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Learning to love the city in Northeast India

THE RAPID URBANIZATION of India's Northeast frontier is one of the most crucial transformations the area has witnessed, yet urban environments are rarely part of imaginations of the frontier, unlike the stereotypical images of plantations, jungle insurgency, spectacular topography, and colourfully dressed ethnic minority communities. In the Focus section of this issue we explore the cities of India's 'unruly borderland' as crucial sites in their own right, and as sites in which to experiment with different ways of researching the region.

Festival goer in Arunachal Pradesh. Image reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Tauno Tõhk on Flickr.

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Connecting new forms of knowledge

The release of this 77th issue of the Newsletter coincides with the tenth edition of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), which will take place in July in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in collaboration with Chiang Mai University. Such occurrence is an opportunity to reflect on ICAS, its constant departure from the conventional academic conference model into a large-scale local-global clearing house, and its pioneering facilitation of decentralized intellectual exchange platforms in Africa, Latin America and the Indian Ocean. Through its collaboration with ICAS, IIAS continues to work as a global connector and incubator of new forms of knowledge.

Philippe Peycam

ORIGINALLY ICAS as a network-based programme may have in some way matched the traditional convention model developed in the United States in which hundreds of panels and meetings are organized in parallel, in one location, during a four-day period. To these discussions and their rigidly structured format were added a number of customary activities such as 'keynotes', an exhibition area, etc. Efforts were, however, deployed from the outset to encourage presentations from different disciplines or country focus into dialogues by grouping individual papers in thematic panels or by promoting unusual side events. The ICAS Book Prize (IBP), for instance, was from the start organized around broad interdisciplinary bases ('Social Sciences', 'Humanities') instead of the traditional geographic or disciplinary compartmentalisation. The IBP is now the most internationally recognised book prize in Asian studies.

Yet the very mechanisms of a self-contained ritual called 'academic convention/conference' remained enforced. In its *modus operandi,* and finality, this academic model of event continued unquestioned. It gained its place in the mainstream international academic landscape as the necessary process through which aspiring individual scholars gather to take inspiration from established pundits or fellow 'rising stars', where one needs 'to see and be seen' by members of the profession. If the American appellation given to these conferences, 'meat markets', may be exaggerated, it reflects a perception shared by many young scholars nowadays that these forums are primarily places for individuals to 'sell themselves' on the academic market stage.

ICAS has only ever partially fit this description. Its biennial conventions have always attracted a proportionate balance in the origin and specialization of its participants. With an equal distribution of contributors – the majority are young, and from Asia, North America, Europe and the rest of the world – ICAS events have never been dominated by one single cultural academic group or model. More features distinguish ICAS from other academic conference networks; and they are compounded by the organization's fundamental collaborative and nomadic natures. Every event is built on a close partnership with a host institution, always in another country or world region. This nomadism at the trans-regional level reinforces ICAS's inclusive and global character. From 2007, it was decided that the biennial events should alternate between being held in Asia and in another region of the world where 'Asia' is being studied. And since 2013, the ICAS Secretary, hosted by IIAS, has been assisted by an International Council made up of representatives of past and future partner institutions as well as organizations in Asia and the world involved in the study of (and in) Asia.

Three parallel evolutions further set ICAS apart from traditional academic gatherings: its transformation into an open platform serving an increasingly diverse range of participants, institutions and sectors of knowledge on Asia; its efforts to anchor its biennial events in the very local intellectual, social and political context in which they are held; its engagement – with IIAS – in favour of the establishment of new academic networks.

Perhaps the most challenging of our efforts is to continue to transform the ICAS biennial events into dynamic forums at which collective collaboration around shared ideas and projects prevails over the atomization of individuals into competing academics.[1] One way to achieve this involves introducing sectors of knowledge situated beyond institutionalized academic categories with the objective of nurturing more inclusive and meaningful exchanges. Artists, cultural and social actors, scientists, community activists, policy makers, diplomats, journalists, artisans and even academic administrators should not be excluded from scholarly exchanges. They should contribute to shaping academic debates, the same way these sectors of activity should gain from being more intellectually situated. Though the necessity of trans-sectoral dialogues is now well accepted, the difficulty in developing the right modes or formats of encounter and exchange remains. Two IIAS programmes – 'Humanities Across Borders' and 'Southeast Asian Neighborhoods Network' – each in their own way, through experimental methodologies of exchange, address this difficulty (see page 53). A number of exploratory steps will be attempted at ICAS 10. IIAS is for instance supporting events involving specialised academics alongside urban 'practitioners' or university administrators. Meanwhile, our partners Chiang Mai University (CMU) are deploying great efforts to mobilize multiple segments of the northern Thai civil society to act as meaningful contributors. No less than twenty exhibitions and other public events are planned, by far the largest number ever introduced at an ICAS event. Regional NGOs, think-tanks, and art groups will also feature at the conference. Their presence, we hope, will encourage participants to engage in collaborative activities where new modes of thinking and acting can be explored. The forging of ICAS events into spaces in which thematic trans-sectoral collaborative experiences can occur should, we hope, expand the reach of what is (still) called 'Asian studies' as a knowledge-connected inclusive space shaped by multiple stakeholders.

For some time already, IIAS has been working on better anchoring ICAS into local realities by working with host institutions, to co-create content that can draw from local experiences, or vice versa, to use home-grown issues to ignite universal questions. Our partnership with CMU is a case in point, with a number of joint events like the CMU-IIAS roundtable on universities' social engagement, or a plenary roundtable where prominent Southeast Asian intellectuals reflect on their efforts to promote democratic rights in their country. ICAS 10 will have a distinctive Chiang Mai mark. The challenge here is not just to move away from the stale academic convention model – usually held in international chain hotels offering the same standardized recipe for a repeated *entre soi* among disciplinary and country-focused colleagues. It is about relocating Asia and knowledge-making processes within living communities and realities, in Asia or outside.

In 2019, ICAS will return to Europe, to where it began; in Leiden, in The Netherlands. As in Chiang Mai, we will seek to confer the event with a local – Dutch and European – 'feel', with as an overarching theme, "Asia and Europe, Asia in Europe". With our host partner, the University of Leiden, we will not only seek the participation of 'area studies' academics but also members of different sectors of knowledge as well as non-academic contributors from all over Europe and beyond. We hope ICAS 11 will bring new light to the complex history of interactions between the two regions.

Another way IIAS and ICAS are facilitating a confluence of localized 'connected knowledges' in and with Asia resides in collaborations they have initiated with a number of networks in regions other than Asia, Europe and North America. Here too, ICAS plays a critical role in decentring the landscape of knowledge on and with Asia. One way to do that has been to diversify the language basis of ICAS Book Prize (IBP), in collaboration with new partners. From ICAS 10 onward, the IBP will award publications in Chinese, Korean, French and German languages, alongside English. This collaborative effort also led to the support for the establishment of the first pan-African independent academic network on Asia, the African Association for Asian Studies (A-ASIA), and the organization of the A-ASIA maiden conference in Accra, Ghana in 2015. ICAS is now also supporting the development of a pan-Latin American network on Asian Studies (see page 48). An LA-Asia conference is planned for 2019, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Recently, ICAS participated in the creation of an Indian Oceanic exchange platform effectively linking the shores of Africa, Arabia and Asia. If this initiative somewhat overlaps with that of Africa-Asia, the two are not mutually exclusive. In November 2018, A-ASIA, ICAS and the University of Dar Es Saalam (Tanzania) will organize the second Africa-Asia conference in the capital city. The event will be preceded by the first of a series of roundtables on the Indian Ocean on the adjacent island of Zanzibar.

As this note suggests, ICAS is an ongoing project. Its transformation into a global clearinghouse, serving an always larger community of people and institutions engaged in intellectual discussions with Asia and Asian societies as background or as focus, is continual. We will persist in making ICAS's events always more accessible. In my view, ICAS as a signature programme deserves to be supported, including financially, for it serves a truly public mission. More needs to be done in this respect. But for the time being, we should enjoy ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai. I want here to thank our colleagues from CMU and from the ICAS Secretariat for their hard work and dedication. Beyond every effort and features that I briefly described here, there are these unexpected encounters, and the pleasure one finds in sharing new ideas with people one did not previously know, that will keep the magic of ICAS alive.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

Reference

1   I discussed the critical importance of collaboration in IIAS's mission and programmes in the previous issue of the Newsletter.

Bengali settlers in the Andaman Islands

The 1947 Partition of India triggered one of the major flows of forced migration in the history of humanity. Dominant narratives on the history of Partition describe the exodus primarily as a wave of dispossessed Hindus migrating from Pakistan to India, and an opposite flow of Muslim migrants crossing the Indian border to reach Pakistan. After seventy years since Partition, the long echoes of loss and displacement are still impacting the lives of many, and several alternative histories of the open wounds of Partition are yet to be written. The story I present in this article concerns the policies of relocation of Bengali Hindu refugees. Although often discussed as a homogeneous community with a clear religious affiliation, numerous caste- and religion-based subcultures are clustered under the label 'Bengali Hindu' refugees. The Partition of Bengal resulted in a massive flow of migrants from East Bengal that continued in steady waves for several decades. West Bengal became the smallest and most overcrowded state of an independent India: an estimated number of six million refugees entered between 1947 and 1971.

Carola Erika Lorea

AMONG THE VARIOUS STRATEGIES of refugee crisis management, the one I refer to in this article concerns the improbable solution of sending about 4000 families of low-caste refugees into the middle of the Indian Ocean under the governmental 'Colonisation Schemes' [sic] to cultivate and domesticate jungle-covered parts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. From 1949, government officials started to promote the option of relocating to the Andamans impoverished camp dwellers who often were living with bodies waiting for mass cremation. Enlisted families were carefully selected to ensure that they had a sufficient number of able-bodied working males: calluses had to be touched and approved by officials as proof of hard-working labourers' hands. Resettling on the Andamans was for many the only real option available with threats of the camp closing down, cash doles being stopped, and possibly being relocated to other hostile and distant regions, such as Dandakaranya, "where tigers would come to catch the children".[1]

Despite the initial hardships and unfavourable living conditions, the Bengali settlers transformed with time an unknown wild space into a familiar home space. Thousands of families of East Bengal origin resettled on the Islands, both as free migrants as well as beneficiaries of governmental schemes; while in 1951 the Bengali-speaking population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands was only 2363, by 1991 the number had grown to 64,706 according to the Census of India. Today Bengalis make up the majority community in the complex and variegated society inhabiting the Islands, with Bengali as their mother-tongue. Despite these numbers, the journeys and lives of Bengali people on the Andamans are mostly an unwritten history.[2] Exiled and confined to their new home space at the margins of the subcontinent, the settlers heavily relied upon cultural traditions, religious festivals and music performances to deal with their physical and cultural isolation.

From East Pakistan to tropical islands: a new milieu for a different Bengaliness
The Bengali settlers, and their descendants, may represent an estimated 98% of the entire Bengali community living on the Andamans.[3] Since the colonial era, the islands became home to people of different caste, language, religion and ethnicity: political prisoners from the subcontinent, deported communities of rebels, Burmese minorities, Sri Lankan Tamils, tribal labourers recruited from Ranchi, and decimated indigenous inhabitants of the forests. Even though the variegated multi-ethnic society of the Islands is often described as a 'Mini India' and as the epitome of 'unity in diversity',[4] tensions and more or less implicit conflicts are nevertheless at play between the different communities. Within this diversified social spectrum, the old Bengali settlers perceive themselves as a marginalized majority. In 2005, they were given the status of Other Backward Caste (OBC) in the reservation policies of the Union Territory;[5] the same category also applies for the Local Born, Bhantu, Moplah and Karen communities. This was interpreted as a disadvantage for the mostly rural Bengali community, since they have to share the reserved 38% seats for governmental jobs and higher education with four more groups, mostly settled around Port Blair, with accessible facilities for good quality education in Hindi and English, the official languages of the local administration.

In the social mosaic of the Andaman Islands, tracing the construction of a cohesive Bengali identity is a difficult task and it reflects how diasporas are privileged platforms from where to observe how identities are always work-in-progress projections of constructed authenticities (if I may so paraphrase Avtar Brah).[6] This context offers us a prism with which to unmask Bengaliness as a process, and a continuous exercise of 'othering' in order to build a shared sense of identity. What is perceived

as Bengaliness on the Andaman Islands, where the younger generations are more comfortable speaking 'Andamani Hindi' than their grand-parents' Bengali dialect?

The quintessential Bengaliness that is often associated with the songs of Rabindranath Tagore is related to a high Hindu *bhadralok* culture that is widely absent from the Andamanese context. The vast majority of Andamani Bengali are people of Namashudra *(namaḥśūdra)* origin. At the time of their forced migration, many of them did not even know about the existence of such a thing as 'being Hindu', and even now many active members of the community are keen to identify their religion as a philo-Buddhist, Dalit, anti-Brahmanical movement, rather than anything 'Hindu'. In my research, I focus ethnographic attention on the members of the Bengali community that define themselves as *Matuẏā panthī,* or followers of the Matua religious movement (from *matuẏā,* meaning drunken, intoxicated in devotional love). This group emerged in the first half of the 19th century in the area of Faridpur, in East Bengal. While adopting theories and doctrines from an earlier Tantric Vaishnava religiosity, the sect gives particular emphasis to social equality. Its followers were mainly marginalised Cāṇḍāla, or untouchables, of the Namashudra group. The movement started as a protest against caste-based discrimination perpetrated by Brahmanical hegemony, and it has much in common in terms of beliefs and practices with lineages named Bāul, Fakir and *bartamān panthī.*[7] The Namashudra people of East Bengal were severely harmed by Partition, and the creation of East Pakistan displaced the majority of the Matua community. Here I discuss the role of music and oral literature in strengthening a sense of cohesive collectivity among Matuas, and the importance of singing sessions *(gāner āsar)* as sites of identity-making.

Songs, dance, and the making of familiar soundscapes
Cultural history and social studies in the area of Bengal have produced abundant academic reporting on folk literature and folk songs. Similarly, there is a wide scholarly literature on the dynamics and political histories of Partition. But there is hardly any study on the relationship between these two, that is, on the ways in which Partition affected Bengali folk genres. My work aims at partially filling this particular gap in scholarly

literature, a gap that reproduces in the field of knowledge the social and political indifference towards the unheard voices of subaltern and uprooted communities of composers, singers and practitioners.

After a very short preliminary fieldwork in 2012, I decided to plan my following visit to the Andaman Islands during the winter of 2017, intending to spend most of my time in North Andaman in the district of Diglipur. This was one of the most isolated and forested areas of the Andamans when the first settlers arrived in 1956. The Bengali agriculturist community of North Andaman has been relatively homogeneous for several decades, providing fresh vegetables for the bazars of the archipelago without much interaction with other communities of settlers. Between January and February 2017, every night within the Diglipur district there was at least one congregational music session (kirtan, in Bengali *kīrtan*), often sponsored by a single household of the Matua community. Such events can cost up to 80,000-100,000 Rupees (equivalent to 1,100 to 1,400 Euros) and can feed several hundreds of people. They generally start on a Tuesday - the opening day of a kirtan, known as *adhibās* - and terminate on Thursday afternoon, with the gathering known as *mil mahotsab*. In kirtan events sponsored by Matua households, the festival takes place at a private *Hari Mandir:* the household shrine dedicated to Haricand Thakur (1812-1878), the founding figure of the Matua movement. The main events, after the reception of the guests and the ritual offerings to the gurus' images on the shrine, are *mātām* and *baiṭhak kīrtan*. The first is a performance of instrumental music led by percussion and accompanied by frenetic dance; as the name *mātām* suggests, the dance is maddening, overwhelmingly intense, bringing a different state of bodily and mental awakening. It is performed through two indispensable instruments: the *ḍaṅkā* - a big two-sided drum played with two wooden sticks - and the *kāś* - a metal gong hit rhythmically with a stick - strongly linked to the practitioner's Dalit identity. As opposed to other percussion instruments, the *ḍaṅkā* and *kāś* are played by both men and women. Music instruments have a sacred status among Matua practitioners and during festivals they are blessed with an offering of sandal paste; later the same offering is also given to the books of Matua songs and applied to the foreheads of the devotees.

Below: A daytime session of Matua songs in Subhas Gram, North Andaman. Photo by author.

The performance of homeland

Above: Songs are offered to the gurus' images in the household shrine before the consecrated food is shared by all participants. Photo by author.

Baiṭhak kīrtan is a gathering during which singers and supporting musicians *(dohār)* alternate in performing various categories of songs, starting from the hymn to the guru. The songs are selected from the wide corpus of Matua literature and their themes include the components of the yogic body *(dehatattva* songs), the teachings for women in conjugal life *(nārītattva* songs), the deeds and qualities of the founder gurus Haricand and Gurucand Thakur (1847-1937), and much more.[8] The performers sing in an ecstatic tone; their melodic voices at times turn into screaming, crying and sobbing. It is expected that the performers' facial expressions are transported by strong emotions, their grimaces and tears helping to create a deep devotional feeling among the listeners, often culminating into a trance and other displays of absorption. At particular peaks of intensity the listeners hug each other in tears, reverentially touching each other's feet. The singing session is highly participatory, with little divide between performer and audience; the listeners, mainly Matua disciples, wear typical coconut necklaces, and are supposed to sing along and repeat the verse sung by the main singer, completely engaged in the performance.

The Andamans' society is often described as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious 'casteless society' in which people from different faiths take part in each other's religious festivals. But in the kirtans where enthusiastic and entranced performers sing for entire nights, only low-caste Bengali participate. Among the participants, there are old settlers from East Bengal as well as later migrants born in camps and refugee colonies in West Bengal. There are also the new generations of Bengalis born and brought up on the Islands, who have often never visited the mainland or the ancestors' district of origin. To each of these groups, 'homeland' has a different significance and coincides with a different place. Here I interpret the idea of 'homeland' as an imagined place that, without corresponding to any specific geographic location or nation-state, is incarnated where the music session takes place: the *gāner āsar,* literally the seat or the place of songs. This sense of homeland is not tied to Bangladesh, to undivided Bengal or independent India, but rather exists through a constant process of reconstruction through performances that provide a shared sense of utopian, historical and territorial origins. Similar to the recreation of temples and shrines in diasporic contexts, interpreted as a process of making new landscapes familiar,[9] the recreation of performative occasions can be seen as a cultural endeavour to make a familiar soundscape and to celebrate the separation between utopian home and inhabited space. Singing traditional songs in a temporarily sacralised space can be envisioned as a performance of homeland in which past and present, near and distant, own and stranger can be mediated and reconciled.

When asking about the Bengali settlers' idea of the homeland, Madhumita Mazumdar[10] reports that her informants in South and Middle Andaman replied with the help of songs' lyrics. One of her interlocutors recited from his book of Matua songs: "Whoever thinks of *desh* [homeland] or *kul* [lineage, family]? / All that matters is the presence of Hari! / All that matters is his name!", and also "Who needs to go to Nabadwip or Nodia? [...] Our pilgrim souls are blessed at the feet of Haricand!" Besides helping us to understand the crucial role of songs in relation to a sense of belonging that transcends the idea of a geo-political 'homeland', these verses are the expression of a diasporic religious community for which the safe and intimate *desh* is wherever "the feet of Haricand" are. This metaphorical place of devotion is mobile; it can be embodied wherever the devotees successfully move and establish, through their community-making effort, the 'transportable' feet of their guru. In another song of the Matua corpus I heard: "If you cannot come to Nodia, oh Gour, make Nodia my body!".[11] Disregarding the importance of geographic pilgrimage *(tīrtha),* Matua ethics and doctrines suggest the idea of locating the holy place within and around oneself. For this and several other reasons, the Matua doctrine is particularly successful among displaced Bengalis who cannot afford, or are not allowed, to visit the main temples and the ancestral homes of their prophets and saints.

Congregation, enlightenment and exclusion: the politics of performance

That the performance of acts is crucial in the construction of social and gender identities is a leading concept in the work of Judith Butler,[12] who draws from the linguistic theories of John Austin. Applying this concept in a diasporic context, Patrick Eisenlohr[13] shows how social identities in rural Hindu Mauritius are created through linguistic performance and how a sense of Hindu authenticity is constructed through collective religious performances in Hindi. In ethnomusicology the performance of traditional songs is often described as crucial in re-making, re-interpreting and re-enacting cultural identity in diasporic contexts. A number of studies on the transmission and performance of Sikh kirtan in the UK, USA and Canada have demonstrated that devotional songs are of paramount importance in transnational Sikhism, in 'being Sikh' and in learning to be Sikh abroad.[14] Performing *bhaṅgṛā* for the Punjabi diaspora has been described as 'practising identity' in contexts of displacement where both globalization and the passing of time are increasing the distance between motherland, mother-language and new home spaces.[15]

In the context of the Bengali community in the Andaman Islands, practising traditional music and sacred songs serves another significant purpose: it brings liberation. In the oral exegesis offered by gurus and elder members of the community, dance represents a condensed form and a short-cut for yogic enlightenment. Jumping up and down through the *mātām* dance provokes a mechanic awakening of the *kuṇḍalinī* energy, which through bouncing, jumping and falling, gets pushed from the bottommost *cakra* all the way up to the *ājñā cakra* in between the eyebrows "like a football". Swinging the elbows alternatively is said to balance the subtle nervous channels *(iṛā* and *piṅgalā),* while dancing with both arms raised up high in the air liberates the devotees from the downward pull of *kām,* the selfish desire for sensual and material pleasure. The enlightening techniques of Matua music and dance are believed to be both traditional and modern. They bring the same results of the yogic *sādhanā* practised in the ancient times by the great sages, who obtained enlightenment after twelve years of austerities, but they do so in a simple and fast way, accessible to all; *mātām* dance brings enlightenment in twenty-four minutes, according to the Matua gurus.[16]

The main scholar on the history of the Namashudra movement, Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, rightly pointed out that the ecstatic joy derived from devotional music is understood as salvific. He described kirtan as an essential feature of the Matua movement; sung collectively, the congregational character of kirtan gave the disciples a sense of homogeneity and dignity through a shared experience of devotion.[17] Madhumita Mazumdar described the Matuas' weekly gatherings for singing sessions as "the soul of the community life" offering "the experience of an intense feeling of community and a kind of immersive solidarity in times when the life conditions of physical hardship and isolation became unbearably oppressive".[18] However, Matua music and festive celebrations not only reinforce unity and homogenize an idealized Turnerian *communitas:* they equally highlight social differences, exclusions and separations. Pointing at their otherness, middle and upper middle-class Bengalis would often disdain the Matua practitioners referring to the characteristics of their music and dance: "They do nothing but bouncing around!", "Let's not invite them: they are Matua! They'll start jumping and behaving like crazy!", stated some of my interlocutors. More orthodox Vaishnava practitioners frequently participate in kirtan events organized by Matuas, but they treat their practices with contempt because they offer non-vegetarian food in the last and most sacred meal *(mil mahotsab)* and because they set up a single kitchen for everybody; a fact Matua devotees are particularly proud of, in view of their strong emphasis on equality and anti-untouchability, while Vaishnava kirtans would always have two separate (rigorously vegetarian) kitchens, one for initiate disciples and one for the common people.

Focusing with a performance-based lens on the Bengali society in the Andaman Islands unravels the politics of exclusion inherent to every process of identity formation. Such hierarchical barriers are often overlooked in the rhetoric description of the multicultural Andamanese mosaic as the casteless miniature of India. My study also aims to rethink the broad narrative about the migration of 'Bengali Hindu refugees', since many subcultures and marginalized religious identities have been subsumed under the hegemonic and often taken for granted 'Bengali Hindu' label. Looking at the performance of travelling archives and migrating repertoires of Matua songs, I attempt to uncover the complex entanglements between the displacement of post-Partition refugees, and the issues of class, caste, gender and ethnicity that regulate the performance of home away from home.

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A user-centred reinterpretation of the Siebold incident

On the afternoon of 16 December 1828, Philipp Franz von Siebold, a handsome German surgeon in the service of the Dutch commercial factory in Nagasaki, said goodbye to his Japanese wife and locked himself in his room to shuffle papers throughout the cold of the night. He used bundles of tracing paper to copy maps of Hokkaido, Sakhalin and the Kuriles compiled by Japanese explorers. His friend the interpreter Yoshio Tsujiro had warned him that his house would be searched the next day. A few months earlier, the ship 'Cornelius Houtman' carrying Siebold's belongings had been damaged by a storm in Nagasaki bay. Upon inspection the Japanese authorities had found a linen cloak with the emperor's crest as well as maps of strategic importance. Siebold's collaborators, chief among them the shogunate's official geographer Takahashi Gensuke, were arrested, while Siebold was placed under house arrest and eventually expelled from Japan. This is now known as the Siebold incident, and has been used to draw conclusions on the strategic status of maps in this period.

Radu Leca

1.

2.

Fig.1:
Mogami Tokunai 最上徳内, Sagarentō no zu 薩哈連島之図 ('Map of Sakhalin'), 1801. Black and red ink on paper. 36.5 by 54 cm. Courtesy of Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Netherlands (Serrurier. 213).

Fig.2: Mogami Tokunai 最上徳内, Hokkai 北海 KAPTA ('Map of the North Sea'), before 1808. Manuscript, ink and colour on paper. 55 by 87 cm. Courtesy of Leiden University Library, Leiden, the Netherlands (Serrurier. 194).

HOWEVER, THE SIGNS OF USE on the maps from Siebold's collection, now kept in the Leiden University Library, show a different perspective on the incident. The material state of these maps as cartifacts show the traces of shared topics of interest and collective effort towards increasing knowledge. Some of these maps feature in the exhibition *Mapping Japan* that I am co-curating with Martijn Storms and will open in SieboldHuis in Leiden in September 2017. In this short article I would like to briefly lay out the argument for reconsidering the meaning of the Siebold incident.

Cartographic conversations
Siebold arrived in Japan during a tumultuous time at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This period of Japanese history is usually discussed in antagonistic terms between a struggling administration and various incursions by foreign ships. In this context, cartographic knowledge was at the forefront of national security. But that was the shogunate's perspective. In practice, Nagasaki interpreters mediated a limited form of knowledge exchange between Japanese intellectuals and Dutch traders. Maps were part of their intellectual conversations. Most of the time the exchange of knowledge occurred in small social circles that forged what social historian Eiko Ikegami calls 'enclave identities'. Maps were often exchanged as part of the social protocol of Chinese literati culture, where penmanship and learned references were appreciated. An example is the meeting between the explorer and map-maker Mogami Tokunai and the collector and patron Kimura Kenkado at the latter's home in Osaka in 1801. Mogami copied an imported Chinese map from Kenkado's collection that had originated in the Jesuit-led survey of China during the reign of the Kangxi emperor (fig.1). Mogami was not interested in continental China but in the territories north of Japan, including Sakhalin, which were perceived as under threat of Russian occupation. Mogami had visited this area himself, and corroborated other Japanese explorers' maps with Russian and European maps in order to extract the best possible knowledge of the area (fig.2). The maps in figures 1 and 2 show that there was a branch of intellectual endeavour that was compatible with Western science in its search for accurate knowledge. This was nevertheless understood within the intellectual paradigm of Chinese culture, for which 'Dutch knowledge' was a new branch of a millennia-old canon.

Nagasaki interpreters shared this appetite for knowledge. We can get a glimpse of it from the journal of Grigori Langsdorff, medic of the Russian expedition lead by Rezanov and Kruzenshtern that reached Nagasaki in 1804:

The interpreter sent to us on this day spoke more freely than any who had come before. He considered all the strict regulations of the Japanese government as extremely ridiculous, lamented that he was himself a Japanese, and wished very much to travel and see foreign countries. He regretted the short-sightedness of his countrymen, imputed it to the education of the emperor and the great magistrates, and said that the subjects must be blind when the rulers had no clear ideas, and were not in a situation to acquire any. Men, he said, are not born merely to eat and drink, but also to instruct and enlighten themselves.[1]

Siebold entered into the social fabric of intellectual exchanges in Japan as a scientist exchanging medical but also geographical knowledge with his peers. On his visit to Edo as part of the Dutch trading delegation, Siebold befriended the shogunal chief astronomer, Takahashi Kageyasu, also known as Globius.[2] Siebold gifted Kageyasu a Dutch translation of James Kingston Tuckey's *Maritime Geography and Statistics*, in which he included a dedication to Globius, addressing him deferentially with Most Honourable Sir, as he would a fellow Dutch scholar. Kageyasu also received from Siebold a copy of Kruzenshtern's *Voyage Round the World in the years 1803, 1804, 1805, & 1806* that included maps of Japan and its neighbouring regions. In exchange, Kageyasu gave Siebold copies of Ino Tadataka's comprehensive map survey of the Japanese archipelago as well as other maps of the islands north of Japan. Siebold was thrilled by this exchange but he probably understood that these maps were a sensitive issue. Upon meeting another important cartographer in Edo, he wrote the following journal entry not in his usual Dutch, but in Latin – a language which the Japanese interpreters could not decipher:

Most happy day! A Japanese man named Mogami Tokunai had been asking to meet me for two days, and showed exquisite learning in mathematics and all branches of science. After discussing various Sino-Japanese as well as European mathematical issues, he showed me under sacred seal of silence maps that delineate the area of the Ezo ocean and Karafuto island and made them available for my use for a while – certainly a most precious treasure.[3]

This passage shows the larger context of the search for accurate knowledge that moved from mathematics to geography. Mogami also gave Siebold that map he had copied from Kimura Kenkado so many years before, thereby including Siebold in the social protocol of Japanese intellectuals.

The cartographic network into which Siebold entered also probably provoked the Siebold incident. Some of the maps given to Siebold by Kageyasu had been copied by the cartographer and explorer Mamiya Rinzo. It is likely that an animosity between Rinzo and Kageyasu led to the former denouncing Siebold as a spy in a letter to the authorities even before the maps were discovered on the storm-damaged ship. Part of the confusion was due to the similarity between the spelling of Siebold's native land of Prussia with that of Russia, leading to a suspicion of espionage. The Japanese authorities did not fully grasp the nature of scientific exchange, and were bound to confuse it with spying.[4]

User data then and now
As shown above, the geographical knowledge circulating in this network was socially inflected, since it was determined by a set of social conventions. This amounted to a form of distributed cognition, which meant that geographical knowledge was not deposited solely within the maps as cartifacts, but permeated the social connections of a diverse group of Japanese intellectuals. The actions of the authorities in the case of the Siebold incident were therefore not aimed primarily at restricting the circulation of the maps themselves. Instead, their aim was to curtail knowledge exchange, to unravel the
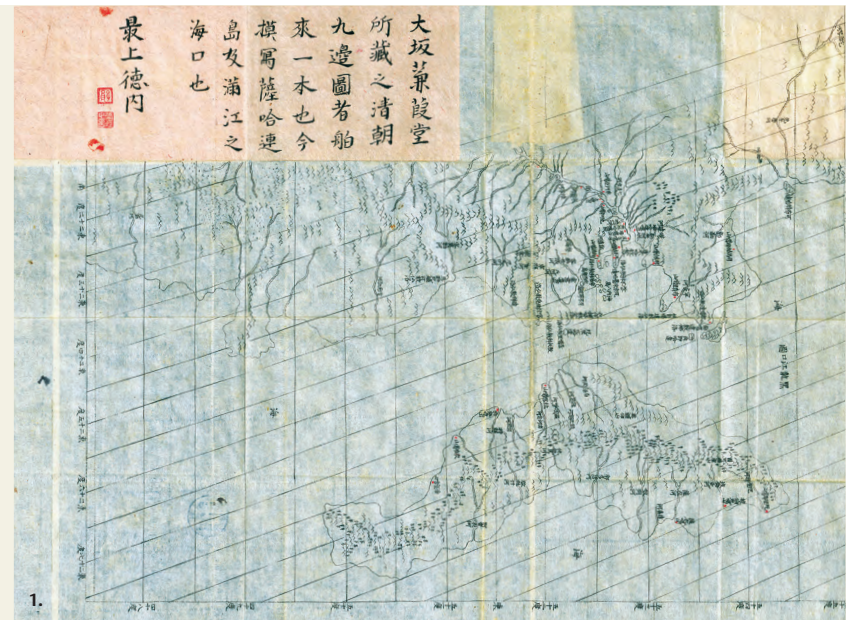
tightly knit network of intellectual collaboration that posed challenges to the political rulers' intellectual authority.

The stake of this exercise of reinterpretation is to give back agency to the various actors involved in the exchange of geographic knowledge, and to describe that exchange in terms of their own intellectual and social systems. Japanese geographers were just as disciplined in their search for knowledge, and were keen to share and compare their results with their fellow geographers, whether Dutch or Russian. Though the Siebold incident might seem to indicate otherwise, the norm was for friendly exchanges of scientific knowledge. Considering such examples require a horizontal way of looking at global history that decenters the Eurocentric narrative by acknowledging the synchronicity and intermeshing of multiple 'movable centers'.[5] By allowing 'movable centers' we are beyond the frame of Western science and its subalterns. This was an exchange made on equal terms, a form of intellectual collaboration.

Maps were vehicles of knowledge exchange and social intercourse, making possible global connections that are still continuing now. Although the technology has changed, we are still dependent on maps to understand our place in the world. The user data on present-day Google maps are the record of vernacular practice independent of official regulations. This user data has been the focus of concern over the security of private information. But what if instead we would look at this data as a record of the vernacular use of the map format? We could recover this silent data not for the purpose of anonymous tracking, but in order to reconstruct the stories of individual users and their understanding of the role of maps. Signs of use on maps of the past show us how knowledge could be appropriated and customized in the context of unofficial social connections. It is time to consider digital maps' user data as equally potent testimonies to our understanding of the world now.

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An unholy brew: alcohol in pre-Islamic Java

Old Javanese literary and epigraphical records suggest that a number of alcoholic beverages were known in Java before 1500, and fermented and distilled drinks were used in secular as well as in ritual contexts. Alcohol influenced social, cultural, religious and political life in pre-Islamic Java in many ways: from the ordinary to the unexpected. Fermented beverages were represented by several types of palm wine, rice beer, sugar cane wine, liana-based intoxicating brews, tuber-based beers and a number of fruit wines. Contrary to an established view, distilled beverages were introduced to Java only by the late 13th century, most probably through the Mongol or Chinese agency.

Jiří Jákl

Above:
Relief scene based on the Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa, on the Brahma temple of Candi Prambanan. NB. the large jars with lid and spout for pouring alcoholic drinks. photograph OD-11361, Institute Kern, UB Leiden.

"Among us there is no marriage feast without drinking. And at the festivals of the natives, where they are not of strong religious convictions (and usually they are Moslem only because their fathers, grandfathers and remote ancestors were Moslem – in reality, they are little better than heathen), large square bottles are always kept standing, and they are not sparing the use of these. But an evil greater than alcohol is here and that is opium. Oh!" These are the words from a letter penned by Kartini in Jepara in Central Java, and sent on 25 May 1899 to her Dutch friend Stella Zeehandelaar.[1] Many centuries before Kartini was born, in 1428, Chinese Ma Huan authored an account of another Javanese wedding: "[w]hen they reach the groom's house, they strike gongs, beat drums, drink wine, and play music. After a few days they disperse."[2] Still earlier, at the beginning of the 13th century, the *Sumanasāntaka,* an Old Javanese poem composed by Mpu Monaguṇa, gives us a fictional account of the wedding of Prince Sāmba and Princess Yajñavatī, at which alcohol flowed freely: "Liquor in great quantities, tasting deliciously, comforting and inebriating, was much in demand. The drinks poured continuously from rock-crystal pitchers like fountains of palm syrup. Sugar cane wine and rice beer were drunk one after the other, like holy water and mead welling up from glass vessels."[3]

Admittedly, more than at any other social event, consumption of alcohol was sanctioned at weddings, as testified by the three passages quoted above. Unlike in modern Bali, a primarily Hindu society where palm wine and other alcoholic drinks continue to be consumed, and where alcohol has a number of ritual uses, in contemporary Islamic Java alcohol is an extremely controversial issue. Yet, textual evidence suggests that in the past the people in Java used fermented and distilled drinks in the secular as well as in the ritual context. In fact, in pre-Islamic Java alcohol influenced social, religious, cultural and political life in many ways: from the ordinary to the remarkable and surprising. Before 1500, alcohol was widely used in Java as well as in Bali and more than a dozen types of fermented and distilled beverages have been documented from Old and Middle Javanese inscriptional and literary records.

Drinking landscape: fermented beverages
Of all the potentially fermentable substances in Java, the variety of palm tree species from the *Palmae* family stand out. Many produce fruits that might have been occasionally turned into fermented drinks, but a more intriguing and culturally important alcoholic beverage was made from their sap. Traditionally called 'palm wine', the beverage is produced by the natural fermentation of the sap – which ferments spontaneously with natural

yeasts – and its alcohol content varies in the range of 1-6%, depending on a number of factors. In the past, the Javanese made several types of palm wine, some of them in several grades, using mostly the fermented sap of the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera),* sugar palm (*Arenga pinnata),* Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabelifer)* and Nipah palm (*Nipa fruticans).* They knew a variety of fruit wines, and produced the sugar cane wine called *kilaṅ* in Old Javanese. This mildly alcoholic, nourishing drink seems to have been, among other of its uses, served as a 'welcome drink' to guests in religious establishments, as we gather from a number of Old Javanese texts. The Javanese also made grain beers (*bram),* including a potent rice beer (typically but imprecisely called 'rice wine'), tuber-based fermented concoctions, and liana-based intoxicating brews. Old Javanese textual evidence indicates that 'rice wine' was fermented for months in stoneware containers buried in the earth, and a great number of stoneware jars imported to Java from China and Vietnam since the 8th or 9th centuries may have been used as fermenting vessels to mature 'rice wine' and to produce one particularly strong type of sugar cane wine. From the late 13th century onward, distilled liquors, a completely new category of potent alcoholic drinks, became known and consumed in Java and elsewhere in the Indo-Malay world. Textual and material evidence also suggests that superior Chinese alcoholic beverages, such as filtered 'rice wine', were imported to the Indo-Malay world since the 12th century in containers known to ceramic scholars as 'mercury jars'. There is also evidence that Javanese elites consumed grape wine, which was imported in small quantities from Iran and by the early-modern period also from India and Europe.

A growing body of evidence indicates that until the 15th century alcohol was a more important phenomenon in many parts of pre-modern South, Central, and Southeast Asia than previously believed.[4] Java was no exception to this general pattern; while alcohol seems to have been enjoyed by many, it had its enemies as well. Texts in Old Javanese (800-1500), in particular religious works and codes of ecclesiastical law, present intoxicating drinks as forbidden, addictive and impure. Other sources, including literary prose and poetry, law texts, texts on the eroticism, and historical accounts, describe and represent alcohol as arousing, nourishing and important in a variety of cultural and political contexts. In fact, the enduring impression one gets from Old Javanese literary and inscriptional records is that an enormous diversity, both of drinks and drinkers, complicates simplified discourses in religious works, and resists any straightforward conclusions. It seems that in coastal and drier parts of Java, alcohol was consumed more commonly than in the mountainous, inland areas; in some drier regions of Java, where Palmyra palms (*lontar)* were common, fresh palm wine may have been drunk just to quench thirst, as was common until recently in drier parts of Bali. In the *Sumanasāntaka,* a venerable head of a royal-sponsored

hermitage, reminds his guest, prince Aja, that "it would be best if you were not too uneasy about drinking palm wine. We drink it like water here. There is nothing else for you to drink."[5]

Alcohol distillation in pre-Islamic Java: transfer of Mongol technology
Apart from fermented alcoholic drinks, much more potent distilled beverages, such as arrack, were consumed. Historians of Java and scholars of Javanese literature have mostly assumed that distilled beverages were already known and consumed in Java by the 9th century, but this common and widespread misconception has led scholars to render simple fermented beverages such as *sīdhu* or *māstava* as 'rum' and 'brandy', liquors which were, in fact, unknown in Java before the late 13th century. Distilling was originally confined to just a few areas of the world, where it was most likely invented independently.[6] There are indications that distillation may have been known in ancient India, but the knowledge seems to have been lost by the Gupta period, if not earlier.[7] Refuting older theories of ancient knowledge of alcohol distillation in India, McHugh has recently defended the view that distilled beverages were introduced to India only during the period of Delhi Sultanate, apparently from Persia, sometime during the 14th century.[8] Java most probably received the new technology from southern China, a region from where at least one type of 'rice wine' has been imported since the 12th century, if not earlier. In China, the process of vaporization and re-condensing alcohol had been known since the Tang Dynasty, and by the Song period distilled wine had become an affordable article of commerce due to the use of improved stills.[9] The *araqi* style distilled wine, well-known in Java by the 15th century, was developed by the Mongols during the Yuan dynasty, when portable stills were widely used. Interestingly, the official history of Koryo indicates that *soju,* a Korean distilled drink based on rice beer, first began to spread from the encampments of the Mongol army in Korea, and was first called *arkhi.*[10] I consider it quite plausible that this particular type of alcohol distillation was also introduced by the Mongol military troops into Java, who invaded the island in 1292.

Before 1500, the Javanese had a sophisticated drinking culture: a number of specialized vessels were used to prepare, store, serve, drink and ceremonially present alcohol. Contrary to traditional views that alcohol was typically poured directly into the mouth from simple earthenware containers, people in pre-Islamic Java used drinking vessels ranging from coconut shell halves, palm-leaf cups, segments of bamboo tubes, through local pottery as well as imported stoneware and porcelain vessels, to rare glass cups and exceptional golden goblets. The available evidence indicates that the consumption of alcohol substantially diminished only during the first half of the 17th century when Javanese society became more strictly Islamic, and when other intoxicants, especially tobacco, coffee and opium became more common. By the 18th century, alcohol consumption in Java was limited mostly to parts of the gentry and other elites, some non-Javanese ethnic groups, and medical use.

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Chinese export paintings in Dutch public collections

The collections of seventeen museums, archives and libraries in the Netherlands include a large number of Chinese export paintings,* many of which have finally been unveiled thanks to the new publication *Made for Trade – Made in China. Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: art and commodity*.[1] Existing research on the corpus deals mostly with the transfer of stylistic aspects; Western and Chinese painting conventions; literary sources; historical models; socio-cultural and aesthetic differences; dating and iconographical issues; and technical analyses regarding conservation of pigments and paper. In contrast, *Made for Trade* puts a new focus on these paintings: to see them as meaningful information carriers of an unknown culture that derive their legitimacy from the historical China trade,[2] and to draw upon current theoretical approaches for treatment of these transnational works of art in future museum practices and strategies. *Made for Trade* follows the entire trajectory of this specific transcultural painting genre, from the production two centuries ago to the current position. At work in this trajectory are mechanisms between people, institutions and the paintings, which increase or, indeed, diminish the appreciation of this time- and place-specific art.

Rosalien van der Poel

Terminology

The term 'Chinese export painting' was coined by Western art historians,[3] following the precedent set by the term 'Chinese export porcelain', in order to distinguish this type of painting (*yáng wài huà* or *wài xiāo huà*) from traditional Chinese (national) painting (*wén rén huà* or *guó huà*), making clear that these works were made for export to the West.[4] These artworks are also called 'China trade painting' or 'historical painting', positioning them in the historical China trade, the most important forms of which were porcelain, tea and silk. The terms are used interchangeably in Europe, Asia and North America. From the place and time of their production in Canton and Macao, later spreading to Hong Kong and Shanghai, until long after, these paintings were described by their contemporary makers as 'foreign paintings', 'foreign pictures', 'paintings for foreigners' or 'Western-style paintings'; whilst foreign, Western buyers in that period just called them 'Chinese paintings'.

In 2015, Anna Grasskamp introduced a new term for artworks derived from trade and cultural interactions between Chinese and Western nations within the framework of visual culture. With the use of the word 'EurAsian' it is possible, she argues, to escape "binary divisions into 'European' and 'Asian' elements, clear-cut 'Netherlandish' or 'Chinese' components."[5] This term is indeed highly appropriate for objects and images that are labelled 'Western' and which, in turn, are modified, re-framed and re-layered by Chinese artists and artisans into new, innovative and complex 'EurAsian' objects. However, this term is only partially suitable for use when discussing Chinese export painting overall. Although, in general, the use of the label 'Chinese' is in many aspects problematic, the commonly accepted and most universal reference, 'Chinese export painting', seems the most appropriate one to use and comes closest to the description of the phenomenon.

