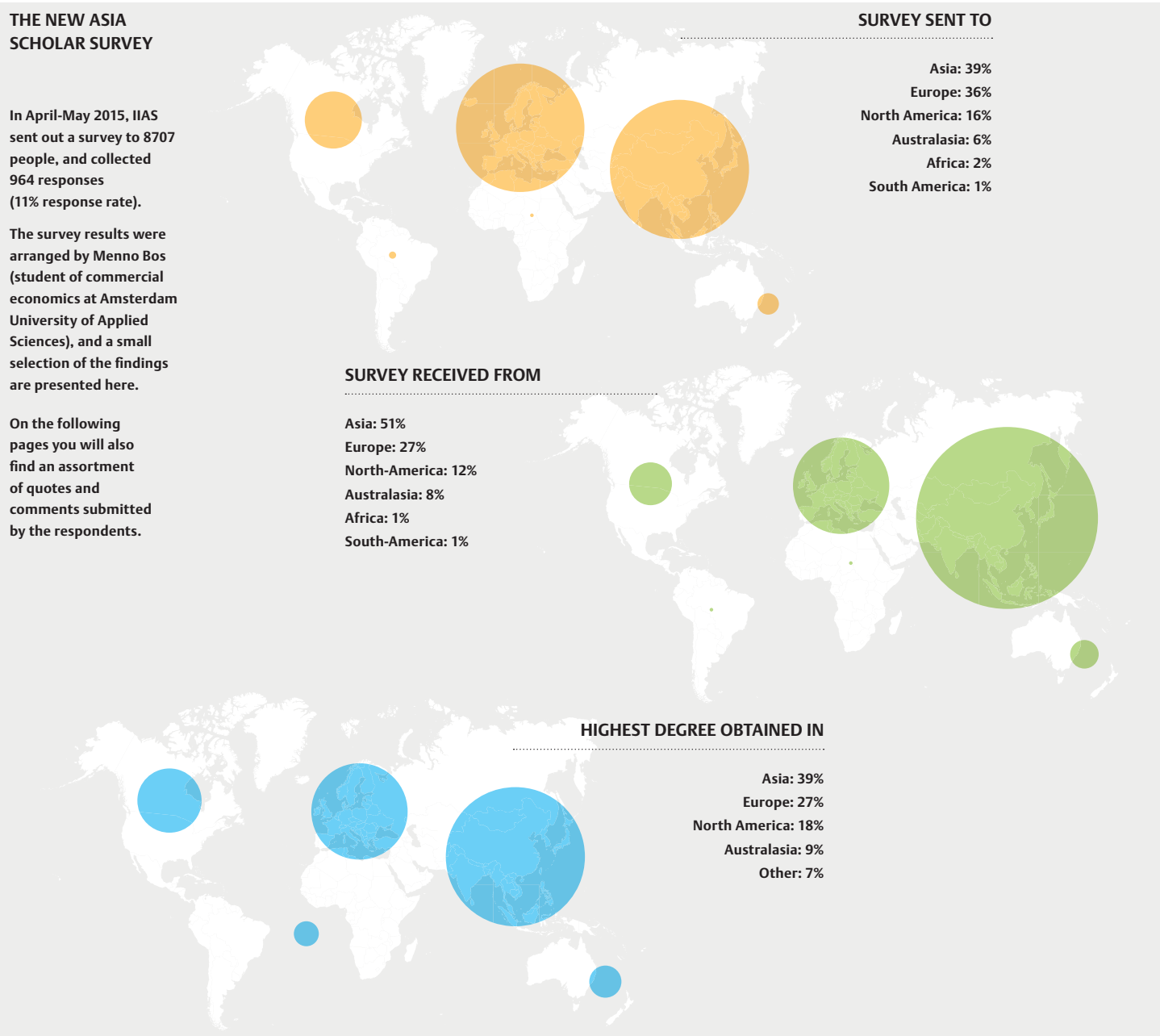
Language in fact plays an increasingly obvious role in Asian Studies; it is of importance for both collecting data and distributing it. Occasionally, language is the tool with which one will come to understand a culture, or a relationship between cultures. And knowledge of a particular language will often mean the difference between being able to publish for an international audience or not. The pressure to publish is a familiar sensation for most academics, but it weighs heavier on some than on others. John Bohannon has gone so far as to declare “an emerging Wild West in academic publishing”, and Ulrich Kozok (University of Hawai’i at Mānoa), in his Focus contribution, comments on this development at Indonesian universities, as an example of the pressure to publish so as to advance one’s career. In addition, Indonesian

## THE NEW ASIA SCHOLAR SURVEY

In April-May 2015, IIAS sent out a survey to 8707 people, and collected 964 responses (11% response rate).

The survey results were arranged by Menno Bos (student of commercial economics at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), and a small selection of the findings are presented here.

On the following pages you will also find an assortment of quotes and comments submitted by the respondents.



academics find themselves in that disadvantaged situation of having to publish in a foreign language. With the pressure high and predatory publishers on the lure, their choices are perhaps understandable. But standards of quality control must be improved if the reputations of academics, and the scientific world of research, are to be protected.

Duncan McDuie-Ra (University of New South Wales) was a member of the IBP 6 Reading Committee and is a former accolade winner. In his article Duncan comments on the benefits those roles have presented him. Although an immense task, judging the IBP gave him the opportunity to act as a clearinghouse, advise anyone he could on which books to read next, and to accumulate new names for peer-reviews. Significantly, he was able to observe the extremely broad field of Asian Studies, and the current state of its publishing. Duncan comments on the ongoing value of books (monographs in particular), produced despite the pressures of academic life, and notwithstanding the ‘phantom crisis’ in the humanities and social sciences. As a judge, wading through the 200 plus submitted books, he found that the field of Asian Studies is very much alive.

In their co-written article, Paul Kratoska and Peter Schoppert present a shift in Asian Studies publications they have recently been witnessing in their role as publishers located in Southeast Asia (NUS Press, Singapore). Western authors have in the past mainly written to explain Asia to audiences in their own part of the world, but Asian publishers have tended to find the appeal of that scholarship limited. However, distribution of research published by Asian scholars in local Asian languages has in its own way also been restricted, that is, until the recent developments encouraging Asian scholars to publish in other languages (mainly English). Their audience is evolving and is starting to include scholars in the West, but also scholars based in other Asian countries. The shift: authors from all over the world are embedding themselves in local discourse, publishers are going straight to the source, and innovative technologies are helping regional knowledge to reach new global audiences.

As a publisher and owner of Silkworm Books in Chiang Mai (Thailand), Trasvin Jittidecharak is in a suitable position to comment on the ‘problems of language’. In her article, she raises concerns acknowledged by many in the field: lacking funds for academic publishing and the pressures of writing in English for non-native speakers. But she also importantly mentions the problem of censorship in many Asian countries. Political systems are perhaps developing towards more liberal forms in many areas of ‘new’ Asia, but freedom of speech is still far from being a reality.

Also contributing to this discussion of language concerns is Tom Hoogervorst (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies), who asks if the ‘New Asia Scholar’ is perhaps motivated by, or even swept up in, ‘the crisis of area studies’, be it real or just an apparition. Has the scholar gone into survival mode, demanding innovation and adaptation? As a researcher of interethnic contact through language, Tom wonders what role language will play in the scurry to reconfigure the field. He follows the path that language-learning in area studies has taken in the recent past; from western researchers learning local languages in their attempts to become ‘regional experts’, to the centrality of English for academic theorisation, to the engagement of native speakers as fieldwork assistants, concluding with the undeniable importance of the study of language to help understand the rapidly homogenising world.

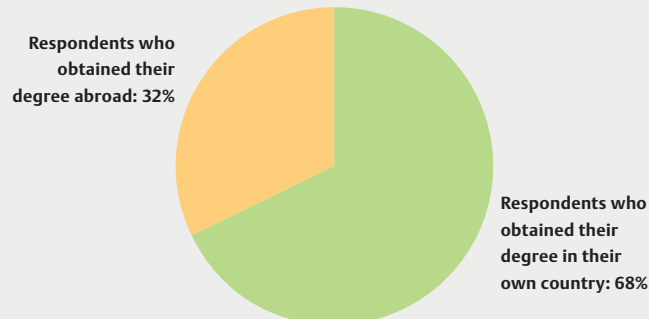
## The New Asia Scholar

This changing field of Asian Studies brings with it a new academic, one we have termed the ‘New Asia Scholar’. Although, Marlon James Sales (Monash University) astutely remarks, in his opening words, that the term can both refer to a scholar who is attuned to the newness of Asia as a field of inquiry, and also be interpreted as a reconfiguration of ‘who’ studies Asia. Marlon is the ‘incidental’ Asianist, one of a variety of scholars whose specific fields of study (in Marlon’s case, linguistics/translating) draws them nearer to Asia by looking at the continent through a ‘new’ set of lenses. He puts forth that both the area of the world and the scholars who study it are ‘new’. But more than that, Marlon discusses the limitations of interculturality in Asia (the acknowledgement of different cultures in Asia), and calls rather for transculturality, which alongside the differences also acknowledges the permeable borders of languages and cultures.

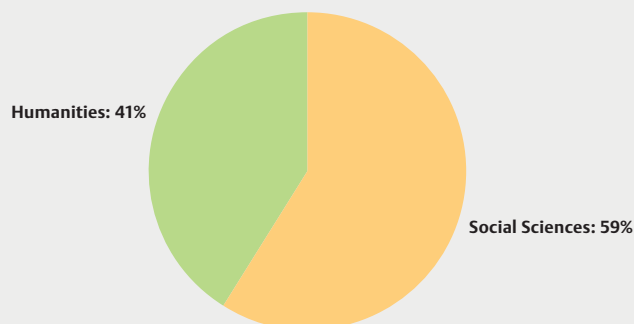
One of the platforms at ICAS this year was ‘Intercultur-Adelaide’, which aimed to bring together scholars, policymakers and other stakeholders to consider the idea of ‘interculturality’ – broadly defined as a set of cultural skills supporting openness and adaptivity. Cathy Monro (University of Sydney) calls attention to the oft-failing collaboration between the academic and legislative worlds, particularly in the context of interculturality. Anyone in the field of Asian Studies knows how diverse and vast topics of academic research can be. We’ve all seen those monographs come by with exotic titles such as ‘yak milk preservation on the Mongolian steppe’, ‘embroidery from the Sumatran forests’, or ‘coconut collection from the beaches of some tropical island’. And as you pick up the book to delve into bizarre new worlds, a little voice in the back of your



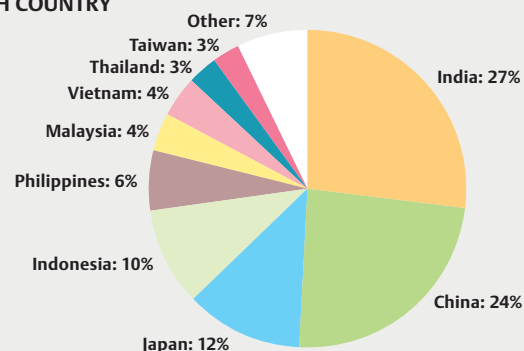
## SOURCE OF DEGREE



## RESEARCH CATEGORY



## RESEARCH COUNTRY



mind might be asking “why?”. Why indeed. It is not always immediately clear why a particular research has been undertaken, or what its significance for society could be (assuming that one would want to have at least a slight impact on society beyond the academic bleachers). Too often, research findings fail to find their way into the realm of practical applicability. Researchers are not always concerned with this aspect, and policymakers habitually bypass academic research findings in their decision-making.

Jinghong Zhang (Australian National University), winner of the ICAS Book Prize 2015 Social Sciences, comments on the dilemmas encountered when attempting social scientific research in the globalising and commercial world (the ‘new’ Asia). Where the new world wants fast and clear answers, the new social scientist must learn how to adapt. Forfeiting their desire to understand the ‘why’ and the ‘how’, they must learn to answer the ‘what’, in the process possibly losing their academic soul. However, learning to adapt to the changing environment, Jinghong explains, will also conceivably give them something new and valuable in return.

Imran bin Tajudeen (National University of Singapore) also comments on the links between knowledge production and usefulness for the ‘new’ commercialised world. He approaches the New Asia Scholar as both an emerging scholar who is changing the conditions for knowledge production, and also one who is challenging the existing forms of knowledge produced about (Southeast) Asia. Imran observes how the old regime of scholarship was motivated by the need to serve various colonial territories, with its legacy still being felt not just in the West, but in Asia too. The post-colonial era continued to see scholarship regimes produce research with utility for Western knowledge consumers. These Anglo-American academic traditions subsequently went on to form the framework of research for most Asian institutions and scholars; alternative discursive domains and traditions of scholarship remain very limited even today.

Contemporary scholarship in the US mould is concerned with what Benedict Anderson has cynically called the ‘theory market in the academic marketplace’, resulting in the dilemma that scholarship with a concern for social engagement must operate beyond and in spite of the adopted US model. To generate critical and socially-engaged scholarship, new avenues must be paved so that research may reflect locally-embodied knowledge and understandings. These ideas resonate with Dell Upton’s advocacy for a cultural landscape approach to architecture and urban history, and with an emerging notion of the ‘flipped academic’, where publication is delayed in favour of community engagement.

## New approaches and players in Asian Studies

Asian Studies as a field of research is constantly developing, but at times a more concerted effort must be made to identify, define and design new approaches. IAS (The International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden; publisher of The Newsletter, and home of the ICAS secretariat) is responding to the organic developments outlined above – new knowledge, new scholars, in a new Asia – as have numerous other knowledge institutions in the field. In 2014, IAS initiated a programme, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: ‘Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context’ ([www.rethinking.asia](http://www.rethinking.asia)). With the objective of reshaping the field of Asian Studies the programme seeks to foster new humanities-focused research. In practice, this means adapting Asian Studies to an interconnected global environment built on a network of academics and practitioners from Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa. Educational opportunities are created by selecting cross-disciplinary methodological questions likely to shift scholarly paradigms as they pertain to Asia.

Titia van der Maas (IIAS) is the project coordinator of the ‘Rethinking Asian Studies’ programme. In her contribution to this Focus she points out how recent technology has improved communications and the sharing of knowledge, and how uniformity in this and in research methodology has facilitated the running of research (projects) across the globe. However, it is nevertheless important to not forget the pursuit of alternative interpretations; to question and challenge the establishment. Although a field of studies will evolve organically in some ways, there are always good reasons to promote more deliberate developments.

In a similar vein of highlighting new players in the field, David Camroux (Sciences Po) delivers a wealth of bibliographic references in his demonstration of the changes occurring in the field of political science research in Southeast Asia. An emergence of new scholarship is introducing comparative dimensions, crossing disciplinary boundaries, and juxtaposing theoretical arguments and observations drawn from various regions of the world, requiring us to rethink a number of assumptions and interpretations.

New approaches and players are also emerging in ‘new’ regions of the world. Cláudio Pinheiro (Rio de Janeiro Federal University) provides a historical overview of Latin America’s curiosity about Asia, which challenges the hegemony of the Northern framework, helping to de-provincialize Asian Studies. This curiosity has passed through various phases; at first defined by Orientalist approaches emulating colonialist views, later by the theories of Development and Modernity; from a diffuse 19th century aristocratic inquisitiveness to the professional academic interest of post-WWII; from disperse connections between peripheral parts of the world to alternative models of modernization. Area Studies, in general, can both develop capacities of intellectuals dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of specific spaces, whilst simultaneously isolate academics in self-contained realities. It has also validated the prevalence of a North Atlantic expertise, which has hindered the postcolonial peripheries from observing one another intellectually. Pinheiro therefore advocates the institutionalization of Asian Studies in the Global South (particularly Latin America and Africa), which will help to improve the progress of the field, to de-centralize Asian Studies, and to encourage debates that cross disciplinary boundaries.

The institutionalization of Asian Studies in the Global South has recently seen fruition in Africa, where the African Association for Asian Studies (A-Asia) was founded in 2013. Lloyd Amoah (Ashesi University College) is Secretary of A-Asia and was also one of the convenors of the recently held conference, ‘Africa-Asia: A New Axis of Knowledge’ (see page 6 in this issue). In his contribution, Lloyd notes that, despite the Asia-Africa relations that can be traced back into antiquity, there has always been a notable lack of an institutional pursuit of knowledge about Asia in Africa. He references Kierkegaard’s ‘midnight hour’ and declares that the hour of ‘unmasking’ has finally struck. Burdened by a past of imperialist subjugation, both continents of Asia and Africa are perhaps finally ready to see each other without the blurring mask of colonialism, struggles of independence, and the Cold War. New relations are being forged; ones that take their source from ancient connections, but which also attempt to craft fresh engagements befitting a rapidly changing world. At the conference in Accra, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana was alerted to this development and understanding its significance announced that the institution planned to open an Asian Studies Centre at the beginning of 2016.

Habibul Khondker (Zayed University in Abu Dhabi) focuses on the challenges and potential of Asian Studies in the Arab states of the Gulf. He shares with us his take on the current state of Asian Studies in his region of the world. He concentrates mainly on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, and paints a picture of hopeful future growth. Although initially established to cater to the human resource needs of a modernising world, the universities in the Gulf region are starting to ‘Look East’ and to recognise the importance of global relations and developments,

possibly encouraged by the infatuating influences of Asia’s pop culture, which are emblematic of the ‘new’ Asia and can be gleaned from the literary contributions to the latest issue of the *Griffith Review*.

One hears the expression ‘the Asian Century’ all the time, but what really does it mean? Are we just talking about growing economies and evolving political systems? Or is the ‘new’ Asia more than that? Julianne Schultz and Jane Camens (respectively, *Griffith Review*, and Asia Pacific Writers & Translators), the co-editors of the latest issue of the *Griffith Review*, titled *New Asia Now*, put this question to 49 literary authors in Asia. All born after 1970, all grown up during a period of extraordinary change. This in all respects ‘ground-breaking’ publication was reviewed by Richard Newman (The University of Queensland). He points out that the publication both reacts to and emerges from the pluralism and ambition of ‘the Asian Century’ and that the contributions consist of realistic and sceptical observations on political dogma, Asian orthodoxy and imported liberalism alike.

## Looking ahead

In his key-note address, ‘Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Asia in the 21st Century’, at the ICAS 9 opening ceremony in Adelaide, Takashi Shiraishi (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Tokyo) started with an overview of the economic, political and social developments in Asia, among Asian areas and countries, and in relation to the rest of the world. He continued by targeting Area Studies specifically. The quote reproduced below were Shiraishi’s concluding words to his speech, which we encourage you to read in its entirety ([www.icas.asia/ICAS9-keynote](http://www.icas.asia/ICAS9-keynote)). His address, and especially his observations made in the section below, sum up our discussion of a ‘New Asia Scholar’ and the field of Asian Studies better than we could ourselves, so we leave it to Professor Shiraishi to conclude this introduction:

“I have worked as a historian, an international relations specialist, a political economist, and a foreign policy expert over the last 40 years, but have always studied Asia, Southeast Asia initially and Asia more generally in recent years. It is my conviction that Area Studies have a lot to contribute to our understanding of the very complex global, regional, national, and local processes at work, precisely because our perspective is anchored in historical and comparative approaches to and across areas rather than in any disciplinary box. The ‘crisis’ of area studies has been talked about since the end of the Cold War era, with budget cuts, disciplinary compartmentalization and the imposition of quantitative, technical assessment standards borrowed from some of the natural sciences and now applied uncritically to the social sciences and the humanities. At the same time, we are very much aware that no discipline can account for the complexity of the lived experience and processes currently unfolding across different scales. Our understanding of the region these days is most often based on a certain discipline, and disciplines are useful because they pose questions from which we can undertake our study of and engagement with the world. But I believe that area studies provide an arena in which we can talk across disciplines and learn from each other. At a time when we have all the more reason and need to learn about ourselves and our neighbors, this crisis of area studies may in fact be a crisis of knowledge and authority, or rather the way in which we go about producing, authorizing or validating, and sharing knowledge. We need to ask the question of whose crisis this is, and whether we are not ourselves guilty of thinking within a box, or even in a box within a box, and complicit in reproducing the inequalities that structure knowledge production. What is clear is that we can no longer go about doing area studies the way we have been used to: which is to say, we go to a ‘field’ somewhere, do research and write about ‘other’ people not our own, publish in our own national language as well as in English but not the languages of the people we are talking about, talk to our fellow academics in America or Europe or Asia while feeling ourselves above the debates happening within communities in the region and in the different countries, not talking to nor citing the scholarship produced by our colleagues in this region, and then insisting that everyone should publish in English language journals with high impact factor. The point is that people in the region and the world move on and things are unfolding right in front of us, and for many of the people who find themselves in an ‘area’ – in the many senses and contexts in which it is understood as such – that area is not something removed or out there, but the ground on which they, and we all live, work, love, hate, have children, move about, grow old, and die. Let us be open-minded and stop thinking about Asian studies as something out there, but something we do together with our friends and colleagues here.”

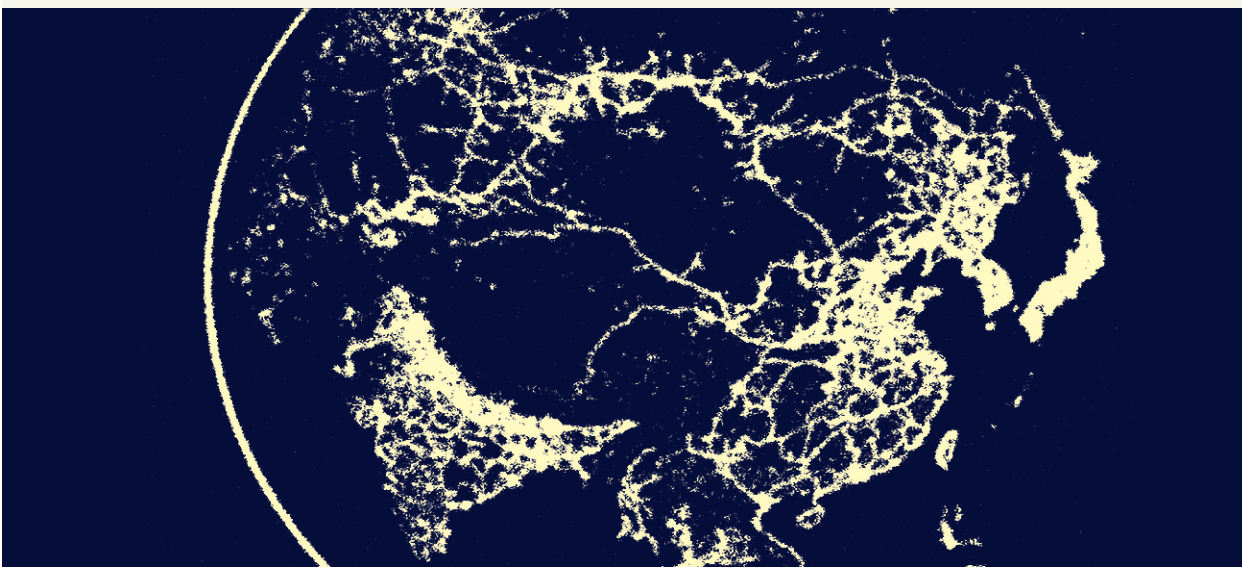
**Paul van der Velde, ICAS Secretary, IIAS Publications Officer, and Founding Editor of The Newsletter**  
([p.g.e.i.j.van.der.velde@iias.nl](mailto:p.g.e.i.j.van.der.velde@iias.nl))  
**Sonja Zweegers, Managing Editor of The Newsletter**  
([s.i.zweegers@iias.nl](mailto:s.i.zweegers@iias.nl))



# New scholarship from Asia

Theories in the social sciences are almost without exception developed in the West and based largely on the historical experiences of Western societies. For a long time, Asia and the non-West have been at best laboratories to validate universalized Western-based theories. In recent years, however, there has been increasing criticism against the hegemony of Euro-American scholarship. Advocates of alternative scholarship have urged for the provincialization of Western perspectives, the invigoration of autonomous social sciences outside the Western tradition, and the development of 'reverse discourses' in order for non-Western scholarship to theorize back at the West.

Tak-Wing Ngo



## New centres of knowledge

Under the existing structure of global academic dependency and intellectual division of labour, in which the production of knowledge as well as the authority to define what constitutes knowledge is firmly controlled by the West, it is not surprising that the progress towards autochthonous scholarship from the non-West has been slow. But this is changing with the shifting gravity of scholarship in Asian Studies. The rise of Asia, or more importantly the opening up of Asia, provides the most conducive setting for the emergence of new scholarship.

The opportunity for reinvigorated scholarship can be attributed to the increasing openness, accessibility, diversity, and connectivity of Asia, leading to the emergence of new research questions and agendas, new methodologies, and new perspectives and theories. The democratization of South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and the opening up of China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, and others have allowed researchers, both local and Western, to conduct fieldwork studies not only in the capital cities, but also in peripheral regions of Asian countries. The study of Asia is thus no longer confined to the study of the flatlands. As more and more researchers with local language skills decipher the specificities of their research sites, it becomes apparent that the plurality of regional dialects, indigenous norms and practices, and local forms of exchange and governance, as well as the varieties of connectivity among border communities with fuzzy boundaries that supersede nationalized borders, have posed serious problems for reductionist grand theories. New conceptual categories and grounded theories need to be developed through inductive approaches. New research questions and agendas have to be formulated to address issues that have hitherto been overlooked by the Western gaze.

These new conceptual categories, perspectives, and research questions may gain popularity as more and more scholars direct their focus on Asia. If we count those researchers working in Euro-American universities, 'Asianists' remain a minority in academia. This will change dramatically when academic institutions and researchers in Asia assert their presence and channel their efforts in Asian Studies. As mobility, collaboration, and networking among scholars around the world and within Asia increase, the hitherto unquestionable role of Euro-American academies as the singular knowledge clearinghouse will be undermined in the long run. The West will no doubt continue to be a major centre of knowledge production, but it will loosen its monopolistic grip when other centres and networks emerge.

## The problem of language and rankings

There are of course major institutional constraints and

challenges facing the rise of autochthonous Asian scholarship. One outstanding problem is that of language. From the outset, observers have indicated that the mediation of scholarly exchange will continue to be conducted through the English language, which is far from a neutral tool for the transaction of knowledge. Unspoken assumptions and values associated with the language will inevitably be imported into the exchange. Closely related to this impasse is the obsession of many Asian institutions with university rankings. One direct result is the overwhelming emphasis on the quantity of publications rather than the quality of research. The preoccupation with quantity is often translated into a numerical count of articles published in SSCI journals, because of which an indexing service run by a commercial enterprise, originally meant to facilitate literature searches, is now used as a yardstick for ranking journals. This intellectual fetishism has in turn displaced the ostensible goal of academic journals from one of communicating research findings, to that of an instrument for securing tenure, promotion, or higher ranking. Worse still, since journals indexed in SSCI are published exclusively in the English language, scholarly works written in indigenous languages are completely side-lined in the current academic publication regime. Some places do have their own local journal ranking system (for instance, CSSCI in China and TSSCI in Taiwan), but local journals are still considered inferior to journals ranked by SSCI. Young scholars who aspire to climb the academic ladder are therefore obliged to play the game.

## Quality over quantity

These constraints are not easy to overcome. The best way out is probably the wisdom of the Golden Mean. Instead of seeing it as an either-or choice, the academic community should recognize the equal value of both English-language and non-English-language publications. The value of a piece of scholarship should be judged in terms of its content rather than by the language in which it is written. In this regard, the ICAS Book Prize is setting a good example by including Chinese and Japanese scholarly books in its future editions. Some journals have also begun to include book reviews of non-English language works. In the meantime, the popularization of the Internet has greatly facilitated the accessibility of non-English publications. These are positive developments. Hopefully, university administrators will come to realize the value of local publications, and will encourage internationalization without compromising indigenous scholarship.

Tak-Wing Ngo,  
Professor of Political Science at the University of Macau  
(twngo@umac.mo).

**EARLIER IN THE YEAR** we sent out a survey concerning our topic, the "New Asia Scholar". A large number of our readers responded, for which we are extremely grateful. We selected a number of quotes given in the survey, and have displayed them randomly on the following pages. Some quotes have been altered for the benefit of space, others have been left untouched.

“THE IDEA of “cultural flows” that Appadurai brought together so persuasively a generation ago applies not only to the places and people we study, but to ourselves as knowledge workers, too. The image of New Asia Scholar has long carried elements of multi-site fieldwork, interdisciplinarity, and life histories of authors crossing borders and boundaries. But perhaps what is newly emerging in 2015 is a sharper picture of what that means: what it looks like to be an Asia Scholar in these times of turmoil, economic and environmental pressures and the simple friction of increasingly rubbing against people different to ourselves. At this moment, then, the need for specialists and those experienced in connecting ideas, places and people thoughtfully and articulately could never be felt more strongly than now.

Of course there have always been cultural brokers, communicators, gatekeepers of knowledge and pioneers of research. But before now the scale of interchange has been relatively small and the consequences for bad decisions or inaccurate understanding has not been on too big of a scale. Now, however, the pace of change in many parts of the world is faster and the extent of being digitally connected is much wider than before. So any message, view or decision can reach people more widely and more quickly than before. Where the knowledge or wisdom is good, that is well. But where the understanding is partial or even wrong-headed, that can be terrible. Enter the individual scholar and the institutions for Asian Studies.

For more than 100 years many universities and colleges have declared their mission to be teaching the current knowledge, creating new knowledge, and applying knowledge in service of problem-solving for the wider population through outreach education. Outreach, however, has not been the top priority. So a lot of valuable information, thinking, methods and findings circulates only among a handful of readers and their colleagues. The New Asia Scholar needs to be the first to promote his or her work more widely: making it easy to find, easy to acquire, and easy to apply or adapt by non-specialists who nevertheless are stakeholders in the subject matter. In other words, now is the time for each Scholar, scholar-to-be, and scholar newly retired to reach out with their work by online slideshow, eBook, video clips, images, blog articles or commenting on other's work, and so on. The newest Asia Scholar is now all-in-one: creator of new knowledge, teacher of current knowledge, and source of outreach in subjects of expertise.

**Guven Peter Witteveen, Outreach Education Consultant, Michigan area, anthreview@gmail.com**

MUCH OF THE SCHOLARLY RESEARCH and communications in Asian Studies, particularly as they relate to Northeast Asian countries, take place within national frameworks, i.e., among students of a particular country and not across broader regions. Even regionally framed research and communications tend to be dominated by national perspectives, with very little infusion of multi-nation or regional perspectives. These tendencies unnecessarily limit possibilities of international collaboration and cross-national comparisons. “Area studies” should go beyond national foci and national frameworks. Disciplinary divisions also are limiting the opportunity to expand the horizons of our scholarship. Another serious problem is the lack of introduction of research published in Asian languages to the English-speaking audience and vice versa, thus perpetuating the gap between English and Asian-language scholarship. There are some encouraging signs, however, as colleagues are beginning to look at “global” issues with regional lenses and those outside of Asia are bringing their perspectives and insights into the region through scholarship and academic conference participation.

**Tsuneo Akaha, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, takaha@miis.edu**

AS SOMEONE INTERESTED in research at the interface of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities (regarding humans and elephants in South and Southeast Asia), and who regularly engages with animal biologists and ecologists, I am struck by the degree to which Asian Studies tends to exclude the natural sciences. For me, the Asian Studies of the future needs to transcend its background in the humanities and embrace more challenging forms of interdisciplinarity across methodological and epistemological divides. After all, the natural environment and the forms of scientific expertise for understanding it are becoming increasingly relevant for all of us in an age of ecological crisis.

**Piers Locke, University of Canterbury, piers.locke@canterbury.ac.nz**



# A China scholar working in China

“What do you think about the recent news on minister Yuan Guiren?”, a Chinese student asked the professor after her guest lecture on the history of Chinese civic education. I had invited the professor of East China Normal University’s (ECNU) Department of Politics to give a lecture for my course ‘Social and Cultural Debates in Twentieth-Century China’. Before the professor could answer, the student explained for his classmates that Yuan Guiren was the Chinese education minister who had allegedly stated that universities should not use textbooks promoting Western values. “Why would the minister say that?”, an American student asked. “Do you agree?”, a Pakistani student followed up. Other students joined in: “Has this happened before?”; “Will this also affect us?” While listening to the professor’s long and thoughtful answers followed by a vigorous discussion between the students and the professor I realized: Yes, this is why I wanted to work at NYU Shanghai, why I wanted to work in China.

Lena Scheen

MY RESEARCH EXPLORES the social and cultural impact of China’s fast globalization and urbanization, focusing on Shanghai. NYU Shanghai, a Joint Venture University between the American NYU and Chinese ECNU, is itself part and parcel of this process. A global university like NYU Shanghai would not have been possible before China ‘opened up’ and joined the global economy. Half of our student body hail from China and half represent countries from around the world. While I sometimes jokingly tell my students, “You are my research subjects”, you might argue that I have become *myself* an intrinsic part of my own research subject. As a matter of fact, my current research concentrates on the very district in which I live, and where NYU Shanghai’s campus is located: the Pudong District.

Living and working in your own research area obviously has its benefits. Take as an example my latest project on a group of people protesting a development project in Pudong. Walking from home to work I noticed a group of old ladies burning incense on the broad pavement along Century Avenue. Intrigued by this unusual sight, I asked them what they were doing and a new research project was born. However, during my first interviews it also immediately became clear that I could no longer play the ‘neutral’ outsider’s role of a visiting researcher on fieldwork. One of the informants determinedly stressed the fact that “your” campus was developed by the same investment company that was behind this redevelopment project, followed up by the argument that most projects in the Pudong District were motivated by a desire “to attract and please foreigners”, and after a meaningful silence, “like you”. “Like me”, I replied realizing my role as an interviewer had suddenly changed. From being a researcher questioning her subject, the gaze was turned back at me and I became the object under scrutiny. I was pushed into the same role as my informants, revealing the equalizing power of being part of the society one studies, as well as the complex issue of complicity that comes with it.

Being a China scholar working in China means that in addition to following and analyzing what is happening in China, you constantly have to reflect on your own role and position in these developments. In principle there is nothing special about that: a self-evident fact for any scholar living in the place s/he studies. The difference, however, comes from the way people *outside* of China respond to people working in China. While I cannot speak for all scholars working on Dutch society, I highly doubt whether an American scholar studying urban developments in the Netherlands is confronted at home with the question how he can work in a country that consistently treats refugees in direct violation of human rights laws. In China, one doesn’t even have to be a China Scholar to be confronted with these questions on a frequent basis. The idea is that working in China in *itself* means that one approves or even legitimizes practices and policies carried out by the Chinese government. Regardless of the flaw in this reasoning, I do value the fact that working in China forces one to reflect on issues of social engagement and responsibility as an academic.

Hence I do not object to these questions. On the contrary, I think we should ask more of these questions, most of all to ourselves, no matter the place or topic of our research.

## Academic freedom

The most urgent question for any academic working in China is of course the issue of academic freedom. Up until today I have personally never experienced any restriction in my teaching or research. In this respect, one can compare the campus of NYU Shanghai with an American embassy: working in China under American laws. Or an even better comparison is the Special Economic Zones: an academic free zone within China. But even though one can discuss any topic considered sensitive in China, one cannot deny that it makes a difference to discuss these topics in China with the people who are part of that very society. The most valuable outcome of this is that it is simply impossible to discuss China as a faraway topic, something out there we can observe, describe, and analyze as an ‘exotic’ object not part of our own world. Likewise, an Orientalist approach of ‘China-as-the-Other’ is simply no option.

Teaching China Studies in China to students from China and other places in the world – a truly diverse class of various cultural *and* educational backgrounds – means that one has to be even more conscious of possible sensitivities, whether political, cultural or religious. It also means that one starts without shared assumptions, values or even knowledge, which to me is the most challenging and, most of all, the most valuable aspect of global education. Indeed, this often creates tension, uncomfortable situations, painful discussions, awkward silences, hurt nationalist sentiments; it is precisely in those most painful moments that we learn.

This is the reason I decided to remain quiet when the discussion between my guest speaker and students evolved. For a brief moment, I was no longer the instructor; I became the student of my own students gaining a deeper understanding of recent reforms in the Chinese educational system, while simultaneously questioning my own position in it. The days after the guest lecture, I worried how the Chinese professor herself had experienced the discussion of that day. Had it gone too far in her eyes? Then an email arrived in my inbox: “I want to thank you for the class the other day. I have learned so much from your very different teaching style and from the interaction with your students. Would you like to give a guest lecture on critical thinking for a large group of Chinese law students?” “Of course”, I answered, “This is why I work at NYU Shanghai, why I work in China.”

