Encouraging knowledge and enhancing the study of Asia

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NO. 85

The Newsletter

The Study

Surrounded by slogans

The Focus

Recentering the Bay of Bengal

ICAS 12

Crafting a Global Future

International Institute for Asian Studies

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Recentering the Bay of Bengal

Connected spaces in an inter-Asian bordersea

Jayati Bhattacharya
and Carola Erika Lorea

Often considered the periphery and the liquid borderland between South Asia and Southeast Asia, the Bay of Bengal can be seen as the nodal crossroad and the cultural hub for a network of exchanges and contacts of diverse kinds. This inter-littoral world of trade, of spices and fabrics, of sandalwood and muslin, preceded the advent of the big European overseas trading corporations. It is from this time period that our contributors retrace the steps of the social, cultural, economic and political history of the Bay of Bengal and its contemporary value for the understanding of water, changing ecologies, and vulnerable livelihoods. The articles in this Focus add complexity and texture to the public discourse around the strategic importance of the Bay of Bengal, and seek to de-romanticize notions of transnational flows, bringing up instances of disconnections, disruptions, and unequal mobilities within and across the Bay.

The Newsletter is a free periodical published by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). As well as serving as a forum for scholars to share research, commentary and opinion with colleagues in academia and beyond, The Newsletter is also a window into the Institute. Information about the programmes and activities of IIAS can be found in the Network pages of each issue of The Newsletter.

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) is a global Humanities and Social Sciences institute and a knowledge exchange platform, based in Leiden, the Netherlands, with programmes that engage Asian and other international partners. IIAS takes a thematic and multi-sectoral approach to the study of Asia and actively involves scholars and experts from different disciplines and regions in its activities. Our current thematic research clusters are 'Asian Heritages', 'Asian Cities' and 'Global Asia'.

In this issue

Planning for ICAS 12 in Kyoto is already in full swing; find out more on p.4 of this issue, and online at, www.icas.asia. Make sure to send us your proposal, or perhaps submit your new publication to the ICAS Book Prize! Two members of the European Alliance for Asian Studies have contributed to the regional pages in this issue (pp.16-20), as has our regional editor at Seoul National University Asia Center (pp.21-23). The report on pp.46-47 is the latest update of a project in the IIAS Humanities across Borders programme: 'Street food practices in Dakar and its environs'. You can read about the UKNA symposium 'Ambivalent Infrastructures' in Nagaland on p.48, along with a short account of the 'deportation' of some of the participants. On the opposite page, we are informed about the Double Degree Programme in 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe'. Our latest announcements can be found on p.51; IIAS research programmes, networks and other initiatives are described in brief on pp.52-53; and on pp.54-55 you will find information about the IIAS Fellows and Fellowship programme.

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

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International Institute for Asian Studies

Beyond the 'competitive' model

Philippe Peycam

After the frenzy of ICAS 11, the IIAS team has been taking stock of what this exceptional event meant not only for future ICAS events but also for the institute and its other activities, along with its capacity to do things in an always more innovative, inclusive and meaningful fashion.

One of the important meetings that took place at ICAS 11 directly dealt with the question of the role of 'area studies' academic institutions such as IIAS and the ways in which they can best serve as inter-disciplinary, transcultural/national platforms. I am referring to the workshop "Institutional Support for Area Studies in Europe – Trends, Opportunities, Limitations", a joint IIAS/GIS-ASIE roundtable organised under the aegis of the European Alliance of Asian Studies (EAAS). The workshop was significant in that it sought to freely discuss the situation in which – in the context of Europe, and a perception shared by many institutions devoted to Asia studies – their work of developing a contextualised comprehension of regions and societies of the world, and 'their' entanglements with 'ours', has not always been well appreciated within academia and within society.

Area (Asia) studies must be recognised as a unique vector of knowledge with its multiplier effects, not just in terms of scholarly research 'impacts', or the direct benefits of training language and country or region 'specialists', but in its potential to formulate new methodologies (comparisons and connections), new pedagogies (transcending mental and institutional boundaries), and new relationships (between societies, between situated experiences, between the academic and non-academic communities).

In the last two decades at least, the restructuring of higher education and the trend towards its corporatisation characterised by a sharp decline in funding support, especially after the 2008-10 financial crisis, has meant that area studies scholars and their institutions have been subjected to an increase in narrow bureaucratic scrutiny and an exacerbated competition to prove their economic 'sustainability', a process resulting in soaring precariousness for their members and for the development of these organisations.

Against this Social Darwinist trend, a number of institutions have set out to move beyond the current prescribed logic of competition by exchanging their experiences while trying to revisit some of their programmatic, even epistemological, models with a renewed interest in globally connected, reciprocated collaborations. At stake for these organisations and the individual scholars in their midst, is a recognition on the part of the public (state), civic (society) and private (foundation) sectors of the need to better support their unique research, educational and service capabilities, including the importance of continuing to train in languages.

One challenge they are facing is to engage substantively with national and international (EU) agencies that are meant to fund them, a task few feel qualified to achieve by themselves, hence the existence of the European Alliance for Asian Studies, and along with it, the organisation by two of its members of the workshop at ICAS. The critical aim of that exploratory meeting was to ascertain to what extent European and national state structures as well as foundations could be included in conversations about the (re-) working of Asia (area) studies in our always more entangled and diverse societies. One question was whether some of the existing funding programmes (Marie Curie, ERC, VIDI, ANR, etc.) could be better adapted, and supplemented, to promote the consolidation and renovation of 'area studies' in Europe.

A reality that the discussions in Leiden highlighted was a sense of disconnect that presently exists between these support mechanisms as they operate today and the actual working of area/Asia studies programmes. There is a shared view among the latter that when funding schemes exist, they are usually too rigidly framed to fit their needs. That they tend to privilege projects with prescriptive responses, often promoting quantifiable if not positivist approaches that do not properly reflect the subtle shifts intervening in today's post-Cold War, post-colonial world, and the practice of area studies that draws from it.

Also, these mechanisms tend to stress systemic competition among individuals rather than the need for more collaborative capacity building initiatives. They (EU's Erasmus Mundi for instance) create complex bureaucratic models often at the expense of organically developed modes of cooperative engagement. As is similar in other branches of the humanities and the social sciences, these programmes follow a quantitative evaluation system originating from the hard sciences, with insistence on 'metrics' rather than substance, and on short term 'deliverables' as opposed to long term transformative processes.

One way to remedy the current marginalisation of area studies, as proposed by the workshop participants, is to encourage more direct, reciprocal collaborative immersions in the regions under study, and to do this in relation to other areas so as to facilitate comparisons. A model of decentred, multi-polar learning should in turn facilitate the capacities of scholars to grapple with urgent topics of global concerns, which a narrow definition of 'Asia' no longer helps to elucidate: phenomena of ecological mutations, digitisation and media, mass urbanisation, ubiquity of English at the cost of other languages, opposing medical systems, issues of political and academic freedom, etc.

To achieve this, academic area studies programmes and their institutional funders should learn to work together in a more horizontal, proactive fashion. More regular interactions and more flexibility in collaboration is needed to support diversified approaches of engagement, beyond the rigid 'competitive' individualised metrics-based grant model. Long term cooperation between European academic organisations and their Asian and global counterparts, in close interaction with their respective social environments, should be encouraged. More than ever, there is a need for all players involved, funding agencies included, to re-invent Asia/area studies by recognising the ever-growing interconnection of societies, aspects of historical permanence and fluidities, while acknowledging that movements of people and ideas continue, even if restricted and orientated.

Philippe Peycam
Director IIAS

Call for applications

Professorial Fellowship for the Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University, the Netherlands, 2020-2021

International Institute for Asian Studies

Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

We invite applications for the Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University. The Chair provides a Professorial Fellow position of five or ten months for a visiting scholar in Taiwan Studies to teach and conduct research at Leiden University and the International Institute for Asian Studies (Leiden, The Netherlands). The Fellowship covers (one or both of) the two semesters September 2020-January 2021, and February-June 2021.

To facilitate the Taiwan Studies Programme at Leiden University, the Department of Cross-Strait Education of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China, Taiwan, the Leiden University Faculty of Humanities and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) have jointly established a Chair of Taiwan Studies, based at the Faculty of Humanities. The Chair provides a Professorial Fellow position for a visiting scholar in Taiwan Studies, preferably, but not exclusively, in the fields of Critical Heritage Studies, Urban Studies or the study of Global Asia, which are the IIAS' focal areas.

For five or ten months in the academic year 2020-2021, the position will be open to applicants from all universities and research institutes in Taiwan or elsewhere. Candidates with a full professorial position at their home institution whose research focuses on Taiwan and preferably falls within any of the fields mentioned above are particularly welcome to apply.

The Chair of Taiwan Studies will teach and conduct research at Leiden University and IIAS. The Ministry of Education in Taiwan and IIAS at Leiden University will sponsor round-trip airfare, living expenses, accommodation, office facilities, as well as relevant expenses for one research conference.

The Professorial Fellow can invite one master's degree or PhD student affiliated with the Professorial Fellow's home institution to come to Leiden for a short-term study or exchange visit during the Fellow's stay in Leiden.

Please submit applications (CVs in both Mandarin and English; one proposal in English) to the Education Division of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium at belgium@mail.moe.gov.tw

Applications should include suggestions for a teaching course, or courses, at BA or MA level.

Application deadline: 16 April 2020

For further information, please contact:

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ICAS 12

Crafting a Global Future
Kyoto, Japan
24-27 August 2021

Davide Grieco on unsplash.com

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is a global platform enabling individuals and institutions from all over the world to come together to exchange views on a variety of issues pertaining to Asia.

Since 1997, ICAS has brought together more than 20,000 scholars, civil society representatives, practitioners and artists, at 11 conventions. Publishers, institutes and NGOs converge to display their products, services and research outcomes in the ICAS exhibition hall. The ICAS Books and Dissertations Carousel offers (future) authors a platform to launch their publications. ICAS' inclusive approach contributes to the decentring of Asian Studies, while successfully convening a global space in which Asia scholars from the whole world can directly interact.

International Institute for Asian Studies

京都精華大学
KYOTO SEIKA UNIVERSITY

ICAS 12 – Crafting a Global Future

The meeting place for the twelfth edition of ICAS will be Kyoto, Japan. Kyoto is famous for its World Heritage Sites, temples, gardens, palaces and craft centres. Kyoto Seika University (SEIKA) is the main host of ICAS 12; it will partner with the city, The Consortium of Universities in Kyoto, and the city's museums and craft centres. The special focus of ICAS 12 is *Crafting a Global Future*. Participate at ICAS 12 and enjoy the multitude of networking opportunities, possibilities to share your research and to meet with publishers.

Call for proposals: deadline 1 October 2020
For further information visit icas.asia or email: icas12@iias.nl

The ICAS Book Prize (IBP) 2021

The biennial IBP was established by ICAS in 2003. The IBP is awarded to outstanding publications in the field of Asian Studies. It has created an international focus for publications on Asia, which has increased their visibility and recognition worldwide. The IBP received 750 submissions in 2019 and has grown into the leading book prize in the field of Asian Studies. For this ninth edition, books in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese will be eligible.