Valuable export goods

Chinese export paintings have for most of their existence been seen as lacking in intrinsic artistic value, which may explain why they have not received their deserved attention, and why they generally lie forgotten and undusted in museum storerooms. The label 'export ware', however, should not discount these paintings as *art*. In addition, with the passage of time, they are currently appraised as valuable collectibles, heirlooms and antique ware, and their subject matter makes them exemplary educational objects. They have a historic, artistic and material value. Rich stories emerge from them. Stories about the most important actors in this Eurasian arena: the painters, their studios, the market, the techniques and methods, materials and various media, and the depicted scenes. These multi-faceted aspects make the paintings significant for contemporary viewers. The scenes depicted potentially teach us about social world history, globalisation and glocalisation, transport, architecture, international trade, former daily life in the Pearl River Delta and mutual exchanges between Europe, North America, China and other Asian countries in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. Moreover, cross-cultural ideas about beauty, connections between trade and collecting, and this particular integrated, blended, transcultural painting phenomenon as a whole, are additional properties that constitute the potency of these paintings. We must take these capabilities into account when we evaluate them as a special artistic phenomenon, and a shared cultural visual repertoire with its own Eurasian character.

This confluence of values makes Chinese export painting distinctive as an art phenomenon that needs to be treated as a class in its own right. Far from being just commercial paintings produced by profit-making Chinese artists in the Pearl River Delta, as transcultural objects they at that time conveyed the richness of a culture and, as such, operated as valuable vehicles in the construction of reality in the historic China trade period during the Canton System (1757-1842), and long after. These paintings possess equivalent signs of the inherently collective and blended culture of the place of their production. Moreover, it is this interpreted Chineseness that makes this art genre interesting and valuable to modern eyes and hybrid audiences around the world.

Research provides not only more knowledge about the constructed and subjective image of China that these paintings brought with them to the audiences in the West, but also highlights the value of the Dutch joint collection, which deserves to be accessible and must be safeguarded for future generations.

Chinese export paintings were so appealing to foreign trading powers active in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that they can now be found in museums and private collections around the world, mostly in Europe and America, with only a few in China, mainly in Macao and Hong Kong. Currently, a growing number can be found in (newly established) museums in other cities in China,[6] including in Guangzhou where the study of the historical China trade episode has seen a remarkable revivification of late.[7] A focus on the Dutch collections is justified due to, among other reasons, the dearth of interest in the Netherlands for this topic and the worldwide lack of awareness of these collections in contrast to the leading collections of Chinese export paintings around the globe. *Made for Trade* helps to convert these paintings from forsaken items in museum basements to centralised artworks, through a new act of inventory.

Representing China to Dutch audiences: a new corpus unveiled

Chinese export paintings functioned as part of a 'meaningful whole' in Dutch society at the time of its historical China trade during the nineteenth century. Unfortunately the paintings failed to maintain their high status and value throughout the twentieth century, only to see a revival a hundred years later (see inset left). As a result of the fluctuating *zeitgeist*, the Dutch collections now include paintings ranging from forgotten and neglected items in the storerooms of (mainly) ethnographic museums, to the unique and excellently restored paintings in the Maritime Museum Rotterdam, the Groninger Museum and the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum. (fig. 1) The Chinese export paintings collections in the Netherlands consist of over 800 inventory numbers, with more than 4000 paintings, of which about 3000 belong to the valuable and extensive Royer Collection held at Museum Volkenkunde/National Museum of World Cultures. (fig. 2) Among the various types of works, sets or albums can be distinguished, whose documentary and serial natures, often constructed around one theme, contribute to the individual images, adding to their value. Together, the images form a narrative that, in a logical and coherent manner, makes the unknown 'exotic' scenes familiar and thus tells a meaningful story. As a kind of ethnographic souvenir, albums with titles such as 'costumes of China' or 'daily life in China' are, as Yeewan Koon calls them: "compelling ways of translating China."[8] Furthermore, the corpus can be regarded as a large dataset of painted media with a variety of genres with Chinese subject matters.**

Image of China

These images were never just innocent renderings of the world, and so we must evaluate Chinese export paintings with great caution, especially when they are presented as veritable historical sources. All these artworks were produced as a result of cultural and trade relations at work between the Netherlands and their trade zones all over Asia, specifically in China and the East Indies. The scenes were generally constructed, copied and reconstructed, sometimes even creatively devised by the Chinese painter, with most of them tailor-made for Western customers; as a result the various genres shaped a (distorted) image of those foreign countries, then and today.

The high demand for export paintings led to the need to standardise and copy scenes. In the well-known Chinese system of production in modules, and the idea that copying old masters was a good and illustrious way of learning to paint, the artistic value primarily depended on the complexity and accuracy of the scene and the high quality of painterly execution. Artists would use templates to shorten the production process, leading to near-identical scenes, but the disparity in accomplishment between painters is plain to see. (fig. 3) Painters could show off their personal artistic originality and creativity through their choices of brush size, colours, scene accessories and compositional elements, facial expressions, and so forth. Indisputably, the fusion of Western and Chinese painting conventions created a unique painting style; Chinese export paintings, with their multiple discourses and interdependencies, clearly shaped ambiguous understandings of what China meant, and means.

Stages of value assignment

1770-1870: Production period, exchange and consumption period
The period of the making of. Transfer to other temporal and spatial settings, and different value accruement. High value/status in the Netherlands. Low value/status in China.

1870-1930: Exchange and consumption period
The period of emotional value accruement. Children and grandchildren inherit from father and grandfather; the stories behind the paintings are shared and known, the paintings are hung on walls.

1930-1960: Exchange and detachment period
Great-grandchildren inherit from great-grandfather and paintings are taken to museums or auctioned. Paintings frequently fall from grace. Period of decline of value.

1960-1990: Exchange and continued detachment period
Low, 'frozen' status. Paintings offered for sale to museums or taken to auction. Paintings evaluated as poor quality objects and uninteresting, or even trash. Period of decline of value.

1990-2000: Detachment period
Low 'frozen' status. No longer purchased by Dutch museums; still accepted as gifts. Status quo concerning value aspects. No particular attention (dormant).

2000-2016: Revivification. Consumption and production period[1]
Value re-accruement. Market improves. Paintings increasingly appear in auctions (consumers are producers at the same time). High status in China. Proliferation of museums and academic research centres. Chinese interest in the history of the historical China trade and the period of the Canton System (1757-1842). In China, these paintings are used to narrate these periods.

Reference

1 In the Netherlands, Jan van Campen's doctoral research on Royer was published in 2000, mentioning the famous Royer albums and his other spectacular paintings, including the set of Chinese winter landscapes in Tartary. Since 2013, I have noticed a sense of urgency in Dutch museums to digitalise their collections, to collaborate with universities, knowledge institutions and other cultural (museum) partners, to establish material research centres, and to preserve valuable objects so that they can withstand the merciless test of time.

A shared cultural visual repertoire

Fig. 1 (above left): Anonymous, View on Hong Kong, oil on canvas, 46 x 76.5 cm, c. 1850, Maritime Museum Rotterdam, inv.no. P2332.

Fig. 2 (above right): Anonymous, Woman with fish in a basket, watercolour on Chinese paper, 29.9 x 34.2 cm, 1773-1776, Royer Collection, Museum Volkenkunde/ National Museum of World Cultures, inv. nos. RV-360-377-D/4.

Fig. 3: Watercolours on pith paper showing same subject matter, but different in their execution, rendering of colours and compositional aspects.

Dictated by the trade routes of the time, the westward movement of Chinese export paintings also conveyed images of China; the paintings became bearers of information. Notwithstanding the role played by Chinese painters in the creation of these images, the undoubted persuasive power of the illustrations was read and interpreted by the eye of the Western beholder. The various representations of 'exotic' Chinese subject matter appealed to a kind of immediacy and fascination. Despite the social use-value of Chinese export paintings offering 'reliable' evidence of a Chinese past, we can assume quite reasonably that the veracity of some subject matter is a more straightforward proposition, considered in terms of its likely commercial success. After all, the different themes represented only what Western customers demanded. They were in great demand and are still viewed by many people around the world as 'articles of knowledge'. On the one hand, the subject matter of 'daily life' helps us to construct a 'history from below'. They purported "in parallel with travel stories and personal diaries, to be eyewitness accounts of the city", as Koon states, when she writes about the image of Canton that emphasised a hybrid Guangdong cosmopolitanism.[9] On the other hand, it is acknowledged that the depicted scenes more likely distort social reality than reflect it.

Determining the gaze

For a long time, it was believed that a Chinese export painting's use-value or utility resided in its ability to represent or reproduce reality. But we also know that these export commodities continued to sell like hot cakes even after their reliability as 'witnesses' was questioned later in the nineteenth century. The bright colours and the 'exotic' topics made the images all the more valuable. There is, then, the question of what Peter Burke calls "degrees of reliability" and "reliability for different purposes".[10]

In the historical China trade period, the construction of visual culture included an array of agents who might have guided the gaze. By painting only specific subjects in their characteristic way, the painters themselves were important agents who guided the 'trader's gaze', who in turn saw the paintings as a way to keep their memories of China afloat. In addition, both on board and on the home front, seamen and their wives were influential purchasing agents. The high status of Chinese art and the fashion during the period under discussion led to requests for, at least, a painting or an album to be brought back home. In addition to being a representation of a cultural reality, the paintings appear to form a selective reality, separate and distinct from the subjects they portray. It is clear that in the nineteenth century, and beyond, the paintings were, primarily, acquired and cherished not only for their historic and informative value, but also because of the longing for the exotic and romantic image of 'the East'.

Today, the characters of the agents who determine the contemporary gaze on Chinese export paintings have changed, but they still exist. Think of descendants with their heirlooms as valuable antiques; auctioneers who determine which objects to put under the spotlight; art sellers with their targeted and compelling descriptions in catalogues and press releases; museum managers who decide what to exhibit; curators who digitalise and thus unlock, or on the contrary, lock their collections; enthusiasts who bring the paintings to the attention of a wider public via social media; and academics who write, or do not write, about this subject.

Back on the stage

The prospects for this painting phenomenon look good. On the one hand, revivification in the places where these paintings originated has resulted in an enormous demand for original paintings. We are seeing the newly established China trade museums and auction houses in China buy back these paintings from the places in Europe and America where they had travelled to in former days. By returning to China, new meanings will be created through this change in their cultural identity. Here, they can reassert their position as prestigious and identity strengthening commodities that confirm the cultural autonomy of owners; a use-value that, at the time of their production, was certainly true for most Western first owners. Thus, export paintings function as tangible evidential material of the early cooperation with overseas trading economies. Through today's exciting developments in the art market, the paintings will become embedded in new shifting cultural contexts through time and space. In fact, we can say that they are in perpetual flux. Their spatial mobility with visible traces of their age, usage and previous life alter their meaning and use with respect to new cultural horizons.

On the other hand, times are changing and things are set in motion on the Dutch side. Museums have become more reflexive about nineteenth-century inheritances ("the nineteenth-century museum's concern to develop an objective, systematic representation of the world as knowable by the Western subject"[11]) in considering the use of biography in and about the museum. Museum curators and collection managers increasingly view the long-overlooked status of Chinese export paintings and their confinement to difficult-to-access (fortunately, often well-acclimatised) museum store rooms as undesirable. Increasingly, they are seen as entwined

with a museum's biography. Biographical approaches to the understanding of Chinese export paintings with an accumulated experience that affords them their use-value "might inform current and future roles for the objects within the museum."[12] In recent years, some good practices have led to a major increase in the physical display of these objects that have not seen the light for years. The visibility of the paintings and, importantly, their connecting narratives upgrade this national cultural heritage in a meaningful manner. Moreover, an increasing number of online resources can be consulted today. Understandably, these developments make the author optimistic about increased accessibility to the material this article refers to. Their archival significance and their aesthetical beauty will amaze many. Likewise, their impact will help to dissolve the boundaries between the dichotomy of art that is 'Western' and art that is 'Chinese'. Ultimately, they will create a relationship between visitors, the culture at large, and with future generations, either 'here' or 'there'. Equally important, their visibility would put an end to the almost global unfamiliarity with the Dutch collections.

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2 The historical China trade period runs from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.
3 The term was introduced by Jourdain, M. & R.S. Jenyns. 1950. *Chinese export art in the eighteenth century.* London: Country Life Limited, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
4 Labels such as 'the West', 'Westerners' and 'Western', refer to a specific geographic and cultural domain; they are merely terms of convenience rather than useful anthropological or art-sociological terms.
5 Grasskamp, A. 2015. 'EurAsian layers: Netherlandish surfaces and early modern Chinese artefacts', *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 63:363-399.
6 Museum of Contemporary Art in Yinchuan (Ningxia, China) opened in August 2015. To my surprise this museum also owns a wonderful collection of 'early Chinese Western-style paintings' (moca-yinchuan.com). With an exhibition on this subject entitled *The dimension of civilization,* from 8 August 2015 to 31 December 2016, Yinchuan, a former trading settlement along the former Silk Road, showcased its connection to the Chinese international trading history. The Maritime Museum in Shanghai also holds a serious collection.
7 Embodiments of this revivification include, among others: the reopening in 2010 of the brand new, modernised, large-scale Guangdong Museum, with much attention for the China trade period; the establishment of the Thirteen Hongs Research Center at Guangzhou University in 2009; the organisation of a number of symposia on the theme 'thirteen hongs' (for example, the jointly held symposium *Literatures and the studies of Canton thirteen hongs* in September 2013, organised by the Guangzhou Association of Social Science Societies, Guangzhou Local Gazetteer Society, Canton Hongs Research Center and the Guangzhou Archivistics Society); the ongoing and intensified academic research into the multidimensional historical aspects of the China trade at Sun Yat-sen University (Zhongsan University); and the opening in 2013 of the Guangzhou Council for Promotion of the Culture of the Thirteen Hongs at the Guangzhou Culture Park. Furthermore, there are an increasing number of exhibitions being organised around this theme by museums and libraries in the region.
8 Koon, Y. 2014. *A defiant brush: Su Renshan and the politics of painting in early 19th-century Guangdong.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, p.58.
9 Ibid., p.68.
10 Burke, P. 2001. *Eyewitnessing. The uses of images as historical evidence.* London: Reaktion Books, p.184.
11 Hill, K. 2012. *Museums and biographies. Stories, objects, identities.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, p.1.
12 Ibid., p.6.

* Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: The Dutch collections include reverse glass paintings, gouaches, enamel paintings, and oil paintings, but by far the most are watercolours. The collections are found in museums all over the Netherlands, but the largest collection is clearly found in Leiden.
** Genres of Chinese export paintings in Dutch collections: The two most popular genres are 'Chinese flora and fauna' and 'Scenes of daily life'. Other genres include: figurine painting, maritime subjects, portraits, imperial court, punishment/torture, garden scenes, landscapes, etc.

Bulging biceps in urban India

Above: Murali Vijayakumar ('Biglee') training a client.

Recent Indian economic growth has brought with it new and highly globalized ideas about the 'ideal' male body. The dramatic increase in visibility of men with lean, muscular bodies in public spaces (billboards) and popular media (Bollywood, lifestyle magazines) indicates that the physical appearance of the male body is increasingly imagined to be an indicator, and facilitator, of socio-economic success. As a result, the number of gyms specifically targeting the Indian middle class has grown dramatically. Building on ethnographic fieldwork this article investigates the background of these developments.

Michiel Baas

ONE OF THE BIGGEST Bollywood box-office hits of 2016 was the movie *Dangal,* a biographical sports film that focuses on competitive wrestling in India. The movie stars Aamir Khan who plays a wrestler who was forced to give up the sport at an early age, but who decides to transform his eldest two daughters into wrestling champions. While the movie received considerable mainstream media attention for its genuinely positive message, equally if not more so did various media zoom in on Aamir Khan's remarkable bodily transformation for the movie. Khan gained 28 kilos in five months so as to convincingly play the ageing and somewhat overweight main character Mahavir Singh Phogat; he then

managed to transform himself again, emerging with a six-pack to play the younger version of his character. A fit and slim man before the movie, Aamir Khan could have played the young and muscular character first, followed by the older and heavier one, but decided to do it the other way around instead. A YouTube video detailing the transformation has been viewed close to seventeen million times and has been widely discussed in Indian media.[1] It is of course no coincidence that a video in which Aamir Khan, the director of the movie and others involved are seen discussing bodily transformations, was made. Increasingly Bollywood not only relies on highly specific scenes which allow the lead actor to show off his

muscular body, the transformation required for such a body is strategically made a part of the concomitant marketing campaign for the movie as well.

How can we interpret the emergence of a new lean, muscular bodily ideal in popular media (Bollywood movies, TV series and advertisements) as well as in public spaces (e.g., billboards and on the cover of magazines) in urban India? It is this striking visibility that takes up a particularly prominent place in my research. *How are such bodies consumed, what function do they have and what kind of meaning do people attribute to them?* In order to find answers to such questions I conducted extensive fieldwork in Delhi, where I participated in a small neighborhood gym, while also conducting interviews with various people involved in the fitness industry across urban India.

New middle class professionals
The main focus in my research is on fitness (or personal) trainers, a professional category that has emerged out of economic growth in the last decade or so and which mainly attracts young men with lower middle class backgrounds. The profession of fitness trainer therefore needs to be understood within the context of related professions, such as coffee baristas (for instance working at Starbucks) and those employed in high-end shopping malls. Such professions generally require highly specific, on-the-job training and/or enrolment in diploma courses at commercially-run training institutes. For instance, fitness trainers are known to complete various certification courses (on workout routines, dietary advice and even physiotherapy) through so-called academies that are professionally run by leading fitness and sports brands. In general, such new professions are characterized

A middle class goes to the gym

by direct interaction with clients who generally hail from 'higher' middle class backgrounds. Besides providing new avenues for making money, opportunities for social mobility and aspiring middle-classness have also been important factors in these professions' popularity in recent years.

For fitness trainers it is of course their own bodies that play a crucial role in securing a job with a popular gym and/or recruiting clients for personal training. However, having an 'ideal type' body alone – to draw from Weberian topology – was decidedly not enough to be successful in the Indian fitness industry I found. Equally if not more important was the way a trainer was successfully able to bridge the ostensible gap in middle-classness. Dealing with clients mainly hailing from the upper middle classes, trainers would often explain that besides keeping their bodies in excellent shape they would also work on their English language capacities and try to learn as much as they could about their clients' lives and lifestyles. Interactions with clients revealed that they did not only look for a trainer whose body resonated with those idealized and glorified in Bollywood movies, but were also looking for those who could effectively 'communicate' about their bodies in terms of workout routines, dietary regimes and otherwise.

Meeting on an almost daily basis, conversations between trainers and clients would naturally focus on how to 'improve' one's body, but also often took on a more personal nature. Trainers told me that clients frequently share aspects of their lives that they might not 'ordinarily' share with strangers. While I have observed this to be the case in gyms in the Western world and East Asia as well, what is remarkable in the case of urban India is that the distance in terms of education, income and social standing between trainer and client is generally much greater than in these other locations. Here it is also revealing how the body itself is 'layered' with various meanings in terms of class and socioeconomic positions in the Indian urban context. A closer analysis of the framing of ideal type male bodies in Bollywood, as well as in the Indian edition of *Men's Health* magazine, is helpful here.

Bollywood and Men's Health

Although it seems as if every Bollywood movie these days comes with a number of specific scenes that allow the male hero to flaunt his 'ripped' body, the industry's incorporation of such specific scenes is actually a rather recent phenomenon. In discussions about the spectacular growth of the fitness industry in recent years, most stakeholders I met agreed that this can be traced back to the blockbuster movie *Om Shanti Om* (2007). This movie was the first mainstream one to carve out a specific scene designed for its lead star (Sharukh Khan) to show off his six-pack abs. While actor Salman Khan had frequently flaunted his muscular physique in various hit movies before – most notably *Pyaar Kiya To Darna Kya* (1998) – in the case of *Om Shanti Om* the subsequent (media) attention was particularly focused on the actor's transformation itself. The lean, muscular body he displayed in this movie would become a standard for many actors to follow. Perhaps even more influential, however, was the Bollywood remake of the Tamil action movie *Ghajini* (2008),[2] which trainers often reference as a turning point in terms of what young Indians would imagine capable for their bodies. Similar to the earlier mentioned movie *Dangal,* lead actor Aamir Khan's bodily transformation from 'boy next door' in *Taare Zameen Par* (2007)[3] to aggressively muscular in *Ghajini* is generally accepted as one of the reasons the fitness industry would grow so rapidly in the years afterwards.

The year in which *Om Shanti Om* was released also saw the successful launch of the Indian edition of *Men's Health* magazine, which was the first magazine of its kind in India. Available at virtually every newspaper stand in the country, it is now part of a growing group of health and lifestyle oriented magazines specifically targeting English-speaking Indian middle class men. Although it occasionally features Bollywood stars on its cover, it continues to predominantly make use of 'amateur models' whose day job is usually in the field of fitness training. An interview with the magazine's editorial director revealed that on recruitment days prospective models show up in large numbers, even requiring the presence of security personnel to keep numbers in check. This is all the more surprising considering that the magazine does not pay its cover models. Instead it assumes that these men see it as an honor and even a specific ambition to feature on its cover; indeed a reason I regularly heard repeated in interactions with trainers and clients. Moreover, trainers imagined that having featured on the cover of said magazine would augment their profile as trainers and thus also attract higher paying clients.

Browsing through a random edition of *Men's Health* reveals that the way the magazine frames ideal type male bodies is not just in terms of desirability with reference to aesthetics and associated masculinity. While sexual attractiveness definitely is an element in this, even more important seems to be the way such bodies are textually linked to notions of socio-economic success, cosmopolitanism and even pro-fessionalism. Frequent reference is made to how the modern Indian man is faced with an avalanche of (often unhealthy)

food and lifestyle options, how managerial positions require a fit body not just in order to improve performance, but also for effective communications with staff and clients, and the way such a body resonates with a cosmopolitan attitude, one that is in tune with the demands of modern life. It is not hard to see how this then also contrasts with the way a 'healthy potbelly' used to signify wealth and prosperity among those belonging to the Indian middle classes, whereby veininess and lean muscularity was mainly associated with labor class professions, concomitant low incomes and the struggle 'to get by'. A more recent development, whereby gyms targeting the affluent middle classes are organized in the open air and – building on functional training routines – make use of alternative equipment such as car tires (to be lifted up and rolled over) and heavy ropes (to be pulled or swung), is particularly ironic here. However, it also underlines how thinking about the male body has undergone a considerable transformation itself.

When I recently observed an evening session of an 'outdoor' gym, in an up and coming middle class neighborhood in Mumbai, I couldn't help but marvel at how the workout routines away from air-con and comfort nevertheless clearly attracted highly-educated English speaking professionals employed in nearby office towers during the day. I have known the trainer who started this gym for close to seven years now and have observed him develop his training as well as English language skills over time. He initially trained clients in a low-end gym where he himself worked out, but later he started to train 'hi-fi clients', as he would put it himself, in much more upmarket gyms, in areas such as Bandra West and Santacruz East. Diligently maintaining his own lean muscular physique, he is now his own poster boy, adorning the van that he uses to carry equipment across town as well as the banners he uses to advertise his services in strategic locations. Hailing from a typical labor class family he initially learned most of his workout routines from observing others in the gym as well as trial-and-error where it concerned his own body. The realization that clients preferred an English speaking trainer, even if they could also communicate with him in Marathi or Hindi, made him decide to work on his communication skills; he gradually improved his English by enrolling in courses at language institutes across town as well as by conversing with his clients. As a result he was also able to tap into a greater source of information on fitness and diets online. By regularly posting updates on his own bodily progress as well as that of his clients, Facebook and Instagram have become instrumental to his business success.

The new Indian male

The role of recent economic growth could be underestimated in the developments described above. While a concomitant increase in food consumption has led to various health concerns such as obesity and diabetes, rising middle class

Below: Even the Hindu Gods have become more muscular lately.

salaries also make fitness training, dietary advice and related services more accessible. Yet the way a particular ideal type body is produced and reproduced in the gym cannot simply be attributed to increased spending power, consumerism or health concerns. Its production process, for which trainers themselves often employ lingo such as 'making the body work like a machine', 'burning off fat' and 'building muscles of steel', stands in direct relationship to societal developments, demands and concerns. It is this interplay of factors that ultimately also layers the way in which, what I have come to term, the 'new Indian male' body is interpreted and understood.

Here it is important to understand the way the above-mentioned production process relates to the way such bodies are (re)produced within the gym, as well as outside. While TV screens mounted on gym walls generally show Bollywood video clips on repeat featuring hero and/or heroine involved in complex dance routines, the very physical presence of trainers within the gym creates the impression or illusion that such bodies are actually within reach. Leaving aside how successful most clients are in their endeavor to meet particular ideals, what is ultimately the most important here is what the lean muscular body is imagined to facilitate within the context of belonging to the Indian middle classes. The gym here represents a coming together of those who are held to belong to different segments of this ever-expanding middle class. The upward social mobility that trainers envision, and in which their bodily accomplishments are a crucial ingredient, is one that relies heavily on their interaction with clients and the way they are able to guide them in their process of bodily transformation. For the clients themselves, upward mobility is envisioned through what a lean muscular body is imagined to stand for. While 'simple' attractiveness is an undeniable factor here, as an analysis of *Men's Health* magazine reveals, such a body is also equated with professional success, cosmopolitanism and more generally with the capacity to deal with the onslaught of consumerism and the pitfalls of modern living. The trans-formation that the clients envision, and which admittedly rarely sees itself fully come to fruition, on the one hand draws on an 'imaginary mobility', bringing them closer to the lives and lifestyles of Bollywood stars, while on the other hand endows them with symbolic (bodily) capital that will aid them in their upper middle class professional trajectories.

Conclusion

I won't deny that in the analysis presented above a certain essentialization is at play that casts trainers and clients in more or less diametrically opposing poles in terms of socioeconomic positions, desires and objectives. The ethnographic reality is decidedly more nuanced and complex. For one, while conducting fieldwork I also encountered trainers who had once been gym clients, as well as highly educated professionals who were now considering gym training as an alternative career trajectory, or trainers who themselves hailed from upper middle class backgrounds. The trainer who is featured in the picture that accompanies this article is an important example. Until recently he was employed as an IT professional in Chennai, but now runs a successful personal training business, something he continues to combine with competing as a bodybuilder. Although his story is less common, irrespective of their back-grounds interviews with trainers, clients and others involved in the Indian fitness industry underlined that there is no denying the symbolic value that the lean muscular body is layered with. As such, clients and trainers alike would often relate to their bodies in terms of an investment; both the capital investment required to build such bodies (ranging from gym memberships, to protein and supplement and substance use) as well as the time/effort required. The total sum was assumed to pay itself off, one way or the other. Discussions about this aspect always hinted at the complexity that presents itself when attempting to understand what the body is held to stand for beyond its immediate use.

While for middle class Indians a muscular body rarely serves a direct purpose in day to day life or work (with the exception of fitness trainers themselves of course), the value and importance that is attributed to it goes well-beyond simple matters of aesthetics and attractiveness. The place and position the lean, muscular body takes up within the context of a rapidly changing Indian urban landscape therefore offers an important window into understanding how urban change, middle class formation and socioeconomic developments are experienced and interpreted at an individual level.

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1   See https://tinyurl.com/khantransformation
    (visited 23-05-2017)
2   The Tamil movie *Ghajini* was itself an adaptation
    of the Hollywood production *Mememto* (2000).
3   The actor plays an art teacher here and deals with issues
    of dyslexia.

South Korea: the corruption that built its economy

On May 9, democracy triumphed in South Korea, as the country elected a new leader – the Democratic Party candidate Moon Jae-in. Back in March, the country's Constitutional Court had removed President Park Geun-hye on charges of corruption. This momentous decision came after an independent investigation last year alleged Park had used her office to enrich a childhood friend and solicit donations from major companies in exchange for favors.

Michael Rock

**Above:
Election posters
for Park Geun-hye
and Moon Jae-in.
Photo courtesy
of J. Martinez
on Flickr.**

THE SCOPE OF THESE ALLEGATIONS and the magnitude of their consequences brought into focus South Korea's complicated relationship with corruption. This latest instance of government malfeasance thrust the country into some turmoil, but corruption has not always been so detrimental to Korea. In fact, if not for the economic benefits of corruption, South Korea would not be the industrialized nation it is today.

In most places in the world, corruption tends to be growth-reducing, but this is much less true in East and Southeast Asia, where it tends to be growth-enhancing. In the 1960s, President Park Chung-hee (father of the recently deposed president) struck deals with a small number of

Korean capitalists, which worked as follows: The Park government provided these capitalists promotional privileges – particularly cheap credit from state-owned banks and monopoly privileges in local markets – to grow their firms. Promoted firms were expected to meet government-mandated export targets. If the capitalists met export targets, they got more privileges. If they did not, they lost, or were threatened with the loss of, those privileges. In exchange, promoted firms kicked back a share of their profits to Park and his political entourage. Park and his government cronies used the kickbacks to finance election campaigns, buy off supporters and enrich themselves.

In this model, corruption was growth-enhancing. One of the side effects of this corruption-and-growth model in Korea was the rise and emergence of the chaebols (family-owned mega-conglomerates), such as Samsung, Lucky-Goldstar, and Daewoo.

Not surprisingly, this corruption and growth model has spread to Southeast Asia (especially Indonesia and Thailand, but also Malaysia, to a lesser degree). Governments in Southeast Asia developed very clear and similar corrupt relationships with a small number of what became large conglomerated firms, especially Indonesia's *cukong* entrepreneurs (Sino-Indonesian capitalists favored by General Suharto) and what became large Sino-Thai conglomerates in Thailand. Just as in Korea, Southeast Asian governments used kickbacks from favored businesses to shore up their political support and enrich themselves.

There are, of course, major drawbacks to this model. For one it undermines political legitimacy. In Indonesia, public revulsion over corruption helped topple Suharto from power. Over time, it can lead to changes in the relationship between government and business; while government was initially the senior partner in this corrupt relationship, businesses gradually gained power by competing for seats in parliament and pulling the levers of economic policy, pushing corruption into a growth-reducing direction.

Park Geun-hye's ouster represents a clear victory for transparent governance and the rule of law in South Korea. The transfer of power to Park's left-wing opposition is an understandable popular reaction to the latest incidence of corruption, and was not unexpected.

But history tells us that illicit ties between Korean businesses and Korean governments run deep. It remains to be seen whether the Korean political and economic establishment can move on from the wide-reaching scandal that brought Park down. The world should follow the next developments with a wary eye.

Michael Rock is the Samuel and Etta Wexler Professor of Economic History at Bryn Mawr College. His most recent book is *Dictators, Democrats and Development in Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2016). He is currently working on a book tentatively titled *Democracy, Development and Islam*.
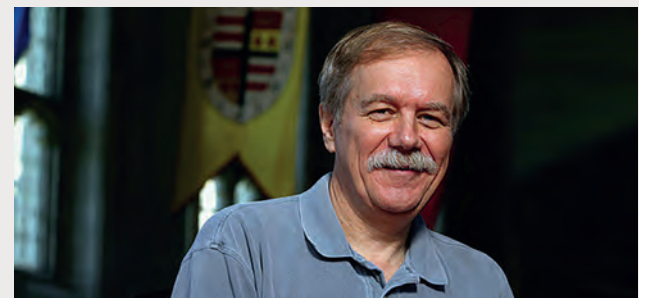
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News from Australia and the Pacific

For *News from Australia and the Pacific,* we ask contributors to reflect on their own research interests and the broader academic field in Australia and the Pacific of which it is a part. We focus on current, recent or upcoming projects, books, articles, conferences and teaching, while identifying related interests and activities of fellow academics in the field. Our contributions aim to give a broad overview of Asia-related studies in Australia and beyond, and to highlight exciting intellectual debates on and with Asia in the region. Our preferred style is subjective and conversational. Rather than offering fully-fledged research reports, our contributions give insight into the motivations behind and directions of various types of conversations between Asia and the region.

In the current issue, we highlight the field of Language and Linguistics. *News from Australia and the Pacific* is edited by Ana Dragojlovic and Edwin Jurriëns, with assistance from Andy Fuller, from the Asia Institute in Melbourne.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

The Asia Institute is The University of Melbourne's key centre for studies in Asian languages, cultures and societies. Asia Institute academic staff have an array of research interests and specialisations, and strive to provide leadership in the study of the intellectual, legal, politico-economic, cultural and religious traditions and transformations of Asia and the Islamic world. The Institute is committed to community engagement and offers a dynamic program of academic and community-focused events and cultural exchanges that aim to promote dialogue and debate.

ACICIS and studying language in Indonesia

David Reeve

IN THE LATE 1980S there began a strong government advocacy of Asian language learning in Australia, with goals and policy recommendations made in the major Ingleson report of 1989, *Asia in Australian Higher Education.* This report proposed a much wider provision of Asian languages in Australian universities, with the aim to have 5% of the higher education population to be studying an Asian language by 1995. There was a particular focus on 'the three major Asian languages', Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian. More local measures were advocated for Korean, Hindi and Thai, plus recommendations for the main-tenance of teaching capacity in Lao, Tibetan, Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and Sinhala at ANU. In-country training was strongly recommended. Japanese language study experienced a boom from the later 1980s, and in the early 1990s more university programs in Chinese and Indonesian were opened.

During the early 1990s various universities made pioneering efforts to set up semester-long programs with Indonesian universities, aided in part by funding through the University Mobility in the Asia Pacific (UMAP) program, which provided seed funding for programs that promised to become enduring student exchange programs between universities in Indonesia and Australia. Considerable effort went into these early initiatives, but numerous problems would emerge over time. One was that the programs tended to disappear after the initial funding had ended. And when they did continue, students went only one-way, to Indonesia; Indonesian students did not come back along the channels opened. Some universities ran useful small programs where some of their students went to Indonesia in exchange for an Indonesian staff member coming the other way, but the numbers were small, particularly in comparison to the numbers envisaged in the Ingleson report.

Problems also emerged in relation to the students themselves when in Indonesia. The first was just getting them there, as the visa application process was so long and difficult. The second was providing advice about study programs once students were in Indonesia. They needed their study in Indonesia to qualify for credit back home, and sometimes they needed quick advice about the choices available to them when they arrived, or later during the program. Then there was the issue of care and advice for all the range of problems that students can face when living in another country, from home-sickness to culture shock and, most urgently, illness. There were matters that needed attention after students went home, particularly that transcripts be sent promptly to their home universities. These were all teething problems that were faced by universities in Indonesia and in Australia.

It became clear that some sort of back-up organization was needed for these students, and that these problems would be best addressed by sending the small groups of students as one single coordinated group, backed up by an Australian academic resident in Indonesia. Thus ACICIS (the Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies) was established in 1994.

At Murdoch University, Paul Stange and David Hill undertook the planning and negotiations with the Indonesian government, and the first group of some 20 Australian students arrived in mid-1995, with Paul Stange as the first resident director (currently Elena Williams is the eighth). The model was that students would spend a semester at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, and those staying for a second semester would take a field study program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang.

From around 20 in the first seminar in mid-1995, numbers rose quickly to about 60-70 per semester at the end of the 1990s, but various security issues coming from a long series of events (rioting around the fall of Suharto in 1998, unrest over Australia's role in East Timor in 1999, then the bombings from 2002 to 2006) hit the program hard and also put plans to expand off-Java on hold.

ACICIS decided to seek, in addition to the Indonesian Studies students, other students who could profit from an in-country experience. The first proposal was for a journalism 'professional practicum', a six-week summer program drawing on David Hill's media expertise and contacts: two weeks at Atmajaya University, with four hours Indonesian language each morning, and relevant seminars from experts in the field in the afternoon, and a four-week practicum in a relevant organization. The success of the journalism summer course led to the gradual inclusion of more practical subjects. In January-February 2017, 106 students studied in Jakarta in four 'practica' programs: journalism, development studies, business and creative arts and design, with a law professional practicum planned for 2018. The New Colombo Program, begun in 2014 as a signature policy of Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, has been of key importance in opening up these new fields.

New programs have also come from Indonesian initiatives for international programs in which Indonesian universities teach their own students in English, and welcome outside participation. This has led to the Indonesian Business, Law and Society program at Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) in Yogyakarta, the International Studies program at Universitas Parahyangan in Bandung, and the Agriculture Studies program at the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB). As well as immersion in Indonesian life and culture, many of these students include language study in their programs. Other new programs taught largely in Indonesian include the Development Studies immersion semester at UGM and the Indonesian Language Teacher Immersion semester program at Universitas Sanata Dharma also in Yogyakarta.

Above: A group of ACICIS students in-country involved in the AIYA Yogyakarta committee. Photo courtesy of ACICIS.

Various shorter courses have also been developed for specific clienteles, including the Indonesian From the Ground Up (IFGU) 10-13 day tour for school-teachers, some school tours, and more recently a Public Health two-week intensive study tour. A short language course for (European and Australian) summer and winter is now being planned. Overall, in-country study is increasingly popular, with many programs developed and more planned. Over 2000 students have taken part in these ACICIS programs since the first group in 1995, but this is still a very small total compared to the numbers of Indonesians studying in Australia each year. The numbers in various programs have waxed and waned, and considerably more students could be accommodated in the existing programs, if universities would send them. The idea of study in Indonesia still needs considerable promotion. But teachers of Indonesian in Australian universities have mostly been delighted with the results of in-country study, with students coming home with generally much higher levels of language skills, and much more familiarity and confidence with Indonesian society and values.

In 2017, ACICIS has grown to include 24 member universities in Australia, plus important international members, such as Leiden University and SOAS in London. There are 16 staff in the in-country operation, looking after all the programs, and a small Australian secretariat at the University of Western Australia. But numbers are still uneven, and much more progress is possible. Most people associated with the program, academic staff, in-country staff and above all the students, are extremely enthusiastic about the range of benefits of study in-country in Indonesia.

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The nexus between language diversity and language education

Michael Ewing and Dwi Noverini Djenar

INDONESIAN IS TAUGHT in many primary and secondary schools across Australia, as well as most major universities in the country. Strengthening the nexus between research and teaching is important for keeping teaching methodologies and content up-to-date and engaging students. We present some findings from our research project on the language of young Indonesians, and explore some of the ways these findings can inform language learning and teaching.

Indonesia is a highly multilingual society and standard Indonesian (itself a variety of Malay), as promoted by the national language board and educational practices, exists in a complex sociolinguistic ecology. Indonesia's language diversity includes colloquial varieties of Indonesian, other varieties of Malay and hundreds of regional languages found across the archipelago. In the past the relationship between the different languages has been described in terms of diglossia, in which each language has a specific function within a particular domain. Standard Indonesian is considered the language of government and education, while regional languages or colloquial varieties of Indonesian are for family and personal relationships. In fiction, this divide can be seen when authors present narration in standard Indonesian, but allow colloquial forms to appear in dialogue. Examining recent genres of fiction aimed at young audiences, we found that this simplistic division is no longer operative.

Beginning in the 1990s, with democratisation and press freedom, there has been a dramatic increase in both numbers and kinds of Indonesian publications, including those aimed at a youth demographic. During the same period a newly recognised trendy, urban youth identity and its associated form of language called *bahasa gaul* [the language of sociability] became popular.

These and the dramatic popularity of social media in Indonesia in recent years, correlate with a weakening of the divide that has officially separated standard and colloquial language, creating a more porous boundary between the two.[1] In an example from Fairish, a teen-lit novel written by Esti Kinasih,[2] the narrator describes how Irish, the protagonist, is surprised one morning to find she was not the first to arrive early at school.

> *Betapa kagetnya Irish begitu tiba di sekolah, karena dia pikir dia bakalan jadi orang pertama yang menginjakkan kakinya di sekolah. Tapi ternyata, boro-boro!*
> "Irish was so surprised when she arrived at school because she thought she was the first one to enter the school ground. But she was totally wrong!"

The narration begins with the standard style then moves to a more colloquial style before ending with the particularly colloquial expression *boro-boro* [let alone] (the translation above is adjusted for idiomaticity). In older teen fiction, this mixing of style is rare. Similar shifts occur in comics, on social media and in conversation. Our next example is from a recording of a group of university students sitting in a food court. They have been discussing economics in fairly standard Indonesian when Rini changes the topic and says that she hasn't yet decided what to order.

Rini: (while laughing) *Saya belum menemukan apa yang mau saya makan.*
          "I have not yet discovered what it is that I want to eat."
          Ini=. … Hah. Itu teh cuma esnya aja?
          "Here. Hah. That's just with ice?"

Ratih: *Minum aja Teh. …Tapi nggak tau mau minum apa.*
          "(I) am just going to have a drink. But (I) don't know what (I) want."

Rini begins in the standard style, indicated by *saya* for first person reference, the fully inflected verb *menemukan*

[to discover] and a complex sentence structure. She also laughs, indicating the humorous incongruity between what she said and how she said it. Rini and Ratih then switch to a more colloquial style indicated by informal *aja* [just] and *nggak* [not], the use of ellipses and the incorporation of a Sundanese discourse marker *teh* and (coincidently homophonous) vocative *Teh* [older sister].[3] While the forces of conservative educators and government bureaucrats continue to promote standard Indonesian, the mixing of styles, registers and languages is in fact the lived reality of all Indonesian speakers, and youth enthusiastically celebrate this linguistic plurality.

What does this mean for language education? We feel that the love of language variation expressed by young Indonesians is something that needs to be shared with learners. We identify four ways that our research can inform the teaching of Indonesian. First, diversity is the reality. As educators, we must recognise and embrace linguistic and cultural diversity and can no longer teach only the standard language in isolation, because this would provide an unrealistic model for students. Second, narrative (in its myriad forms) is an extremely useful entry into the complex cultural and linguistic diversity found in Indonesia and so is valuable in language teaching. Third, for learners the key is flexibility. We cannot possibly teach all the different kinds of language and cultural variation students will encounter in Indonesia, but we can teach them skills, tools and strategies to deal with and embrace diversity. Finally, as educators we have to rise to this challenge. Rather than falling back on easy solutions that rely on a simplistic reading of register and language variation, we need to embrace difference, hybridity, and complexity.

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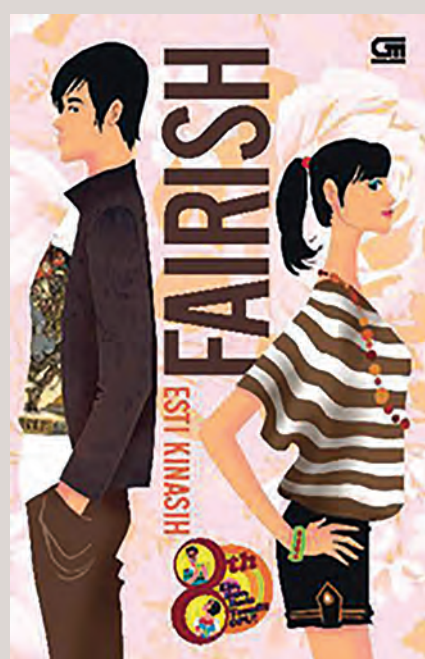
The Tai-Kadai languages and their genetic affiliation

Yongxian Luo

TAI-KADAI is a family of diverse languages found in southern China, northeast India and much of Southeast Asia, with a diaspora in North America and Europe. It is one of the major language families in East and Southeast Asia. The number of the Tai-Kadai languages is estimated to be close to one hundred, with approximately 100 million speakers who are spread across six countries: China, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, India and Vietnam. Tai-Kadai is a well-established family in its own right. However, its genetic affiliation remains open.

As the name itself suggests, Tai-Kadai is made up of two major groups: Tai and Kadai. Tai, also known as Kam-Tai, comprises the best known members of the family: Thai and Lao, the national languages of Thailand and Laos, whose speakers alone account for over half of the Tai-Kadai population. Thai and Lao are closely related to Zhuang, the language of the largest minority group in China. Other important members within the Tai group include Kam and Sui, with several million speakers.