**Lena Scheen is Assistant Professor Faculty Fellow at NYU Shanghai. Her research explores the social and cultural impact of China’s fast urbanization, focusing on Shanghai. She is the author of *Shanghai Literary Imaginings: A City in Transformation* (AUP, 2015) and the co-editor of *Spectacle and the City: Chinese Urbanities in Popular Culture and Art* (AUP, 2013) (lms14@nyu.edu).**

*IN TRYING TO BE SUCCESSFUL the New Asia Scholar (NAS) must be highly motivated, mobile and flexible. NAS struggles with unfavorable employment conditions such as a low salary and short-term contracts. NAS has to be reachable at all times and will seize every opportunity to apply for a grant. How do young NAS juggle the demands of work, mobility and private life and to what extent are they successful? I argue that casual employment and uncertain working contracts add to the stress of young NAS. If they want to be successful, they do not only have to be excellent scholars but they must also be skilful networkers, managers and grant writers.*

**Monika Arnez, Universität Hamburg,**  
monika\_arnez@yahoo.de

*AM I REALLY STUDYING Asia just because my research is based in India? Is a social scientist in The Netherlands doing ‘European Studies’?*

**Cynthia Groff, University of Pennsylvania,**  
cgroff@alumni.upenn.edu

*THE MAIN DIFFERENCES between Asian Studies research in the second decade of the twentieth century and when I first began research in the 1970s are as follows:*

1. The trend now is towards disciplinary studies, rather than area studies. Disciplinary studies is often comparative, so that scholars will study topics like “population issues” or particular economic questions in various countries, not just one. The emphasis is on the knowledge of the discipline, not of the country or countries concerned. It is a perfectly reasonable approach, and it has produced very good scholarship, but it does have one problem for me, which is that language studies often take a back place to disciplinary studies. For China, the country I know best in Asia, the result is that many people use research assistants who are themselves Chinese and don’t bother to master the language or to do so to the extent that intensive research requires.
2. Research tends to be more money-based, because there are now far more grants available than was the case in the past. Moreover, judgments on how good a scholar is tend to be based more on how much research money they have been able to gain.
3. Within the universities, tenure has become both more important and more difficult. Publishing has become more important all over the world, and it is not as easy to get tenure, let alone promotions, without extensive publications. Of course, the volume of these publications have expanded enormously over the period. Many of these publications are of very high standard, but I’m not sure that the standard overall has risen.
4. In China it is much easier to undertake research work than it used to be in the 1970s. It is of course true that many still complain a great deal that government authorities place obstacles in the way of scholars, especially those who are very critical of government and for topics considered sensitive. But it is still MUCH easier than it was. The number of places scholars can go and live has expanded and the range of work that can be undertaken has gone up.
5. The range of scholars who undertake scholarship in Asian studies has increased. There are now far more women than there used to be, and one of the results is that gender studies has increased as a field of study. Of course, it is possible for men to undertake gender studies, but the reality is that most of the work on China gender studies, which I know best, is done by women.
6. There is nothing new about Chinese scholars moving overseas, including to Western countries. The older generation of scholars included Chinese who had left mainland China due to the communist victory. But after the opening up in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many more went to the West and were able to do PhDs in China studies and take up jobs, never going back to China.

*I think I was lucky in getting into some fields that were not fashionable at the time, but have become much more so since. For instance, at the time I began my work on Chinese theatre, most scholars did not regard it as a central issue worth extensive research. Similarly, when I started my work on ethnic minorities, it was still an unusual field that most people regarded as either too difficult or not central enough to China studies to be worth the trouble it required. Of course, there were exceptions. However, I think taking up a relatively new field was lucky. In particular, ethnic studies have now become very fashionable and important, fitting into the politics of our era. Overall, I think the New Asia Scholar has it more difficult than the old. This is because competition is far fiercer and, although opportunities are also much greater, the rate of expansion is slowing. I admire many of the younger scholars greatly and think they deserve better opportunities. Have I witnessed tensions between “old” and “new” scholars? Yes, I have, because frequently younger people adopt different and even hostile attitudes and have different experiences to those of former generations. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as tension can be productive. People, whatever their generation, can and should learn from each other.*

**Colin Mackerras, Emeritus Professor, Griffith Business School,**  
c.mackerras@griffith.edu.au



# The new Asia scholar's role in Asian/area studies

Soon after completing my MA in History of Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, in September 2001, I applied for a doctorate at Columbia, at University of Pennsylvania, and at SOAS, all popular choices to pursue a study on South Asian Temple Architecture. Unfortunately, funding became a major issue after 9/11 and I was unable to secure a full grant. After a few years working as an independent scholar, and curator in Mumbai (working on a Parsi Zoroastrian project),<sup>1</sup> my partner's job transfer brought us to Singapore in 2005.

Priya Maholay-Jaradi



WITH NO JOB or appointment in hand, it seemed like that perfect time to revisit the idea of a doctoral study. My work as a curator had at the time taken me away from *temples*, and towards *collectors* of colonial India, and so I decided to follow this path once again. A proposal on collection studies was drawn out and fortunately accepted at the South Asian Studies Programme, NUS. However, at the time there was no suitable guide for my research plans, and so the proposal was saved to file for the meantime. Since I had to wait for my research programme to start, I began scouting for a job and I eventually went on to serve as curator at the South Asia Gallery at the Asian Civilisations Museum, one of Singapore's National Museums. After two years, Dr Andrea Pinkney, a religious studies scholar who completed her doctoral study at Columbia, joined the South Asian Studies Programme at NUS. Given her familiarity with the region, and her focus on religion and anthropology, she was seen as a suitable guide to groom my project on a South Asian collector. A full scholarship further facilitated my candidature.

Regrettably, the first few reading lists drawn out by my new guide, Dr Pinkney, made me quickly question my place in an area studies programme. The topics seemed to be too far removed from my research interests, and I longed for a more art-history based focus, which I surely would have received at, for example, SOAS. After all, how was modernity in Russia, capital in Chicago and the history of foreign relations and trade in South Asia relevant for my study of collectors in colonial India? The Parsi Zoroastrian collectors with whom I had worked closely in Mumbai had discussed (seemingly) more 'relevant' themes: the taste for European style portraiture, commemoration of philanthropists through portrait commissions, portraits in residential spaces and fire temples. Yet the reality was, that only after reading the multi-disciplinary modules, was I able to successfully situate my art historical case study in a wider context. After three whole semesters and several moments of self-doubt, zeroing in on a case-study and its associated archive led to the conviction that an art history-focussed collection studies proposal was finally gaining shape. I was guided in the direction of princely Baroda (present-day Vadodara in Gujarat State), as one of the more progressive and better-administered states during the Raj. It was likely that the records would be comprehensive and relatively well-kept.

Faculty members working on political economy, religious studies and partition histories of South Asia, understood the nature of vast archives in the care of the central and state governments of India and their distinct pedigrees. The recce and final fieldwork in the provincial record room in Vadodara city offered rich data, which could be woven with the histories of modernity, capital, trade, art and even contribute new insights to them, but the facilities do not compare with archives in major metropolitan cities or those housed in well-funded libraries or universities elsewhere in the world, such as the India Office Library Section of the British Library.<sup>2</sup> I was grateful that examiners' reports lauded my data-collection efforts, being well aware that materials at provincial record rooms are neither as neatly classified nor as available through

Above: Jawaharlal Nehru voting for the motion to ratify partition. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Govind Ballabh Pant are seen in the background, June 1947. HV Archive/The Alkazi Collection of Photography. Photo by Homai Vyrawalla.

easy keyword searches, as they are in larger libraries or universities. As Barbara Ramusack notes, princely India's archives have been under-studied, yet there is a great rush to theorise its history without sufficient empirical data.<sup>3</sup> Lower standards of cataloguing compared to colonial records, discontinuities in correspondence due to scattered locations, inaccessibility to several royal archives/holdings, poor facilities for storage, and absence of digitization, are reasons cited by Ramusack for thin engagement with princely records.<sup>4</sup> Despite encountering the difficulties listed by Ramusack, the two publications born from my doctoral thesis<sup>5</sup> highlight fresh archival work and a new case study: a provincial arts centre from South Asia and an Asian collector are located in global narratives of exhibitions, nationalisms, modern and contemporary art production and changing political contours of South Asia.

This autobiographical opening introduces the location of emerging Asia scholars, many of whom take disciplines such as art history (considered the stronghold of European and American academics) to area studies departments in prestigious Asian universities. The benefits of multi-disciplinary mentoring are not restricted to setting the theoretical directions of the work alone, but also ensure engagement with less frequented provincial archives. These mark the beginnings of re-approaching disciplines with new data sets, new themes and protagonists.

## Sharing resources

This story of the Asia scholar and Asian archives needs to be read in conjunction with the proliferation of new universities, satellite campuses, museums and university-based art centres in Asia. Yale-NUS opened in 2011 in Singapore with a strong emphasis on a liberal arts education with 'an Asian twist'. Likewise, the satellite campuses spread over Doha, Dubai and Abu Dhabi craft their courses with an Asian focus, and look towards their local resource agencies and an emerging network of satellite museums for fieldwork and activity-based output. The Devi Art Foundation Museum (2008) and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (2011), India's largest private art collections turned museums in Delhi, have formal or informal partnerships with the School of Arts and Aesthetics at the renowned Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and with a new university, Shiv Nadar University, respectively. The shared resources between museums and university programmes have led to new pedagogical tools, faculty drawn from diverse backgrounds, and exhibition programmes.<sup>6</sup> These models have created numerous new entry points to appreciate Asia and to make its story that much richer and intricate.

Several scholars with profiles such as mine, return to teaching positions in academia (read 'area studies departments'). New modules and reading lists are increasingly drawing on a combination of essential readings, new titles published by younger scholars and fieldwork involving local museums and archives. In the case of Singapore, a young two-decade history of national museum projects complements its status as a relatively new and recent nation-state.<sup>7</sup> Photo and video documentation (of Asian cultures, i.e., festivals,

ritual practices, art and craft production, costumes, people) undertaken from the early 1990s at museums such as the Asian Civilisations Museum<sup>8</sup> are now gradually becoming part of this new arc of 'scholarship-archives-museum-publications-teaching'. Be it through student projects, lecture slides, or exhibits, more perspectives are coming to bear on area studies. Recently launched boutique projects, such as the Nagore Durgah Indian Muslim Heritage Centre (2015) and India Heritage Centre (2015) in Singapore, include hitherto undocumented stories of young diaspora communities and their cultural objects. Community participation and voices of individuals enjoy a remarkable presence in these projects. The themes and display mechanisms demonstrate a keen understanding of local audiences.<sup>9</sup> Just as Singapore begins to export home-grown exhibitions to world-class museums across the globe, its scholars and curators are travelling out to universities overseas by availing of scholarships instituted by the government as well as other external agencies.

## Linking theory and practice<sup>10</sup>

Jackie Yoong (MA History, NUS) curator of the Peranakan Museum, Singapore, is currently pursuing a Masters in History of Art at SOAS on the Alphawood scholarship for Southeast Asian studies. Yoong's thesis contextualizes *nonyaware* (Chinese export porcelain for the Peranakan market of Southeast Asia 1820-1930s; Peranakans being the descendants of overseas traders with Southeast Asian women who developed a hybrid culture) within the wider Qing ceramic tradition, both domestic and export. Given that Peranakan art is a form of cross-cultural art reflecting varied Asian and European influences, its distribution and appreciation has evolved through the years across different geographies. Thus Yoong's position as curator and scholar allows her to include case studies from museum collections in Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia) and Europe (UK and Amsterdam). Her recent presentation, as part of the Percival David Foundation ceramic workshops at the British Museum, facilitated sharing of the Peranakan Museum's collection and a simultaneous gathering of information about pieces in Europe. Viewing sessions at the British Museum and the V&A storage provided additional scope to handle good pieces and exchange ideas with curators about their respective collections.<sup>11</sup>

This idea of increasingly re-inscribing the field of Art History, Museum Studies and Collections through Asian content and perspectives, is echoed by Yunci Cai, who was Manager (Policy and Research) at the Strategic Planning and Policy Division of Singapore's National Heritage Board (2005-2013). Cai is currently registered for a PhD in Museum Studies and Cultural Heritage at the UCL Institute of Archaeology (London), focusing on Southeast Asian museology. Her research considers 'Indigenous Agency, Native Curatorship and Cross-cultural Museum Practices in Southeast Asia'; she examines the development of indigenous cultural villages in Malaysia, exploring the politics and poetics of culture as a tool for development and community activism. As she undertakes periodic fieldtrips to Mah Meri Cultural Village in Carey Island, the Orang Seletar

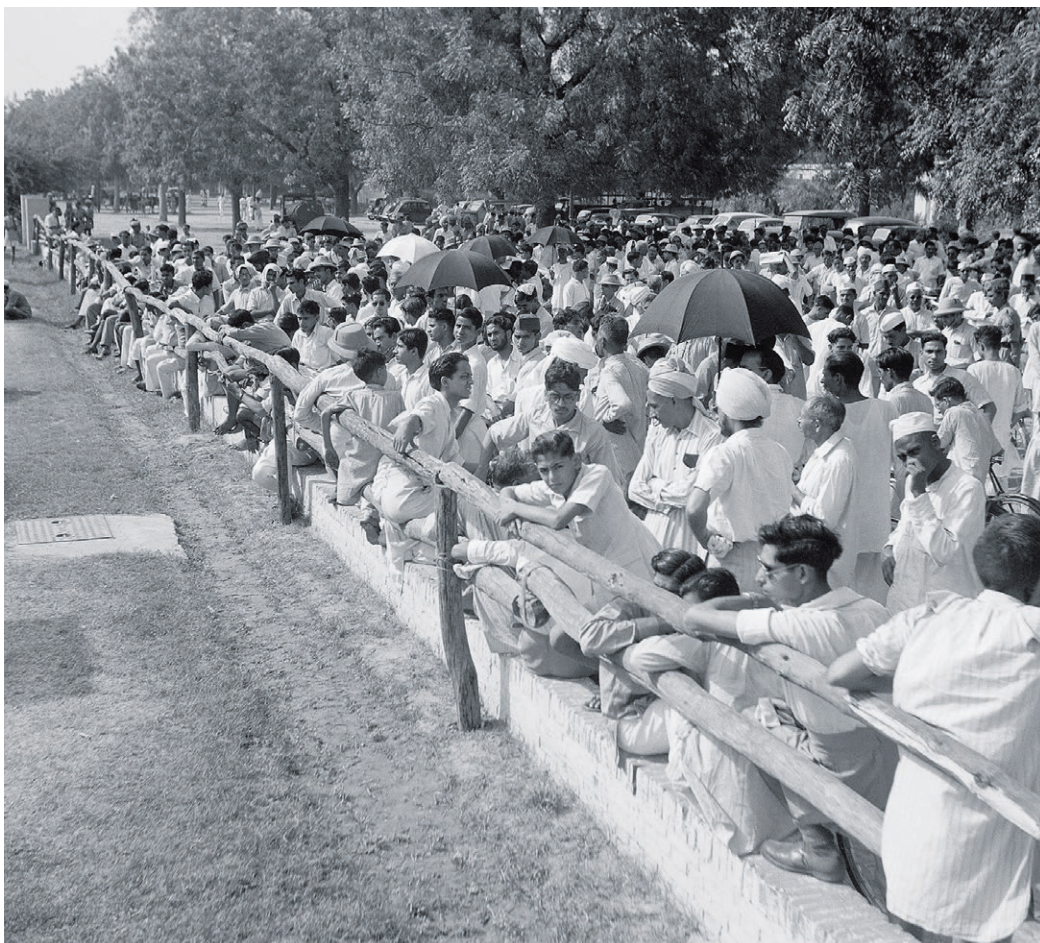


## Reining in the museum

Cultural Centre in Johor Bahru (both in West Malaysia), and the Monsopiad Cultural Village and the Linangkit Cultural Village (both in Sabah, East Malaysia), Cai observes, “Previously inaccessible to Western scholars, perhaps due to political, cultural and communication barriers, the presence of more Asian scholars and heritage professionals in Western academia that are conversant in English and their native languages, as well as competent in different knowledge systems and philosophical thoughts, can foster friction and fusion of different philosophies and viewpoints, leading to the cross-fertilization of ideas and creation of new knowledge.”<sup>12</sup>

Cai’s work, based on reviewing the strategic focus of the National Heritage Board’s heritage establishments and drafting collection-related policies for National Museums, allows her to attest how Asian scholars and heritage professionals offer alternative ways of seeing and thinking about issues based on the philosophies and practices in Southeast Asia. In the field of museology, for example, while the origin of the museum institution has been widely traced to the 14th century evolution of great public museums of the Renaissance period in Europe, there have been parallel developments in Southeast Asia where heirlooms and treasures are collected in families, monasteries and temples, which are preserved and handed down through generations. Similarly, there exist many indigenous methods of looking at museum objects as well as caring for and preserving museum objects that are unique to Southeast Asia. Cai elaborates, “For example, museum objects in Southeast Asia are often acknowledged to embody spirits and supernatural powers that need to be appeased and purified before their acquisition into the museum collection, and their subsequent use in museum exhibitions, which have impacts on the museum’s collection management policies. Museums in Southeast Asia have also adopted traditional methods using traditional herbs and spices to care for museum collections, which are more appropriate to the local contexts in terms of the climatic conditions and resource availability.”<sup>13</sup>

**Below: Crowds waiting outside the venue of the Congress Committee meeting for the news on partition, June 1947. HV Archive/The Alkazi Collection of Photography. Photo by Homai Vyarawalla.**



Cai sheds light on the ability to link museum theory with practice; she sees much value in enabling academic research on museums to be made socially relevant to local communities (since the *sine non quo* of a museum is to be socially relevant to its communities): “Several interchanges are becoming more pertinent in an academic climate where researchers are increasingly encouraged to demonstrate the social impact of their research”.

### Rapidly proliferating resources

Today, increasingly shared spaces between academia, museums, archives and related projects, promote the view that different perspectives grounded in diverse knowledge systems and philosophical thoughts will likely have wider political, economic, social and cultural implications to the world we live in.<sup>14</sup> Just as plural disciplines in area studies departments groom an art history project, so also do visual materials aggrandize narratives and arguments within other disciplines. A recent talk delivered at the Institute for South Asian Studies (ISAS; Singapore), by Sabeena Gadihoke (Associate Professor of Video Production, at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi) was accompanied by powerful visuals of the run-up to India’s partition and the decade following independence.<sup>15</sup> The images came from the personal archives of India’s first (female) press photographer, the late Homai Vyarawalla (1913-2012) and thus also shed light on her practice. Now in the care of the ACP Archives New Delhi, these pictures have formed the subject matter of Gadihoke’s research, publications and curatorial projects.

As physical holdings of pictures and documents are digitized, they become decontextualized from their original locations, trunks and catalogues, thus finding a new virtual habitat. Consequently, they provide an altogether different vantage point, as observed by Gadihoke. Much like Vyarawalla’s collection digitized by the ACP Archives, several modern and contemporary Asian artists’ documents, diaries and correspondences form the bulk of materials at the Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong. Schematic online catalogues afford condensed overviews of heterogeneous materials; they serve as a resource for research and also guide the making of new research proposals. The condensed online view of the archive allows one to connect some very disparate records, materials and themes. Thus, a single ‘screen shot’, often overwhelming due to its underlying content, drives home the point that the new Asia scholar has a vast offering of physical and virtual spaces: archives, record rooms, digitized catalogues, museums and universities. Engagement with these rapidly proliferating resources can simultaneously rein in older materials, recent histories and living cultures, thereby making Asian/Area studies relevant to the contemporary world.

Several disputes and challenges of the Asian world, such as continuing subordination of women, religious intolerance, cross-border terrorism and conflict zones, require a more nuanced understanding of people, cultures and worldviews from within. For instance, shared religious practices were part of South Asian civilisations and their cultures.<sup>16</sup> Until the nineteenth century British census undertakings, people did not necessarily have to classify

themselves along religious categories; cultural concepts did not translate into fixed numbers and appellations.<sup>17</sup> If alone, the plurality and inter-religiosity of Asian civilizations can be comprehended and made part of popular imagination, the contemporary world can avoid episodes such as the razing of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (India) and the Buddhas of the Bamiyan valley in Afghanistan. Even a quick look at Homai Vyarawalla’s photographs of a pre-partition meeting held in Delhi will tell us of the miniscule numbers who made an irreversible decision of drawing up political boundaries (on the basis of majority and minority numbers of religious groups), to decide the fate of culturally-linked multitudes. Pictures, such as those shot by Vyarawalla, will have to be engaged in conjunction with scholarly undertakings at universities and academies, to encourage more nuanced readings of Asia and bring these effectively into popular spheres of consumption, be they textual, pictorial, pedagogic or exhibitionary.

**Priya Maholay-Jaradi is a former curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, and currently a part-time lecturer at the National University of Singapore. Her most recent publication is *Baroda: A Cosmopolitan Provenance in Transition*, Mumbai: Marg Publications (2015).**

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THERE’S BEEN A DRAMATIC growth in attention to manuscript studies during the last twenty years or so. New critical editions of Sanskrit texts are more common today than in the past, especially facilitated by the latest computer tools for typesetting coupled with digital imagery. This has also led to the emergence of a new group of highly talented younger scholars who are excellent in languages and in the skills of textual criticism and interpretation. I think a new area ripe for growth is translation studies as applied to ancient and medieval Indian languages.

**Dominik Wujastyk, University of Alberta,**  
wujastyk@ualberta.ca

I HAVE ALWAYS FOUND water tight compartmentalisation and artificial boundaries between different disciplines stifling the evolution of human advancement in the area of research. I admit that for practical purposes and for the sake of formal education some amount of division is required but what does a scholar like me do, when after having done a Ph.D. in Life Sciences I develop a deep interest in the Humanities? University regulations in India, and I am sure in many other countries, do not allow students to pursue a Ph.D. in humanities if they do not have a graduate and post-graduate degree in the same discipline. I am sure that this problem is faced by many other scholars. Perhaps it is time to bring about some flexibility in regulations related to higher education and research. Secondly there is at the moment a kind of caste-distinction between research papers produced by ‘established mainstream’ scholars with a list of degrees and papers behind them and the ‘non-conventional’ scholars who may have crossed over from a different field and may not be affiliated to well established departments in their new field of interest. The quality of research produced should be judged in isolation from the academic background or affiliation of the research scholar. Such scholars are also at a major disadvantage when it comes to getting research fellowships or publishing papers or books in their new area of research. In my opinion there should be some international universities and research institutes which allow deserving Asian scholars who want to change over into another discipline, some age concession and flexibility that would facilitate them to pursue research, apply for fellowships and publish papers in reputed journals. As an end note I would like to mention that often times the cross-over scholar can bring a refreshingly new perspective to the table due to her different and varied background.

**Rupa Abdi, independent researcher, abdi\_rupa@yahoo.co.in**

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# Publishing for easy credits: An Indonesian case

The pressure to publish is a familiar sensation for most academics, but it weighs heavier on some than on others. Knowledge of a particular language, for example, will often mean the difference between being able to publish for an international audience or not. Here I comment on the Indonesian case, as an example of the lengths gone to for career advancement. With the pressure high and the predatory publishers on the lure, scholars' choices are often understandable, but standards of quality control must be improved if the reputations of academics, and the scientific world of research, are to be protected.

Ulrich Kozok

## Publishing requirements for promotion

Indonesian universities have a four-tier academic ranking system: Asisten Ahli (tutor), Lektor (lecturer), Lektor Kepala (senior lecturer) and Guru Besar (professor).<sup>1</sup> Each tier (jabatan) is further divided into two steps (golongan), except for Lektor Kepala, which has three steps. The procedure for promotion to the next step or tier is regulated by the Directorate General of Higher Education (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi [Dikti]), and follows a credit point system (Sistem Penilaian Angka Kredit Dosen). Publications, and especially articles in international journals, weigh heavily in the credit point system.<sup>2</sup>

Besides regular promotion (kenaikan jabatan), an accelerated promotion (loncat jabatan) is also available for the 250,000 sub-professorial academic staff members (dosen) at Indonesian universities—only 10% of all academic staff members are professors. Promotion is granted based on merits in teaching and education, service to the community, and research and publications. One of the requirements for advancement from the rank of Lektor to Lektor Kepala is that the applicant has published an article in either an accredited national journal or in an international journal. If, however, the instructor who applies for promotion to the rank of Lektor Kepala is not a holder of a doctorate, then the applicant must have published at least one article as the principal author in a reputable international journal. Promotion from Lektor Kepala to the rank of Guru Besar requires a doctorate and at least one publication in a reputable international journal. The requirements are tougher for those who opt for accelerated promotion. Promotion from lectureship to professorship requires four articles in reputable international journals.

According to Dikti, an 'international journal' must have an ISSN, an online presence, an editorial board with members from at least four countries, and it must be indexed by international databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, or Microsoft Academic Search. Dikti furthermore stipulates that the article must be written in one of the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish)—notably, not a native Indonesian language such as Bahasa. 'Reputable' international journals also need to have an ISI Web of Science (Thomson Reuters) impact factor or a Scimago Journal Rank (SJR).

## Potential, possible, or probable predatory publishers

The no-fee open access model with free downloads of scholarly articles has a number of advantages – the most obvious being the free accessibility of scholarly articles. In order to finance themselves, however, publishers either need a sponsor such as a university, or they must charge the authors. A study conducted in 2013 found that among the 9000 open access journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), only 28% charged a publication fee. Among humanities journals, only 4% required payment by authors.<sup>3</sup> Yet, many authors – the vast majority of

them from developing countries, but also from Russia and other former Soviet republics – choose journals that do indeed charge fees. The reason is that a large percentage of fee-charging journals accept articles with little or no scrutiny.

In 2013, John Bohannon, as an experiment, submitted 304 versions of a fatally flawed 'wonder drug' paper to open access journals.<sup>4</sup> 121 papers were submitted to journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. The DOAJ lists quality open access, peer-reviewed journals. 167 papers were submitted to journals listed in the Beall's List of 'potential, possible, or probable predatory scholarly open access publishers'.<sup>5</sup> By the time Bohannon published his article on the outcomes of his experiment, 157 of the journals had accepted the bogus scientific paper and 98 had rejected it. 60% of the final decisions had been made without a peer-review process. Of the 106 journals that had actually reviewed the paper, 70% accepted the bogus paper. The acceptance rate was, with 82%, much higher among the journals on Beall's List, but a surprisingly high number of DOAJ publishers (45%) also accepted Bohannon's 'spoof' article, despite the fact that it was significantly scientifically flawed.

Predatory journals have mushroomed since 2010 and this has created, in Bohannon's words, "an emerging Wild West in academic publishing." The 2015 Beall's List of predatory open access publishers contains 693 publishers—an increase of 241 since 2014. Furthermore, the publishers on the list have portfolios that ranges from just a few, to hundreds of individual journal titles. Dikti is well aware of this issue and has started to develop its own blacklist, but hitherto it only contains three entries!<sup>6</sup> Dikti's advice is both outdated and insufficient, and its guidelines as to what constitutes an 'international reputable journal' are inadequate.

## Exposing a predator

One journal that fulfils all of Dikti's requirements for a 'reputable international journal', is the *Journal of Language and Literature* published by the Progress Publishing Company in Baku (Azerbaijan). *The Journal of Language and Literature*, and also the other five journals published by the Progress Publishing Company, became increasingly popular among Indonesian scholars. Hundreds of articles were published by Indonesian scholars, especially from smaller and less prestigious universities. In the February 2015 edition of the journal, every fourth article originated from Indonesia. The Progress Publishing Company became a convenient venue to accumulate easy and, with just a US\$290 fee, relatively inexpensive credits for tenure and promotion.

In mid-2014 I exposed the Progress Publishing Company as a predatory publisher, which was deceiving researchers by pretending to be a legitimate journal.<sup>7</sup> Despite positive Scopus and Scimago Journal Rank indicators, the submissions were often of poor quality, and there was no evidence of even basic editing. The names (and addresses) of the members of the editorial boards of the various journals had been taken from the Internet without the knowledge of the alleged board members. The 'board members' demanded that their names be deleted from the site, and the editor-in-chief resigned. A few weeks later the website of the Progress Publishing Company disappeared for good. Unfortunately, as the enterprise was an online money making scheme, not a single article had ever been printed. And so, with the dissolution of the company, several thousand articles, submitted mainly by young researchers from developing countries, also disappeared.

The following describes the case of just one of many hundred articles submitted by Indonesian researchers with the apparent goal to gain easy credit points for promotion. In 2014, a group of researchers from Diponegoro University submitted an article with the title "Identification of lifestyle adaptation due to aircraft noise in Ahmad Yani International Airport and surrounding" to the *Science Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* published by Science Journal Publication [sic].<sup>8</sup> After paying the publishing fee of US\$500 the article was accepted for publication.

The *Science Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* prides itself for its "quality, reputation and high standard of peer review." The "fast and unbiased [...] double-blinded peer review process" is said to "ensure professional and fair review" of submitted manuscripts. Submitting a paper to the journal

is made easy: "Generally peer review is complete [sic] within 1-2 weeks and the editor's decision within 24 hours of this." This is the abstract of the article as published by this assumingly trustworthy publisher. All typographic mistakes are the authors':

Noise is one of the most common items used by aircraft around the world, there are About 50,000 commercial flights each day around the world and 3 million people traveling. In the operational of aviation in Ahmad Yani International Airport Semarang, an airplane can make some noise. The noise is a sound that unwanted in a place and time scale, it can make some disturbance that influence human freshness and health. Particularly for Residents whom living very close by the airport such as Graha Padma and Tambakharjo.

The authors frequently omit spaces between words and violate rules of punctuation either by putting a space before a punctuation mark or by not putting a space after a punctuation mark. Note that the numeral '2' in the following quote is not a footnote mark.

By that definition, the sound emanating from jet aircraft is considered noise to most people.<sup>2</sup> The real estate professional needs to assess the market's perceptions towards airport noise, knowing that those perceptions are then translated into sales prices when the properties are sold and other indications of market values.

Poor English does not necessarily mean that an article is of low quality, but a combination of poor English and poor quality, as in this article, is unfortunately not uncommon, especially in predatory journals.

This example, and the case of the *Journal of Language and Literature*, shows that a journal with a SJR ranking is not necessarily a reputable journal. And as Bohannon's experiment has shown, there is no clear line separating 'good' from 'bad' journals (even DOAJ listed journals accepted his phoney article). After Bohannon's revelation, DOAJ tightened its inclusion standards, but as long as the Wild West dominates fee-based open access publishing, and as long as Indonesian universities do not apply tougher standards of quality control, it may be difficult to constrain the flood of low quality articles published in questionable journals.

**Uli Kozok is Professor and Program Coordinator at the Indonesian-Malay Language Program, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (kozok@mailbox.org).**

## References

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# Wading through a field of books

Asian Studies is a very broad field. A fairly obvious statement, but at no point does this become more apposite than when boxes and boxes of books contending for the ICAS Book Prize start arriving by courier. As a member of the jury for the Book Prize at ICAS 9 in Adelaide, I started to receive books at my office in late 2013. The final package arrived just a couple of months before the July 2015 conference. Over this period I developed a highly advanced system for organising the books; namely, piling them on the floor with spines facing up – like a library stack that has lost its balance. New packages would come and I would reorder the pile, at first arranging by country focus, then discipline focus, then (when procrastinating and putting off the completion of my own writing) by colour of the spines. Books would come and go from my office floor to home to conferences to fieldwork; some ended up being read through episodes of insomnia or jetlag, some during my daily commute, and while waiting for various appointments to arrive. No matter how much I read the pile on my floor grew.

Duncan McDuie-Ra

COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS would come into my office puzzled as to why I didn't put books on the shelf. They would ask other questions too – why is a book on 'monasteries in Mongolia' next to one on 'beer in Japan'? I didn't know you researched concubines? Who would have thought red was so popular for book covers? Over the period I became a one-person clearinghouse for new books on Asia. I would grab a colleague and drag them into my office and fling a book in their face: "have you seen this?" A particular book would remind me of a colleague working in another country I had not seen for a while, or someone I met at a conference, or a former student – giving me a perfect reason to get in touch and mention the new title. My PhD students would stick post-it notes on books they wanted when I was finished. One colleague asked if they could have a particular book to give to their spouse for their anniversary! I found new scholars to approach. I scrawled down names of authors I wanted to keep in mind for a book series I am involved with. I cited some of the books I was reading for the prize in my own writing. I passed on others to colleagues for use in courses they teach ...

And then one day the books stopped arriving. The joy of discovery was replaced with the challenge of actually long-listing, short-listing, and writing citations with my fellow jury members. Throughout the process I had judiciously added titles to a wooden crate: the 'long-list crate'. However, when it came time to select 10 books I found my long-list crate contained 29. This was halved with some tough love (and a few regrets!), some negotiating with my fellow jury members got us to an agreed 10, and a few weeks later we agreed on 5 for the short-list – all of which deserved the main prize. Awarding accolades made it possible to bring some that had been in that long-list crate back into the frame, which made me sleep a little easier.

## The field of books

The metaphor of 'the field' is apt when gazing at over 200 books on the floor over a period of many months. Asian Studies is a very broad field; the edges of which are almost impossible to see. The submissions for the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) affirmed this. Indeed, the only thing that united the books on topics as diverse as 'post-Suharto media' and 'alcohol and drug culture in colonial Manchuria', was that their subject matter was based somewhere, sometime, in this idea called Asia.

My experience on the jury brought three things about the current state of the 'field' into focus. First, Asian Studies is alive and well. The scholarly quality of the books submitted for the prize was astounding. Over the last two decades (or even longer) the idea that there is a crisis in the humanities and social sciences has gained traction as departments close, funding is cut, and rankings-obsessed institutions track metrics and citation rates. Indeed, conversations among scholars in affected fields can rarely ignore crisis talk, even if the conversation started out as an innocent discussion about 'Myanmar film stars'. The quality and originality of the books submitted for the IBP provide an alternative narrative about the state of humanities and social sciences, especially with regard to Asian Studies. Books are being written; lots of them. Scholars are writing them, many of whom have jobs in universities and research centres that give them the time, resources,



and support to write alongside their other commitments. This does not mean 'crisis averted', rather the quality of this scholarship needs to be used as evidence and to be considered as part of the defence of the disciplines and fields under threat.

Second, books have persevered as a form of presenting research and as a reason for doing research in the first place. Books, especially sole-authored monographs – which constitute the majority of books submitted for the IBP – take years of dedicated research, committed writing, review and revision, and patience with the production process. They also take dedication and time to read – time that is shrinking under the demands of contemporary academic life. As the costs of

production also increase and publishers seek out a guaranteed return on their investment in a book, some authors are wary that the pursuit of a book contract involves some compromise towards current trends, course adoption, and simplified scholarship. However, what becomes clear from the books submitted to the IBP is that publishers are prepared to push the boundaries into new areas – new topics, new scholars, new series, new conceptions of Asian Studies.

Books offer a form of presenting research like no other, and with many of the top university presses seeking to maintain scholarly quality, while also enabling open access to titles, the field is undergoing a further shift, one that may catch on across the publishing spectrum. Furthermore, books remain such a crucial way of becoming known in a field. There is something about the material form of a book – even if in a PDF – the cover, the blurb, the endorsements, the depth of analysis and detail, that stays in the head of a reader, a fellow author, or a jury member in ways that other forms of research writing are unable to replicate. To put it another way, a great book (or 2 or 3) does amazing things for the reputation of a scholar in Asian Studies.

Third, the boundaries being pushed are – by and large – empirical. On the one hand this is unsurprising as the only thing connecting the vast range of titles in the IBP is their empirical focus somewhere and sometime in Asia. On the other hand, most books submitted staked their claim to originality on their empirical contribution. This is not to suggest that there is no fascinating conceptual and theoretical innovation taking place, but to suggest that shifts in conceptual and theoretical thinking is led by breaking new empirical boundaries rather than the other way round. Empirical content in the books ranged from the conventional focus on places, peoples, and periods, to work that put human-animal relations, commodities, mobilities, and memories at the centre of analysis, and used this to reflect back on how we understand people, places and periods – including the idea of Asia itself.

## Benefits of judging and being recognised

Serving on the jury also made me reflect on my own writing. As a recipient of one of the IBP Accolades at ICAS 8 in Macau, I often found myself looking at the 200 books for ICAS 9 and wondering what had made mine stand out for the jury last time round. Was it the opening few pages? The cover? The blurb? Was it chapter 6? Did they even get all the way to chapter 6? Being on the 'other side' this time made me think about the ways my previous book would have been discussed, debated, put on and taken off various long and short lists, recommended, and most importantly, read. Read by jury members who may not have otherwise read it. Receiving an accolade certainly boosted the profile of the book, especially to a broader Asian Studies audience – further enabled by the book being open-access, meaning those who heard about it did not have to commit to buying it in order to read it.