For the English language edition of the IBP 2021 we also welcome dissertations on Asia in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Deadline: 1 October 2020. Submit your titles to the IBP 2021 on icas.asia

Asian Studies Book Fair

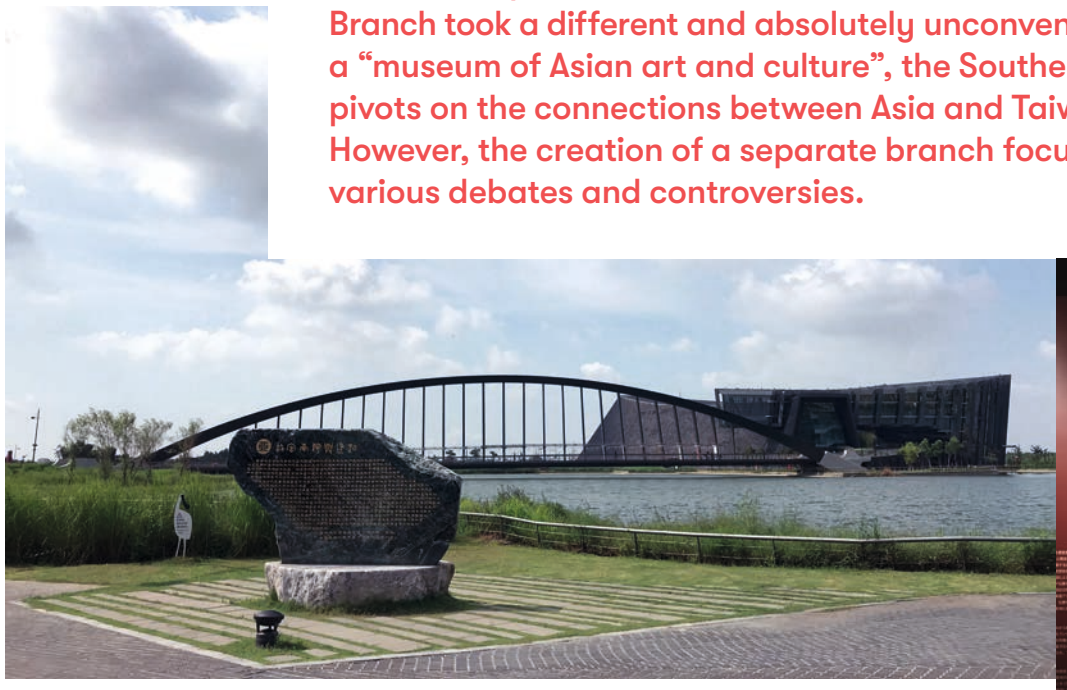
Publishers and academic institutes are invited to exhibit at the Asian Studies Book Fair at ICAS 12, to present their publications, projects and programmes to the large number of attendees. The Book Fair will also host events such as manuscript pitches, author meetings and book launches.

Exhibitors or advertisers email: icas12@iias.nl

Representing Asia in the Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum in Taiwan

Susan Shih Chang

The Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum (NPM) in Taiwan opened on 28 December 2015 (south.npm.gov.tw). While the main branch in Taipei holds vast collections of Chinese art and antiques, and prides itself as the protector and inheritor of Chinese civilisation, the Southern Branch took a different and absolutely unconventional route. Positioned as a "museum of Asian art and culture", the Southern Branch is a project that pivots on the connections between Asia and Taiwan's multicultural history. However, the creation of a separate branch focusing on Asia spurred various debates and controversies.



Above: View of the Southern Branch National Palace Museum. Right: Stupa Railing with Tree Goddesses (2-3 AD, India), situated at the entrance of the exhibition *Imprints of Buddhas*.

For the opening, Chinese nationalist actor Jackie Chan donated replicas of bronze zodiac sculptures originally seated in the Old Summer Palace in Beijing. The gift was publically criticised as a symbol of the looming Chinese history that overshadows Taiwan.[1] Just days after the opening, two of the sculptures were 'vandalised' and spray-painted with the text 'Cultural United Front'. This incident demonstrates how national museums can be battlefields for forging and maintaining political power through dominant ideology, and how museums not only reflect a nation's political and social development but also, in Taiwan's case, respond to the 'imperial centre' of each era.[2] This event is also one of the many cases that illustrate Taiwan's public reaction to China, 'Chineseness' and the 'China factor',[3] signalling a harsh reality that the formation of Taiwanese identity must, in many circumstances, consider China and 'Chineseness' as reference points.

My research, which seeks to discover other possibilities for referencing, focuses on how the Southern Branch positions itself as a linkage of Asian heritage and civilization via an 'intercultural and cross-cultural discourse'. I explore the narratives that the museum uses to strengthen the position of Taiwan as a hub where Asian cultures continue to create, recreate and integrate. Through examining the exhibitions and interviews with the curators, I was given insight into how the museum applies the concept of 'cultural spheres' throughout the permanent galleries. This novel method, I argue, represents a quest for a new kind of modernity for Taiwan, which symbolises the need, consciously and unconsciously, for an alternative explanation of history and other possible perspectives to view the relationship between the self and the other.

The museum: a quest for identity

When Chiang Kai-shek-led Kunmingtang (KMT, aka the Nationalist Party) retreated to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the Chinese Civil War, the original plan was to use Taiwan as a temporary base to reclaim the Mainland from the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong. As Taiwan had previously been colonized by Japan (1895-1945), the KMT government promoted 're-sinicisation' on the island through installations of Chinese cultural institutions, including the National Palace Museum. The architecture is modelled after the Forbidden City in Beijing and displays elements of traditional Chinese royal designs and symbols. In addition, the museum emphasises a collection that is 'inherited' from the Qin Emperors, in order to gain international recognition for the legitimacy of the KTM as the true government of China and the sole preserver of Chinese civilization.

In 2000, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election, ending the KMT's nearly forty-year authoritarian rule. The DPP is a Taiwanese nationalist political party, strongly committed to political change, human rights and a distinct Taiwanese identity. The Southern Branch was initiated and built in order to transform the National Palace Museum from a legacy of Chinese civilization into a museum and research centre that focuses on the arts and cultures of Asia as a whole.[4]

The Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum was envisioned and put into planning by Tu Cheng-Sheng, who was later appointed Museum Director by President Chen in 2000. Tu is one of the historians who came up with the concept 'New History',[5] with which they argue for alternative interpretations of Chinese history and its relation to the Asian region and Taiwan. He explicitly explained the need for the NPM to transform itself, so as to become a cultural window for the nation.[6] He stressed the need for the museum to not only represent Chinese and Taiwanese culture, but to also educate the public about Asian culture and art. One objective of the newly established branch would be to show the linkage of Chinese culture and civilisation with other parts of the world. And so, in addition to newly acquired and borrowed collections from India, Japan, Korea and other parts of Asia, the museum also houses artefacts from the NPM's original collections of Chinese art. Staying true to its mission to re-orient the National Palace Museum towards Asian arts and cultures, the Southern Branch opened with five permanent exhibitions: 1) Imprints of Buddhas: Buddhist Art in the National Palace Museum's Collection, 2) Boldness of Forms and Colours: Asian Textiles from the National Palace Museum's Collection, 3) The Far-Reaching Fragrance of Tea: Tea Art and Culture in Asia, 4) Through the Annals of Time: A Brief History of Chiayi, and 5) Understanding Asian Art: Multimedia Gallery Guide.

Maintaining and pushing boundaries

The exhibition *Imprints of Buddhas* houses a rich collection of Buddhist artefacts, "comprising dignified and elegant Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and statues passed down from the Qing court as well as 407 gold Buddha statues donated by Mr. Peng Kai-dong (1912–2006) in 2004, 2006 and 2008".[7] Buddhism originated in India and spread across South, Central, Southeast, East and Northeast Asia. It has played a crucial role in shaping the lives and cultures across Asia, and this exhibition demonstrates how the religion spread from one location to another, creating multiple new cultural centres, along with numerous interpretations of Buddhism. "The popularity of Buddhism in the afore-mentioned regions has led to the birth of various Buddha statues such as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, heavenly kings, and dharmapalas".[8]

The exhibition comprises five sections, with each section presenting a different region during the same period to show similarities and differences of the materials, artistry and philosophy behind the making of the artwork. The displays of these Buddhist artefacts aim to highlight the transformations resulting from interactions with regional and local cultures, aesthetics and beliefs.

One of the most significant exhibits is the *Kangxi Manuscript Kangyur in Tibetan Script*. The manuscript is the first Kangyur written in gold and also the only Buddhist scripture named after the dragon, making it one of NPM's finest items of Qin court art. The manuscript was commissioned by the Grand Empress Dowager Xiaozhuan, the grandmother of Emperor Kangxi, whose origin can be traced back to Mongolia. By positioning the manuscript in dialogue with other Buddhist art from all over Asia, the museum shows the historical trace of multiculturalism within the Qin Empire. By doing so, it invites the audience to rethink their understanding of Chinese civilisation as ethno-nationalistic and monocultural.

Constant redefinition

The Southern Branch of the National Palace Museum 'de-centres' the 'nation' by bringing in the multifaceted and trans-cultural relations of Chinese civilisation through new collections and displays of Asian cultures and art, and by placing current Chinese artefacts into novel and unconventional contexts. The museum hereby also 're-centres' Taiwan by shifting its subjectivity and bridging new inter-Asian connections. This allows Taiwan to seek its position in the world and embrace the Chinese 'cultural sphere' at the same time. The novelty of the *Imprints of Buddhas* is not only that it ceases to use geographical boundaries to define cultural boundaries, but it also provides visitors with an innovative perspective by exploring cross-cultural topics with collections originally categorised as 'Chinese' artefacts. The de-centring and re-centring process, therefore, is not merely a political agenda that embodies a conflicting ideology and notion of 'Taiwan as a nation', but also a quest for a new kind of modernity, a new relationship between the self and the other.

The *Imprints of Buddhas* exhibition has paved the way for future exhibitions, illustrating that topics on self/other don't have to be restricted to relationships and historical ties between Taiwan and China. The museum's future projects will continue to explore the issues of self and other, as well as examine the perspectives and the myths, thereby opening new dialogues of inter-cultural transformations and influences within the Asian region.