Kadai refers to a number of lesser-known languages, some of which have only a few hundred fluent speakers or even less.[1] The majority of Tai-Kadai languages have no writing systems of their own, particularly Kadai languages. Those with writing systems include Thai, Lao, Sipsongpanna Dai and Tai Nua. These use the Indic-based scripts. Others use Chinese character-based scripts, such as the Zhuang and Kam-Sui in southern China and surrounding regions. Romanized scripts were also introduced in the 1950s by the Chinese government for the Zhuang and the Kam-Sui languages. Almost each group within Tai-Kadai has a rich oral history tradition.

In the early days of Sino-Tibetan studies, Tai was assumed to be a member of the Sino-Tibetan family. This theory was challenged by Paul Benedict, who put forward the hypothesis of a Tai-Austronesian alliance.[2] Benedict's position has gained increasing acceptance among Western scholars. Benedict made the links between Kam-Tai and a number of lesser known languages such as Gelao, Lachi and Laqua, for which the term

Kadai was coined. More recently, terms like Kra and Kra-dai have been proposed for these latter languages.

While there is no question about the status of Tai as a distinct language family, the genetic affiliation of Tai-Kadai remains controversial. Opinions are divided into three camps: (1) Sino-Tai; (2) Austro-Tai; (3) Sino-Tibetan-Austronesian. The Sino-Tai hypothesis assumes the membership of Tai under Sino-Tibetan while the Austro-Tai theory argues for a genetic relationship between Tai and Austronesian. The Sino-Tibetan-Austronesian hypothesis proposes a super phylum that includes Chinese, Tai-Kadai, Miao-Yao, and Austronesian.

Today western researchers generally embrace the Austro-Tai theory while the majority of Chinese scholars still uphold the traditional hypothesis for a Sino-Tai alliance. A number of Chinese scholars, however, are siding with Benedict in linking Tai-Kadai with Austronesian, excluding Tai-Kadai from Sino-Tibetan.[3] The advancement in the phylogenetic study of Kam-Tai and Austronesian peoples, along with several anthropological traits such as face-tattooing and teeth-blackening, lend support to this view.

On the basis of comparison between Kam-Tai and Austronesian, Deng and Wang believe that Kam-Tai and Austronesian are genetically related.[4] Their conclusion is arrived at through solid evidence: some 40 basic vocabulary items in Swadesh's list are found to be shared by Kam-Tai and Austronesian. These include several items from Yakhontov's list – a 35-word subset of the Swadesh list posited as especially stable by Russian linguist Sergei Yakhontov for calculating the genetic relationships between languages. However, not all Austronesianists are convinced; for them, the evidence cited proof is in fact far from consistent, and should be considered as result of contact rather than genetic link.

On the other hand, recent research provides evidence from Kam-Tai and Chinese showing that the two languages share basic vocabulary and morphological processes.[5]

Little parallel development can be observed between Kam-Tai and Austronesian in this regard. This is at variance with Benedict's claims that Tai and Chinese share little in basic vocabulary and morphology. Since basic vocabulary and morphology is relatively stable and resistant to borrowing, this finding is worth considering.

For now, evidence from both sides is contested. The Sino-Tai hypothesis needs to be revisited, as does the Austro-Tai hypothesis. Since Kadai languages may hold a key to the genetic position of Tai-Kadai, good descriptive and comparative work needs to be done to unveil key aspects of historical connection.[6] The issue of genetic affiliation of Tai-Kadai remains a fascinating topic of academic pursuit.

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Intercultural language education in Australia

Etsuko Toyoda

IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS where we are required to mark and grade our students, it is easy to focus solely on their linguistic progress. However, we often need to step back and remind ourselves that a true benefit of language learning is intercultural understanding. Foreign languages play an important role in intercultural education. The term intercultural as used here refers to interaction between people from dissimilar backgrounds. Learning a language enables learners to communicate directly with people who speak the language, and makes learners become aware of their own language, culture, and their way of thinking (which is influenced by their language). In addition to the direct benefits of language learning, cultural diversity among learners can be an effective forum for intercultural learning.

Scholars interested in intercultural language learning in Australia include Angela Scarino, Anthony Liddicoat, Chantal Crozet, Adriana Diaz, Paul Moore, Alistair Welsh, and Michelle Kohler. Recently, the Intercultural Language Teaching & Communication cluster was formed as part of the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities (LCNAU). My own research interests lie in the connections between intercultural competence development, learner diversity, and foreign language education. I have constructed and evaluated a collaborative intercultural learning environment using the 'Community of Inquiry Framework', which assumes that effective critical learning requires a community of inquiry.[1] It consists of three elements: teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence, which mutually support and improve a learning environment as a whole. Being based on social constructivist perspectives, knowledge is seen as something that is created and shared in social settings, both physical and online learning spaces. At the same time, the framework emphasizes that learners should be able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection. Above all, it underscores the important role of the teacher who designs and facilitates the formation and use of social and cognitive processes, for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes.

Findings from my research suggest that the maturation of key components of intercultural competence, which are knowledge/experience, awareness/comprehension and critical thinking skills, nurtures effective and appropriate communication and behaviour in intercultural situations.[2] Initially, learners' interactions were often superficial. In their reflective journals, learners tended to use basic understanding that evidenced shallow evaluations or limited reflections. As a result of the intercultural pedagogical techniques, such as collaborative learning, they increasingly engaged in conversations at a deeper level. At the same time, they gradually became aware of their own language use as they started to notice how others expressed their thoughts. They became aware of the limited range of their own knowledge and experience while listening to others. The interactions with people of different backgrounds broadened learners' perspectives, deepened their thoughts, and enriched their expressions. This study showed that critical thinking skills were crucial for transforming knowledge and experience into awareness and comprehension.

A learner's individual learning experience in an intercultural learning environment, however, varies considerably. The results of an in-depth analysis of journals kept by six learners (two international students, two local students with Asian background, and two local students with a relatively monocultural background) demonstrated that their learning experiences were different - although they all expressed satisfaction with the intercultural learning experience.[3] When learners were exposed to intellectually stimulating resources (text/people), there was a tendency for learners with richer multicultural experiences to exercise critical thinking, and construct and confirm meaning through discourse and reflection. However, the data also revealed that while prior intercultural experience of individual learners played a key role, both teaching presence and social presence also affected the exercise of critical thinking. The findings suggest that perceiving teaching presence correctly (i.e., understanding the value of intercultural learning) and utilising social presence (i.e., sharing experiences, thoughts and opinions) leads to exercising critical thinking, and consequently to greater cognitive presence (i.e., awareness and comprehension).

The findings of one of my other studies,[4] on the other hand, show that there is no clear relationship between the critical thinking skills exhibited in the intercultural learning and learners' language performance, despite the general belief that critical thinking skills assist language learning. Critical thinking skills might be a factor in the improvement of language performance, but it was not the sole factor. Other factors also affected language performance, such as the current level of language ability (whether one was in the position of being able to learn from higher-proficiency peers), focus on language learning (whether one was attentive to one's own language use), and the relationship with other group members (whether one's group was sufficiently collaborative).

Interactions with others who have disparate cultural backgrounds are great opportunities for learners to recognize and understand themselves as "situated in their own language(s) and culture(s)".[5] Resultant increases in learners' sociocultural awareness may then become entry points for reflective analyses about transcultural communication, frames of reference, and the influence of cumulative experience on language and culture. In sum, learners should be encouraged to engage in two aspects: doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. Through this type of active learning, they can improve their language performance as well as enhance their critical thinking skills.

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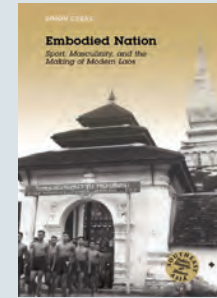
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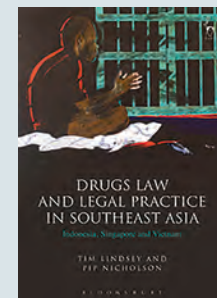Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
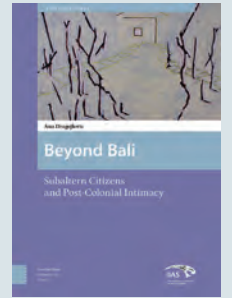
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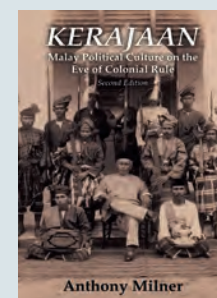London: Hart Publishing.

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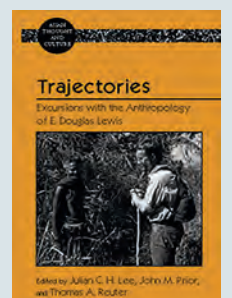
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News from Southeast Asia

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These selected articles are from the workshop 'National Imaginations in Southeast Asian Art', organised by the Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS) Programme at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. Together with RSCS's regular Arts in Southeast Asia seminar series, this workshop aims to explore the intersecting forces of nationalism, nation-building and art-making in the region.

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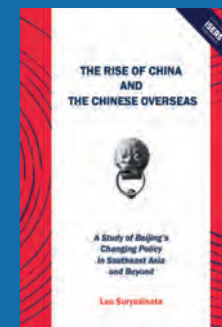2017, 577 pages
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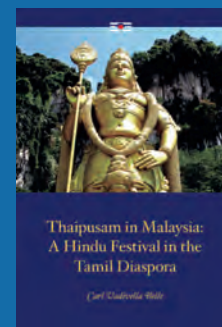
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National imaginations in Southeast Asian art

Helene Njoto

THE REGIONAL Social and Cultural Studies Programme at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute convened the workshop 'National Imaginations in Southeast Asian Art', on 20 January 2017. This workshop welcomed both senior art historians and younger specialists from the region including Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, as well as Australia, the Netherlands, the USA. Designed as an open forum, the one-day workshop gathered a large crowd of over 140 people from cultural institutions such as galleries, museums and universities. Clearly, there was great public interest in the region's art history, a discipline still in its infancy in Southeast Asia.

The workshop, organised by Helene Njoto and Terence Chong, addressed the theme of national consciousness in Southeast Asia and the role of the arts in the formation of nationhood. It asked how the art world, its agents and the images produced, can shape this region and how much this region's 'national imaginations' are shaped by the arts. The workshop examined the role of arts not only from the point of view of artists and their artworks or through other dialectical frameworks such as modernism or globalisation. It also sought to address a broad range of local socio-economic factors from which art is manufactured as well as the cultural intermediaries like curators, critics and gallerists who promote or exclude artworks. It questioned 'nation-building' as a heuristic/relevant framework about 60 years after the creation of the first sovereign nations in Southeast Asia. This question seems ever more relevant today as artists tend to abandon local cultural signifiers and adopt more global idioms.

The workshop was divided into three country panels to highlight singularities among Southeast Asian nations.

The morning was dedicated to Indonesia and the afternoon saw two consecutive panels on the Philippines and Thailand on the one hand, and Singapore and Malaysia on the other. The speakers covered a wide timespan from the 19th century to the present with an emphasis on the pre- and post- independence era (1940s to 1970s) when most artworks and writings on nation-building were produced. Dr Daphne Ang showed how artistic genres such as portraiture served the purpose of establishing colonial authority in Malaya.

Most speakers observed that the role of arts in forming national imaginations is an on-going process. In the Philippines and Indonesia, artists from the colonial past (19th century) are lauded for being pioneers of modern art and national heroes "avant l'heure", though not without triggering some reaction as shown by Dr Sinnardet, Dr Baluyut and Dr Scalliet in their respective presentations. In the Indonesian panel, Ms Katherine Bruhn and Ms Brigitta Isabella spoke of how certain ethnic or provincial groups in Indonesia were excluded from the national narrative, while Mr Matt Cox challenged the territorial boundaries of 'national art' by looking at diaspora artists. The very limitations and relevance of the 'national' framework were also touched upon by Mr Brian Curtin who spoke of contemporary Thai art. In the late afternoon Dr Sarena Abdullah looked at the effects of the promotion of religious and ethnic values in national Malaysian arts. Last, Dr Yvonne Low and Ms Grace Hong addressed the challenges faced by Singapore to construct a national curatorial line while coveting a more global position in the region. Find below short summaries of three presentations given at the workshop.

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The ambivalent political identities of Chinese Indonesian artists in the 1950s-1960s

Brigitta Isabella

THE IDENTITY OF CHINESE INDONESIANS is closely linked to the way they perceive themselves, as well as how they are treated by society and the state. Chinese Indonesians have had to negotiate issues of nationalism, citizenship and loyalty in articulating their identities. This was certainly so amongst Chinese Indonesian artists of the 1950s. The case of *Yin Hua Mei Shu Hsieh Hui* (印華美術協會) or *Lembaga Seniman Yin Hua* (Yin Hua Artist Organization, YHAO), formed in Jakarta in April 1955, is a prime illustration of how national forces have pulled the identities of Chinese Indonesians in ambivalent directions.

There are two lenses with which to view YHAO. One is through the issue of national citizenship and the other through national identity. Both issues placed YHAO in a tug of war between Indonesian and Chinese political and cultural identities. These issues were shaped by a variety of forces such as decolonization, nationalism, the bilateral policy between Indonesia and China, and the overseas Chinese community in Indonesia.

YHAO had approximately 92 members from Jakarta, Surabaya, Semarang, Solo, Cirebon, Pekalongan, Malang, Bandung and Tanjung Pinang, probably making it the biggest art organization in Indonesia at that time. YHAO enjoyed the patronage of none other than President Sukarno. The Chinese government also supported YHAO's first exhibition in January 1956, and later invited ten YHAO members to visit China for five months in the same year. YHAO was soon drawn into the politics of diplomacy between Indonesia and China. YHAO's first exhibition from 7-14 January 1956, at the Hotel Des Indes, Jakarta, was a case in point. President Sukarno and the Chinese Ambassador to Indonesia, Huang Zhen (in office from November 1954 to June 1961), attended the opening and praised YHAO's first exhibition. The show turned into a diplomatic gesture, which immediately transformed YHAO into a symbolic bridge for Sino-Indonesian relationships, providing China leverage through Sukarno's well-known passion for art.

However, Indonesia-China relations were full of contradictions. The official Chinese endorsement of YHAO's first exhibition sent, on the one hand, a clear message of transnational unity with overseas Chinese in Indonesia; on the other, this endorsement contradicted Chinese state policy, which encouraged Chinese Indonesians to distance themselves from Chinese transnational patriotism, and to choose Indonesian citizenship, but withdraw from Indonesian domestic politics in order to play down the negative association of ethnic Chinese with communism. It was never clear if the overseas Chinese would neglect their cultural identity if they opted for Indonesian nationality. For YHAO, however, the political aesthetic imposed on it was Maoist-Chinese in orientation. As such, when expressing identities and culture in its art works, YHAO had to oscillate between Chinese transnational political aesthetic and Indonesian nationalism.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian government also desired close ties with China. However, due to its own deteriorating economic situation, Indonesian domestic policy was un-sympathetic to the rights of Chinese in Indonesia. On paper, after 1955, the Chinese in Indonesia could freely choose either Indonesian or Chinese nationality. But throughout the 1950s-1960s the government established many discriminatory policies that made most of them feel alienated and unwanted. Under such circumstances, YHAO formed a dual attachment to Indonesia and China. Although the sense of overseas Chinese patriotism is present in YHAO's organizational practice, there are artworks in the 1956 exhibition that praise Indonesian nationalism, as represented by the works of Ling Nan-Lung and Tjio Tek Djin that depict the figure of Sukarno respectively in sculpture and painting, both entitled 'P.J.M. Presiden Dr. Ir. Soekarno'.

Malay and Islam-Centric national narratives: modern art in Malaysia during the 1980s

Sarena Abdullah

THE 1971 NATIONAL CULTURE CONGRESS could be seen as the first official attempt to shape arts and culture in Malaysia. Inspired by increasingly pro-Malay government policies, Malay intellectuals convened at the University of Malaya in August that year to formulate the country's policy on national culture. Three principles were established, namely, 'Malaysian National Culture must be based on the indigenous culture of the people from the region'; 'Elements from other cultures that are deemed proper and appropriate can be integrated as parts of the National Culture'; and 'Islam as an important element in forming the national culture'.

Perhaps more influential than the National Culture Congress in arts and culture was a rise in Islamic consciousness and policies from the mid-1970s onwards in Malaysia. This Islamic consciousness emerged from the *dakwah* movement that could be seen in parallel with the rise of ABIM (Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) and the 1979 Iranian Revolution. It can be argued that Islamic consciousness had important implications on the art practices among Malay artists during the 1970s and 1980s.

In general, scholars note that Islamic considerations first emerged conspicuously in modern Malaysian art in the 1980s. It is during this time that more art exhibitions, seminars and scholarly writings began to engage with Islam, through discussions of Islamic art and culture. So much so that many Malay-Muslim artists sought to marry Islamic concepts, in whatever guise, with a modernist attitude in art.

Modernist artworks based on Islamic aesthetics include those of Sulaiman Esa, Zakaria Awang, Ahmad Khalid Yusof, and Ponirin Amin, among others. These artists can be argued to have positioned themselves in a larger context of Islamic *ummah* [society] by applying Islamic design conventions, such
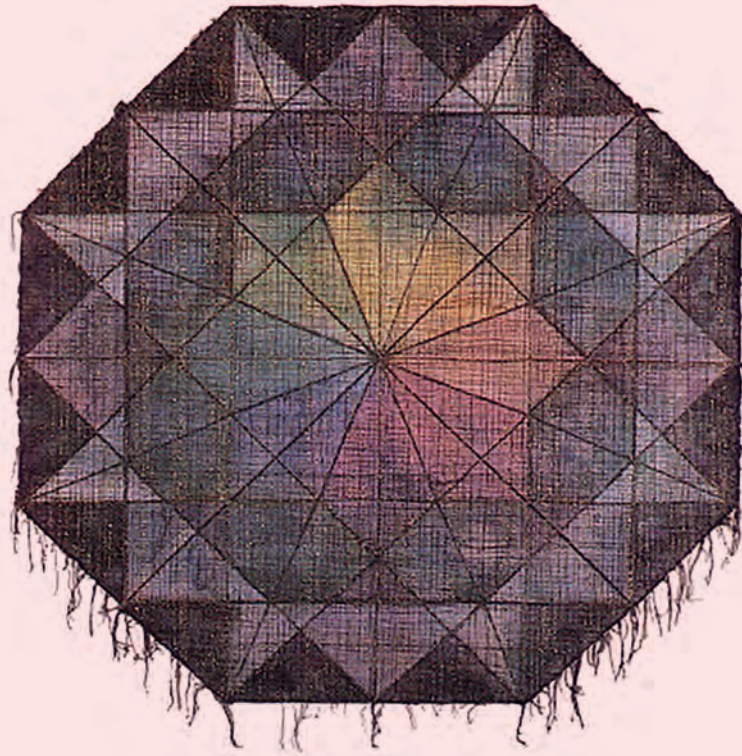
as the Arabic Script or Jawi script, calligraphic motives and the Arabesque, the displays of verses from the Quran or the Hadith and epithets praising God's supremacy, to their art and even shunning the depiction of human and animal figures in their work.

As modern artists, they were not restricted to traditional media, but adopted Islamic aesthetics or philosophy in their art-making. Sulaiman Esa's Nurani series (Fig.1), for example, is a quest for Islamic aesthetics through artistic contemplation

Fig. 1 (Above): Sulaiman Esa, *Nurani* (1983); source: Masterpieces from the National Art Gallery (2002), Kuala Lumpur: NAG.

of traditional Islamic arabesque design. Through the arabesque, Islamic spiritualism in the work is closely wedded to the experience of harmony and archetypical reality through the reflection of the One (Allah the Almighty) and the concept of unity of *tawhid*.

For the most part, Islamic art in Malaysia thrived because the artists who shunned figurative art did not do so out of Islamic interdiction, but because they empathized with the abstraction of the avant-garde. Indeed according to art critic TK Sabapathy, "Art reflecting the global Islamic revivalism in the 1980s has either aligned itself with tendencies in Abstract Expressionism or found kinship with decorative art."

It is also important to note that the Islamisation of modern art in Malaysia was not down to solely the artist. Curatorial decisions played a key role too. The selection of artists and artworks for galleries and exhibitions often adhered to popular expectations of modern Islamic art. As a result such exhibitions and art were easily read as 'Islamic'. It must be noted that the proclamations of the New Economic Policy (NEP), culture policy, and the Islamisation policies were part of the country's nationalist phase, which inevitably reframed art with a nationalistic agenda. This collection of policies reinforced the state-endorsed national identity based on the hegemony of Malay culture despite the country's multiracial complexion.

To conclude, external social and economic factors also shaped Malaysian art during the late 1970s and 1980s. For example, the economic gain attained by the Malays through the NEP resulted in the emergence of a new Malay middleclass as well. According to Joel S. Kahn, the NEP and the emergence of the new Malay middleclass further bolstered the construction of Malaysian identity through the reiteration of Malay culture in particular. With the resurgence of Islam at that time, it was not surprising that some artists carried their interest in Islam into art to expound some form of national identity.

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An art historical parallax: the subject, spectacle, and myth of/in Juan Luna's *Parisian Life*

Pearlie Rose S. Baluyut

"[E]very age had its own gait, glance, and gesture."
Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life* [1]

Parisian Life (1892), by Filipino artist Juan Luna, features an interior scene in a café with a woman seated prominently on a banquette and three men at the far left corner. It fetched $859,924 at Christie's auction in Hong Kong in 2002, an exorbitant sum paid by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), the pension fund institution of the Philippines.

The painting is a richly layered portrayal of contemporary social norms, gender politics and national allegory. Formal and social analyses reveal a woman, believed to be a prostitute, as the subject of the male gaze. Women in Paris were increasingly seen as a threat to the status quo. If they did not conform to the traditional role of a *femme honnête* (respectable woman), they were seen as the *courtisane,* or the prostitute. As a dangerous

Above: Juan Luna, Parisian Life, 1892, oil on canvas, 20.94 x 29.72 in. (53.2 x 75.5 cm.). National Museum of the Philippines, Manila

woman, the prostitute bore the stigma of infecting men with venereal disease.

The unregistered prostitute, who constituted a growing labor force in Paris, was regarded as "the site of absolute degradation and dominance, the place where the body became at last an exchange value, a perfect and complete commodity".[2] In constant circulation like money, yet at times also clandestine, the prostitute could be considered as the spectacle in the flesh, which Manet's *Olympia* (1863) embodied. Indeed, she represented desire and death, a *femme fatale* who was both loved and loathed.

Parisian Life mirrors the constructions of masculinity and civility among the three men wearing European clothes, "part of a larger attempt at nationalist self-fashioning".[3] Despite the civilized middle-class body, their brown faces disclose their racial identity. They are identified as the Filipino patriots Jose Rizal, Juan Luna (frontal pose), and Ariston Bautista (holding cane handle). They are fixed on the woman whose very appearance in a café is an erotic encounter itself. While Luna's self-portrait exhibits fatigue or even ennui, Bautista registers the curiosity and pleasure of a voyeur "in a fairly lascivious way" tilting his head toward the sexually objectified cocotte who furtively acknowledges his gaze.[4] Far from heroic, Juan Luna brought to light the hypocrisy and duplicity of his milieu and the general anxiety against the prostitute. Despite of and whether the black umbrella functions as a barricade or signifies the phallus, the conventional prostitute of *Parisian Life* still approximates the familiar Old World – patriarchal – whose double standards Luna and the *ilustrados* enjoyed.

While Luna's body of work crystallized the artistic and economic negotiations he had to perform as a painter, his life and home became the model of the divided self and the imagined community. Contrary to nationalist historiography and its grand, developmental narrative, the growth of the new 'Filipino' consciousness was uneven, ambiguous, and problematic. Moreover, the yet-to-be-'Filipino' was already endangered. Although the prostitute personified the threat
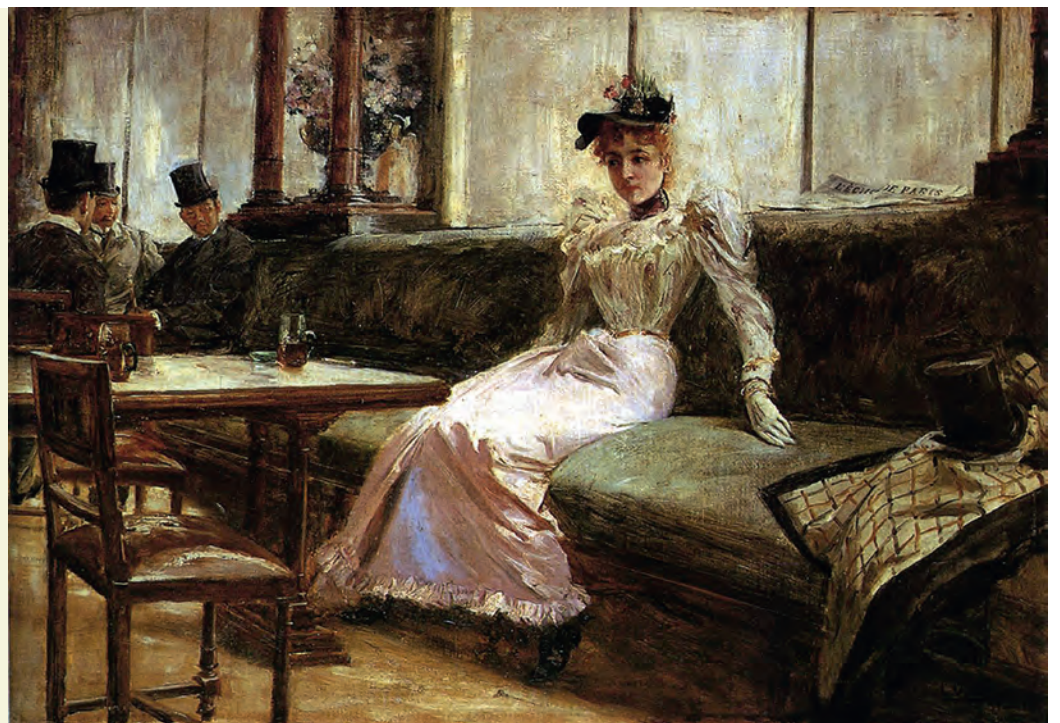
of sexual corruption, moral disintegration and physical death in *Parisian Life,* the latent fear of the *ilustrados* was caused, in general, by women and, figuratively, by France.

In sum, Juan Luna's *Parisian Life* is an Impressionist rendition of an interior of a café inhabited by a cocotte, a dandy, and three *ilustrados* in Haussmannized Paris. It can be read as an ideological unveiling not only of late 19th-century French modernity, but the "gait, glance, and gesture" of the spectacle and myth that it mirrors: the problematic and complex formation of the nation-state and the scarcity and fetishism of the Filipino. Indeed, meaning, to echo Jacques Derrida, is always "deferred".

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These works were criticized by the Chinese Indonesian art critic, Oey Sian Yok, as "merely a competition to get attention from the authorities, not to mention that as a painting, the quality of the portrait is not that high". While Oey was referring to the work of Tjio Tek Djin, it was clear that she was pointing implicitly to YHAO's desire to seek Sukarno's patronage. Yet, YHAO's tribute to Sukarno was understandable in counterbalancing the endorsement from China. While demonstrating political attachment to both Indonesia and China might be considered opportunism by some, it was actually a means for the ethnic minority community to feel secure.

Nevertheless, when the New Order government took over in 1967 all Chinese-related cultural expressions, from family name to language, were banned. YHAO disappeared and many of the artists of Chinese descent in Indonesia went into exile as stateless individuals. YHAO's place in the history of Indonesian art was not examined until the *Reformasi* era.

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News from Northeast Asia

Since 2009, the Seoul National University Asia Center (SNUAC) has been proposing new contents and perspectives on Asia by integrating regional and thematic research across Asia. SNUAC seeks to be the leading institution for research and scholarly exchanges. SNUAC features three regional centers, the Korean Social Science Data Archive (KOSSDA), and seven thematic research programs. By fostering 'expansion' and 'layering' between Asian studies and Korean studies, the Center endeavors to shape new frameworks of Asian studies that go beyond a 'Western-non-Western' dichotomy. SNUAC will continue to support the pursuit of scholarly excellence in the study of Asia by providing opportunities to conduct international collaboration on an array of topics in Asia research.

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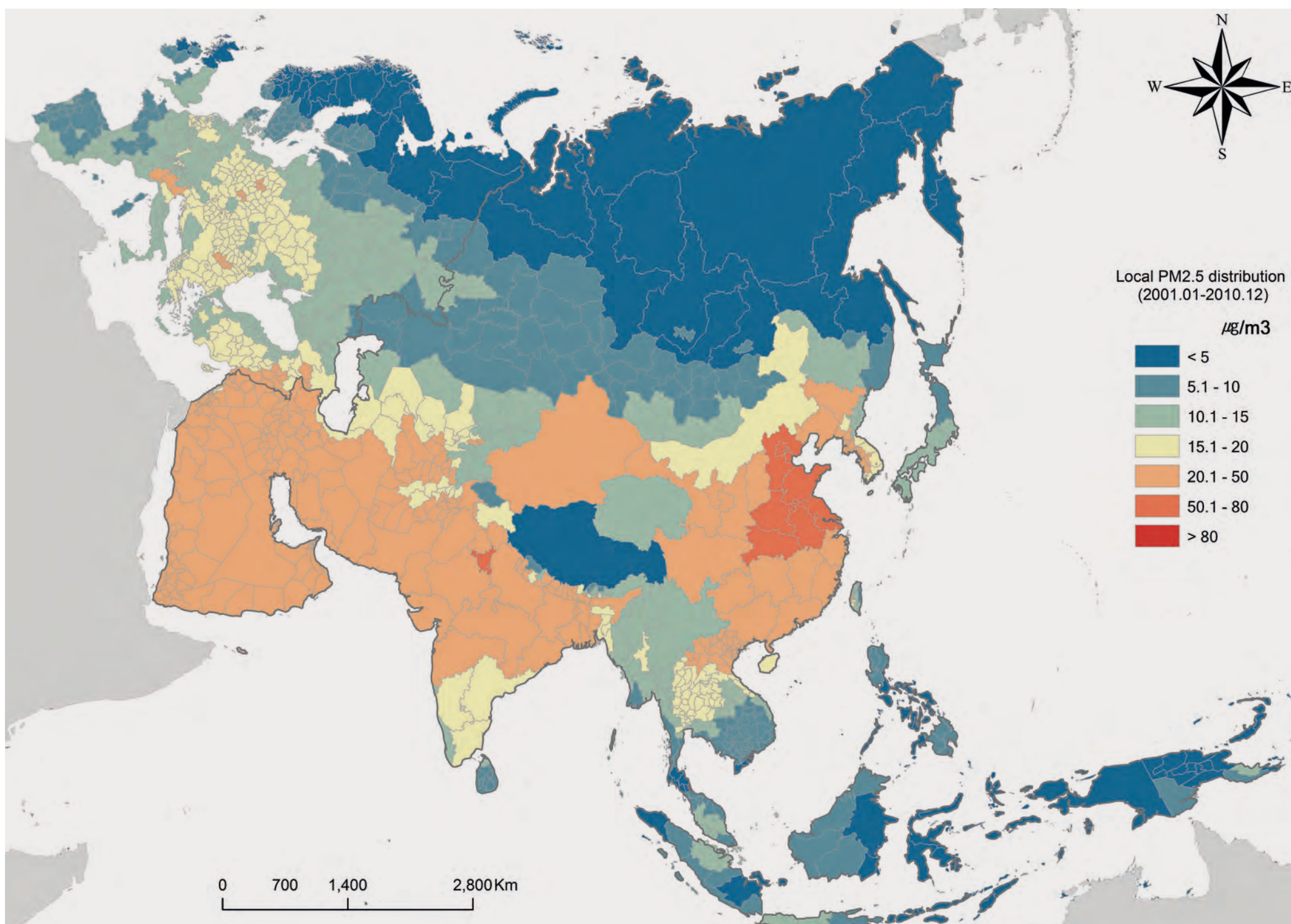
Fine dust issues in Northeast Asia

Kyuhoon CHO

THE IMPRESSIVE economic growth of China and other East Asian countries in the past 20 to 30 years has also resulted in significant harm to the region's natural environment. Consequently, air pollution, and fine dust in particular, has arisen as an important social issue for countries in East Asia. Fine dust (i.e., $PM_{2.5}$) is known to be a contributing cause of asthma, cardiac arrest, and cancer. Although transboundary air pollution substances such as this are domestic issues in China, Japan, and Korea, there is a growing recognition of the need to ascertain the causes and prepare measures not only for the regional level within East Asia, but on a larger, global level as well.

The following four essays address the issues of fine dust in Korea, China, and Japan, as well as the legal case of an environmental organization against the Chinese and Korean governments. "Fine dust and sustainability in Northeast Asia" (Soojin Park) deals with the problem of sustainability and the dangers of environmental pollution in East Asia, focusing on the fine dust issue in Korea. "Japan's long-range transboundary $PM_{2.5}$ problem" (Shunji Matsuoka) discusses the context in which the fine dust issue first arose in Japan, changes in environmental standards in order to deal with fine dust, and the extent of influence of fine dust from China on Japan. In "Particulate matter pollution in China",

Jangmin Choo analyzes the status of major areas affected by fine dust in China, looks into the primary causes of fine dust, and examines the measures of the Chinese government. Finally, in "Suing Beijing for harm caused by fine dust", Yul Choi, president of one of Korea's representative environmental organizations, explains the recent legal case against the Chinese and Korean governments over the issue of fine dust within the context of his efforts for protecting the environment in Korea for over 40 years.

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Local PM2.5 distribution (2001.01-2010.12)

μg/m3

- < 5
- 5.1 - 10
- 10.1 - 15
- 15.1 - 20
- 20.1 - 50
- 50.1 - 80
- > 80

0   700   1,400   2,800 Km

Fine dust and sustainability in Northeast Asia

Soojin PARK

WINTER IN KOREA is infamous for its harsh cold and bone-dry air. The colorful blooms and budding leaves of spring that follow those long winter months are a welcome presence to many people. For some, however, spring has now become synonymous with wearing dust masks to ward off the dreaded yellow dust and fine dust blowing in from China. The harmful effects of fine dust have come into light in recent years, fueling widespread anxiety over the issue. Fine dust, with a particle size of 2.5μm ($PM_{2.5}$) and under, infiltrates the body through the skin and the respiratory system, leading to asthma, vascular disease, heart failure, and cancer. According to an article published in the March issue of *Nature*, 3.45 million people died from issues related to air pollutants worldwide in 2007.[1] This article highlights the startling fact that Korea, North Korea, Japan, and Mongolia have a collective yearly death rate of 30,900 due to fine dust originating from China. The Batelle Memorial Institute and Columbia University are utilizing satellite imagery to show that the eastern regions of China have the highest concentration of fine dust in the world. These images also clearly indicate that the wind carries the dust into Korean territory.[2]

Once it was revealed that China was the main cause of air pollution within Korea, some environmental organizations filed lawsuits against China, demanding compensation for damages and losses caused by fine dust. According to the Korean government, an estimated 30-50% of Korea's air pollutants come from China each year. On the other hand, others argue that measures should first be taken to deal with thermo-electric power plants and vehicle exhaust fumes, which are known to be the leading domestic causes of air pollution. It is nearly impossible to calculate exactly how much fine dust in Korea is produced domestically and how much blows in from China. Before we focus on the place of origin, however, it is essential to take this opportunity to examine the close connection between Northeast Asia and fine dust, as well as the importance of inter-state cooperation in solving this issue.

Northeast Asia houses over 15 million people and has a higher population density than any other region in the world. Unsurprisingly, it is also accompanied by a high risk of environmental pollution. The region has been experiencing rapid development over the past few decades, and it is expected that the development will further continue at unprecedented speed in the future. From arid lands to tropical rain forests, Northeast Asia covers a range of diverse climates and ecological areas. Consequently, it is highly susceptible to various types of natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. According to research conducted by the Asia Center at Seoul National University (based on data from EM-DAT of the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters), annual damage costs caused by natural disasters in Northeast Asia increased from $600 million in 1983 to $53.7 billion in 2013.[3] In other words, damages jumped an astonishing 86.8 times over a span of thirty years. 1.26 million lives were lost to natural disasters during that time period, and approximately 3.4 billion people across the region were affected both directly and indirectly. By contrast, the global sum of natural disaster damages merely increased seven-fold from $16.7 billion in 1983 to $118.4 billion in 2013. Northeast Asia succeeded in achieving revolutionary economic development, but that victory unfortunately came at the cost of environmental destruction, pollution, and disaster.

As descendents of a common civilization based on Chinese characters, nations within Northeast Asia have historically shared a considerable degree of cultural homogeneity. Over the past century, however, each country has been pursuing individual forms of progress, leading to an increase in economic and political discord. Recent issues such as the territory disputes between Korea, China, and Japan, the threat of North Korea, and the potential of China to overturn the global order have driven political and diplomatic uncertainty in Northeast Asia to its peak. As a result, the region is failing to come together to address environmental dilemmas, despite suffering from the highest level of damage and disaster. It is crucial to recognize that active inter-state cooperation is the key to solving the ever-growing issue of air pollution. Once that cornerstone is established, the gates will surely open for widespread sustainable development in Northeast Asia.

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Left: Distribution of fine dust in Asia (Average of PM2.5 (2001-2010) from the Batelle Memorial Institute and CIEN (2013) by administrative district)

Japan's long-range transboundary $PM_{2.5}$ problem

Prof. Shunji MATSUOKA

Polluting Industries in urban Japan. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of shinobu sugiyama on Flickr.

FINE PARTICULATE matter ($PM_{2.5}$), a long-range transboundary air pollution (LRTAP) substance, first emerged as a major social issue in Japan in early 2013.[1] Severe $PM_{2.5}$ pollution in areas of China including Beijing was reported in Japan through broadcast and print media in January. At the end of the month, high concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ exceeding environmental quality standards were detected across western Japan, with concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ in Fukuoka city (in Fukuoka Prefecture) reaching levels three times the norm. Every year, western Japan experiences damages to quality of life due to yellow dust coming from China and, in recent years, has experienced damage to forests due to acid rain and acid fog and issued warnings for photochemical smog, all of which are believed to have originated in China. Under these circumstances, as a new LRTAP substance coming from China, $PM_{2.5}$ has aroused a high degree of public interest all at once.

In the past, the environmental quality standard for Suspended Particle Matter (SPM) in Japan was set at PM_{10} levels.[2] However, considering the risks to health such as lung cancer, a discussion on the necessity of regulating the finer $PM_{2.5}$ particles ensued, and in September 2009, environmental quality standards were designated at less than or equal to $15μg/m^3$ as the annual average standard and less than or equal to $35μg/m^3$ as the 24 hour standard.[3] Furthermore, in accordance with the increased public interest in 2013, the Japanese Ministry of the Environment proposed provisional guidelines of a 24 hour standard of $70μg/m^3$ for public warnings in February of that year. This value has become the standard for guidelines (revised in November 2013 and November 2014) to warn citizens to avoid unnecessary and non-urgent outdoor activity and strenuous outdoor exercise for extended periods of time. In comparison, the environmental quality standard for $PM_{2.5}$ in urban areas in China is set at $75μg/m^3$.

When the problem first arose as a social issue in January 2013, the 24 hour average concentration of fine particulate matter in Beijing exceeded China's environmental quality standard of $75μg/m^3$ and Japan's provisional guideline of $70μg/m^3$ for public warnings, resulting in air quality conditions that pose a serious risk to health. Although China's severe $PM_{2.5}$ problem garnered the world's attention in the winter of 2013, the composition of air pollutants in the country did not change suddenly in that year. Outbreaks of extreme air pollution had been and remain common in China. It was only that the winter of 2013 was marked by lower than usual temperatures and weak surface winds, providing optimal conditions for fog to form. The combination of these weather conditions inhibited the diffusion of air, leading to the detection of higher than usual concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$.

Research has been conducted on the influence of China's $PM_{2.5}$ problem on concentrations of fine particulate matter in Japan. According to Kanaya et al. (2013), for example, the percentage contribution of China on average yearly concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ in Japan by region is estimated at 61 percent in the Kyushu region (9 prefectures), 59 percent in the Chugoku region (5 prefectures), 59 percent in the Shikoku region (4 prefectures), and 55 percent in the Kinki region (6 prefectures). Thus, over half of the $PM_{2.5}$ in western Japan is thought to have originated in China. On the other hand, the percentage contribution of China on average yearly concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ in the Kanto region (7 prefectures, including Tokyo) was 39 percent, and 51 percent is estimated to have originated domestically in Japan.

In the case of ozone (O_3), another LRTAP substance, the frequency of photochemical smog warnings dropped below 100 days per year around 1990 but shot up to a steady 170 to 180 days per year around 2010. The influence of China was discussed in Japan on this matter as well. However, according to Kanaya et al., the percentage contribution of transboundary ozone from China was estimated to be 12 percent while ozone of domestic origins and ozone originating in North America and Europe were estimated to be 22 percent and 7 percent, respectively. Therefore, in the case of ozone, there is a need to consider the movement patterns of pollutants on a much larger, global scale.

The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) in Europe can serve as a reference for dealing with LRTAP problems such as $PM_{2.5}$ in East Asia. This convention opened for signature in 1979 in response to transboundary damages from acid rain in Europe, entered into force in 1983, and formed a regime to respond to transboundary air pollution issues through the continued adoption of various protocols. At present in East Asia, there are also regional efforts such as the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), but the effectiveness of those efforts remains to be evaluated.

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1 $PM_{2.5}$: fine particles with a diameter of 2.5μm or less
2 PM_{10}: inhalable coarse particles with a diameter between 2.5 and 10μm
3 "The annual standard for $PM_{2.5}$ is less than or equal to $15.0μg/m^3$. The 24 hour standard, which means the annual 98th percentile values at designated monitoring sites in an area, is less than or equal to $35μg/m^3$. (Notification on September 9, 2009)" The Ministry of the Environment page on Environmental Quality Standards in Japan - Air Quality. https://www.env.go.jp/en/air/aq/aq.html

News from Northeast Asia *continued*

PM (particulate matter) pollution in China

CHU Jang Min

PARTICULATE matter has become an increasing environmental problem in China due to the country's economic development, rapid urbanization, industrial expansion, and drastic increase in the number of motor vehicles. At the beginning of 2015, 388 cities at or above the prefecture level across China started to monitor and publish their air quality data in accordance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). In 2015, the lowest and highest 24-hour concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ and PM10 in 388 cities were 11 $\mu g/m^3$ and 125 $\mu g/m^3$, 24 $\mu g/m^3$ and 357 $\mu g/m^3$, respectively. The annual average concentration of $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} in the same cities were 50 $\mu g/m^3$ and 87 $\mu g/m^3$.

The most developed and highly populated city clusters such as the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region (BTH), the Yangtze River Delta (YRD), and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) are exposed to frequent heavy pollution due to their distinct regional characteristics. In 2015, the annual average concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ and PM10 in the BTH region were 77 $\mu g/m^3$ and 132 $\mu g/m^3$. In particular, BTH and its surrounding areas (including Shanxi, Shandong, Inner Mongolia and Henan) still have the poorest air quality and highest frequency of heavy pollution in the country. In 2015, 70 cities at or above the prefecture level in the region recorded a total of 171 days of heavy or higher-level pollution and issued 154 alerts for heavy air pollution. In addition, the annual average concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} in YRD were 53 $\mu g/m^3$ and 83 $\mu g/m^3$. In PRD, the annual average concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} were 34 $\mu g/m^3$ and 53 $\mu g/m^3$, respectively. The concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ in PRD are generally lower than those in the other two largest city clusters in China.

Sulfur dioxide (SO2) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) are key pollutants in ambient air quality. As data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China shows, there were major changes in air pollutant emissions from 2006 to 2014 in China. During that period, SO_2 emissions have shown a decrease-increase-decrease trend, and NOx emissions have decreased since 2011, when there was a 29.8% increase over the previous year. The surge in emissions in 2011 may be attributed to changes in China's method of calculating NOx emissions. Starting that year, data on NO_x emissions from motor vehicles began to be collected and included in total NOx emissions figures.

There are many sources contributing to increasing air pollutant emissions in China, including the industrial, transport, and residential sectors. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the industrial sector contributed most to the fine particulate matter in China. In 2014, the industrial sector was responsible for 88% of SO_2 emissions. The two sectors that contributed the most NO_x in 2014 were the industrial and transport (motor vehicle) sectors, which were responsible for about 68% and 30% of the emissions, respectively.