During the period I was on the jury I was completing two new monographs: both within Asian Studies. I often went back to the book that received the accolade at ICAS 8 and used it as a kind of blueprint. Though the content was certainly different, there was value in considering its approach: what had worked and was it replicable? It also helped that I was surrounded (physically and mentally) by new books. Even though my writing was in my own particular discipline and sub-field, I was often influenced by the style, approach, and structure of the books I was reading for the IBP. Sometimes they would trigger an idea I hadn't considered, or a new way of thinking about my own projects. In addition, seeking a new book contract was noticeably eased by my previous win; the accolade assured the publisher that I could deliver a book that would have appeal to a broad Asian Studies audience, even if the content appeared at first glance to be quite specific.

Finally, the experience on the jury reiterated the importance of the publishers. Production, editing, and promotion of titles – the fact the books were even submitted to the IBP in the first place – are such vital components of taking high quality scholarship to a broader audience. At ICAS 9 in Adelaide I met staff from many of the publishers who had submitted books and we chatted in detail about the authors and the titles I had enjoyed. A press that knows their authors and their projects in that level of detail is a tremendous boost to Asian Studies scholars; that level of detail has certainly influenced the choices I have made about my own publishing and advice I give to my PhD students, postdocs, and friends when they ask about their manuscripts. When it comes to books, quality – rather than simply speed, size and/or scale – matters.

**Duncan McDuie-Ra is Associate Dean Research in Arts and Social Sciences at UNSW Australia. His most recent books are *Debating Race in Contemporary India* (Palgrave, 2015) and *Borderland City in New India: frontier to gateway* (Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2016). His 2012 publication *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: race, refuge and retail* (Amsterdam University Press) was the winner of the 'Most Accessible Book for the non-Specialist Reader' Accolade at ICAS 8.**



# Publishing new Asia scholarship

This year's twelve-title shortlist for the ICAS Book Prize on social sciences and humanities included three books first published in Asia (two by NUS Press). For the new EuroSEAS Nikkei Book Awards given in Vienna in August this year, five of six finalists originated in Asia. And in March this year, the US Association of Asian Studies (AAS) awarded its Kahin Prize to M.C. Ricklefs' *Islamisation and its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History*, a book published in 2012 by NUS Press at the National University of Singapore. Remarkably, this was the first time any book published in Asia received an AAS book prize.

Peter Schoppert and Paul Kratoska

IT TOOK A LONG TIME to reach this particular milestone, and it is useful to explore what it might mean. Does it tell us anything about the shifts in Asian Studies? About new Asia scholars? Despite many predictions over the years that the centre of Asian Studies would shift to Asia, why is so much of Asian Studies scholarship still published outside Asia? And does that matter?

The past few decades have brought an explosion of scholarship on Asia carried out by scholars at Asian universities. The greater part of this research is published in local languages and receives little attention outside of the countries where it appears, and like scholarship in other parts of the world, it tends to come out in the form of journal articles rather than monographs.

Asian-language scholarship often deals with issues of particular concern to the countries where it originates, and is part of a conversation that does not actively invite participation by outsiders. Many universities, research centres and other institutions in East and Southeast Asia publish scholarly periodicals that handle this material. A rough calculation suggests that there are more than 40,000 such publications, many of them fully funded by Asian institutions.

However, the major universities in Asia now expect scholars to publish research articles in internationally recognized journals covered by major citation indexes, in effect requiring them to write and publish in English. When Asian scholars do this, their audience shifts. Potential readers include scholars in the West, but also scholars based in other Asian countries who may well find parallels with their own research concerns. (Recent work that fits this model deals with topics such as regionalism and Asian identity.) As a publisher based in Asia, we look for opportunities to nurture this second audience.

Recent initiatives such as the Consortium for Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA) launched in 2013 suggest that institutions and scholars will increasingly work within widespread networks, electronic and personal, that extend across national borders. Technological advances in the production and distribution of books are creating a global

book market. While traditional library markets in the West are under severe pressure, it is possible for publishers in Asia to reach them with greater ease. Asian markets are becoming more open and transparent in response to a growing demand for access to information. The more savvy publishers from the West are sourcing more works from Asia, basing commissioning editors in the region and commissioning more local peer reviews.

Manuscripts written by Western authors are often written to explain Asia to the West, and adopt an 'outside-looking-in' perspective on matters of great import to audiences in the region. Frequently these manuscripts represent solid scholarship, but they position their discussion within the theoretical concerns currently engaging scholars outside of Asia and for a publisher like NUS Press, whose primary market lies in Asia, they have limited appeal. When referees in Asia indicate that the substance of a manuscript is well known within the country concerned, and that the material is not pitched appropriately for Asian readers, our conclusion is that the author should probably seek publication opportunities elsewhere.

At the same time, more and more younger scholars from all parts of the world see social science research as a co-creation of knowledge. If they do Asian Studies they wish to speak to Asian audiences, and while their books and articles may reach readers in institutions around the world, they also become embedded in local discourse.

The book prizes mentioned at the start of this piece reflect a noticeable shift in the geography of publication of Asian Studies. Whether this shift becomes a long-term trend remains to be seen, but the remarkable output of research by Asian scholars cannot be ignored, even if publishers are grappling with new forms of 'publication' and new channels for delivering knowledge.

**Peter Schoppert is Director and Paul Kratoska is Publishing Director at the National University of Singapore Press (npupjs@nus.edu.sg; kratoska@nus.edu.sg).**



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IN THE 1960S professors were told to teach in the vernacular. This type of history writing was called "pantayong pananaw"—the vision of ourselves by ourselves. Those who failed to comply were branded as colonial or outdated. Nationalist historiography has its advantages as it helps see history from the point of view of the natives. They see each other as rising from the grip of colonial rule and taking their place in the family of nations.

Another trend was local history writing. This resulted in a plethora of histories of regions of the Philippines, the provinces and towns even down to the barangay or village level. Yet this mode of history isolates one from the region. When we go out to attend conferences abroad such as those organized by IIAS, IAHA and ACAS, we find that we are being left behind as our neighbours are now writing about bilateral histories, and how their national histories are affected by regional events and vice versa. When Filipinos write their histories using their national language, people of other nationalities cannot relate to us and we cannot relate to them.

I realized that by remaining isolated we cannot see the history of the region or the world in general if we just look at ourselves. We must realize that what is happening to the Philippines is probably a result of what is happening in the region. Events in the Philippines too, may affect the region.

**Augusto Viana,  
University of Santo Tomas,  
augustodeviana@gmail.com**

POSITIVE CHANGES in the fields in which I work - Indology, Tibetology or South and South Asian studies—include the elimination of gender imbalances among researchers and lecturers, movement beyond the overly theoretical Post-modernism that dominated approaches in the 1980s and 90s, and the broader understanding of Asian perspectives on the field. On the negative side, centre perspectives continue to dominate at the expense of those on the periphery, archival research is often neglected in favour of (Western) theoretical approaches, scholars all-too-frequently appeal to their own community rather than engage with the concerns and interests of their subjects, and critical approaches are neglected in favour of emic representations. In general scholars tend to follow trends rather than to take up original approaches or uncover original subjects. Probably the greatest risk to proper scholarship lies in the commercialisation of the universities, with economic demands overwhelming academic quality.

Too often, grant application forms are not drafted by academics, but by bureaucrats. The end result is that a scholar on a one-year research fellowship spends much of that year filling in applications for future funding rather than actually carrying out research. The need for academics to publish on a regular basis has led to a proliferation of journals, many of which, while peer-reviewed, of necessity publish material that adds little to the field. Whether on-line publication is a problem or a solution remains to be seen. On-line publication has not yet developed the status of print publication, despite its value in allowing access to scholars in countries where many European publications are too expensive to obtain. None-the-less the field of Asian studies in general is growing organically and there remain publications and publishers who will bring out scholarship that is not commercially attractive, just as there remain institutions and individuals who continue to seek the highest possible quality of work. Fashions may come and go, and attract superficial scholarship as they do, but the field has never been stronger and the future remains bright.

**Alex McKay, historian, indologist,  
IIAS fellow and world traveller,  
dungog@hotmail.com**

THE WORD ASIA is of Greek origin and means everything lying east of Greece. Given the number of countries and cultures lying east of Greece, Asian Studies are an unrealistic venture.

**Heinrich Menkhaus,  
Meiji University (Tokyo),  
menkhaus@kisc.meiji.ac.jp**

A somewhat dogmatic belief prevails that these regions are difficult to compare because of their contrasting historical, political and social backgrounds. However, when the modernization processes in [Latin America and Asia] are discussed in parallel, it is possible to find commonalities worth to be further explored (see Urushima, A. et al. (eds.) 2015. *Modernização urbana e cultura contemporânea: diálogos Brasil-Japão*, São Paulo:Terracota).

**Andrea Flores Urushima,  
Kyoto University,  
urusayf@gmail.com**



# The new ASEAN scholar

This is how a young Thai university lecturer in Bangkok spends her semester. She teaches six hours a week in two undergraduate classes and one graduate class. She advises a couple of PhD students. She works on two research projects. She serves as advisor to more than ten undergrad senior-year Thai students and about twenty students in the international program. She provides advice to any students who need it, whether or not they are assigned to her, and she writes reference letters for them when requested. Her workload extends beyond her own university. She serves as thesis advisor to grad students from other Thai and foreign universities. I suspect that all Thai lecturers have similar responsibilities, although the number of students that they assist may vary. Add to this workload the daily commute of two to three hours through the city's traffic gridlock and one wonders how Bangkok academics even find time to do research.

Trasvin Jittidecharak

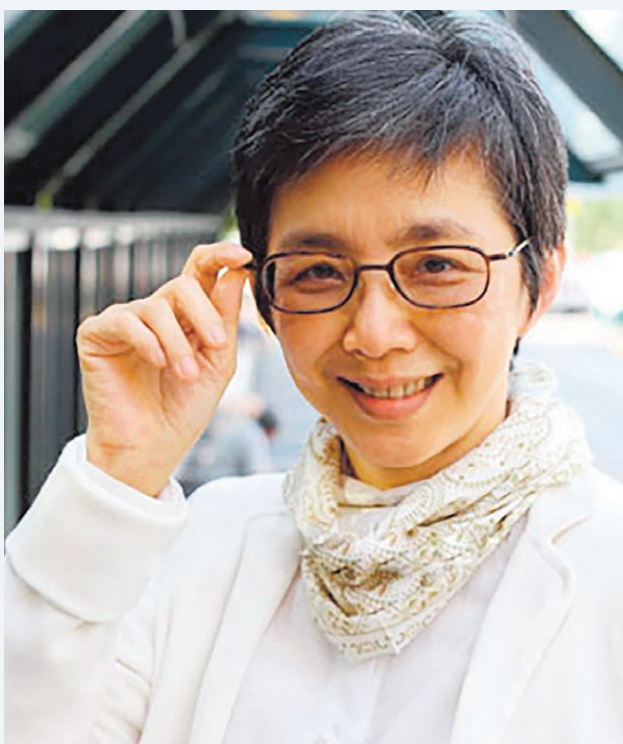
## Burdens of writing and editing

But the Thai academy has been facing another challenge. After the Tomyam Kung economic crisis in 1997, the IMF advised the Thai government, as part of their rescue package, to downsize their civil workforce and to cut expenses. The result was the privatization of almost every state-owned university. In Thailand, being a civil-worker means 'security'. The state covers most of your essential expenses, including your children's school tuition and your parents' medical bills. Privatization takes away this privilege. It makes it tougher to get promoted. And in the old days, no civil servant was ever fired for underperforming. Now, academic instructors are hired on contract and risk losing their jobs if they don't perform according to expectations. The resulting instability will hopefully eventually disappear as administration and management adjust their policies and procedures, and academics get used to the new situation.

The academy in Thailand is undergoing a more critical change these days. Take one look at the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and you see the rich ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. How well can these countries work across the cultural divides to provide support for their own scholars? Silkworm Books has experienced this issue firsthand. In 2006, we received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to promote the work of regional scholars in the broader English-language community. This project was fraught with two general difficulties.

The first was administrative. Every national government has some sort of policy to support its academics. Translation and publication funds are provided, but the rules and regulations were set up years ago, likely by an administrator with no practical knowledge or experience of translation, copyediting, and publishing. The conditions and stipulations are dated and need revamping. Policymakers and top administrators need to understand that translating a local language into English is not a simple undertaking. It is time consuming and very costly. I have miscalculated the cost more than once due to underestimating the time needed for copyediting. In cases where the translations were arranged by the authors themselves, our copyediting was often further delayed because the authors could not easily respond to our editorial queries in English.

This brings me to the second difficulty. In a regional association like ASEAN the common language for working and publishing is inevitably English. How will scholars who don't speak English manage? It is onerous for non-native English speakers to produce works in English unless the writers grew up in an English-speaking country and were educated there. Not only do the unfamiliar English grammar



Trasvin Jittidecharak

and vocabulary cause problems. Structure and organization and flow are also huge hurdles. Even when a native English-speaker has been asked to check and correct the original work before submission, and even when the grammar appears to be fine at first glance, we have found that it may still need extensive copyediting or even rewriting. The rhetorical style may be back-to-front. The organization may not be coherent. The whole thing can be an editorial nightmare. As a matter of fact, we would have been hard-pressed to find a freelancer willing to copyedit this type of manuscript for us a second time.

At the end of the day, the question is simple: can we afford to promote the work of a Southeast Asian writer? How many editors and how many hours will we need to make it readable? Our local or regional academics may have brilliant ideas and brilliant writing styles in their native languages, but the quality of their English writing, or of their translators', is, sadly, not up to standard.

## Self-censorship

When all is said and done, there is a final, far more serious issue for academics in Southeast Asia: the lack of freedom of expression. In Thailand, Article 112 aka Lese Majeste, along with libel law, strongly affect the way people think and write. Since 1935, Thailand has had nineteen coup d'états. Only during short periods in our recent history has the country been ruled by elected governments. We have become quite used to self-censorship, to sealing our lips. Since the 2014 coup, there has been less and less public debate and discussion. Some accusations have gone beyond reason, for example, when the military filed a complaint against someone who verbally criticized a sixteenth-century king. The sentences handed down by the military court for violating Article 112 have been extreme.

Indeed, other countries in the region are facing the same issue. Our various laws may have different names, but the control they exert is essentially the same. They only vary in severity. How can academics produce quality and respectable work under these conditions? I hope that by 2017, when ICAS 10 takes place in Chiang Mai, the situation will have improved and we will be able to discuss any subject openly and constructively.

Trasvin Jittidecharak, publisher of Silkworm Books and Executive Committee Member of the International Publishers Association (2012–14, 2015–17) (Trasvin@silkwormbooks.com).

*Am I an applied linguist researching Asia (specifically China) or an Asia scholar researching language issues? My dissertation explored the changing use and status of English in China from the 17th century to the present; the growing importance of the Chinese language in the world; and the policy challenges posed by providing English language education to China's ethnic minorities. In more recent times, I have also become interested in the ways in which the Chinese government promotes Chinese language learning abroad, and the use of English for conveying information about China's environmental policies and projecting environmentally friendly images of China. Brumfit's (1997) definition of applied linguistics as "the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue" (93), has resonated strongly with me. This differs from how language is often seen in Asian studies. Reid (1999), for example, says Asia scholars have in common "a commitment to the serious enterprise of understanding a culture and tradition other than our own, through a variety of disciplinary techniques which usually include language" (p. 144). Language for the Asia scholar is therefore a technique or tool for studying something else, such as the history, politics or economics of Asia, rather than the central focus of research.*

*I have found it necessary to draw on the work of many Asia scholars when conducting my research because, as Grabe (2010) points out, 'few practical language issues can be addressed through the knowledge resources of any single discipline' (p. 43). Understanding the use and status of English in China, for example, requires knowledge of China's domestic political situation and its relations with the rest of the world, while the promotion of Chinese language learning abroad cannot be fully understood without considering China's reemergence as a great power. I have also used my language skills to access Chinese academic sources in my areas of interest and to conduct fieldwork activities such as interviews.*

*I think there remains an important distinction regarding the way language is approached – as the central focus of research or as a tool for researching something else – by applied linguists and Asia scholars. This is why I consider myself an applied linguist, rather than an Asia scholar. I hope this brief personal reflection will spark further discussion of what it means to be an applied linguist researching Asia.*

Jeffrey Gil, Flinders University,  
jeffrey.gil@flinders.edu.au

*IS 'ASIA' DYING? A rather hyperbolic question, however, having spent the last decade living and working in Seoul, the more I look around the country the less I see of what it once was. Gone are the hanboks (traditional dress) and the hanoks (traditional houses). They are becoming relics or forms of exhibition; things that are presented at cultural exhibitions. Whilst Koreans have always prided themselves on hyo (filial piety) and other Confucian concepts of discipline and obedience, these too are slowly becoming items associated with previous generations, with a time long gone. Churches have replaced temples; baseball caps have replaced top-knots; independence has replaced dependence. This has led to wonderful developments in academic results, social movement, democracy, literacy, and freer journalism and for that Koreans are appreciative. Does it mean that Asian Studies may soon become something more akin to history than social sciences or culture.*

*So, is Asia dying? Well, it's certainly showing remarkable developments in its global achievements (from both a financial and cultural perspective) but are these really their achievements or are they the achievements of the Westernization that has swept this part of the world and replaced the tea houses with green-tinted chain coffee shops on every corner? Again, it may sound a little hyperbolic but I do wonder what the future will hold for this particular field and whether the 'Asian Scholar' will soon become more of a historian than a cultural analyst.*

David Tizzard,  
Seoul Women's University,  
datizzardswell@gmail.com

*IN CONTEMPORARY post-modern 'Asian Studies' more importance should be given to overcoming the colonial influence and western attitude.*

Basanta Kumar Panda,  
panda.bk@rediffmail.com





# The fluent Asia scholar? Language and area studies 2.0

As the ominous truism goes, area studies – and the humanities in general – is in crisis. Our last resort against the besieging hordes of reorganization-prone bureaucrats, we are led to believe, is a wholesale reconfiguration of its core tenets. Enter the New Asia Scholar, whose noble desire to innovate carries more than a whiff of Darwinian survival and adaptation. And, as the field of Asian Studies continues to reinvent itself, the question of how language will feature in its future manifestations becomes relevant once more.

Tom Hoogervorst

## A roadmap to credibility

Language is central to an informed understanding of culture and cultural context. It facilitates research and in fact shapes it. At times, language proficiency may even offer some protection against the pitfalls of over-analysis and exoticification. From the outset, several Asian Studies programmes prioritized teaching and acquiring competence in at least one widely spoken national language. Doing so, it was believed, would permit a deeper engagement with the people being researched. More controversially, it also enhanced observations and analyses of their history, economy, power structures and political climate. This idea went hand-in-hand with the expectation that (predominantly) western researchers would, at one point, indulge in long-term immersion in 'the field'. At this almost ritual space, they developed what is now known as 'regional expertise'. The cultural and linguistic credentials thus acquired would often sustain them throughout their further academic career.

Asia Scholars from Asia – now in the majority – are clearly overqualified in this regard, unless they work on societies other than their own. From the very beginning, Asian Studies departments in Europe, North America and Australia were quick to welcome these perceived insiders in their midst. Their knowledge of cultural and linguistic detail was superior, yet for long their alleged inability to maintain an objective distance lingered around as a point of contention.<sup>1</sup> Over the past decades, such lines – between 'insider' and 'outsider', Asian and Western, 'self' and 'other' – have been blurred by decolonization, new waves of migration, and global trends in academia. Few scholars would now argue that non-westerners are unable to speak for themselves, although the stigma of voicelessness seems to have shifted to several types of 'subalterns'.

Besides changes in the demography of Asian Studies programmes worldwide, the role of language is inextricably – and unsurprisingly – linked to economic considerations. In general, much funding now goes to team-based research projects. The delegation of fieldwork to native-speaking assistants or field data collectors has already become general practice in many academic disciplines, reducing the occasions at which direct communication with informants is needed. (These local collaborators are at best listed as co-authors and at worst acknowledged in a footnote, if at all.) In this light, today's academic realities may well require the New Asia Scholar to just pick up some of the most important lingo before proceeding with the 'real' work. The question of *how much* language should be taught is increasingly turning into *whether* language should be taught, rather than outsourced to private institutions or relegated to the domain of self-study. In general, the push to learn foreign languages – other than Mandarin and English – is declining. In all honesty, so are the associated career perspectives.

## Indispensable inequalities?

A somewhat different reason to divert resources away from language teaching is the idea that the acquisition of near-native competence in such languages as Hindi, Japanese, Malay or Arabic is a high impossible, life-long endeavour. Many western-trained scholars, of course, do publish and present in the national languages of 'their' countries of research – and some acquire a semi-legendary status by doing so. Yet the requirement to pick up excellent English – for many an equally laborious enterprise – seems to be much more self-evident. The status of English as the lingua franca of Asian Studies is, *grosso modo*, a fait accompli. And while undeniably constituting "a discriminating factor in the unequal distribution of access to intellectual production across many disciplines",<sup>2</sup> more sensible alternatives are yet to be proposed. Indeed, in the hierarchy of academic inconveniences, the hegemony of English ranks well beneath commercialization, intransparent recruitment, and the exploitation of early-career researchers.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to reflect on the centrality of English for prolific academic theorization, known less charitably as "the franchising of ideas".<sup>3</sup> In no small part, theoretical sophistication within Asian Studies relies on circles of scholars "who push each other's ideas into the academic marketplace",<sup>4</sup> often moving the discussion further and further away from the daily realities of the people they describe. At the most recent EuroSEAS keynote speech, Benedict Anderson made the point that scholars "cherish an ugly language which is not understood by the general population". Indeed, the excitement of,



Left and below: multilingual signs in Penang, Malaysia (Malay, English, Chinese, Tamil, Punjabi).

Bottom: English, Bengali and Tamil on a sign in Little India, Singapore.

say, Indonesian undergraduate students reading the work of esteemed academic superstars tends to quickly dissipate when they come to realize that, at least with regard to their own society, "They theorize, we understand".

Yet new opportunities loom on the academic horizon. I am most familiar with the situation in the Indonesian humanities. In this field, western-trained scholars who supply Indonesian translations of their articles on their Academia.edu profile, or publish in Indonesian to begin with, will soon realize that these works are downloaded substantially more often than any of their 'quality journal' writings. This presumably holds true for other non-Anglophone settings as well. In the light of the alarmingly low impact of the average journal article,<sup>5</sup>



this should at least satisfy some of the impact-obsessed funders populating contemporary higher education. Unfortunately, such efforts rarely 'count' as academic core activities and are at best considered 'outreach'.

## Some prospects

Most fieldwork-based research in Asia remains strongly determined by the linguistic fluency and cultural competence of the researcher, while gender and physical appearance play important additional roles.<sup>6</sup> This beckons the question in which domains language remains crucial to the study of Asia 2.0, as well as other cultural areas. It is a question I can only answer incompletely, based on my personal experience.

Foremost, some exciting possibilities surface in the area of reconstructing non-Eurocentric pasts. A language-centric approach offers the analytical tools to move beyond the constraints of the nation-state in determining the origins, contact-situation and self-image of human populations. This is predominantly an exercise in philology, oral traditions and historical linguistics. Here, New Asia Scholars finds themselves in the good company of experts on Africa, who face very similar challenges. Language is also key to the increasingly salient field of popular culture. The urban space often becomes the stage for new types of music, street art, media production and other manifestations of non-elite culture. The language of young people in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world not only provides insight into these processes, its study is also a largely neglected academic category in itself.

This brings us to the final domain: language for the sake of language. Leaving aside such bonuses as 'cultural fluency', Alzheimer's prevention, and the pedagogical advantages of learning how to listen, speak, read and write on multiple levels, the study of languages provides one of the most tangible ways to make sense of an otherwise rapidly homogenizing world. The vast majority of today's roughly 7000 languages is spoken in Asia and Africa. Some have become strong markers of local or trans-regional identity. Others are marginalized and vast disappearing. This should be a concern to all who seek to understand human knowledge in its full diversity. The death of each language, to end with another ominous truism, means the loss of a stored repository of history, story-telling, music, traditions, culture, and world-making.

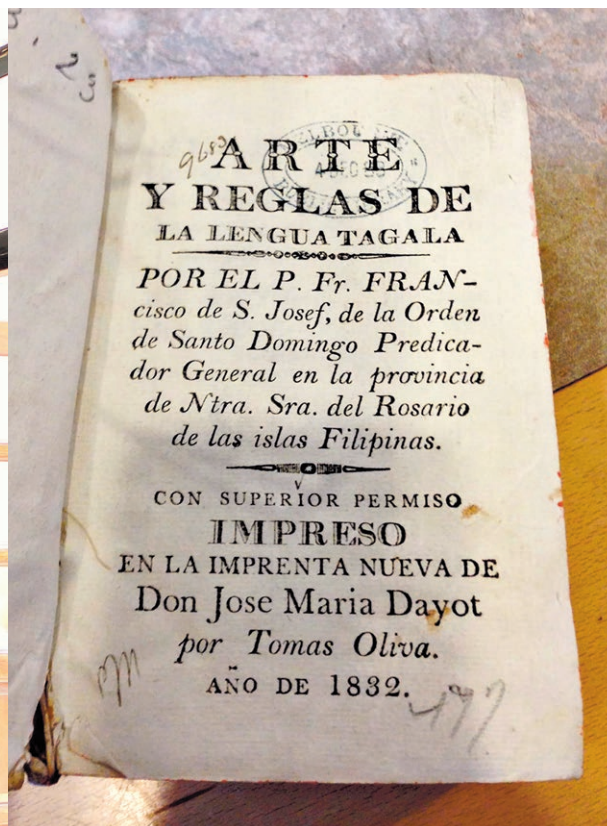
Tom Hoogervorst is a researcher at the KITLV in Leiden (the Netherlands) where he focuses on language contact and Malay linguistics (hoogervorst@kitlv.nl)

## References

- 1 Focusing on Southeast Asia departments, these and other tensions are discussed in detail by Ariel Heryanto: Heryanto, A. 2002. 'Can there be Southeast Asians in Southeast Asian studies?', *Moussons* 5:3-30.
- 2 Ibid., p.13.
- 3 So called in the *LeidenGlobal Lecture* of 12 May 2015 by Michael Herzfeld. The professor admitted to only passing his PhD students after they had given at least one academic presentation in the national language of the country they worked on.
- 4 Robert Cribb's superb analysis of these dynamics within the field of Indonesian Studies merits emulation in other academic domains: Cribb, R. 2005. 'Circles of esteem, standard works, and euphoric couplets', *Critical Asian Studies* 37(2):289-304, see p.289.
- 5 One study has it that 50% of papers published in academic journals are read exclusively by their authors, referees and editors, while as much as 90% are never cited: Meho, L.I. 2007. 'The rise and rise of citation analysis', *Physics World*, January, pp.32-36.
- 6 See for a recent study on the impact of language, physical appearance, gender and other factors on the researcher's positionality in the field: Tanu, D. & L. Dales. 2015. 'Language in fieldwork: making visible the ethnographic impact of the researcher's linguistic fluency', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*. doi:10.1111/taja.12150



# The newness of Asia and its discontents



Far left: Cloister of the San Agustín Church in the walled Spanish city of Intramuros, in Manila. Originally founded in 1571, it is the oldest stone church in the Philippines and has been declared in 1993 as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Left: This is the title page of a copy of the 3rd edition of the *Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala* (1832), which has never been included in the bibliographies of missionary linguistics before, and which I have discovered at the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne. Originally published in 1610 by the Dominican grammarian Francisco Blancas de San José, the work was arguably the most authoritative missionary grammar of the Tagalog language. My PhD project explores the notion of translationality and historicity in missionary exo-grammatization, and *Arte* is my main text of study.

The polysemy in the phrase ‘The New Asia Scholar’ is particularly useful in evaluating the state of scholarship about Asia. On the one hand, it can refer to a scholar who is attuned to the newness of Asia as a field of inquiry. On the other hand, ‘The New Asia Scholar’ can be interpreted as a reconfiguration of ‘who’ studies Asia.

Marlon James Sales

## The incidental Asianist

Despite all that has been written about the continent, the collective advances in the humanities, in the social sciences and even in science and technology have pushed the boundaries of our research, and have expanded our consciousness of Asia as a historical, social, political, cultural and mediated space. This interpretation likewise acknowledges the crucial role of the continent in the dynamics of an ever-changing world, where the issues of international security, regional cooperation, migration and territoriality, participatory citizenship, and the like, have continuously challenged what may be previously thought of as the foundational axioms of Asian Studies, and the essentialist portrayals of Asia as a locus.

ICAS 9 (Adelaide, July 2015) was a testament to this. Apart from the more familiar discussions about the major players in the region and the usual emphasis on politics and economics, there were many panels that explored novel themes that linked Asia to a wider array of research directions, towards which many of us are heading. It was particularly encouraging for me to see panels on the engagements of Asia with Europe, Latin America, and Africa; on minority cultures and their practices; on the itinerancy of Asian bodies and texts; or on disaster preparedness and risk reduction in the face of climate change. At its most altruistic, the role of the scholar is to bring these issues to light, and to seek answers to questions that the newness of Asia forces us to ask.

However, ‘newness’ can also be interpreted as an attribute not of the field of inquiry, but rather of the person who chooses to look at Asia through a different set of lenses. The long-established approaches in studying the area now co-exist with alternative approaches that are either sourced from autochthonous scholarship, or borrowed from disciplines not traditionally linked to Asian Studies. This, to my mind, best describes my own case as an ‘incidental’ Asianist, given that my primary research interest is Philippine Hispanism. In other words, I am able to draw near to the Philippines and to Asia through the tools of Hispanic Studies and Translation Studies, and often rely on this interstitiality to make sense of my experience as a Filipino and as an Asian.

## Linguistic concerns

My approach is not without its challenges. Language, for instance, is pivotal in my research. Aside from the already complex relationship between Philippine languages and English, I am compelled to add Spanish to the equation, and thus submit myself to the issues of accessibility, legitimacy and perspectivism. What texts in Spanish can I include in my examination of Asia? How legitimate are these texts in describing the continent? From which perspective do these

texts articulate their stand? And more importantly, where do I find myself in relation to these texts? The ‘foreignness’ of Spanish also locates me at a different authorial position, and I feel that this is the same crisis faced by any Asia scholar who writes outside the perceived spatial, chronological, identitarian, epistemic or discursive boundaries of the region. Am I an outsider looking in? Or am I an insider who catches a glimpse of Asia from an outlying point in the peripheries? By extension, how does the work of a European or Australian Asianist compare to that of his peers who are from the continent? Or should these questions even matter at all?

That these linguistic concerns are a subject of a continuing debate among Asia scholars indicates that there is so much to be gained from beyond the frontiers of English-language research. The peculiarity of Asia as a site of study is such that in order to participate in the discourse, one has to resort to using a language other than his or her own, a practice that can ultimately preclude many marginal voices from the discussion. For many Asia scholars, academic visibility entails that they be read and heard in English with all its concomitant discomforts and discontents. It is for this very reason that the announcement that Chinese and Japanese will likely be given their due space in the next edition of the ICAS Book Prize is a positive development. I hope that this is just the first of many steps towards a more eclectic appreciation of the discipline. I also hope that more Asian languages will soon find their niche as analytic tools that require no further explication (if I may be allowed to use this term from Translation Studies), but without falling into the trap of self-exoticization.

## The intercultural towards the transcultural

Another issue that comes to mind is that of interculturality, which was at the heart of ICAS 9. I find the call for an intercultural understanding of Asia to be so promising, and yet so surprisingly limiting. The acknowledgment that different cultures exist in the continent is a necessary pre-condition for interculturality to thrive, and I share the general consensus that this is needed now more than ever. As was pointed out in the inaugural panel of InterculturAdelaide, in an age when absolutisms are gaining a lot of ground and are even taken as normative in certain contexts, a commitment to interculturality becomes an imperative.

Interculturality, however, seems to be restricted to a culture’s awareness of and respect for its others while remaining intrinsically detached from whatever is happening outside its perceived boundaries. But these boundaries are porous, and what may be perceived as a parochial concern can actually demand a response that transcends borders. A Filipina worker who suddenly finds herself on the Indonesian

death row together with two Australians, a Brazilian and four Nigerians illustrates the tangency of migratory flows and the differences in the laws that govern them. The devastation of a super typhoon that almost wipes out the provinces along the Philippine eastern seaboard can potentially become the same devastation that affects many parts of East and Southeast Asia. The turmoil in the contested territories in the West Philippine Sea situates many countries in the region in a condition that tests the delicate balance of international diplomacy.

In examples such as these, our model for the study of Asia must move from the intercultural towards the transcultural. Far from the respectful detachment of interculturality, as it were, Asian Studies should be envisioned as a venue of exchange that leads us to abandon the comfortable impermeability of our borderlines.

## Creating Asia

Our individual experience of Asia, though discrete, must be taken as an interconnected sum that affects all of us, and reaches many other people at the fringes of academia. In order for us to sustain the relevance of Asian Studies, we must recognize how we change and are changed by Asia. The new Asia scholar knows that s/he translates Asia for the world, and it is through our work that Asia is understood, examined and instantiated. This association to Asia conversely translates us, and our academic activism should be informed by our positionality in between disciplines and sites, and by our readiness to transgress them if there be need.

The newness of Asia and its discontents pose many questions that have yet to be resolved. I take comfort in the fact that the in-betweenness of the new Asia scholar and the translated-ness with which s/he explores the region can serve to do away with the reductive models of Asian Studies, and interrogate the many Asias that we continue to create for ourselves.

Marlon James Sales, School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University (Marlon.Sales@monash.edu)

Below: Calle Crisólogo is the most famous street in the City of Vigan, Province of Ilocos Sur (Northern Luzon). Considered as the *mestizo* district during the Spanish colonial rule of the islands, the street has retained its cobblestone path and heritage houses of Filipino-Chinese families from the period. The UNESCO has declared Vigan as the best preserved example of a Spanish colonial enclave in Asia.





# Navigating our culturally interconnected world

The concept of interculturality between Asia and the world was a central theme at the 9th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 9), held recently in Adelaide, Australia. While the notion of interculturality is relatively new, its prominence at ICAS 9 highlighted the importance of rethinking the diverse cultural variations in existence and their impact on our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. The notion encourages mutual understanding between various interacting cultures. Academic researchers play a pivotal role in identifying, analysing and articulating the differing cultural phenomena, and all being well, they also help to increase levels of intercultural understanding. Equally important is that policymakers take into account the effects of intercultural issues on societies, and consider findings produced by academic researchers.

Cathy Monro



## (Dis)connect between research and policy

Many research findings presented at ICAS 9 were particularly relevant for our increasingly interconnecting world. The findings would be valuable sources of information for policymakers in their efforts. However, practice appears to indicate that there is a lack of focus on the broader implications of academic research, and on policy strategies reflecting the relevant research findings.

A study presented by scholars from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, for example, found that the indigenous Indian caste system continues to operate within Indian communities residing in Britain. The Dalits (untouchables) are at the base of this caste system, with the Valmiki being the lowest of all Dalits. Members of the Valmiki community are traditionally assigned to menial work only, such as sweeping and sanitation tasks. The Indian diaspora communities in Britain continue to observe practices related to the caste system despite the changing societal context, that is, a Western democratic society.

Several questions could arise from this particular research finding. For instance, what will happen in the British workplace where Indian Hindu employees, with different caste identities, have to work as a team? What would be the impact on the team when a person of a lower caste but in a senior position encounters a person of a higher caste but in a lesser position? The same questions would also arise in the event of similar scenarios occurring during international negotiations, socially or politically. Nevertheless, this particular study focused primarily on the Indian migrant communities in Britain, and their opinion of the practice of the caste system in general. While the study did state the importance of examining transformations of indigenous value systems for understanding various aspects of different societies, it would

have been helpful to articulate the implications of indigenous value systems being observed under differing, transnational circumstances. In the case of the Indian caste system being observed in Britain, it would be critical to consider the impact of this inherent cultural system within an environment that is based on equality and individuality.

My own presentation at ICAS 9 articulated the fundamental differences between the Chinese and Western conceptualisation processes with a focus on the notion of democracy. My research demonstrated a conditional nature to the understanding of democracy in China. This conditional nature is rooted in China's ancient Confucian philosophy and cultural practices that prescribe the rights and responsibilities of individuals in relation to their designated position in the societal hierarchy. These prescriptions are explicit in emphasising the supremacy of the state over society, and of society over the individual. This contrasts with the prominence of individuality that is fundamental to Western notions of democracy. While it is beneficial to identify the differences between Chinese and Western conceptualisation processes, it would also be useful to examine the implications of such differences. With regard to the Confucian construct, the impact of such prescribed conducts for individuals in a societal environment that emphasises individual rights and freedom should also be a focal point of research. However, my experiences seem to indicate that there is a lack of emphasis on implications of particular researches. In truth, I have spoken to Asia scholars in the past who admit to not concerning themselves with implications of their research in any way.