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Notes

1 The Initium. 2015. 'Jackie Chan donated replicas of zodiac animals to the National Palace Museum, criticized of united front tactics [成龍捐生肖獸首複製品與台灣故宮，被批 統戰]'; https://tinyurl.com/initium-JC
2 Wu, Rwei-Ren. 2016. 'The Lilliputian Dreams: Preliminary Observations of Nationalism in Okinawa, Taiwan and Hong Kong', *Nations and Nationalism* 22(4):686-705.
3 Wu, Jieh-min. 2016. 'The China Factor in Taiwan: Impact and Response', in Schubert, G. (ed.) *Handbook of Modern Taiwan Politics and Society*. Routledge, pp.425-445.
4 Council for Economic Planning and Development. 2003. *Challenge 2008: National Development Plan 2002-2007.* Taipei; Ting, R. 2003. 'A 6000 million NTD budget for the construction of National Palace Museum Southern Branch', *China Times*. Taipei.
5 Tu, Cheng-Sheng. 2004. '異國風情—亞洲文物展 [The Arts and Culture Asia]', *The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art* 22(1):4-7.
6 Tu, Cheng-Sheng. 2003. '變革的時代談台灣博物館永續經營之道 [The Sustainable Development of Taiwan's Museums in a Time of Change]', in National Museum of History (ed.) *Crisis and Opportunity: Museums in the New Century Forum of Museum Directors*, pp.143-157.
7 National Palace Museum. 2016. 'Imprints of Buddhas: Buddhist Art in the National Palace Museum Collection'; https://tinyurl.com/NPM-buddhas
8 Idem.

Teachers, missionaries, and activists. Female religious leadership and social mobility in Southeast Asia, 1920s-1960s

Iris Busschers, Kirsten Kamphuis and David Kloos

What roles did Malay and Indonesian women play in early twentieth century religious reform? Both Muslims and Christians felt confronted in this period by a need to adapt their practices and institutions to modern times. Increasing women's participation in religious education, ritual, and proselytization was a key aspect of this urge for renewal. Yet, very little has been written about women in positions of religious authority and historical research about women and women's movements has a decidedly secular imprint. At the same time, the study of religion is deeply biased toward men. In both perspectives, female religious authority is a neglected theme. How did women, whose experiences were shaped largely by and through religious engagement, navigate a changing world and their own place therein? Three brief portraits provide a glimpse. They suggest that the agency of these women was more significant than commonly assumed, and also, albeit often confined to local spheres, both reflective of and conducive to new paths for social mobility.

Wanita Rukun Santoso: picture probably taken at an annual conference of WRS at Swaru. NL-UtHUA 1567 file 320 photo album De Vries and De Vries-Kruyt (ca. 1934).

Spearheading Islamic education for girls: Rahmah el Yunusiyah

The 1920s have been characterized as "an age in motion", a period of new ideologies, new technologies, new media, new forms of education, and new visions of the future.[1] It is in this period that Rahmah el Yunusiyah (1900-1969) came of age. Rahmah was one of the most prominent figures in Islamic education for girls in the Netherlands Indies, and continued to play an important role in education and religious politics after Indonesian independence. Her life story poignantly illustrates how some Indonesian women were able to gain significant religious authority, in spite of their doubly marginalized position as colonized women in a racially structured society that valued men over women.

Rahmah was born in West Sumatra, a region known throughout the Netherlands Indies for the prominent place of Islam in local culture, and for the particularities of Minangkabau society. The Minangkabau are well-known for their matrilineal traditions. The family line, and to some extent property, passes through female family members. In line with this strong position of Minangkabau women, West Sumatra has a longstanding tradition of girls' education in Quranic schools.[2] Rahmah el Yunusiyah played a crucial part in expanding girls' education in her region into the realm of secular knowledge. Around the beginning of the twentieth century, more and more parents sent their daughters to European-style secular schools established by the colonial government.

Rahmah believed that a different kind of education was needed for local girls. Her passion for religious knowledge and education was sparked early in life. She came from a family of *ulama*, scholars of Islam, and received practical and religious education from the women in her family. Her older brother, Zainuddin Labay el Yunusy, founded a coeducational primary school for Islamic education.[3] Rahmah, however, argued that girls should have the opportunity to follow a designated educational programme in an all-female environment. This, she believed, was required in Islam. In Rahmah's eyes, women's religious education ran the risk of being neglected in favour of men's, and she was determined to change this. After divorcing her husband, to whom she had been married off at age fourteen, she remained unmarried and dedicated her life to the cause of women's education.[4]

In 1923, at the age of 23, Rahmah opened a new school called *Diniyyah Puteri* [Religious Education for Girls] in a mosque in Padang Panjang. To raise the necessary funds, she had travelled extensively through West Sumatra and Aceh. The school was a novelty in the Netherlands Indies, offering a combination of religious and secular education in a girls-only boarding school environment. The curriculum was not restricted to religious education and Arabic, as was common in traditional Quranic schools. Instead, the programme included a range of secular school subjects such as history, Dutch and English, geography, and economics. Diniyyah Puteri quickly gained popularity in West Sumatra and beyond, and five years after its opening the school moved to a large two-storey building that served as a *pondok* [dormitory]. By the end of the 1930s, hundreds of girls were registered, hailing from as far as modern-day Malaysia, Singapore, and Ambon. One of them was Aishah Ghani, a future minister of independent Malaysia.[5]

Ideologically, Diniyyah Puteri was part of the *kaum muda* [young generation]. This was a political and educational movement that aimed to strengthen Islam by integrating Western science into the religion. By combining Islamic with secular, 'modern' knowledge, kaum muda schools, including girls' schools, sought to educate a new generation of Muslim intellectuals capable of freeing Islam from colonialism.[6] They were regularly raided by the colonial police and many were closed down by the government. This never happened to Diniyyah Puteri, however, possibly because Rahmah refused to align her school with overtly anticolonial organizations such as PERMI (Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia, the Indonesian Muslim Union). The government considered PERMI a grave threat and did everything it could to frustrate the organization. Its schools were frequently raided and in 1932, PERMI leader Rasuna Said (1910-1965) became the first Indonesian woman to be imprisoned for anticolonial activities.[7] Interestingly, Rasuna was a former teacher at Diniyyah Puteri who had left the school after a conflict with Rahmah about the content of its education. Rasuna wanted her classes to have an anticolonial character, while Rahmah insisted that the school should be politically neutral.[8]

That said, Diniyyah Puteri did have an undeniably nationalist outlook. In the school newsletters *Soeara Moerid* [The Voice of the Students] and *Kodrat Moeda* [Force of the Youth] students wrote about the important role of Muslim women in the struggle against colonialism. *Soeara Moeda* stopped appearing in 1926 after its editor-in-chief was arrested and sent to the Boven-Digoel prison camp by the colonial authorities.[9]

As convinced of the importance of Indonesian independence as her students, Rahmah herself refused to accept subsidies from the colonial government, and stated that she aimed to teach "young Muslimas, the daughters of Indonesia", using the nationalist term for the territory.[10] Diniyyah Puteri was a prestigious school in the colonial era, and remained so after Indonesian independence. As early as the 1930s, some of its graduates continued their religious education in Egypt, a global centre for modernist Islamic learning.[11] In the 1950s, Rahmah herself became the first woman to receive the honorary title *syeikhah* from the famous Al-Azhar University in Cairo, an acknowledgement of her prominent role as a scholar of Islam. Nowadays, Diniyyah Puteri is still a flourishing institution that offers Islamic education from primary school up to secondary school level. The school will soon celebrate its one-hundredth anniversary.

At the forefront of public life: Khaironnisah Mohd Ali

As in West Sumatra, the 1920s and 1930s in Penang could rightly be called "an age in motion". Like other port cities in the region, such as Bangkok, Rangoon, and Batavia, this island just off the coast of the Malay peninsula became a centre of social and political change. Alongside Singapore and Malacca, Penang was part of the so-called British Straits Settlements. The expansion of trade and commerce, the development of the local press, a thriving cultural scene, and a wide range of new religious and political movements created unprecedented opportunities for social mobility and emancipation. Women across social classes benefited from this atmosphere of change as they joined local and international organizations, secured access to education, and found employment in local schools, hospitals, offices, and banks.[12]

It is in this atmosphere of possibilities that Khaironnisah binti Mohd Ali (1933-2017) was born.[13] Her father was a clerk at the *Hollandsche Bank* [Dutch Bank], while her mother took care of six children. The family lived in Jelutong, a peri-urban area outside the island's main city Georgetown. From the age of seven onwards, Khaironnisah attended a local Malay-medium primary school. During the Japanese occupation, this school remained open, teaching children Japanese in the morning and religion in the afternoon. Khaironnisah was a good student and at twelve years old she already taught the Quran to younger children. But she entered the most formative years of her education only after the war. Together with a few friends, she was enrolled by her religious teacher in the famous Al-Mashoor school in Georgetown. Founded in 1916, *Sekolah al-Mashoor* was one of the most important institutions of modernist Islamic education in Southeast Asia.[14] In contrast to traditional

Islamic schools, the curriculum included religious and secular subjects. It had a modern administration, a classroom system, and was open to both male and female students. Al-Mashoor was thus comparable to Rahmah el Yunusiyah's school in Padang Panjang and, due to its location in Penang, a focal point of the growing urban Islamic middle class.

Khaironnisah's mother took her daughter and her friends to school every morning, until one of the teachers could no longer bear the sight of the old woman plodding through the streets. It was decided that the girls would have to board. A girls' section was thus established parallel to the boys'. Another big change occurred in 1949. Five female teachers got married, more or less simultaneously, and left Penang. The best students, including Khaironnisah, sixteen years old at the time, were pitchforked into a new job as teacher. The girls agreed but, ambitious and assertive as they were, only on the express condition that their own education would not suffer from it and that they would be taught by the senior teachers two days per week. Four years later, Khaironnisah became the head of the girls' section, as the first woman in the history of al-Mashoor. She was an active and enterprising leader. The girls of al-Mashoor, she believed, should be knowledgeable but also prepared for responsible roles in society. She therefore regularly organized extra-curricular trainings in skills such as public speaking.

Khaironnisah's ambition to prepare her students for a visible role was modelled, at least partly, on her own experiences. In 1946, she represented al-Mashoor at an assembly of the Malayan Union (the first experiment with self-determination, orchestrated by the British and the Malay aristocratic elite). Her speech did not remain unnoticed. New political parties were conscious of the importance of youthful commitment, and Khaironnisah was scouted by the local branch of the United Malays National Party, the organization that would dominate the national political landscape for more than sixty years to come.

In 1957, the year in which Malaya became an independent nation, Khaironnisah tried to resign from al-Mashoor. Her husband had found a job in Singapore and she had decided to follow him. The school board, however, did not accept her resignation and instead offered her husband a job as a teacher. They stayed. A few years later she did step down as a school director so she could dedicate herself more fully to her growing family. It was the end of a short and turbulent career, but not of her visible role in local politics and civil society. Khaironnisah remained active on the forefront, as a political activist, as a member of several associations, and as a religious teacher of both children and adults in her neighbourhood. She continued to fulfil some of these roles up until her death in 2017.

Christian women's leadership: Wanita Rukun Santoso

Christian women, too, were able to achieve religious authority. In the context of Christian missionary work and Christian churches in East Java, women played important roles in local religious and social life. In 1935, the Women's Mission League and the Dutch Missionary Society appointed Christine Slotemaker de Bruïne as the first woman missionary in East Java.[15] Her appointment meant a more sustained commitment by the mission to dedicate itself to work "by women, for women". Slotemaker de Bruïne's tasks included coordinating women's associations and training Javanese women in evangelising labour.