In general, motor vehicles have contributed a significant portion of air pollutants, particularly ambient $PM_{2.5}$. The contribution of vehicle emissions to $PM_{2.5}$ in the BTH region in 2013 reached 31.1% (Beijing City), 20% (Tianjin City) and 15.5% (Hebei Province). Similarly, in Hangzhou and Shanghai in the YRD region of China in 2013, vehicle emissions accounted for about 40% and 29.2%, respectively. Vehicle emissions were responsible for 21.7% of the $PM_{2.5}$ pollution in Guangzhou City.

Above: Chinese street seller in mask. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Thepismire on Flickr.

Air pollution poses an incredible challenge for China. In September 2013, China's National Action Plan on Air Pollution Control was issued by the State Council. The Action Plan was designed to reduce and prevent air pollution at the national level by 2017. Specifically, it aims to reduce the PM_{10} concentration by at least 10% by 2017 (taking 2012 as a base year). Moreover, it sets a target that the concentration of $PM_{2.5}$ in Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, Yangtze River Delta, and Pearl River Delta should be decreased by 25%, 20%, and 15%, respectively, by 2017. Furthermore, the 13th Five-Year Plan (FYP) was formally adopted in 2016. According to the 13th FYP, China's new target is to decrease the $PM_{2.5}$ concentration by 18% by 2020, in cities that are exceeding the national air quality standard.

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Suing Beijing for harm caused by fine dust

Yul CHOI

Members of the Korea Green Foundation bringing attention to the dangers of fine dust at a public debate at the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 21 April 2017 (photo courtesy of the Korea Green Foundation).

ON 5 APRIL, Arbor Day, I urgently filed a lawsuit against the Korean and Chinese governments. Six people, including attorney Kyung-jae Ahn and several homemakers, joined me in filing the joint action, requesting KRW 3 million per person on the grounds of mental distress due to fine dust. This case is the first suit on damages related to yellow dust as well as the first legal filing on cross-border air pollution in Korea.

Last spring, the amount of fine dust in the air in Korea reached unbearable levels. In a class I was teaching at Sogang University, the severity of coughing fits among the 300 or so students in attendance made it almost impossible to continue the lecture. Attorney Kyung-jae Ahn, who daily ascends the 300 meter tall Bongui Mountain in Chungcheon Province, unexpectedly developed throat pains and fits of coughing. The levels of yellow dust on that day were particularly high, and Ahn was diagnosed with asthma from unknown causes. We shared our experiences through social media and ultimately came to think of a lawsuit as a way to deal with the problem.

When I decided to engage in environmental activism 41 years ago, there were many opposing voices. There were even those who said, "If it means a better life, I'll fill my lungs with air pollution." That is how little people were concerned with environmental issues. When I predicted 29 years ago that the industrialization in China would have an influence on environmental conditions in Korea during an interview with the media, the issue received little attention from the government and society. Environmental groups in Korea, including the Korea Green Foundation, have persistently pressed the issue of the severity of fine dust and the need to devise measures to address it. However, the public continued to ignore the problem, and the government enacted the same, ineffectual policies over and over again. They acknowledged that fossil fuels were the main culprit for the fine dust but did nothing to prepare measures to reduce the dependence on coal plants. Policies that eased regulations on diesel cars continued to be pursued. When the fine dust issue finally became a serious problem, the government was quick to cast the blame on China. As a result, Korea has become one of the most polluted countries in the world in terms of air quality.

In these circumstances, the reason Kyung-jae Ahn and I chose to file a lawsuit was to draw the attention of the general public and incite to action the government in both Korea and China. The objective of the suit is not to receive monetary compensation. Rather, it has a symbolic meaning in garnering interest and providing a stimulus for action. As stated in the petition, the purpose of the suit is to accurately determine the cause of the fine dust and to alert the people in both countries of the severity of the problem. I believe it is only then that the governments of the two countries will join forces to devise a reasonable solution.

The effects of the lawsuit were seen almost immediately. It was covered in various media in Korea, and inquiries concerning participation in and support of the lawsuit came pouring in. Also, in China, there was a deep interest in the issue, and the Global Times conducted an urgent public opinion survey on Chinese people's attitude concerning the topic. Domestically in Korea, with the hastened presidential election in the wake of the impeachment of President Park, measures to deal with the fine dust became a primary campaign issue among the major presidential candidates.

It is true that the prospects of winning the lawsuit are not particularly bright. There are no concrete laws in place, and it is impossible to determine whether China will cooperate. However, if there are no laws in place, then efforts must be taken to put them in place. The Trail Smelter dispute between the US and Canada and the acid rain case in Northern Europe are good examples of how harms to society can be brought to light as social issues through civil movements, developed into political issues, and eventually settled through diplomacy.

The most important task is determining the cause of fine dust and accurately gauging how it changes in accordance with the change of seasons. Following this, measures need to be devised and a plan for reduction must be discussed between Korea and China. Once the exact cause and the scale of damage are clear, the two governments will join forces, and if that happens, various plans for solving the problem will emerge as a result. For example, an emissions trading system similar to the one in place for greenhouse gases can be applied for fine dust as well. From the perspective of China, this is a reasonable plan to consider because it reduces the costs of curbing emissions and enables the transfer of technology.

It is only the beginning in the fight against fine dust. It is not an issue that can be easily resolved by only garnering the interest of the government and people. There is a need for continual action such as expanding the scale of the lawsuit increasing public interest. At present, we have gathered people who wish to participate in the lawsuit and are forming a "100-person plaintiff group." If the amount of compensation exceeds 200 million KRW, the case will be brought before a panel of three judges, and this will lead to even greater social awareness.

Environmental lawsuits, when propped up by strong media support, can bring about great results. From experience, I know that there is a need for trials to be accompanied with social movements. In the future, we plan to regularly host panel discussions, inviting experts on the fine dust issue. In addition, we will conduct site visits of places that bring about fine dust, such as coal plants, with large groups composed not only of experts but also ordinary citizens to see the sources of pollution firsthand and seek out solutions altogether.

Yul CHOI, President, Korea Green Foundation (choi@greenfund.org).

China Connections

Joint venture universities in China

Studying at Chinese universities in Beijing as an Indian in the 1980s was a fascinating and memorable experience. I entered Beijing Foreign Languages Institute (now Beijing Language and Culture University) for a four-year BA program in Chinese language and literature when I was still in my mid-teens. I had no prior knowledge of Mandarin and the instructors spoke no foreign languages, yet they possessed the best pedagogical tools to teach Mandarin to novice foreign students.

Tansen Sen

I WAS STRUCK MOST by the intimate relation between the instructors and foreign students at a time when contacts between foreigners and locals were still restricted. Our Chinese *laoshis* were not merely teachers, but also our host families, counselors, and friends. Thus, we received an education that went beyond class lessons and textbooks. It involved insights into the daily lives of people and a society that was on the verge of experiencing dramatic social and economic transformations.

After passing the national exams I enrolled in the MA program at Peking University. Suddenly I was taking courses with Chinese students that required significantly advanced Chinese language skills. Despite the strenuous curricular demands, the three years at Beida were equally remarkable. I had a motherly advisor, participated in various scholarly seminars, and even made trips to Tiananmen Square during the 1989 student protests. Education at the two Chinese universities has unequivocally shaped my academic career as well as personal life.

The collection of articles in this section focuses on the new rise of Sino-foreign joint venture universities. In addition to offering new educational opportunities and programs, these campuses foster unique bonding between Chinese and foreign students, faculty and staff members. While Chinese and foreign students also engage in similar opportunities at universities in Europe and the United States, the setting in China with pedagogical tools inducted from the world's leading academic institutions provide a distinct educational value, a range of innovative curricula and unprejudiced perspectives. With such shared educational training and experiences, graduates from these universities, as the articles imply, are expected to make significant contributions to the multicultural collaborations that define the globalized world of today.

Tansen Sen, Founding Director of the Center for Global Asia, NYU Shanghai (ts107@nyu.edu).

Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai
The Center for Global Asia at NYU Shanghai serves as the hub within the NYU Global Network University system to promote the study of Asian interactions and comparisons, both historical and contemporary. The overall objective of the Center is to provide global societies with information on the contexts for the reemerging connections between the various parts of Asia through research and teaching. Collaborating with institutions across the world, the Center seeks to play a bridging role between existing Asian studies knowledge silos. It will take the lead in drawing connections and comparisons between the existing fields of Asian studies, and stimulating new ways of understanding Asia in a globalized world.

Asia Research Center at Fudan University
Founded in March 2002, the Asia Research Center at Fudan University (ARC-FDU) is one of the achievements of the cooperation of Fudan and the Korean Foundation for Advanced Studies (KFAS). Throughout the years, the center has been working tirelessly to promote Asian Studies, including hosting conferences and supporting research projects. ARC-FDU keeps close connections with the ARCs in mainland China and many institutes abroad.

Sino-foreign joint venture universities: an introduction

Mike Gow

COLLABORATION in higher education between Chinese and foreign universities has been going on for over 30 years. The earliest collaboration, the Hopkins Nanjing Center, was established in 1986 and is still in operation today, offering postgraduate programs to both Chinese and non-Chinese graduate students. However, it wasn't until 1995 that the PRC State Education Commission developed provisional regulations to encourage Sino-Foreign collaboration in higher education. Between 1995 and 2003, 24 joint education institutes (JEI) were established, offering multiple degrees developed in collaboration with foreign universities, only two of which have since ceased operations. These JEIs are effectively colleges of existing Chinese universities.

In addition to these JEIs, single degree joint education programs (JEPs) were also permitted by the 1995 provisional regulations, with 438 being established between 1995 and 2003. In 2003, the Ministry of Education updated these regulations with a number of significant changes. Between 2003 and 2015, a further 33 JEIs and 638 JEPs were established. However, the 2003 Regulations allowed for the establishment of a new breed of Sino-Foreign HE collaboration: the joint venture university (JV).

The JV differs from previous collaborations as it involves not partner universities, but parent universities who establish a brand new university with legal person status under Chinese law. It's worth stating here that, in the PRC, there is no such thing as a branch campus: collaborations involving foreign partners are either established within existing Chinese universities, or in the case of JVs, establish a new Chinese university. Unlike the majority of conventional joint ventures, JV universities are a form of cooperative JV where the foreign parent university's contribution is measured in their intellectual property input, with financial investment being provided from the Chinese parent and, more often, the local government in the municipality or province where it is established. Currently there are 7 JV universities in operation (see chart below left).

While the regulations under which these universities have been established are the same, there are great differences between these universities due in large part to the educational philosophy and vision of the leadership involved in their establishment. Another major factor affecting establishment and ongoing operations relates to the Chinese parent university and the location in which the JV is established. For example, NYU Shanghai's Chinese parent is East China Normal University (ECNU), which is itself located in Shanghai. ECNU is a key national university under the jurisdiction on the Ministry of Education. All JVs, however, report to the provincial education bureau or municipal education commission in which they are established, even if their parent university is a national university reporting to the Ministry of Education. This is perhaps less of an issue for NYU Shanghai who are in the same municipality as ECNU, their Chinese parent university, and who necessarily have strong existing relationships with the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission and other government bodies in Shanghai. However, compare this with XJTLU or DKU, who are both located in Jiangsu Province but whose parent universities are from Xi'an (Shaanxi) and Wuhan (Hubei) respectively, and there is an added complication in establishing relationships with the provincial education authorities; pricing bureaus who set the tuition fees, and other government bodies involved in the establishment and smooth operation of a Chinese university.

Sino-Foreign JVs are fascinating examples of transnational higher education, and also of the experimental boldness of China's higher education reforms. They have been permitted in order for China's reformers to examine new and different approaches that may be adopted to address challenges in China's vast and complex domestic higher education sector, especially with regard to China's desire to internationalize their own universities and attract both foreign academics and students.

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Joint Venture	Location	Chinese Parent	Foreign Parent	Licence (Expiry)
University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) 宁波诺丁汉大学	Ningbo, Zhejiang 浙江宁波	Zhejiang Wanli University 浙江万里学院	University of Nottingham (UK)	2005* (2055)
United International College (UIC) 联合国际学院	Zhuhai, Guangdong 广东珠海	Beijing Normal University 北京师范大学	Hong Kong Baptist University (HK)	2005 (2035)
Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University (XJTLU) 西交利物浦大学	Suzhou, Jiangsu 江苏苏州	Xi'an Jiaotong University 西安交通大学	University of Liverpool (UK)	2006 (2056)
NYU Shanghai 上海纽约大学	Shanghai 上海	East China Normal University 华东师范大学	New York University (USA)	2012 (2021)
Duke Kunshan University (DKU) 昆山杜克大学	Kunshan, Jiangsu 江苏昆山	Wuhan University 武汉大学	Duke University (USA)	2013 (2029)
CUHK-Shenzhen 香港中文大学（深圳）	Shenzhen, Guangdong 广东深圳	Shenzhen University 深圳大学	Chinese University of Hong Kong (HK)	2014* (2044)
Wenzhou Kean University (WKU) 温州肯恩大学	Wenzhou, Zhejiang 浙江温州	Wenzhou University 温州大学	Kean University (USA)	2014* (2064)*

* Several universities were given conditional terms to recruit students prior to finalizing the JV licence.
  In each case, the first intake occurred in the year prior to the licence being granted.

A philosophy from the trenches – University of Nottingham Ningbo

James Mirrione

PLATO ONCE REMARKED that the origins of education were in the activity of play. As a theatre and drama specialist I have endeavored not to lose sight of that axiom. Throughout forty-five years of teaching, I have never known a student to praise me for following the syllabus. Instead, I treat the syllabus as a clock to run against. I drag my students to any detour deemed more important than the pre-conceived path. I also force my students to stay with a difficult piece of literature, because the joy of discovery is what I believe lies at the core of true education.

I have constantly straddled the worlds of art and education and I have found these ruminations to be especially relevant to my teaching experience in China and with Chinese university students; although, they could just as easily be applied to any setting or population. However, in China there is a need to re-mind students that you, the teacher, are a living human being. Very often, I have found myself in a class that has me compet-ing with laptops, cell phones, iPads and electronic dictionaries. This has occasioned me to blurt out such non-sequiturs as "Two guys walk into a bar…" The Chinese students then have the following reactions: (a) Do I take notes? (b) Do I download this and, if so, what is the link? (c) Bar? Did two men hit their heads? (d) Who are you and where is the teacher? Technology has threatened all professors who make their livings by being animated human beings; and, China has moved farther down the not-so-golden-avatar brick road. Therefore, may these axioms serve as possible palliatives to the above dilemma and, as a primer as to what I do as a teacher.

1. Get out from behind the desk
You are on stage whether you like it or not. Students want to see the whole of your corporeal essence when you start to teach, not some disembodied head that constantly looks down at your dog-eared copy of the text that you read from, quoting your pearls of wisdom from the margins. Unless you are Stephen Hawking, this is a losing strategy; and, by the way, he is not shy at showing himself in full view so what's your excuse?

2. If students could, they would steal your book and then you would become irrelevant
You are not Moses reading from some elevated tome that has all the answers that students think they need, because all you do is read to them from it. Use the text as jumping off point; spin that verse, explore that image, wrestle that metaphor to the ground and be happy to get your fingers burned whenever an incendiary idea or concept reveals itself in the writing. If you do your students' work for them they will treat you to this version of a singing waiter: *"I could read the menu, but I will just let this guy drone on and decide for me in the hope that he shuts up."*

3. When you do read, make it dramatic
You don't have to stand on the desk (although that might help) but put some life into it! If professors were judged on how intriguing, beguiling, riveting, motivated and passionate they were about the given subject matter, and its delivery, then we might have a more accurate determinant as to their 'mastery of the material'. It certainly would become a challenging approach to what now passes for erudition, which is only that same misguided notion that has ruined Shakespeare, Beowulf, Milton, Dante (the list is long), for countless students who have had to endure only an anemic rendering of the words. Just because many of these authors are dead doesn't mean you have to be. Make them read with you; let them be a character who is in opposition to your character; and, if you are doing a play, cast your students in as many roles as possible. You will be surprised to discover some latent thespians just waiting to take center stage.

4. The unexamined student is not worth your living with them for the period of the class
I always tell my students that they might not always understand me or agree with me but, they will never be bored. The classroom in the Bunsen burner to set fire to the cobwebs of sloppy logic, to the lazy-boy-recliner of easily spouted prejudices and to the presumed flame retardant natures of religious, social and political propaganda. If all you are is a parrot then students might as well buy the real aviary version of the creature. You were hired to be a gadfly whether the institution knows it or not and even if it never lists that as a learning objective.

5. Strive for humor, not some academic version of Draco
It was Horace who said it best: "… drama is the form of forms: there is no power to equal the dramatist's art for moving the mind and mirroring the magical vision of art." For me, this is a summation of my belief in the efficacy of my approach to use drama and theatre as a teaching tool; and, to treat education as an opportunity to create drama and theatre. This is where the classroom changes from a room to a stage and a stage into a platform for ideas. However, the challenges of teaching in China put to the test all of these prescriptions. This is due to the complexities of language and the lack of familiarity with critical thinking. There is still an extreme learning curve for students to comprehend that to be critical is not akin to heresy; nor is it disrespectful to believe that teachers are not infallible. Finally, these adages have been submitted, as well, to inject some reality into the rhetoric of cross-cultural learning that so many of our intuitions of higher learning traffic in whenever they are proposing joint Sino-Western educational ventures.

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A global supply chain of teaching and learning – Duke Kunshan University

Andrew Field

I HAVE BEEN Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs at Duke Kunshan University for nearly two years now. Until our undergraduate degree program starts in Fall 2018, my main role is overseeing our Global Learning Semester (GLS). This program has offered many challenges and opportunities for the advancement of higher learning in China and for providing an international and China-focused educational experience to both faculty and students from all over the world. The semester-long GLS program brings undergraduate students from over 20 partner universities in China, together with international students, in a liberal-arts style program at DKU. In addition to our Duke faculty who come to Kunshan to teach, we have a small team of DKU faculty who teach language and writing courses. Most of our Chinese students choose our Academic Writing course, which involves intensive training in US-style academic writing.

The first challenge that I faced when starting as Associate Dean, was to ensure that the processes of selecting courses and faculty, approving syllabi, and orienting our faculty all go smoothly. All the courses and syllabi for our GLS program are vetted and pre-approved by a committee of Duke faculty and are added to the Duke course catalog. Since our courses involve teaching many students for whom English is a foreign language, we have to ensure that the courses for our GLS program account for the different learning environment at DKU (opposed to Duke), while still maintaining the high quality of Duke courses, especially because our GLS program courses are awarded Duke credits.

In addition to running a Duke-quality program, taught mainly by Duke faculty in Kunshan, we also face the challenge of attracting students from Duke and other universities. Attracting more American students is challenging for several reasons: Duke students have to meet their major course requirements and other distribution requirements; and US students have the choice of many programs in China, some that are located in more well-known cities than Kunshan. Instituting a Kunshan Innovation Scholarship starting in spring 2017 has helped to attract more students from the USA, including students from liberal arts colleges that do not have China-based programs of their own. Word of mouth has also been helpful, since most of our American students have greatly enjoyed the experience of living and studying with a largely Chinese student body in an international university setting with top-quality facilities and faculty. One of the great values of the GLS program for Chinese students is that it serves as a powerful springboard for students wishing to do graduate work abroad. Studying in an English-language Duke-quality liberal arts program greatly enhances their reading, writing, speaking and critical thinking skills, and they receive much assistance in applying to graduate schools abroad.

Despite the challenges, the GLS program has been a great success in terms of providing a high-quality academic and extracurricular educational experience for

Andrew Field with his Shanghai History students and special guest Betty Barr Wang, who spoke about her experience in a Japanese internment camp in Shanghai in the 1940s. Courtesy: Duke Kunshan University

all involved. Over 300 students have completed this program already, and we will run it for one more year before launching our 4-year degree program in fall 2018. Running this program has taught us a great deal as an institution, and this program's success has at least partially vindicated the model of providing a liberal arts higher education to a largely Chinese yet also international student body. I am very proud of our work and pleased to have helped to bring this ambitious goal to fruition.

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A student's experience of multi-cultural immersion

Xuehan (Shirley) Zhao

I COULD SPEND YEARS telling you how much I appreciate my decision to come to NYU Shanghai, but here I will share with you one aspect of my experience: multi-cultural immersion, and how it contributed to my understanding of global education. I am a Chinese national, born and raised on the Mainland, educated in key-point *(zhongdian)* public schools until Gaokao (Chinese College Entrance Exam). By studying and living with professors and fellow students from over 70 countries and even more cultural backgrounds from around the globe, I've been motivated to see things through a new lens.

Some things that I take for granted may appear novel to my non-Chinese friends. For example, I once mentioned the legal duty of Chinese people to take care of our parents, only to be unexpectedly interrupted by an exaggerated "What?" from my non-Chinese friend. "You *break the law* if you don't support your parents? No way!" I could tell how surprised she was, and, to be honest, so was I. I didn't know how to respond to her reaction because… you know… "why would you *not* take care of your parents?" We ended up having a vigorous discussion about parent-child relationships, exchanging experiences in our own countries and bringing in various texts we had read in class on moral philosophy. Such occasions happen to me often. They surprise, excite, and inspire me and make me reexamine my world from various angles.

Being immersed in a multi-cultural environment also means being confronted with more serious differences. Sometimes my friends and I hold opposite opinions that can only be resolved by suspending the debate with "let's go and get some food"; sometimes we joke about and mock one another's living habits. Be it a casual chat or formal discussion, we don't seek to convince others; instead, we acknowledge, understand and respect the unique positions and views that each of us holds.

I consider 'multi-cultural immersion' to be an essential part of a global education. For my education to be truly global, I'm not satisfied with knowing about, or touching upon, something non-Chinese. I want an immersion of variety, where I spend day and night with people of diverse backgrounds, worldviews and living styles. I'm eager to embrace the world, and am equipped with the ability and confidence to do so. Wherever on this globe I end up, I know I can and will thrive!

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A new campus as Utopia – Wenzhou-Kean University

Jennifer Marquardt

The Wenzhou-Kean campus building Courtesy: Wenzhou-Kean University

AS A SCHOLAR AND FICTION WRITER, I am interested in utopian narratives and the ways that places designed upon an ideal can influence the population that inhabits them. So it isn't surprising that I classify Wenzhou-Kean University (WKU) as a type of utopia. Our university is utopic, not in the sense that it is a perfect place, but in that our community was conceived of as a remedy to educational issues, such as China's alleged education system that tends to prioritize memorization over the development of problem-solving skills with real-world application and Chinese students' lack of preparation in developing global citizenship.

Sociologist and utopian expert Ruth Levitas writes "utopia is the expression of the desire for a better way of being or of living".[1] The utopic solution in this case is a seemingly simple one: provide a western education in a western language. Campus buzzwords are critical, creative, and English-only. Students are promised an education that builds these skills and provides preparation for further education and employment abroad. Our course curriculum is the same as that of our home campus

in New Jersey and our pedagogy emphasizes student-centered learning, a contrast to the passive learning of power point-centered lectures that most Chinese students are used to. But these are only superficial techniques emerging from a larger, philosophical desire to shift the student from a consumer of knowledge to a producer of it.

Like traditional utopias, ours is rather isolated, situated at the foot of a mountain in the outskirts of Wenzhou, a city that has incorporated western business models and is known for its economic and industrial development, but is slow to accommodate western culture. This can be limiting; unlike Tier 1 cities that host a large population of foreign experts, our students' access to English-speakers is restricted to those they find on campus. But the isolation of the campus is also one of the benefits. It is a blank slate where what is needed can be created. When students and faculty expressed the desire for coffee and a café-culture, rather than ask the canteen to provide coffee we invited students to submit business proposals for coffee shops. The winning team now operates Social Dog, a coffee shop on the fifth floor of our campus building and where they know just how I like my Americano. Similarly, we recognized the need for heightened verbal interaction and built the necessary elements into our introductory speaking courses. Groups of students interrupt classes (with an ok beforehand from the professor) to shout a line or two of poetry or a song. We term this 'song

bombing' (my personal preference is to be 'bombed' with lines of Whitman). This can get competitive, with classes keeping records of who 'owes' who. The process may seem purely ludic, but it incorporates the elements of gamification, a growing field in western education. Students are not only practicing pronunciation, they are developing identities as proactive members of a community.

Developing more sophisticated levels of interaction, WKU has worked to make debate central to our campus culture. Fostering the students' debating skills increases participation and builds analytical skills. Students who were once shy now argue aggressively and persuasively with one another – and sometimes their professors. While aggression may not always be desirable, it is an overcorrection that will eventually balance out. More importantly, this willingness to engage is a mark of the successful global personality that our students desire to embody.

This atmosphere of engagement has developed further community-building. While faculty and staff organize lectures and activities, students have developed a debate club, a salon society, a finance club, and a host of other clubs as well as a media club to document and celebrate these clubs and their accomplishments. They are no longer passive observers, but people who shout lines of Whitman or Szymborska to one another, debate me in the hallway, and who are capable designers of the space they inhabit now and the spaces they will inhabit in the future.

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# The Global University model – NYU Shanghai

Joanna Waley-Cohen

NYU SHANGHAI is a research university that includes a comprehensive four-year liberal arts and sciences education. It rests on the premise that, in the 21st century, active and substantive internationalization of learning is crucially important if we are to fulfill our commitment as educators. The city of Shanghai and the new business district of Pudong invited NYU to create the first Sino-US joint venture in higher education, in partnership with East China Normal University (ECNU), with a view to offering a possible model for the transformation of higher education in China. So NYU agreed to plant its third degree-granting campus (after New York and Abu Dhabi) in this rising global city, with the mission of uniting the intellectual resources of NYU with the multi-dimensional richness of China. From whole cloth it created a university with a highly international faculty; a university where research is peer-driven, not directed from the top down; where the curriculum is dynamically geared to our changing world; and where students learn in deep and lasting ways to become effective in a multicultural setting.

An NYU Shanghai education operates on the premise that the world of higher education has changed in the past half century as the result of three major phenomena, namely: the revolution in information and communications technology; the 'new machine age' in which machines do many of the tasks formerly performed by humans; and globalization. A broad and deep liberal education of the old-fashioned kind remains important, but is no longer enough. Today young people need to develop in three incredibly important areas: 1) they need to become completely at home with the tools of the new information and communications technology including developing a basic understanding of algorithmic thinking; 2) their education needs to create the conditions in which creativity, humans' leading edge, can take place, a creativity that requires imagination and often is the outcome of connecting things that are seemingly quite disparate, hence the need for students to gain a broad range of experiences; and 3) they need to learn how to work effectively with people from different cultures in order to function optimally in our globalized world.

At NYU Shanghai half of the student body is Chinese and the other half comes from over sixty countries around the world. Non-native speakers of Chinese must learn Chinese to at least an intermediate level, and non-native speakers of English must learn to communicate effectively in spoken and written English, so that everyone graduates with bilingual capability. Students take a range of courses in social sciences, humanities, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), and have the opportunity to explore new interests, so that when the time comes they can choose majors that spark their passions. Every student spends at least one semester studying elsewhere in the world.

Beyond the classroom, in what may be the most educational experience of all, every Chinese student has a non-Chinese roommate and vice versa. Our first cohort of students will graduate in 2017; many have already found jobs in China and internationally, gained admittance to top quality graduate and professional schools such as Harvard and Cambridge, and won prestigious international fellowships such as the Schwarzman Scholarship. The NYU Shanghai project presents great opportunities and great challenges, which sometimes seem almost to mirror one another. One major opportunity is, of course, redesigning a liberal arts education for the 21st century, along the lines outlined above. Moreover an institution without entrenched traditions is more likely to be able to nimbly adjust as needs surface, yet starting a new university inevitably involves missteps; it also can be challenging to convince skeptics, particularly with the demand for a more obviously instrumentalist approach. We have the opportunity to learn by doing what true multicultural effectiveness means in education, in the workplace, and in life experiences more generally, and this is just as true for faculty and staff as it is for students. We have the opportunity to make a difference in China, in both individual and institutional terms. For those of us whose professional lives have been bound up in China one way or another, it can be deeply rewarding to participate in China's extraordinary transformation.

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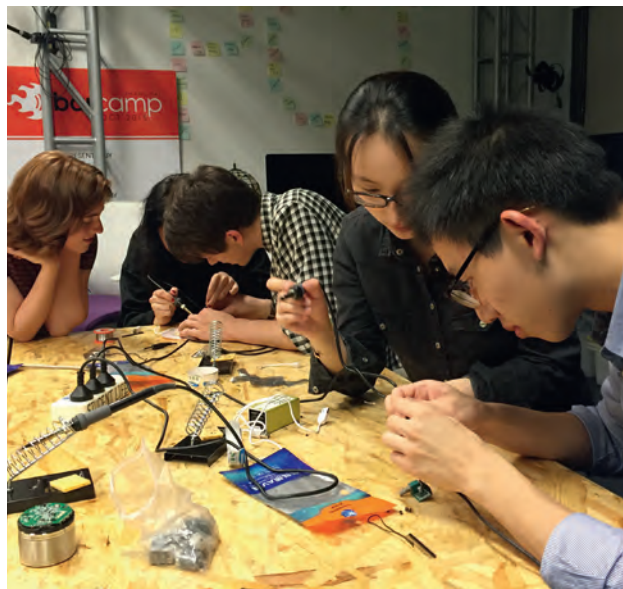
Students working on their projects in the IMA (Interactive Media and Arts) lab. Courtesy: NYU Shanghai

'The man with the key is not here' – Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

David Goodman

I'M AN ACADEMIC WORKING on social and political change in China. With the dramatic changes after 1978, I increasingly came to think that there would be an advantage in having students learn about China, as well as learning Chinese in China. The approach is one of the lived China experience. At the same time, for myself and other academics, there are advantages to be had from living, working, and conducting research in China. The opportunity to experiment with these ideas came in 2013 when I was invited to help develop a Department of China Studies at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) in Suzhou.

XJTLU is a Joint Venture University (Xi'an Jiaotong University and University of Liverpool are the parents) located in Suzhou Industrial Park, to the east of the old city of Suzhou. Currently there are about 9,500 domestic Chinese students and 610 international students enrolled in 35 undergraduate degree programs and 27 postgraduate coursework programs. Teaching Chinese students in China is great fun. The students are enthusiastic and engaged, determined to succeed. Of course, their approach to China Studies is different to their international peers, not least because of schooling and socialisation. This difference sometimes makes for unnecessary gaps in the learning environment, in both directions, which the department has to provide through short courses and additional activities.

Working in China is of course not without its challenges. Many people outside China, even some of those who have been there in the past, assume that we have no academic freedom, that we are constrained in what we can teach or research, or even that we are told what to do and how to do it. On the whole, such problems are minimal. Of that kind the only real problem is that book suppliers will sometimes act on the side of caution if asked to provide a book to the Library or students. Fear of getting into trouble is their motivator, sometimes without any reasonable basis of thought. I was recently stopped from importing a Chinese language version of Mao Zedong's commentaries on literature and art. It was a book originally published openly in China, where it had been purchased. I am still trying to work out why importation was not permitted.
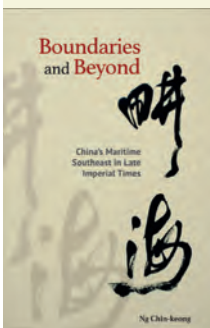
More serious are the problems of living and working in a society developing from a radically different social system, by importing some of the technologies and practices from elsewhere. As all our students know, mobile phone usage and Internet access require VPN installation. Luckily the market demand is well met by Chinese providers. Office administrative practice usually fails to keep up with the speed of change: functions in the workplace most usually stop when someone with a specific task is on leave or is sick; there is little client service mentality. In the 1970s when I first lived in China we used to talk about "the man with the key is not here" – the phenomenon of the lack of access to something when a request was made. These days it's "I'm sorry, my colleague whose responsibility to approve your emergency need for a replacement computer is away for two weeks."

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Late Imperial China's maritime boundaries and beyond

Most of us should be familiar with Professor Ng Chin-keong's seminal study, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735,* which was first published in 1983. But perhaps we are less familiar with his many other important studies on China's maritime history – mostly articles and chapters in books in English and Chinese – published over the past forty years. Many of these shorter studies are scattered about in hard to find, obscure journals. Ng Chin-keong's new book under review here is a collection of fourteen essays published between 1970 and 2015. The book is divided into four parts loosely arranged around the concepts of physical, political, and cultural boundaries and crossing boundaries as applied to maritime China during the fourteenth through nineteenth centuries. As the author explains in his Preface, the 'boundaries and beyond' used in the book's title "highlights the two contesting forces of continuities and discontinuities that characterized China's maritime southeast in late imperial times" (p. ix). Although boundaries were meant to maintain stability, status quo, and sociopolitical order –to demarcate stability and instability – nonetheless because they were always in a state of flux rulers, statesmen, merchants, and ordinary seafarers had to constantly make adjustments according to particular circumstances.

Reviewer: Robert J. Antony

AS WITH HIS OTHER STUDIES the essays included in this book concern mostly the economic, political, diplomatic, and social relationships between southern China, especially Fujian province, and Southeast Asia. Avoiding the more typical Eurocentric and Sinocentric approaches to the study of maritime history, Ng instead takes a broad perspective for understanding the interactions and connections between China, her southern neighbors, and Europeans across the wide South China Sea. His first chapter (part 1) provides a concise overview of the long history of maritime southeastern Asia, covering some two thousand years from ancient times to the fifteenth century, a period that was characterized by flexibility and inclusiveness in conducting long-distance trade. The other chapters delineate perceived boundaries between Chinese and the "other" (part 2), undercurrents of social and economic forces that challenged official demarcations (part 3), and transnational movements of people, goods, and ideas across boundaries (part 4). The author views maritime history in terms of a continuous struggle between tradition and innovation through the inter-actions, compromises, and accommodations of governments and people. In the process old boundaries disappeared only to be replaced by new ones.

In one way or another most of the chapters deal with maritime trade, the interactions between merchants and

officials, and relations between Chinese and foreigners, whose perspectives and objectives were seldom the same. Challenging long held views, Ng shows that Chinese officials tended to be pragmatic and flexible in their dealings with Portuguese traders (chapters 3, 8 & 9) and British officials (chapters 4, 5, 11, 13 & 14). The late imperial state, too, was not universally opposed to merchants and their overseas economic activities; in fact, many officials realized that the substantial revenues from customs fees provided both economic benefits and social stability in seaboard provinces (chapters 2, 9 and 13). For their part, Ng argues that the merchants also willingly made compromises that allowed them to be more acceptable to Confucian elites. In what the author calls the "Confucianization of merchant culture", individual merchants and trade guilds tried to accommodate mercantile and Confucian values by playing down profit-seeking and by using their wealth and organizational capabilities for responsive public welfare (chapter 10). Ng is at his best in his case study (chapter 13) of a successful Fujian merchant in Batavia, Chen Yilao, who was arrested after he returned to his homeland in 1749 and was subsequently sent into life exile. Ng astutely argues the complex and extenuating circumstances in this case and the reasons for Chen's harsh treatment. The author convincingly challenges previous scholarship that has viewed this case as a prime example of Qing anti-maritime attitudes and policies by showing that, in fact, Chen Yilao was not punished because of any underlying governmental hostility towards trade but rather because he had violated the laws concerning crossing borders, remaining abroad for too long, and employment by a foreign government. From the government's perspective the main issue was national security. Taken as a whole, Ng's main conclusion is that despite the strict governmental prohibitions and often ambiguous policies, the late imperial age was a time of vibrant maritime activities and wholesome transnational exchanges that were chiefly the results of "the dynamic spirit of the maritime population" (p. 442).

In any book of this sort – one that is a collection of previously published essays by the same author – there are

bound to be some problems. One problem is overlap between different chapters where some of the same materials are repeated again and again. Another problem, of course, is the lack of updating of essays published in the 1970s (chapters 7, 8 & 9). Although these are still useful chapters on the socio-economic conditions in rural Fujian that provide the context for understanding overseas commercial expansion in the Ming and Qing periods, nonetheless they could have benefitted by the inclusion and updating of recent studies by Paul Van Dyke on Canton merchants or by Philip Kuhn on overseas Chinese.

But those are minor quibbles. Ng Chin-keong and NUS Press are to be commended for making available this fine and useful collection of essays by one of the doyens of Asian maritime history. This book should be essential reading for anyone interested in the history of East Asian maritime commerce, international relations, and transnational migrations, and required reading in graduate courses dealing with those subjects.

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Building Filipino Hawai'i

Roderick Labrador's *Building Filipino Hawai'i* provides a rich, nuanced account of Filipino identities in a distinctively multicultural American context. The study confronts the tremendous diversity of Filipinos in Hawai'i, who vary in terms of the timing of migration, region, language, and social class. It is in this milieu that Labrador's highly personal account unfolds, documenting efforts to develop a more united Filipino identity in the Hawaiian context.

Reviewers: Shane J. Barter and Rayen Rooney
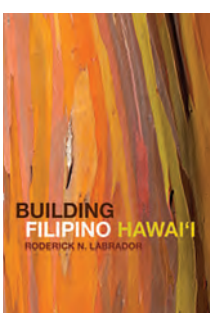
LABRADOR PROVIDES A RICH ACCOUNT of diversity among Filipinos in 'Oahu, charting their origins and continued experiences. With Asian migrants excluded from American territories at the turn of the century, the Philippines, located within the American empire, provided cheap labour on Hawaiian sugar plantations. *Sakada* plantation labourers brought to Hawai'i a century ago were primarily Ilocano and most were uneducated. After World War II, more educated Tagalog-speaking migrants began arriving with a new sense of Filipino identity. Today, Filipino migrants continue to arrive in Hawai'i for jobs ranging from nurses and maids to business-

persons and academics. Labrador outlines three primary groups of Filipinos in Hawai'i: Local (born in Hawai'i, mostly descended from sakada migrants), immigrants from the Philippines, and migrants from the continental United States. Labrador succeeds in painting a picture of Filipino diversity, noting how persons of Filipino descent manage and shift their identities over time, evolving different understandings of what it means to be Filipino.

Labrador's study locates Filipinos within Hawai'i rich ethnic tapestry. Filipinos have not seen the upward mobility enjoyed by Chinese, Korean, or Japanese communities. Labrador describes

Speaking of the self

In the last few decades, scholars of South Asian history have disputed the notion that South Asian cultures do not possess the autonomous representation of the individual, particularly in documenting histories, compared to their European counterparts. To that end, the numerous ways in which self-representation has been practiced in this region in different forms and time periods have been increasingly explored in scholarship. The rich collection of essays in this volume, edited by Anshu Malhotra and Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, challenge the existing boundaries and discourses surrounding autobiography, performance and gender in South Asian history by presenting a varied and fresh selection of women's autobiographical writing and practices from the seventeenth to mid-twentieth centuries. The compelling choice of authors explored in the essays include Urdu novelists, a Muslim prostitute in nineteenth century Punjab, a Mughal princess, a courtesan in the Hyderabad court and male actors who perform as female characters. It moreover challenges conventional narratives in the field of autobiographical studies by relaying in careful detail the different forms which ought to be encompassed within the genre of autobiography such as poetry, patronage of architecture and fiction.

Reviewer: Niroshini Somasundaram
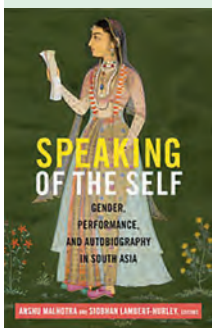
THE COLLECTION GRAPPLES with several key questions: how does one define autobiography? Does women's autobiographical writing differ from men's? And how do gender and performance relate to the autobiographical format in South Asian history? To this end, the book is divided into three parts, *Negotiating Autobiography, Forms and Modes of Self-Fashioning* and *Destabilizing the Normative,* with an excellent introductory chapter. The introduction provides a clear and comprehensive account of the autobiographical form in various literary traditions, the propensity to locate autobiographical writing as a Western field, challenges to such beliefs and debates surrounding the use of the word 'autobiography' itself. It is most convincing in arguing that autobiographical accounts ought to be more widely considered in illuminating the social and political worlds of the respective authors.

Part 1 of the book, *Negotiating Autobiography: Between Assertion and Subversion,* addresses the ways in which women have navigated and disrupted autobiographical practices from the late nineteenth century. Sylvia Vatuk begins with an absorbing account of the writing and life of Zakira Begam (1922-2003), whose writing and reflections on the early parts of her life in Hyderabad in a conservative and educated Muslim household emphasized her love of Urdu literature and its role in defining her sense of self. Ritu Menon's essay on Nayantara Sahgal and the Indian novelist's autobiographical works provides rich grounds in which to explore the peculiar demands of not only the autobiographical form but a scholar's own engagement with such works. The memoir and diary of Nazr Sajjad Hyder (1892-1967), and the serialization of her works in Urdu women's magazines is addressed by Asiya Alam. Shubhra Ray explores the autobiography of a young Bengali woman Kailashbashini Debi (c.1829-1895) and how her form of self-representation both located her within the social and political milieu of her time and reform movements, yet also transcended the politics and expectations of her at the time. All four authors in Part 1 augment understanding about the role of literature in creating selfhood from existing scholarship.

The collection proceeds into more unconventional and fascinating territory in respect of the autobiographical form and its subversion in Parts 2 and 3, *Forms and Modes of Self-Fashioning* and *Destabilizing the Normative,* respectively. Uma Chakravarti's thoughtful essay explores three novels on Partition written by Pakistani women, which she considers to be autobiographical in quality, and how memory, violence and public narrative complicated and embedded themselves in such practices. Maha Laqa Bai, an illustrious *tawa'if* (courtesan) at the Hyderabad court, is the focus of Shweta Sachdeva Jha's essay and how an autobiographical record was left by the courtesan, as a defiant form of reinvention, through different acts such as constructing mosques and composing poetry. Afshan Bokhari's account of the Mughal princess Jahanara Begam (1614-1681) similarly looks at Mughal women's power and agency in the period and focuses on masculine strategies adopted by the princess to wield power with respect to her treatises on Sufism and patronage of architecture. Bokhari's essay, with its vivid accounts of the life of Jahanara Begam and use of visual materials, is a particularly notable example of the ways in which women sought to navigate the political milieu of their time and represent themselves in the face of various challenges.

Anshu Malhotra's essay on Piro (d.1872) a Muslim prostitute in Punjab in the mid-nineteenth century, deftly examines how the poetic *kafi* form was used by Piro to narrate the astounding events of her life and her beliefs, particularly in respect of living with a guru of Sikh lineage and navigate her existence "on the edges of her society" (p.226). Siobhan Lambert-Hurley explored the writings of Raihana Tyabji (1901-1975), a devotee of Krishna and nominally Muslim. The clearest assertion of the book's goals is expressed here by Lambert-Hurley who states, in using the word autobiography in respect of Tyabji's form of Bhakti devotionalism, that the collection hopes to "disrupt the established Western canon of autobiography" (p.247). Finally, Kathryn Hansen discusses the autobiographies of two male actors, Jayshankar Sundari and Fida Husain, who primarily performed as women.

In complicating the boundaries of women's autobiography in this way, the collection encourages a bold reevaluation of central assumptions in the field of autobiography and gender. The collection stems from activities associated with the research network *Women's Autobiography in Islamic Societies* and thus naturally tends to focus on the autobiographical practices of Muslim women. Greater inclusion of writing beyond Muslim women's writing would perhaps have more accurately reflected the collection's expansive title of *Gender, performance, and autobiography in South Asia.* The authors nevertheless present a significant corpus of scholarship relating to autobiography and gender which can apply broadly not only in South Asia but beyond. By carefully exploring important theoretical aspects and alternative examples of autobiography, the authors open new grounds and sources to critique autobiographical writing and methods. The collection is a significant contribution to the field and will be of considerable interest to both scholars and enthusiasts of autobiography and gender in South Asia.