## (Re)connect research with policy

Making practical use of academic knowledge needs to be a concerted effort by researchers as well as public or commercial policymakers. It is important for academia and policymakers to

function not as different entities, but with the intention of collaboration, while maintaining their respective independence.

Academic requirements for the element of research implications appear to suggest that simply contributing to academic debates, or providing fresh and under-explored aspects to phenomena, is sufficient. Yet academic research is conducted with scientific and systematic rigour, producing robust findings. Research is also strengthened by the academic peer review process to ensure validity and ability to withstand closer scrutiny. Adding practical applicability to the research process by articulating and providing examples of its relevance to the current society would further enrich the particular research, as well as ensure its constructive legacy in the society of the future. Improved awareness of and access to such findings would allow policymakers to incorporate research evidence into policy considerations, and help ensure the relevance and viability of their policies.

For scholars there needs to be an increased emphasis on how particular research findings relate to current and future societies, and what the advantages and disadvantages would be when the particular findings are incorporated into relevant public or commercial policies. In particular, considering the varying, inherent cultural values and practices that exist within any current national border, it is increasingly critical to identify and articulate where the particular differences lie between Asian and other various, co-existing philosophies and practices; why they are different, and how these differences would transpire and effect impact under differing social and political contexts.

## Coming together

For the policymakers of (Asia-related) multicultural societies, conferences such as ICAS 9 offer ideal opportunities to access current research. Research presented at such conferences often emphasise findings rather than methodology. This is advantageous for the often time-conscious policymakers, allowing them to obtain a considerable amount of research information concerning a wide range of social and political issues within a relatively short period. Furthermore, they would have the opportunity to interact directly with relevant researchers who are able to address related policy issues immediately, or to collaborate in devising potential research plans that are both relevant to current policy concerns and to the researchers' interests.

In sum, it is no longer sufficient for scholars of Asia to simply observe and acknowledge cultural or political phenomena. New scholars of Asia need to go further. They need to explore the idea of intervention through articulating their research impact on the society and encouraging considerations of academic research findings in policymaking processes.

Above and below:  
Supporters en route  
to Tiananmen Square  
during the 1989  
Student Movement  
in Beijing; case  
study photographs  
by author.



Cathy Monro, China Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, Australia-Asia Intercultural Strategist (mail@cathymonro.com.au)



# Losses and gains to the anthropological soul

As an anthropologist, I recently found myself at a disadvantage while applying for funding from a government organization; another academic from the field of marketing and economic research, clearly had the upper hand in this case. Both of us were looking at the preferences of consumers in a specific country for a certain kind of commodity. The funder's goal is to help the industry, and it was evident that the market researcher would be their first choice. I see two major reasons for this.

Jinghong Zhang



Top: Two kinds of tea leaves, processed in different ways and originating from different areas in Yunnan, China. Photo by Jinghong Zhang

## Time and questions

First, for a similar project, a market researcher demands less time than an anthropologist. When the former might ask for just one year of funding, the latter hopes to get at least two years. In fact, a two-year research is still very tight for an anthropologist, who usually would prefer at least twelve months of fieldwork, especially if the research is a new area. A market researcher is likely to declare that within one year,

he or she is able to send two reports to the funding authority, publish one referred journal article and release one trade magazine article. An anthropologist, even with a much reduced fieldwork, will still be analyzing field notes or drafting a paper, by the end of the first year. Information collected from informants needs to be 'translated' from concrete forms into abstract concepts.

Second, market researchers and anthropologists ask a different set of questions. The former asks 'what', and the latter asks 'how' and 'why'. When the former asks, for instance, 'what' products are favored by female consumers, or, on 'what' occasions do consumers tend to spend more money on the purchasing of products, the latter asks 'how' the social and cultural changes influence the purchasing preferences of female consumers, or, 'why' it matters that purchasing happens frequently at one time and space, rather than another.

By discovering the 'what', and with a little bit of an explanation, a market researcher will offer specific research results, to be used by the relevant industry immediately and directly. Many questions raised by anthropologists or other social science researchers, however, could sound over-intellectual to the policy makers and the industry. Funding assessors regularly question anthropological proposals, and wonder how the research can be 'translated' into policy for the industry. Namely, even though you provide 'why' and 'how', then 'what'? The anthropologist, if given the chance to respond, would answer: without exploring sufficient cultural contexts, namely the 'how' and 'why', the discovered 'what' could be wrong.

## Pragmatic solutions or open interpretations

Relatively speaking, marketing research delivers practical guidance, whereas anthropological research offers alternative ways of thinking and of identifying new questions. Anthropologists are more concerned with understanding the fundamental cultural background behind a phenomenon, rather than hastily declaring the discovery of a truth or a fact concerning the phenomenon. In fact, anthropologists often refrain altogether from stating any truths or facts. They choose instead to present information provided by informants, analyze the general meanings revealed, leave it otherwise open for interpretation, and maintain the readers' right to discern truth or falsehood.

Unfortunately, this approach rarely attracts research grants that expect pragmatic solutions and quick benefits. Policymakers and industry people don't enjoy indirect suggestions and would rather not bother with interpreting meanings themselves. In addition, government funding for academic research around the world has seen drastic cuts and the situation has resulted in many organizations turning to the world of business and industry, who regrettably demand direct benefits and swift outcomes.

Under these circumstances, anthropologists and other social scientists are forced to compromise; changing their tone of writing and ways of asking questions. More and more, anthropologists imitate the ways of market research; for example, quoting numbers and using diagrams to disclose 'facts', and stating objectives as directly as possible. In other words, anthropologists are having to translate anthropological ideas into practical guides that are appreciated by policymakers and the industry. There are perhaps advantages to this transformation of knowledge; it will encourage anthropologists to explain profound theories in straight language. Yet the problem remains that anthropological applicants have to demonstrate absolute benefits to the industry before starting the actual investigation. Understanding 'how and why consumers choose a product' becomes less important than 'how to encourage consumers to choose the product'.

## Making it apply

If an anthropologist nevertheless still intends to receive such a grant, his or her research must have a strong applied aspect. If it is a linkage project, the anthropologist will work with a partner investigator from the industry. This cooperation provides useful assistance to the anthropological investigation, but perhaps also generates a lot of aggravation due to the divergence between the industrial and anthropological interests. The soul of anthropology—avoiding truth and falsehood judgments, opening doors for interpretation, and critically reflecting—is somehow lost.

However, upon finishing the applied research, an anthropologist may have the chance to win back his or her anthropological soul. The process of interacting with industry partners provides interesting cases and data for the researcher to reflect upon and analyze. The anthropologist needs to conduct another translation of knowledge: the practical guidance offered to the industry back into anthropological thoughts and cultural critique. The only uncertainty, however, lies in whether such reflections could be published as it involves the privacy of the industry partners.

Jinghong Zhang, Postdoctoral Fellow, The Australian National University ([jinghong.zhang@anu.edu.au](mailto:jinghong.zhang@anu.edu.au)).

36 FROM MY OWN Thai study experience, I hope to advocate the interculturality between foreign anthropologists and indigenous anthropologists, which could be an important part of the overseas ethno-graphy. Indigenous scholars are spokesmen for their own society and culture, so their life experience, political viewpoints and academic perspective are the social facts which overseas ethnography should represent. On the other hand, the academic exchange between foreign anthropologists and indigenous scholars will form equal dialogue relationship, which leads to rethinking of authoritative discourse in the anthropology discipline and constitutes the necessary epistemological background for the overseas ethnographical practice. Valuing inside perspective, forming multi-perspectives and promoting interculturality are the basis of building the identity of world anthropology.

GONG Haoqun, CASS (Beijing), [mollygong@yeah.net](mailto:mollygong@yeah.net)

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES for research in 'Asian Studies' today is to avoid the hype associated with the rhetoric of the 'Rise of Asia' or the 'Asian Century'. In today's academic environment scholars are increasingly pressured to generate research funding. Career trajectories are significantly determined by institutional and national research audits, many of which (as is the case with the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF)) explicitly assess research 'impact' beyond academia. Under such a system the temptation can be to prioritise the financial value of our research on Asia and to present it as contributing primarily to national or regional goals in the areas of foreign policy, trade, economic engagement or cultural understanding. As scholars of Asia we must stand ready to defend our research – especially that which is curiosity-driven, theoretical or which involves working with/on marginalised, remote or subaltern populations – from the tendency to regard us primarily as 'knowledge workers' whose worth is our skills in shaping the outside's engagement with Asia or Asia's engagement with the flows of global capital and culture. The potential for our research to be skewed, even compromised, by the demands of the corporatist university and neoliberal, results-oriented funding and regulatory frameworks is all too real. We must protect 'Asian Studies' (even as we critique the very concept of Asia and Asian-ness) from those who would like to see it develop into a discipline whose primary roles are to act as the servant of state and corporate interests and to facilitate particular global and inter-regional architectures of security, commerce, finance, diplomacy and trade.

Simon Obendorf, University of Lincoln, [sobendorf@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:sobendorf@lincoln.ac.uk)

THE VARIOUS WORKS from Asian studies researchers culminate to a better understanding of a world in the past and the present world we live in. Some Asian countries have progressed rapidly within decades and it is important for scholars to capture that change and give meaning to the phenomenon that is happening. The new Asia scholars increasingly make use of technology in their work. The common use of social media and e-publishing make it easier for these scholars to exchange ideas and publish them online. There is also an increasing trend of cross-disciplinary studies. Technology has provided quick and sometimes, instant, flow of information which can be a challenge for scholars to discern the facts from opinions. Could the time spent in front of the screen be better spent at a library, museum or an archive?

ANG Seow Leng, National Library Board (Singapore), [ang\\_seow\\_leng@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:ang_seow_leng@nlb.gov.sg)



# Old and new knowledge regimes and the public milieu

Notwithstanding reservations about generalising across regions, in this discussion I consider the notion of 'new Asia scholars' in connection with Southeast Asia. I look at two possible assumptions: either that new types of scholars have emerged that change the circumstances for knowledge production, or that new scholarship among Southeast Asian scholars may change or challenge the forms of knowledge produced about the region. I discuss both angles in relation to old and emerging regimes of knowledge production and their engagement with society.

Imran bin Tajudeen

## Received legacies for research and publication

Before we may speak of 'new types of scholars' or 'new scholarship', I wish to begin with a survey of two regimes that have been inherited. First, without discounting the heartfelt passion, devotion and intrinsic motivation of individual scholars for the pursuit of knowledge, one may note that the underlying motivations for the patronage of European scholarship on Asia in the preceding centuries lay in the utility of such knowledge for European imperialism and epistemological control. The 'old regime' in scholarship on Southeast Asia was generated by institutions founded to serve and augment the administration and management of various colonial territories. They remain vital today.

Scholarship was also generated through the exploration and record of peoples and languages for evangelism by various European and American religious groups. These centres of knowledge production and archiving, and their journals and publishers, continue to referee and shape scholarship on Southeast Asia. The *Siam Society* and its journal founded in 1904 under royal patronage in Bangkok is the notable exception, even though it was ultimately modelled after the antiquarian societies of European colonial powers and is in fact linked to Siam's own imperial ambitions in the Southeast Asian mainland and its anxiety to demonstrate its parity with European imperial powers.

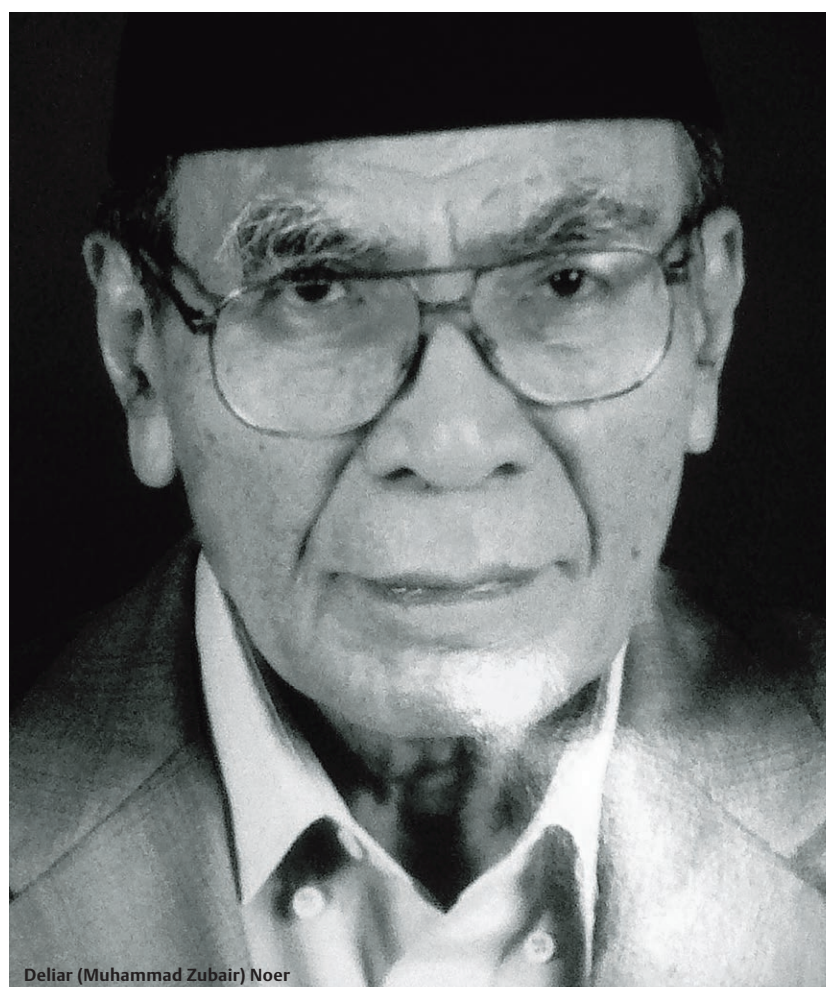
From the 1940s to the 1980s, a second regime emerged, with North American and Australian universities joining European ones in developing centres or programs on Southeast Asia connected to strategic foreign policy imperatives. Benedict Anderson observed acerbically the contrast between the 'entrepreneurial' North American university researcher and the 'unhurried' European colonial civil servant-scholar, both of whom were creatures of their respective 'ecology'.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, Anderson does not discuss any other 'ecology' beyond these.

Both European colonial and Cold War North American scholarship regimes involve Western scholars producing research with utility for Western knowledge consumers, at times within their national contexts. Yet, both legacies for research and publication shape contemporary scholarship in powerful and fundamental ways. Recent trends in promotion and tenure assessment for Asian universities based on American modes of knowledge validation through academic journal publication have renewed the power of both regimes of knowledge production.

It is these traditions, in English (and to a limited extent, other European languages) and refereed by Euro-American institutions, which form the received modes of scholarly enquiry, academic validation, career advancement, and financial viability for many Asian scholars. Alternative discursive domains and traditions of scholarship remain very limited even today – and language medium and milieu play fundamental roles in their dissemination. We need only recall that while J.C. van Leur's dissertation of 1934, with its well-known observations, destabilised not merely the epistemological assumptions but the very ontological bases of knowledge about Southeast Asia, its fundamental revision gained wider recognition only after an English translation of his thesis had been published in 1955.<sup>2</sup> His critique was then supplemented by those from Anglophone scholars such as John Smail calling for 'autonomous histories' in 1966.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, influential critiques by Asian scholars such as Arjun Appadurai and Lila Abu-Lughod of tropes and lenses inherited from colonial scholarship in anthropology were written in English. English-language Asian scholarship has largely remained the preserve of groups that have not only mastered and appropriated the language – notably those from former British colonies such as India and the Straits Settlements at Penang, Malacca and Singapore – but also have particularly sought to question inherited



Koentjaraningrat



Deliar (Muhammad Zubair) Noer

ways of seeing and discussing Asia or the 'Orient' and, further, explored new ontological terrains that expose the limitations of categories or terms in existing scholarship.

The lack of any sustained scholarship in English among former colonies of France and the Netherlands in Southeast Asia should be considered against the rupture from inherited colonial educational legacies. These former colonial languages – French and Dutch – have a much-reduced utility as mediums of scholarly communication in the relevant former Southeast Asian colonies today. It is revealing too that the *Bijdragen* has opted to use English since 1948.<sup>4</sup> One may contrast Indonesia with the Philippines in this respect. Their former colonial languages, Dutch and American English respectively (notwithstanding the Philippines' earlier Hispanicisation), enjoy vastly different fates in international academia today. While *Asian Studies*, issued by Manila's Asian Centre at the University of the Philippines Diliman, has enjoyed continuous publication in English since 1963, the University of Indonesia's *Wacana*, begun in 1999 as a bilingual journal for the humanities in Bahasa Indonesia and English, chose in 2010 to use English exclusively. Gajah Mada University Press stands out in this regard – beginning in the 1950s, and particularly from the 1970s, it has published a number of English-language books despite belonging to a non-English-speaking milieu.

## Pioneering 'new scholars' – PhD holders in the early post-independence milieu

Asian intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century were internationally-mobile individuals well-aware of their shared colonial predicament and attuned to the socio-political developments elsewhere<sup>5</sup> – and they were mainly autodidacts. Subsequently, a different type of scholar in Asian society emerged, who underwent further formal education in Western universities leading to higher degrees. A parallel transition took place among European scholars; Oliver Wolters conducted his doctoral research at SOAS in 1961, under the supervision of D.G.E. Hall, who had an MA in English History. Hall's entry into Southeast Asian scholarship began when the British government despatched him to assume the Chair of History for a newly-created University of Rangoon (Yangon) in 1921; his departure upon Burma's independence led him to eventually become the first chair of the History of South East Asia at SOAS in 1949.

The pioneer generation of Southeast Asian doctoral degree-holders who taught locally did not yet belong to the 'publish or perish' milieu of today. Though they continued to publish academic works, there was no real impetus either for sustained academic publication in English for an international audience, or to engage Euro-American or Australian scholarship that was then being produced about Southeast Asia for Western foreign policy. Instead, much of their intellectual energy was directed towards serving their respective countries, especially through institution-building or diplomacy, and more importantly in public service and advocacy.

The stories of five pioneer Indonesian doctoral-degree intellectuals demonstrate this pattern. Sumitro Djojohadikusumo (PhD Netherlands School of Economics 1943) returned to Indonesia to fulfil several ministerial roles in the newly-independent country before becoming the second dean of the Faculty of Economics at University of Indonesia (UI) in 1951. His students, known as the so-called 'Berkeley mafia', received doctorates or masters in economics in the US by the late early 1960s, under a cooperative agreement with UC Berkeley facilitated by the Ford Foundation, and served Indonesia through public office or civil service. Strikingly, in this early post-independence period, academic programs in the US attracted, sponsored or courted the key Indonesian scholars. Koentjaraningrat, independent Indonesia's pioneer anthropologist, was a Fulbright scholar who studied at Yale before returning to Indonesia for his PhD at UI in 1958; in 1974 Utrecht University bestowed upon him an honoris causa doctorate. He founded the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in 1964, while his students headed Departments in various universities across Indonesia.

Deliar (Muhammad Zubair) Noer (PhD Cornell 1963) taught in Jakarta for seven years before being sacked in 1974 just before delivering a lecture on 'Participation in Development', which the Suharto regime deemed seditious, and thereafter taught at ANU and Griffiths University before co-founding a think-tank, LIPPM. Sartono Kartodirdjo (MA Yale 1964; PhD Amsterdam University 1966) returned to head Gajah Mada University's History Department from 1968, was general editor of the 6-volume set of Indonesian history textbooks published in 1975, and was conferred the first Harry J. Benda Prize in 1977. Finally, in Soedjatmoko we see a very different kind of intellectual – a statesman who was accorded several honoris causa doctorate degrees by US tertiary-level educational institutions. As a journalist he was critical of the Suharto regime; he served in various Indonesian think tanks and, when it was no longer safe to remain in New Order Indonesia, was guest lecturer at Cornell, and at the end of his career served as Rector at the United Nations University from 1980 to 1987.



Indonesian scholars also founded the important think-tank LP3ES in 1971, which continues to produce academic publications and journals today. Meanwhile, the Singapore Planning and Urban Research (SPUR) Group was founded in 1965, but was disbanded by the state in 1975. Both academic think-tanks saw a mission in critiquing state planning schemes and in contributing alternative visions to policy. Both also achieved a number of fruitful outcomes.

K.S. Jomo, an economist from Malaysia (MPA and PhD Harvard, 1974, 1982) represents the following generation of Southeast Asian PhD-holders who taught, engaged in social activism, and founded a think-tank for social analysis (INSAN) in his homeland before later assuming a role in the UN. His very name Jomo Kwame was fashioned by his father, who was likewise an activist, after the anti-colonial first presidents of Kenya and Ghana. Between his Masters and PhD, Jomo taught at USM Penang and also Yale and Harvard, before teaching in the University of Malaya from 1984 to 2004, during which time he also assumed visiting positions in Cambridge, Cornell, and Asia Research Institute (ARI) in NUS. Since 2005 he has served the UN in various capacities. As befits his generation, Jomo maintains his own website: [www.jomo.ws](http://www.jomo.ws).

#### New scholarship and post-bureaucratic frameworks?

The early post-independence milieu was concerned with the application of intellectual capacities to the tasks of institution-building. Today scholarship in the US mould is concerned with what Benedict Anderson has cynically called “the rush to theory” that is driven by “two American peculiarities”, namely the “theory market in the academic marketplace” and “the link of theory to public policy”.<sup>6</sup>

Scholarship with a concern for social engagement must now operate beyond and in spite of the contemporary shift of Asian universities towards this American ‘academic marketplace’ model. A new scholarship for Asia would also utilise not only the colonial written archives but also the living archive in its midst, through a dialectical relationship between researcher and community – with the latter as source of information and feedback, and the former performing the duty to inform and serving as a source of informed critique. To generate critical and socially-engaged scholarship, new avenues must be paved for forums involving the general public and institutions so that research may reflect concerns rooted in the locality studied; and for debates that engage Western scholarship and local circles of knowledge. These ideas can radically change the ontological basis for knowledge production, and have informed my public engagements since 2011. They align with the idea of the open university, and simultaneously involve direct encounters with, and field documentation of, foundational, embodied knowledge that cannot be accessed via written archives, may not fit received conceptual frameworks,

or defy immediate distillation into theoretical discussions. These ideas resonate with Dell Upton’s ‘cultural landscape’ approach to architecture and urban history<sup>7</sup> and the notion of the ‘flipped academic’ where publication is delayed in favour of community engagement.<sup>8</sup>

This year I was named ‘Most Promising New Civil Society Advocate’ for my sustained effort at public engagement and fieldwork on Singapore urban heritage and place histories. But these efforts take time and energy from work that adds to the academic publications record. Asian universities, particularly in Singapore, are currently driven to align with the ‘academic marketplace’ mould for international ranking. There is presently no motivation for universities to consider alternative grounds for assessment. If scholars must pander to the quick-turnover, theory-driven requirements of the ‘academic marketplace’ regime, to the detriment of public engagement or long-term fieldwork, new scholarship and innovative teaching is thwarted – especially for areas of study that concern cultural landscapes connected with a living milieu, and that derive academic renewal precisely from sustained advocacy and painstaking, time-consuming foundational groundwork.

**Imran bin Tajudeen, Department of Architecture, School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore ([imran.tjdn@gmail.com](mailto:imran.tjdn@gmail.com))**

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K.S. Jomo

AS ONE OF A RELATIVELY small handful of trained comparatists working in the field of Asian Studies from the disciplinary home of Comparative Literature, I find that some of the most exciting ‘new’ conversations in Asian Studies have begun to develop from conversations with Asian/American Studies. These two fields have traditionally defined themselves in opposition to one another, with the former focused on an area-studies, nationally and politically oriented approach, and the latter emphasizing epistemological categories, including ethnicity and citizenship, that drew mainly on the history of the United States. The past decade, however, has seen a series of rapprochements in which, for instance, categories ‘belonging’ to Asian American Studies (ethnicity, race, diaspora) have been applied with increasing success to studies of Asia. For example, Asian Studies has responded to the postnational turn in the humanities and social sciences by becoming increasingly open to rethinking its national and regional insularities, and to work that pushes, often literally, on the boundaries of Asia as both a place and a concept. At the same time, Asian American Studies has become increasingly aware of the ongoing importance of Asia to the Asian American experience, and thus more open to work that is transnational or multilingual, as well as to forms of scholarship that challenge the US-centrism of concepts governing the Asian diaspora.

**Charlotte Eubanks, The Pennsylvania State University, [cde13@psu.edu](mailto:cde13@psu.edu)**

THE TERM ‘INDOLOGY’ may seem quite obsolete, but it still indicates a vast field of study beyond the study of Indian history, literature, philosophy, etc., to cover the cultural history of many other countries which have assimilated salient features of ancient Indian civilization, such as religions, statescraft, artistic traditions, writing, and sacred languages. The construction of many great and spectacular monuments of the world, known from the Himalaya countries down to the island of Sri Lanka, and others in mainland and insular Southeast Asia, had been inspired by Buddhism and Hinduism, imported from India, while Sanskrit functioned as the sacred and intellectual language of the royal courts and priestly preceptors in all these countries overseas. Local genius of the areas adopted the Indian ingredients, adapted these to the taste and requirements of the new environment and created magnificent phenomena in architecture, sculpture and painting with distinctive characteristics of their own. And yet, their relationship with the Indian roots remained undeniable.

**Nandana Chutiwongs, author and former curator at the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, [nandana.chutiwongs@hetnet.nl](mailto:nandana.chutiwongs@hetnet.nl)**

THE INCREASE in the number of Asianists hailing from Asian nations is a wonderful development which inevitably enriches the diversity and quality of work in the field, ultimately contributing to better [global] understanding.

**Jacob Kovalio, Carleton University, [jacob\\_kovalio@carleton.ca](mailto:jacob_kovalio@carleton.ca)**

AS A SOMEWHAT naïve undergrad majoring in Chinese I was often reminded that I was not political enough. The time was the early 1970s and I was advised in no uncertain terms to deepen my knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and to adopt the department’s pro-Mao party line. So, I did as I was told and graduated successfully. Fast forward 15 years to the late 1980s and the advice I received was of the same order but in reverse ... The result was a confused graduate student caught up in the crossfire, not to mention a record of the way things once were in the field of modern Chinese studies and the personal price one pays in toeing the line.

The emergence of the field of twentieth century China studies was laudable and profoundly necessary; nonetheless, the straitjacket of narrowly defined ideas that surrounded it was stultifying. One might ask whether the prescribed set of paradigms differed only in kind from the orientalism that accompanied the earlier version of Chinese studies that focused exclusively on the text to the detriment of the culture that gave birth it?

Today, the expansion and openness of Chinese studies is like a breath of fresh air. The field has grown tremendously due to the proliferation of knowledge about China and the critical theories, such as post-colonialism, postmodernism, the spatial turn, cultural studies, border studies, indigenous studies and the host of other ideas that has taken Asian Studies by storm. The freedom to pick and choose any or all these paradigms and to apply them in ways that seem appropriate to the individual researcher stands in very stark contrast to the authoritative ways of the pre-liberalization days. The liberalization in modern and contemporary Chinese scholarship has brought deeper awareness about the nature of Chinese culture and society, which is surely the aim of the field in the first instance, and not to provide a platform for the bias or pre-conceived notions of the individual with a hidden agenda or axe to grind. It is commendable that the wider field of Asian studies has also taken a meaningful step forward to a future that is less constrained and authoritative. In short, as one of the members of the older generation I remain envious of the younger generation who enjoys greater autonomy to think, analyze and write. The result is a discipline that is more enjoyable, inclusive and open to different points-of-view and ways of thinking and being.

**Rosemary Haddon, Massey University, [R.M.Haddon@massey.ac.nz](mailto:R.M.Haddon@massey.ac.nz)**



# Something old, something borrowed and something new?



Curiosity and consideration being the first requirements for contextualizing the studies of Asia in a contemporary setting, we would also need to think of how to substantialize our inspirations on this matter. From my experience of working in the field of Asian Studies from the managerial side, some observations spring to mind that are defining the work, and to some extent the course, of ‘the research project’.

Titia van der Maas

WHAT STRIKES ME MOST in my daily work is the uniformity of the research culture within the humanities and social sciences worldwide. Communicating about the outline and objectives of our research project, mostly digital, is just as easy and efficient with our colleagues in Hong Kong as it is with their counterparts in France, Cambodia or the US. Fulfilling agreements with our partner institutes in Jaipur, Accra or Shanghai, with regard to the organization of a conference or workshop, is both in content and logistics hardly a challenge as we can rely on our hardworking and very much motivated colleagues on site. We labor on the merit of a mutual interest: the advancement of our specific field of interest within Asian Studies and similar understandings about the education and networking aspects fundamental to the *mores* of the scholarly world.

The homogeneity within the way the humanities and social sciences are managed (and I'm sure this can be said for the wider scholarly world) brings enormous benefits to the studies on, with and in Asia. Think of the opportunities created by the use of a shared language, both conceptually and linguistically. The enhancement of interpersonal communications, exchange of ideas, and the growth of open access to publications and resources through the internet, is indeed exciting. Also, the institutionalized and often generic way in which academic knowledge and funding is acquired contributes to a continuity of the studies – albeit, this development is paralleled to a trend of diminishing funding and lack of general interest in the cultural and language studies. Lastly, the global interchangeability of knowledge concepts, students and academic staff is astonishing: the introduction of the BA and MA system worldwide, allowing shared notions of conceptual knowledge within the humanities and social sciences, and additionally, the tenure track system for those who aspire to a lifelong career as a scholar, providing continuity in global career moves.

### Alternative interpretations

So what does a working environment characterized by uniformity mean for the advancement of a research network aimed at ‘reframing’ Asian Studies? As mentioned above, the current academic infrastructure facilitates multiple opportunities for exchanging people, knowledge and money, in a way that may have been possible two decennia ago, but certainly not on such a scale and in such an efficient way as is possible today.

But this involves a challenge. Because how does one encourage alternative conceptual thinking in such an established scholarly world, in terms of research traditions, hierarchy on the work floor, and research funding requirements? When aspiring to provide the field of Asian Studies with alternative interpretations, this is in fact something to consider. The genesis of knowledge transmission remains the relationship between teacher and student. Recalling my own incentives to obtain an MA in history, I must mention the magnificent teachers I had for this subject both at secondary school and university. Their ability to visualize the past and explain its relevance to today's world still amazes me now, especially if you take into account the bunch of indifferent teenagers we were in school.

Even though factual knowledge and pedagogical skills are prerequisites for a lecturer, how does one teach their students to think independently or to be critical about the establishment? Even more so because the students are part of it themselves, or have the future promise of becoming so. During my time at university, the professors were all –with exception of a few –nearly pensioned, white men. Without being too cynical here, they were generally inappreciative of any criticism about their field of interest and, moreover,

Above: Image used in conjunction with the Artistic Intervention Roundtable reproduced courtesy of multimedia artist Tiffany Chung.

their theories that we had to base our essays on. So imagine you learned on-the-job in a Starbucks franchise, but you're eager to start your own coffee bar, thus competing with your former employer? It's not easy to find an investor and to oppose the almost dogmatic popular coffee market – if you'll allow me to use this metaphor.

### Defiance required

Parallel to the ‘franchised’ humanities and social sciences, which we benefit from for all of the above mentioned good reasons, institutes working on the advancement of Asian Studies should also facilitate ‘defiant’ thoughts, or at least stage alternative narratives. This will require getting out of our comfort zone in terms of interdisciplinary and inclusive thinking and with regard to the management of our personal and professional favoritisms. If we would like Asian Studies to remain relevant to a new generation of students and if we endeavor to link the field of studies to contemporary historical developments, we will need to invite the *unusual* suspects – young and creative people – into the existing academic infrastructure, promote new teaching methods, and provide scholarships – however small to start with – as seed funding for alternatives in conceptualizing, writing about and teaching Asian Studies.

Titia van der Maas, programme coordinator of ‘Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context’ – An IIAS research network supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation ([t.van.der.maas@iias.nl](mailto:t.van.der.maas@iias.nl); <http://www.rethinking.asia>).



# Globalizing comparative political science research on Southeast Asia

From my point of view, the scholar of Asia today is a 'global scholar', embedded not only in his/her area studies specialization, but also in constant intellectual dialogue with others in the same discipline, but focused on other Area studies fields. In practice, by dint of the complexity of the 'object', we are studying to becoming interdisciplinary. In short, the scholar of Asia today not only has greater savoir, s/he has an enhanced savoir faire: in a virtuous circle of scientific dialogue, greater interdisciplinarity leads to today's Asia scholar making a more substantial contribution to his/her 'home' discipline. Below, I shall argue the case for political science.

David Camroux

IN LESS THAN A DECADE two interrelated developments have impacted on both the discipline of political science and the field of Southeast Asian Studies. On the one hand a new generation of scholars in North America, Europe, Australasia and Southeast Asia itself has emerged to revitalize research in political science in relation to the ten ASEAN member countries. On the other, the Southeast Asian experience has come to generate theory rather than, as was previously largely the case, being an object on which theory and theoretical concepts from outside were brought to bear.

Of course this latter development had previously occurred in other fields. Consider the work of two intellectual giants in their respective disciplines: Benedict Anderson in history and James Scott in anthropology. Anderson's broad path-breaking work on Indonesia led directly to his seminal study on nationalism globally, *Imagined Communities*; first published in 1983, one that continues to feed into all debates on this subject.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak*, based on a study of peasant farmers in Malaysia, led to a general rethinking of power relations in rural societies globally.<sup>2</sup> While working on themes for his marvelous study of communities in the uplands of continental Southeast Asia, *Living Without a State*, Scott published an inspiring trans-national study on the State and on State capacity.<sup>3</sup>

In the recent past one can cite only two authors in political science/political economy who have had an impact on theorization in a global context. Jeffrey Winter's important study of oligarchy in Indonesia, *Power in Motion*,<sup>4</sup> published in 1996, led later to his widely praised comparative study of varieties of oligarchy, in which, as a heuristic device, he makes an international comparison between warring, ruling, sultanistic and civil oligarchies.<sup>5</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, in his conceptual introductory chapters to the five volumes he edited, sought to draw from the broader Asian experience to break new ground in thinking on subjects such as political legitimacy, civil-military relations, the study of international relations and processes of democratization.<sup>6</sup> These five studies were published in the 'Contemporary Issues in Asia and the Pacific' series at Stanford University Press, a cooperative undertaking with the East West Center, with Alagappa himself the series editor. It therefore comes as no surprise that, with John Sidel and Geoffrey White succeeding him as editors, that my first 'bookend' title featuring the new generation of political science scholars, was published within this series.

The publication in 2008 of an edited volume, *Southeast Asia in Political Science*, demonstrated that comparative political science research on Southeast Asia had come of age.<sup>7</sup> The eleven chapters by a new generation of scholars rapidly making their mark (as well as one by Don Emmerson, a pioneer in the field) are all theoretically rich and avowedly comparative.<sup>8</sup> The three editors of this volume – Dan Slater, Erik Martinez Kohunta and Tuong Vu – have since continued to make a significant contribution to political science research. Dan Slater's innovative study of state formation in Southeast Asia has undoubtedly added substantially to the general comparative theoretical literature on State formation.<sup>9</sup> His typology of institutional outcomes and their causes has relevance beyond the Southeast Asian case studies he conducted, as does the link between contentious and conciliatory politics and authoritarian and democratic outcomes. Like his co-editor Tuong Vu, Slater emphasizes the importance of critical historical junctures in creating political path dependencies. Tuong Vu's broad canvas study comparing emerging, or non-emerging, development trajectories in two Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia and Vietnam, with those in two Northeast Asian nations, South Korea and China, is theoretically sophisticated.<sup>10</sup> He posits a link between patterns of elite alignment and elite-mass engagement and the emergence, or non-emergence of developmental states. Martinez Kuhonta returns to the subject of development in his own broad

study of Southeast Asia in which he underlines the importance of state institutions and political parties in determining equitable outcomes, an argument applicable outside of the region.<sup>11</sup> All three place emphasis on the role of external forces and particularly on the immediate post-World War II period of decolonization as being a watershed in the path dependencies they describe. This insight is also crucial in Ja Ian Chong's, a Singaporean based academic's, nuanced comparative study of state formation in Indonesia and Thailand, as well as China.<sup>12</sup>

Three of the above volumes have been published by Cambridge University Press, which has emerged as the most exciting publisher in the area of Southeast Asian politics. CUP has also just published an edited volume by one of the three editors of the 2008 Stanford publication, Erik Martinez Kuhonta, who with Allen Hickens brings together a representative group of younger political scientists to discuss political parties in Asia in a conceptually rich way.<sup>13</sup> CUP has also published two textbooks by more senior scholars, Jacques Bertrand and Bruce Gilley, both of which attest to the mainstreaming of the new scholarship in Southeast Asian politics.<sup>14</sup> This is also the case in two comparative overviews of the state of democracy throughout Asia, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2010 and 2014.<sup>15</sup> Routledge, alongside Palgrave Macmillan, the main British non-university press publishers, have contributed to this flowering of political science research on Southeast Asia by bringing to a much wider audience the work of a number of dynamic European political scientists: Marco Bunte, Aurel Croissant, Dirk Tomsa and Andreas Ufen.<sup>16</sup> Their work, like that of a previously German-based academic Mark Thompson,<sup>17</sup> is significant both in its comparative dimension and also in its delving into European political science traditions. Routledge has also been very active in publishing the work of Asian<sup>18</sup> and Australian scholars.<sup>19</sup> In crossing disciplinary boundaries, anthropology has become even more central to the research agenda of political scientists as evidenced in an edited volume published in 2012 on *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Power*.<sup>20</sup> Terence Lee at the National University of Singapore draws on anthropology in his study of military responses to popular protests in Asia, and in doing so provides theoretical insights that are salient beyond the Asian cases he examines.<sup>21</sup>

A mere seven years following the Stanford volume, to simply provide a measure of how far we have come, allow me to mention the fourth, very recently published volume in the Routledge Handbook collection devoted to Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> Edited by William Case, a prolific writer from the intermediate generation,<sup>23</sup> and entitled the *Routledge Handbook of Democratization in Southeast Asia*, it is a representative display of 'the state of the art', theoretically rigorous and resolutely comparative.