The East Java mission conference created Slotemaker de Bruïne's position in response to the "age in motion" in Java. Her appointment was part of a series of changes in missionary policy, the most evident of which was perhaps the establishment of the *Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan* (GKJW) [East Java Christian Church] in 1931. Under pressure of Javanese Christians and the international missionary community, the East Javanese church became (partially) independent from the mission. Javanese men occupied most of the leadership positions in the church but chairmanship remained in the hands of a Dutch missionary. Dutch missionaries thus handed some of their authority back to Javanese Christians after having taken over leadership in Javanese congregations during the nineteenth century.[16]

The organization of women's work among and with Javanese Christian women was an important element in the reconfiguration of the Christian mission and church in East Java. Dutch missionaries and Javanese church leaders feared that Javanese Protestants would lag behind the organizational vigour of other Javanese groups, including nationalist and religious (Muslim and Catholic) organizations. The establishment of schools and associations received particular attention. Slotemaker de Bruïne's coordinated women's associations and women's evangelising work as part of a broader transition that included moving Christian life beyond villages and into the cities of Malang and Surabaya (which attracted increasing numbers of Christians), and the founding of new Christian schools and (youth) associations.[17]

In the early to mid-twentieth century Malay-Indonesian archipelago, similar mechanisms of agency and social mobility were at work in Muslim and Christian communities.

In her first years in East Java, Slotemaker de Bruïne set out to coordinate activities that, to a large extent, were already taking place, albeit not under Dutch coordination.[18] In her effort to coordinate women's associations, she depended on gaining access to existing local Christian women's associations and the overarching federation called *Wanita Rukun Santoso* (WRS) [Women Harmonious and Steadfast]. Javanese women founded WRS in 1929 as a follow-up to the annual women's conferences organized by missionary wives since 1926. WRS's slogan read "spiritual and material progress". In 1936, the organization added the aim of "bringing others to Christianity". Motherhood and the guarding of morality, especially of Christian daughters, were central concerns, similar to some Muslim women's associations.[19] WRS united approximately thirty local associations, which all put the federation's slogan into practice in their own manner. However, all local associations organized bible circles, offered sewing or weaving circles, and provided financial aid to those in need. WRS thus combined social, economic and religious initiatives.

The work performed by Javanese women was indispensable to fostering Christian belonging and building up active Christian women's associations in East Java. For Slotemaker de Bruïne, these women could act as intermediaries. One of the women she worked with was S. Mestoko, who was married to the first minister of the GKJW. She was chair of WRS and together with missionary wife Hester Schuurman-Nijhoff taught the wives of future ministers at the training college for Javanese ministers in Malang. In her capacity as chair of WRS, Mestoko helped Slotemaker de Bruïne gain access to the meetings of local associations. At the same time, this position also allowed her to curtail Slotemaker de Bruïne's access. For example, by forbidding her from speaking at the annual congress of WRS, instead relegating her to the youth department, which she considered more suitable for a Dutch unmarried woman. Mestoko also joined Slotemaker de Bruïne in some of her journeys. Together with two other Christian women they visited the public meeting of *Aisjiah*, the women's section of the Islamic modernist organization *Muhammadiyah*, in 1938 in Surabaya. In response to that visit and the broader debate about the proposed marriage law in 1937, Mestoko spoke about marriage at various WRS meetings.[20]

Another influential board member of WRS was R. Arsiah, who worked as a teacher at the Christian domestic science school in Malang. In 1936, Arsiah participated in the Asian YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka as the only Javanese attendant. Like the other WRS women highlighted here, Arsiah acted both within missionary circles through her work at the school, and in the context of the GKJW in her role as WRS board member. Moreover, she combined these activities with a third function for the transnational Christian organization YWCA, implementing YWCA work in Malang.

WRS board member Soewati was also instrumental to the work of Slotemaker de Bruïne. Like the other women discussed here, she received Christian education beyond the village school level and she was part of important Christian family networks. Her brother, for instance, was the secretary of GKJW. Like many members of WRS board, she lived in Malang and adhered to the idea that village women needed further Christianisation and education. Soewati accompanied Slotemaker de Bruïne on multiple tours of local women's associations, providing the necessary contacts for the Dutch missionary. Through this labour, Soewati hoped to be appointed as inspector for WRS, a position that entailed making working visits to local associations. When WRS appointed an older and married woman instead, Soewati moved into a position of surveyor for the mission's district nursing organization in Malang. For Soewati, then, a position in the Christian women's federation was also a means of making a career.

For Slotemaker de Bruïne, these three women were key intermediaries, advancing her missionary labour. However, their activities as Christian social reformers and sometimes proselytizing women were by no means confined to being a go-between for Dutch missions. They were evidence of the manoeuvring space and potential for social mobility implicated in Javanese women's roles in the context of, and particularly in moving between, mission, church, and Christian associations.

Religious activism as a pathway towards social mobility

In the early to mid-twentieth century Malay-Indonesian archipelago, similar mechanisms of agency and social mobility were at work in Muslim and Christian communities. The most significant difference between Christian and Muslim female activists was, of course, their relationship to the British and Dutch colonial regimes. While the Dutch colonial government often actively supported Christian missions, for example, it repressed certain Muslim organizations which it considered a threat to its authority. At the same time, Christian women used their skills to create a more prominent place for local people in previously European-dominated religious spaces, suggesting that they did not always accept the colonial status-quo.

The individual women portrayed here also differed significantly, and not just in terms of their religious backgrounds. Some of them were educated at official schools, while others received education at home, and the social position of their families of origin varied. What they had in common, however, was a strong dedication to their religious and social aspirations in a time of great change. An interesting insight, in this respect, bears on the apparently relatively strong stance of several of these women toward marriage and divorce. This brief inquiry into the lives of Rahmah el Yunusiyah, Khaironnisah Mohd Ali and the women of Wanita Rukun Santoso demonstrates that a focus on Southeast Asian women's religious agency in the colonial era can wield fascinating results. Their stories have the potential to transform the ways in which scholars interpret the religious history of the region, connecting women's religious commitment to new pathways towards mobility and the forging of public roles.

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13 The following paragraphs are largely based on the (transcriptions of) interviews with Khaironnisah Mohd Ali, carried out by Mahani Musa (Universiti Sains Malaysia) and her students, between 2008-2014, in the framework of the project (also led by Mahani Musa) "Oral History Documentation, Al-Mashoor School Pulau Pinang, 1940s-1980s" (History Section, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia in partnership with Malaysiana and Archives, Hamzah Sendut Library, USM, Penang State Museum, and Yayasan Islam Pulau Pinang). Additional interviews were carried out by David Kloos and Mahani Musa in 2014 and 2016. For a longer biography, see: Mahani Musa. 2016. 'Dato' Hajjah Khaironnisa' bt Mohd Ali: Bekas Pelajar, Guru, dan Guru Besar Sekolah perempuan Al Mashoor,' in Mahani Musa. (ed.) *Memori 100 Tahun Sekolah Al Mashoor*. Georgetown: Jam'iyah Al-Ikha' Al-Khairiyah, pp.104-13.
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A medical dynasty

The Badmayevs and the Trans-Siberian knowledge corridor

Emilia Roza Sulek

Tibetan medicine did not come to Europe directly from Tibet; it arrived via Russia, specifically from Transbaikalia, the region east of Lake Baikal. It was a family of Buryat doctors who transferred their knowledge of Tibetan medicine, as they practised it, to the West. In the late 1850s, they opened the first Tibetan pharmacy in Europe and their medical formulas are still being produced in Europe today.

Fig. 1 (from left to right): Tsyrendulma Batomunkina, Tsyndyma Tsyrendorzhieva, Bazarzhab Batomunkin, Galsan Tsyrendorzhiev. All relatives of the Badmayevs.

Flying to Tschita

I am flying from Ulan-Ude (Buryatia) to Tschita. The aircraft is an antique. It has remnants of 1960s elegance, with graceful upholstery and wide seats. But there are neither seatbelts nor lifejackets, and apparently only one engine works. “Don’t be nervous”, a neighbour tells me, seeing the fear on my face. “If it flew to Ulan-Ude, it’ll manage to fly back.”

From Tschita, the administrative centre of Transbaikalia, I travel to Aginsk, a small town in what was formerly Agin-Buryat Autonomous Okrug. In 2008 it lost its autonomy, which continues to be a source of resentment for most Buryats. I catch a *marshrutka* (a shared taxi that follows a fixed route), and the driver invites me to sit upfront. He asks: “Do you like it here”? “Yes”, I answer honestly. “You’re crazy”, he shakes his head. “One doesn’t come here. One escapes from here”. But I am going to Aginsk for good reason: to understand how a certain family of Buryat doctors was so successful in bringing Tibetan medicine from Transbaikalia to Europe, where their medical formulas are still in use today. Who were they? What helped them achieve this unprecedented knowledge transfer? And what made Tibetan medicine, as they practised it, so special?

On the steppe

In Aginsk, on the main square, a row of busts stand as if ready to welcome guests. They are all famous Buryats. There is Gombozhab Tsybikov, whose photographs of Lhasa were the first of the Tibetan capital ever to be published (*National Geographic Magazine*, 1905), and also Tsyben Zhamsarano and Bazar Baradin, two Buryat scholars and politicians. Aginsk is as different from Tschita as can be. The latter used to be a restricted-access military city; it has a feeling of neglect and decay. Not far from here lies Nerchinsk, where Decembrists served their prison terms. Deportation to Siberia was the typical punishment for political disobedience, and so when travelling to this region where people were exiled to disappear, you feel as if you are heading *nowhere*, to the end of the world. But you would be wrong. As slender, charred trunks of blackened trees (the latest taiga wildfires ended only a few weeks earlier) give way to the steppe proper, new horizons open up in front of your eyes. Entering the epicentre of Buryat culture, you are immediately struck by its uniqueness.

I continue to the village of Uzon, where I encounter a little ‘fairy-tale’ house and its inhabitants – a retired couple and their relatives. Over a wooden fence, a lush garden caresses the eye with a full palette of colours. Back in the house, the table bows under plates of dumplings, tomatoes, bread, honey and preserves. Everything here is home-made, self-grown or collected from nature’s garden. The lady of the house has an endless collection of jars in her kitchen cupboards. But her and her husband’s collection of books is even bigger – piled high everywhere you look, seemingly growing out of the floorboards. The couple, Galsan Tsyrendorzhiev and his wife Tsyndyma, belong to the local intelligentsia. Born here and educated in the city, they returned to work at the school and in cultural institutions. They are descendants of the Badmayevs, doctors of Tibetan medicine. (See fig. 1).

The beginnings

The best known member of the Badmayev family is Piotr. Born in 1851 as Zhamsaran, he left his steppe homeland to go to school in Irkutsk. Later, he travelled to Saint Petersburg, where he entered the medical faculty. But the main reason for his going to the capital was to help his brother, who had already started the first Tibetan pharmacy in Europe. The brother, Aleksander (Buryat name Tsultim Badma), the first of the doctor dynasty, was a rather different sort of man. Back on the steppe he had been a monk in Aginski *datsan*, one of the main Buddhist monasteries in Transbaikalia. His medical skills brought him admiration from influential Russians, including Nikolay Muravyov-Amursky, general governor of East Siberia. Aleksander, as the story goes, helped him fight off a typhus outbreak in a Russian military garrison.