Niroshini Somasundaram, Postgraduate student in Modern South Asian Studies, University of Oxford.

the jokes and stereotypes of Filipinos as being uneducated, speaking poor English, eating dogs, and being hyper-sexualized. In Chapter Two, Labrador explores how these stereotypes play out through local humor. He notes a variety of jokes and comedians that poke fun of Filipinos, jokes laughed off as part of the Hawaiian experience, but which also sustain Filipino insecurities. While it may be tempting to see Filipinos simply as marginalized, Labrador goes further, situating Filipinos in relation to indigenous Hawaiians. Filipinos are part of two colonialisms: colonized by the United States in the Philippines, and part of US colonialism in Hawai'i. The Filipino Hawaiian narrative rarely mentions the appropriation of native Hawaiian lands or understands Filipinos as part of the colonial project. Labrador tackles this difficult topic rather fearlessly, locating the position of Filipinos amidst a variety of ethnic communities.

The diversity and status of Filipinos in Hawai'i are important factors in local efforts to create a sense of shared identity. In many ways, this study is not about building a Filipino Hawai'i, but is instead about building 'Filipinos' in a Hawaiian context. This project is carried out in part through university organizations, where more standard narratives of Filipino nationalism and instruction in Tagalog help to construct modern Filipinos, even among those who have never set foot in Southeast Asia. The book details efforts to construct a diasporic identity, creating "born-again Filipinos" (93). Labrador reminds us that

this is also a class project, with powerful business leaders creating community centers and announcing the 'arrival' of Filipinos as a modern community. Efforts to unite and uplift Filipinos in Hawai'i have not been entirely successful though. The book concludes with a glance to electoral politics, which shortly after the creation of a shared community space, laid bare the ongoing divisions among Filipinos in Hawai'i.

Labrador's accounts of Filipino diversity, status, and search for unity are compelling. This said, the book is written according to the conventions of ethnic studies, an intensely personal style that is not for everyone and which may block some avenues for analysis. The personal style is especially strange given how dated many of the accounts appear to be, with material taken mostly from the 1990s. For example, Labrador discusses a racialized Philippine Christmas song that circulated in 1994, but does not offer any recent accounts of such materials or note that this song continues to be sung today. The book's personal approach allows Labrador to capture rich detail, but falls somewhat short in terms of providing a sense of wider context or magnitude. The linguistic and class diversity of Filipinos is clear, but Labrador then treats white, Chinese, and Japanese communities as givens. For example, Chinese migrants have also featured a stunning range of dialects, divided political allegiances, and important class divisions; it is not clear if Filipinos are exceptional here. The book almost gives the sense of entirely distinct, separate ethnic communities,

as there is no mention of Chinese Filipinos or Moros, and there is only limited discussion of persons of Filipino descent who do not identify as Filipino or of persons claiming mixed descent. In terms of magnitude, it would be useful to provide a sense of the frequency of the book's many anecdotes. Labrador mentions local greeting cards with crude jokes, but it is not clear if these were produced by hand one time, or if they are manufactured for sale in stores. Without a sense of who makes these jokes, buys these albums, and exchanges these cards, it is not clear how pervasive these anecdotes are.

All told, *Building Filipino Hawai'i* provides a fascinating account of Filipinos in Hawai'i, noting their fragmentation and locating them in a broader ethnic landscape. It will be of interest to scholars of Hawai'i and migrant identity, as well as anyone interested in Filipino identity writ large. Although it takes place in Hawai'i, many of the issues are those that continue to confront the Philippines as a whole, making the discussion of Hawaiian Filipinos especially important and timely.

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Ports of the Ancient Indian Ocean

This edited volume delivers much more than is suggested by its title, since it includes discussions of emporia as far inland as Delhi, the time-scale covered by its articles extends from the 20th century BC to the 18th century AD, and since not only the Indian Ocean, but also the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea are discussed by the various authors. Given the wide range and disparate nature of the twenty-four papers in the volume, how should one orient oneself among them? Best to begin with Elizabeth Lambourn's *'Describing a Lost Camel' – Clues for a West Asian Mercantile Networks in South Asian Maritime Trade (Tenth-Twelfth Centuries AD)*. The volume taken as a whole forms a contribution to the genre of world history and Lambourn provides a clear-eyed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of that genre. Although Lambourn's paper is primarily concerned with the two hundred years from the tenth- to the twelfth centuries AD, her masterly analysis of the sources and criticism of the various methodologies in which they are employed provide the reader with a prism with which to view the remaining papers in the volume.

Reviewer: Dr Richard Fynes
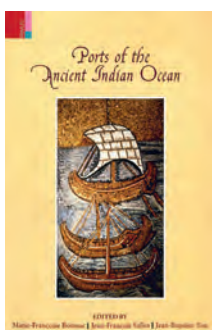
Reviewed title: **Marie-Françoise Boussac, Jean- Françoise Salles & Jean-Baptiste Yon (eds.) 2016.** *Ports of the Ancient Indian Ocean.* Delhi: Primus Books ISBN 97893840820792

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LAMBOURN BEGINS HER ACCOUNT with a review of the relevant archaeological and documentary evidence. It is salutary to learn just how insecure is the dating of many South Asian ceramic types and consequently of the archaeological sites whose dating has been largely derived from ceramic evidence. Lambourn notes the problems posed by pluridisciplinary character of the sources and their simultaneous use. Her paper focuses on the port of Sanjan, in the domain of the western Indian dynasty of the Rastrakuta, where, for the tenth century there is rare conjunction of evidence from archaeology, Arabic geographical writings and Indian epigraphy. Her discussion is rich both in evidence and insight, and she gives due acknowledgment to the work of Ranabir Chakravarti, whose work has led scholars to reformulate the questions they ask of the sources. Lambourn's findings lead her to speculate on the nature of world history and the relationship between micro- and macro history, as she expresses dissatisfaction that she is "left with an eclectic collection of small insights and few satisfactory larger narratives." Such honest appraisals of the conclusions of one's research invite further questions and are thus a stimulant to further research.

With Lambourn's discussion in mind, one can turn to the other papers. Rila Mukherjee in *Routes, Ports and Networks in Bengal; The China Connection* reviews connections over wide areas and a long chronology. She argues for the existence in history of a regional unit that she calls the northern Bay of Bengal, comprising parts of the areas of four modern states: China, India, Bangladesh and Burma, within whose early history were many states with a host of ethnicities, religions, languages and practices. Mukherjee argues that consideration of this unit allows one to abandon conventional ways of looking at places, such as points of view that are state-centric or categorized by area studies. The heart of her paper is an overview of trade networks in this area ranging from the second century BC to the fourteenth century AD. Much of her information about trade routes comes from early twentieth-century scholars such as Schoff and Pelliot, but her analysis is informed by the work of the recently deceased numismatist Nicholas Rhodes. Mukherjee's interesting and important study leads, however, to a somewhat banal and tautological conclusion: "…just as Bengal-China interactions fluctuated over time, so too did the networks between the two regions."

Such conclusions highlight the weaknesses in the genre of world history and the need for scholars to heed Lambourn's call to reconsider the questions they ask of their material.

Berenice Bellina in *The Inception of the Transnational Processes between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea from an Early City-State on the Thai-Malay Peninsula (Fourth-Secend Centuries BCE)* also places her discussion in the context of world history by arguing that the political unifications of Mauryan India and Han China beginning in the fourth century BC, opened the overland and maritime Silk Roads and led the emergence of a Eurasian and African world-system, which lasted until the modern period in the sixteenth century, within which a chain of intertwined networks inaugurated a trading boom and major trans-national cultural processes. On the basis of archaeological evidence from Khao Sam Khaeo, on the west coast of the gulf of Thailand, Bellina builds the hypothesis that the site was an early example of a cosmopolitan city-state formed by cultural interactions and mixed configurations, a hypothesis that seems to be in need of stronger corroboration than that of the cited evidence.

Ingo Strauch in *Indian Inscriptions from Cave Hoq at Socotra* sheds a welcome beam of light on some of the participants in the Indian Ocean trade in the early centuries of the common era. While making guided tours of the spectacular Hoq cave on the island of Socotra, off the coast of the present-day state of Yemen, Indians, South Arabians, Ethiopians and a Bactrian left graffiti and drawings in the cave, which were discovered in 2000. Strauch's paper is concerned only with the India material. Among the inscriptions are two dedications to the Buddha and tridents engraved on some of the stalagmite/stalactites indicate their worship as *lingas* of the god Siva. The cave could clearly have been a site for cultural transmission, as different groups toured the caves and left memorials of their experience there.

Roberta Tomber *Living in the Egyptian Ports: Daily Life at Berenike and Myos Hormos* is concerned with the archaeological evidence for daily life in two of the most important Egyptian ports for the Indian Ocean trade during the Roman period. Berenike and Myos Hormos were primarily transit transhipment centres for the main emporium of Alexandria, and as described by Tomber life within them must have had a somewhat make-shift quality, while remaining strongly Roman and Mediterranean in character. Pierre Tallett discusses *The Egyptians on the Red Sea Shore during the Pharaonic Era* while reviewing the archaeological evidence from three sites on Egypt's Red Sea Coast. Inscriptions from votive anchors found at one of them, Mersa Gewasis, provide evidence for a voyage to Punt, now generally agreed to be situated somewhere on the southern-most coastline of the Red Sea, launched during the reign of Sesostris I (c.1950 BC).

The volume gives good coverage to ports and harbours on the southern coast of Arabia, the Persian Gulf and Western India. Jean-Francois Salles in *Towards a Geography of the Harbours of the Persian Gulf in Antiquity (Sixth Century BC- Sixth Century AD)* provides a wide-ranging overview based on archaeological and literary evidence but the results of his analysis lead him to

express a sense of frustration similar to that of Lambourn: "Such a survey of the harbours known in the PG over a dozen centuries will probably remain unsatisfactory… The concept of globalization/mondialization is becoming *a la mode* in Ancient History, but many complex questions cannot be answered through such theoretical approaches and will remain pending …"

A key element of the volume is its concern with geographical writings and cartography. Emmanuelle Vagnon in *Ports of Western India in Latin Cartographic Sources, c.1200-1500: Toponomy, Localization and Evolutions* begins with a useful outline of recent changes in the history of cartography, both in methodology and in ways of understanding old maps. She makes the point that so-called errors and inaccuracies in the maps should be considered as traces of complex evolutions of the interpretation and transmission of source material. She then, however, proceeds to give an informative commentary on some maps that have been selected for their outstanding qualities, using a traditional chronological approach.

Without aiming to be comprehensive, the volume is wide-ranging in its coverage. However, one omission that detracts somewhat from its overall utility is the absence of any discussion of the kingdom of Axum and its port of Adulis, since during the late Roman/early Byzantine period Axumite traders acted as middlemen in the Indian Ocean trade until the power of Axum was eclipsed by the rise of Islamic polities.

The volume itself appears to have come slightly adrift from its moorings: we are told in the prefacing Editors' Note that a meeting in Kolkata at the Rabindranath Tagore Centre was organised as a result of cooperation between Indian and French archaeologists and historians and made possible by the French National Agency for Research but we are not told when the meeting took place. Are the papers in the volume re-worked and edited versions of papers given at the meeting or did scholarly interaction at the meeting provide the catalyst for their later writing? In their prefatory note the editors emphasize that a major moment of the meeting was the "beautiful inaugural address" of Professor Barun De; this sadly has not found its way into the printed volume.

There is not space in this review to mention all twenty-four papers in the volume. While working through them readers will create their own systems of reference points, which they can use to navigate the overlapping and fluctuating networks that are surveyed in the volume and thus gain a more comprehensive sense of the various interactions enabled by the Indian Ocean. As well as providing an overview of the current state of play in an area of study that is rapidly developing, the volume is rich in information that will in turn be a stimulant for further research; I for one would like to know more about the salt traders of early Tamil Nadu whose bullock carts were driven by women and who carried monkeys along with them mentioned by V. Selvakumar in *The Routes of Early Historic Tamil Nadu, South India 300 BC to 500 CE.*

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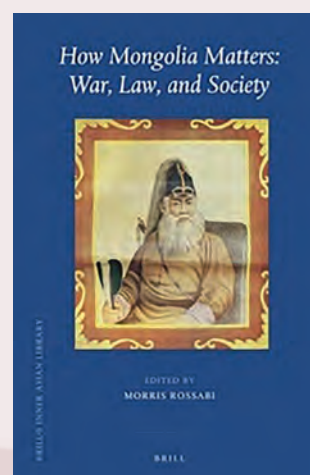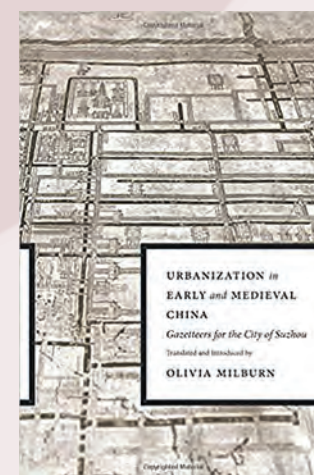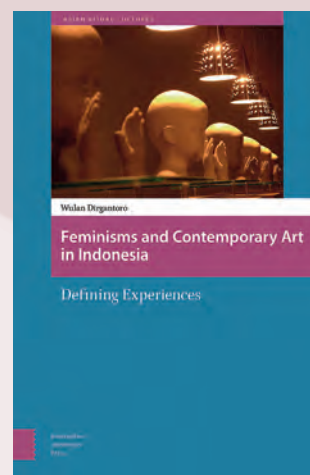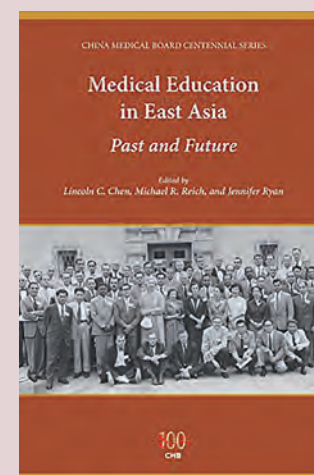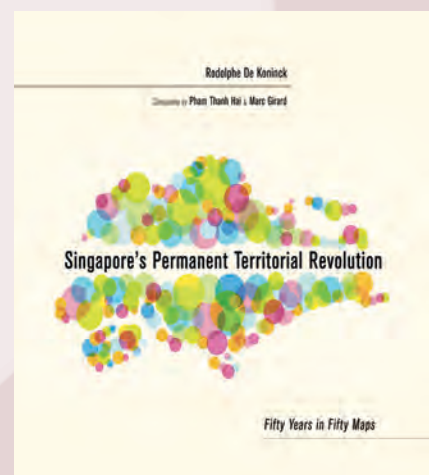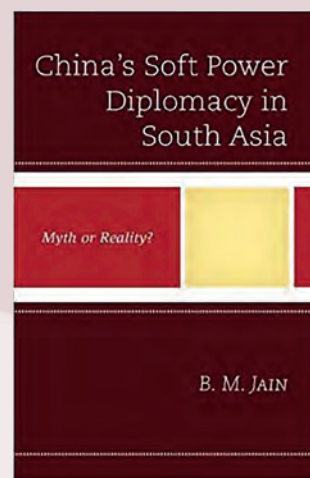
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Learning to love the city in Northeast India

The rapid urbanization of India's Northeast frontier[1] is one of the most crucial transformations the area has witnessed, yet it remains relatively understudied. In just a few decades a large number of the inhabitants have become urban dwellers in one of the frontier cities, or migrants in cities in the rest of India and abroad. Urban areas in the frontier have diverse histories and some common experiences. Colonisation, resource extraction, stations for supply, and militarisation are some of the shared features. These processes have persisted in postcolonial India along with the growth in administrative quarters and buildings (and cars) for the bureaucrats of newly created political units (new federal states and autonomous districts), new military installations and housing, and population growth from migration for those seeking work, refuge, and education. Despite this history, urban environments are rarely part of imaginations of the frontier, especially in the production and circulation of images and the stereotypes of plantations, jungle insurgency, spectacular topography, and colourfully dressed ethnic minority communities. In this *Focus* section we explore the urban environments in the Northeast frontier – India's 'unruly borderland'[2] – as crucial sites in their own right, and as sites in which to experiment with different ways of researching the region.

Duncan McDuie-Ra

Mizoram. Image reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Joe Fanai on Flickr.

Learning to love the city in Northeast India *continued*

Urban frontiers and frontier urbanism

"Urban areas in the Northeast are so small!" sceptics cry; "How can they be worthy of attention?" To begin with, the threshold for being considered 'urban' in India is quite low. The census uses two criteria to define urban areas: (a) All statutory places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee and (b) A place satisfying the following three criteria simultaneously: (i) a minimum population of 5,000; (ii) at least 75 percent of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and (iii) a population density of at least 400 per square kilometre. This criteria allows for smaller sites beyond state capitals and large commercial hubs, like Kakching (Manipur), Lunglei (Mizoram) and Pasighat (Arunachal Pradesh), to be considered as emerging urban forms; sites that dissolve the urban-rural distinction.

Two dynamics can be considered, in addition to just the size of a settlement: urban population growth and municipal expansion. The 2011 census recorded extensive growth in urban populations. The percentage of the overall population living in urban areas in each of the Northeast states in 2011 was as follows (with the increase since 2001 in brackets): Mizoram 52% (+3%), Manipur 31% (+6%), Nagaland 29% (+12%), Tripura 26% (+9%), Sikkim 25% (+14%), Arunachal Pradesh 23% (+2%), Meghalaya 20% (+1%) and Assam 14% (+2%), compared to a national average of 31% (3%).

However, the urban population growth data refers only to areas actually *classified* as urban. Across India, urbanization outside former municipal boundaries is responsible for almost a third of urban growth for the period 2001 and 2011,[3] yet, as Denis et al. argue, there are incentives for maintaining a *rural* classification in India (mostly eligibility for certain forms of government assistance) and so many densely populated 'built up' areas that adjoin cities continue to be classified as rural areas.[4] In much of the Northeast this classification carries additional significance given that land laws, which protect indigenous and tribal communities, are often non-applicable to designated municipal areas. Historically, city-level governance, compared to state and district level, has always been weak in India; an issue further complicated in the Northeast by overlapping layers of authority (including traditional decision making bodies), and until recently there has been little incentive to expand the territory under municipal authority.

This, however, is changing. There are now new incentives to enlarge and/or create municipal areas in the frontier. The Ministry of Urban Development has a number of flagship schemes. From 2015 the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation has provided infrastructure funding to 500 cities in India: four in Assam, two in Nagaland, and one each in the other Northeast states (all are state capitals). The Smart Cities Mission (also from 2015) aims to "promote cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of 'Smart Solutions'."[5] There are five Smart Cities in the Northeast: Agartala, Guwahati, Imphal, Kohima, and Namchi. Furthermore, the Ministry of Urban Development dedicates 10% of its annual budget to the Northeast (as do other ministries) and explains: "[g]iven the difficult access to and remoteness of (the Northeast), the urban areas in the North Eastern States perform a much higher order function than those of similar size in India."[6] Finally, all Northeast states have Municipal Acts, most created in the previous two decades with recent amendments. While the Acts vary, they have provoked controversy and contention around issues such as property tax (both the need to pay it and who has the right to levy it), elections (there are reservations based on indigeneity and gender), and constitutional protections for tribal and indigenous communities (and whether or not land under municipal authority is subject to existing protection laws). While state governments amend their municipal acts in the hope of accessing more funds for infrastructure and enabling infamous sub-contracting practices, private capital – much of which originates in other parts of India – continues to shape the urban environment through commercial and residential developments, consumer spaces, and the supply of consumer goods (from plasma televisions to house paint).

Emerging urban forms

Research on small cities in developing contexts is dwarfed by an obsession with mega-cities and global cities, what Bunnell and Maringanti refer to as 'metrocentricity'. They argue that not enough attention is paid to emerging urban forms and call for more engaged ethnographic work, work that cannot be done from afar.[7] This echoes the agenda put forth by Bell and Jayne to take small cities more seriously, a crucial task in developing countries generally where "two-thirds of urban residents live in places of less than 1 million people".[8] They argue that "a number of 'imaginative leaps' must be taken by theorists currently hung up on the notion that globalization of the city means globalization of the metropolis".[9] This recalls Mathews' explorations of what he calls 'low-end globalization', defined as "the transnational flow of people and goods involving relatively small amounts of capital and informal, sometimes quasi-legal or illegal transactions, commonly associated within the developing world".[10] These secondary flows are evident throughout the frontier, whether Karen refugees from Myanmar-via Thailand attending theological college in Nagaland, or the network of Tibetan traders moving 'counterfeit' clothing and footwear from Southeast Asia via China to the markets of the region.

Small urban areas – and the vernacular urbanism they produce – are a hard sell in the Northeast where research remains focused on cultural change (narrowly defined as tradition versus modernity), conflict and ethnic politics, and of course the borders, fences, and roads that connect and obstruct. Despite this lack of interest, urban areas in the frontier are crucial sites in which to analyze state-led development, liberalization and securitization, agrarian change and land issues, territorial claims and counter-claims, and connectivity (both state-led and state-evading). Urban areas in the frontier are sites where the past is manifest in material objects, the built environment, demography, and the spatial order. They have witnessed the region throughout the centuries, yet they are more than just arenas where broader economic, social, and political dynamics play out; they are also sites where these dynamics are created, channeled, and challenged.

Fig. 1: Churches for different tribal communities and future meat point. Sovima, Dimapur. December 2016 (Photo by Duncan McDuie-Ra).

Fig. 2: Newspaper clippings celebrating the community service of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for public display. Thangal Bazar, Imphal. December 2012 (Photo by Duncan McDuie-Ra).

Learning to love the city...on foot

Urban environments in the Northeast encourage different entry points for inquiry and exploration and here I want to focus on mobility through urban space. Purposeful mobility from designated points – government office to NGO rally (often in a vehicle) – are common routes, yet emerging urban forms can best be captured on foot, and in many instances, by accident. Walking ethnography is an ideal entry point into the urban environment of the frontier. It brings researchers into contact with people, places, and objects that were otherwise unknown, unnoticed, or seen only at a blurred distance through a vehicle window. As Cheng argues, "[w]alking not only guides us through encounters with other human beings, but also embeds us in a dense network of materials, ranging from skyscraping buildings to the most mundane of everyday objects such as lampposts or sidewalks'.[11] And in a region where research can often take a predictable trajectory, any opportunity to encounter something new, unexpected, and (hopefully) significant should be welcomed. Here I identify three ways of considering urban areas, gleaned from my walking ethnography in urban areas of the Northeast over the last 15 years; all three resonate with the approaches taken in the essays in this *Focus* section and serve as examples of possible ways to research urban areas of the Northeast (certainly not the only ways).

1. Spatial violence

For a region that has experienced horrific levels of organised violence by state, non-state and quasi-state actors – in the public sphere and the private sphere – little consideration has been given to how violence has created particular spatial orders in urban environments. Herscher and Siddiqi ask us to consider the spatial histories of political violence, with their own sequences, continuities, and ruptures. Spatial violence calls for us to hone our understanding of the deeper and slower structural forms of violence that contour political historical categories such as 'development', 'reconstruction', 'modernity', 'peace', 'progress', and so on, which they argue is "a constitutive dimension of architecture, urbanism, and their epistemologies".[12] In the frontier, neighbourhoods, public buildings, commercial areas, houses, slums, parks, ceasefire camps, barracks and memorials all tell stories of past and present relationships of power and violence. In Imphal (Manipur) a paramilitary base dwarfs the adjacent Kabui neighbourhood in Ragailong. Entering the locality from the south necessitates walking past watchtowers and gun posts, a common routine in a city scattered with checkpoints, barracks, and surveillance. It is not just fissures between the civilian and military space that are striking; multistorey houses of the elite and well-connected (to both state and non-state power) with high fences and a fleet of cars parked on the lawn, rise adjacent to bamboo thatch and mud shacks. Settlements started by families seeking refuge from violence have grown into neighbourhoods and communities. Some become legible parts of the city, others remain distant from state authority, while in others settlers face struggles against threats of eviction.

Juxtapositions help to illustrate these relationships. King describes juxtapositions as attention to the positioning "of the dissimilar and even the incompatible", drawing attention to the ways space is appropriated, officially and unofficially, temporarily and more permanently, all of which drive change,

reflecting past and present configurations of power and their accompanying imaginations.[13] The urban Northeast is full of captivating juxtapositions: such as the line of *ui sa* (dog meat) shops across the roads from an Assam Rifles memorial and *mandir* (Hindu temple) in central Aizawl, or Karbi women from across the inter-state border between Assam and Nagaland selling silkworms from cardboard boxes on the pavement outside KFC in Dimapur.

Urban areas host a concentration of development projects, most visible in infrastructure or lack thereof, reflecting deeper and slower forms of violence and exclusion shaped by powerful players within and outside state institutions. Useless showpiece development projects, such as a (now empty) outdoor aquarium in Namchi – a town with chronic water shortages – or the day/night cricket stadium at Sovima on the outskirts of Dimapur, are touted to the public as exemplars of modernity, of putting a town 'on the map'. Other infrastructure reflects long histories of extraction, like the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation facilities on the outskirts of Dibrugarh, while the comically narrow Bir Tiekndrajit Flyover in Imphal and the foul pollution of the Wah Umkhrah in Shillong are testament to the impacts of rapid urbanization and (meager) attempts by civilian authorities to grapple with these impacts. Some of these projects inspire pride, some hope, some embarrassment or disgust, and others are repurposed for entirely different uses as they age, become dilapidated and go to ruin. The search for exceptional spaces in urban areas also needs to account for normalcy, and indeed the unstable ground upon which 'normal' and 'exceptional' can be understood in the Northeast. Parks, malls, theatres, cemeteries, bus stations, are important sites where people live out their lives, sometimes even – in the case of the gardens on U-Chiyok in Kakching – in full view of acres of military infrastructure.

2. Visual culture
Visual culture in the urban Northeast is astounding. Freitag encourages the use of visual resources for understanding public culture in urban South Asia. She posits that in such rapidly changing sites paintings, photographs, posters, maps, and three dimensional objects are "witnesses to the changing 'communication context' predicated on visual literacy that transcended multiple languages and scripts", and depend "on new dissemination networks, repletion… and thickly-entwined inter-ocular references".[14] Urban areas in the Northeast are covered in images and text that reflect a lived cosmopolitanism – and it's limits – that both accompanies and challenges dominant ways of understanding the region and its component parts. Consider advertisements (government and private) on billboards, painted directly on walls, shutters, or handed out on flyers. Some advertisements are vandalised, some are defaced, some are marked with particular scripts – such as Meitei Mayek – that turn conventional advertisements for, say, telecommunications companies into statements about place and territory. Billboards for education fares, training colleges, apartment complexes (often in other cities), cars, or global restaurant chains reveal changing perceptions of the frontier as a consumer market producing and reflecting the aspirations and desires of the residents, visitors, and interlopers. Common throughout the region are billboards publicising the armed forces and paramilitary, marking sites of control, and littering the landscape with propaganda such as 'Friends of the Hill People' and enlarged newspaper clippings touting community initiatives (see fig. 2). Civilian governments, both local and national, mark space with their presence on foundation stones, inauguration plaques, and details of funding schemes utilised to build a bridge, seal a road, or upgrade a bus station.

Alternative scripts appear as graffiti made with etchings, spray paint, and stencils announcing support for a particular underground group, declaring undying love in multiple languages, and as public art; most noticeable in Aizawl and Gangtok where cement walls have been given over to local graffiti artists. Posters for election candidates, advertising tuition courses and medical care (including almost region-wide attention to piles and fistula), and announcing army recruitment, are pasted onto electricity poles and cement walls and live on in various stages of decay. Handwritten signs direct relatives and well-wishers to funerals, weddings, and prayer meetings; often wedged onto an existing signboard or affixed to a bamboo stake. Red stains from betel nut and white clumps of lime paste mark the built environment with the presence of passers-by, often haphazardly, but occasionally with purpose targeting the face of a politician or a particular storefront. Less obvious yet also instructive are the names on businesses and publicly displayed licences revealing the commercial power of particular ethnic communities, and these may change as one moves through different localities. Hand-painted locality maps, snippets of religious texts, and civic and moral instructions such as *Aia upate zah thiam Mizo Zemawi* [Respecting Elders is the Mizo character], add further layers of text and image. (see fig. 3)

3. Sensory experiences
Finally, in the built environment and astounding visual culture of the urban Northeast, sense plays an important role in the articulation and demarcation of space. As Low argues, "[e]veryday experiences of the senses take on an emotional character, where heightened feelings become apparent in the encounter between sensory selves and sensory others".[15] In urban areas attempts to articulate and enforce acceptable sensory behaviour characterises relationships between ethnic communities, often drawing a line between indigenous and migrant, or dominant and marginal, with the latter the subject of grievances for the physical, sonic, visual, and olfactory affect on local space; such as the smell from the food different communities cook and eat, or the noise from particular religious worship and festivals. Senses also affect relationships among communities along class lines; for instance, poorer areas are perceived as 'smelly' by some urban residents because of the rubbish, the industry (metal works, incineration, animal slaughter), and noise owing to overcrowded dwellings and raucous behaviour often linked to rural sensibilities and alcohol consumption, while wealthier areas are imagined as quiet, odour free, clean, and 'decent'. And between residents and the authorities, for instance, sensory disturbances are taken as indicators of ineffective urban governance and thus the smell of burning garbage and polluted watercourses, the noise and pollution of heavy vehicle traffic, and the aesthetic breaches of the built environment contribute to the perceptions of civilian authorities as corrupt, inept, or incapable and that development remains elusive and mismanaged.

In this *Focus* section six authors approach six different urban environments in Northeast India from diverse disciplinary perspectives. The collection is exploratory rather than exhaustive. Bengt Karlsson discusses the nostalgia hanging over Shillong: a former colonial hill station and now the capital of Meghalaya. Within overlapping forms of governance and all the associated problems of rapid urbanisation on a limited amount of land, Karlsson considers the best way to think about contemporary Shillong, settling for analysing it as a 'tribal city'; one unable to come to terms with the present in favour of memories of the past. Lallianpuii uses an account of print media in Mizoram and surrounding Mizo speaking areas to situate Aizawl city, the state capital, as the centre of the transnational Mizo world. Bucking the trend of a global downturn in print circulation, demand for daily print media emanating from Aizawl can barely keep up with supply, revealing the need for news produced close to the corridors of political power – from the Mizo metropolis.

Sanjay Barbora analyses three dynamics that have shaped the history of Dibrugarh in upper-Assam: capital, calamity, and counter-insurgency. These dynamics produce what he refers to as a 'counterintuitive urban transformation' evident in the tea gardens in the city centre, the oil installations and gas cracker plants on the outskirts, and the 'silent social relations' of the city's multi-ethnic population. Mona Chettri considers the infrastructure-driven growth of Chungthang in north Sikkim alongside the enduring presence of the armed forces deployed to monitor the border with China. At the centre of the town, between an enormous hydropower dam and various army barracks, is a Sikh Gurdwara (temple) built by the armed forces and currently at the heart of contentions over cultural history, space, and 'belonging' in Sikkim.

Fig. 3: *Aia upate zah thiam Mizo Zemawi* [Respecting Elders is the Mizo character], transl. Lallianpuii; billboard facing basketball court. Zarkawt, Aizawl. February 2014 (Photo by Duncan McDuie-Ra).

R.K Debarmma begins his account of Agartala, the capital of Tripura, with protests for an indigenous state and the demonization of the protestors by the state. This sets up an account of Tripura as a settler colonial state during the British period and especially after Partition of South Asia in 1947. Agartala is the main arena where spatial contests between settlers and indigenous communities play out, making it a settler colonial town. Dolly Kikon discusses the controversy over the sale of dog meat in Dimapur, Nagaland. Opposition to dog meat sales from a government determined to make Dimapur more 'city-like' and activists concerned with animal welfare exist alongside the persistence of impunity for the armed forces in their treatment of humans in Dimapur and beyond. If sales are to be banned what will become of the traders, mostly women, who peddle the meat in Dimapur's markets?

In presenting this collection we advocate for and encourage research that explores urban areas in the Northeast of varying sizes and official classifications. Such research offers new insights into the Northeast and new possibilities for comparative research on urbanism in frontiers elsewhere in Asia.

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Shillong: tribal urbanity in the Northeast Indian borderland

When heat became hard to beat with fresh drink and fan
To cool myself, hastily to Shillong I ran
Where pine-decked hills and deep dark forest
Afford tired souls their much needed rest.[1]

These lines are by no one less than Rabindranath Tagore. The famous poet was fascinated by the beauty and serenity of Shillong and visited several times in the 1920s. Many of his well-known stories and poems were written in Shillong or were set there. Several other prominent persons have made the hill resort their home for shorter or longer times, contributing to the special charm or romance of the small town. Despite the town turning into a modern, bustling, crowded and polluted city with a metropolitan population of around 350,000 people during the last few decades, the idea of that originally serene place seems to linger on in people's imagination. Such nostalgia, however, cannot prevent the rather ruthless development taking place today. The Assam-style bungalows that many associate with Shillong are becoming increasingly rare (fig.1).

Bengt G. Karlsson

Fig 1 (above): School mess, Pine Mount School, Shillong, 2016 (photo by Tarun Bhartiya). An example of the typical old style of housing in Shillong, slowly being replaced by concrete high rises.

A FEW YEARS AGO the heritage building, the Sidhli House, where Tagore stayed during his last visit in 1927, was knocked down to give way for a larger concrete building. The house originally belonged to an Italian, and later to the Queen of Sidhli and friend of Tagore, Rani Manjula Devi. A relative of the Rani later sold the house to Philip Pala – a coal baron from Jaintia Hills, the new tribal nobility of the city[2] - who subsequently destroyed it.[3] In this short essay, I will try to outline a few key traits or characteristics of present-day Shillong, a city I have come to love and feel at home in. As will be clear, not all are equally welcome or allowed to belong to the city. Some forever remain *dkhars,* outsiders, despite being born and raised in Shillong. The author Anjum Hasan struggles in her novels *Lunatic in my head* (2007) and *Neti, Neti / Not this, Not this* (2009) with such a predicament; that is, growing up as a Bengali, a non-tribal, in a city that has become increasingly ethnically exclusivist. Despite this, she also asserts, "I Love this Dirty Town".[4]

The colonial hill station

To understand Shillong, the particular history of a hill station is especially critical, and like with other hill stations in India the founding idea was to create a home away from home for colonial officers, ailing army men and the wider expatriate community. As Dave Kennedy puts it in his study *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj,* "the replication of particular features of the natural and social environment of Britain was central to the hill station's distinct identity".[5] The cognitive model was that of an English village, and compared to the carefully planned and regulated cities in the plains, the hill station was allowed to grow in a more organic and unplanned manner, according to Kennedy. The one feature that was emphasized, however, was the separation of European and Indian residential areas, the first referred to as 'wards' and the latter 'bazaars'.[6] This spatial separation along racial lines has rightly been stressed in scholarship on colonial and postcolonial cities. Yet, as more recent research shows, the

separation was never as absolute as one was made to believe. As A.D. King aptly put it, "there were charged interconnections between the two spaces".[7] Shillong seems indeed to be a place where the Indian elite could trespass into social spheres supposedly reserved for the Europeans. Sports, the favorite pastime of the Europeans in Shillong, however, seems to have been an arena where the racial privilege remained the strongest.[8] Of the many old photographs I have seen of people playing golf, cricket or polo, none of them display any Indian sportsman (fig. 2: Colonial cricket). Regarding sports it is interesting to note that what captured the imagination of the people of Shillong, as well as Northeast India more generally, was not cricket but football. The town today hosts several prominent teams, the most successful one recently being Shillong Lajong FC.

Nostalgia

Despite the rich 150 years history – founded in 1864, becoming a famous hill station, capital of the undivided province and later state of Assam, and since 1972 the capital of Meghalaya – relatively little research has been carried out with a direct focus on Shillong. I find this surprising. There are of course a wide range of scholarship concerning the history, culture and economy of the Khasi people and other communities in the area, and more general about the politics, demography and environment of the region, which in different ways touches on urban developments in Shillong as well.[9] But it is hard to find research where the city itself is the key object of study. This is also the case for Northeast India more generally. Duncan McDuie-Ra's new book on Imphal, the capital of Manipur, is groundbreaking , showing the way for theoretically informed and empirically grounded urban studies of these frontier tracts.[10] My thesis here is that Shillong still awaits a similar type of ethnography of the inner-workings, the metabolism, of the city.[11] The Anthropological Survey of India held a seminar on Shillong that resulted in the edited volume *Cultural Profile of Shillong* (1979), and a similar seminar some thirty years later resulted in *Shillong: a Tribal Town in Transition* (2004).[12] These volumes provide important beginnings, but remain rather thin in content. Today, however, I sense a growing public interest in exploring what Shillong is, has been and is becoming. The web-based activist-scholar collective *Raiot* is exemplary here, publishing essays, personal memories and political reportage about Shillong, for example, regarding the controversies about the new township development.[13]

An aspect that I have come to associate with Shillong is nostalgia; a longing for a city that once was. This relates to the colonial past, when the city was less populated, greener and cleaner, but also to a more recent postcolonial past. Among middle-aged people – those I mainly socialise with – this longing is mainly for the city of their youth; a city prior to violence and protests, a peaceful and friendly place where you go to meet a friend or watch a movie late in the evening without fear. But as many of my interlocutors lament, this ended in the 1980s with increasing ethnic conflicts, curfews, rallies and underground activities. The past – the 1960s and 70s – appears as a time of innocence, freedom and possibilities in a world that was opening up. While I suppose it is a universal feature to cling to memories of the formative period of one's youth,[14] Shillongites seem especially besieged by a nostalgic mood, a collective commemoration of the past. That life for many in the city has improved materially doesn't seem to alter such cravings for the city that once was.

Nostalgia is a complex phenomenon. It obviously has a conservative ring to it, indexing societal stasis and regress. Anthropologists have had reasons to engage with it, however, often reluctantly.[15] In my earlier work among the indigenous Rabha community in forest areas of northern-most West Bengal, I was commonly told that life had been much better under the sahibs. This seemed strange in view of the colonial appropriation of most of their shifting cultivation lands, turning these into tea gardens and forest reserves. But according to my Rabha interlocutors, the coming of the *bangla sarkar* (the government of the Bengalis), had brought nothing good for them. The forest officers, who were the main agents of the state, and who they interacted with on a more regular basis, were considered corrupt and mischievous. My reading of this was that the nostalgic remembrance of the rule of *sahibs* had little to do with the past, but should rather be read as a critique of the present; having to endure what was perceived as a highly oppressive state.[16] The present nostalgic ramblings among the Khasis in Shillong, however, seem more difficult to account for. The Khasis, along with the other two main indigenous or tribal communities, the Jaintias and the Garos, have a rather privileged position after being granted a separate state with control over politics, land and natural resources.

Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo points to what he describes as a common paradox in nostalgic yearnings, especially recurrent under imperialism: "people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed". Agents of colonialism, Rosaldo argues, tended to display nostalgia for 'traditional culture', the native society as they existed when they first encountered them, hence oblivious

to the fact that these were "forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed".[17] Something similar might be at play in the yearnings for the Shillong of the past. As a hill station, Shillong attracted people from various backgrounds and was celebrated as a cosmopolitan place. This was also the idea of the city after independence and well into the 1960s and 70s. It was an educational hub with well-known schools and colleges that provided first-class English secondary education and further a place with a vibrant cultural scene, not least in the case of music, famously known as the Indian capital of rock music. This started to change with the formation of Meghalaya as a separate state in 1972. The idea of the city seemed to have started to shift towards a more exclusive understanding, that is, that only certain people belonged there. In the 70s the city also saw the first wave of ethnic violence, initially against the Bengali community, then later in the 80s, against the Nepalis, and then against various other ethnic groups; even smaller indigenous communities like Karbi and Rabha were targeted as outsiders *(dhkars)*. More recently this sentiment has translated into a demand for the Inner Line Permit (ILP), a kind of internal visa regime that was used by the British to control movement of people between the hills and the plains of the Northeastern frontier. All except the indigenous tribes would hence require a permit to enter the state, this to halt the 'influx' of foreigners. For the non-tribals, the ILP movement stirred up fears of a resurgence of ethnic violence, which indeed has occurred.[18] Even if most of the Khasis in Shillong support the idea that the rights of the indigenous tribes must be put first, they also seem to lament what the exclusivist ethnic politics has done to the open, cosmopolitan nature of the city. People from various parts of India used to send their children to Shillong to be educated, but now the Khasis who can afford it send their children for their studies elsewhere, preferably South India. As one of my friends explained, Shillong is no longer a place conducive for study.

The tribal city

So if no longer a cosmopolitan town, what would be the best way to characterize present-day Shillong? Perhaps 'the tribal city'! First of all, the overwhelming majority belongs to indigenous or tribal communities, formally designated in India as scheduled tribes. The city, or most of it, is further under a tribal governance structure and with customary laws as the key legal instrument. Traditional political institutions among the Khasis revolve around the elected headman, *rangbah shnong,* and his council, the *dorbar shnong.* What historically developed in the context of village life now constitutes a central institution within the city, evolving along with two other – partly over-lapping and competing – administrative structures, the district council (established under the sixth schedule of the constitution) and the civil, state bureaucracy. The situation, as we will see, is highly complex and confusing for both experts and laypersons. Pressure groups, like the powerful Khasi Students Union, also play a critical governance role, intervening with calls for strikes and civil uproar whenever community interest is perceived to be compromised.

In theory, Shillong consists of three main types of legal or administrative entities: (1) tribal areas, under a headman and his dorbar, as mentioned above, and (2) the municipality area, supposedly under an elected civil board (but elections have not been carried out since the last board was dismantled in 1967 due to protests because the board is a non-Khasi institution), and (3) the cantonment area in the hands of the armed forces.[19] Of the total metropolitan area population of 350 000, about 200 000 people live in the tribal areas, organized as separate villages, localities or townships with their respective headman and dorbar. These so-called 'traditional political institutions' remain a highly controversial matter in Meghalaya. For the tribal ideologues it is a celebrated form of grassroots democracy whereas for the critics these institutions are an exclusivist – debarring women, the young and non-Khasis to hold office or even speak at the dorbar – and ineffective form of rule that ought to end.[20] The latter commonly stress that the headman usually lacks appropriate education and skills and further that they lack financial and technical resources required for increasingly bureaucratic and complex urban administration, such as that relating to roads, power, water, sewage, education, health, policing and various other infrastructural arrangements that need to be in place. Another problem is a lack of transparency, which critics claim enables corruption. Vanessa Kharbudon Ryngnga asks, in the leading newspaper *The Shillong Times* (Feb. 20, 2015), "Does Meghalaya Need the Dorbar Shnong in the 21st Century?". After investigations she has discovered that the *rangbah shnong* usually demand a share (sometimes as much as ten percent) of every property deal within their respective locality. Women's participation in the dorbar is opposed as it supposedly violates tradition, yet as Ryngnga asserts, such a practice has no backing within Khasi tradition. Khasi tradition, hence, can be bent when it serves certain interests. Sheer hypocrisy, she writes. But instead of calling for the headman and dorbar to be scrapped, Ryngnga hopes to reform the dorbar. In this she agrees with most Khasis: the traditional political institutions are highly problematic yet most precious.

In conclusion

To the surprise of many, Shillong failed again to be selected by the central government as a 'smart city', a status that would bring along a package of investments to improve the power grid, public transport, sewage, IT connectivity and other urban amenities. In a moment of critical self-introspection, commentators asked why they failed when less prominent Northeastern capitals like Imphal and Agartala had been selected. The former deputy chief minister and leader of the main opposition party UDP, Bindo M. Lanong puts the blame on the incompetence of the Congress-led Meghalaya government, stating that Shillong, with its history of a prominent hill resort and regional capital, and today hosting various prestigious state and central institutions, and with its cosmopolitan population, had all the qualifications required.[21] But most of the other commentators feel that the failure points to deeper, structural problems, evoking a general uncertainty about where the city is heading.

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8   Cricket like many other colonial games were played within the parameters of the club, which remained all-white bastions to the very end of colonial rule, cf. Ramachandra Guha. 2003. *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of British Sport,* London: Picador.
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Fig 2 (below): Shillong Cricket Ground In India. Pith-helmeted spectators watching a cricket match at the Cricket Ground at Shillong in Assam, India, circa 1900. (Photo by Popperfoto/ Getty Images. All rights reserved.)