To conclude, in order to provide for the busy reader a very recent, readily available, example that supports the central argument of this brief overview: an extended article by Marcus Mietzner on the presidency of Joko Widodo (Jokowi) in Indonesia published online by the East West Center.<sup>24</sup> Mietzner, a Canberra-based European scholar who along with Edward Aspinall and Greg Fealy has made the ANU a mecca for the study of Indonesian politics. In this article Mietzner, by postulating a concept of 'technocratic populism' to describe Jokowi's praxis, and juxtaposing this with other theoretical arguments drawn essentially from Latin America, demonstrates how the vibrant Southeast Asian political experience requires us to rethink a number of assumptions and interpretations based on observations in other regions of the world.

David Camroux is Honorary Associate Professor and Senior Researcher at Sciences Po (Centre for International Studies), Paris. (david.camroux@sciencespo.fr).

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# Cartographies of Asia in Latin America

There is an undisputable assumption among all Asian Studies scholars that Asia is a globally relevant topic. Most people, Asianists or not, are familiar with how Asia has affected global history and also with the history of global curiosity concerning Asia. But, how 'global' is this curiosity?

Cláudio Costa Pinheiro

## Conceptual empires

European views of the *Orient* were greatly influential to global perceptions of Asia. Initially, those visions concerned forms of political, economic and cultural imagination organized through forms of knowledge, ultimately at the service of a colonialist structure of power – which are indistinguishably associated to Western domination. This is essentially the critique made by Edward Said (and others before him),<sup>1</sup> through the concept *Orientalism*: imagination is power and knowledge wields control over the other.

Likewise, we should not forget that in modernity, the imagination of contexts (territories and people) colonized by Europe, emerges as a privilege of the colonizers, their descendants and apparatuses of power. This circumstance reinforces a cleavage that opposes an imaginative *North* – that produces imaginations as an attribute of power – to an imagined *South* – the very predicate of that power of imagination.<sup>2</sup>

The area studies framework has somehow, reinforced this scheme. On the one hand, it developed capacities of intellectuals dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of specific spaces. Yet on the other hand, as Willem van Schendel suggests, it reinforced the insulation of academic communities into self-contained realities and “conceptual empires” that, likewise, consecrated the areas to specific themes, methodological approaches, intellectual jargons, etc.<sup>3</sup> Another undesired effect of this approach on international scholarship is that postcolonial peripheries still suffer from the same isolation, blindness and mutual ignorance that affected them under colonialism. Asian, African and Latin American academies nearly never have direct contact and are largely ignorant of one another’s intellectual agendas. It has even affected the geographical perception of these regions, sometimes reinforcing imperial boundaries drawn by colonialism, sometimes dividing them through cultural areas, related to the post 1950s geopolitics of power.

Although the countries of Latin America (LA) share historical connections with Asia, LA has (with a few exceptions) never considered Asia particularly relevant to its reality. In fact, even after the bulk of 19th century independencies, LA continued to hold Europe as its main focus. This has not only led to a mutual disinterest, but also to the silencing of histories that once linked Asia and LA. The deleterious effects of this obscurity comprise not only the loss of histories “stored in social relations”, as Charles Tilly would say,<sup>4</sup> but also politics of “postcolonial amnesia” obliterating connections between peripheries of the Global South.<sup>5</sup> This condition is indeed damaging not only to the academic interaction between LA and Asia, but to the field of Asian Studies as a whole.

## The beginning of Latin America's interest in Asia

From the late eighteen hundreds until the present, more than 120 institutions have been established (and some closed), more than 70 events have taken place and more than 20 journals dedicated to the study of Asia have been published (and some terminated) in Latin America. The current article presents a preliminary survey of the past and present state of Latin American curiosity concerning Asia – from a diffuse 19th century aristocratic inquisitiveness to the professional academic interest of post-WWII – and displays the diversity of views on Asia developed in Latin America.

Historically speaking, connections between these two regions were significant during Iberian colonialism, but decreased again from the 17th to mid-19th centuries when the British Empire controlled the global economic-political scene. In the eighteen hundreds, relations moved through a gradual rapprochement and in the last 15 years have experienced a major revival. Broadly speaking, modern European colonialism as a globalized economic-political system was decisive for establishing effective, yet dispersed and indirect, connections between the peripheral parts of the world.

In economic terms, the commercial flow between Asia and Latin America was not the most intense, especially when compared to the South Atlantic commercial linkages or to the longstanding ties of the Indian Ocean, but it was still relevant.<sup>6</sup> The *carreira da Índia* (the 'India Run'), for example, was one of the most complex and enduring maritime routes of the Modern Age, connecting Europe to the Far East, Africa and South America (up to the Andean region), from the 16th to mid-19th centuries.<sup>7</sup> In that period, many small and medium size companies based on kinship relations helped to maintain cultural and economic ties between colonial territories in parts of South America and Asia.<sup>8</sup>

Although mercantile bonds were central to colonialism, economics was not the sole justification for the connection between those regions. The movement of populations (forced, assisted or voluntary migration), of natural species, products and ideas, concerned not just commercial commodities, but also represented an important part of the circulation of imaginations between Asia and Latin America. For example, textiles from Asia became cult objects within Afro-American religions. Some deities and spirits of these religions can even be identified as the “people of Asia” or “people from the Orient”, often seen as divinities wearing turbans or saris, etc. The religious /spiritual domain was, in fact, very central to the expansion of a certain view of the Orient that reached South and Central America in the 19th century.

The 19th century is when LA's autochthonous interest in Asia first became properly visible. This is the time of the first publications about Asia (or themes widely associated with Asia), the establishment of the first LA diplomatic missions, the presence of LA travellers in Asia, and of the preliminary efforts to institutionalize the continent's curiosity for the Orient – through reading groups, religious societies, journals, associations, publications, etc. Clearly, the 19th and early 20th century Latin American imagination concerning Asia emulated that of Europe – through its Orientalist glasses. This was due to Europe's role as gatekeeper to colonial Asia and postcolonial LA. Colonialism played a definitive role, not only in the way Asia and Latin America were connected, but also in the way Asia was framed by LA imagination.

Most of those first images and publications on Asia were European productions. Very few were by Asian authors – the first Asian author to be translated in LA was R. Tagore, after his Nobel nomination in 1914 (in Brazil, he was the only Asian author to be published until 1948)<sup>9</sup> – and none of the existing translations came from originals in Asian languages. The people in LA who mastered an Asian language at that time belonged to migrant communities and the skill was not very common in intellectual circles.

## Interest in Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries

At a time when Latin America was debating ideas of nation building, the constitution of the people, the importation of migrants to replace slaves, Asia appeared as an alternative pathway to modernization, a source for new civilizational and ontological models, in contrast to European positivism, materialism and nationalism. The spiritual-religious domain associated with the Orient had a particularly pervasive presence in LA. This domain did not forcibly concern any religion in particular, but focussed rather on concepts of spirituality, transcendence and the universality of man.

Asia's identification with ancestral civilizations and ancient religious regimes, embedded the LA imagination of the Orient with a certain notion of immovable time and immemorial traditions, and the mid-20th century Asian movement for independence did not much affect LA's curiosity concerning the continent. By and large Asia continued to be relevant for its past (pre-colonial and colonial), rather than for its present or future.

'Asia' was not recognizable as a geographic entity or sociologic category, but rather the 'Orient', which included the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, Middle East and Asia. It was associated with the non-academic study of colonialism, antiquaries, ancient civilizations and 'oriental' philosophies. LA's interest in Asia was at the time very much confined to aristocratic elites (artists, writers, and dilettantes), to the religious/spiritual spheres or to communities of Asian migrants in urban areas. The source of interest was clearly reflected in funding for the circulation and translation of publications, or the creation of journals and associations. Religious and spiritual societies were particularly active until the 1940s. Also, aristocratic families and upper-class philanthropists were curious about the exotic, the occult, spirituality and poetry, but not Asia's political context.

## Asia's appeal, 1950-1980

The idea of Asia in LA suffered a radical change after WWII; in fact, all postcolonial peripheries were affected by how the development debate and the later area studies approach framed their existence in the global political and intellectual arena. In this period, Latin American Asia became a theme of formal academic investigation and teaching in disciplines such as history, economics and social sciences, literature and language.

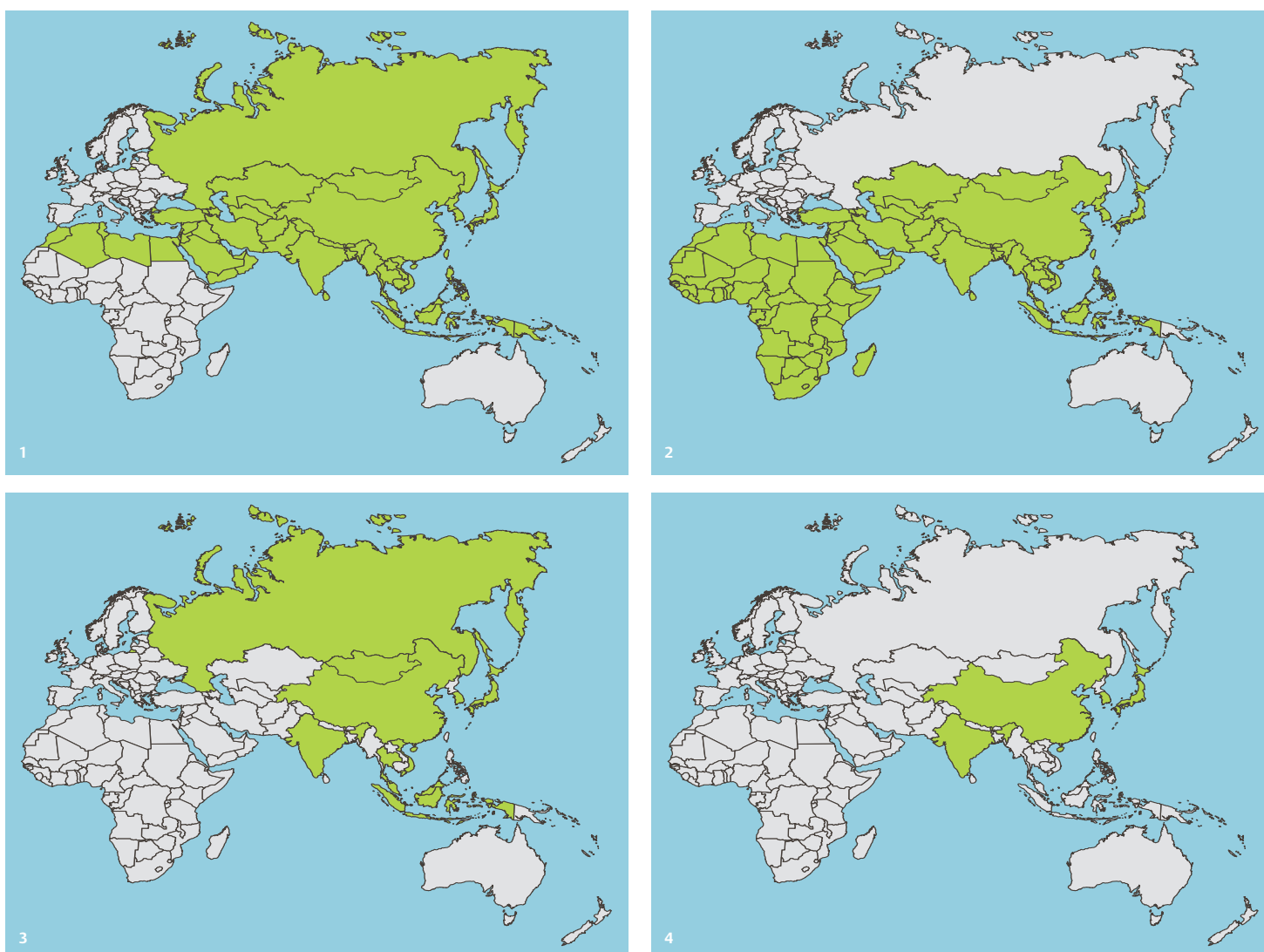
While it remained a historically relevant topic with regard to pre-colonial and colonial issues, Asia was certainly affected by the development debate. This is when A. Sauvy developed the concept of the Third World,<sup>10</sup> approximating Asia to Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, identifying these as places devoid of development and modernity. Accordingly, views of history and narratives of time continued to classify Asia not only as the land of immemorial past, but as a space of non-development, where modernity never arrived and with restricted possibilities for change. In the 1950-80s, LA endured a number of dictatorships; and though the promotion of development was prioritized by military regimes, academic interest in underdevelopment (e.g., in Asia and Africa) was under scrutiny. Paradoxically, this period of time, when LA and Asia were considered to be unable to achieve the *future* (as developed societies), was the time when they became mutually interested in their *present* (of underdevelopment).

The profile of scholars interested in Asia changed from *antiquarians* and curious dilettantes to professional academics. It did not mean that there were Asianists in LA, but at best 'thirdworldists' or 'developmentalists'. Scholars skilled in Asian languages started to appear, though mostly speaking languages of migrant communities present in LA, such as Japanese, Arabic, and Russian. Linguistic skills were still not seen as a mandatory part of academic capacitation in LA.

Below: 'Barbie Kali' and 'Ken Buda' from the series 'Barbie, the plastic religion' (Buenos Aires, 2014), produced by Argentinian artists, Marianela Perelli and Emiliano Paolini ([www.pooly-marianela.com](http://www.pooly-marianela.com)). Photo courtesy of the artists.







The changes in LA's imagination of Asia again influenced its perceived geography (physical boundaries) of Asia, and accordingly, the politics of scholarship and institutionalization of Asian Studies in LA. From the late 1950s on, we see the inauguration of the first academic institutes, journals and centres for Asian Studies. The majority of these concerned Afro-Asian Studies – heavily influenced by the corresponding liberation movements and the spirit of Bandung and Non-Aligned Countries – or focused on individual countries (Japan, mostly). In both cases, the scholars were interested in the development debate. Asia was inevitably linked to Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and was framed as an indistinguishable part of the Third World.

A number of institutes and journals for Afro-Asian Studies had appeared in the late 1950s, but it was in the 1970s that this agenda became truly established. In 1978, for example, the ALADAA (Latin American Association of Asian and African Studies) was founded in Mexico, very much inspired by the ideological discussion on the consequences of colonialism and capitalism to peripheral societies. It was only in the late 1980s that local academic institutions began to consider Asia through other frameworks.

Funding in the 1970s and 1980s was not particularly abundant, and what there was came from Asiatic Foundations, public LA research funding agencies and, to a small degree, university departments and institutions. Asiatic Foundations focused on promoting the study and interest of the national sphere – such as the Japan or Korea Foundations. They restricted their support to language-training, and topics concerning the nation (not the region). Small grants were also managed by LA ministries and public universities to develop specific programs, journals or events on themes concerning Asia.

#### Institutionalization, 1990 onwards

From 1990 onwards, there was another interesting change in the perception of Asia in Latin America. Asia suddenly went from being the land of ancient civilizations, immobile time, and unchangeable realities of underdevelopment, to the land of *forthcoming prosperity*, and *ultimate modernity* and *forecasting futurology*. Again, the change in perception resulted in a new 'geography' of Asia, and LA's interest shifted from Japan to China; and places like Korea and India, for example, became more relevant for their present and future than for their pasts.

Asia continues to impact Latin America's intellectual and political agenda through the debate on economic development, and research now includes configurations that accommodate discourses on emerging development, like the 'Asian Tigers' or the 'BRICS' countries, ASEAN, etc. Thus in the 1990s and 2000s Asia was reframed through having achieved (some sort of) modernity. Public foundations and governmental initiatives invested in research and academic cooperation, motivated by the belief that some regions of LA and Asia share a common future of prosperity. Although the institutionalization of LA intellectual curiosity for Asia has been visible since the late 19th century, it is remarkable that the bulk of this interest came after 2000. It coincides with the celebration of the so-called 'emerging

Above: Latin American views of Asia's geography. Fig. 1: 19th-20th Century until WW2. Fig. 2: 1950-80s. Fig. 3: 1990s. Fig. 4: present day.

countries' as the future champions of development, and with the establishment of coalitions between those countries in both regions. During this period, direct intellectual connections have developed enormously. The number of publications on Asia has grown significantly; translations of Asian publications have started to appear, as well as publications authored by Latin American scholars. The number of events on Asian issues increased visibly, so too the circulation of Asian intellectuals in LA. Paradoxically, the consolidation of Asian Foundations supporting research and intellectual capacity in LA has undermined Asia, simply because the foundations tend to prioritize national state agendas (research on issues that are central to their countries, promoting language training, etc), instead of the regional/continental. The more these state initiatives enter the arena, the less Asia is visible as a totality.

#### Conclusion

A healthy curiosity between LA and Asia challenges the hegemony of the North Atlantic framework, helping to de-center Asian Studies. Democratizing the Asian Studies platform, including Latin American or African views on Asia, would already be sufficient reason to pursue this quest, but ideally, the capacity of scholars from LA needs to also be enforced. The ground is already very promising. With some concentration in the most rich and powerful countries of the region, we have (or have had) institutions dedicated to Asia in 17 (out of 26) countries of the continent. Of course, the existence

of institutions does not necessarily improve the existence of a local academic community or of a continued debate concerning Asia. Unfortunately, only 5 of the institutes produce a journal and only 6 organize events regularly. Journals, publications and events are indicators of the 'liveliness' of an intellectual community, the constant circulation of funding and the production of research that feeds publications (journals and books). The consolidation of Asian Studies in the region should encourage the publication (of journals and books), the offer of research grants and simultaneously the participation of LA scholars in events of the area.

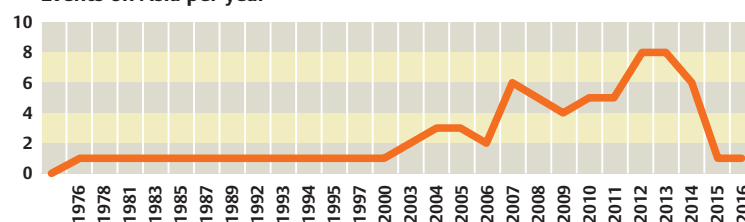
The advantages for the field of Asian Studies and for Social Sciences are potentially huge: to unfold forgotten historical connections, to compare theoretical frameworks, and to propose renewed vocabularies of analytic categories that do not share the historical background of the European Orientalist approach.<sup>11</sup>

**Cláudio Costa Pinheiro is Professor at the Institute of History at Rio de Janeiro Federal University, and Chair of the Sepsis Programme (South-South Programme for the History of Development). His recent research projects involve the dynamics of the international scientific production developed outside the hegemonic centers, analyzing intellectual dependency at peripheral contexts in relation to an international academic mainstream (c.pinheiro@sephis.org).**

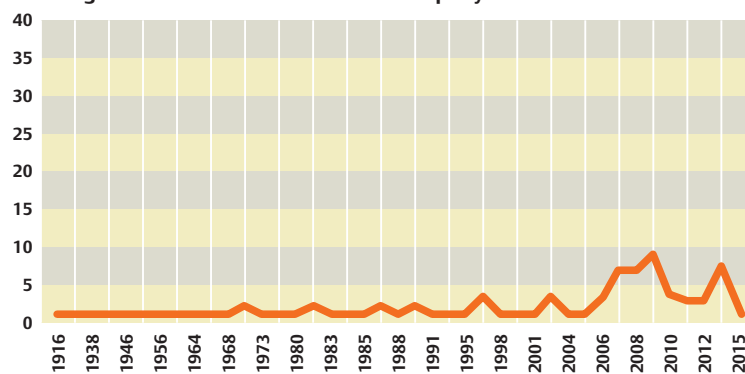
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- ibid. note 2
- Sauvy, A. 1952. 'Trois Mondes, Une planète', *L'Observateur* 11 8:14.
- This is also the ambition of a consortium of institutions, led by IIAS, when developing the African Association of Asian Studies (A-ASIA)

Latin America Events on Asia per year



Latin America Inauguration of Asia-related institutions per year



Institutions dedicated to Asia per LA country

Country	Institutions	Events	Journals	Chairs
Argentina	23	11	4	3
Bahamas	1	-	-	-
Bolívia	1	-	-	-
Brazil	29	13	12	1
Chile	14	18	2	-
Colômbia	14	18	-	3
Costa Rica	1	-	-	-
Cuba	2	1	-	-
Equador	4	-	-	-
Guiana	1	-	-	-
Jamaica	1	-	-	-
México	18	9	4	2
Nicarágua	1	-	-	-
Peru	7	-	-	-
Suriname	-	-	-	1
Trinidad y Tobago	1	-	-	1
Uruguai	1	-	-	-
Venezuela	3	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>12</b>



# Africa and the unmasking of Asia

Masking has a long and rich history on the continents of Africa and Asia. In Africa the notable masking tradition of the Yorubas of West Africa comes to mind. In Asia the dexterity and speed of China's face mask artists have intrigued and entertained theatre lovers for centuries.<sup>1</sup> Merged, intertwined and entangled with ontology, epistemology and even meta-physics, masking has played cultural, philosophical and moral roles in these ancient societies. To be sure, in both societies and civilizations, to mask is temporally and temporarily transmutative; the masked take on another identity that only unmasking can reverse. As Africa and Asia interact far more intensely today I will argue that a Kierkegaardian unmasking moment, of an existential quality, has been reached: "Do you not know that there comes a midnight hour when everyone has to throw off his mask?"<sup>2</sup> I will show that 'a midnight hour' has struck for contemporary Africa-Asia relations and why for Africa an unmasked Asia that reveals an authentic self (to borrow Kierkegaard's word) is critical for Africa.

Lloyd G. Adu Amoah

## Long connections

It is often mistakenly believed that current Africa-Asia relations were initiated during the Cold-War or better still, post-America world. However, Africa-Asia relations have deep roots going back into antiquity. The Chinese may have reached Alexandria (Egypt) overland in Han times and evidence of early Africa-China contacts in the medieval period is reflected in Chinese porcelain and coins found in and around the eastern coast of Africa.<sup>3</sup> With regard to Africa's eastern coast, the Indian Ocean in particular has proved the vital waterway linking Africa and Asia "melding ... ideas, peoples and material objects that became the basis for conceptualizing the Indian Ocean as one of flows and fluidity."<sup>4</sup>

More recently, what has become known rather debatably as the East Asian Miracle,<sup>5</sup> which has been followed by the increasing importance of China and India in the global economy, has concentrated attention on Africa-Asia relations. In the trajectory of interactions, traced albeit briefly here, it can be argued that a midnight hour of urgency has struck the path, on both continents, that has been marked by imperialist subjugation and the fight for self determination and freedom. To be precise, Western imperialist subjugation was to have a particularly telling impact in the way in which Africa has come to view and therefore engage Asia. The West's cultural (and therefore ideational) imprints (however superficial) on modern Africa erected a glass wall through which Asia was viewed darkly, hazily and from a safe distance. This orientation was to be reinforced by the diplomatic, trade, economic, educational, informational, migratory and other ties that bound former colonial entities to the former metropolitan centers, long after the years of independence and liberation struggles. To overturn this historical intermediation implies a conscious, sustained, systematic and organic engagement with Asia in all its varied manifestations directly by Africans, as a matter of necessity and urgency.

Below: Kwame Nkrumah with Mao, photo courtesy of the Chinese Embassy in Accra.



## Unmasking: from haziness to clarity

One of Africa's leading thinkers of the 20th century, the Ghanaian Dr. J.B. Danquah, provides a useful (if not exhaustive) insight into understandings Africans held about Asia in his day and even now. There seems to have always been a quest for deeper knowledge about Asia and its people, beyond the facile. It is important to quote Danquah in full here:

*Many years ago, at the court of Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, during the Second Great War, a party of British Information officers called on the late Okyenhene,<sup>6</sup> and I was there with them. He asked me this question: "Tell me," he said, "any time I take a photograph of some of your people, the negatives come out with a Chinese slant of eyes. But when the negatives are printed, the slant disappears. Why? Have you had any Chinese contacts in these parts?" All I could say was that I did not know. But who can deceive or conceal nature from nature? Ghana and China, have they ever had organic, or cultural or biological connection through the ages? If so how and when?<sup>7</sup>*

If the circumstances that brought China into the dialogue above seem simplistic and even tasteless, Danquah's retort and subsequent reflection showed that Asia, and just what to make of it, weighed on the consciousness of Africa's educated elites. In Danquah's vast world of thinkery as a linguist, philosopher and culturalist, Asia loomed large, even if mysterious. He drew comparisons, however furtive, between the matrilineal Abusua system of the Akan and those of south India.<sup>8</sup> Danquah tried to unravel the complexity of the Akan seven day calendar in his research by positing links to China's own. In the field of public policy, politics, economics and social organization Asia was also a constant reference point for Danquah. Japan was the best example of a world beater for Africa to emulate with its "consumer-oriented society" underpinned by a liberal economic and political system.<sup>9</sup> In his view, small Japan had upstaged China economically because the latter was Marxian and state-led, and therefore undermined individual initiative, liberties and freedom. This last point manifests rather vividly all the signs of the ideological struggles that came to define the Cold War and marked Ghanaian and African politics and policy formation right up to the 1980s. It is worth noting here that Danquah's political contemporary, Joe Appiah (father of the noted literary scholar and philosopher, Kwame Anthony Appiah) had visited China in 1972, and based on what he saw surmised almost presciently that "China's best is yet to come."<sup>10</sup> In addition to the politics, economics and policy reflections, we must add the active conversion to and practice of Asian religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, in 20th century Africa.

In the deliberately selected lucubration above a set of pertinent questions force themselves upon us. In Danquah's cultural disquisitions on Asia, would his analysis have been sharper if there was a long tradition of Asian studies by Africans from which he could draw? If Danquah had been exposed to Asian values, ideas, history and culture more intimately and directly (he had to conduct some of his research in the British Museum and therefore deal with all the Euro-centric biases that the curation and organization of documents and artefacts will bear), would his almost Manichaeic view of Japan and China have been tempered? To be sure these are questions that are all too simplistically counterfactually

derived. The historical, material and technological conditions in Africa in particular (and the world generally) in the last two hundred years (at the very least), had conspired to make a pointed focus on Asian studies in many ways a virtual luxury. For one, Africa was trying to understand itself and reconstruct its past; both projects though still ongoing, have largely been successful. Today, blinding technological changes and altered geo-political and economic realities (inspired in the main by Asia's ascendancy), make it possible for Africa to begin building its own tradition of Asian studies.

## Unmasking : towards greater clarity

How (and why) should Africa at this juncture in history approach the study of Asia? Undoubtedly, this question has been reflected on by some of Africa's leading minds, among them Chinweizu and Ayi Kwei Armah, long before Asia became ascendant in the last half of the 20th century. In one of Armah's fictional works, *Osiris Rising*, the pursuit of a new Africa involves drawing up a curriculum that features a deliberate collection of courses connected with Asian studies. Presently, two issues are pertinent for Asian studies in Africa: institution building, and with it, making it possible for the emergence and sustainability of African Asianists. There have been some attempts at institution building, albeit of very recent provenance. South Africa's Stellenbosch University's Centre for China Studies (set up in 2004) is one such example. Strategy3 (established in 2010), a private research firm based in Accra (Ghana), is the first and only think tank in the West African country explicitly founded with a clear focus on fostering and promoting Asian studies. Recently, Confucian Institutes (promoted in the main by the Chinese Government) have sprouted across the campuses of Africa's universities. The Japanese Government, through the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), has been promoting the study of Japan's culture and language in Africa. I will not attempt a comprehensive survey here. It is clear, however, that in the last three decades attempts have been made in Africa to understand Asia via institutionalized entities. Two approaches seem evident. There are new institutions (private/state or a combination), purpose-built to follow, track and unpack Asia interactions with Africa, and there are existing institutions (private/state or a combination), which have added an Asian focus to their portfolios, as Africa-Asia relations deepened and expanded in the timeframe in question.<sup>11</sup> A third approach may be added, which would include the Confucian Institutes, among others: public diplomacy entities actively initiated, funded and supported by some Asian governments. The first two approaches have tended to be mostly directed at the political-economy of Asia-Africa relations and have thus focused on the the evolving patterns in trade and economic interactions, development assistance, governance, migration, and the like. The third approach has focused on cultural matters, such as promoting the study of Japanese, Mandarin or Asian cuisine, fashion and creative work.

While all the above are useful, the institution building contemplated here should move Asian studies in Africa to higher levels of intensity, coverage and depth. Asian studies should therefore extend beyond the policy-political-economy themes (without abandoning them) and tenaciously engage Asia in its diversity and complexity: art, language, literature, history, philosophy, religion, etc. Here must be noted the inordinate focus on the materially rich regions of Asia, to the exclusion of other very important parts of the continent such as the borderland areas of Southeast Asia and Central Asia; a new focus is definitely called for. This new frontier of Asian studies should therefore aim to actively build expertise in these areas, from the undergraduate to graduate levels. This undertaking should open up a new vital axis of intellectual and cultural connections that would unmask fresh insights into the human experience, hitherto unjustifiably marginalized or totally ignored.

From 24-26 September 2015, the University of Ghana (Legon) hosted (with the support of the Association for Asian Studies in Africa, the International Convention of Asian Scholars, the International Institute for Asian Studies, and other organizations around the world) the first ever 'Asian Studies in Africa Conference'. This should offer fresh beginnings for sustained Africa-Asia intellectual dialogue. Under the aegis of the Association for Asian Studies in Africa (A-ASIA), the plan is to institutionalize this conference so it will serve as a flagship event on Asian Studies in Africa, to be held in different parts of Africa and Asia every two or three years. Publication on Africa-Asia is also being encouraged through this conference with the initiation of the Africa-Asia Book Prize in 2014. Adam Lifshey of GeorgeTown University won the first Africa-Asia Book Prize (see page 6 of this issue). In addition, an Africa-Asia Book Series is planned from the many insightful presentations made at the Accra Conference.

## The first step to learning

Chinese sages have said that 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step'. Of course, Africa is increasingly coming to the realization that an in-depth understanding



# Asian Studies in the Arab states of the Gulf: challenges and potential

This is a preliminary exploration into the state of Asian Studies in the Arab states of the Gulf. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are the six countries that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): a regional bloc formed in 1981 on the basis of geographical contiguity for economic, technical, social and cultural cooperation. They share not only a common religious and linguistic heritage, they are also endowed with hydrocarbon resources that have fueled rapid economic growth and modernization.

Habibul Haque Khondker

EDUCATION—ESPECIALLY HIGHER EDUCATION—as an important aspect of modernization, though relatively new in this region, has received considerable state patronage. The first university in this area, King Saud University, was set up in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1957. Kuwait University was founded in 1966. University education began in Qatar in 1973, with gender-segregated faculties. The first university in the UAE, the United Arab Emirates University, was initiated in 1976, in Al Ain. The first public university in Oman, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), opened in 1986. And in the same year, the University of Bahrain was established to combine the existing College of Arts, Sciences, and Education (1978) and the Gulf Technical College (1968).

## Meeting the demands of a modernizing world

Most of these universities were public institutions created to meet the challenges of the human resource requirements of the modernizing countries of the region; social sciences were not given a priority. In fact, throughout the Arab world the modern universities are relatively young. A recent report observed: "... 97 percent of Arab Universities—491 out of 508—were created after 1950 ... 70 percent did not exist before 1991".<sup>1</sup> One of the challenges faced by these universities is the singular focus on technical and skill developments, accompanied by a penetration of market ideology, which affects both the curricula as well as the structure of the higher educational institutions. In all, the corporatization of the universities takes a toll on liberal education. Yet, it is interesting to observe that social science education is likely to receive more attention with growing interest in East Asia, which has become a dynamic economic region. With growing trade relations between the Arab Gulf states and China, Chinese soft power is being felt.

## Soft power

The first Confucius Institute to be established on the Arabian Peninsula was in Dubai, in 2011. The second opened at Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, in 2012. The third Confucius Institute to come to the region is situated at the University of Bahrain, set up in 2014. Of the total 437 Confucius

Institutes worldwide (as of June 2015), there are only three in the Arab Gulf states, and a total of nine in the Middle East (two each in Egypt and Jordan, one each in Lebanon and Iran). In Russia alone there are twice as many Confucius Institutes than in the entire Middle East. The US, of course, is its main destination, with a presence at 96 universities.

The Confucius Institute was created following President Hu Jintao's 2005 call for "enhancing soft power of Chinese culture". Joseph Nye, among others, is skeptical about the success of the soft power offensive, since China applies oppressive policies against its own civil society.<sup>2</sup> Nye's analysis may be appropriate insofar as the United States, and other democracies with a vibrant civil society are concerned, but for the rest of the Global South, China's cultural diplomacy may prove to yield positive outcomes.

The Confucius Institute at Zayed University, as it does elsewhere, offers Chinese language courses, which have in recent years grown in popularity. The University of Dubai (established in 1997) offers Chinese language training for various governmental departments of the UAE. The University of Bahrain is a mature university with a Japanese studies program alongside French, German and American programs. Zayed University has also hosted the King Sejong Institute of Korea since 2010, which offers Korean language courses. In 2015, Sultan Qaboos University of Oman (SQU) became part of the Silk Road Universities Network (SUN), which was formed at Hankuk University in Jeonju, Republic of Korea. These are important steps that promise research cooperation and an exchange of students promoting interests in East Asian Studies.

## Popular culture

In the GCC universities, the initial focus was to train students for the rapid modernization taking place in their societies. Humanities and social sciences did not receive much attention. In recent years, however, that lacunae is being addressed. General education courses at a number of UAE universities are 'going global' and now deal with not only western civilizations, but also include Asian civilizations. At Zayed University, a full course is offered within the Masters in Diplomacy program

on East Asia, covering China, Japan and Korea and the Newly Industrializing economies. The UAE University in Al Ain also offers a minor in Korean language. Following the course structure of North American universities, many of the public universities in the region have introduced general education programs, designed to generate a higher global awareness. Many of these programs involve Asia, but more specialized courses on Asian regions are still rather limited.

The absence of advanced courses or programs on East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Central Asia in the Gulf universities does not indicate a lack of awareness of the importance of the emergence or re-emergence of (specific parts of) Asia. Japan and the Republic of Korea have already made significant impressions insofar as their popular cultures are concerned. Many academic institutions in the region celebrate Japan day. At Zayed University, there are Japanese Clubs and Korean Clubs initiated by the students who partake in various Japanese cultural activities. The Japanese cartoon genre *manga* has won the hearts and minds of many young Emiratis and has made an impact on Gulf culture.<sup>3</sup> The availability of Arabic versions of *manga* is proof of the popularity of East Asian pop-culture. There is also a growing number of fans of Korean drama and K-pop among the Gulf youth.

Insofar as South Asia is concerned, the influence of Bollywood as the purveyor of soft power has also played an important role. Indian cinema has an appeal in the Gulf region beyond the expatriate South Asian audience. Many Gulf citizens are enamored by the dazzle of Indian cinema. The younger Emiratis, however, do not necessarily share the same degree of enthusiasm of their parent's generation, and prefer to divide their attention between the Hollywood-generated and East Asian popular cultures.