In recognition of this, in 1857 Aleksander was invited to Saint Petersburg to be introduced to the Tsar. Once there, he opened a clinic and started treating patients. Yet, Aleksander’s success overwhelmed him, and he did not even speak fluent Russian. His younger brother had fewer difficulties with transitioning into this new life. Following Aleksander, he adopted Orthodox Christianity and changed his name to Piotr Aleksandrovich (after Tsar Alexander II). Most importantly, he mastered the family’s Tibetan medicine, including the art of pulse diagnosis and medicine making. When Aleksander died in 1873, Piotr expanded his practice.

> **… the need to return to nature and for the harmonious development of body and mind.**

Famous medicine from Aginsk

In fact, Aleksander Badmayev was not the first Buryat doctor in the Russian capital. Interest in Tibetan medicine from Buryatia and Transbaikalia was evident in Russian scientific circles as early as the eighteenth century. Scholars such as Johann Georg Gmelin, Gottlieb Messerschmidt and Joseph Rehmann explored the eastern frontier of the empire and reported on their encounters with Buddhist monk-doctors.[1] Buddhism, with Tibetan Medicine, had arrived in the region in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first monasteries were founded in the following century. The two main religious seats in Transbaikalia were Tsugol and Aginsk.[2] Medicine taught there was based on theoretical foundations from the Chagpori college in Lhasa and Labrang monastery in northeast Tibet.

Yet theory and practice are two separate things and Buryat practitioners adapted the Tibetan pharmacopeia to local conditions. Local doctors inform me that 80 percent of medicinal ingredients used in Transbaikalia are from the immediate area. Original formulas from Tibet, so the Buryats tell me, had to be adapted to the climate, diet and specific metabolism of their local patients: they were thus patient-tailored or even culture-tailored. When these lands became part of Russia and Russians began to settle here, the newcomers had little choice but to rely on local medics. Nikolai Kirillov, a doctor and ethnographer, reported that there were fifty-two ‘European doctors’ in Transbaikalia but *thousands* of monk-doctors.[3] The latter dominated not only in number but also in quality. Seen in this light, calling for doctors from Aginsk to aid epidemic-struck Russian garrisons seems completely understandable – proof of the medical helplessness of the colonizers and the medical efficacy of the colonized.

Knowledge of the achievements of Buryat doctors soon spread to cities in European Russia. Scholars brought records of their trips and material findings back to their universities. Rehmann, for example, purchased a whole portable pharmacy. This intricate souvenir contained several dozen medicines and masses of information. In order to explain the medical system behind it, a Buryat doctor named Tsultim Tseden was invited to Saint Petersburg. Unfortunately, he passed away without moving the project forward.[4] But the appetite for medicine from Asia had been ignited.

Man of paradoxes

Piotr’s biography is better known than that of his older brother, but its evaluation is obscured by the multiplicity of his activities. He was not only a doctor but also an entrepreneur and diplomat, engaging in diplomatic, trade and intelligence missions in the Sino-Russian borderlands. Elsewhere, he lobbied to lead the Trans-Siberian railway project to Lanzhou in China. He had political nous, too, and informed the tsar about the coming fall of the Qing dynasty and the ensuing political vacuum from which Russia should benefit.

Piotr’s life presents various paradoxes. A devout Christian, he initiated construction of the Orthodox church in Aginsk, but also co-financed a Buddhist temple in Saint Petersburg – a unique project combining Tibetan and art nouveau influences, still a must-see in the city. He was a sworn royalist but did not blindly represent the interests of the state; for instance, he lobbied successfully for his fellow Buryats when Russian policies grew stricter, as in the 1880s when the government started dissolving the steppe *duma*, Buryat self-government bodies, or when it pushed for religious radical conversion policies.

Despite his many interests, Piotr was a titan in the field of medicine. In 1893 alone, he was carrying out between 40 and 100 visits per day, amounting to 17,000-20,000 each year.[5] He produced medicines, engaged in passionate polemics about the scientific value of Tibetan medicine and published the first translation of the classic Tibetan medical treatise, *The Four Tantras*.[6] Earlier attempts to translate this hermetic text had been futile, but with Piotr’s organizational talent it became possible.

The task involved cooperation of several Buryat monks whom he had invited specially to the city. In the process, Piotr 'cleaned' the text of elements of religion or mysticism, which as he put it, obscured its true value. His goal was thus not a verbatim translation but one that secured for Tibetan medicine a legitimate place in the pantheon of sciences.

The next generation

The October Revolution brought Piotr's career to an abrupt end. As a friend of the tsarist establishment, Piotr was arrested and he died in 1920. But in his broad shadow, his two nephews were building their own careers. The first was Nikolai (alias Osor), who tried to acclimate to the new political realities. He was a Red Army doctor and treated Maxim Gorky and other celebrities of the new communist era. He wanted to practice Tibetan medicine within the Soviet medical system. With official permission, he opened a clinic of 'Eastern Medicine', but the 'Badmayev brand' was too closely associated with the tsarist regime, and soon Nikolai found himself arrested on the fabricated charge of being a Japanese spy. He pleaded guilty and was executed.

Nikolai's younger brother followed a different path. Włodzimierz (alias Zhamyan) escaped from Russia and sought refuge in Poland, establishing himself in Warsaw where he quickly gained popularity as a medic. He published books and journals (*Tibetan Physician* and *Synthetic Medicine*) and was doctor to two Polish presidents. He wrote about the dangers of technological progress, about the need to return to nature and for the harmonious development of body and mind. Włodzimierz tirelessly explained the principles of Tibetan medicine, stressing that it is a proactive medicine of health and not, as its Western counterpart, a reactive one of disease. Similar to the other Badmayevs, he was a natural ambassador of his culture.

Born on the steppe, Włodzimierz successfully changed country, religion and language, lived through two World Wars and three revolutions. He was a man of the world, travelling to treat patients across Europe.[7] In photographs, we see him on holiday, during state events and at parties (he in a tuxedo and his wife in fox furs, they fit perfectly into high society of the interwar period). Włodzimierz continued his work after the war, running a practice in two cities, Warsaw and Krakow – all this at a time when private entrepreneurship was actively repressed by the communist authorities.[8]

Aginski Zhor

Włodzimierz ran a laboratory and produced medicines. These were all officially registered, with a name (derived from Tibetan) and a number. This was the project his uncles had started in Saint Petersburg; to systematize the formulas they brought to Europe, by ordering, numbering and translating them. Włodzimierz purchased some ingredients from abroad, including India, while others were grown locally. He was an effective networker, and his son recounted that even during the Second World War his father was importing medicinal resources from abroad.[9]

Fig. 2: *Aginski Zhor*, from the monastery of Aginsk, contains 1197 individual recipes. Since 1993, after a forced break of over half a century, Tibetan medicine is being taught here again.

Włodzimierz prepared his medicines according to recipes from a particular book, the so-called *Aginski Zhor*. The *zhor* – or prescription book – as this genre of compendium is known, flourished among the Buryats. Local doctors compiled medical formulas with indications, dosage and modifications of contents. *Aginski Zhor*, from the monastery of Aginsk, contains 1197 individual recipes. Not all of them were used very often, but their number shows the ingenuity of local medics. Located in parkland surrounded by tall larches, Aginsk monastery is unique. Journeying through lands where radical communism swept away most sacral architecture from the landscape, you expect to encounter a cluster of new buildings erected *ad hoc* in the rural-Siberian style, mixed with Chinese influences. But Aginsk is different; its main buildings were spared from destruction. Today, the monastery has the serenity of truly old places, yet it appeals also to younger generations. Since 1993, after a forced break of over half a century, Tibetan medicine is being taught here again. (See fig. 2).

Dmitrii Shakhanov, custodian of the library, showed me the monastic collection. Aginsk ran a large printing house in the past. It published, according to Dmitrii's estimates, more titles than all the other Buryat monasteries together. Even today, after the years of Stalinist terror when many objects were destroyed or carried away to museums in Moscow and Leningrad, it still has one of the largest collections of Buddhist literature in Russia. The steppe climate is good for books; even old ones, opened once more after decades lying unread, look as if they have freshly left the press. *Aginski Zhor* is among them – in manuscript, xylographic edition and translation.

A time of brutality

Aginsk monastery witnessed some very dramatic times in the 1930s. In the first years after the revolution, Buryats tried to adapt to the new realities. The so-called Renovationist programme, led by Agvan Dorzhiev, another famous Buryat, introduced Western anatomy and diagnostics to Buryat medical colleges, while education was subject to state control. But after Stalin consolidated his power in 1928 there was no space for dialogue; anything that did not meet the prescribed norms and even slightly hinted at the past was sentenced to extermination. In 1936, Tibetan medicine was outlawed. Monasteries were closed and monks forced to disrobe. Many were executed.

Aginsk was shut down in 1937. It formally reopened in 1946, but its buildings housed military quarters, a tuberculosis sanatorium and drug addiction clinic. The monastic inventory was largely destroyed. "Soldiers threw books out of the windows", a neighbour of the monastery told me. "Pages fluttered in the air and spread on the ground like snow." People collected these fragments and hid them away. Many of these books are still secreted in people's homes. Every now and then, an elderly Buryat brings back what she or he saved from destruction.

Nikolai Dugarov also has an important and sacred part of his family history stashed away in his home. I meet him at the National Museum (named after Gombozhab Tsybikov, of *National Geographic* fame), he works at the ticket office. Nikolai studied art in Leningrad and returned to Aginsk because of his parents. Their history reveals much about the fate of the Buryats in the Soviet Union. But also about the fate of Tibetan medicine. "My father, Dambinima, was a monk-doctor. When the persecutions started, many monks were killed or 'disappeared'. My father fled to Krasnoyarsk, together with *khambo-lama* Gomboev.[10] One worked as a fireman, the other in a smelter". So Nikolai starts his story. His mother was deported to Krasnoyarsk, a Stalinist centre in the gulag system. Mass deportations were a daily occurrence in Russia; Buryats,

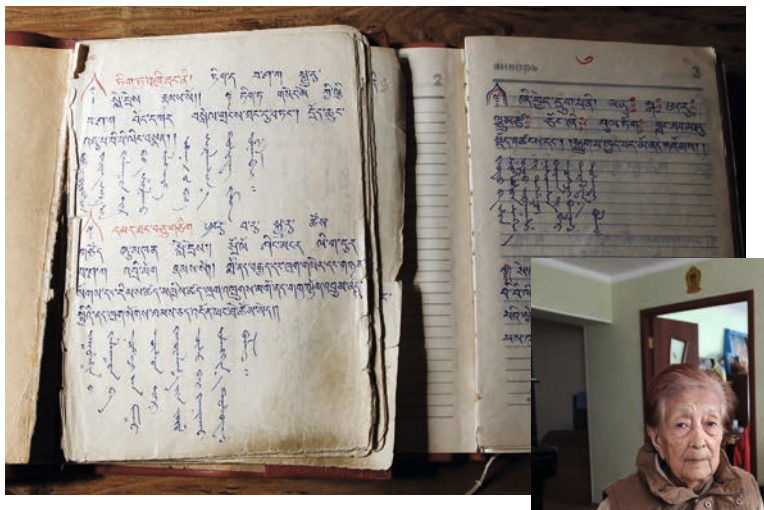

Fig. 3 (above): The prescription books left to Nikolai Dugarov by his father Dambinima, a monk-doctor, who survived the labour camps.