Mizo urbanity, media infrastructure and the state

I look here at the existing infrastructure that supports the proliferation of Aizawl-based newspapers in contemporary Mizoram and argue that government institutional structures, once intended to suppress and censor the print media, have become an integral part of the creation of content for the pan-Mizo media, while a diffuse network of private transporters, agents, and subscribers bring news from the capital to the far reaches of the state. An attempt is made to examine the complex links between the state and newspapers, thereby highlighting the significant role of the state in the making of Aizawl-centered Mizo newspapers, which serve to produce an image of Aizawl as the center of the transnational Mizo world.

Lallianpuii

Locating Aizawl

Aizawl is the capital of Mizoram, a Northeast Indian state bordering Myanmar in the east and south and Bangladesh in the west. A young city, Aizawl was built as a colonial military outpost in the late 19th century, and was at that time inaccessible to the locals. However, like other cities of Northeast India, Aizawl has seen rapid transformations in colonial and post-colonial times, including two decades of armed struggle (1966 to 1986) fought between the Government of India and the Mizo Nationalist Front (MNF), which altered the city´s demographics. Mass in-migration, including the forced regrouping of people into camps during the conflict,[1] those seeking refuge, a large population of armed forces, and later, bureaucrats, have expanded the city dramatically.

Since the creation of the Mizoram state in 1986, Aizawl has been the seat of government and has gradually assumed the role of a cultural capital for Mizos living in the state, and for related communities across internal and international borders. What is striking is that the local population reclaimed the former colonized and militarized space as their own. In fact, migration into Aizawl is continuing and the city is being reconfigured from one with distinct neighborhoods into a crowded urban sprawl. Currently, a little less than 50% of Mizoram's population of 1.1 million lives in Aizawl.[2] This aligns with Duncan McDuie-Ra's argument that borderland cities challenge the notion of a backward and remote frontier.[3] Redefined as the focal point of Mizo communities, the city is now an important space for the exploration and expression of urban modernity, of which local newspapers – a medium that informs and connects the people – are a part.[4] Aizawl is the production hub of modern Mizo culture; a culture that is circulated within and beyond the city – and even beyond Mizoram into Myanmar and other Northeast states – through media.

Reliance on government: revenues and news

Early February this year, I tagged along with a reporter from the local newspaper *Vanglaini*, to attend a get-together of members of the Mizoram Journalists Association (MJA), a welfare body for working journalists in Mizoram. The meeting was held at MJA headquarters in Aizawl and was attended by more than 50 city-based journalists of print and broadcast news media. It included a discussion about a proposed donation of ten *lakh* rupees ($15,000 USD) by the government to the MJA Welfare Fund. This grabbed the attention of the journalists, who are mostly uninsured by the news organizations they work for. These funds have been handy in times of crises and they felt reassured that some additional money would come in from the government. The discussion also turned to how MJA would keenly observe the publicity budget allocations of various governmental departments in the coming fiscal year. As estimated by one member, the various government departments spend about 1.5 crore rupees ($229,000 USD) on advertising each year. In the absence of big corporate media or capitalist industries, governmental advertisements are a crucial means of income for most Mizo newspapers.

In Mizoram, the government-sponsored advertisements are distributed by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DI&PR) across broadcast and print media. DI&PR was established in 1972 during the first decade of the armed conflict, at a time when mobility was controlled, media was silenced, news and views were censored, dissenters were arrested and people were terrorized by the armed forces. Even in ´post-conflict´ Mizoram, this state structure (DI&PR) continues to exert influence on news media, particularly smaller newspapers. For instance, at this particular MJA meeting, a journalist and owner of a lesser-known daily, shared anecdotes of how he and his colleagues had received advertisements from friends at DI&PR as a means to pay their children's educational fees. He encouraged his colleagues to cement friendships with state actors who liaise with the media. One way of doing so is to give government departments extensive media coverage, especially when the press are invited for worksite visits. Aizawl is the hub where these relationships are initiated and nurtured; making it the center of the Mizo media landscape.

As per DI&PR guidelines, 102 newspapers of different periodicity qualify as recipients of governmental advertisements. Of these, there are 34 Mizo dailies from Aizawl, followed by ten newspapers in Lunglei district, and eight in both Champhai and Mamit districts. Eligibility for DI&PR funds is dependent on (1) non-stop publication for at least one year, (2) sending a copy of the newspaper to the DI&PR every day, and (3) a minimum circulation of 500 (even though accurate circulation numbers are difficult to ascertain, as monitoring mechanisms are unheard of in Mizoram). Observations from the field have shown that recipients do not always fulfill the above criteria, and that favoritism plays a big role. In fact, most advertising is done in Aizawl newspapers, while only a marginal number of adverts are allocated to publications in other districts. This may suggest that a proximity to the seat of administration results in better financing opportunities for newspaper organizations.

Dependence on the government extends to news sources and content as well. In Aizawl, journalists are not limited to a specific beat. Rather, they cover all relevant news in the city, and very rarely outside the city. For example, during my fieldwork I attended events ranging from students protests in Aizawl, press conferences by opposition parties in Aizawl, a press conference by the Chief Minister (CM), a polio drive, voluntary donation drives, road safety campaigns and more. The everyday practices of local news gathering and coverage are concerned with local issues only and are embedded in the culture of press conferences in Aizawl; reporting clearly favors government spokespersons, who are, in the words of the *Vanglaini* editor, "important sources of news. More than two-thirds of local news consists of news by and from the government usually involving activities of the Chief Minister, the Cabinet Ministers, or bureaucrats of different governmental departments."

Privileging the government is not new. Relations between the state and media are longstanding and complex; in fact, colonial bureaucracy initiated the first Mizo newspaper *Mizo Chanchin Laishuih* in the late 19th century, though it was short-lived.[5] Newspaper publishing in Mizoram was originally the product of the colonial state and the Christian missions who had their base in Aizawl. Even in a changing political climate, especially during the armed struggles (1966 to 1986) between MNF and the Government of India in post-colonial Mizoram, the state initiated institutions such as the All India Radio (AIR), DI&PR, Doordarshan (DDK) national television, and the Directorate of Printing & Stationary in Aizawl. All these institutions have persisted. The DI&PR in particular is an important influencer of the news media, through its trained and fulltime-employed public relations specialists (Mizoram Information Services).

Sending the news from Aizawl

Aizawl is well connected by road to major parts of Mizoram. This connectivity works well for city-based newspapers like *Vanglaini*, with its (reported) circulation of 40,000. Unlike in other parts of India where road transport services are monopolistic and centralized, in Mizoram public transport is decentralized – no big travel or transport company dominates. Instead, most transport facilities are individually owned and continuously ply between Aizawl and other parts of Mizoram. *Vanglaini* relies heavily on such commercial transport services, such as Sumo services (shared taxis/utility vans), to expand its circulation and readership. This paper is currently delivered to 128 towns and villages in the eight districts of Mizoram. Within Aizawl district there are more than 25 thousand (27,859) subscribers in 37 villages. Villages in close proximity to the city and with reliable vehicular services receive their newspapers in the morning; others obtain their daily edition around midday.

Lunglei is the second largest district in Mizoram in terms of population (after Aizawl) and has its own center of newspaper publishing. Nevertheless, *Vanglaini*, with 3906 subscriptions covering 21 villages, is the highest circulated newspaper in Lunglei district. Infiltration by an Aizawl-based newspaper is significant considering that each district has its own publications and that alternative sources of media (such as mobile phone ownership) are very high. None of the other district-based newspapers have a notable circulation in Aizawl, or in fact beyond their own district. Yet news from the capital is sought after and eagerly awaited every day in every corner of the state.

The editor of *Vanglaini* explained that there are subscription requests from villages that cannot be honored due to a lack of reliable transport services. His aim is to circulate the newspaper in every village with over 100 homes. He likes to see it as a "social service and less of economic motives." What needs to be considered is the social side of infrastructure. In Mizoram, daily newspapers are not sold by street vendors; circulation is based only on fixed home based subscriptions, and deliveries across the state require linking up with transport providers and networks of people who literally deliver the paper to the doorsteps. In the case of *Vanglaini*, over 250 people are involved as delivery agents. Losing or gaining readership is also largely dependent on retaining and recruiting such agents.

According to the Department of Printing & Stationary, there are 56 printing presses in Mizoram, of which 50 are based in Aizawl. These printing presses have switched to offset machines allowing smaller newspapers to forego heavy investments in printing machinery. For newspaper entrepreneurs with deep pockets, investing in technologies is attractive. *Vanglaini* is one of the few newspapers that can afford and that uses technological development to boost its circulation. It is now printing from its own press using web offset. It is one of the few newspapers that is printed (partially) in color. Each time the paper adopts a new printing technology it experiences tremendous growth in circulation. Between 2001 and 2016, circulation increased from 7000 to 40,000.

While globally the circulation of printed newspapers declines and digital media ascends, Mizoram is bucking the trend. News from the capital city is sought after, challenging the dual – and contradictory – stereotypes of the remote frontier on the one hand and the savvy consumerist Northeast tribal on the other. News in (or from) Aizawl is fed by the government to the media, printed, and then physically taken to all corners of the state through a web of mountain roads. Indeed, roads are really the only limitation to ever-greater circulation. This situation would be unthinkable without locating the city – Aizawl, the Mizo metropolis – at the center of the production of information and the desire for vernacular media produced close to the corridors of power.

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4 At present there are 34 daily newspapers, two local cable networks and a government-owned TV and radio station producing news in Mizo, a pan-ethnic language of communities subsumed under the larger Mizo, Zo, Kuki, and Chin ethnic groups living in Mizoram and other Northeast states such as Manipur, Tripura, Assam and Nagaland, metropolitan cities like Delhi, Chennai and Bangalore, and across the international border in the Chin state of Myanmar and farther afield. The production of news is centred on Aizawl, the state capital of Mizoram.
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Agartala as a settler-colonial town

On 23 August 2016 the Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) undertook a rally in the capital of Tripura, Agartala, demanding a separate state for indigenous people. During the rally, a minor scuffle between members of IPFT and Bengali Hindu residents spiralled into a full scale riot, in which fleeing IPFT members were waylaid and subjected to mob violence in front of police and the media. The next day, hundreds of indigenous students fled Agartala, fearing attacks by Bengali Hindu residents. The state government blamed IPFT for provoking residents of Agartala, the local media supported this and described members of IPFT as a violent and unruly mob, who descended into Agartala to deliberately disrupt the peace. Footage of the disturbance, which emerged later on social media, showed how local media distorted the event, amounting to the essentialisation of the 'tribals' as violent.[1] Though the incident, unlike in the past, did not escalate into large scale ethnic violence, it serves as a clue to reading modern Agartala as a settler-colonial town. To identify Agartala, and by extension modern Tripura, as a settler-colony is to demand transformative politics that render coexistence possible.

R.K. Debbarma

IN ANOTHER INCIDENT, in February 2017, scores of indigenous men were subjected to brutal physical assault while executing a *bandh* (general strike), which was restricted to areas under Autonomous District Council (peripheries of Agartala). The *bandh* was called to oppose Delhi's new citizenship bill that plans to grant citizenship to Hindu immigrants from Bangladesh. The *bandh* was organised by a newly formed alliance, the All Tripura Indigenous Regional Parties Forum (ATIRPF), a shaky coalition between the Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra (INPT), the Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT), and the National Conference of Tripura (NCT). The local media reported the event as a clash between rival political parties, eliding the ethnic content of the violence.

Two aspects of these instances of violence are important for my purpose here. One, the local media's effort to distort the reporting of ethnic violence, through their casual delineation of victims and perpetrators, can be seen in the casting of innocence on the settlers' presence in Tripura, arising from a perennial anxiety associated with any form of settler-colonialism.[2] It is strategic political practice to mask the history of the dispossessed indigenous population in modern Tripura. Two, the state government's framing of the indigenous political parties as 'anti-peace' and 'anti-communal harmony', and by extension declaring them responsible for ethnic conflicts in Tripura, marks a shift in the way conflict is explained in Tripura. This shift has been visible in the last two decades or so, motivated mainly by the Left Front Government, which has been at the helm in Tripura for the last 24 years. Prior to this time, ethnic conflict was understood as being a by-product of immigration and settlement of Hindu Bengalis from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, and subsequent land alienation of indigenous communities. Now the onus has been reversed.

The making of a settler-colony
Tripura, formerly ruled by Manikya kings, is a product of British-India's colonial cartographic surgeries to the Manikyan spatial arrangement.[3] The Manikya state was characterised by three spatial realities: fortified state core, hill space and extractive plain space. The state core was located where hills and plains met, formerly at Rangamati and later at present day Agartala. This became a Hinduised space. Manikya's main source of revenue was the large swathes of cultivated plain in present-day Bangladesh, then part of Bengal. The Bengali Hindus who immigrated and settled in Tripura, after the partition of the subcontinent, came from this former extractive space. This spatial arrangement was ultimately disrupted in the eighteenth century when British-India captured these plains, then categorised as British or Plain Tripura. The hills, which were considered to be outside of colonial influence, came to be known as Independent Tripura, till its merger with independent India.

Of course, this did not mean there was not already a Bengali Hindu population in (the hills space) of so-called Independent Tripura. There was a sizeable number of bureaucrats in Agartala, who stayed on Tripura land when their service ended, and there was a large population of Bengali peasants who were induced by the new state to carry out sedentary wet agriculture in its ambitious project to replace the loss of extractive space to British India. However, none of those Bengalis who remained in Tripura lost their British Indian citizenship. And so, when the

Indian subcontinent was partitioned, large numbers of Bengali Hindus already found themselves in Tripura, and the former bureaucrats automatically acquired prominence in the new administration. Soon the hill communities were reduced to a demographic minority, and the new independent state expended much of its resources in rehabilitating the new immigrants. In fact, the new state began to invent, sanction and circulate Tripura's past as one of flourishing tribal and non-tribal communities under the benevolence of great Manikya rulers; a useful narrative to claim space and inscribe presence of Bengali Hindus on the landscape. It did not take long for the new settlers to establish a dominant presence in Tripura. The new social, economic and political arrangement benefited the new settlers, which coincided with the material dispossession and exclusion of the indigenous communities.

By the 1970s a new Tripuri nationalism emerged to oppose the ongoing alienation and material and cultural dispossession of the indigenous communities. The new nationalist groups included the Tribal (now Twipra) Students Federation (TSF), the Tripura Upajati Jubo Samity (TUJS, political party), and the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV, armed insurgency). These three organisations challenged the prevailing idea of Tripura's past, and sought to reinvent and reclaim Manikya history as their nation's glorious past. These groups not only sought to resist the cultural dominance of the Bengali Hindu settlers, but also mobilised nationalist sentiments and became a powerful force in electoral politics. Their later incarnations, especially the various armed groups that espoused the nationalist cause, engaged in violence against the Bengali Hindu population.

When Manik Sarkar became the Chief Minister in 1998, he not only sought to crush the indigenous armed insurgency, but also the ideological basis of these groups. The war against the insurgency led to a militarisation of indigenous life. Unlike other places in Northeast India, this quiet but violent militarisation did not attract the attention of the outside world; mainly because of the inability of those who were affected to articulate their resistance. And most importantly, Sarkar's government reinvested heavily in the historical narrative of the Tripura-Bengal connection, and the process unleashed violence on the memory of the indigenous people's connection to their land. What began as land alienation, and subsequent material dispossession through various structures and practices, finally culminated in the dispossession of history. Over the past two decades, the state government has renamed various historical sites and has memorialised Hindu Bengali heroes and personalities from present day West Bengal, all over Agartala.

Recreating Agartala as a settler town
Agartala, by virtue of being the capital of Tripura, has been a crucial space for re-inscribing the new spatial discourse of Tripura's past (the Bengal-Tripura connection). This new political project gained urgent ascendancy under Manik Sarkar's regime, who sanctioned the renaming of various historical sites and buildings despite strong opposition by indigenous political parties. His government introduced a Bill in the State Legislature to rename Agartala Airport after Rabindranath Tagore (a famous Bengali author), despite the airport having been built by the last Manikya ruler. The proposal elicited strong opposition

from various indigenous political parties, and was allowed to lapse. Another proposal by Sarkar's government, to rename the Ujjayanta Palace as the Tripura State Museum was also successfully opposed by the same forces. However, these setbacks did not stop the government from renaming the Astable Grounds (sport stadium) after Swami Vivekananda, an Indian nationalist hero from Bengal who became a convenient prop in the rise of right wing forces in India.

The (re)naming of official buildings established by the state are beyond the power of the indigenous political parties to oppose or challenge. All these buildings are named after Hindu Bengali heroes from Bengal; and they are memorialised all over Agartala. Agartal now fully resembles a settler-colonial town, recreated in the image whence the settlers came. The indigenous population feels estranged and excluded, mainly because Agartala no longer represents the ideal past of a flourishing of 'tribal' and 'non-tribal' communities, nor does it seek to commemorate a Manikya past, which is credited with this blossoming. If anything, the Manikya presence is erased, or disavowed by the state. The large statue of Khudiram Bose (see photo), with his chest thrust forward, which stands at the entrance to the Ujjayanta Palace, is an everyday reminder of Agartala as a settler-colonial town: the power to recreate one's place of settlement in the image of one's original home; the power that produces and is produced through the dispossession of the indigenous population.

Importantly though, Bengali Hindus have always been found in the area, also during the Manikya reign. Agartala was also inhabited by a sizeable population of Manipuris and Bengali Muslims. In fact Bengali Muslims constituted the second largest population after Tripuris and other indigenous communities. Indeed, immediately after partition, Bengali Muslims, with the support of a few members of the Royal Family, wanted Tripura to be part of East Pakistan. This desire was expressed through rallies and marches around Agartala. Together with the Tripur Jatiyo Mukti Parishad, before it became a 'tribal wing' within the Communist Party, the Bengali Muslims were seen as a political threat by the Bengali Hindu majority, who were members of the Indian National Congress, and who wanted Tripura to be part of India. Even before Independent Tripura merged with India, the Parishad had already built up a strong support base among the indigenous communities, and were poised to take over the state. The Queen Regent, who had assumed power after her husband Bir Bikram Manikya died in 1947, fled to Shillong (now capital of Meghalaya) with her young son, the heir to the throne. After the merger, power automatically passed into the hands of Congress and the new state banned the Parishad and launched a military offensive against them. Its leaders, sympathisers and members fled Agartala and went underground in the hills. The Bengali Muslims were chased from Agartala and expelled from Tripura.

Over the past two decades or so, it has become impossible to speak of Tripura in terms of dispossession of indigenous population. The desire to block this narrative arises from anxiety inherent to a settler-colony – to tell itself and the outside world about the benefits of their settlement. Groups like IPFT are an impediment to the smooth flow of such a narrative, and as such invite violent disciplining by mobs, and censuring from those in power in Agartala.
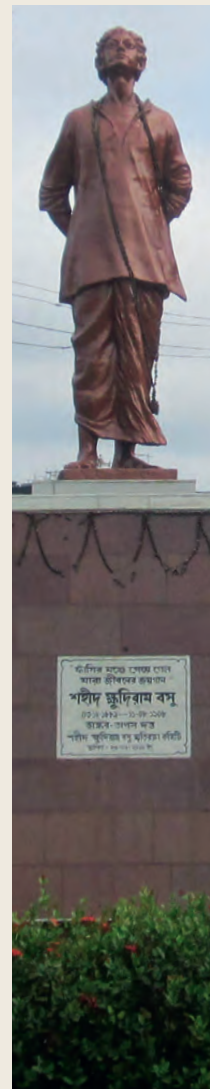
Conclusion
The IPFT and other indigenous political parties and armed insurgencies represent the politics arising out of dispossession. The IPFT's demand for a separate state for the indigenous population not only disrupts the tidy story of communal harmony and egalitarian politics, but also serves to remind the settler of their complicity in the making of a settler-colony. Such politics unsettle their self-congratulatory presence in Tripura, a telling indictment of how their presence has impacted the indigenous population. One should read the two instances of protest described at the beginning of this essay as a demand for dismantling of settler-colonial structures, practices and ideologies. This should be read as a demand for transformative politics, both in the ways indigenous politics are envisioned and practiced, and in the social, economic and political arrangements that seek to perpetuate colonial relationships of inequality and exploitation centred on urban Agartala.

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Above: Khudiram Bose at the entrance of Ujayanta Palace (Photo by Sunil Kalai).

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Chungthang: an emerging urban landscape in Sikkim

The Indian border state of Sikkim has remained relatively detached from the rest of India owing to its cultural distinction and geographical isolation from the Indian mainland. However, over the recent decade state-induced economic liberalisation, evinced in private hydro-power projects, pharmaceutical companies and educational institutes, has been the predominant cause of social, economic and spatial transformation in the region, visible in infrastructural growth, rapid urbanisation of rural and semi-urban areas, increased consumerism and changing aspirations. This paper focuses on state-induced development in Chungthang, north Sikkim, and the creation of an urban landscape that raises questions and concerns about belonging and identity.

Mona Chettri

The road to development

A long convoy of army trucks laden with *jawans* (military personnel), guns and horses meanders slowly through the hills of Sikkim-Darjeeling Himalaya to the northern borders of Sikkim. This is a familiar sight on National Highway 10 that draws neither alarm nor panic amongst other drivers on the road, who are at the worst frustrated over traffic jams and delays caused by the passing trucks. The army trucks jostle for space with other vehicles plying the narrow hill roads carrying passengers, vegetables and provisions, construction materials and pharmaceuticals. National Highway 10 is the artery through which hill cities experience globalisation, change and development. It connects India to Sikkim, the erstwhile Himalayan kingdom where until recently – except through Bollywood films, Indian television programmes, isolated army cantonments and a few chapters in history textbooks – ideas of mainland India had remained distant and almost enigmatic for generations.

Prior to the merger with India in 1975, Sikkim was a feudal kingdom that had been territorially consolidated and politically unified by the Namgyal dynasty (1642-1975), which maintained close familial and political links with Tibet. Sikkim was made a British Protectorate in 1861 and an Associate State of India in 1951. Keen to secure its borders with China, especially after the Sino-India war of 1962, India imposed a constitution on Sikkim in the early 1970s leading to its eventual merger in 1975.[1] The 1975 merger brought an end to three centuries of rule by the Namgyals and the multi-ethnic feudal kingdom was transformed into a democratic, federal unit of India.

The merger made Sikkim one of India's official borders with China and a permanent military base was established in north and east Sikkim. Along with permanent army battalions, special constitutional provisions to safeguard

pre-existing 'Old Laws' in the form of Article 371F,[2] Sikkim also became a recipient of major financial contributions from the Indian government, a vital resource for a state with very few natural resources, no income tax (for Sikkimese citizens) and a population engaged in subsistence agriculture. The 2012-13 report released by the Comptroller and Auditor General of Sikkim stated that only 22.42 percent of revenue receipts came from the state's own resources (tax and non-tax), and the balance was made up with contributions by the Indian Government.[3] Despite the decrease in financial contributions over the last few years, the financial dependency on the Central government remains intact. To raise internal revenue and decrease dependency on the Central government, the Sikkim government has been proactive in opening its borders, eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and easing the entry of private finance into the state. For instance, in 2007, the Sikkim State Assembly introduced changes to the Sikkim Registration of Companies Act (1961) to "ensure speedy industrialisation of the State and to attract more industries and companies to the State".[4] By the end of 2007, Sikkim had signed contracts with private and public developers for the construction of over thirty dams on its rivers, and by 2016 there were fifteen private pharmaceutical companies operating in various parts of the state.

Pharmaceutical plants and hydropower projects are now dominant features of the landscape in almost all districts in Sikkim, and for many people these private ventures are their first introduction to the Indian state. In Sikkim, development has acquired a tangible form – roads, buildings, bridges, dams, temples – structures that can be seen and paraded as 'development' to India and other north-eastern states. In Sikkim, infrastructure has become the medium through which to express and claim modernity,[5] for the state as well as the citizens.

The expansion of the urban sprawl in the capital city Gangtok can be attributed to increased employment opportunities in the booming retail sector, growth of educational institutes, and other tourism-related opportunities that draw people in from the rural areas of Sikkim, Darjeeling hills and from other parts of West Bengal and Bihar. In a state where anxieties over land and property ownership have been institutionally recognized and safeguarded through various constitutional provisions, specifically Land Revenue Order no.1 (1917),[6] the coming of infrastructural development and the concomitant in/out migration, environmental degradation and new forms of political impunity, have transformed the social, religious and economic landscape of Sikkim.

This transformation is evident in changes to public spaces, over-crowding of neighbourhoods and the formation of ethnic enclaves, which play an important role in aggravating pre-existing insecurities over land and the influx of 'outsiders'. Paramount amongst these concerns are migration and villages and towns being 'taken over' by outsiders, concerns that are discussed in hushed whispers and private conversations. Change in the urban landscape fuels these concerns further. Under the veneer of mandatory green buildings, butterfly-themed flyover bridges and organic food stalls, lie the slums; poorly built, over-crowded with minimal access to water or sewage that give shelter to the thousands of people who flock to Gangtok. Yet the increase in numbers of buildings, slums and traffic jams in cosmopolitan Gangtok is not as stark a change as it is in other parts of Sikkim. Development has opened the Buddhist sbas yul [sacred hidden land] [7] to new people and experiences, and has led to the transformation of urban as well as rural spaces; the impact of these changes is visible most explicitly in northern towns such as Chungthang, which have experienced the combined onslaught of developmental projects and permanent occupation by the Indian army.

Above:
The last stretch of the Lachung River before it meets the dam. Army barracks and town sit above the reinforced riverbank. Chungtang. December 2016 (Photo by Mona Chettri).

Chungthang: emerging urban landscape

Gangs of migrant workers from Nepal, Bihar, Assam and other parts of West Bengal work on Highway 310A, which connects the northern borders of Sikkim to the main towns of Mangan and Gangtok. They have been hired by contractors and sub-contractors working for the Border Roads Organisation, a "symbol of nation building and national integration",[8] which constructs and maintains roads in border regions. Border roads are maintained primarily to ensure swift and easy passage to army vehicles, but the building of good roads has been beneficial for the locals as well as tourists travelling to and from north Sikkim.

Highway 310A leads to Chungthang valley, the gateway to the Lachung and Lachen valleys in north Sikkim and the border with China. Situated at the confluence of the Lachen and Lachung rivers, it is a small town with a population of 3970 people (2011 Census) pre-dominantly belonging to the Bhutia-Lepcha ethnic group. Land transfer in Chungthang is guided by legal provisions under Land Revenue Order no.1 (1917), which prohibits the sale or transfer of Bhutia-Lepcha (tribal) land to anyone outside the Bhutia-Lepcha ethnic group, the Sikkimese-Nepalis included. However, the Sikkim Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act of 1977 empowers the government to acquire tribal land for 'public purpose'. This has enabled the government to circumvent the rules and facilitate acquisition of tribal land for private hydropower developers. Chungthang, the bastion of Bhutia and Lepcha communities is now the site of the biggest hydropower project in Sikkim, Teesta Stage III, developed by Teesta Urja Private Limited, in collaboration with the government of Sikkim, also the primary shareholder.

The 1200-MW Teesta Stage III hydropower project dominates the physical landscape of Chungthang – the reservoir walls rise high above the riverbed, cutting off the downstream water flow, concrete walls line the confluence and the reservoir of green water waits to be diverted to the tunnels that burrow through the hills. This project embeds a strategic border region within a national narrative of economic progress and sustainable development. Given the scale of construction, the small town has seen a significant increase in population and must make room for construction workers, administrators, engineers and other transient travellers associated with the project. The construction workers hail from various parts of India and live in shacks near the dam; the engineers and administrators in rented apartments, creating a temporary boom in the local housing market. Now that the major engineering work is complete, a considerable number of administrators and engineers are moving out of Chungthang, leaving behind empty buildings as there are no occupants to replace them. Other hydropower projects in north Sikkim have already been theatres of conflict between local communities and the state,[9] and the Teesta project is also not without its own share of controversies around land ownership, environmental degradation and influx of migrants.[10] The project was once stalled temporarily only to be revived in 2015, this time with the government increasing its financial investment to fifty-one percent.

Beyond the dam, another structure dominates the visual landscape of Chungthang: a Sikh Gurudwara (temple) built by the Indian armed forces. The imposing Gurudwara with its shining, golden dome is visible from a distance, and what originated as a small place of worship for the *jawans* stationed in the area has become one of the most visible representations of the army, composed of different ethnic and religious (pre-dominantly Sikh or Hindu) backgrounds than the local Buddhist and/or animist population. This Gurudwara was built next to a pre-existing monastery and advertises an alternative, competing version of the cultural history of the town. In this version, Chungthang became Changi Than (meaning 'beautiful place' in Punjabi) blessed by Guru Nanak on his way to Tibet and China as opposed to the Tibetan version wherein the valley was consecrated by Guru Rimpoche, the patron saint of Sikkim. The competition over cultural and spatial legitimacy is evident from the respective notice boards within the same compound, with the local community and the army each displaying their versions of origin story, which has catalysed social tensions between the two.[11]

The permanent presence of the Indian army adds another complex layer to Chungthang's urban landscape. Large sections of the hills leading up to and surrounding Chungthang are occupied by the army, making it look like a town within a cantonment rather than the other way around. The town is filled with locals, migrant workers and army personnel who share the same space. The local economy has grown over the years and is now sustained by the business that the army and the migrants provide. However, in their interactions with one another, the three groups never cross the pre-determined boundaries that define their roles and rights over the town. This relationship is also mapped onto the urban landscape where the physical location of every group is well defined as if not to disturb their uneasy co-existence.

A small road lined with liquor shops and provision stores passes through the main town. Apart from army trucks that traverse this road daily, tourist vehicles carry Indian tourists to the Lachen and Lachung valleys, which have developed into major tourist destinations over the last decade with the coming of reliable road networks, better facilities and the state government's relentless emphasis on tourism as a means of sustainable livelihood. On either side of the main road are buildings, shanties, an unused gymnasium, banks and a large army base. While the riverfront is occupied by the construction workers, the upper-end of the town houses a large cantonment area complete with a football field inside its gates. In addition to distinct spaces within the town area, the army oversees access to grazing grounds and foraging in the hills, whereas the hydropower project prohibits locals from using the river for fishing and swimming. Stuck between these prohibitions, the local community finds itself backed into a corner with no control over its land and environment, which deepens social ruptures and further heightens 'insider-outsider' discourse in a town that is filled with migrants from across the region.

In Sikkim, development is accompanied by political silence as there are no major opposition parties or civil society organisations to contest the path that has been chosen by the state. This silence can also be attributed to the expansive network of political patronage that determines access to public goods and services. In a state with limited sources for income and high dependence on the Indian state for almost everything – ranging from employment, houses to subsidised rice – there is very little room for political contestation.[12]

Development creates ruptures manifest in slums and shanties, resource conflicts, and rising land and housing prices, but Chungthang, like many of Sikkim's emerging urban areas has acquired a distinct local characteristic that makes it different from other emerging urban areas. Urbanisation in Chungthang is a by-product of resource extraction by the private hydro-power companies and occupation by the Indian army; a town with temporary residents and permanent infrastructure that represents the Indian nation-state. Developmental projects, the presence of the armed forces and the various levels of socio-economic inequality have given rise to a fragile form of urbanisation with the potential to change with the vagaries of the developmental state. Here, urbanisation is temporary, ushered in by the *jawans,* migrants and transients related to the developmental projects that have been initiated by the state. For instance, once the hydropower project is completed, the shanties will be deserted, the buildings that housed the engineers and other administrative officers will be vacated and the associated small businesses will disappear. The development projects will move elsewhere, taking their fragile urbanisation with them. In Chungthang, the physical presence of the Indian army and the construction of the largest hydropower project in Sikkim has changed the urban character of the town by creating spatial and social distinctions, contestations over the cultural history of the land and restrictions to traditional land use.

Conclusion

Hydropower projects in Sikkim are displayed by the state as examples of modernity, development and success, in spite of their detrimental environmental and social impact. Infrastructural developments, especially hydropower projects and pharmaceutical plants, have transformed Sikkim from a remote Himalayan kingdom to a rapidly liberalising mountain state. Simultaneously, the increasing prowess of private finance and the retreat of the state has, ironically, led to a greater integration of a border region into the political and cultural fold of the Indian nation-state. Infrastructure, therefore, not only represents a desire for modernity, but at a subliminal level, furthers the process of modern state-building.

However, despite its claims to modernity and progress, infrastructural development is perceived by locals as a threat to their sense of belonging and identity, a perception that finds representation in the spatial organisation of Himalayan towns and cities around ethnic enclaves where interaction with the 'outsiders' is limited and merely functional. The re-organisation of public and private space, limitations over access to resources and the gradual erosion of constitutional rights all contribute to the creation of distinct urban formations, the social and political ramifications of which are yet to be seen.

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Below:
Army traffic and signs indicating various barracks. Central Chungtang. December 2016 (Photo by Mona Chettri).

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From the heart to the plate
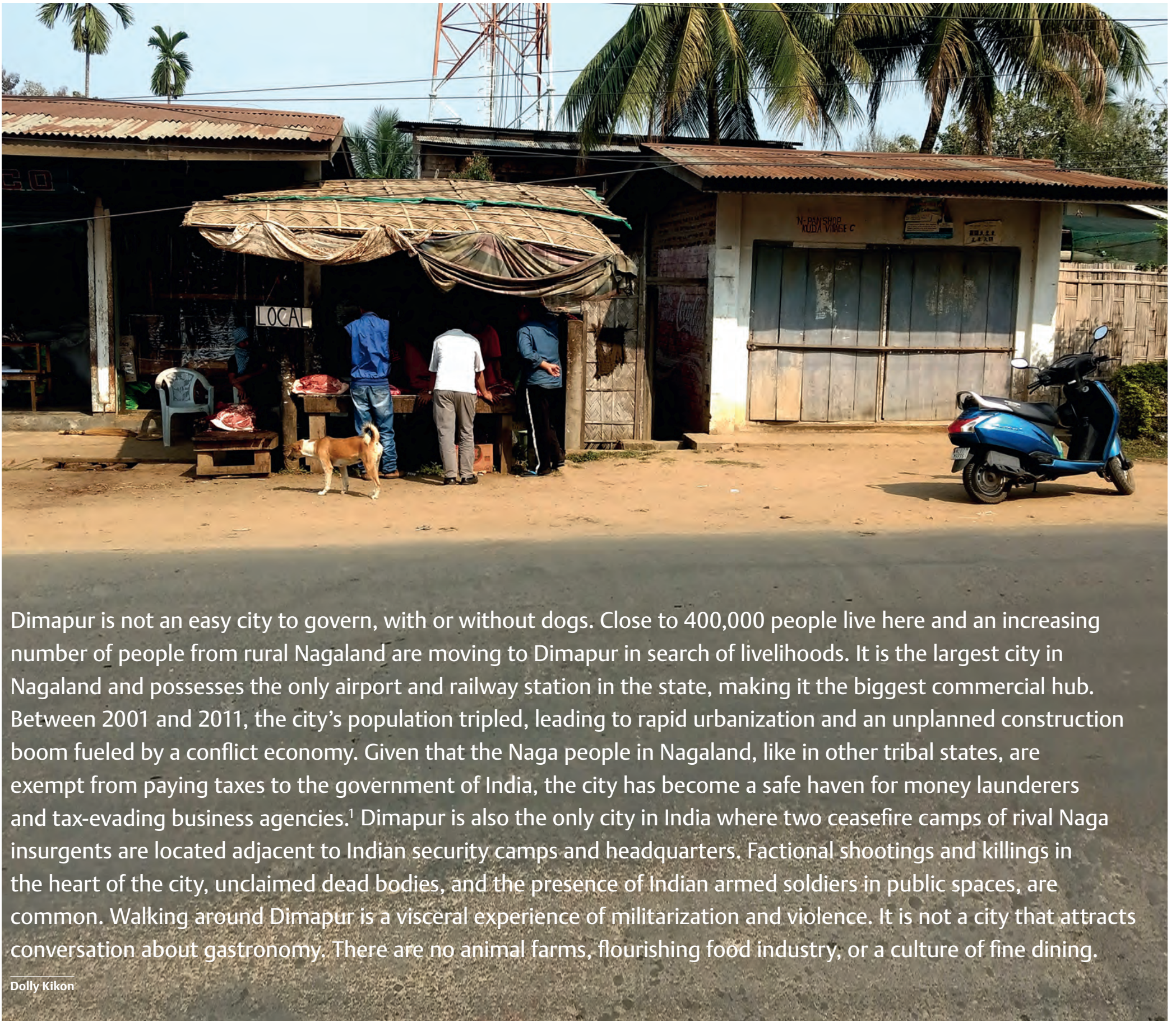
Dimapur is not an easy city to govern, with or without dogs. Close to 400,000 people live here and an increasing number of people from rural Nagaland are moving to Dimapur in search of livelihoods. It is the largest city in Nagaland and possesses the only airport and railway station in the state, making it the biggest commercial hub. Between 2001 and 2011, the city's population tripled, leading to rapid urbanization and an unplanned construction boom fueled by a conflict economy. Given that the Naga people in Nagaland, like in other tribal states, are exempt from paying taxes to the government of India, the city has become a safe haven for money launderers and tax-evading business agencies.[1] Dimapur is also the only city in India where two ceasefire camps of rival Naga insurgents are located adjacent to Indian security camps and headquarters. Factional shootings and killings in the heart of the city, unclaimed dead bodies, and the presence of Indian armed soldiers in public spaces, are common. Walking around Dimapur is a visceral experience of militarization and violence. It is not a city that attracts conversation about gastronomy. There are no animal farms, flourishing food industry, or a culture of fine dining.

Dolly Kikon

The heart of the matter

Yet, conversations about cruelty towards dogs and the practice of eating dog meat in Nagaland have gathered momentum with pictures and videos taken in a location known as Super Market in Dimapur. A line of bamboo sheds from where women traders sell dog meat have motivated tourists, journalists and animal rights activists in India to highlight the inhumane practices of dog meat trade in the state. In 2016, the dog meat debate attracted the national limelight when a legal notice was served to the government of Nagaland to stop the use of dog meat as food.[2] When reports about the dog meat trade appeared in newspapers and on social media across India, it was immediately condemned as a cruel practice. The images of dog meat in Nagaland became part of a standard strategy used by animal rights activists to portray consumers of dog meat as, "...the most despicable, abusive, and inhumane..."[3] The message portrayed them as evil torturers and savages without a conscience. Dimapur is a frontier city that tells a complex story of military occupation and violent social worlds; the spatial marks across the city highlight the experiences of people in a militarized society, who negotiate the competing authorities (insurgents, state officials, cultural associations, tribal bodies).[4] Yet, vulnerable dogs in Nagaland have received more passionate support from activists in urban India than, for example, the campaigns for the repeal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (1958), which gives Indian armed forces the right to kill Naga citizens on the basis of mere suspicion.

Conversations about animal cruelty and the practices of the dog meat trade have generated disgust and anger.[5]

Above:
'LOCAL' butcher.
Duncan Basti,
Dimapur. February
2017 (Photo by
Duncan McDuie-Ra).

The 2016 legal notice to ban dog meat in Nagaland became a new chapter in the battle for configuring spaces of governance, ethics and authority between citizens and dogs in India. To date, debates about dogs in contemporary India have depicted street dogs as a nuisance and a danger. In 2015, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported the growing 'menace' of stray dogs in urban India and indicated that in the state of Tamil Nadu alone more than 100,000 cases of dog bites had been registered. In the neighboring state of Kerala, dog catchers resorted to extreme measures, such as injecting stray dogs with potassium cyanide to kill them.[6] No wonder that state authorities define street dogs as 'encroachers' in urban India and a threat to citizens.[7] Considering dog meat as part of a food system, or linking it to larger issues of food culture, taste, delicacy or pleasure, does not cross the minds of many Indians.

"Whatever they want to do"

A 2016 report brought out by the Humane Society International in India (HSI/India) noted that the consumption of dog meat was taboo in the country with the exception of states like Nagaland.[8] The idea of Nagaland as an 'exceptional state' builds on a dominant understanding of the region as a zone of exception where people and the political state of affairs are in a permanent state of disarray and violence.[9] However, given the hostility towards stray dogs in urban India, law makers proposed various methods to address the dog nuisance. In 2012, a controversial resolution was submitted by a member of the Punjab Assembly, Mr. Ajit Singh Mofar. The Congress politician proposed that all the

stray dogs in Punjab should be sent to Nagaland, Mizoram or to China for, "whatever they want to do". He further stated, "We cannot be really bothered what that is. We have to solve our problem first. Stray dogs are killing children, attacking the elderly".[10] As one might expect, this statement caused an uproar, but this would not be the last time such a proposal was made. It has been reported that state human rights commissions and local bodies, like the *panchayats* in Kerala, have also suggested ways to export dog meat.

In 2016, when the Municipal Affairs Department of Nagaland requested that the Dimapur Municipal Council would oversee the matter of banning dog meat in the city, the challenges of managing a conflict city began to unfurl. There has been no municipal election in the state since 2006. The officials overseeing the municipal functions in a city of 400,000 are ad-hoc political appointees, who struggle to keep up with basic functions like garbage collection and maintenance of the sewage system. Barely able to manage the crumbling infrastructure such as water supply, drainage, and the increasing cases of land encroachments by land mafia, the municipality had little time and few resources to spend on animal welfare. Even though Dimapur Municipal Council dropped the matter and did not pursue it, a vibrant conversation did take place among the women traders who sold dog meat at the Super Market in Dimapur. "What is the point of banning?" Ms. Akhu asked me as we sat in her stall. "It sustains us. It is a question of livelihood. Just as we kill pigs, goats, and chicken, we kill the dog in the same manner." Forty years old and mother of four children aged 12, 14, 16 and 18; all her children were in school, which she paid for by selling

Debates about dog meat in Dimapur

dog meat. For Ms. Akhu and her colleagues in the adjacent dog meat stalls, they sell a food item like any other vendor at the market. Many of them had been landless and came to Dimapur as migrants from rural parts of Nagaland. Some of them were single parents while others had partners, but were unemployed and struggled to find employment. Ms. Avani who sold frogs and herbs in her stall along with dog meat said, "We are traders. We are honest and hardworking." She had three children and the eldest child was getting a Bachelors of Commerce from a local college. On the criminalization of consuming dog meat, she said, "By eating dog meat no one has done anything bad. They have committed no crimes like take drugs or harm the society. Even if the government bans dog meat, the customers will come and collect it from home."[11]

At the heart of the debate, including the legal notice served to the Government of Nagaland in 2016, questions about dog meat as 'food' came up prominently. A reporter noted, "The Advocate, through the legal notice, had noted that dog meat was openly sold as food, just as chicken and mutton…".[12] Why is it that certain culinary practices are seen as cruel and savage, while others are considered appropriate in human society? Why mobilize for the banning of dog meat in India, "…which has little to no impact on the nation's diet or commerce, and not for chicken, beef, pork… (or homelessness or crime, for that matter?)".

Even though a large number of animals in our food system are subjected to cruelty in India, the call to ban dog meat is a strategic one. According to Desoucey, "the answer depends on who those groups are and where their interests lie. What these questions imply is a more intricate set of relationships among what we value, what we *say* we value, the vulnerability of various targets, and what we, as individuals and as members of society, are actually willing to fight for".[13] In this context, the connection between dog and human is considered to be a long-lasting and deeply social one. Revered as a companion, friend, caregiver, and a member of the family, humans have developed strong attachments to their pets, particularly dogs and cats. These emotional conditions, according to Archer, prevail because, "people usually view their relationship with pets as similar to those they have with children. Pet owners treat pets like children".[14]

Dog culture

The moral issues connected to the consumption of dog meat have had far reaching consequences. A Naga migrant who worked in a retail store in New Delhi told me that she ate her lunch alone after she had been regularly humiliated by her colleagues about the dog eating culture in Naga society. "One day I was so angry I told them yes, yes, we also eat human beings. We are cannibals!" Consumption becomes connected to the identity and culture of the consumer. During a conversation in July 2016, about the proposal to ban the sale of dog meat, the president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals (SPCA) Dimapur District, Mr. N. Joseph Lemtur said, "It is not being taught from the school or church, it is cultural. We have become habituated to eat dogs; this is very unlucky. So at this juncture, animal activists like the SPCA are campaigning against it". It is important to recognize how the culture card is applied to legitimize certain practices, and that homogeneity is carelessly assumed among a cultural group. However, the reality is that a large number of Naga households do not eat dog meat, and many more refrain from eating wild animals, silkworms, water insects, ferns and mushrooms, all considered to be delicacies in Naga society. Nevertheless, the ongoing debate about the consumption of dog meat is framed by cultural practices, and ideas about civilization and cruelty.