## Looking east

In this exploratory paper, by no means an exhaustive survey, some challenges, i.e., an excessive emphasis on the corporatization of higher education is discernible, yet the changing politico-economic realities of the world, and the recent 'Look East' tendency in the Gulf, may portend a bright future for Asian Studies in the region. But this is not going to happen on its own, a change of vision at the top decision-making levels, infused by an understanding of the changing global realities, would be needed.

Habibul Haque Khondker,  
Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
(Habibul.Khondker@zu.ac.ae).

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- 3 Good, O. 2009a. 'Gold Ring: The UAE's first Manga', *The National* (Abu Dhabi) July 20; Good, O. 2009b. 'Mad About Manga', *The National* (Abu Dhabi) September 22; Johnston, E. 2011. 'East Meets West', *Vision* (Dubai) August.



Left: Kwame Nkrumah with Zhou Enlai, photo courtesy of the Chinese Embassy in Accra.

Continued from page 38

of Asia has an existential value in a rapidly changing world. That is a crucial first step. Turning this realization into concrete measures revolving around institutions, training and research programmes, backed by dependable sources of funding over a long period, should define the next vital steps; steps that the Accra conference hopes to inspire. The African sages intone that 'if you learn you will know'. That should be inspiration enough, as Africa begins the process of bridging the unacceptable intellectual gap that has existed between the two continents; this is a critical move for the mutual unmasking of both sides.

Lloyd G. Adu Amoah, Strategy3 and Ashesi University College, Ghana (lgaamoah@gmail.com)

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- 1 Most notably expressed in what has come to be known as the Peking Opera.
- 2 Kierkegaard, S. 2004. *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*, Penguin Classics
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- 4 Gupta, P. 2010. 'Introduction', in Pamela Gupta, et al. (eds.) *Eyes across the water: navigating the Indian Ocean*, Pretoria: University of South Africa (UNISA) Press, p.3.
- 5 The writings of Asian thinkers like Kaoru Sugihara show

that the economic transformation of leading Asian countries like Japan was wrought from painstaking, incremental socio-technological changes driven by state led policy over decades rather than from a sudden miraculous turn of events. See for example, Sugihara, K. 2004. *The State and the Industrious Revolution in Japan*, Working Paper 02/04, London: London School of Economics.

- 6 Refers (in a loose and imprecise rendering in English) to the King of the Akyem people, one of the sub-groups of the Akans of Ghana and West Africa. It must be noted here that Danquah worked closely under Okyenhene Nana Ofori-Atta I (his paternal brother) from 1915-1921.
- 7 Danquah, J.B. 1997. *The Ghanaian Establishment: Its Constitutions, its Detentions, its Traditions, its Justice and Statecraft, and its Heritage of Ghanaism*, Accra: Ghana Universities Press, p. 304.
- 8 Loosely translated in English as 'clan'. To paraphrase Danquah's words, Akan society is divided into clans and the clans into smaller families, based on the matrilineal system; *ibid* note 8, p.298.
- 9 *Ibid.* note 8, p.122
- 10 Appiah, J. 1996. *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, p.288.
- 11 The Dakar-based African Center for Trade, Integration and Development's programme on 'Globalization, Emerging Markets and South-South Trade' and the Pretoria-based Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute's (TMALI) emerging focus on China, are typical examples.



# New Asia Now

## Griffith Review 49: New Asia Now

Co-edited by Julianne Schultz and Jane Camens. Accompanying the print edition of *New Asia Now* (volume 1) is an exclusive e-book (volume 2) that includes an additional eighteen pieces. All available from <https://griffithreview.com/editions/new-asia-now/>

GRIFFITH REVIEW –the leading Australian literary, cultural and current affairs quarterly –has always adopted an outward looking perspective, but this year it has undertaken a most ambitious venture: publishing a collection of young writers from the Asia Pacific region. Over its twelve-year life Griffith Review has published a number of editions with a regional focus, most notably the New Zealand themed *Pacific Highways* (2014) and *In the Neighbourhood* (2008), but *New Asia Now* took this to a new level, publishing 49 writers from 20 countries.

Australia is part of the Asian hemisphere, and in recent years there has been increasing public policy and economic focus on ways of engaging with the region. Almost all of this discussion, however, has been about the economic opportunities as the countries in Asia become more prosperous and increasingly middle-class. Asian countries are Australia's main trading partners and increasingly the source of its immigrants; Australians travel extensively in the region, and hundreds of thousands of young people from these countries study at Australian universities.

Although Australian arts groups perform and exhibit widely in many of these countries, cultural exchange has received less attention than trade. But, last year the Australia Council decided to make this cultural exchange a focus of its activities in 2015, as part of its agenda as the leading arts funder of a 'culturally ambitious nation'. Griffith Review proposed and received support for a special edition featuring writers from throughout the region –in an endeavour to showcase with more depth and nuance the issues that shape the lives of people as they are lived today. We decided to limit the edition to those writers born since 1970, writers who had grown up in what we now think of as the *new Asia* –post war, post colonialism, post revolution –and who were likely to become increasingly influential in their own countries and abroad.

## Griffith Review 49 New Asia Now

Edited by Julianne Schultz and Jane Camens.  
Maggie Tiojakin, Joshua Ip, Sheng Keyi, Murong Xuecun,  
Miguel Syjuco, Annie Zaidi, Michelle Law, Omar Musa.



Detail from: *Nomads 2014*, by Baatarzorig Batjargal, Mongolia b.1983.

Much of the writing about Asia that is available in the west has come from an older generation of writers, and is often framed by earlier political and economic situations. We were determined to showcase the voices of younger writers; not only did many of the authors address contemporary issues, a number wrote about the process of interrogating the past, a past which was often glossed over as they were growing up. This edition presents investigations of the past in relation to China, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kashmir, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, and in the writing by Australian writers who have a connection by heritage or experience in the region.

As we embarked on the task of selecting the articles to be included, we realised how brilliantly these writers were addressing the core issue of making sense of the reality behind the talk of the Asian Century. The complexities of living in rapidly changing, yet traditionally informed societies were teased out. Similarities and differences were thrown into shape relief. Reflecting on different forms of political organisation, the way democracy is evolving, the points of optimism and resistance, were all themes that recurred. Interestingly the fault lines also recurred – particularly around issues of corruption and dynastic power, and the place of women.

This has been a huge and ambitious project, and a unique example of cultural diplomacy –some of the authors felt that they could say things in an internationally published journal that they could not say at home. A number of the authors have expressed their gratitude for this opportunity and explained the formal and informal retribution they might receive if they published these essays at home. One Indonesian writer explained that after years of being censored, to write in her authentic voice was a life-affirming gift for which she was deeply grateful.

By publishing in this way, not only are Australian and international audiences given an insight into the richness and diversity of regional writing, but it demonstrates Australian commitment to the exchange of ideas and artistic excellence and cultural ambition. *New Asia Now* is not only a beautifully written and crafted collection, but it is the starting point for a much deeper exchange.

Professor Julianne Schultz,  
Founding Editor, Griffith Review  
([www.griffithreview.com](http://www.griffithreview.com))

## New Asia Now: only connect

Review of Schultz, J. & J. Camens (eds.) 2015.  
*Griffith Review 49: New Asia Now*, Brisbane and Melbourne:  
Griffith University in conjunction with Text Publishing  
Review by Richard Newman

THIS COLLECTION OF ESSAY, memoir, reportage, fiction, and poetry –an assembly typical of Griffith Review –both reacts to and emerges from the pluralism and ambition of 'the Asian Century'. It is, in a substantial sense, this quality or posture of reactive, receptive, critical awareness that helps to constitute what Jane Camens and Julianne Schultz, in the volume's introduction, call 'New Asia'. *New Asia* is not a matter simply of time, nor purely of geography; it is also alomb, daring, difficult retrospection, hope, anger, and intelligence.

The introduction affirms that the following work is that of a younger generation, born since 1970, "one that has grown up during a period of extraordinary change: countries decolonised, civil wars fought and won, political systems turned inside out, authoritarian states fallen to democracies." Murong Xuecun's opening essay, 'Wake up while the flowers are blossoming: Chinese thinking in the age of the internet', reflects on the opportunities for individualistic chat, jokes, and complaints, made available to an expressive Chinese public through the internet. But this online botany is not quite, as Murong makes clear, the signal of a political system decisively turning or being turned inside out; it is in many ways, less encouragingly, presage to an authoritarian power growing more flexible in order to effect different, profound constraint. A population exultantly breathes out, and coils (firewalls, arrests, crackdowns of various kinds) implacably tighten. The awareness, the interconnected wakefulness, of the Asian Century this volume rightly values and richly communicates, is visible, audible, and very largely unacceptable to authoritarian governments unfallen to democracy and enduringly hostile to the gentlest dynamics of modern cultural life.

### Powerful uncertainties

Joshua Ip's poem 'the umbrella men' offers affectingly well-judged comment on the necessary, poetical unpredictability of authentically shared political activity in Asia and elsewhere. Ip's poem registers, with some pathos, how sluggish and

impetuous and reversible political change can be –how fierce, for the time being, is *New Asia's* dialectical clinch with Old Asia. And André Dao's essay, 'All for the people, without the people: Asian values, democracy and human rights', properly and powerfully includes Australia in a vision of promising, but often faltering social change in our region. As Dao writes, "The campaign leading up to the 1967 referendum, which granted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the right to vote, stretched out over ten long years. That campaign was –it had to be –an incredibly broad and powerful social movement that crossed the usual divides of class, gender, race and ideology. But following the successful referendum, that movement splintered. In the nearly fifty years since that watershed, progress on Aboriginal rights in Australia has failed to live up to the promise of that campaign." Dao's unsparing essay is the highlight of this collection. Victory and defeat are not the sole possible outcomes of struggle, and liberal democracy and victory are not synonymous.

Miguel Syjuco's essay, 'Beating dickheads: The writer's role in defective democracies', is good on this point: on the compatibility of an expanding middle-class and a stable government with rancid power-hoarding and astonishing inequality. The artistic expression of historical identities and memories helps, but culture is consistently marked for destruction. Keane Shum's piece of reportage, 'The way one fell', concerning democratic reform in Hong Kong, cuts effectively to the past to illustrate the city's long-running churn of self-definition and (brutal and bureaucratic) subjection: "The Song Dynasty was steward of the greatest technological advancements man had ever known. But all the art and literature, the scientific breakthroughs, even gunpowder, could not hold at bay marauding Mongol invaders from the north, and in a string of military defeats and naïve alliances, the Song Dynasty kept retreating, always south."

### Displacement and shame

Tammy Law's series of photographs, 'Burma untold', is another significantly valuable part of this edition of *Griffith Review*. Images of great rural peace are undercut by captions indicating the poverty that exists alongside agricultural fertility, and the terrifying displacement of Burmese people within and without their country's borders. Succeeding photographs show some of the Burmese resettled abroad, some longing to return to a socially peaceful homeland.

Jessie Cole's brief memoir, 'The Asian invasion', is worth mentioning in relation to this manifestly unthreatening picture of refugees; Cole throws back on itself Pauline Hanson's hypocritical loathing for people allegedly refusing to assimilate. Anne Zaidi's memoir, 'Embodying Venus: Memories of shame and shamelessness', turns from the national, trans-national, oil-spill dimensions of Hanson's strident embarrassment, to the personal, "private view of our bodies" she acquired as a girl at a convent college-hostel in Ajmer, Rajasthan. Zaidi captures and communicates with understated moral force the fairly mechanical, fairly taken-for-granted twist whereby the shame flowing from acts of "statutory rape at the very least" coalesced not around the men responsible but around the bodies of the girls. It is detailed, vital commentary on the stigmatised, unaccepted power of the female body.

### A new generation of writers and thinkers

The volume does an admirable, often acute, job of illustrating what it is, what it might increasingly be, about new generations of writers and thinkers in Asia that gives some cause or license for the introduction's positive-spirited outlook. This regularly consists of scathing realism and honest scepticism about political dogma; Asian orthodoxy and imported liberalism alike. *New Asia Now* is a populous, vigorous, diverse collection, with an interesting and powerful belligerence about a number of its pieces. There is a fierce excited consciousness that not knowing what might happen is no good reason to stop or slow down. It's proper, and useful, to say that efforts to hold back time are truly efforts to hold back people, to hold down imagination, to limit a vocabulary. And this is an entertaining series of buoyant, severe, spirited rejoinders.

Richard Newman,  
The University of Queensland  
([r.newman1@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.newman1@uq.edu.au))

### References

- 1 This is a modified version of the original review written by Richard Newman. All changes made for space requirements, by editors of The Newsletter.



# News from Northeast Asia

Seoul National University Asia Center (SNUAC) aims to serve as a hub for Asian Studies by integrating regional studies and thematic research agendas across Asia. Since its establishment in 2009, SNUAC has been working on laying a cornerstone for Asian Studies at Seoul National University. SNUAC contributes to the cooperative relationship and mutual prosperity in Asia by advancing and sharing knowledge on Asian Studies. SNUAC is a global, integrated research center that combines academic research, international exchange, and human resource development. It is home to three regional research centers and eight thematic research programs: Northeast Asia Center; Southeast Asia Center; Central Asia Center; Asia Census; Civil Society and NGOs; Democracy and Economic Development; Environmental Cooperation; Popular Culture; US-China Relations; Transnational Asia; Asia Global Economic Order. For further information please visit: <http://snuac.snu.ac.kr>



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## Remembering and rewriting seventy years since the end of World War II in Northeast Asia

Joo Yunjeong

AS THIS YEAR, 2015, marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, each country in the Northeast Asia region staged various memorials this summer, on different dates and in different ways. The services included official statements (executed by the presidents and prime ministers of each country), commemorative events (such as parades and exhibitions), and academic conferences held in South Korea, China, Japan, and Taiwan. Such acts of commemoration not only serve to remember the past, but are also anticipated to rewrite the future of the region. Given that the countries of Northeast Asia hold varying perspectives and follow different directions, common ground for regional peace and prosperity can only be found if these differences are better understood. In South Korea, for instance, the meaning of '8.15' has evolved over the past decades as the political powers have changed. In China, on the other hand, a large-scale military parade was held on September 3rd for both internal and external purposes, while in Japan, the repentance speeches about the past have turned into major political events and sources of conflict. In Taiwan, the textbook contents on the history of Japanese colonialism have been under heated discussion.

In these ways, history is not just history in Northeast Asia. History is evoked for different purposes and within different contexts. In order to understand the present and future directions of Northeast Asia, it is crucial to look upon the past, witnessing how the past is both remembered and rewritten constantly.

SNUAC Editorial Committee  
(Managing Editor Joo Yunjeong, Research Fellow, SNUAC)

During the Victory Day Parade, Chinese helicopters fly the number '70' to memorialize the 70th anniversary of the victory of the war (courtesy of People's Daily Online, [kr.people.com.cn](http://kr.people.com.cn)).





# News from Northeast Asia *continued*



## Social changes and history wars in East Asia: 70 years after Korean Liberation

Jung Keunsik

THE YEAR 1945, when World War II came to an end, is remembered as an important historical moment of structural transformation, not only in Europe, but also in East Asia. What is noteworthy is that each country in East Asia has commemorated the end of the war on different dates and with different methods. In Japan, they mark '8.15' as the day the war ended, having many politicians visiting the Yasukuni Shrine to remember the war. In the People's Republic of China, September 3rd is observed as Victory Day (officially, in the 'War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War'), while Taiwan commemorates October 25th as its National Liberation Day. In both Koreas, '8.15' is celebrated as Liberation Day; in South Korea, it is known literally as 'the day the light returned', while in North Korea, it is referred to as 'the day of the Korean people's liberation'.

In South Korea, '8.15' encompasses both national liberation from Japan in 1945 and the foundation of the Republic of Korea in 1948. According to the official commemoration, this year marks 70 years since liberation, although right-wing historians insist that this year marks only the 67th year, revealing the chasm between historical perceptions among the Korean public. There exists a gap between a nation-centered perspective and a state-centered perspective in historical understanding.

Not only in terms of history, but also in terms of memory politics, South Korea is caught up in the complex dynamics of international commemorations of the war. In April earlier this year, both Xi Jinping and Abe Shinzo attended the Asian African Conference Commemoration in Indonesia, which marked the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, while only the Deputy Prime Minister joined from South Korea.

On May 9th, when Russia celebrates Victory Day, President Park Geun-hye, though invited to attend, sent members of the National Assembly as envoys after careful deliberation. Such a decision was speculated to have been made due to the possibility of meeting North Korea's young president, as he had also been invited. Ultimately, the young leader of North Korea passed on visiting Russia at the last moment.

The PRC invited many prominent leaders from around the world for 'Victory Day of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression', and the president of the ROK, in particular, was strongly encouraged to attend. After careful consideration of US-ROK relations, the ROK government first announced her plan to visit the US in October, and then announced her acceptance to attend the PRC's Victory Day event. By the end of August, it had been publicized that neither the Japanese Prime Minister nor the

North Korean leader would be attending China's Victory Day. Consequently, President Park's participation during Victory Day celebrations came to be regarded as highly significant for the PRC.

As the emergent rivalry between the US and the PRC becomes inevitable, the interrelations positioned by the neighboring countries such as Japan, the ROK, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia show drastic changes compared to those in 1945 or during the Cold War period. East Asia during the Cold War was more or less divided into two blocks: strong ties between the US, Japan, and the ROK; loose ties between the USSR, the PRC, and the DPRK. While undergoing post-Cold War transformation twice in the 70's and the 90's, structures of history, military politics, and economy have all become entangled in a complex structure as each area developed independently from each other, and the call for the need for an East Asian community has been on the rise. However, with recent heated debates and conflicts over the issues of regional territories and Japanese comfort women, relations between Japan and the PRC, as well as between the ROK and Japan, have deteriorated so far as to be called the 'history war'. The building of East Asian community cooperation in the near future is becoming increasingly unrealistic.

Japan and the ROK, two main allies of the US in the Northeast Asian region, are exhibiting somewhat different paths for international relations. While the traditional allies of the PRC and the DPRK reveal some distance, more tightened are the relations between ROK and PRC. Whether such changes will bring about dramatic transformation of the regional structure in Northeast Asia remains to be seen.

In the ROK, numerous commemorations and memorial events encouraging North and South Korean national exchanges have been held on '8.15' in recent years. However, given heightened military tensions between the two Koreas this year, Koreans experienced much anxiety on National Liberation Day. Fortunately, as a result of the two Koreas' strenuous negotiations and subsequent agreement, military conflict was ultimately averted; in South Korean society, we now have growing voices calling for fundamental changes to this unstable situation, fraught as it is with military tension. The starting point will be to transform the Korean 'armistice state' into a 'peace state', as proposed during the 2015 International Conference for Peace in East Asia on August 13th.

Jung Keunsik (Professor, Director of Northeast Asia Center, Seoul National University)

Above:  
At the main gate  
of the Yasukuni  
Shrine, a father and  
a son make a bow.  
©Kwon Chul

## Reflections on China's memorial parade, on the 70th anniversary of Victory Day in the 'Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression'

Fu ShaoQiang

TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS of the '9.3 Grand Parade', China held eight consecutive press conferences in August this year, in order to demonstrate that the PRC was in full preparation for the 70th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, as well as to emphasize the significance of this commemoration worldwide.

This event marked China's first major war victory since the Opium War, regaining the long lost international status and beginning a return to the center of the world. Chinese officials noted that China, the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom were all allies during World War II, and worked together to defeat the fascist aggression of German and Japanese forces around the world. Further adding that such allegiances are remembered not only by the people of the allied nations but shared by the peoples of the world. As a G-2 nation dominating the world economy, China has endeavored to evoke such a special memory to present throughout the world China's responsibility and aptitude for peaceful development.

Chinese diplomacy has indeed been a success, with 49 countries participating, including 30 heads of state from Belarus, the Republic of Korea, Russia and others, and 19 high-level government officials and envoys from Australia, Brazil, France, Britain, Canada, Germany, the US and the EU attending the event. In addition, high-profile guests included 10 heads of international and regional organizations, such as the Secretary-General of the UN, both the Director-Generals of WHO and UNESCO, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, former Japanese Prime Minister Murayama, and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

In their efforts to influence international public opinion, many international mainstream media outlets have recently observed that the Chinese people had made great sacrifices to ensure victory in the world war against the fascists, and contributed significantly to history, which had been rather ignored or underestimated in the past. *The Economist* commented that the parade would remind the world of how hard Chinese soldiers had fought to resist an imperialist Asian country. And that China's dedication and sacrifice for this history deserves wider recognition. *The Wall Street Journal* also noted that China was an earlier member in the war against fascism, since hundreds of thousands of Japanese troops invaded China and brought about disaster there in 1937, two years before World War II.

In the meantime, Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper)* also published an article stating that China had made significant sacrifices for victory during World War II. Exhibiting a strenuous will to fight against Japanese imperialism, the Chinese people did not give up and fought back under great hardship. Such historical facts have been largely overlooked and underestimated up till now. While many in the international media have interpreted the parade as a symbol of the 'Rise of China', China intends to hold the position dedicated to 'China's Peaceful Rise'. The parade on September 3rd was the first large-scale military parade held on a day other than National Foundation Day since the founding of New China, as well as the first military parade attended by foreign heads of state and friends, implying a great political significance.

The unprecedented parade announced to the world that China intends to play an important role in the post-war world order. At the same time, an even more significant message was delivered to corrupt, anti-reform officials and groups, chiefly, President Xi Jinping's strong power backed by the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army. As a result, many social problems such as economic slowdown and anti-corruption reform can be more effectively handled so as to provide a more solid ground for reform, along with the 'China Dream'.

China wants to play a role in world peace. China even sent an invitation to Abe Shinzo, though he did not attend. But, former president of the KMT (the Chinese Nationalist Party) Lien Chan, did attend the parade, which was very much welcomed. Great power comes with great responsibility. This Chinese parade was an effort to construct a blueprint for peace and security for both Asia and the wider world, moving forever beyond the fascism of the past.

Fu ShaoQiang (Associate Professor, the Communication University of China)





## Two types of revisionism: historical perceptions 70 years after World War II in Japan

Chong Young-hwan

IN REFLECTING ON historical perceptions in Japan as it passes the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, it is not possible to exclude the issue of an historical revisionism that attempts to justify colonization and imperial invasion prior to 1945. Regarding Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's official statement on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the war's end, August 14th, it is important to note how his remarks have been evaluated and understood. Prime Minister Abe maintains the position that "judgement of history should be left to historians" and that we should "try to avoid viewing the Asia-Pacific War as a war of aggression", while he at the same time continues to deliberately refuse to recognize Japan's responsibility over 'comfort women' for the Imperial Japanese Army. Such a course of historical revisionism still holds a strong social influence in Japan, and it is the radical right-wing groups that Prime Minister Abe is politically based upon.

Abe's speech was limited to 'the Manchurian Incident' in 1931, in which "Japan lost sight of the overall trends in the world" and "took the wrong course and advanced along the road to war". "I bow my head deeply before the souls of all those who perished both at home and abroad. I express my feelings of profound grief and my eternal, sincere condolences," said Abe. Without clearly taking responsibility for the war of aggression and colonial rule, he even claimed that "the Japan-Russia War brought encouragement to many people under colonial rule from Asia to Africa". He also carefully avoided remarks that could initiate controversies over the historical perceptions and conflicts between the war-time allies such as the US and the PRC, although he made sure not to miss the opportunity to pay homage to far-right historical revisionists. Consequently, criticism from the Korean media was quite apt, whilst the DPRK was not even mentioned.

Meanwhile, another problem that cannot be set aside when reflecting on historical perceptions in contemporary Japan, is 'historical revisionism of post-war history'. In his statement on August 14th, Abe Shinzo also declared, "with deep repentance for the war, we have created a free democratic country and

consistently upheld the pledge never to wage war again." In addition, he continued, "Japan has repeatedly expressed the feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology for its actions during the war." That is to say that during 70 years post war, Japan has been a 'peace nation', repeatedly expressing repentance towards Asian nations.

However, such historical perception is contrary to the facts. Post-war Japan was tied to the Japan-US Security Treaty, playing the role of a 'base state' for US wars in Asia. The land of Japan served as a military base for the US during its involvement in the Korean as well as Vietnam Wars. Moreover, it is widely known that the Japan Coast Guard participated in a naval action during the Korean War. The 'peace nation' Abe claims Japan to be is in clear contradiction to the fact that it was under the nuclear umbrella of the US. Indeed, contemporary historical research shows that in post-war Japan, awareness of Japan as a past perpetrator of military aggression has been lacking. To a certain extent, the Japanese people are more beholden to their position as 'victims' of war.

Compared to historical revisionism of the pre-1945 period, criticism in Japan against revisionism of post-1945 history is far less pronounced. This is partly because the Japanese population that is against the Abe administration shares a similarly complacent historical perception of post-war history, without a full awareness of Japan's post-war structure. In other words, despite opposing the discourse of Abe, liberal critics are somewhat complicit in the revisionism. Moreover, without genuine reflection in Japanese society on a post-war history that does not take full responsibility for Japanese military aggression, a rather self-centered historical perception persists. Consequently, examining the 'historical revisionism of post-war history' will provide an important key to more properly understanding contemporary Japanese history.

Chong Young-hwan (Associate Professor, Meiji Gakuin University)

## Seventy years after the war in Taiwan

Qiu Shijie

AT THE END of World War II in 1945, Taiwan was returned to its motherland, China, after years of Japanese colonial era. Five years later, however, separation came to the PRC and the ROC due to civil war and the KMT's retreat to Taiwan, resulting in cross-Strait confrontations between Mainland China and Taiwan. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Pacific War.

Within the past twenty years, the Taiwanese people's national identity has more or less evolved from 'one country on two sides of the Strait' to 'Taiwan is a single nation state', while more recently, pro-Japanese colonialism sentiments have begun to appear in Taiwanese society. During the summer of this year, for example, heated discussions arose over Taiwanese history textbooks when local high school students 'occupied' the Ministry of Education and publicly insisted on the erasure of "compulsory mobilization of comfort women" from history textbooks (the current Taiwanese government is led by the KMT, which indoctrinates the history of anti-Japanese movements). Moreover, many academics argue that the Taiwanese people regard themselves as members of a 'defeated country', given that Taiwan suffered from massive airstrikes during World War II. In Taiwanese academia, the emphasizing of Taiwanese identity is pronounced; consequently, the year 1945 is no longer regarded as an important historical turning point. Thus in history textbooks, many concepts related to Japanese colonialism and subsequent transformations have been abandoned. Previously in academia, 'Taiwan Guangfu' (Taiwan Liberation) was frequently employed in describing the transformation of 1945; following the Japanese style, however, 'the end of the war' is now more often employed than 'liberation'.

On August 15th this year, the conference 'War and Taiwan Society' was organized by Academia Sinica's Institute of Taiwan History. It was the largest academic event in Taiwan, marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, and covered such themes as Manchuria, the Kinmen archipelago, folk beliefs, memories of war and other complex issues, all in an effort to reinterpret history with an emphasis on the Taiwanese identity.

There were, however, efforts by the Taiwanese government and pro-unification groups to commemorate 'the victory of the war', even if the scale was somewhat limited. In July, the ROC government held a parade in commemoration of liberation, although its size was reduced and anti-Japanese colors were de-emphasized out of consideration for diplomatic relations with Japan, which in turn provoked public criticism. And on August 15th, civic and pro-unification groups protested against Japanese imperialism in front of the Japan Interchange Association in Taipei: Comfort women, the Diaoyu Islands, Yasukuni Shrine, the Japan-US Security Treaty, and Abe Shinzo's remarks during the war anniversary on August 14th, were all singled out. As for Taiwanese Liberation Day this coming October 25th, which also marks Taiwan's return to China, it remains uncertain how officials and academics will memorialize the date.

Qiu Shijie (Ph.D Candidate, National Taiwan University)



Above: 56 guns representing 56 Chinese ethnic groups fired 70 gun salutes (courtesy of People's Daily Online, kr.people.com.cn).

Right: A Japanese civilian wearing a military uniform commemorates '8.15'. ©Kwon Chul



# News from Southeast Asia

**ISEAS** YUSOF ISHAK  
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In 2014, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced plans to rename the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) to 'ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute' as a tribute to Encik Yusof Ishak, Singapore's first President. In commemoration of the 105th anniversary of Encik Yusof Ishak's birth, ISEAS was officially renamed on 12 August 2015. This issue features three articles from the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC). NSC pursues research on historical interactions among Asian societies and civilisations. It serves as a forum for comprehensive study of the ways in which Asian polities and societies have interacted over time through religious, cultural, and economic exchanges and diasporic networks.

## New Titles from ISEAS Publishing

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## Digging the Lion City and the future of Singapore's archaeology

Lim Chen Sian

THE UNIMAGINABLE SIGHT of a 20-ton rain tree suspended 30m in the air caused the mid-afternoon downtown traffic to slow to a crawl. Smartly dressed office workers in pressed dress shirts and silk ties from the nearby Central Business District paused to photograph the phenomenon with their cellphone cameras.

A massive operation to transplant eight mature rain trees in downtown Singapore was initiated this past March, to create 'plaza' space in front of the Victoria Concert Hall and Theatre, on the occasion of the SG50 celebrations. The relocation of the trees, to their new home just 100m away, turned out to be the largest rescue excavation ever attempted in Singapore. The archaeology team from the Archaeology Unit, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre (NSC) ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, spent 100-days on the new site scrambling desperately to stay ahead of the fast encroaching construction.

Billed as an 'archaeological jackpot' by the local media, the Archaeology Unit safely recovered some 3-tons of artifacts from ancient Singapura, which would otherwise have been destroyed and lost to the development. These finds presented

new interpretations of pre-colonial Singapore, allowing researchers to not only reconstruct past lifeways, but also the murky chronology of the island. The irony was not lost, however, on those who inquired: 40-year-old trees were transplanted to celebrate Singapore's golden jubilee, but in the process the 700-year-old site of the ancient settlement of Temasek was uprooted.

Presently there is no legislation entailing the undertaking of archaeological impact assessments prior to development in Singapore. Despite the want of any regulatory requirements, the discipline has established itself within the tightly connected heritage community. Since 1984, archaeologists have been quietly going about digging on the island. The early days saw the reliance on expatriate archaeologists and volunteers, with American John Miksic, then with Gadjah Mada University Indonesia, who led the first systematic investigation on Fort Canning, followed by Greek museum consultant, Alexandra Avieropoulou-Choo. The first two decades of Singapore archaeology were sporadic and ad hoc, where digging

Above:  
Empress Place  
Rescue Archaeology  
Excavation.

opportunities were few and limited to the occasional foray into construction sites within the boundaries of old colonial government quarters, particularly along the Singapore River.

As of the 2000s, local Singaporean archaeologists increasingly led and championed archaeology, and currently a small Singaporean team is based in the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. Formalized in 2010, the Archaeology Unit (AU) seeks to contribute to the understanding of Southeast Asia through the study of the material record. Since its inception, the AU has expanded its mission to develop Singapore's archaeological capacity and today, it is the sole entity in Singapore capable of conducting the full suite of archaeological evaluations, heritage impact assessment, rescue excavations, post-excavation analysis, artifact collections management, public archaeologies, and academic research. The AU also has plans to roll out its past reports as part of the NSC working paper series and as standalone monographs. More crucially, the AU is training a new generation of Singaporean archaeologists who will be the future researchers and custodians of the buried past.

The AU's work is not confined to Singapore. From 2012 the NSC Field School of Archaeology provided young university students in archaeology and related disciplines an opportunity to participate in a 3-week program of fieldwork and classes held in a partner ASEAN host country. While many field schools exist in the region, their participants tend to be from the sponsoring institution or country. The NSC Field School seeks to not only provide adequate field experience for the participants, but more importantly recognizes and encapsulates interaction between aspiring archaeologists across national and cultural boundaries. The Field School, currently in its third installment is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore, and is opened to East Asian Summit member countries.

Back at Empress Place, the lumbering crane set a rain tree down in a cloud of dust, showering fine sediment over the yellow-helmeted linesmen and their animated supervisors. With a shrill whistle of the all-clear signal, the archaeology team scrambled back into their trenches. The water pump spluttered back to life, extracting groundwater that had preserved the 700/800-year-old planks from the ancient settlement. Everywhere buckets of soil stood, awaiting sieving for small finds in the likes of Yuan period export ceramic sherds, locally manufactured glass bangles, Song Dynasty Chinese cooper cash, and the odd gold *kupang* from the 16th century Johore Sultanate. The archaeologists and their loyal crew of enthusiastic volunteers rushed about the site – resulting in another 14-hour marathon day for them. Four precious hours were lost that afternoon as the trees crept closer to the dig and the incessant deadline loomed nigh.

Lim Chen Sian is a Visiting Fellow with the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute's Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre.



# On the origins of the Javanese mosque

Hélène Njoto

THE ARCHITECTURAL GENESIS of the 'Javanese mosque' has yet to be adequately studied. The earliest mosques date to the 15th-17th century transitional era from 'Indianization' to 'Islamization' in the wider Southeast Asian Archipelago. The most notable mosques are in Java, where some of the oldest remaining examples of Islamic material culture in Southeast Asia reside.

Common features of the earliest mosque type, found with variations throughout the Malay world, are superimposed roofs (generally three) and a concentric post-pattern. Four tall posts in the centre hold the highest roof. Around this centre, a gallery of 12 posts and a second gallery of 20 posts (in average) hold the lower second and third roofs (fig. 1). The oldest examples of this architectural type can be found in towns such as Cirebon, Banten, and Demak along the North Java coastline. These settlements became important downstream international commercial centres between the 15th and 17th centuries. The mosque of Demak is considered to be the oldest.

In the 1940s and 1960s two Dutch scholars published differing hypotheses concerning the Javanese mosque type. G.F. Pijper (1893-1988) considered the Javanese mosque structure to be an "ancient native one [of prior Javanese Hindu and Buddhist temples] adapted to the requirements of the Moslem worship." Although he did not prove it, Pijper believed this type of mosque construction shared common features with Balinese architecture, as well as Javanese architecture and sanctuaries from the Hindu-Buddhist period.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, H.J. De Graaf (1899-1984) initially suggested that early Indonesian archipelago Muslim converts 'modelled' this architectural type on early Indian mosques, citing three examples from Malabar and Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> In his subsequent study of the historical Chinese diaspora communities in Java, De Graaf and his colleague Th. Pigeaud (1899-1988) suggested that Chinese pagodas could also have inspired Java's earliest mosque builders.<sup>3</sup>

To this day De Graaf's and Pigeaud's hypotheses of Indian Muslim or Chinese architectural influences are the most popular among historians of Javanese Islam. However, recent archaeological findings suggest that Pijper's assumption seems more plausible, especially when paired with previously known examples of Java's Hindu-Buddhist period architecture. Three temple remains in Western and Central Java, dating from the 7th to the 13th centuries, provide evidence of the existence of concentric patterned buildings that supported superimposed roofs, eight centuries prior to Java's Islamization.

The first temple, Candi Blandongan, dating to the 7th-10th centuries, is located in West Java. It is a square terrace base measuring 25 meters wide, with an upper level bearing a smaller elevated square terrace in the centre where a *stupa* once stood. The *stupa* was made of brick covered with stucco. The temple included eight bases and two postholes at the ground level (blue dots in the plan); 12 bases on the first upper level; and four bases closer to the *stupa* at the top (fig. 2). The distribution of the bases suggests the two-tiered terrace temple was sheltered under a timber structure with superimposed roofs.

Two sites in Central Java, the Ratu Boko and Candi Plaosan religious complexes, show even clearer concentric patterns. The syncretic Hindu and Buddhist Ratu Boko complex was founded in the 8th century. One of the largest structures of this site is a 20m wide square terrace built before a smaller rectangular terrace. Traces of 24 post bases placed in a concentric pattern were found on the platform of the main square terrace: four central bases surrounded by a gallery of 20 bases (fig.3). As in the previous example, this pattern seems to document a structure with an upper central roof supported by four posts and a lower roof supported by 20 posts.

The final example (fig. 4), the 'C structure' of the Plaosan Lor complex, approximately 1.5km from Ratu Boko, is a rectangular terrace (21.7m x 18m). Two concentric galleries of post bases can still be seen: 16 bases in the centre, surrounded by another gallery of 24 quadrangular bases.

The three temple examples leave little doubt concerning the antiquity of concentric patterned wooden buildings with two or three superimposed roofs in Java. These examples collectively demonstrate they were each used for Hindu and Buddhist cult purposes from the 7th century in West Java, and from the 8th and 9th centuries in Central Java. A more thorough study of the distribution of this architectural type in South and Southeast Asia, as well as in the wider Sinicized world, will be carried out. It may well demonstrate that the Javanese and Malay mosque types should no longer be considered as sub-types of East Asian pagodas or Indian Muslim Mosques, but as worthy Southeast Asian innovations.