Fig. 4 (right): Włodzimierz's niece, Saran, the closest living relative of the Badmayev doctors, with her son Purbotsyren Baldorzhievich.

accused of harbouring nationalistic sentiments and carrying out espionage, were deported in their thousands. Many died because of the harsh working conditions. Many people never returned, but thankfully Nikolai's parents did.

It required great stamina to survive. It also needed strength of character to practice medicine underground, which is what Nikolai's father, now a layman, did when he got home. Yet he never instructed his son in this secret knowledge, as it was too dangerous. Nikolai did inherit his father's prescription books though: his private *zhor* with condensed medical knowledge sharpened by years of (illegal) practice. The writing is all Tibetan or Mongolian, although in 1939 Buryats were forced to adopt Cyrillic script. (See fig. 3).

Broken ties: the journey continues

Did the family in Aginsk have any contact with Włodzimierz in Poland? "We knew that someone was living in the West", the Badmayevs in Uzon tell me, "but any contact was too dangerous". The contacts in Russia were broken too; Leningrad and Aginsk were thousands of miles apart. The damage wrought on the Badmayevs is shown most starkly in their genealogical tree, especially the branch who carried Tibetan medicine to the West. Traditionally, Buryat genealogical trees are male oriented. It is ironic that it was during a meeting with a woman that I learned about other Badmayevs. Born in 1931, Saran Bazarzhapova is Włodzimierz's niece. Of her four uncles, one survived in Poland and one was executed, while the two others, who lived in Leningrad, died young or disappeared in unknown circumstances. Saran's father stayed on the land but one night he was taken by the secret police and shot on espionage charges. (See fig. 4).

Włodzimierz died in Poland in 1961, but his formulas continued their journey. In 1959, Swiss entrepreneur Karl Lutz attended a lecture by Cyrill von Korvin-Krasinski, a Benedictine monk and expert on Tibetan medicine. The topic fascinated him and so Lutz decided to study Tibetan medicine, seeing in it a chance to revolutionize the European pharmaceutical market. Thus, Korwin Krasinski, a former patient of Włodzimierz, turned Lutz's attention to the medical formulas of the Buryat doctor. Lutz wanted to rescue them from behind the Iron Curtain; the Polish authorities were not interested in continuing their production, but he feared that they would not like losing control over this unique heritage. Finally, in 1965, Włodzimierz's son, Piotr, brought the Badmayev formulas to Zürich where Lutz began testing them. The company he founded, named after the Badmayev family, continues to produce them today.

The Trans-Siberian knowledge corridor

What was necessary for the Trans-Siberian knowledge corridor to function? It needed pioneers, daring spirits who did not shy away from publicity, who felt the spirit of the time and grasped possibilities. It required a ground ready to accept their knowledge. It also needed the flexibility of the Tibetan medical system, able to adapt to new circumstances. And it had to have teamwork. Western history books tend to highlight individual achievements, but the transfer of Tibetan medicine was a community success. The Badmayevs were in constant exchange with their fellow Buryats – monks in Aginsk and relatives on the steppe, who supplied them with knowledge and *materia medica*. This stopped during the years of the Great Terror and many people who built this history remain obscured. Their stories still need to be told.

Today, even for tourists exploring Buryatia, Aginsk is too remote to visit. Geopolitics have consigned it to a part of the country that can be entered only with a special visa; it is too far away from the centre for the authorities to leave access unrestricted. This makes it even more unusual; here Buryats speak Buryat (not always the case in Buryatia), the cult of high education, personified by people like Tsybikov or Zhamsarano, is alive and well, and the elite character of the place is highlighted not only by people's stories that Chinggis Khan 'was from here', but also by the fact that almost everyone is somehow related – in a distant line – to one of the prominent figures in the monuments on the main square. The relatives of the Badmayevs from Uzon plan to erect a new monument – to Piotr Badmayev. The opening will take place on 17 July 2020 during the International Buryat Festival Altargana.

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Notes

1 For more information, see Surkova, N. et al. 2012. 'Frühe neuzeitliche Begegnungen deutschsprachiger Forscher mit der tibetischen Medizin in Sibirien', Forschende *Komplementärmedizin* 19(3):143-152.
2 Both monasteries first operated from yurts. The first buildings were built in 1811 (Aginsk) and 1831 (Tsugol); see Vanchikova, T. et al. 2008. *Zemlya Vadzhrapani: Buddizm v Zabaikalie*. Moskva: Dizain – Informatsia – Kartografia, pp.386,402.
3 Kuz'min, Y. 2014. *Doktor P.A. Badmayev: uchenyi, diplomat, predprinimatel*. Moskva: KMK, p.55.
4 See Grekova, T. 1998. *Tibetskaya medicina v Rossii. Istoriya v sud'bakh i litsakh*. St. Petersburg: Aton; Rehmann, J. 1811. *Beschreibung einer Thibetanischen Handapotheke. Ein Beytrag zur Kenntnis der Arzneykunde des Orients*. St. Petersburg: Drechsler.
5 Semennikov, V. (ed.) 2016. *Za kulisami tsarizma. Arkhiv tibestkogo vracha Badmayeva*. Moskva: LKI, pp.76-77
6 Badmayev, P. 1898. *O sisteme vrachebnoi nauki Tibeta*. St. Petersburg.
7 Some sources say that Piotr also exported medicines, for instance to Switzerland.
8 The policy of 'battle over trade' aimed at destroying private entrepreneurship, such as by levying astronomic surtaxes. A daily newspaper reported that Badmayev had to pay 7 mln PLN – roughly ten years' the average salary of an employed person. The same article called him "a dangerous sorcerer"; see Anon. 1948. 'Niełądnie, panie doktorze!' *Życie Warszawy* 25.5.1948.
9 Badmajew, P. 2013. *The History of a Warsaw Insurgent*. iUniverse, p.6.
10 Zhambal Gomboev became a *khambo-lama* or head of the Buddhist church in the USSR. As Nikolai says, both men had a plan: to rehabilitate themselves through voluntary enrolment in Krasnoyarsk.

Left: A typical wood-burning stove for cooking coconut flower nectar. People in Kokap use firewood for cooking as it is cheap and still relatively abundant in the area. Photo courtesy of Dimas D. Laksmana.

Right: The silhouette hanging from the tree branches is a coconut farmer still collecting coconut flower nectar as dusk is falling. Photo courtesy of Dimas D. Laksmana.

Above: An elderly woman crushing lumps of granule coconut sugar using copra. Photo courtesy of Dimas D. Laksmana.

Between 'green lies' in Germany and organic agriculture in Indonesia

Patrick Keilbart
and Dimas D. Laksmana

Germany and other countries of the Global North import a variety of organic products from Indonesia, such as organic rice, coffee and coconut sugar. The Indonesian National Standard was formulated by the Indonesian government to ensure the quality standard of organic produce in order to protect consumers and producers. However, certification is negatively perceived by some Indonesians as simply privileging large-scale profitable projects, thereby ignoring issues such as food security and environmental integrity; and farmers who are certified face numerous challenges once they are integrated into the global market.

The organic movement in Germany

The 'Organic Movement' is a generic term that refers to individuals and organizations involved in the promotion of sustainable agriculture through organic farming practices. As part of this international movement, Germany has played a considerable role both as a wealthy importer of organic products and as an influential member of the community. Many German actors share the movement's aims to promote and expand organic agriculture, and to develop it from a small niche to a broader, more mainstream market by establishing detailed regulations and efficient yet fair certification and control systems. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) based in Bonn, Germany, was established in 1980 to provide the first international guidelines for organic agriculture, and in 1991 the European directive for organic agriculture (EU Verordnung Ökologischer Landbau) was implemented.[1] Currently, more than 1000 affiliates in over 120 countries are members of IFOAM.

With these achievements, the overall objective of a transparent and sustainable global market for organic products appears more feasible. A growing number of countries worldwide accept and implement national and international regulations, and what constitutes 'organic' is increasingly defined by law. A survey conducted by Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) in 2018 shows that 87 countries have national organic regulations.[2]

However, regulations and certification systems for organic agriculture, and the growing international market for organic products, are not unproblematic, especially for producers and producing countries. In many cases, local farmers do not have access to the organic market since they often encounter difficulties in fulfilling the international regulations or requirements for certification, and applying for organic certification poses significant financial burden to farmers. Furthermore, organic products are often targeted for wealthy importing countries of the Global North, in which the organic industry partly develops contrary to the initial objectives of transparency, economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The German bio-fetish, green-washing and 'green lies'

The main finding of the recent consumer research 'GfK Consumer Index 2017' suggests that in Germany, organic products have already reached the mainstream consumer market.[3] People can purchase organic products at various places, for instance at small organic and health food stores, but also at large-scale organic supermarket chains. In addition, the major supermarket chains and discounters provide a range of organic products or have even introduced their own organic brands. The report conducted by the Society for Consumer Research (Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung, GfK) further shows that in the last ten years, the market share of organic food products in Germany has doubled (from 2.6 to 5.7%) in 2017, and the percentage of German households "with a high affinity for healthy, sustainable food" has reached more than 30%.

These figures, however, present an incomplete picture on the overall achievement of the sustainability and transparency aims pursued by the organic movement. The problem with organic brands or 'bio-brands' in Germany is that they contribute to the "fetishization of everything 'bio'".[4] That means, they create market demand and represent a profitable line of business without providing sufficient information about the producers. Many people in Germany buy products that are labeled 'bio', without knowing its meaning and background. For a comprehensive understanding of the organic markets, it is necessary to consider financial and economic structures, but also productive and immaterial labor as well as producers' perspectives and life worlds. Only by assuming ethical, social and environmental responsibility can the objective of a sustainable global market for organic products be achieved.

Unfortunately, recent cases of green-washing are a perversion of the initial objectives and efforts of the organic movement. Those are enterprises that offer products or services (or obtain raw materials) in a clearly environmental unsustainable or socially unjust framework, but try to establish a positive public image as sustainable, eco-friendly, and fair. The journalist Kathrin Hartmann[5] illustrates a prime example of such 'green lies' and negative effects of the bio-fetish in Germany with the case of palm oil production in Indonesia. It is promoted as a sustainable and eco-friendly product, though in reality it has devastating effects on rainforest biodiversity and labor living conditions.