Dogs mean different things in Naga society: pet, companion, food, medicine, guard, spirit sensors, thief catchers and cat chasers. They also feature centrally in the most famous origin myth about the Naga script, which is connected to identity and language. According to legend, a dog ate the Naga script written down on animal skin, and from that day onwards, Naga tradition and knowledge has only been received and shared orally. The relationship between dogs and people in Naga society is an intimate one, and is integral to everyday lives. Dog meat has been part of Naga cuisine for a long time, yet, before dishes started to appear on restaurant menus and before vendors starting selling the meat in the market place, there was no debate or national campaign to ban dog meat.

In contemporary India, the language of animal rights that triggered the dog meat debate is strongly rooted in a framework of class and caste.[15] Unlike the cow, which is regarded as holy and therefore banned as a food item in some parts of India, or the tiger and Amur falcon campaigns based on saving the animals from extinction, the dog debate rests on a framework of care and love. This is leaky politics. This debate about eating man's 'best friend' is a moral minefield where meanings of acceptable dietary practices are fluid and ambiguous and the logic of barbarism is juxtaposed with love and compassion.

Who is best capable of loving the dog? What are the dilemmas for dog meat eaters? The politics around which animals deserve protection has become an arena to discuss issues of ethics and justice between humans and animals in India. It is predominately an urban issue. Concern about stray animals, selling certain meats in public view, and animal welfare generally appear when an urban area is desperate to clean up its act; to be taken more seriously as a place for investment, tourism, and in the case of Dimapur, peace. The exceptional attention dogs have received in urban India as vulnerable beings, in comparison to squirrels or monkeys, tells us about the distinct language of value in metropolitan India. In this language, dog meat betrays a civilizational deficit. It reflects notions of a far off place where ethics, justice and care are lacking. For authorities in Nagaland there is an aggressive drive to sanitise the city of pests like stray dogs as part of a general mindset of being more metropolitan; more like other cities in India. And while passionate activists stand up for vulnerable dogs, extraordinary laws like AFSPA leave the armed forces with the right to kill and detain human dwellers of the city and throughout Nagaland and other parts of the frontier. If dog meat does symbolize cruelty on the one hand but also a part of local food habits on the other, perhaps a useful way to think about its place in the city is to consider the women traders at Super Market, who not only depend upon the dog meat trade but who have the most realistic sense of demand; a demand that will continue even if banned in public.

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7 See Narayanan, Y. 2016. 'Street dogs at the intersection of colonialism and informality: 'Subaltern animism' as a posthuman critique of Indian cities', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 0(0):1-20; journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0263775816672860
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13 Ibid. note 4, Desoucey, p.158.
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Top:
Menu at Blessing Hotel.
Dimapur, November 2016
(Photo by Dolly Kikon).

Below:
Patrolling Super Market.
Dimapur, March 2017
(Photo by Duncan McDuie-Ra).

Remaking Dibrugarh in contemporary Assam

Dibrugarh, an important city for trade, commerce and education in eastern Assam has had a fascinating history of destruction and renewal since the 1950s. It was one of the highest revenue collecting cities in post-colonial India at the time of the transfer of power in 1947. Following the large-scale destruction caused by the 1950 earthquake, the city became vulnerable to floods and lost much of its trading importance to neighbouring Tinsukia. Moreover, following the Assam Agitation (1979-1985), the city became a staging post for political mobilisation by insurgents of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). This resulted in counter-insurgency operations by the Indian army, which had an impact on social life that continues to be felt to this day. In this article, I argue that Dibrugarh showcases an urban transformation that has followed a counter-intuitive path, influenced by the socially disruptive capacities of capital, calamities and counter-insurgency.

Sanjay Barbora

Capital

Most towns and cities in the Brahmaputra valley of upper Assam have fairly delineated spaces for commercial areas, especially if larger municipalities administer them. Dibrugarh town is (almost) neatly divided into localities that denote ethnic identity and occupation, especially when trade and commerce are involved. Assamese Muslim families own and run most of the garages that fix old cars on the western extremes of the city. The Assam Trunk (AT) Road winds its way through other localities that reflect the ethnic-occupational world of the city, where Bihari labourers load and unload trucks, and middle-class Assamese professors teach at Dibrugarh University and the Assam Medical College. Bengali Hindus, who live around the vicinity of Kalibari, share space with Muslims who live on both sides of the railway line. The traditional commercial area – circumscribed by the railway line, AT Road and Mancotta Road – is a hub from where the city's hinterland acquires consumer goods, food supplies and other materials needed to keep both industry and agriculture going.

As part of the 1985 Assam Accord, signed by leaders of the Assam Movement and the Indian Government, the city acquired a gas cracker plant in 2007 (as requested by the leaders of the Assam Movement). It is called the Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited and is situated along the Sessa River on land that used to be covered by tea plantations. Today, environmentally concerned citizens of Dibrugarh claim that effluence from the plant has caused fish to die and has destroyed the livelihoods of fisherpersons. There is neither data nor a report that they can use to buttress their assertions. However, the claims demonstrate a turn away from promises of development forged through the Accord.

For most visitors to the city, which is situated at the heart of Assam's tea growing area, the presence of tea plantations within Dibrugarh's municipal limits is a quaint sight. The story of tea is intrinsic to the city's modern history and has made it a rich city, attracting traders and speculators in equal measure. As historian Jayeeta Sharma has argued, "… imperial capital and enterprise transformed Assam into a plantation economy characterised as much by rapid demographic change as by the visible emergence of ordered tea gardens and rice fields in place of forested, riverine and common land".[1] Along with tea, Dibrugarh's proximity to the oil drilling areas of upper Assam – Digboi and Duliajan – means that the city hosts local offices and individuals whose lives are intrinsically linked to the two extractive industries; industries central to the economy of colonial Assam and other parts of the Empire.[2] The tea industry needs pesticides and chemicals, which come from factories outside the district and are distributed and stocked by Marwari traders with offices along Hanuman Singhania Road in the New Market area. The trucks that supply rationed and subsidised grain to the plantations offload their goods at the Assam Trunk Road that runs parallel to the embankment and the Brahmaputra River. This condensed space, replete with plantations, railway lines and commercial areas is reminded of its precarious position every year during the monsoon months when floods trap goods, people, and transportation.

Calamity

The 1950 earthquake changed Dibrugarh's fortunes in several ways. The riverbed shifted, altering the river's course throughout western Assam. Areas that used to be tea plantations were subjected to intense pressure from

the flow of water, which resulted in erosion and inundation of land. The geological changes produced by the earthquake accentuate the ubiquitous presence of water around the city; though not a coastal city, Dibrugarh is in this way not unlike the "soaking ecologies" identified by historian Debjani Bhattacharyya.[3] Much of the municipal work around the city involves efforts to manage the flows and stagnation of water in various localities.

The Deputy Commissioner's (DC) Office and the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) office (the repository of procedural and logistical matters arising out of flood and earthquake related work), coordinate with the Dibrugarh Town Municipality in order to address problems that result from unregulated construction, much of which adds to the waterlogging problems during the monsoon. The DDMA recruits most of its members from various walks of civic life, including the Civil Defence, a body of volunteers that emerged during the 1930s and was given a new mandate following the Indo-China war of 1962. The DDMA outsources much of the construction work, including dredging of drains, to contractors, which reflects, in turn, the complex politics and layers of authority operating in the city.

Counter-insurgency

The world of contractors and sub-contractors in Dibrugarh is intrinsically linked to the government's counter-insurgency policies against the ULFA that began in 1990 with the Indian army's Operation Bajrang and Operation Rhino. As Sanjib Baruah has written of this period, "dissent (in Assam) was severely curtailed and human rights activists and journalists were arrested for reporting on abuses".[4] For the rebels, Dibrugarh and its hinterland were emblematic of both the structural conditions of Assam's colonisation, as well as the possibility of an armed insurrection against the state. Most of the rank and file of young women and men who joined the armed wing of the organisation came from villages and small towns around the city. In 1990, they ambushed and killed a number of important business-persons related to the tea industry. They also attacked police officials and demanded reparations from the tea industry, leading multi-national companies to airlift their executives out of eastern Assam.

In earlier work, I have noted that Operation Bajrang and Operation Rhino were instrumental in driving ULFA further underground and the militarisation of public life, creating a "garrison mentality" in governing Assam.[5] Many of the mid-level leaders of ULFA, especially those who were based around Dibrugarh, were convinced to leave the organisation through pecuniary incentives that were offered by the government throughout the 1990s. These incentives included rehabilitation grants, and offers of business licences and contracts. In return for such largesse, many leaders were induced to report against and sometimes actively eliminate their former comrades. This created a volatile environment, in which a set of upwardly mobile young men were allowed to enforce their will over established trading houses and older businesspersons. They were able to do so with tacit support from the administration, but this created friction among the various groups in Dibrugarh. In April 2003, one 'Surrendered ULFA' (locally referred to as SULFA), Nayan Das (alias *Guli* [bullet]), was hacked to death by people of a predominantly Bengali-speaking locality, because they were outraged by his lack of decency and

the impunity that was offered to him by the police and administration. Such an explosive milieu necessitated a closing-in among the SULFA cadre, who corralled off parts of the city to build apartment blocks where they could live together, fearing further attacks by their former comrades, or even the local public. Nevertheless, they continued to respond to advertisements for government tenders, and also began to muscle in on much of the lucrative trade in perishable goods – like fish and poultry – that were brought to Dibrugarh from different parts of the country. By 2010, they had successfully begun to operate multiplex cinema halls, hotels and other high-end businesses, far removed from their days in ULFA. This ceasefire capitalism challenges the old order of the city's business operations, creating new tensions and new opportunities, while further segmenting the city into different sites of control and influence in uneasy relationships with one another.

Puzzles to contemplate

Dibrugarh's modern history, as a city that hosted people, institutions and the bureaucracy that sustained two of Assam's most important industries – tea and oil – is offset by a contemporary story of political violence and ecological vulnerability. The expansion of tea and the discovery of oil created the foundations of a modern city that brought in tradespersons, artisans and professionals alike. While it was able to include a diverse range of people in the early 20th century, political events of the 1980s and 1990s created a period of uncertainty for the inhabitants of the city. In pursuing a sovereign Assam, ULFA's upper Assam cadre saw Dibrugarh as the town they needed to muscle into and control. While a few rehabilitated cadres were able to corner some businesses in the city, their ascendency in the late 1990s – enabled by the administration – coincided with a few intense years of violence against different sections of the population in Dibrugarh. The counter-insurgency operations targeted rebel sympathisers, while the rehabilitated rebels targeted businesspersons. This period has created a silence about social relations in the city. There is an uneasy everyday life in Dibrugarh, one that persists in concerns about the everyday life of its citizens.

For instance, the city is also home to India's eastern-most university, where scholars from various departments contemplate the ecological devastation to the Sessa River caused by the gas cracker plant. Their concerns are all the more urgent as the plant is situated along the banks of a river that provides people with large stocks of freshwater fish, livelihoods, and water supply. Hundreds of families living downstream have had to give up their livelihoods as fishers, as all the fish have disappeared. Protests against the gas cracker plant are little comfort, as they quickly disperse again after a few more contractual jobs are offered to some of the leaders of the protest groups. There are dilemmas here that narrate the counter intuitive urbanisation of Dibrugarh. The gas cracker plant was set up to bring development to the city following the Accord; it was part of the deal to mitigate the sense of state-neglect and give the city and the region a post-conflict future. Yet this very plant is now seen as the cause of much of the ecological devastation in the city, one already ravaged by calamity, militarisation, and the (mis)fortunes of the tea industry.

Even as the city attempts to come to terms with the effects of rapacious capitalist growth, its volatile ecology and political expediency, those learning to love it – students, teachers and activists – have had to continually improvise. In doing so, they have managed to keep the waterlogged streets cleared for another torrential downpour of water and politics. Dibrugarh's history offers fascinating insights into the manner in which urbanisation occurs under very challenging circumstances, especially at sites that have had intense ruptures from colonial and postcolonial experiments in capitalism and counterinsurgency, and persistent exposure to severe calamities.

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The Visual Documentary Project

The Visual Documentary Project: building bridges between academia and the documentary filmmaking world in Southeast Asia

Mario Lopez

Scene from *60 Days* (2016, Dirs. Htut Ye Kyaw, Sett Paing Aung, Pyay Maw Thein)

DOCUMENTARIES ARE A WINDOW onto a complicated world. With just a camera and a compelling story, filmmakers can weave together events, create strong narratives and present relationships between people, situations, and contexts. Stories powerfully emerge through the medium of documentaries. Filmmakers can spend days, weeks, months or years committed to deepening their understanding of a topic they want to present to audiences. Visual storytelling can have a profound impact and entice the viewer into further thought as they go back and forth between visual images and narratives.

In 2012, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) Kyoto University, under a large-scale research program "promoting the study of sustainable humanosphere in Southeast Asia", set out to examine the rich diversity of experiences in the region under the rubric of plural coexistence. Southeast Asia is one of the world's most diverse regions in terms of societies, cultures, languages and ecosystems. In recognition of the dynamics of the region the "visual documentary project" (VDP) was set up to offer a platform to young Southeast Asian filmmakers in the region. One of the main aims of this project is to create a bridge between academia and documentary filmmaking communities to stimulate discussion and develop dialogues that lead to new research/filmmaking inquires. We aim to strike a balance between academic inquiries, filmmakers' commitments to their art and the inherent activism that can arise from unique discussions between different actors. A secondary aim is to develop an archive of subtitled films (in English and Japanese) as potential documentary research material for future scholars. Since 2014 this project has also been bolstered by support from the Japan Foundation Asia Center (JFAC) in order to further build links between Japan based communities and their Southeast Asian counterparts.

Academic research on the region is abundant and recent years have seen a substantial increase in the volume of scholarly works being published. Observing and engaging Southeast Asia through the minds and imaginations of young filmmakers on the ground offers new ways to think about, from a non-academic perspective, how people capture the everyday nuances of life. The proliferation of cheap technology, mobile phones and computers, alongside gradual democratization and liberalization, has led to the vibrant growth of amateur, semi-professional and professional documentary film industries. This has been accompanied by the founding of film schools, academies and institutes that offer training and direction for aspiring filmmakers.

These developments are invigorating visual documentation in the region. Academics who work in their respective fields can spend years developing language skills to create their networks and to engage in fieldwork. From research to publication 3 to 4 years may pass. Yet during this time the 'field' can abruptly move on. Filmmakers on the ground, often from the communities they document, can quickly bring fast moving events to broader audiences to contextualize current issues often with deep insight. From the everyday and mundane to chasing political scandals and corruption; from environmental concerns to political participation and representation; from land dispossession to calls for social justice: Southeast Asian filmmakers have their finger on the multiple pulses of the region.

Over the past five years the VDP has developed into a platform that is enriching dialogues on how documentaries can help us to rethink the ways issues are framed within Southeast Asia. Since 2015, CSEAS has not only screened documentaries submitted to the project, but become a hub to help raise the profile of young and upcoming filmmakers trained and practicing in Southeast Asia. This has included collaborations with Thai universities; the submission of documentaries to the Kyoto International Film and Art Festival (KIFF) for screening to the general public; the hosting of talks by international renowned filmmakers such as Rithy Panh (Oscar nominated filmmaker and founder of the Bophana Audiovisual Center, Phnom Penh) and extending invitations to filmmakers to stay in Kyoto to produce and edit documentaries; and creating links with film institutions and universities in the region to share the fruits of this unique endeavor.

Each year has provided a broad theme under which filmmakers have submitted their work. Themes have included 'care', 'plural coexistence', 'people and nature', 'human flows: movement in Southeast Asia', and 'politics in everyday life'. Since the inception of the project we have received 240 submissions. Many documentaries have sensitively engaged in issues ranging from migration in Thailand, gender issues in Cambodia, land dispossession and indigenous community affirmation in the Philippines, climate change and its impact on the reproductive health of women, to the struggles of Burmese students protesting Myanmar's recent national education reforms.

Documentary filmmaking as a barometer of change

In recent years, the shifting political climate in some nations, most notably Myanmar, has seen an unprecedented increase in the output of documentaries. Since democratic reform in the late 2000s, this ethnically diverse nation of just over 50 million is experiencing new opportunities to speak about political change, test the boundaries on what can be said, and speak about ongoing reforms. This watershed has led to the prolific emergence of a diverse range of creative documentary filmmaking. At the forefront is a young energetic generation of filmmakers testing new found freedoms and pushing the envelope as to what degree popular political commentary is allowed. What was a trickle in 2012 has become a stream and this has been most illustrated by some of the submissions we have received over the past two years. This in part has been encouraged and supported by the Yangon Film School (YFS, Yangon) and the Human Dignity Film Institute (HDFI). For our most recent event we received an unprecedented 34 submissions (out of 75) from Myanmar alone, a testimony to the rapid changes sweeping across the country.

Vein (2015, Dirs. Htet Aung San, Phyo Zayar Kyaw, Ko Jet), for example, shot in the Kachin state, focuses on the lives of migrant workers on mining sites searching for jade. Along with Myanmar's ongoing transition to democracy, its abundant natural resources have become a source of economic hope and tension. With no clear figures on how many corporations and illegal mines are active in the region, jade is a tense source of income for both the Kachin Independence Army and Burmese state forces. We see Myanmar's veins exposed and this visceral documentary presents the viewer with the sense of a 'gold rush' and a stark portrayal of the everyday risks miners face. Opening with a landslide, viewers are confronted with raw phone footage of miners being dug up after they were buried by a landslide while attempting to dig for jade. The documentary tracks several people affected by the tragedy, presenting their narratives within the broader context of the national and regional economies of natural resources exploitation. Attempting to capture the precariousness of work at the mines, the directors –at risk to themselves –take long panoramic shots up cliff faces on the verge of collapse; track the flickering torches of workers scrambling over mined rock tipped into midnight quarries dwarfed by colossal dump trucks; and train the viewer's senses on the cascading rocks that offer potential economic opportunities yet threaten life. Jade has recently caught the attention of other Burmese directors (Taiwan based director Midi Z [2016, *City of Jade*]), but this documentary is unrivalled in bringing home the brutal reality of migrant workers living on the edges of the nation.

Also from Myanmar is *60 Days* (2016, Dirs. Htut Ye Kyaw, Sett Paing Aung, Pyay Maw Thein), which deals with the recent 2015 student protests that arose after the transition to democracy from Thein Sein's government. Enacted in September 2014, the Burmese national education bill led to protests from students who felt it would infringe on their academic freedoms. Even though amendments were made to the bill, students intensified their protests dissatisfied with the government's stance. This led to harsh police crackdowns, which were denounced in the West and cursorily covered by international media. These crackdowns were an impetus for students to galvanize and organize themselves and enhanced their cause within Myanmar. Viewers are presented with actual footage of the activist students organizing and planning for their march. The documentary follows Ko Zayyar Lwin, then student president of the Yangon University Economic Student Union, who narrates their reasons for protesting. *60 Days* offers a balanced take on what was at stake with in-depth discussions with representatives from the National Network Education Reform (NNER), Myanmar's Teacher Federation, and Dr Yin Yin New, Chief Education Advisor to the President of the Republic. This documentary is a labor of love that captures the tensions that existed at the time between students and the government. The final scene captures a tense standoff with armed forces, leading to the arrest of students (who were all subsequently released) and reminds us of the excessive crackdowns of 1988. The political message in this documentary and the others from Myanmar are a clear indication that a new milieu prevails with documentary filmmakers at the vanguard of witnessing changes in country.

As this project develops we aim to extend our connections with universities, film schools and institutes and NGOs within Southeast Asia and Japan to further develop discussions and dialogues. Our goal is to encourage hybrid collaborations that strengthen bridges between different communities. Doing so will hopefully lead to the creation of unique works that can deepen our understanding of this diverse region and encourage and support new voices and perspectives. These can challenge academics to rethink how they engage with issues through the minds, visions and cameras of those who experience them on an everyday basis.

Submissions and screenings

The documentaries included in the VDP are selected through an international selection committee made up of both filmmakers and academics. Directors whose works are selected are invited to travel to Japan for screenings in Tokyo and Kyoto. Currently the VDP is accepting submissions for this year's project "urban life in Southeast Asia". The project looks forward to documentaries that engage in issues dealing with rapidly transforming urban landscapes; from life in slums to financial districts; from informal settlements to gated communities; revitalization projects to mass urban restructuring; values that shape urban life; and the ways cultural diversity, heritage, and aesthetics intersect in people's everyday lives.

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VDP
VISUAL DOCUMENTARY PROJECT

The majority of the documentaries that will be screened during ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai (20-23 July 2017) have been selected by the VDP. The ICAS 10 film overview and schedule will be included in the conference programme book and be made available online.

For more information on the project visit our website: https://sea-sh.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/vdp2016/

The 2017 ICAS Book Prize Shortlists

It is my pleasure to announce, on behalf of the ICAS Book Prize reading committees, the final shortlists for what now has become a multilingual book prize (the lists below are presented in alphabetical order). The shortlisted authors are all still in the race; the winners will be announced during the ICAS Book Prize ceremony on 20 July 2017, during the opening session of ICAS 10 in the Chiang Mai International Convention Centre. At the ceremony the audience will also receive a special ICAS Book Prize booklet, containing all shortlists, winners, reading committee citations and the full list of special Accolades. We would like to thank all the contributing authors and publishers, and look forward to seeing you in Chiang Mai.

Paul van der Velde (General Secretary IBP)

English edition

Social Sciences

Jie Li
Shanghai Homes. Palimpsests of Private Life.
New York/Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Pamela D. McElwee
Forests Are Gold. Trees, People, and Environmental Rule in Vietnam.
Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 2016.
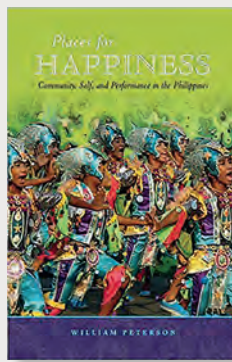
William Peterson
Places for Happiness. Community, Self, and Performance in the Philippines.
Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016.
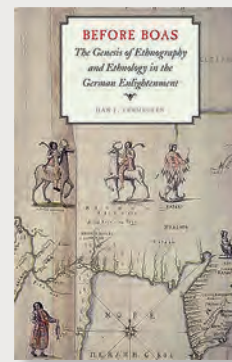
Han F. Vermeulen
Before Boas. The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment. Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015.
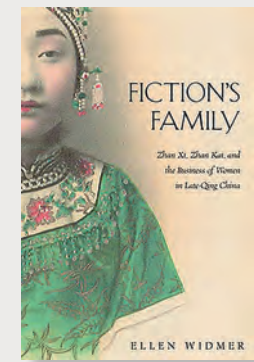
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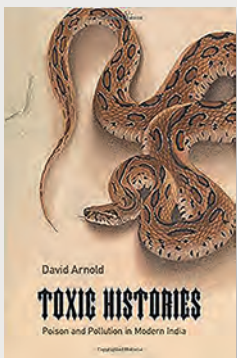
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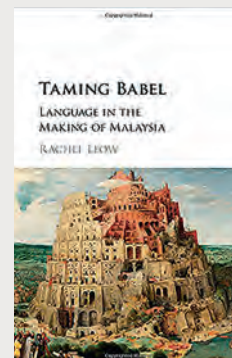
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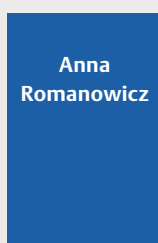
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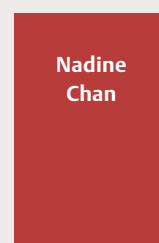
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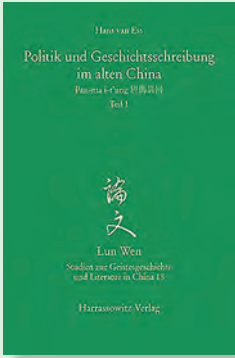
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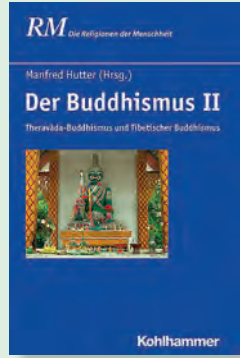
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Leiden University's new Asian Library

After three years of planning and construction, Leiden University's new Asian Library is ready. Bringing together various important collections on Asia, the Asian Library holds the largest collection on Indonesia worldwide, and some of the foremost collections on South and Southeast Asia, China, Japan and Korea. The Executive Board of Leiden University warmly welcomes all to attend the official and festive Grand Opening on 14 September 2017.

To mark the achievement, Leiden University is celebrating the whole of 2017 as the 'Leiden Asia Year'. Working together with other Asia-oriented institutes in Leiden as well as with the Leiden municipality, so far the agenda of the Leiden Asia Year has already featured over 70 events, with a further 40 still scheduled to take place, including the library's Grand Opening. Students and scholars will not have to wait until September, as the Asian Library was opened for the public on March 31.

Sandra Dehue (IIAS) and Rosalien van der Poel (Coordinator Leiden Asia Year)

The Asian Library
In 2014, Leiden University decided to build a new Asian Library to bring together under one roof all of the collections of the various Leiden University libraries on China, Japan, Korea, India and Indonesia. Also included are the Heritage Collection of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam and the library of the Leiden-based Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV). Adding up to over 30km in length, the collections of the Asian Library belong to the most important worldwide, both in quantity and quality.

The new Asian Library was realised by adding a complete extra floor on top of the Leiden University's main library building. This extension offers direct access to a large volume of reference works, as well as work spaces for students and researchers, a group study room, a seminar room and a small cinema. The library also houses numerous Asian special collections, which are available in the nearby Reading Room Special Collections. Whatever is not immediately on-hand, can be ordered and presented within an hour.

Asian special collections
The Asian Library comprises many special collections, including a huge variety of rare books, thousands of manuscripts, maps, prints, drawings and photographs, and hundreds of archives. Predominant is the written heritage originating from or dealing with Southeast Asia (especially Indonesia), South Asia and Tibet, and East Asia. The collections contain an abundance of native materials, such as palm leaf manuscripts and block prints, documenting the many religions, languages and cultures of Asia in word and image over a period of more than four centuries. It also holds ship logs, letters, research reports, publications, photographs and other source materials collected from and testifying to the presence of European travellers, mer-chants, scholars, colonial civil servants and institutions in Asia.

These unique Asia collections of the Asian Library, but also those of the nearby Hortus botanicus Leiden, the Japan Museum SieboldHuis and the Museum of Ethnology, are among the many reasons for scholars around the world to come to Leiden, along with the abundance of scholarly expertise present at Leiden University and other Asia-oriented Leiden institutions.

IIAS donates books to the Asian Library
During a small ceremony on 31 March, Leiden University Rector Magnificus Prof. Carel Stolker officially declared the new Asian Library open to the public. This was also the moment for the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) to symbolically gift the library the first of the more than 500 books submitted for the 2017 'ICAS Book Prize' (IBP).

IIAS maintains excellent relations with the Asian Library. Not only do our fellows use its collections in their research (some examples of which are included below), the Asian Library is also the main sponsor of the ICAS Book Prize, which is awarded every two years (when Asia scholars from around the world gather during the International Convention of Asia Scholars) for outstanding books and dissertations on topics related to Asia in the Humanities and Social Sciences. In return, the Asian Library receives one copy of each book submitted to the IBP. In March 2017, more than 500 books were donated, including titles in English, Chinese, Korean, German and French. This number is likely to rise to perhaps as high as 1000 in 2019, with a more active participation of the foreign-language submissions and the expansion of the reading committees to include Japanese submissions as well.

In 2019, the 11th ICAS convention is planned to take place in Leiden. It will be the first ICAS in Europe since the first two editions in Leiden and Berlin, in 1998 and 2001 respectively. As usual ICAS will cover a wide range of topics, but will also focus on 'Asia in Europe', demonstrating how this region of the world is itself deeply influenced and shaped by its historical connection with Asia and Asian societies. Contributing to the Leiden Asia Year, IIAS will organise an afternoon meeting on 10 October to introduce the academic community of Leiden to ICAS.

Join us for the Grand Opening and 'Tour of Asia' festival on 14 September

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY invites you to the Grand Opening of the Asian Library. If you would like to join the celebrations, please register now at www.universiteitleiden.nl/grand-opening-asian-library.

The Grand Opening Day will start at 10am in the Pieterskerk ('Peter's Church'), with a keynote speech by renowned global historian Peter Frankopan, musical performances, a presentation of the Asian Library and its rich collections, and the launch of the book *Voyage of Discovery. Exploring the Collections of the Asian Library*. After a walking lunch, the programme is resumed in the afternoon with an informative and fascinating 'Tour of Asia' in and around Leiden University's central locations. Various parallel events will be held at different locations, including the IIAS office, and will involve lectures, country updates, exhibitions, tours, contemporary Asian films, music, workshops, panel discussions and much more. At the end of the day, all attendees are invited for snacks and drinks in the University Library.

Detailed information about the programme will be made available on the Leiden Asia Year website: www.leidenasiayear.nl

Leiden Asia Week (13-17 September)
The following events are scheduled in the week of the Grand Opening. Information about these and all other events of the Leiden Asia Year are available at: www.leidenasiayear.nl

13 Sept	De-bordering Asia – Graduate conference
14 Sept	Grand Opening of the Asian Library and 'Tour of Asia' festival
14-17 Sept	Middle Period Chinese Humanities – International conference
15-16 Sept	Mapping Asia: Cartographic Encounters between East & West – International conference
16 Sept	Night of Arts and Sciences – Cultural festival with acts and performances

DISCOVERY
ASIAN LIBRARY OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY
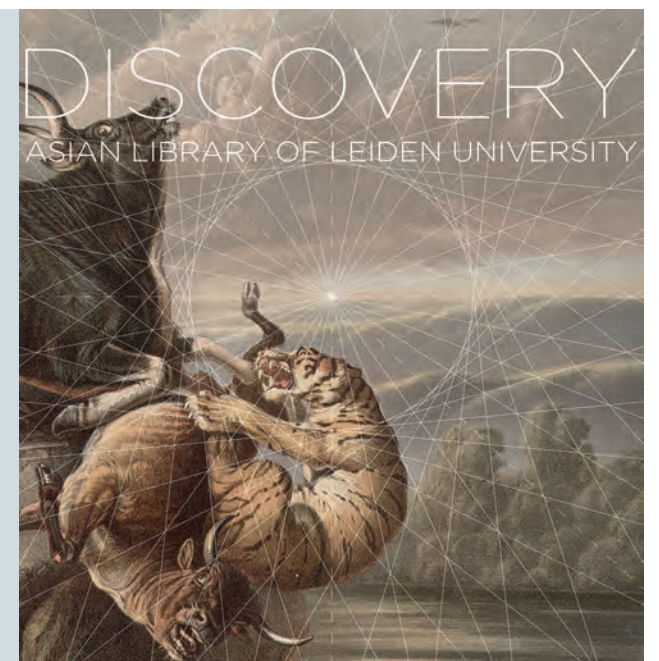
Asian Studies in Leiden

LEIDEN OWES much of its Asian collections to 400 years of Dutch interactions with Asia, starting with the endeavours of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) from 1602. Shortly after 1600 the university library acquired the first written materials from Asia. But the true foundation of the extensive Asia collections at Leiden University was laid in the second half of the nineteenth century, when substantial collections found their way to the library. Among these were the colonial library of the Royal Academy in Delft (1864), the books of the physician and scholar of Japan studies Philipp Franz von Siebold (1881), and the bequest of the linguist and Indologist Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk (1895-1897).

The growth of the Asian collections kept pace with the increasing study of Asian languages and cultures in Leiden. The German scholar Johann Joseph Hoffmann was appointed professor of Chinese and Japanese in 1855. Hendrik Kern became professor of Sanskrit in 1865. In 1864, the academic component of the *Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (KITLV), the State institute for the education of East Indian (Indonesian) civil servants, was moved from Delft to Leiden. In 1966 the

Institute, including its library, was also relocated to Leiden. With such a concentration on Asia in Leiden, it was only logical to house the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden as well, when it was established in 1993 by the Ministry of Education as the leading Dutch institute to promote the highest quality of research and knowledge on Asia by actively stimulating national and international cooperation.

Today, Leiden University runs world class research and unique teaching programmes in the field of Asian area studies (organised as of 2009 in the School of Asian Studies, which is part of the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies). Leiden University is the only university in the Netherlands that offers BA and MA programmes in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and South and Southeast Asian Studies. While language is a large part of these teaching programmes, they also offer students a wider variety of disciplinary and thematic topical perspectives (e.g., history, philosophy, society, religion, politics). A multi-disciplinary approach is even more present in research, exemplified, among others, by the appointment at LIAS of researchers from other disciplines. Moreover, experts from Leiden in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Law often join forces in their research on Asia and many vibrant links exist between the different Asia-oriented institutes based in Leiden.

Sources and further reading

Asian Library: www.asianlibraryleiden.nl
Special Collections (pictures and information): www.iias.nl/asian-library
Leiden University Asia Dossier: www.onderzoeksgebieden.leidenuniv.nl/en/asia

Asian collections in research

THE AGENDA OF THE LEIDEN ASIA YEAR features an abundance of different types of activities and topics pertaining to Asia. Below are three examples of activities that illustrate how the collections of the Asian Library are used in research and education.

Sanskrit as a vehicle of cultural exchange

Leiden University holds one of the oldest and richest Sanskrit collections. From 18 May to 5 September, the exhibition '*Sanskrit – Across Asia and Beyond*' explores Sanskrit as a vehicle of transculturation and exchange. It incorporates a broad range of materials from the Asian Library, including rare manuscripts, vibrant photographs of Asian temples and icons, and original videos and multimedia presentations. The exhibition is organised in cooperation with IIAS fellow Dr Elizabeth Cecil (see Cecil's article on page 46 of this issue), who is a historian of pre-colonial South and Southeast Asia with a focus on Religion and Material Culture. At IIAS, Cecil is completing a book manuscript, entitled *Mapping the Pāśupata Landscape: Polity, Place, and the Śaiva Imaginary in Early Medieval North India* with a fellowship provided by the J. Gonda Fund.

Charter of the Cola kings Rājarāja I [985-1012] and Rājendra I [1012-1042], 21 copper plates held by a ring with Cola seal, Sanskrit (in Grantha script) and Tamil.

Mapping Asia

The Asian Library holds close to 30,000 maps concerning Asia, including several large collections of historical maps. Among these are the maps of Japan collected by Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) during his stay in Japan where he was employed by the Netherlands Government at the trading post of Deshima in the bay of Nagasaki. These maps were the reason for Dr Radu Leca (fellow at IIAS) to come to Leiden, where he is surveying both Western maps of Japan and Japanese maps in Dutch collections for his research on cartographic sources as testimonies of the geopolitical thought in early modern Japan. In addition, Leca has been working closely together with the Asian Library as a map curator for the permanent exhibition of Japanese maps in the Japan Museum SieboldHuis. Leca is also one of the thirty scholars to present a paper during the international conference '*Mapping Asia – Cartographic Encounters between East & West'*, on 15-16 September. '*Mapping Asia*' is also the title of an exhibition organised by the Asian Library at the Museum of Ethnology from 14 September 2017 until 16 January 2018. This exhibition not only features historical maps, prints and books, but also highlights various aspects of Asia using cartography and (GIS) mapping tools (see Leca's article on page 6 of this issue).

Symposium 'Collecting Asia'

Another activity of the Leiden Asia Year to mention here is the symposium '*Collecting Asia',* which took place in the Museum of Antiquities on 17 March 2017. Organised by the Centre for Global Heritage and Development, the National Museum of Antiquities and Japan Museum SieboldHuis, in cooperation with the Asian Library, the symposium not only provided an overview of the existing collections from Asia in Leiden, but also addressed the history, systematics and ethics of collecting. One of the speakers was

Leiden PhD student Taufiq Hanafi, who is currently doing research at KITLV. For his work on fiction as counter-history in Indonesia, he uses works that are present in the Asian Library but which are banned (and burned) in Indonesia. Hanafi: "*Collecting Asia,* despite its bias-cum political connotation that includes structure, control and curiosity towards the foreign, can be very helpful as it directly helps in preserving material culture or, in this case, books that are no longer accessible in their home country due to tight censorship, banning, or practical reasons such as shelf-life".

IIAS Reports

Sanskrit – Across Asia and Beyond

Elizabeth A. Cecil

SANSKRIT IS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON – a language that has captured the intellectual imagination of historians and linguists in nineteenth-century Europe, and contemporary students of yoga and *āyurveda*, alike. While Sanskrit is commonly studied as a literary form, its influence has extended to shape rituals, fables, images, performances, and architectural forms that together inspired a shared world of culture linking diverse regions of Asia across the centuries. The aim of the exhibition, *Sanskrit – Across Asia and Beyond* (Leiden, 18 May-5 Sept 2017), is to materialize some of the complexity and cultural dynamism of Sanskrit by featuring materials from the Special Collections of Leiden University Library. The organizers[1] are also grateful to the *Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen* and the *Vereniging Vrienden van het Instituut Kern* for their generous loans in support of the exhibition.

To tell the story of Sanskrit in its many manifestations and cultural forms requires an equally broad range of materials. Illuminated manuscripts and bronze sculptures, paintings, and photographs are organized thematically in seven show-cases curated to highlight important facets of the tradition: Sanskrit as a language of sovereignty, a language of devotion, and a language of rich storyworlds and traditions of embodied practice. The exhibition concludes by reflecting upon the current status of Sanskrit as a highly politicized language in an increasingly globalized world.

Discovering hidden collections

One of the primary aims of the exhibition was to bring attention to Leiden University Library's collection of early South Asian manuscripts – particularly those held in the Kern Collection, named after Hendrik Kern, who initiated the formal study of Sanskrit at Leiden University in 1865. Prior to preparations for the display, many of these important materials were uncatalogued and, as a result, effectively invisible. This situation is changing and data for the manuscripts featured in the exhibition are now available online via the University's Special Collections.

Shedding a new light on Leiden's hidden collections also reveals the diversity of Sanskrit as a written language. While it is most commonly associated with India, Sanskrit spread across South and Southeast Asia, and manuscripts were recorded in a wide variety of scripts and materials, each with their own distinctive regional character. Manuscripts from North India on birch bark, palm leaves and paper are written in sharp, angular characters exemplified by the Bengali alphabet visible in one of the paper manuscripts of the epic *Mahābhārata*. By contrast, Southern palm-leaf manuscripts are engraved in full rounded scripts like the Grantha characters used on the palm leaf *Śivadharmaśāstra* manuscript. Epic traditions that spread to Southeast Asia are also displayed prominently, as in a palm-leaf manuscript of the *Rāmāyaṇa* recorded in the Javanese language and script, a descendent of early South Asian characters.

Expressing devotion in text and image

It is important to note that these manuscripts were not simply texts, but potent ritual objects by virtue of the sacred knowledge they recorded and the devotional contexts in which they were used. The expression of devotion (bhakti) to God is the center of many of the religious traditions that have originated in South Asia. In its purest manifestation, loving devotion to a deity is considered the path to final beatitude (*mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*). Bhakti can be deeply personal, reflecting a close personal bond with the divinity. It may also manifest itself in elaborately staged public rituals and seasonal festivals in honor of particular deities. The exhibition includes two small illuminated manuscripts—one of the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* ('Thousand Names of Viṣṇu)— from North India and Kashmir that would have served as personal devotional aides (figs. 1 and 2). Likewise, small early medieval clay amulets recovered from North India would have functioned as part of a personal religious repertoire.

These pocket-sized texts stand in stark contrast to the grand Nepalese palm-leaf *Prajñāpāramitā* ('Perfection of Wisdom') manuscripts that were likely intended for public rites and recitations that involved the Buddhist community. These texts were distributed widely and played a major role in what has been called the 'Cult of the Book' in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The two carefully written manuscripts are dated c.12th century, the oldest Sanskrit manuscripts in the library's collection (fig. 3).

Rituals performed in honor of richly decorated icons are also central to devotional traditions. In addition to showing how Sanskrit was transmitted in literary forms, the exhibition features sculptures, ritual objects and images that reflect a Sanskritic milieu. One of the treasures of the exhibition is a remarkable 9th century four-armed bronze Gaṇeśa from Java that shows the elephant-headed god with a single intact tusk (fig. 4). This unique image reflects the popular tradition that he broke off one of his tusks to use as a stylus to record the text of the entire *Mahābhārata* epic.

Multiple representations of goddesses on display attest to the complexity of the theological concepts that informed their creation and the devotional contexts that animated these images. The exhibition showcases varied traditions of artistic production – from medieval bronze sculpture from Java, contemporary chromolithograph from Bengal, and an abstract 20th century re-imagining by Indian artist Jyoti Bhatt. Like textual accounts of the personality and the exploits of the Goddess – recorded in the gilded *Devīmāhātmya* manuscript on display – these images may be 'read' as well. From them we learn of Durgā's victory over the Buffalo Demon, the benevolence and prosperity afforded by Lakṣmī, and the continued power of the Goddess as an icon for contemporary Indian artists.

A language of power and sovereignty

In addition to serving as a vehicle for religious ideologies and practices, Sanskrit has also served as a rich symbolic language through which political ideals and aspirations were transmitted. As a language of sovereignty, Sanskrit cultural forms were adapted strategically by rulers and others seeking political prestige. For rulers in South and Southeast Asia, political legitimacy was intimately tied to lineage. Extensive

genealogical records were composed in Sanskrit for rulers and recited publically by bards and court poets or engraved on stone for all to see. While genealogical accounts could be elaborate works of Sanskrit *belle-lettres,* like Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṃśa* ('The Lineage of Raghu'), they could also appear in a more abridged format, as does the royal genealogy from Nepal featured in the exhibition. The lineage is painted on a lacquered board topped with a hook to allow for its public display.

Sanskrit inscriptions served as another medium for the expression of political power and prestige. One of the highlights of the exhibition are the massive copperplate charters of the Cōla rulers Rājarāja I [985-1012 CE] and Rājendra I [1012-1042 CE] held by a ring stamped with the royal insignia (see pp. 44-45 of this issue). Inscribed with Sanskrit and Tamil in the Southern Grantha script, these inscribed plates celebrate the virtues of the ruling dynasty and commemorate a royal donation in support of a Buddhist monastery. Such acts of piety were important manifestations of kingly virtue and generosity.

Tales of gods, kings, and epic battles are the focus of the voluminous Sanskrit narratives of the epics and *purāṇas*. Both the epic *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* traditions grapple with issues of power, duty, and the justification of violence. One of the illustrated pages of a *Bhagavadgītā* manuscript on display depicts a critical moment in the *Mahābhārata* epic when the Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs the hero Arjuna in the warrior ethos while the opposing forces align on the battlefield. This section of the epic culminates in a divine vision represented on another illuminated page: here Kṛṣṇa reveals himself to be the transcendent God Viṣṇu. Often depicted astride his eagle mount, Viṣṇu was emblematic of kingship and his image was used to adorn royal monuments across Asia. The exhibit includes one such elaborately carved and painted wooden icon from Bali showing the deity riding the eagle Garuḍa. In addition to text and icon, in Southeast Asia, epic constructions of power and duty were explored in elaborate traditions of puppet and theatrical performance. The beautifully illustrated volume of *Wayang Purwa* records the narratives used in these performances.

Sanskrit matters

The story of Sanskrit is not confined to centuries past, but continues in the 21st-century. The exhibition's final display illustrates the unique and often contested position of Sanskrit: a classical language in dialogue with cultural and political developments on a global scale. The massive rubbing of a 4th-century Sanskrit inscription by the Dutch scholar J. Ph. Vogel is a symbol and an instance of the preservation of South Asian material heritage. The inscription was one of many from the Buddhist site of Nagarjunakonda located in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Early 20th century photographs from the Kern Collection show the site being excavated before the area was flooded to build a dam in 1950. Although the original *stūpa* is now submerged, the reconstructed archeological landscape has become a powerful emblem of India's ancient heritage. As such, monumental sites like Nagarjunakonda function both as symbols of a national identity as well as sites for a renewal of Buddhist identity, particularly by pilgrims from Japan and Tibet who seek the origins of their religion in the Indian subcontinent. The role of ancient Indian material and literary culture in processes of heritage making aptly illustrates the continued relevance of Sanskrit, and exemplifies the need for continued study and dialogue across Asia and beyond.