Hélène Njoto is a Visiting Fellow with the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute's Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 Pijper, G.F. 1947. 'Minaret in Java', *Instituut Kern, India Antiqua: A volume of Oriental Studies Presented by his Friends and Pupils to Jean Philippe Vogel, on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of his Doctorate*, Leiden: Brill, p.275.
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- 3 de Graaf, H.J & Th.G.Th. Pigeaud (translation and comments) & M.C. Ricklefs (ed.) 1984. *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th Centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, p.179.
- 4 This paper is excerpted from a forthcoming article: Njoto, H. 'On the origins of the "Javanese Mosque"', BEFEO 100 (in press, 2014).

Fig. 1

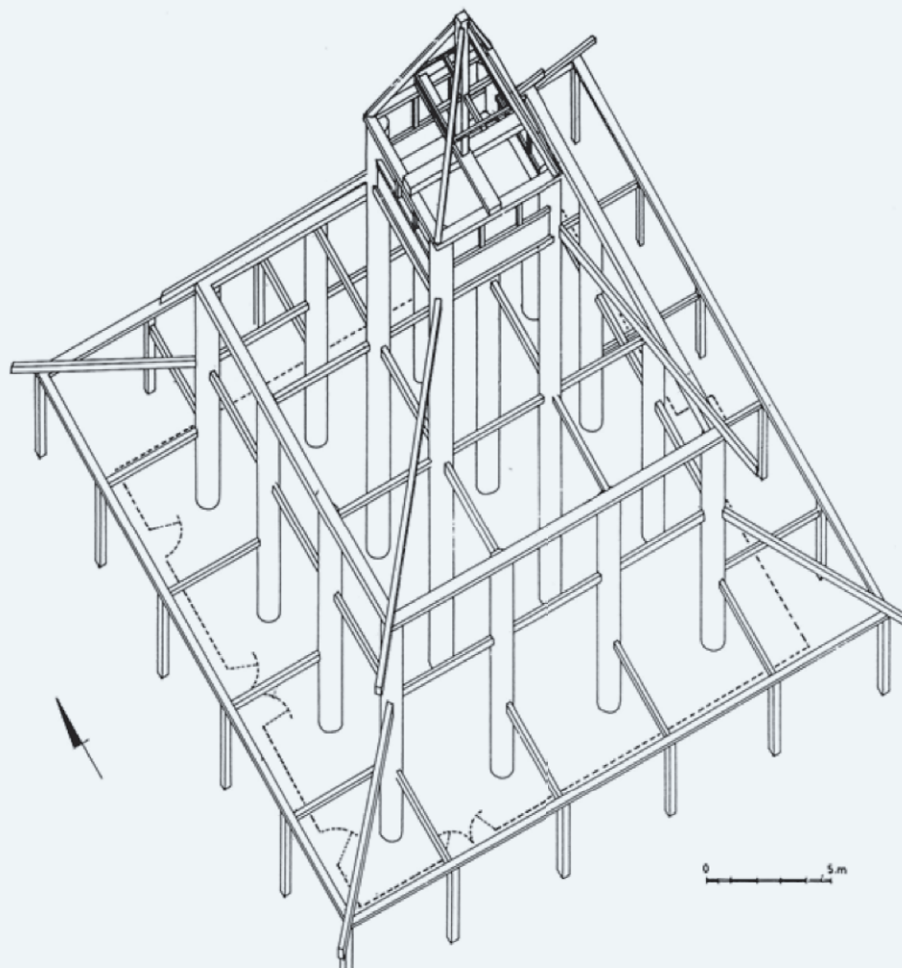


Fig. 1: 'Demak's mosque, restitution of its original state of conservation', in J. Dumarçay, *Histoire de l'architecture de Java*, p.140, pl. VI-YG 544.

Fig. 2

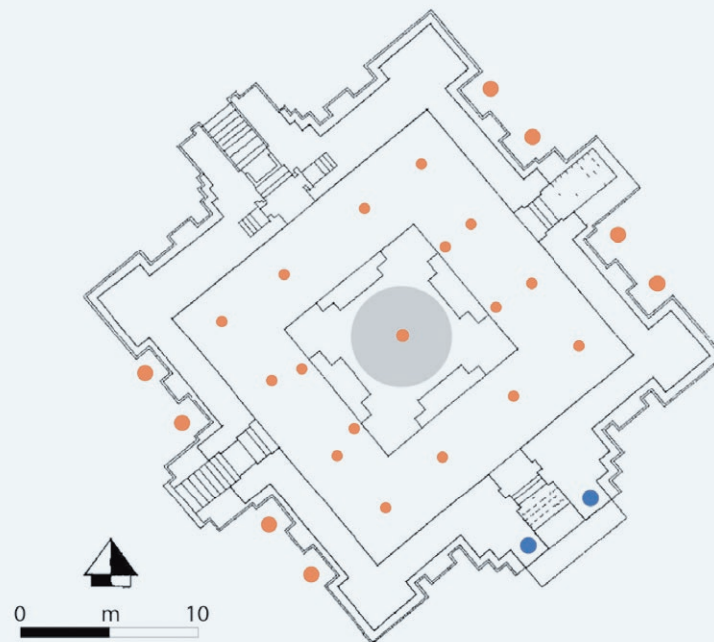


Fig. 2: Batujaya, Candi Blandongan. In red, the approximate position of post bases. In blue, post holes positioned as seen during the monument's restoration (drawing by P.-Y. Manguin, adapted from a plan of the Balai Pelestarian Cagar Budaya Serang).

Fig. 3

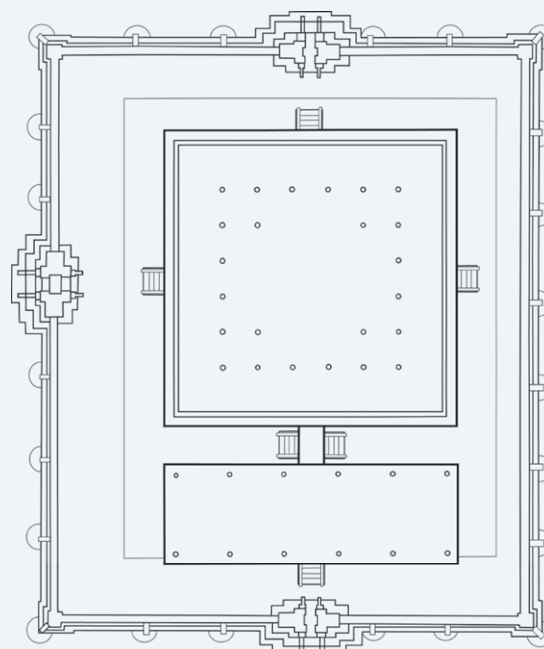


Fig. 3: 'Ratu Boko's pendopo,' V. Degroot, 'The Archeological Remains of Ratu Boko, from Sri Lankan Buddhism to Hinduism,' *Indonesia and the Malay World* 34/98, fig. 2, p. 58, included with the authorization of V. Degroot.

Fig. 4

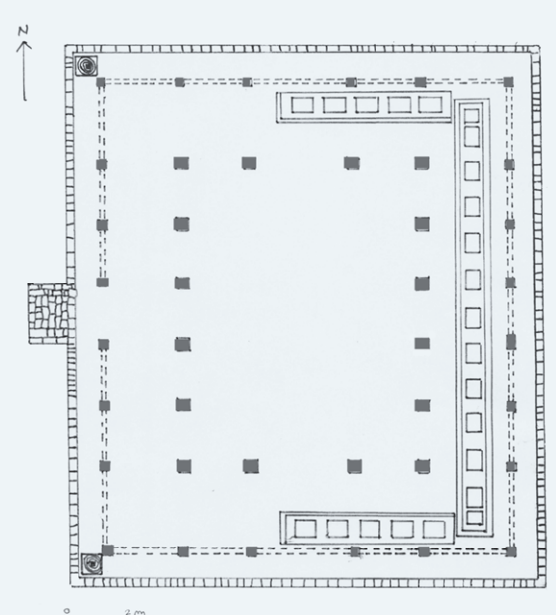


Fig. 4: Reconstruction plan of Candi Plaosan Lor's 'C structure.' Drawing by H. Njoto, adapted from a plan by Sri Ediningsih, Respati Hardjajanta, *Laporan purna pugar. Kompleks Candi Plaosan Lor*, Direktorat Jenderal Sejarah dan Purbakala. Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata, 2001, p.49.



# News from Southeast Asia *continued*

## Esoteric Buddhist networks in Maritime Asia, 7th-13th centuries

Andrea Acri

ESOTERIC BUDDHISM – ALSO CALLED *MANTRANAYA* (Method of Mantra) or *Vajrayāna* (Diamond/Thunderbolt Way) – had a tremendous impact on the religious and cultural history of Asia. Esoteric Buddhist traditions were vectors for the circulation of philosophical ideas, cults and ritual technologies, artistic motifs, material culture, and political paradigms. This circulation spanned across Maritime Asia – a vast swathe of maritime, littoral and landmass territory spanning from the Indian subcontinent to East Asia, the geographical fulcrum of which encompasses mainland and insular Southeast Asia.

Perceived as an esoteric orientation within the Mahāyāna or as a self-conscious (Tantric) school, Esoteric Buddhism regarded its path as superior, and in any event faster and easier, than other Buddhist paths; it included an element of initiation, secrecy, transgressive devotional and ritual practice, the use (for both this-worldly and other-worldly purposes) of mantras, magical formulas and diagrams (*maṇḍala*), possession, exorcism, etc. Esoteric Buddhism shared significant common elements with Tantric Śaivism, to the extent that the two religions participated in an interdependence of discourse in the domains of soteriology, ritual, and iconography.

Networks of Buddhist clerics of various ethnicities adhering to esoteric developments begin to emerge in the 7th century in disparate Asian locales, moving along the maritime routes plied since time immemorial by seafaring traders, religious specialists, and pilgrims. The expansion of Esoteric Buddhism was initially driven by a handful of monks – including the famous Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra – endowed with a remarkably cosmopolitan vision and ‘international’ ambitions, who crossed oceans and lands in search of esoteric scriptures in Sanskrit, initiation masters, as well as – perhaps most importantly – royal patrons. Those charismatic

personalities, more often than not associated with a vigorous activity of translation, commentarial work and initiation of pupils, travelled both eastwards and westwards along the sea routes linking the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia, China and Japan. It is probably these networks of monks and their disciples that acquired, transformed, and propagated images, texts and devotional practices associated with esoteric forms of such popular Buddhist divinities as Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, and Tārā.

In spite of having suffered a sudden downfall in royal support in Tibet, Sri Lanka, Central Java, and China in the middle of the 9th century, Esoteric Buddhism by the 10th century had virtually become identical with Buddhist practice over much of Asia. Having died out in the Indian subcontinent by the late 13th century, it continued to live or even thrive (in its localised instantiations) until the late 15th century in Java and Sumatra, and to the present day in Nepal, Tibet, Bali, and Japan.

Major centres of Esoteric Buddhism were the Northeastern areas of the Indian subcontinent, roughly corresponding to modern Bihar (itself the cradle of Buddhism since the time of the Buddha), West Bengal and Bangladesh. Bihar was the seat of Nālandā, the cultural powerhouse that dictated the predominant religious and aesthetic paradigm in the Buddhist Cosmopolis from the 8th to the 13th century. Other locales that played a role in the formation of Esoteric Buddhism and its overseas expansion are the Western Deccan, Orissa, South India, and Sri Lanka. The last two areas once hosted important lineages of Esoteric Buddhist masters and repositories of Tantras, and acted as hubs for the spread of esoteric traditions and their foundational scriptures to Southeast Asia and beyond. Monks of the calibre of Punyodaya, Amoghavajra and Prajña travelled from China to South India and/or Sri Lanka to get hold of some esoteric texts unavailable elsewhere.

Below: Borobudur (8th-9th century, Central Java).  
Photo: Andrea Acri.

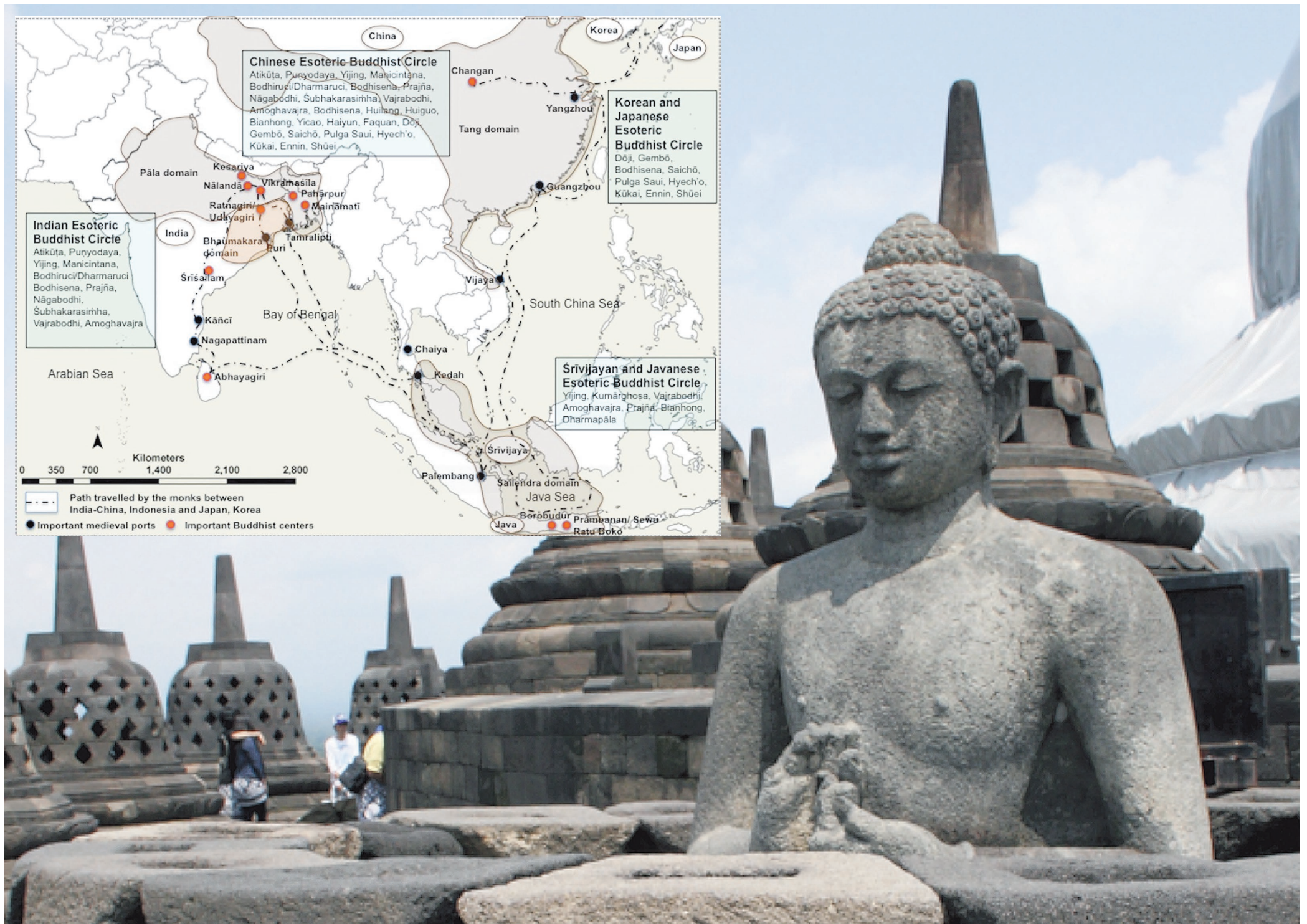
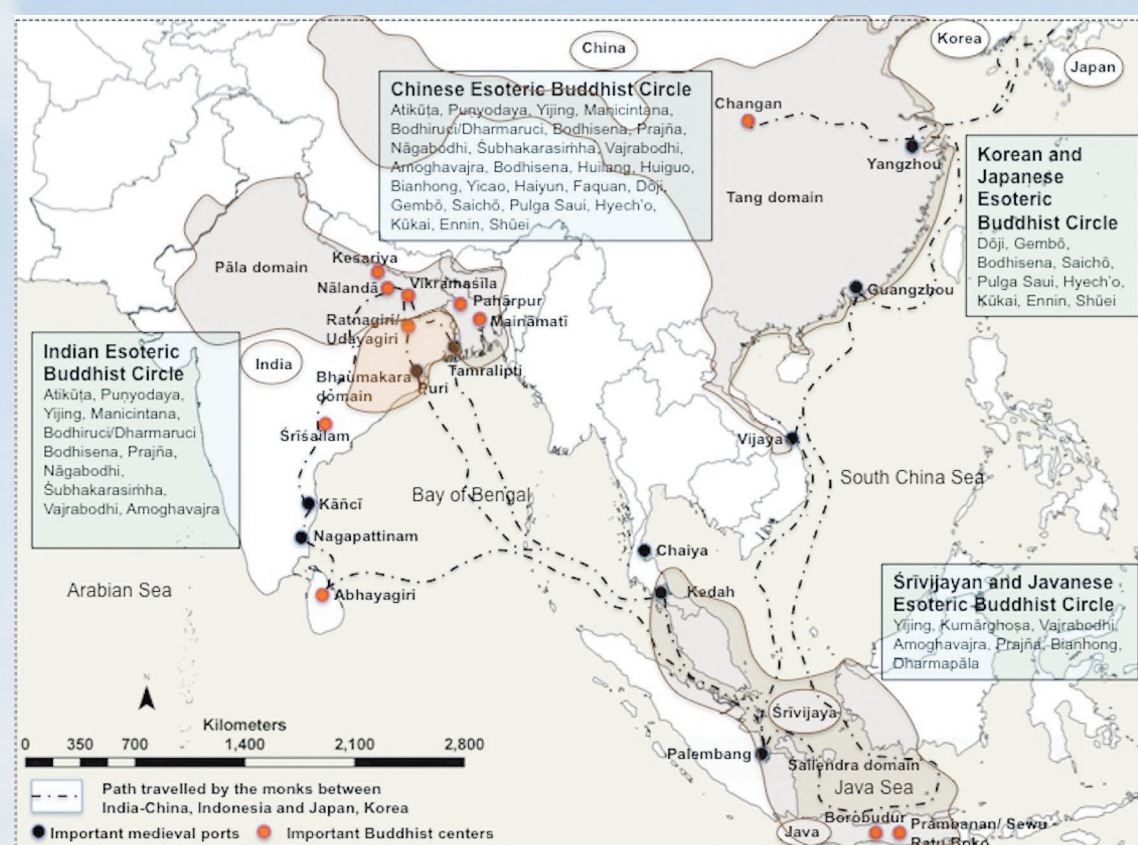
Inset:  
Paths travelled by the monks between India, mainland and insular Southeast Asia, China, and Japan-Korea. Map by Swati Chemburkar and Andrea Acri.

Cutting across the natural boundaries and barriers of continental topography, sea-based routes (the so-called ‘Maritime Silk Roads’) formed a network of conduits that led to the formation of a mediaeval global Buddhist Asia. Those routes played an important role in shaping premodern intra-Asian connectivity, and allowed both regional and cosmopolitan traditions of Esoteric Buddhism to participate in complex circulatory processes involving mercantile, diplomatic, and religious networks moving across the ‘Southern Seas’.

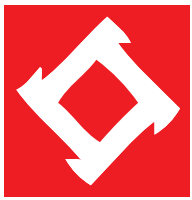
The appreciation of this ‘maritime dimension’ of Esoteric Buddhism reveals the limits of a historiography that is premised on land-based transmission of Buddhism from a South Asian ‘homeland’ across the Eurasian continent; furthermore, it advances an alternative historical narrative that overturns the perception regarding Southeast and East Asia as ‘peripheries’ that were mere consumers rather than generators of Esoteric Buddhism. Indeed, cults were transmitted from multiple centres across a much wider world of Buddhist cultural interchange than is usually assumed at present, and a strong point can be made for the re-evaluation of the creative and transformative force of (South)East Asian agents in the dissemination of Esoteric Buddhism across Asia.

Indeed Southeast Asia – and large areas of what are now the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago in particular – played an important, Asia-wide role as both crossroads and termini of (Esoteric) Buddhist contacts. The mention of pilgrims coming from Gurjaradeśa (Gujarat?) in a Śaileन्द्रa royal inscription from Central Java; the existence of a replica of the Sinhala monastic complex of Abhayagiri in the same locale, and of monasteries for monks and pilgrims coming from Śrīvijaya at Nālandā and Nagapattinam (South India); the survival, besides the Chinese reports, of Sanskrit and vernacular textual materials of Esoteric Buddhist persuasion, some of which contain quotations traceable to Sanskrit Tantras; and the significant remains of statues, ritual implements, and monuments (such as the majestic Borobudur), all suggest that insular Southeast Asia was a recognised seat of esoteric cults in a highly interconnected Buddhist cosmopolis rather than a remote and backward periphery.

Andrea Acri is Visiting Fellow at the Nalanda-Srivijaya Centre







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# 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**

In May 2016, IIAS will be hosting a conference focusing on the role of international organisations and global heritage activism. This conference will be the last in a series of three, jointly organised by IIAS; Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan; and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore.

**The full text of the Call for Papers is available at:**  
[www.iias.nl/heritageaid](http://www.iias.nl/heritageaid)

### Summary

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 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.

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. The relative shortage of historical, sociological, political, and ethnographic researches on the multiple incarnations of 'Heritage As Aid or as Diplomacy', as extensively described in the full call for papers, 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 international and transnational actors as objects of study and will engage in a threefold exploration (see the 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'.

### Submission requirements

Please refer to the website for a list of topics to explore in your paper, as well as for the requirements for your proposal.

**Website:** [www.iias.nl/heritageaid](http://www.iias.nl/heritageaid) **Contact:** For enquires about the conference, please contact Ms. Martina van den Haak at [m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl](mailto:m.c.van.den.haak@iias.nl)



## Call for Papers – Dynamic borderlands: livelihoods, communities and flows

**5th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network**  
**Submission deadline: 15 January 2016**  
**Conference dates: 12-14 December 2016**  
**Venue: Social Science Baha, Kathmandu, Nepal**

### The Conference

Borderlands in Asia are often seen as marginal, isolated and remote. Social scientists are now recognising that borderlands generate a dynamism in and of themselves, and that cross-border linkages are far more central to historical change than previously acknowledged. In recent times, development across Asia has been markedly unequal and this has led to new borderland dynamics - both productive and destructive - that urgently need to be addressed.

Borderlands are also 'dynamic' in the sense that the realignment of borders and the creation of new kinds of borders are recurrent processes throughout history. Think of the exchange of hundreds of enclaves in India and Bangladesh, disputes over the construction of new island territories in the South China Sea, or the liberalisation of some Asian airline services.

In this conference we would like to place special emphasis on borders and cross-border flows of people and objects that have not been highlighted in previous conferences. Examples could be air and maritime borders, high-altitude borderlands, borderlands with a high risk of natural disasters, nomadic and migratory communities, and control over cyberspace.

We invite submissions that address the following questions: What new borderland flows, corridors, and paths are (or have been) taking shape, and what impacts do they have on livelihoods and communities? How can we use these Asian cases to rethink social theories of various kinds? More information about the topics 'livelihoods', 'communities' and 'flows' and related questions can be found on [www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net).

### Application Procedure

Since one of the main goals of this conference is to spur collaboration and conversations across diverse fields in the hope of building up a more nuanced picture of the intersections and relationships across Asian borderlands, we would like to include scholars, writers, policy studies researchers, artists, filmmakers, activists, the media, and others from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds. We hope that these conceptually innovative panels, based on new research, will

help to develop new perspectives in the study of Asian Borderlands.

We encourage applicants to submit a full panel proposal, as only a small number of individual papers will be selected. We will consider proposals for panels and roundtables that have a thematic focus, are of a comparative character, and involve scholars or practitioners affiliated with different institutions. If you are looking for other people to join your panel prior to the 15 January deadline, you may post your panel abstract and contact information on our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/asianborderlands](http://www.facebook.com/asianborderlands) in order to reach a wider network.

Please visit the Application Forms Page on [www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net) to submit your proposal. The deadline to send in panel, roundtable and paper proposals is Friday 15 January 2016. Participants will be notified around April 2016.

### Funding

Very limited financial support may be made available to some scholars who reside in Asia and some junior or low-income scholars from other parts of the world. If you would like to be considered for a grant, please submit the Grant Application Form (on [www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net)) in which you state the motivation for your request. Please also specify the kind of funding that you will apply for or will receive from other sources. Please note that the conference operates on a limited budget, and will not normally be able to provide more than a partial coverage of the costs of travel. The form should be submitted before 15 January 2016. Requests for funding received after this date will not be taken into consideration.

### More information

Further information about registration fees, the venue, accommodation, and logistics will be provided on the ABRN website ([www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net)) once the panels have been accepted. Students and scholars with accepted papers who are affiliated with higher education institutions and research organisations in Nepal will have the opportunity to register at a discounted rate; details to follow.

### Convenors

- Deepak Thapa, Social Science Baha, Nepal
- Bandita Sijapati, Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, Nepal
- Sara Shneiderman, University of British Columbia, Canada
- Tina Harris, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Willem van Schendel, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Erik de Maaker, Leiden University, the Netherlands

### Organisers

The conference is organised by Social Science Baha; International Institute for Asian Studies and the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN).

**Website:** [www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net)

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## New coordinator for Critical Heritage Studies

AS OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2015, Dr Elena Paskaleva is the new coordinator of the IIAS Asian Heritages Cluster. Elena will be paying special attention to the development of the Graduate Programme and Double Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, for which she is also teaching the course *Critical Approaches to Heritages Studies*.

### Graduate Programme in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

Over the last few years, IIAS has been intensively engaged with the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) and targeted Asian partners in the development of a special master's track in the field of 'Critical Heritage Studies'. The uniqueness of this initiative is that the MA in Leiden is combined with a parallel set of courses at a number of Asian universities, allowing for the students to obtain a double degree at the end of their training. To date, the Asian partners involved are National Taiwan University in Taiwan and Yonsei University in South Korea, and contacts with other possible Asian partner institutes have been established.

### MA programme at Leiden University

At Leiden University, students can already opt for the MA specialisation in *Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe* within the MA Asian Studies track 'History, Arts and Culture'. Inspired and supported by the IIAS Asian Heritages research cluster, the curriculum allows students to explore the contested character of all representations of culture, the plurality of notions of heritage in Asian and European contexts, and the way distinct and conflicting values of indigenous, local communities and official state discourses are negotiated.

The programme is supervised by Dr Elena Paskaleva (IIAS/LIAS), also teacher of the course *Critical Approaches to Heritages Studies* together with guest lecturer Prof. Michael Herzfeld of Harvard University. Elena Paskaleva works on material culture of Central Asia. Her latest interests involve architectural heritage along the Silk Roads. Michael Herzfeld has been intimately engaged with the Asian Heritages cluster ever since the IIAS-ASEF roundtable on heritages in 2010, and is the Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative.

### Double Degree

Apart from the Leiden MA programme, students can also engage in the Double Degree Programme offered by Leiden University, IIAS and one of the Asian partner universities. Upon successful completion of the whole programme, the students will obtain three diplomas in total: the Leiden University MA diploma, the partner university MA diploma (two-year programme, of which the Leiden MA qualifies as one year) and a separate certificate for the Double MA Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, issued by IIAS.

**More information is available at:**

[www.iias.nl/page/critical-heritage-studies](http://www.iias.nl/page/critical-heritage-studies)

**If you have any questions, please contact Elena Paskaleva (IIAS/LIAS) at [e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl) or Dr Willem Vogelsang (IIAS) [w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl](mailto:w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl)**



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



# IIAS Report and Publications

## IIAS seminar report International seminar: transnational religious and ideological influences in modern Central and Inner Asia

Regensburg, Germany  
5-6 June 2015

IN THE CONTEXT of the three-year IIAS programme 'Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context', which is sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (New York), IIAS co-organised a seminar that discussed socio-political processes in Central and Inner Asia that are intersecting with global ideological trends. Particular emphasis was put on the question how the global processes influence current nation-building policies, social identities and people's loyalties. The seminar, supported by the International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies, followed up on a previous meeting, 'Knowledge production and knowledge transfer in and on Central and Inner Asia', which was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 5-6 August 2014.

In Regensburg, some twenty scholars from America, Central and Inner Asia, and Europe were welcomed by the co-organisers, namely the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies and the Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, both of Regensburg University. During the two-day meeting, the participating researchers, invited by the convenors Dr Irina Morozova (Regensburg) and Dr Willem Vogelsang (Leiden), discussed their papers, which had been distributed in advance, thus providing ample time for thorough and sometimes very lively deliberations.

The intensive debates of the seminar highlighted some significant aspects of the transnational religious and ideological influences in modern Central and Inner Asia. One of these, not surprisingly, was the importance of the particular historical background of the pertinent country or region. The relationship for much of the twentieth century between Islam and the Soviet Union in Central Asia, whereby the Soviet leaders often tried to pacify the Muslim clergy, was very different from the generally very hostile attitude of the Mongolian communist government vis-à-vis Buddhism. Another aspect that was discussed at length was that of foreign influence, or at least international contacts. Mongolia was again taken as a very telling case study. After the fall of communism in the early 1990s, Buddhism, though regarded as part of Mongolian culture by many, was very dependent on foreign support. The Indian ambassador to Mongolia played an important role, and so did the Dalai Lama. There was, however, local opposition. Buddhism in Mongolia was and is closely linked to Tibetan Buddhism. On a governmental level, the close links with Tibetan Buddhism, and in particular the Dalai Lama, were regarded as perhaps hostile towards the Chinese government. But also ideologically, many Mongolian Buddhists preferred a more 'Mongolian' form



Dambadarjaa monastery, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Image courtesy of libreshot.com

of Buddhism. This wish for a more 'local' form of a global religion was also discussed in relation to Central Asia, where some governments try to regard and develop Islam as part of the, as it was called in one of the papers, 'genetic blueprint' of the state. Islam is being regarded as part of local 'folklore', and in some parts of Central Asia the government consequently supports traditional forms of Islam, rather than the fundamentalist forms so dominant in the world of Islam today. Whether or not these policies will prove successful remains unknown, but they conform to some of the issues also discussed at the 2014 seminar in Ulaanbaatar, namely the opposition in Central and Inner Asia between, on the one hand, a government-led push for nation-building and ethno-nationalistic symbolism, and on the other, the enormous expansion of globalisation.

**Willem Vogelsang,**  
Deputy Director IIAS  
(w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl)

## IIAS Book Series - Asian Heritages

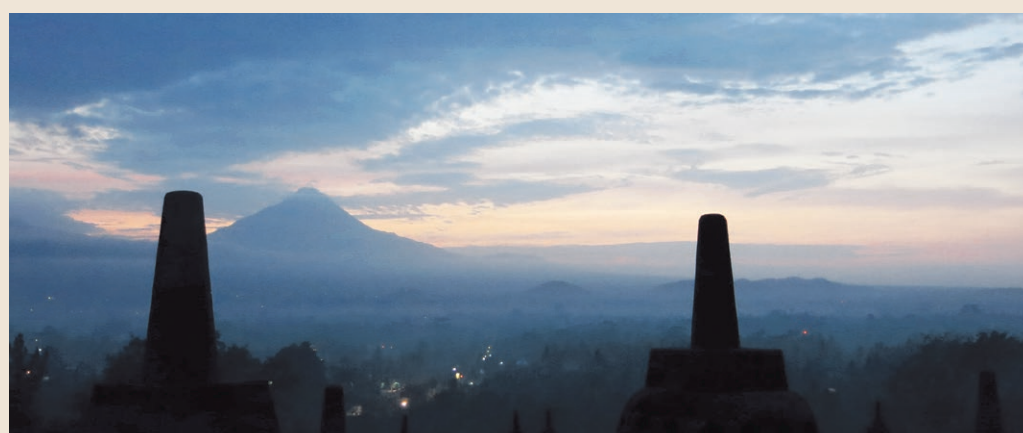
ASIAN HERITAGES SEEKS manuscripts of excellent quality and destined to become theoretically and descriptively significant contributions to the analysis of 'heritage' in the Asian context. All manuscripts are subject to a rigorous peer-review process, in which, in addition to the usual criteria of conceptual rigor and lucid, attractive writing, evaluators are asked to assess the work for its contribution to a critical rethinking of the key concept as it has been used in Asia.

Contributions should be both intellectually innovative and empirically grounded. They should engage with critical perspectives that shed light on how the concept of heritage and the practices associated with it are used in Asia today or have been employed there in the past. We especially seek new approaches to the origins and politics of heritage production, the relationship of heritage to colonialism in all its varieties and after-effects, and the translation of ideology into conservation and other relevant forms of heritage practice.

Among the many more specific topics that can be addressed by the series, we especially invite manuscripts on the following themes: processes of heritagization and gentrification in relation to ethnic and national dynamics, including those involving post-conflict reconstruction; reflections on the nature of materiality ('tangibility') and its relevance to the preservation of multiple pasts; development policies and the clash between heritage and economic security; heritage as neoliberal target and resource; heritage and rights; the social and cultural roles of museums; legal dimensions of collective cultural property; illegality as heritage; nationalism and its discontents; marginalized groups, self-determination, and heritage as ethnic resource; the impact of natural and human disasters on heritage and its evaluation; heritage and international conflict; inflections of heritage in contemporary art and media; language as and in heritage; local and national terminologies of heritage in comparative perspective; and the geo-politics of gastronomy and franchising. We also warmly encourage prospective authors to suggest additional themes that will enrich the critical perspective we intend as the hallmark of this series.

Interested authors should in the first place submit a short (two to five pages) summary of the book, indicating major content and themes and a chapter breakdown with a brief paragraph explaining the content and purpose of each chapter; intended audience; probable length; and expected date of submission. Proposals should also be accompanied by a brief bio-note if possible.

Please send your proposal to Adèle Esposito  
(adelesposito@yahoo.fr).



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# IIAS Report

## Japan, China, and the construction of history

Leo Douw



AFTER THE APEC MEETING in Beijing in November 2014 a series of pictures were released in the world press, which showed Japan's Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and China's President Xi Jinping reluctantly shaking hands. Small wonder, Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations have been in stalemate for several years and apparently won't improve much for some time to come. On 25-26 June 2015 a workshop was convened at the University of Amsterdam with the intention to discuss this impasse: can we speak of a new, regional Cold War, which might erupt into a real war, and drag the world community of nations along? Can we speak of an ongoing Chinese expansionism, menacing to Japan and its other neighbors, which should be counter-balanced by a military build-up under US leadership? If so, are there alternatives to this confrontation, in particular by the promotion of trade and investment, or the construction of an East Asian regional identity? And with regard to the latter, could a historiography be constructed that counteracts the Japanese and Chinese nationalisms, and which tempers the concomitant historical claims?<sup>1</sup>

First, does China pose a military threat to international peace and if so, should that threat be balanced by a counter-threat? The recent surge of alarmist tendencies in the international press resonate with the presentation by Henk Schulte Nordholt (Hofung Technology): he interpreted Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" discourse and his "Seven Don't Speaks" campaign as a deepening of Chinese nationalism in the domestic and international arenas, and an accompaniment to China's territorial claims on island groups in the East and South China Seas. Counter-claims by the US, which backup Japan, warn China against using force in supporting its claims and threaten the US free navigation.

Ingrid d'Hooghe (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael) argued that the consistent anti-Japanese propaganda, which China uses in its public diplomacy, harms Japan's international exposure and triggers a Japanese counter offensive, even if it also keeps the dialogue between both countries going and attenuates mutual bad feelings about one another among their populations. She would also acknowledge, however, that China starts from an underdog position and may feel threatened by its conscious encirclement by the US and its allies.

Would economic exchange and related institution building help ease existing tensions and lessen the need to balance their power projections? Henk Overbeek (VU University Amsterdam) and Shaolian Liao (Xiamen University) considered the tracks of globalization followed by China, Korea and Japan during the past three decades. Liao showed that although there is no one-to-one relationship between the fluctuations in economic cooperation between Japan and China and the highs and lows in Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, the complementarity between the Japanese and the Chinese economies should contribute positively to an improvement of mutual relationships in the longer term. However plausible as an argument, much doubt was expressed by the discussants, and Liao himself would admit that Chinese businesspeople could be more active in initiating trade and investment with Japan, and not leave the initiative to their Japanese counterparts.

Peter Peverelli (VU University Amsterdam) opened a fascinating window on the problem of regional cooperation

with his study of the Tumen River Area Development Project, formally established in 1993 along the border between North Korea and China. However vague in its operations and results, the project reveals how the Japanese have taken the lead with their sophisticated mode of organization, and by their exploration of its potential, thereby maneuvering China and other involved nations into follower positions.