In the last few years, public awareness about green lies of sustainable palm oil from Indonesia has gradually been raised by media reports. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* featured a report titled 'Rainforest clearings for the supermarket',[6] and Der Spiegel reported on 'The dirty business of palm oil producers'.[7] Yet, ultimately the main responsibility lies with the importers and consumers of presumably organic products. Responsible consumers and supporters of the organic movement in Germany must look beyond bio-brands and green lies, and consider mechanisms of the organic market on the production side.

Below: Taman Nasional Kalibiru (or Blue River National Park), one of the main tourist attractions in the area. With the opening of the new Yogyakarta International Airport within a 30-minute drive, and other related infrastructure plans, the area will likely undergo a massive transformation in the next 10-15 years. Photo courtesy of Dimas D. Laksmana.

Above: Women employed by their neighbour to help make organic coconut sugar. Photo courtesy of Dimas D. Laksmana.

Organic agriculture in Indonesia

Germany and other countries of the Global North import a variety of organic products from Indonesia, such as rice, coffee, and coconut sugar. In response to the gradual expansion of the market for organic produce in the course of the 1990s, an Indonesian National Standard (SNI) was formulated by the Indonesian government. It defines organic agriculture as a production management system that increases and develops the health of the agro-ecosystem, avoids the use of synthetic fertilizer and pesticides, and applies site-specific management practices adapted to local environmental conditions.

The objective of the SNI is to ensure the quality standard of organic produce in order to protect consumers and producers. Its major role is to provide a guarantee system for the organic value chain, to develop nationally and internationally recognized certification for export and import purposes, and to contribute to environmental protection efforts at the local and global level.[8] The increased state regulation through the SNI, however, has embedded organic farming into a national agro-economic framework predicated on a productivistic logic and neoliberal ideas of market expansion. The legally-enforceable certification as promoted by the SNI defines access to the market and thus implies (further) production constraints on producers, particularly in the case of marginalized small-scale farmers who do not have the means to afford certification.

For some Indonesian producers and consumers, organic certification is perceived as privileging large-scale, export-oriented, and highly profitable projects, and are thus rejected. However, organic agriculture in Indonesia can also be understood as a social movement and socio-ecological endeavor that seeks to achieve diverse yet often interlinked issues, such as healthy diets, sustained livelihoods, social justice, food security, and environmental integrity. Organic farming is not simply a variety of agricultural practices that refrain from using petrochemical pesticides and fertilizers as well as genetically modified seeds. Therefore, certification based on particular standards, technical rules, and political procedures (as a result of institutionalization) is not a suitable means for achieving sustainability.

In the early 1990s, the Farmer and Fisherman Association World Food Day (SPTNHPS), one of the first pioneers of organic agriculture in Java, was formed in Central Java. This organization advocates 4 principles in sustainable agriculture: ecologically sound, economically feasible, culturally adapted, and socially just. While organic agriculture started off as a social movement driven by environmental concern, it has developed into a more market-oriented sector. "At the early stage, we mainly focused on teaching farmers how to grow food without using artificial pesticide and fertilizer, how to care for our nature", says one of the founders of SPTNHPS. "We didn't think about marketing, but now things have changed. Now marketing is everything, especially after the government passed SNI on organic farming. Our organization is starting to look for potential market access".[9] Even farmers who focus on selling certified organic products as premium goods are experiencing numerous challenges once they are integrated into the global market.

Organic coconut sugar

Picture a lean man with a honed sickle by his side, carrying cylindrical containers made from cut-bamboo stems filled with coconut flower nectar. The containers are tied to a pole which balances on his right shoulder, and they create a 'tock, tock, tock' sound as the man traverses the uneven terrain of Menoreh Hill, to the west of Yogyakarta, Central Java. This sound signals the beginning and end of a day for many coconut farmers [*penderes*]. The routine is followed by smoke spewing out of houses as the women prepare fires to cook the coconut flower nectar collected by the men. Together they are the preservers and backbone of the traditional coconut sugar making, which relies on human ingenuity and adaptation to the environment.

In Kokap District, Yogyakarta, coconut sugar has always been produced with a clear division of labor. Every morning and afternoon, the men climb coconut trees with nothing but their bare hands and a small knife or sickle to make incisions in the flowers, allowing for the nectar to drip into the bamboo containers [*bumbung*]. The women then cook the nectar for a couple of hours on a wood-burning stove, until the liquid reaches the right consistency and is ready to be molded on copras (dried coconut shells). The only additives are coconut milk or grated coconut to prevent the boiling liquid from overflowing, and a mixture of limestone water and mangosteen sap, which is the yellowish crust formed on the skin of the fruit. All the ingredients are naturally abundant in the area. "I don't know who invented this recipe, but as far as I know even my grandmother produced coconut sugar this way", says a retired teacher and coconut sugar maker. "It is truly natural and the molded coconut sugar has different shapes depending on the makers' preferences. Some like it small, some like it big. It depends on the copras too".

"So we invented organic granule coconut sugar for the export market to increase the income level of coconut farmers here in Kokap", says a member of Jatirogo cooperative, the pioneer of this product. Today, the export of organic coconut sugar has developed into a profitable business sector for local farmers. "In the past, the price of granule coconut sugar was 7000 Rupiah per kilo (about €0.40) and coconut sugar was 3000 Rupiah per kilo, and since then the price of coconut sugar has reached up to 13000 Rupiah when the price of granule coconut sugar was 16000 Rupiah", says a coconut farmer. This account is repeated and confirmed by other people in the region; coconut sugar production provides a stable income, whereas other job opportunities are scarce and youth unemployment is common.

Despite this economic benefit, unfortunately, the creation of organic granule coconut sugar, which is specifically designed to fulfill international market demands, poses unprecedented problems. Firstly, the long value chain of the product is subject to international market fluctuation and creates uncertainties for farmers. When demand stops, farmers cannot sell the granule coconut sugar that they produce on a daily basis. There is also low demand at the local market, as in Indonesia people usually consume coconut sugar, but not in the granule form. During low demand periods, piles of granule coconut sugar packed in transparent plastic can be found in the corners of farmers' houses. In comparison, regular coconut sugar can be sold regularly at the local market.

Secondly, the costs of organic certificates create financial barriers for farmers, hindering them from enjoying the economic benefits of being organic farmers. For instance, the cost of applying for an organic certificate for the European market is 200 million Rupiah (about €12.000) and another 70 million should be paid annually for recertification. These numbers are beyond the reach of many landless farmers whose monthly expenditure is below 5 million Rupiah (about €300) according to the Statistic Publication of Indonesia in 2015.

Thirdly, the financial prospect of being organic farmers still does not appeal to young people given the challenges above. In this area, the aging generation of coconut farmers can hardly find successors to continue collecting coconut flower nectar as the young people tend to emigrate to neighboring cities to find more promising and prestigious occupations. The present example of organic granule coconut sugar for the export market illustrates challenges faced by farmers when their products are intended for consumers thousands of miles away.

Conclusions: from bio-fetish to sustainability

Departing from the global organic movement and its aim to promote sustainable agriculture through organic farming practices, we have shown that the organic industry partly developed contrary to this aim. Organic products have clearly reached the mainstream consumer market in Germany, but without adequately taking the perspectives and life worlds of producers into consideration. On the contrary, 'green lies' about supposedly sustainable and eco-friendly organic products conceal perilous working conditions and devastating environmental effects at production sites.

The case of organic coconut sugar production in Indonesia illustrates the obstacles and pitfalls organic farmers are facing, especially when aspiring to reach the global organic market. Although organic granule coconut sugar has proven to be a profitable export commodity, international market fluctuation, financial barriers of organic certificates, and uncertain future prospects (concerning the younger generation) put its sustainability into question.

Indonesia, as an exporting country, needs cross-sectoral integration between the government and producers to sustain the development of organic agriculture. In importing countries like Germany, responsible consumers must try to look beyond organic brands, and demand that providers of organic products follow ethical guidelines that include concerns of the producers. Only if both producer and consumer sides translate those guidelines into concrete measures can the objectives of transparency, economic, social and environmental sustainability be achieved.

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Notes

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2 Willer, H. & Lernoud, J. 2018. 'The World of Organic Agriculture Statistics and Emerging Trends 2018'. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, and IFOAM – Organics International, Bonn.

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4 Birch, K. & Tyfield, D. 2012. 'Theorizing the Bioeconomy: Biovalue, Biocapital, Bioeconomics or ...What?', *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 38(3): 299-327, p.299.

5 Hartmann, K. 2018. *Die Grüne Lüge. Weltrettung als profitables Geschäftsmodell.* München: Karl Blessing Verlag.

6 Hennemann, L. 2012 (6 Sept.). 'Regenwald-Rodungen für den Supermarkt', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; https://tinyurl.com/szregenwald (accessed 20 August 2018).

7 Hartmann, K. 2015 (7 Mar.). 'Das schmutzige Geschäft der Palmöl-Produzenten', *Der Spiegel*; https://tinyurl.com/spiegelpalm (accessed 20 August 2018).

8 Standar Nasional Indonesia (SNI) 2002. 'Sistem Pangan Organik. Badan Standardisasi Nasional Indonesia'; https://tinyurl.com/snisistem (accessed 21 August 2018).

9 Sekretariat Pelayanan Petani dan Nelayan - Hari Pangan Sedunia STPNHPS (n.d.) FO Profile Indonesia STPNHPS; https://tinyurl.com/SNIprofiledoc (Google Doc).

Surrounded by slogans

Perpetual protest in public space during the Hong Kong 2019 protests

Milan Ismangil

On the way to the metro, I walk past graffiti and posters asking me to be conscious and supportive of the protests. In the metro itself footage of protesters is shown on the many television screens.[1] Public space in Hong Kong can no longer be neutral, it seems. The protests in Hong Kong are entering their fifth month at the time of writing. Originally demanding the withdrawal of a controversial extradition bill, they quickly transformed into a larger cry for accountability of those in power, with universal suffrage and an independent investigation into police brutality amongst the five main demands. The Lennon Walls[2] that have popped up all over Hong Kong and other places across the world are home to post-its, posters and various other visual media, put there by anyone wishing to express their support for the movement. In this article I discuss the transformation of Hong Kong's public areas into spaces of perpetual protest.

Fig. 1 (above): The 'Lennon Bridge' in Tai Wo Hau.

Fig. 2 (left): Remembering the movement near Wong Tai Sin temple.

Fig. 3 (below): Appeals to history and memory at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Fig. 4 (bottom): Informing the public about vandalism; photo taken near Jordan.

It is nearly impossible to walk anywhere in Hong Kong today without encountering signs and slogans of the protests on walls, pavements, railings, walkways, poles, ceilings and so on. Furthermore, buildings targeted for their (perceived) support of the Communist Party have fortified themselves with bars and reinforced doors, adding to the changing image of Hong Kong's streets.

One of the most impressive aspects of the movement is its diversity and expertise in visual imagery. The use of social media and image hosting sites, combined with Hong Kong's population density and high economic development, allows for a rapid spread and high visibility of new protest images. Some of these are curated, organized by certain organizations, but others are more guerrilla in nature, posted online for anyone to print out and disperse across Hong Kong. Based on a number of photos taken during the movement I discuss some themes and motives that characterize the visual makeup of the protests, along the lines of four categories: 'memory and remembrance', 'appeals and explanation', 'beyond the local context', and 'the changing city'.