Elizabeth A. Cecil, IIAS Gonda Fellow (lizacecil@gmail.com).

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1   The exhibition *Sanskrit – Across Asia and Beyond* was conceived and curated by Peter Bisschop, Elizabeth Cecil, and Daniele Cuneo with the cooperation of Jef Schaeps and Liesbeth Ouwehand. Thanks to Devaki Sapkota, the Sanskrit manuscripts at Leiden University Library are now online and searchable via the Special Collections (i.kern skr). The exhibition was festively opened on 18 May 2017. Elizabeth Cecil's opening speech can be found alongside the online version of this article: tinyurl.com/sanskritbeyond

1.

2.

The social roles of academics: reflecting on the project of a Delhi City Museum

Xiaomei ZHAO and Yike Hu

IN DECEMBER 2016, UKNA (Urban Knowledge Network Asia; www.ukna.asia) held a five-day event in Delhi, India, entitled *Revisiting Delhi: Urban Heritage and Civic Services,* combining a decentralized city-museum proposal to the local government with discussions on the sort of civic services such a museum could offer to Delhi's inhabitants. As Chinese participants from a country in a similar situation to India, we were rather impressed by the enthusiasm of the local scholars to engage with community-based projects and wish to share our reflections.

The event was organized by UKNA partners Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) and IIAS, in cooperation with Jawaharlal Nehru University (Institute of Advanced Study). It included a two-day roundtable on urban heritage and the need for a decentralized Delhi City Museum, and a two-day seminar on the basic urban services in Delhi and the roles of citizens, state/policy and politics.

Community-based heritage project as urban civic service
The Delhi City Museum project was initiated by the Centre for Community Knowledge (CCK) at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), with the goal of establishing an institutional platform in India in the interdisciplinary areas of the Social Sciences and to link academic research and teaching with dispersed work on community knowledge.[1] Coordinated by Dr Surajit Sarkar, the Centre works closely together with local people to improve the understandings of their own living heritage and to integrate community-based knowledge with available alternatives. The Delhi Citizen Memory Project is one of the urban programs of the CCK that develop people-centred narratives of knowledge, history and diversity of the expanding megacity as opposed to the narrative of Delhi 'the Capital'.[2] (fig.1) We were so fortunate

3.

Fig. 1: Exhibition of neighborhood memories at AUD campus (photo by Xiaomei Zhao, 2016).

Fig. 2: The inauguration of the photo exhibition of Camera *Dilli-Ka – A Delhi Photo Archive 1880-1980* at IIC (photo by Yike Hu, 2016).

Fig. 3: The Dara Shukoh's Library at AUD campus (photo by Xiaomei Zhao, 2016).

to be invited to the inauguration of the photo exhibition *Camera Dilli-Ka – A Delhi Photo Archive 1880-1980,* based on this project, at the International India Centre (IIC), one of top elite clubs in Delhi. (fig.2) We very much appreciated their delicate work involving students, faculty and local partners in collecting memories and interpreting the history of this amazing city. Based on their experiences of neighbourhood-based museum projects, the team decided to propose a decentralized City Museum project to the local government. This proposal aims at building a City Museum network, with numerous nodes as city interpretation centres, hosting possible permanent collections of reflections of the city, brought up through recordings of residents' memories of Delhi.[3] The museum aims to work as a civic service to collect lived experiences, organize on-site activities, interpret a multi-layered history and reinforce the local identities of this metropolis. The concept of this 'City Museum' cannot be generalized. It should be ritualistic to some degree, while at the same time displaying Delhi's past, present and future. In addition, the City Museum should undertake some traditional functions of city museums as well.

Towards a City Museum: working process at the roundtable
It was the City Museum proposal that gathered us, two dozen people from urban and heritage studies, to engage in discussions at the roundtable meeting. At the roundtable there were senior professors and young lecturers working at different universities and research institutes, as well as practitioners in the field of art, museum and urban planning, including museum directors, NGO organizers, architects and urban planners. The roundtable comprised eight sessions with topics ranging from the initial idea and the definition of a City Museum of everyday lives, to the theme(s), function(s) and location(s) for a decentralized City Museum. After several presentations on different perspectives of the city of Delhi and the neighbourhood-based projects already established by CCK, we reached agreement on the general idea of a City Museum that tells the stories of diverse and unique local lives instead of the narratives of a capital city full of Indian icons. However, we were divided about some of the concrete issues, for example, the question who this museum should mainly serve or the methods by which to organize activities. Theoretically, we all agreed that it should be a multi-use museum for different people, as a place where school children are educated, tourists achieve a better understanding and appreciation of the city and where locals find their own past. Practically, however, it will be almost impossible to achieve these goals all at once, not to mention the problems presented by the poor conditions of available locations and buildings of the different museum branches.

Location was a furiously debate topic. The proposed museum is suggested to be located at different campuses of AUD to encourage people to explore different neighbourhoods across the city. However, the choice of the hub building is difficult to make. The first proposed location, the centuries-old historic Dara Shukoh's Library building located at the Kashmere Gate Campus of the university (fig. 3), was rejected as it is poorly-equipped, half-abandoned and not large enough to qualify. We considered searching for funds to restore the building and re-use the space, but had to agree that the current condition and colonial style is too depressing for a truly vitalizing proposal for a City Museum that tells the stories of the city and its inhabitants. After all, city heritages are shared memories of the city and the people who live(d) in it. The target of the City Museum is to stimulate the vitality of the city and raise the level of education for all, displaying at the same time Delhi's centuries-old history and profound culture. Indeed, the relationship between city museums and city heritages needs to be further discussed.

Here we see the dilemma of the proposal. We need to persuade the government to fund this museum project, coming up with an attractive proposal that both suits our goals and the goals set by the government for city development. Therefore, the layout of the City Museum needs to support a system of urban public spaces and urban services, while at the same time incorporating the regional characteristics, elements and symbols of the city of Delhi. We were careful to avoid the idea that the project is about a 'museum of the city', presenting the whole of the city as a living museum. Yet, the concept of a museum may still be misunderstood by the government as a representation of a 'frozen heritage' without development. Designing our proposal, we thus made our decisions with careful consideration of political issues while upholding our initial determinations.

The social roles of academics in Social Sciences
Academics share social responsibilities just as other social actors. Many of the participants in the discussion on the City Museum proposal are academic in the fields of the Social Sciences, including the authors. Dealing with social issues, academics in the Social Sciences tend to be more involved with practical work in society than those working in other fields. CCK is a good example. The faculty doesn't merely teach and conduct research, but also organizes quite a lot of impressing practical projects in various city neighbourhoods. They don't consider themselves 'authorities', but work as facilitators, trying their best to achieve agreement among different social groups. At the same time, the City Museum project requires cooperation with academics from other fields, such as, for example, from landscape architects, who can help to deal with the relationship between the City Museum and its surroundings. Moreover, the involved academics have to work closely with governmental agencies. In China, the current strategy of think tanks requires scholars to actively participate in policy-making consultation for better governance, corresponding to Confucian thought that all intellectuals should contribute their intelligence to the country. Based on experiences of practical projects linking different stakeholders, academics could provide valuable suggestions to facilitate community-orientated policies, which may be taken as opportunities to promote democracy in a roundabout way. The essence is to abide by our professional ethics while negotiating with governmental agencies and working for the benefit of the public, just as the people of CCK have been doing in this City Museum proposal and other projects in the fantastic city of Delhi.

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Yike Hu, Associate Professor at Tianjin University, School of Architecture; UKNA fellow at IIAS from April- September 2015. His research interests include landscape architecture design, urban public space design, as well as scenic tourist area planning and design (563537280@qq.com).

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IIAS Reports

Perspectives on Asian Studies in Latin America

Cláudio Pinheiro

Workshop: 9-11 November 2016,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOP was to (1) outline the current state of Asian Studies in Latin America and (2) identify ways to move forward, encourage internationalization of Asian Studies at the institutional level, and integrate universities and scholars from the region.

The workshop was preceded by a Public Opening on 9 November and attended by almost 30 participants from 8 disciplinary fields, representing 25 institutions from 11 countries in Latin and North America, Europe and Asia. The event was hosted by the School of Advanced Studies of the Rio de Janeiro Federal University and organized/sponsored by SEPHIS (the Global South Exchange Programmed for the Research on the History of Development), ICAS (International Convention of Asia Scholars) and IIAS (International Institute for Asian Studies). The preparations for the workshop included a survey carried out by Sephis; the initial results of this survey were published in The Newsletter (#72, Autumn 2015, pp.36-37; http://iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/cartographies-asia-latin-america).

Public opening
In addition to the workshop participants, the public opening was attended by an audience of scholars and students from public and private universities in metropolitan Rio de Janeiro. Also present were directors and other formal representation of various organizations, including the Japan Foundation for South America, the SSRC for Africa and the Vice-Consul of Japan. Most relevant was the notable presence of students of African descent and underprivileged origins, testifying to the potential of Asian Studies in Latin America to de-ethnicize Social Sciences on the continent. 'Asia' has traditionally been identified in Latin America with an elitist curiosity concerning the 'Orient', but recent promotion of social inclusion through tertiary education shows that this picture is changing. Moreover, the field of Asian Studies in Latin America is characterized by a noticeable presence of scholars of Asian descent.

The workshop
The first day focused on analyzing the state of affairs, whilst the second discussed how to move forward toward a sustainable and inclusive environment for Asian Studies in Latin America, as well as suggestions for concrete action plans and pilot projects to integrate initiatives across Latin America and with Asia. Below are some results from the workshop discussions.

Asian Studies in Latin America. Questions of importance and relevance
The importance and relevance of Asian Studies in Latin America is not necessarily self-evident or under a permanent demand for justification. Development continues to be the main approach for framing relevance, however, this does not provide a sustainable prospect for Asian Studies. Moreover, Asian economic activities in Latin America, have led to 'Asia' becoming a 'commodified' academic good. This has led to an archipelago of isolated initiatives, directed by the priorities of national agendas. This hampers an integrated study of Asia, which is much needed to help review wide misperceptions concerning Asia in Latin America (and vice versa). If economy and development were to be the sole determinants of the relevance, scholars and themes would run the risk of becoming subservient to economic flows. It would also diminish the study of Asia to only those countries that are economically/developmentally active in Latin America (China, Korea, Japan, India and Russia).

The existing capacities of Asian Studies in Latin America; perceived gaps and needs
At an institutional level, Latin America relies on a well-developed academic and scientific structure, where the interest for Asia/Asian Studies is neither new, nor small. Asian Studies in Latin America have notably been framed by the specific interests of Latin American countries, reflected in the availability of resources, sustainability of the field, local teaching traditions, research agendas and the role played by language.

Past/existing continental initiatives include ALADAA (Latin American Association for Asian and African Studies, 1978), which has had a fundamental role in promoting Asian and African studies on the continent, but has problems with its financial sustainability and governance. ALADAA should be supported as an intellectual legacy of the continent, but its limitations for promoting a full-fledged integration of Asian Studies within Latin America should not be ignored.

Material concerning Asia or Asian Studies depends on the mediation of US or European academies, media or publishing industries. Likewise, materials on Latin America in Asia are mostly Latino-Americanist readings produced in the US and Europe (primarily produced in English, resulting in a mediated secondhand perception of Latin America), and very rarely are fresh works produced on the ground in Latin America. This seriously impacts on teaching traditions, as most students do not read languages other than their own, adding to the creation of stereotypical views. This has also led to teaching traditions to crystalize around non-autonomous understandings of Asia in Latin America (and vice versa). There thus exist challenges for enabling direct intellectual linkages, free access to research and bibliographic resources concerning both regions, and connecting academic journals, associations, archives and libraries in direct dialogue through an electronic platform.

Another obstacle is funding. National resources are primarily reserved for a country's own nationals. As a consequence, funding for pan-national, regional or continental initiatives are normally made available by external resources (e.g., Asian, European or North-American foundations), again leading to nation-specific research (e.g., funding from China for research on China).

What kind of Asian Studies do we want for the future?
Improvements would include the investment in direct dialogues between the two regions, in a way that the encompassing presence of the *West* could be challenged, not just at the level of mediator for global knowledge circulation, but for producing knowledge outside a certain methodological and theoretical framework. Studying Asia helps Latin America to rethink and deconstruct self-imposed views of the region being part of the *West*. Asia-Latin America intellectual encounters could lead to reconsidering 'history' as a derivative effect of the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world, organizing perceptions of the past as much as of the present. A Latin America-Asia intellectual connection is not only heuristically relevant for producing autonomous views on Asian and Latin American Studies that could avoid the encompassing presence of the West, it is equally important for producing pluralistic views of 'global'.

Moving forward
Encourage continental collaborative projects and initiatives, and organize existing capacity through a platform that can connect Asian Studies within Latin America within the broader international field of Asian Studies. Promote a pan-Latin American graduate program on Asian Studies that could work for the circulation of scholars and publications within the region and from outside; although this could also be risky, as the present academic scenario of Latin America has difficulties to absorb classic *Asiantists*. Other formats of collaborations are also possibilities, such as on-line collaborations and the consolidation of Asian History into an obligatory discipline at the undergraduate level.

Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia
The workshop participants discussed the relevance of a continental platform as a strategy for consolidating new forms of collaboration with institutions and associations in Asia and elsewhere. The platform should also function as a means for Latin American intellectuals to connect with other parts of the Global South in an autonomous way. The discussion led to the idea of a 'Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia', that could promote initiatives and later evolve into the form of an Association. The platform would require communication strategies, including newsletters, social media and a collective electronic platform (a site or blog), as well as a repository for identifying achievements (publications, journals, institutions) and for identifying libraries and archives that store material concerning Asia. The electronic platform should be pursued as a collective project, organized around local commissions. Functioning as a community for professionals at different stages of their careers, it could be the kick-off collective project of our Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia.

After the debate, the following concrete initiatives were proposed:
- The Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia should be present at meetings on Asian Studies, in our region and abroad.
- A panel or roundtable organized around our platform during ICAS 10 (Chiang Mai, Thailand, 20-23 of July 2017).
- The strategic meeting of the Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia should discuss an agenda for one, three and five year plans, with practical and academic issues, including:
  - the establishment of a secretariat; a calendar for bi-annual conferences; a definition of roles of individual faculty members and research agendas; a committee for the ICAS Book Prize (Portuguese and Spanish);
  - the construction of an on-line platform to: gather academics, institutions, journals and newsletters; improve continental knowledge about the history and present capacity of Asian Studies in LA (building on the survey by Sephis); register archives and libraries with special collections on Asia in Latin America; constitute a privileged space for students and young scholars from Latin America and Asia for interaction and information sharing.
- The Latin American Knowledge Platform on Asia should be present at the next ALADAA meeting (Lima, Peru, October 2017) - not only for taking the opportunity for further consolidating our platform, but specially for promoting an integrative agenda with ALADAA and other institutions and associations within Latin America.

Cláudio Pinheiro, Professor, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Chairman, Sephis Programme for Research and Cooperation on the Global South.

Abridged version by Sandra Dehue (IIAS).

**The full report is available here:
https://tinyurl.com/IIAS-LAperspectives**

Below: Participants of the workshop.

Above: Participants of the Winter School.

Global Debates, Local Realities

Sarah McKeever, Anna Julia Fiedler, Gayathry Venkiteswaran

2017 IIAS-SSRC Winter School
on Media Activism and Postcolonial
Futures in Hong Kong

IN AN ATTEMPT TO CHALLENGE established accounts of new technologies as mechanisms of 'liberation' in post-colonial societies, the Social Science Research Council and the International Institute for Asian Studies jointly organized a Winter School (Masterclass) in Hong Kong. The topic 'Media Activism and Postcolonial Futures' was carefully chosen to offer young academics the opportunity to engage in debates concerning the ways global power relations and thus postcolonial contexts influence practices in political and media activism.

From January 16th to January 21st a group of 25 PhD students from various regions and disciplinary backgrounds were given the chance to engage in lively academic debates, convener-led sessions and field research. The Winter School was hosted at the C-Centre of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) with conveners Francis Lee and Jack Linchuan Qiu (School of Journalism and Communication, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the C-Centre, Hong Kong); Paula Chakravartty (Department of Media, Culture and Communication and the Gallatin School, New York University, US); Zaharom Nain (The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus); and Srirupa Roy (University of Gottingen's Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS), Germany).

The preview
Twenty years since the handover from British to Chinese sovereignty, Hong Kong posed as the ideal place for an intensive dive into current academic debates on post colonialism and means of digital communication for achieving social change. Having undergone months-long protests, broadly mediated via various social media channels with the 2014 'Umbrella Movement', Hong Kong offered both the postcolonial context and the highly networked activist scene. Prior to the excursion, all participants engaged with extensive writings on the Umbrella Movement, ethnicity and media, class, power and populism. Additionally, all participants could choose one organization for their field research, from either the media flagship 'Apple Daily', the activist medium 'HK-In-Media', or the social activist and support group 'Hong Kong Mission for Migrant Workers'.

The start
To gain insight into the city's vast population of migrant workers from South East Asia, particularly the Philippines and Indonesia, the last group got a head start. Most domestic helpers have their only day off on Sundays, which they spend in parks, walkways, or on the empty streets of Hong Kong's shopping districts: Central and Admiralty. One day before the Winter School officially started, the Mission for Migrant Workers offered to introduce several self-organized workers' groups to the participants. Besides a union representative and LGBTQ activists, the group spoke to the representative of the Mission for Migrant Workers, Cynthia Abdon-Tellez. The first and brief impressions of this community left many questions for the coming field research including the importance of space in the discourse on migrant labor, particularly in a trade hub like Hong Kong.

On the New Asia College Campus of CUHK the participants were confronted with the challenges of a myriad of modern Hong Kongese cultural identities influenced by classical and neo-classical Chinese culture and philosophy, local minority group practices and beliefs, as well as western strands of ideas. The disciplinary backgrounds of the participants ranged from film and theater, architecture, linguistics, area studies, to political sciences, and anthropology. This richness of perspectives helped to engage with new arguments, deconstruct established concepts and to develop interdisciplinary approaches for the field trips.

The sessions
As an introduction, the first two sessions focused on pro-democracy activism in Hong Kong and labor activism in the People's Republic of China. Francis Lee introduced the debates surrounding the Umbrella Movement highlighting the usage of digital media and the diverse strands of political ideology within the pro-democracy camp. Jack Qiu led the second session concerning the global market and digital labor. Comparing the slave trade since the 16th century to the contemporary exploitation of labor in the production of new technologies, he introduced his concept of iSlavery. Finally he countered questions on how global chains of production and consumption could be controlled, and exploitation could be challenged through activism with a call for conscious digital abolitionism.

Zaharom Nain took up a case from contemporary politics in Indonesia during his session on 'Media, Ethnicity and Religion in South East Asia'. The case highlighted the way existing divides could be enhanced through campaigns and new media. The two joined sessions led by Srirupa Roy and Paula Chakravartty provided historical context through comparisons to 20th century movements and tackling general theoretical concepts. The groups engaged in heated debates relating current global political trends to new modes of communication, analyzing whether established power dynamics could be challenged. With Cherian George's guest lecture on Anti-Democratic Activism and his concept of hate spin, based on case studies of religious campaigning, the participants got to engage in another aspect of media politics.

Besides leading to more questions on how to research the influence of changing modes of communication on different societies or global communities, the sessions also helped to create a common starting point for the fieldwork.

The field
For two and a half days, the three research groups could explore the city and visit their respective organizations. Key to the development of a case was not only the interviews with the organization representatives, but also the contextualization of the observations, making the city an important part of the group work.

The Apple Daily group got the chance to visit an established print medium with one of the largest groups of daily readers. They were invited to tour the facilities and the newsroom and had discussions with the editor-in-chief and the head of the video division, 'Action News'. Their research on the media outlet presented them with a paper that was avant-garde when Jimmy Lai founded it in 1995. It dramatically lowered the price of its daily from the industry standard and provided mostly

sensational content. Adapting early to digital technologies, Apple Daily provided a local example for challenges to the global communication industry like paid content and digital advertising revenue. Within the political spectrum of Hong Kong, Apple Daily always took a pro-democracy stand, and catered to the middleclass with political commentary by well-known academics. The outlet supported the protestors during the 2014 Umbrella Movement, and faced cyber attacks and blockades of its delivery trucks, losing advertisers in the process.

The impressions from their visit presented the group with an outlet that mirrored the tensions between Hong Kong and China, and digital and print media. Their presentation portrayed the paper's development, and perspectives on it's reporting. Despite the criticism of it's sensationalist content, the group highlighted the paper's strong stance in fighting for the rights of the people. Whether this counts as media activism was of some debate within the group, considering the paper's stance as pro-market; perhaps this was just marketing strategy. Nonetheless, perhaps Apple Daily represents new forms of media activism in the 21st century.

This kind of reporting has paved the way for new strands of online journalism. Talking to the producers of HK-In Media the second group got to explore new ways of news creation and activism. The group visited the office and editorial board of the media outlet, which had been established in a reaction to the extensive political rallies in 2003 opposing legal reforms. At a briefing by one of its editors, Betty Lau Hin, it became clear that the role and growth of the portal was closely linked to the city's social movements. They worked with different civil society groups to promote democracy, as well as provide a space for public discussion on political, social and environmental issues.

In 2009 the outlet started to provide professional coverage from the ground replacing the majority of their content consisting of mere contributions of individuals and organizations. According to Lau, this shift enabled it to offer alternative and quick coverage during protests. In-media's fans on Facebook rose dramatically. The growing popularity of Facebook also meant that civil society groups that used In-media as a platform, shifted their dissemination and communication strategies directly to the social media. The theater performance of the research group during their presentation showed how they had been inspired by this citizens' initiative that has taken on the politically- and financially-powerful, and facilitated public discussions and interrogation of democracy.

For a long time, the issue of migrant workers, their lives in the metropolis, and their lack of employment rights had been of little interest for the majority population of Hong Kong. With the Mission for Migrant Workers, a platform and safeguard had been founded for the disenfranchised domestic helpers of the city. Highly networked with labor, human, and women's rights organizations around the city, the Mission had managed to become a powerful advocate concerning both local and international cases of abuse and fraud.

Besides the Sunday excursion the research group was invited to the small office to speak with Cynthia. She exposed the power dynamics by portraying the journey of domestic helpers, including the role of their governments and local agencies, giving an insight into the working and living conditions in the most dehumanizing and obscure places of the employers' homes, and introducing high profile abuse cases. The migrant worker's role in Hong Kong's working society, how the lack of space influenced their lives, and ways and tools that were used for communication and networking dominated the group's discussion. Most migrant groups were not represented in Hong Kong political organizations and seemed to lack real leverage. Nonetheless, the worker's struggle to build and uphold friendships, hobbies or political activism despite a lack of space and time, were remarkable. From interest groups, dance instruction, self-funded independent magazines to self help groups, a sub-community had been established, reaching to fellow workers around the globe.

Eventually the research group struggled with their presentation, trying to include all aspects of this diverse, international group of individuals and their activism. The exchanges at the Mission for Migrant Workers and the Domestic Workers Union emphasized the ways in which post-colonial societies remained in economic dependencies and how media could both help to create a platform for disenfranchised people or be used for exclusionary campaigning.

The research groups had jointly explored different strands of communication and media production, activism and postcolonial societies. The social networks Facebook,WhatsApp and Twitter proved important for research, communication and documentation. As serendipity was highlighted as key to exploration, the participants ventured out to the city and gathered for tea and karaoke, engaging in fruitful debates. Finally it weren't only the lectures, or the interaction with journalists, activists and those in between that made this Winter School memorable, but also these casual encounters.

Report by Winter School participants: Sarah McKeever, Anna Julia Fiedler, Gayathry Venkiteswaran.

IIAS Announcements

Tarini Shipurkar – Winner of the 2016 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize

Gender on campus: redefining gender identities at Jawaharlal Nehru University

Thesis cover picture (c) Tarini Shipurkar: mural depicting the struggle for women's liberation in India, made by members of AISA (All India Students' Association) – a left-wing student political organization at JNU.

The thesis prize winner Tarini Shipurkar.

TARINI SHIPURKAR was awarded the 2016 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies. She wrote her thesis, fully entitled, *An ethnographic study on the transformations in gendered identities of young women in India as they shift across contexts of home and university,* at the Leiden University Institute of Anthropology and Development Sociology (May 2016, supervised by Dr Erik de Maaker).

Each year, IIAS awards this prize, in the form of a three-month IIAS fellowship, to encourage young academic talent to continue their research interest in Asia and help them with their next steps on this path. The fellowship can be used to write a PhD project proposal or a research article.

The winner was announced during a festive gathering at Leiden University's Faculty Club by Nira Wickramasinghe, Chair of the IIAS Board and Professor of Modern South Asian Studies at Leiden University:

"Tarini Shipurkar's thesis is an ethnographic study of the experiences of young women studying at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, a university which is at present the target of Hindu nationalist forces in India. Through this case study in a single site, the thesis explores gender, space, urban life, youth, and identity, all themes of wider significance in the study of South Asia and Asia more broadly. Shipurkar finds that for women from widely varying class, ethnic, and regional backgrounds across India, in contrast to their more ambivalent or negative perceptions of Delhi as unsafe for women, JNU is a kind of exceptional space. Here, many female students can reinvent and reimagine themselves away from home through their everyday practices, comportment, political engagement and mobility, albeit in temporally and spatially circumscribed ways. The strength of the thesis resides in my view in the analysis of the embodied practices as well as the utterances. The thesis offers a measured and subtle reading of the fluidity between the multiple social worlds these women inhabit."

This year, the Jury assessed 15 submitted theses, and shortlisted three. Professor Wickramasinghe also praised the other two shortlisted theses as deserving and impressive. She concurred with the Jury that they, too, certainly exhibit the qualities mentioned in Umberto Eco's famous little book *How to write a thesis:* "critical thinking, resourcefulness, creativity, attention to detail, and academic pride and humility."

Runners-up
- *China: Third World Representative or Global Superpower? Reviewing China's Discourse about Its Developing Country Status Vis-à-Vis Africa.* Matthijs Bijl, MA International Relations: East Asian Studies, University of Groningen, August 2016. Supervisor: Dr Frank Gaenssmantel.
- *Dynamics of Temporality and Timelessness. Horse games and the notion of 'tradition' in present-day Kyrgyzstan.* Simone de Boer, MA Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University, June 2016. Supervisor: Dr Nienke van der Heide.

The deadline for submissions for the 2017 IIAS National Master's Thesis Prize in Asian Studies is 1 October 2017 (see p.12 of this issue).

Call for Panels – Borderland Spaces: Ruins, Revival(s) and Resources

FOR THIS UPCOMING 6th Asian Borderlands conference in Bishkek, we invite panels and papers that address the following questions: How are borderlands in Asia creating alternative spaces for heritages, self-definition and the extraction of resources? How can these cases serve to rethink social theories of various kind?

As one of the main goals of this conference is to spur collaboration and conversations across diverse fields, 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.

The conference is organised by the American University of Central Asia, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN).

6th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network

Deadline: 2 October 2017
Conference dates: 23-25 August 2018
Venue: Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

For full information and online application forms:
www.asianborderlands.net

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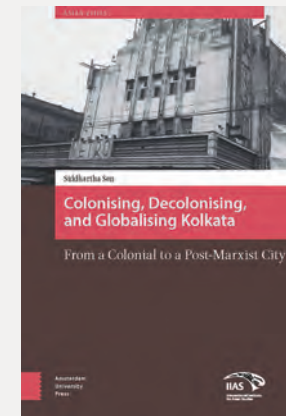
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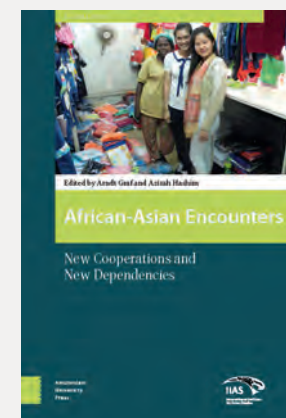
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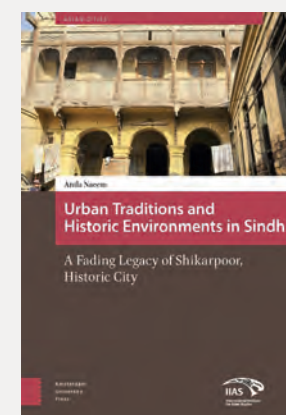
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IIAS Research and Projects

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 for more information.

Global Asia

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

Asian Borderlands Research Network (www.asianborderlands.net)
The Asian Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. The next conference, on borderlands as alternative spaces for heritage, will take place in August 2018. See p.52 for the Call for Panels.
Coordinator: Eric de Maaker (maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)
Website: www.asianborderlands.net

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 Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS.
Coordinators: M. Amineh, Programme Director EPA-IIAS
(m.p.amineh@uva.nl or m.p.amineh@iias.nl),
Y. Guang, Progamme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS
Website: 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.
Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo
Website: www.iias.asia/research/iias-centre-regulation-and-governance

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.
Website: 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.

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.

Financed by the EU, extensive research staff exchanges focusing on China and India were caried out between 2012 and 2016. The success of the UKNA synergy has encouraged the network's partners to carry on its activities, among others, expanding its orientation to include urban develop-ment in Southeast Asia in the framework of the South East Asian Neighborhoods Network programme (2017-2020).
Coordinator: Paul Rabé (p.e.rabe@iias.nl)
Website: www.ukna.asia

Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET)
This new 'urban' initiative of IIAS (2017-2020) is about research, teaching and dissemination of knowledge on Asia through the prism of city neighbourhoods and urban communities in six selected Southeast Asian Cities. The aim of this micro-local framework of scholarly and civic engagement is to generate alternative, generalisable paradigms on city neighbourhoods. A second ambition of the programme is to shape and empower a community of early career scholars and practitioners working on/from Southeast Asia who will contribute to the growing body of humanistically informed knowledge on Asian cities. The programme is supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation (New York, USA).
Coordinator:
Paul Rabé (p.e.rabe@iias.nl)
Website: www.ukna.asia/seannet

Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER focuses on the uses of culture and cultural heritage practices in Asia. In particular, it addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for social agency. Doing so, it explores the notion of heritage as it evolved from an originally European concept primarily associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested assertions 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. The wide variety of activities carried out in this context, among others, aim to engage with the such concepts of 'authenticity', 'national heritage' and 'shared heritage' and, in general, with issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage.

International Graduate Double Degree 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 an international Double Degree programme for graduate students in the field of 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe'. To date, the Asian partners involved have been two departments of National Taiwan University and one department of Yonsei University in South Korea; contacts with other possible Asian partner institutes are being explored. The programme offers selected students the opportunity to follow a full year study at one of the partner institutes with full credits and a double degree. The curriculum at Leiden University is supported by the IIAS Asian Heritages research cluster and benefits from the contributions of Prof Michael Herzfeld (Harvard) as a guest teacher and the Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative of IIAS.
Contact: Elena Paskaleva (e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl) or Willem Vogelsang (w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl)
Website: www.iias.nl/critical-heritage-studies

Indian Medical Heritage Research Network
The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network wants to stimulate social-cultural and social-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unanitibb, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage) for collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds.
Website: www.iias.nl/indianmedicine
Coordinator: Maarten Bode (m.bode@uva.nl)

Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World

A four year programme supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) at Leiden University has been awarded a four-year grant by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, New York, to facilitate a collaborative platform of over twenty Asian, African, European and North American universities and their local social and cultural partners, for the co-creation of a new humanistic pedagogical model. This follows the successful completion in 2016 of a three-year project *(Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context)*, supported by the same foundation, to rethink the scholarly practice of area (Asia) studies in today's global postcolonial context. IIAS is grateful to the Mellon Foundation and Leiden University for their continuing support.

The new programme (2017-2020) titled 'Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World' calls for expanding the scope of the humanities by mobilizing knowledge-practices that have largely remained unrepresented in contemporary academia. It will connect a global network of individuals and institutions capable of garnering such knowledge in Asia and Africa in order to develop alternative pedagogies for teaching, research, and dissemination across disciplinary, national, and institutional borders. The aim is to contribute to the realignment of the social role and mission of institutions of higher learning with regard to the humanistic values that inspired their establishment in the first place.

The objectives of this four-year initiative are: (1) The establishment of a trans-regional consortium of scholars, educators, and institutions committed to innovations in research and education; (2) methodological interventions through a focus on key sites of knowledge-practices in four regions – Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and West Africa – to benefit from their comparative potential; (3) the encouragement of university-society linkages and, when possible, their institutionalization in the form of trans-disciplinary centres for testing curricula and pedagogies in partner institutions; (4) the development of a curricular matrix responsive to forms of humanistic knowledge-practices across borders.
Coordination: Dr Philippe Peycam, Programme Director; Dr Aarti Kawlra, Academic Director; Titia van der Maas, Programme Coordinator. Contact: Titia van der Maas (t.van.der.maas@iias.nl).
Website: www.iias.asia/research/humanities-across-borders-asia-africa-world

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

Eva Ambos
The heritagization of the (post-)war in Sri Lanka
15 May 2017 – 15 March 2018

Mehdi Amineh
Coordinator
'Energy Programme Asia (EPA)'
Domestic and geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union
1 Sept 2007 – 31 March 2018

Elizabeth Cecil
Mapping the Pāśupata landscape: polity, place, and the Śaiva imaginary in Northwest India (7th-10th century)
1 Feb 2017 – 31 July 2017

Haydon Cherry
Down and out in Saigon: stories of the poor in a colonial city, 1900-1940
1 June 2017 – 31 August 2017

Lung-hsing Chu
Meeting in Nagasaki: rethinking Western influence on Japanese material culture in the late Edo period
1 Oct 2016 – 31 July 2017

Lawrence Chua
Bangkok Utopia: modern architecture, urban public space, and the Buddhist spatial imagination in 20th-century Thailand
1 June 2017 – 31 Dec 2017

Jatin Dua
A sea of protection: piracy, trade, and regulation in the Indian Ocean
1 Oct 2016 – 31 July 2018

Gregory Goulding
The Cold War poetics of Muktibodh: a study of Hindi internationalism, 1943-1964
1 Sept 2016 – 31 July 2017

Anna Grasskamp
Maritime material culture in a global context
1 Feb 2017 – 31 July 2017

Laxshmi Greaves
A hoard of Gupta period terracotta temple panels from Katingara, Etah district, Uttar Pradesh
1 April – 31 Juli 2017

Jiri Jakl
Alcohol in pre-Islamic Java (c. 800-1500 CE): cultural, social, and ritual uses of an 'unholy' brew
15 March 2017 – 15 Aug 2017

Pralay Kanungo
Visiting Professor,
India Studies Chair (ICCR)
Indian Politics
1 Sept 2013 – 30 June 2018

Neena Talwar Kanungo
The arrival of digital democracy in India: social media and political parties
1 July 2016 – 30 June 2018

Radu Leca
Myriad countries: the outside world on historical maps of Japan
1 Oct 2016 – 31 July 2017

Carola Erika Lorea
Folklore, religion and diaspora: the migration of oral traditions across and beyond the East Bengal border
1 Sept 2016 – 30 June 2017

Giacomo Mantovan
Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora
1 Sept 2016 – 30 June 2017

Bindu Menon
Migrant cartographies: migrant media in the Gulf Council Cooperation cities
1 Aug 2017 – 31 May 2018

Sebastian Schwecke
Informal monetary markets
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jan 2018

Bal Gopal Shrestha
Religiosity among the Nepalese Diaspora
1 Jan 2015 – 31 Dec 2017

Alexander Stolyarov
Database of early mediaeval North Indian land grants: copperplates and publications
19 June 2017 – 19 July 2017

Ady van den Stock
'Wisdom' as a category of knowledge and a marker of cultural identity: reinterpretations of Wang Yangming in modern China
26 Sept 2016 – 26 July 2017

Shu-li WANG
The Politics of China's cultural heritage on display: Yin Xu Archaeological Park in the making
1 Sept 2015 – 31 Aug 2017

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
Application deadline: 1 April and 1 October every year

KNAW

ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme

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

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

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

African Studies Centre

IIAS
International Institute for Asian Studies

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Laxshmi Greaves

A hoard of Gupta period terracotta temple panels from Katingara, Etah district, Uttar Pradesh

MY FELLOWSHIP AT IIAS began in May this year and I have already benefitted enormously from the inspiring, supportive and convivial environment of the Institute and of the neighbouring Humanities Faculty with its thriving Indology community.

I came to the IIAS after completing my doctorate at Cardiff University and the British Museum on monumental brick temple architecture and terracotta art of early North India. My current project focuses on a substantial and fascinating group of narrative Gupta period terracotta panels dispersed across museum and private collections in North America, Canada, Europe and India. Many of the panels depict scenes from the great Hindu epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and some bear short Brāhmī inscriptions dating to the early fifth century CE, which Professor Peter Bisschop (Leiden University Institute for Area Studies) has been helping me to decipher. Although the panels share a bold, idiosyncratic style and a likeness in scale and finish, they have never been acknowledged as having a single origin. Instead, most of them have been loosely described as hailing from Uttar Pradesh. The obscure provenance suggests that the panels were not unearthed during the course of a legal excavation.

The central aims of my research paper are to draw together this remarkable collection of panels and to put forward an argument for their place of origin being a small archaeological site near the village of Katingara, located in the alluvial plains beside the Kali Nadi river (a tributary of the Ganges) in district Etah, Uttar Pradesh. Katingara will also be positioned within the context of recorded early archaeological sites in the region – a region often overlooked in studies on Gupta art, architecture and archaeology despite being in the heartland of the empire. Importantly, the panels constitute one of the earliest and most extensive collections of terracotta *Rāmāyaṇa* images surviving from the Gupta period and this is the first time since their illicit removal from Katingara that they have been 're-assembled'.

Being at IIAS has also given me the opportunity to begin research on a collaborative paper with Dr Elizabeth Cecil, an IIAS fellow and lecturer at Leiden University (see p.46 of this issue). Our project will investigate some unusual Śaiva images from northern Rajasthan dating to circa the late Kuṣāṇa period (3rd century CE). Some of the features in these images were not absorbed into the iconographic language of religious art in South Asia, formalised to an extent during the Gupta period, and are therefore little understood and highly intriguing.

I have also been making the most of the excellent museums in Leiden and its neighbouring cities, as well as enjoying the delightful architecture and canals. One of the highlights of my stay in Leiden is being able to pop over regularly to the beautiful Hortus botanicus located a few doors down from the IIAS, where I can clear my mind and do a spot of sketching.

Jirí Jákl

Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

Liquor in the jar: Alcohol in Java, ca. 800 – 1500 CE

I CAME TO IIAS to finalize my book on 'alcohol in pre-Islamic Java (ca. 800 – 1500 CE)'. From my first sojourn in Leiden as an MA student many years ago, I still remember Leiden's intellectual environment, which has not been changed and remains as challenging as before. The brand-new Asian Library (see pp.44-45 of this issue), with its helpful, professional and dedicated staff, are certain to appeal to anyone who works on Asian cultures, as is the rich and world-famous collection of Asian manuscripts. In particular, however, it is the open-mindedness of my colleagues and friends that makes my second sojourn such a nice and enriching experience.

My research interests lie in the field of the social and cultural history of the maritime Silk Road. In my past research and teaching I have always been trying to understand 'historical change' as a complex event, in which social, cultural, religious, but also material aspects and factors fuse together to result in a particular, often unpredictable, new quality.

Many historical changes are often only fully recognized and experienced by a society after years or decades, when they are finally accepted as representing a 'change'. Following this approach, I find alcohol, and other less well-known intoxicants, to be a particularly rewarding research topic, as it represents an intriguing window into the loves and fears of the societies that existed in the past, in what is now called Indonesia.

Obviously, alcohol is extremely controversial in contemporary Islamic Java. Though representing a relatively marginal intoxicant in modern Java, where tobacco and coffee rule the day, alcohol was an important substance in pre-Islamic Java, as it was and still is on Hindu Bali. Old Javanese texts, especially the texts on *dharma* and ecclesiastical rules, present intoxicating drinks as forbidden, addictive, and impure. Yet, other sources describe alcohol as nourishing, arousing, and important in the social, political, ritual, and medical contexts.

Probably surprisingly for many modern observers, alcohol has, through time, influenced Javanese social, religious, and cultural life in many ways, from the ordinary to the remarkable and unexpected. My book deals with questions such as: Why was alcohol so prominent and widespread in Java before 1500 CE, but disappeared from most social and cultural contexts by the 18th century? Was Islamization the only reason behind this development, as is commonly supposed? The historical records available to us indicate that consumption of alcohol has substantially diminished only during the first half of the 17th century, when other intoxicants, in particular tobacco, became more common. In the 18th century, when substantial segments of Javanese society became more strictly Islamic, alcohol consumption was limited mostly to elites, some non-Javanese ethnic groups, and medical use.

During my affiliation with IIAS, I will give talks in Leiden, Denmark, and possibly Vienna. Apart from working on my book, I engulf myself in occasional visits of Dutch museums and galleries, and spend part of my weekends bird-watching with a couple of friends. And yes, my academic study of alcohol in Java would not be complete without a disciplined consumption of delicious Dutch (and Belgium) beers.

IIAS FELLOWSHIPS

Yearly application deadlines: 1 March and 1 October

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

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

Asian Cities

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

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

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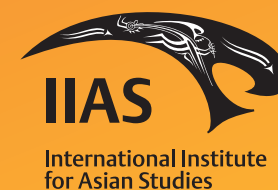
Japan Museum SieboldHuis

The SieboldHuis is named after Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold (1796-1866), surgeon major in the Dutch East Indies Army and Dutch diplomat in Japan. In his capacity as general practitioner Siebold gained access to many everyday household goods, woodblock prints, tools and handcrafted objects, and thus he started his extensive 'Japan' collection, later expanding it to include plants, seeds, and rare animals. Siebold settled in the house on Rapenburg 19 (Leiden, the Netherlands) and it was in this location that he showed his collection of Japanese objects and artefacts to an interested public. Today, after more than 150 years, his former house is the first official Japan centre in the Netherlands. Two special exhibitions have been planned at the SieboldHuis this summer, as part of the Leiden Asia Year (see pp.44-45): 'Tōhoku Girls' and 'The Constructed Landscape'.

Tōhoku Girls. *Kokeshi* dolls from Japan.
23 June – 3 September 2017

THIS SUMMER Japan Museum SieboldHuis will host approximately two hundred traditional wooden dolls from Japan. These pretty *kokeshi,* with their brightly painted clothes and expressive faces, were all hand-made by skilled craftsmen in the north-east of Japan, in a region of volcanic mountains, hot springs and forests called Tōhoku. These dolls are widely collected for their simple charm and the variety of character shown in their different facial expressions. The careful observer soon learns to recognise the eleven different strains and the variety of painted patterns handed down through generations. There are currently about 150 *kokeshi* artisans and during this exhibition a film will be shown of one famous maker, demonstrating how these special dolls are made.

Kokeshi **dolls from Tōhoku, photos by Erik and Petra Hesmerg.**

The Constructed Landscape. Photos by Shibata Toshio.
16 June – 3 September 2017

EXPERIENCE THE JAPANESE LANDSCAPE through the eyes of Shibata Toshio. Large-scale highways and civil engineering constructions set in uninhabited regions are transformed into mysterious vistas in his contemporary photography. This internationally renowned landscape photographer illustrates the tension between human intervention and the strength of nature. Shibata's perspective takes the viewer beyond the functionality of these structures and shows them the aesthetics of the infrastructure. His compositions illustrate how nature (weather, corrosion, erosion, water currents and landslides) reclaims damage done by human intervention. Shibata's photos, taken with a large-format camera exude an atmosphere of fantasy void of references to time, place and scale.

Left: Okawa Village, Tosa County, Kochi Prefecture, 2007.

Right: Juocho, Hitachi City, Ibaraki Prefecture, 2008.

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