What about the possibility of building a regional East Asian identity, or one that is even more cosmopolitan? Several papers implied that China should not be reified as a nation endowed with a unique and unchangeable culture, or identity, but be studied as a participant in global developments that shape and reshape it over time. Jeroen de Kloet (University of Amsterdam) warned against the exclusive framing of last year's Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong as a pro-democracy movement; this positions China and Hong Kong on a track of development which lags behind the West, and is essentially a euro-centric approach. It would be better to accept the movement as being coeval with global developments and having multiple targets.

Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner (University of Sussex), in her presentation on "Asian bioethics", acknowledged that this term has served to articulate national social and political agendas, rather than to bring these together. But at the same time she showed how it has provided an umbrella for common discussion, and an opportunity to overcome Orientalist notions of Asia and replace these by a more self-aware and positive discourse on Asian values. The paper by Arif Dirlik (University of Oregon) argued that the notion of "China" or *Zhongguo* was subject to change over the long period of its use, and had begun to propagate a Chinese cultural exceptionalism by the late nineteenth century, after a centuries-long interaction with Western ideas about the nation state. In doing so, the term as used by Chinese nationalists makes us forget about the diversity of China's society and the acquisition over time of foreign territory by the Chinese state.<sup>2</sup>

This brings us finally to the question of how a historiography of East Asia may be created that underbuilds such a regional East Asian identity. One recurring motif during the workshop was the need to overcome the repressed identities of those mobile populations, especially traders, who before WW II had initiated the modernization of regional business enterprise, but who after the war had become victims of modern state building and the concomitant repressive nationalisms.

Byungil Ahn (Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan) presented his research on the contemporary position of Korean migrants of Chinese descent in the US, and traced much of their predicament back to exactly this history of repression after the war. Just as in most South East Asian countries, big Chinese business families had increasingly dominated domestic and international trading in Korea before the war. Junghee Yi (Incheon National University) reinforced this argument by presenting materials from the recently opened archives of the Overseas Chinese Chamber of Commerce, during 1910-1945, in Incheon, the port city where the biggest Chinatown of Korea was located at the time. Jin-A Kang (Hanyang University, Seoul) went even further back in history, and discussed the complicated patterns of interaction with the Korean society among members of one big Chinese family business, the Tongshuntai firm, during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95. The issue of emergent nation-oriented loyalty and the related

discrepancy between the interests of the firms, which engaged in cross-border trading, and those perceived by the local society, was evident in the discussions on these papers as an issue to be developed in future history writing. One means to overcoming the resulting tensions was discussed by Kuo Huei-Ying (Johns Hopkins University), namely the building of cross-border business networks through the cultivation of hometown ties; such was the case with Myanmar business tycoon Aw Boon Haw's Hakka network, and the Hokkien network of Aw's competitor in Singapore, Tan Kah Kee.

Similarly, the papers by Leo Douw (University of Amsterdam and VU University Amsterdam) and Man-houng Lin (Academia Sinica, Taipei) discussed the social position of the Taiwanese who migrated to China and Southeast Asia during the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). The predicament of these "Registered Taiwanese" existed of the ambiguity caused by the claims laid on them both by the Chinese and the Japanese governments during that period: being Taiwanese, but registered as Japanese nationals, they were subject to Japanese rules and restrictions, but they also profited from that status, especially when they worked and resided in China and South East Asia. The resulting jealousies and accusations of non-patriotic and even criminal behavior, which were largely justified, were forgotten during the Cold War period, but were again remembered during the late 1980s, when in Taiwan the indigenization movement emerged and the issue of multiple nationalities and identities was posed once more. Lin maintained that no understanding of the rift between "mainlanders" and "native Taiwanese" in Taiwanese society is possible without remembering that many Taiwanese during the colonial period cooperated with the Japanese against China's interests. Forgetting and remembering as major motives in the revisions of historiography were already noted in the forgetfulness by Chinese nationalism in Dirlik's paper; these were also present in the argument made by Ethan Mark (Leiden University) on the memorial monuments in Jakarta and Amsterdam for J.B. van Heutsz, the general whose massacres among the native population of the Netherlands East Indies have been largely forgotten by mainstream Dutch historiography, but actually were already a topic of contestation in Dutch politics during the Interbellum, and in Mark's view should be better remembered at present.

It seems clear that the revisionism that informed the history-oriented papers of the workshop can contribute significantly to identity formation in East Asia, and balance the single-minded nationalisms that prevail in Japan and China. The workshop focused on the twentieth century, but also in the longer term a definite uneasiness has characterized Sino-Japanese interactions: trading has been indirect and strictly controlled since the sixteenth century at the latest. Therefore we may say, that the present-day reluctant cooperation between both countries is part of a long lasting pattern. This pattern in its turn may be a better starting point for historical analysis than the 'balance of power' approach, which has recently emerged in public debate, and threatens to sharpen the apparent Sino-Japanese antagonism rather than soften it.<sup>3</sup>

Several of the papers in the workshop will be published in the recently relaunched academic journal *Translocal Chinese: East Asian Perspectives* (TCEA), nr. 10.1 (Spring 2016), published by Brill Academic Publishers. The journal is meant to provide a platform for academic debate on issues and concerns, of which those treated in the workshop are an important part. For further information on the journal's institutional embedding and editorial policy, please see: [www.brill.com/tcea](http://www.brill.com/tcea) (see also the announcement on page 51).

**Leo Douw, Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam (L.M.Douw@uva.nl).**

### References

- 1 The workshop was held at the occasion of the author's retirement and was kindly sponsored by the Program Group *Moving Matters* of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam, the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, and the Faculty of Arts at the VU University Amsterdam.
- 2 For a publication of Dirlik's paper, see <http://tinyurl.com/boundaryDirlik>
- 3 The workshop of course was much richer in content than could ever be done justice in a summary article, and all misrepresentations are the author's responsibility. Valuable contributions, aside from those by the paper presenters, were provided by the other participants, in particular the paper discussants and session chairpersons. For shortness sake only their names follow here, in alphabetical order: Julia Bader (University of Amsterdam), Otto Holman (University of Amsterdam), Gerd Junne (University of Amsterdam); Susan Legêne (VU University Amsterdam), Chris Lorenz (VU University Amsterdam), Pál Nyiri (VU University Amsterdam), Peter Post (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation), Willem van Schendel (University of Amsterdam), Sikko Visscher (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), and Harriet Zurndorfer (Leiden University).



# Announcements

## Asia in Amsterdam, exotic luxury in the Golden Age

Rijksmuseum, 17 October 2015 – 17 January 2016

*"When I saw the Store-houses, and Magazeens (...) full of Spices, Silk, Stuffs, Purcelane, and what ever China and the Indies afford that is most rare, I thought Ceylon had sent thither all its Cinamon [sic], the Moluccas all their Cloves, the Islands of Sumatra and Java, all their Spices, China all its rich stuffs; Japan its excellent works of several kinds, and the rest of the Indies its Pepper and Silk."*

THESE ARE THE WORDS of the German traveller Johann Albrecht von Mandelso, after visiting the warehouses of the Dutch East India Company (VOC – founded in 1602) in Amsterdam in 1639. The Dutch were not the first to travel to Asia. But unlike their Portuguese predecessors the Dutch ventures into Asia were directed purely towards trade. They brought Asian luxury goods to the Netherlands in much larger quantities than before, in a wide range of qualities and prices. Large numbers of the burgeoning Dutch middle classes were able to buy Asian luxuries, and so they did. The far distance trade to Asia caused a lot of excitement and Dutch citizens wanted to be part of its success by owning one or a little group of Asian treasures.

This enthusiasm for things Asian is further very visible in contemporary works of Dutch craftsman and artists. Dutch potters were not able to produce the high fired, very hard, thin and white porcelain, but they set out to create a type of earthenware that resembled the outward appearance of porcelain. They adjusted the thickness of their wares, applied a white tin glaze over the clay surface and decorated that with Asian motifs in cobalt blue. They even called it 'Hollands Porceleyn' or Dutch Porcelain. Amsterdam burger Willem Kick obtained a patent to produce lacquerware in 1609. He produced caskets and other objects with gold decorations on a black background. The motifs were not even necessarily Asian, but the shine, the look and feel certainly was.

Still life painters started to incorporate porcelain into their work. With their very keen eye for materials, colours and textures they were fascinated by the Chinese material of which the recipe was unknown. They went to great pains to render the shine, and various hues of blue, experimenting with colorants and surfaces. They also had a selective eye in choosing special and high quality pieces for their paintings. This connoisseurship certainly mattered. Asian luxury goods were imported in large quantities, and art lovers and painters alike needed a discerning eye to find the real treasures.

The exhibition 'Asia in Amsterdam' presents a selection of the highest quality Asian luxury goods produced for the Dutch market in the 17th century, together with the work of Dutch craftsmen who worked in an Asian fashion, their imagination fuelled by the sudden abundance of new shapes, materials and motifs, and by the work of Dutch painters who likewise were charmed by the Asian imports. Together these exhibits can give us an idea of the sensation caused by the increased Asian-Dutch connection.



Left: Willem Verstraeten, earthenware plate.

Below: detail of 'Amsterdam chest', example of excellent lacquerware traded by VOC employees.

Bottom: Willem Kalf, still life.



## Translocal Chinese: East Asian Perspectives (TCEA) 《海外華人研究》

A journal published by the Brill Academic Publishers  
ISSN: 2452-2007; E-ISSN: 2452-2015

*Translocal Chinese: East Asian Perspectives* (TCEA) is a peer-reviewed bilingual (English and Chinese) journal that is jointly-published biannually by the Society of Overseas Chinese Studies (SOCS), Taiwan; the Research Center for the Overseas Chinese (RCOC), Department of East Asia Studies, National Taiwan Normal University; and the Brill Academic Publishers in Leiden and Boston.

A transdisciplinary journal devoted to the studies of overseas Chinese communities in all their manifestations and contestations, *TCEA* focuses, however, on the region of East Asia. We study overseas Chinese border crossing networks disseminated from or converged in (pen)insular countries or zones such as Japan, North and South Korea, the Ryukyus, Taiwan, Kinmen (Quemoy), Hong Kong and Macao. We also welcome research on other mobile groups which are connected to, or whose experiences could be compared with overseas Chinese in and from East Asia. Also see the workshop report *Japan, China and the Construction of History* on page 50.

For further information go to [www.brill.com/tcea](http://www.brill.com/tcea)



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# IIAS Report

## Religious violence in South(East) Asia: domestic and transnational drivers of intolerance against Muslim minorities

Maaïke Matelski en Marit van Liere

BUDDHIST AND HINDU MAJORITY SOCIETIES of South(East) Asia are not traditionally associated with conflict and intolerance. Yet recent years have seen a surge in international reports of religious tensions and violence perpetrated by Buddhist and Hindu majorities against Muslim minorities in the region. A seminar on this topic was organised by VU University's Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the International Institute for Asian Studies on Monday 15 June 2015. The seminar was opened by Ton Salman and Maaïke Matelski from VU University, who explained the department's interest in the apparent rise in intolerance towards Muslim minorities in the region. Recent news reports of Rohingya Muslim refugees fleeing Myanmar by boat are a reminder that this has now become a matter of regional or even global concern.

Jonathan Spencer (University of Edinburgh) explained the precarious position of the Muslim minority population in Sri Lanka caught between aggressive Buddhist nationalism and aggressive Tamil separatism during the decades-long conflict between the government and the LTTE. Significantly, open anti-Muslim sentiments actually increased after the conflict ended, particularly as the Bodu Bala Sena ('Buddhist Power Force') gained societal influence in 2013 when it started a public campaign against the labelling of Halal-food in supermarkets. Spencer's presentation ended on a somewhat optimistic note, as he identified a decrease in hostility towards Muslims under new President Maithripala Sirisena, who came to power in January 2015 with significant Muslim and Tamil support. However, he argued anti-Muslim sentiments are unlikely to have disappeared completely.

Iselin Frydenlund (PRIO/University of Oslo) then drew a comparison between the anti-Muslim rhetoric that has been emerging in Sri Lanka and Myanmar in recent years. The campaigns that are marked by symbolism, hate speech, and instances of violence have been largely met with impunity by the respective authorities. Societal changes such as a shifting religious demography and public displays of religion have politicised the Buddhist leadership, which actually invokes

discourse on 'religious freedom' to protect the Buddhist identity from other religious influences. Frydenlund also pointed to a new sense of threat and insecurity as a result of political changes in both Sri Lanka and Myanmar. She further highlighted that important inter-religious peace initiatives have also acquired a transnational character.

Next, Ward Berenschot (KITLV Leiden) focused more specifically on the topic of 'religious violence', comparing cases in Gujarat (India), where Hindus killed about 2000 Muslims in 2002, and North Maluku (Indonesia), where violence between various Muslim groups broke out in 1999 after the Christian population had initially been targeted. In these cases, as well as in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the police has been inactive or arguably complicit in the violence. With reference to the presumed inter-ethnic and inter-religious component of these instances of violence, Berenschot asked when and how political elites manage to make religious differences salient, and in what cases they are able to incite populations into violence. The answer he argues can be found in the workings of patronage networks, whereby political support is generated through the provision of access to resources by certain middlemen, who act as brokers between politicians and needy communities.

In her role as discussant, Nira Wickramasinghe (Leiden University) questioned whether the term 'religious violence' adequately sums up what is happening in Sri Lanka, as various forms of communal violence have been taking place in the country for decades. Based on her experiences at the University of Colombo, she signalled a growing disconnect between Buddhist monks and Sri Lanka's liberalising society since the 1980s, while the monks are still considered an authoritative voice in society. She also highlighted the connection between the growing anti-Muslim rhetoric in the region and the global discourse on the 'war on terror'.

The afternoon session focused on Myanmar and Thailand. First, Khin Mar Mar Kyi (University of Oxford) described the impact of the increasing intolerance towards Muslims on the

position of women in Myanmar. She referred specifically to four draft laws on the protection of race and religion, some of which have already been approved by Parliament. These laws are seen as directly targeting women from the (officially unrecognized) Rohingya minority group, and also infringe on women's right to interfaith marriage. Khin Mar Mar Kyi further described the heightened sense of fear and insecurity as the country opens up to the outside world, which has highlighted intergroup differences and sparked a fear of Muslims as a threat to national (Buddhist) identity. Increased internet access in parts of the country has led to the emergence of Facebook as a new discussion forum, but also a potential site of misinformation, which can give rise to further rumours.

Next, Matthew Walton (University of Oxford) presented recent findings from a project on the prominent narrative of Islam as a threat in contemporary Myanmar. The project team identified a consistent set of justifications which present Islam as a threat to society, and Buddhists as acting out of virtuous self-defence. These narratives have emerged since the eruption of communal violence in 2012 and have since remained uncontested by the state. Walton questioned the widespread understanding of communal violence as resulting from hate speech, arguing that the narrative of Muslims as a threat is so dominant that it does not even need to be publicly articulated in order to have a societal impact. He concluded that it is important to recognize the limitations of human rights language, as many Buddhists in Myanmar do not consider human rights standards irreconcilable with the narrative of Muslims as a threat to society.

The last presentation by Alexander Horstmann (University of Copenhagen) focused on local experiences in Southern Thailand, where Buddhist and Muslim populations had long managed to co-exist despite a history of religious tensions. This changed in 2004 when the conflict in Southern Thailand escalated and violence occurred on both sides. In seeking to increase its presence in the region, the state created Buddhist settlements and imposed its linguistic and religious dominance on the local population. The increase in violence in the region has resulted in an atmosphere of insecurity and mistrust in which the space for mutual exchange is reduced. Horstmann concluded that cultural or religious differences in themselves are insufficient explanations for the emergence of conflict, and emphasized the importance of examining intra-communal processes, as well as the role of external influences.

Gerry van Klinken (KITLV Leiden/University of Amsterdam) then commented that although mass violence seems to require some form of organisation, the organisers behind the violence cannot always be clearly identified. He referred to political transitions as forming a 'political opportunity' for certain actors to bring forward new, potentially intolerant discourses, or 'frames'. In Myanmar, for example, the previous narrative of military dictatorship as a threat seems to have been replaced by the framing of Muslims as a threat. Such processes do not occur naturally, van Klinken argued, but require an exploration into the actors behind these changing frames.

In the panel discussion that followed, the speakers tried to identify commonalities and differences among the cases, and discussed the transnational dimension of this rising intolerance in the region. The interrelatedness of developments in various countries was confirmed by the fact that various speakers had expanded their research focus to multiple countries, e.g., by comparing the situation in Thailand or Sri Lanka to recent developments in Myanmar. Linkages between Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka and Myanmar have already been noted in the media, for example in a 2013 issue of Time Magazine, titled 'The Face of Buddhist terror', which was banned both in Myanmar and in Sri Lanka. Dutch journalists have also pointed out that the anti-Muslim discourse of politician Geert Wilders is being used by Buddhist monks in Myanmar as an example of the global threat of Islam. Other transnational trends that were identified included the global discourse on the 'war on terror' and European campaigns such as the burqa ban that are influencing anti-Muslim sentiments in the region. Conversely, the halal boycott campaign initiated in Sri Lanka has since spread to countries such as Australia and the UK.

It was concluded that the recent increase in intolerance towards Muslim minorities in the region can be attributed to a combination of local developments, including significant political transitions in various countries, and transnational factors that may reinforce local perceptions of Muslims as a threat to society. An adequate response would therefore take into account local specifics, but also strengthen transnational inter-religious dialogues as a means to counter rumours and the sense of threat that gives rise to feelings of insecurity, which in turn have the potential to be mobilised into hate speech and/or violence.

**Maaïke Matelski, PhD candidate at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam (maaike.matelski@gmail.com).**

**Marit van Liere, alumna of the Master in Conflict Studies and Human Rights, University of Utrecht.**

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# IIAS Research and Projects

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

## Global Asia

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

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

The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. Next conference: Dynamic Borderlands: Livelihoods, Communities and Flows; Kathmandu, Nepal, 12-14 December 2016. Deadline Call for Papers: 15 January 2016.

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

### Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

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

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

### IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance

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

**Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo ([t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl))**

### Asian Studies in Africa

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

In 2012, a roundtable in Chisamba, Zambia, led to the establishment of the pan-African 'Association of Asian Studies in Africa' (A-ASIA). A-ASIA's development is headed by a steering committee of scholars, mainly from Africa and Asia. In September 2015, A-ASIA held its three-day inaugural conference, in Accra, Ghana, called 'AFRICA-ASIA: A New Axis of Knowledge'. It was the first conference held in Africa to bring together a multidisciplinary ensemble of scholars and institutions from the continent and the rest of the world with a shared focus on Asia and Asia-Africa intellectual interactions.

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

## Asian Cities

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

### The Postcolonial Global City

This research programme examined the postcolonial cities of South, East and South-East Asia, and how some of them have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right. Intended as an interdisciplinary research endeavour, the Postcolonial Global City has brought together not just architects and urbanists, but also people from other disciplines, such as geographers, socio-logists and political scientists, as well as historians, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of Asian studies.

**Latest publication: Bracken, G. 'Asian Cities: Colonial to Global', June 2015.**

### 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](http://www.ukna.asia))**

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

## Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER 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 evaluate 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 MA track in the field of 'Critical Heritage Studies'. The uniqueness of this initiative is that the MA in Leiden is combined with a parallel set of courses at a number of Asian universities, allowing for the students to obtain a double degree at the end of their training. To date, the Asian partners involved are National Taiwan University in Taiwan and Yonsei University in South Korea, and contacts with other possible Asian partner institutes have been established. 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. The programme is supervised by Dr Elena Paskaleva (IIAS/LIAS). Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard) is a guest teacher and the Senior Advisor to the IIAS Critical Heritage Studies Initiative. **Contact: Elena Paskaleva ([e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl)) or Willem Vogelsang ([w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl](mailto:w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl)) for more information.**

### Indian Medical Heritage Research Network

The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network wants to stimulate social-cultural and social-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage](http://www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage)) for collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds. A workshop, entitled, 'Indian medicine: Between state and village' will take place in Leiden, The Netherlands on 23-24 June 2016.

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

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

## Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

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

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

The initiative is coordinated by IIAS, in collaboration with numerous institutions in Asia, the United States, Europe and Africa, and is funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York. The pilot programme includes a range of scholarly activities such as workshops, conferences and summer schools in five topical areas, or fora, that cut across regions and disciplines:

1. Artistic Interventions: Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia
2. Uses of Culture and Cultural Heritage
3. Asian Spatialities: the Indian Ocean World, Central Eurasia and Southeast Asian Borderlands
4. Idea of the City in Asian Contexts
5. Views of Asia from Africa

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

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



# IIAS Fellowship Programme

Along with the research fellows, who are attached to one of the IIAS research programmes, the Institute yearly hosts a large number of visiting researchers (Affiliated Fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.

## CURRENT FELLOWS

### Rosalina Abu Bakr

*Social interaction in the Malay manuscripts*  
1 Nov 2014 – 31 Oct 2016

### Hajime Akitomi

*The comparative study of labor, employment and globalization labor between the Netherlands and Japan*  
1 Apr 2015 – 1 Apr 2016

### Mehdi Amineh

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

### Anna Castaing

*Women in the writing of the Indian Nation (Hindi, Urdu, Bengali)*  
1 Jul – 30 Sept 2015

### Weijuan DAI

19 Oct 2015 – 12 Jan 2016

### Daniela De Simone

*Mauryan Antiquities of Pataliputra*  
1 Sept 2015 – 30 Apr 2016

### Liu DONG

Energy Programme Asia (EPA) fellow  
1 – 10 Sept 2015

### Valérie Gelézeau

*New geographies of urban cultures in the Korean world – convergence and divergence*  
1 Mar – 31 Dec 2015

### Haoqun GONG

*Practising (Patibad) Buddhism: Body techniques and religious publicity in urban Thailand*  
1 Aug 2015 – 31 May 2016

### Jenna Grant

*Technology, clarity, and uncertainty: an ethnography of biomedical imaging in Phnom Penh*  
20 Jan 2014 – 30 Sept 2015

### Nur Hidayat

*Islamic Feminism in Indonesia: Past, Present, and Future Trajectory*  
1 Oct – 31 Dec 2015

### Yike Hu

*Quantitative study of the urban national park, boundary marketing, design and management*  
1 Feb – 19 Sept 2015

### Pralay Kanungo

Visiting Professor, India Studies Chair (ICCR)  
*Indian politics*  
1 Sept 2013 – 30 Jun 2016

### Tak-wing Ngo

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

### Mahajan Nidhi

*Moorings: Indian Ocean Trade and the State in East Africa*  
1 September 2015 – 31 January 2016

### Thien-Huong Ninh

*The new chosen people: Religion and race in the Vietnamese diaspora?*  
20 Aug – 16 Sept 2015

### Saraju Rath

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

### Surajit Sarkar

20 Sept – 28 Nov 2015

### Bal Gopal Shrestha

*Religiosity among the Nepalese Diaspora*  
1 Jan 2015 – 30 Jun 2016

### Tina Shrestha

*Transnational suffering narratives: Documenting Nepali migrant-communities in Europe and Southeast Asia*  
1 Mar – 31 Dec 2015

### Amanda Shuman

*"No One Can Deny Our Achievements": The Politics of Socialist Athletics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1966*  
1 Sept 2015 – 30 Jun 2016

### Emilia Sulek

1 Oct 2015 – 31 May 2016

### Shilpa Sumant

*Preparing the second volume of the critical edition of Śrīdhara's Karmapañjikā-jātasamsthāh: Basic rituals for one who has been born*  
1 May – 31 Oct 2015

### Lidia Szczepanik

1 Oct 2015 – 31 Mar 2016

### Minna Valjakka

*Seeds of Hope: Urban Creativity in Hong Kong*  
1 Nov 2015 – 30 Apr 2016

### Chuanhong ZONG

1 Dec 2015 – 28 Feb 2016

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



### Shilpa Sumant

**Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute**  
*Unveiling ritual culture of medieval Orissa: critical edition of Śrīdhara's Karmapañjikā*

BRINGING UNKNOWN TEXTS to light is extremely important for discovering our cultural past. At IIAS, I am preparing a critical edition of Śrīdhara's Karmapañjikā, a ritual manual written in priestly Sanskrit language around the 16th century CE in the eastern Indian state of Orissa. The edition is planned in three volumes in collaboration with Professor Arlo Griffiths (Leiden University). It is based on six palm-leaf manuscripts written in Oriya script, each containing approximately 175 folios. We have photographed five manuscripts from private collections of the priests and received the scan of one from the State museum of Orissa.

The Karmapañjikā belongs to the genre of medieval religious texts. It is a guide-book for the priests to carry out domestic rituals according to the Atharvaveda Paippalāda school. The text represents a stage of development from ancient Vedic to modern-day Hindu ritual. Very few texts of this genre have been studied in India in general and Orissa in particular. A thorough study of linguistic and religious aspects of the Karmapañjikā and of its of inter-textual and intra-textual intellectual traditions will certainly contribute to the cultural and literary history.

This is my second opportunity at IIAS as a Gonda Fellow. During my first term in 2008–09, I prepared a preliminary draft of our edition of the first volume. It is almost ready for publication after several refinements during the past years. Now, I am working on a draft of the second volume, which will pass through many stages of improvement during joint editorial sessions.

The academic atmosphere in Leiden, and peaceful and well-equipped working conditions at IIAS provide suitable environment to carry out concentrated research work. My stay in Leiden enables me to make use of the Leiden University Libraries for reference work. I also attend a weekly discussion group initiated by Professor A. Lubotsky. This group was initially intended to discuss the editorial work of the Paippalādasamhitā, a text containing collection of mantras that serve the basis of rituals discussed in the Karmapañjikā. The discussion group serves as a platform for scholars to share their research work and get feedback from other members of the group. Being a fellow at IIAS gives me the opportunity to get introduced to and interact with like-minded scholars throughout the world working on topics related to Asian culture and heritage. This certainly helps to broaden my sphere of experience and knowledge.



### Farabi Fakhri

**Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia**  
*Colonial participation in the creation of urban spaces. The municipality of Bandung in the early 20th century.*

I AM CURRENTLY CONDUCTING research with the aim of producing papers or a book on the topic of the rise of the municipality in early 20th century Java, the institutional make up that allowed the production of urban space and its relationship with democratization and the rise of a particular kind of limited participative colonial society, a kind of urban colonial liberalism.

The creation of the urban built form was a momentous change in the experience of the individual in the colony, allowing people to experience the promise of modernity and thus changing their sentiment to their allotted position

## Gonda Fellowships for Indologists

FOR PROMISING YOUNG INDOLOGISTS at the post-doctorate level, it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation, to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS. Please send your application to the J. Gonda Foundation by the appropriate deadline below. The J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) supports the scholarly study of Sanskrit, other Indian languages and literature, and Indian cultural history. In addition to enabling Indologists to spend time at IIAS, the foundation offers funding for projects or publications in Indology of both researchers and scientific publishers, as well as PhD grants.

Application form: [www.knaw.nl/en/awards/subsidies/gonda-fund](http://www.knaw.nl/en/awards/subsidies/gonda-fund)  
Application deadline: 1 April and 1 October every year



## 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](http://www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme)





in colonial society. In particular, I look at the rise of the municipality of Bandung, a city that was built around the image of modernity during its nascent rise in the early 20th century. Understanding the workings of the municipality in forging links with both the business world (real estate companies, the tourism industry) and central government, the linkages between individual members of the municipal council to wider local, regional and international networks, and the discourse produced by people in the municipal council and the wider civil society in the effort to 'sell the city' as one of the economic models of the city.

The main sources I use are the municipal council minutes and the various municipal publications on the city, including brochures and advertisements to entice newcomers to buy land and live in the city. I also consult the tourism magazine, Mooi Bandoeng, in order to understand the strategies used by both the municipality and the civil society interested in the selling of the city. Data on companies and their management in various Indonesian cities, various population data, economic reports of the municipality's land company, housing companies and their financial condition, are also consulted.

One major reason why the IIAS fellowship (1 July-31 Aug 2015) has been very worthwhile for my case is the availability of primary sources located at the excellent Asia Library of Leiden's University Library. It has one of the best collections of Indonesian resources in the world. I have been able to meet and discuss with scholars interested in similar topics both within IIAS and at other institutes in the Netherlands. My three months stay in Leiden has also allowed me to forge links and collaboration with other scholars in order to develop this research further. I plan to develop the research with others in a more comparative manner, including European cities and the extent to which their development mirrored what was happening at the time in Java.



## Hajime Akitomi

**Aoyama Gakuin Women's Junior College**  
*The comparative study of employment and labor between the Netherlands and Japan*

AS IS WELL KNOWN, Japan is famous (or, notorious) for its long-hours working culture. Indeed, since the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, the total work time of the Japanese people has fallen superficially. But this is only because, within the last 25 years, the number of part-time workers (needless to say, they tend to work less) have been increasing. Japan is still the country where full-time workers with employment security (lifetime employment etc.) work the most hours and have a strong influence on the economy and society as a whole.

Since staying in the Netherlands as an IIAS fellow, I more and more suspect that the long working hours on the one hand, and 'consumer convenience' on the other, are two sides of the same coin. Let me give a few examples. In the Netherlands, supermarkets close early on Sundays or are even closed all day. In Japan, supermarkets are often open until late at night, even on Sundays. Moreover, there are more than 50,000 'convenience stores' all over Japan, and most stores are open 24/7. If you find yourself in need of a meal in the middle of the night, you will certainly be able to satisfy your hunger in Japan.

Another example. In the Netherlands, the date and time when a parcel is delivered is determined in advance, and, if you miss the first delivery, you cannot choose a date and time for the second delivery. However, in Japan, you can choose any day and time you wish. You can even ask for the second delivery to take place on the same day as the first missed delivery, simply by calling the cell phone of the parcel deliverer. I am not saying that either country is superior to the other. The meticulous services for consumers in Japan, which may thought to be unnecessary by Dutch people, are possible thanks to the long working hours of Japanese people (convenience store clerks, parcel deliverers etc.). These days, more and more eyes are focused on the many problems brought about by the long working hours in Japan, and they have been attributed to the special employment status of full-time workers. If Japanese people wish to work less from now on, does this mean more part-time workers and the acceptance of less meticulous services, as in the Netherlands? This question is one of the themes I wish to research at IIAS.

IIAS FELLOWSHIP AS WELL KNOWN

Application  
deadline  
1 February

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, cosmopolitanism 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.

### Asian Heritages

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.

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

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

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



# Ai Weiwei



**Celebrating the past, looking to the future**  
**19 September-13 December 2015**  
**Royal Academy of Arts, London**

AI WEIWEI IS NO ORDINARY ARTIST. Over recent years he has become a household name. His activities are widely reported, as witnessed by the recent coverage when his passport was returned to him by the Chinese authorities. Ai's international profile emerged following the Szechuan earthquake in May 2008, when he started openly questioning the building standards of the local schools which collapsed, killing thousands of children. As part of a Citizens Investigation Ai collated the names of those children and recorded the impact their loss had on their families. These moving works include 'Straight' a monumental memorial constructed of rebar (steel bars used in the construction of reinforced concrete buildings) that he reclaimed from the destroyed buildings. The whole work weighs 150 tonnes and stands in silent testament to the victims of the disaster, and serves as a very visceral reminder of the fabric of those buildings within which they lost their lives.

In April 2011 Ai was detained at Beijing International airport and was prevented from boarding a flight to Hong Kong while on his way to Taipei, Taiwan, where he was planning a major exhibition. For the next 81 days he was illegally detained at a secret location and kept in a small padded room, under the watchful eye of two silent guards. On his release Ai's architectural company Fake Design Ltd. was charged with tax evasion, presented with a demand for over £1 million and given fifteen days to pay. Public donations helped him settle this bill and soon after a number of art works commemorated these experiences. These events, widely covered by the international press, elevated Ai's profile around the world.

Ai's life has over recent years overshadowed his art. His position as a political dissident, a champion of free speech and human rights, as well as a spokesman for the ordinary Chinese, may have brought him global attention, but at a high personal cost. However, throughout these years and despite all these challenges Ai has continued to express himself through his art. The exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts will allow many to see the artist behind the dissident, to witness his creative side. Since his return to China in 1993 Ai has created a wide body of work from photography to film, from sculpture to installation. He embraces a broad range of materials, many of which have a rich association with China's Imperial past, such as marble, jade, porcelain and wood. Through his choice of materials and the skilled craftsmen that produce much of his work, Ai embraces the history and traditions of China, consciously maintaining a link with the past. For instance, Ai reuses wood from the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), salvaged from dismantled buildings, and furniture much of which is reconfigured in extraordinary ways, that simultaneously celebrate the past and look to the future. His work is embedded in China, as manifested in his 'Map' series that present the modern geopolitical borders of the country, often provocatively including the island of Taiwan, and in many ways stands as a testament to his father, the celebrated poet Ai Qing.

Throughout Ai does not compromise. His standards are exacting, the workmanship is meticulous. The scale and ambition of his work is often bewildering and the complexity of it likewise defies imagination. He is an artist of great imagination, producing works of some complexity that can be unfurled to recount his own personal experiences and those of others, as well as to critique the rapidly changing face of China as it jettisons its past in order to embrace its future.

**Adrian Locke, Senior Curator at the Royal Academy of Arts, and co-curator of the Ai Weiwei exhibition.**

**Circle of animals/zodiac heads: gold**  
**3 October 2015-31 January 2016**  
**Phoenix Art Museum Asian Gallery**

**Above: Ai Weiwei, Straight, 2008-12**  
**Steel reinforcing bars, 600 x 1200 cm**  
**Lisson Gallery, London**  
**Image courtesy Ai Weiwei**  
**(c) Ai Weiwei**

**Below (left): Ai Weiwei, Dragon (detail), 2010. Gold-plated cast bronze, 35 7/8" x 18 1/8" x 25 7/8", (right) Rooster. 2010. Gold-plated cast bronze, 24" x 14 7/8" x 18 7/8".**  
**Images courtesy of Ai Weiwei.**  
**(c) Ai Weiwei.**

PHOENIX ART MUSEUM is pleased to announce the exhibition of this major work by China's renowned contemporary dissident artist. The installation consists of a dozen gilt bronze sculptures representing the animal symbols from the traditional Chinese zodiac. Ai Weiwei drew his inspiration from an original set of zodiac animals located at *Yuanming Yuan* (Old Summer Palace), an imperial retreat of palaces and European-style gardens built outside of Beijing in the 18th and 19th centuries, under Emperor Qianlong. Designed and engineered by two European Jesuits, Giuseppe Castiglione and Michel Benoist, the animals originally functioned as an ornate fountain clock that would spout water at two-hour intervals. They were part of the Hall of Calm Seas (*Haiyan Tang*), the most elaborate of these palaces, which were apparently used mostly as showplaces for the emperor and his court rather than actual residences.

Once accessible only to the elite of 18th century Chinese society, the palace was destroyed and looted by Anglo-French troops in 1860 during the Second Opium War, displacing the original Zodiac Heads. Of the seven heads that are known to still exist (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Horse, Monkey and Pig), five have been repatriated to China and the ownership of two remains contested. *Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* engages issues of looting, repatriation and cultural heritage while expanding on ongoing themes in Ai's work of the 'fake' and 'copy' in relation to the original. The Zodiac Heads have become fodder for the reinterpretation of cultural objects from the artist's own cultural knowledge and artistic fantasy.

In his own words, he was able "to produce something that is a copy of an original but not an exact copy—something that has its own sensitive layer of languages which are different, and that bears the mark of our own time."

Ai Weiwei (born 1957) is an artist, architectural designer, and social activist who employs a wide range of media. Ai lived in New York City for more than a decade during the 1980s and 90s, where he became interested in grass-roots activism and protest art. He has been openly critical of the Chinese government's stance on democracy and record of human rights violations, investigated government corruption and cover-ups, and was held for 81 days at an undisclosed location in 2011. After four years of house arrest, Ai's passport was returned to him in July 2015, whereupon he departed for Germany in August, where he is currently residing with his wife and son.

The display of this gold-plated 2010 edition of the Zodiac Heads at Phoenix Art Museum will be accompanied by a video about the artist and the production of the works as well as 18th-century examples of Chinese bronze and cloisonné works from Phoenix Art Museum's collection. These works demonstrate the skill of Chinese craftsman at the time that the original bronze Zodiac Heads were created in China, as well as being examples of the type of objects that were carried off during the destruction of the Old Summer Palace during the Second Opium War.

Sponsors for the exhibition include Heather Sacre and James Carona, Phoenix Art Museum's Asian Arts Council, GFWC Desert Jade Woman's Club Endowment for Chinese Art Programs, Marilyn A. Papp, and The Marilyn A. Papp Endowment for Chinese Painting.

**Janet Baker, Curator of Asian Art, Phoenix Art Museum.**