Memory and remembrance

The movement uses dates as stark reminders of events in the past. Repeated references to these dates help to legitimise the movement by giving it a solid foundation of historic events. The dates are displayed on so-called 'protest calendars' (fig.2), and considering the censorship regime of the ever-encroaching mainland China, it makes perfect sense to connect to and remind people of its history.

Memories of important protest events are kept alive through posters displaying, and chants repeating, their dates. For example, references to '6.4' (六四), the date of the Tiananmen massacre, are a relatively common sight (see fig.3). '7.21' and '8.31' are two other well-known dates; the first refers to the attacks on protesters by assailants with knives on 21 July 2019, and the second to the police violence inside a metro station on 31 August 2019. Other dates such as '10.1' and '8.11' again refer to incidents of police violence: respectively, the first live gunshot injury and a rubber bullet shot into a protester's eye. Dates have become part of the canon of Hong Kong protests, with numerous public displays urging us to remember. This is also typified in graffiti seen around the city stating, "Some moved on, but not us", or "we will never forget". Slogans such as 毋忘721 831 [Don't forget 721 831!] are seen all over Hong Kong.

Historical appeals are powerful metaphors. There is an awareness among the protesters of China's power of their need to shape the narrative. The ubiquitous nature of these 'calendars' shows a protest against a regime that has a tight grip on the memory and history of its people. They appeal to their observers to remember and spread the word, and not fall prey to manipulation and subversion by the Chinese state. Some posters, written in simplified Chinese, directly appeal to the many mainland Chinese visitors with the aim to unbalance the state's narrative. These posters are engaged in a silent battle with the state's propaganda apparatus.

Appeals and explanation

A second major part of the visual makeup of the movement is clarification. Acts of vandalism or destruction are explained by protestors – on site – to inform passers-by, with the intention to spread a message that goes beyond wanton violence. Fig. 4 shows a vandalized Starbucks, targeted by protestors because the branch is managed by the pro-Beijing Maxim's Group. The spray-painted texts explain their reasons as well as their vow to not steal from the property. The promise and act of not stealing is vital

Fig. 5 (right): Online and offline in Diamond Hill.

Fig. 6 (below): Emojis come to life at University Station 黨鐵不了 [Cannot stand the (communist) party rail].

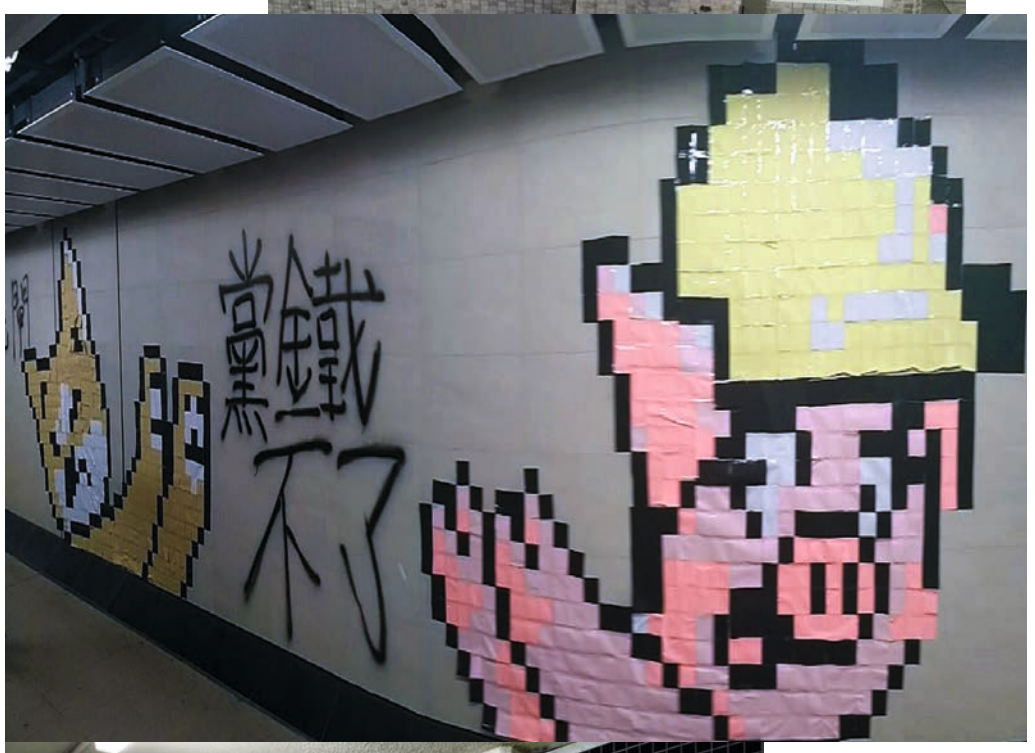


Fig. 7 (left): Newly installed grates near above Kowloon Tong metro station.

Fig. 8 (bottom): San Po Kong Bank of China 'bunker', showing security measures taken.

Fig. 9 (bottom): Graffiti has been painted over.

as it crystalizes the vandalism as ideological destruction. The belief in this ethos was exemplified by a person being tied up and left for the police after he was seen trying to loot a XiaoMi store.[3] Other public messages explain why the MTR is a target of attacks, or why certain stores are boycotted, or as the movement grew more violent, became a target for 'renovations'. The MTR was targeted due to its perceived role in assisting the police as well as possibly 'covering up' police brutality by refusing to make camera footage inside the stations public. Most famously on 31 August (8.31.), when policemen entered the station and clashes took place. Rumours of possible deaths due to police brutality spread rapidly leading to outrage and further demands of public accountability of the police and the possible role of the MTR in protecting or facilitating the authorities.

Beyond the local context: from offline to online, domestic to abroad

A large part of the movement is its digital sensibility. This bleeds into the real world as online memes and imageries are reproduced on the streets. Technologies such as QR codes serve to establish an ephemeral bridge between the 'real' world and the digital world 'out there', reached through our phones on the streets. Pepe the Frog, an American cartoon character, has been adopted by the protesters as an icon (fig.5). Other cartoon characters, such as the dog (連狗) and pig (連豬) (fig.6), hail from the LIHKG Forum, one of Hong Kong's most popular forums and used by many protesters. The protesters have been identified as "young, educated, and middle class",[4] which explains the popularity of using emblematic icons taken from the internet. These images can digitally communicate the protest message beyond the local context, across the world, shared through social media.

With 'beyond the local context' I refer to the strategy of *sharing* that underlies the protests. Clearly, posters and other visuals are made not exclusively for the local observer but with (international) television and social media in mind. Exemplary of this strategy are protest messages at university graduation ceremonies. By cladding the walls of graduation venues with protest images and slogans, most photos taken at the ceremony will become carriers of pro-protest messages. As people share their pictures of Hong Kong, they inadvertently share protest messages.

The changing city: accommodating the protests

The visual media in the public space ensures one is constantly reminded of the protests during the daily commute. Recently, however, the reminders are also found in the structural changes that the city has been submitted to. The city is bearing silent witness to the breakdown of the normal state of being. The changing cityscape is reacting to and accommodating the protests in different ways. For example, in anticipation of large crowds and for safety concerns, fences and chains at pedestrian crossings have been removed and replaced with simple tape. The little changes affect the way in which we now navigate the city. Metal grating was installed to open sides of railway bridges/walkways after the protests started, most likely to prevent people (protesters) from throwing things onto the rails, or accessing the station after closing time (fig.7).

Lastly are some of the protective measures taken by many companies, such as the Bank of China, Yoshinoya and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. Due to the recent targeting of 'pro-Beijing' establishments, some companies have opted to protect their properties; glass windows have, for example, made way for metal panels, further changing the atmosphere on the streets (fig.8). Walking around Hong Kong, some establishments look like construction sites blending into the background, with only simple signs fixed to the facade betraying their function.

Keeping the movement alive

Everyday space has become protest space, but the protest has also bled into the fabric of everyday life. Many restaurants have televisions broadcasting the news; the Metro, used by a majority of the population, shows protest footage inside the train cars, making it near impossible to escape the protests even on quiet days. Not to mention the categorization of restaurants and businesses into 'Yellow' (pro-protesters) or 'Blue' (pro-police). The political becomes the everyday.

The protesters have succeeded brilliantly in transforming Hong Kong into a political site. I have shown but a snapshot of the diversity of the visual culture of the movement and have left out many of the common slogans sprayed all over Hong Kong, such as 光复香港，时代革命 [Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times],香港人加油 [Keep it up Hong Kongers], which later turned into 香港反抗 [Hong Konger – resist], a more provocative statement. Revising this article several months later, the slogan 香港人報仇 [Hong Kongers take revenge] has become popular, as the general legitimacy of the government and police force continues to be eroded.

Travelling anywhere within Hong Kong one is sure to encounter some form of protest related art, be it graffiti, posters or some other method of altering the public space. The protestors have also cleverly managed to dance between off- and online space, national and international space. International attention is seen as an effective weapon to put pressure on the government and many of the posters speak beyond the observer on the ground. There is a digital strategy of sharing, spreading, and making viral the protest's art. It is a constant game between the government who regularly cleans up contested sites, and protesters who come back the next day with updated posters, occasionally even sardonically thanking the government for cleaning up the old, irrelevant posters and giving them a blank canvas to express themselves.

A final point relating to digital technologies is the blurring of audience of these images. Many images are meant to be photographed and shared, rather than seen by passers-by. One example are the many posters that speak directly to foreign leaders, imploring them to intervene. Or the posters thanking other countries for showing solidarity with the Hong Kong movement. These speak 'beyond' the local, relying on the press and local observers to share these online. They are decontextualized within Hong Kong in order to speak beyond.

The ever-developing professionalization and standardization of the protest art is also of note. Different forms are being explored, such as the post-it imagery of the dog and pig. Other locations might feature large art pieces tailor-made to fit a precise location, such as on the 'Lennon bridge' (fig. 1). The movement is more than people semi-randomly sticking flyers on walls; it is seemingly blossoming in its creative expression, and speed of employment. By turning everyday space into protest space the protests, since June, have turned Hong Kong into a space of perpetual protest reaching beyond the local into the digital world and through it, the entire physical world.

Postscript

Revising this article several months later with still no end in sight, most of the artwork has been removed or replaced by more recent versions (fig.9). The government has stepped up its efforts to clean up the city, leading to new strategies and tactics in a city engulfed in a seemingly endless daily struggle.

Milan Ismangil, PhD candidate at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, writes about culture and everyday life https://notjustaboutculture.com

Notes

1 Several weeks after writing this the metro station was largely trashed and sections burned during the police siege of the Chinese University of Hong Kong
2 Named after the Lennon Wall in Prague, where fans wrote messages after his death.
3 https://tinyurl.com/scmp-looting
4 https://tinyurl.com/scmp-demo

Negotiating a global identity

Chahida Bouhamou and Cha-Hsuan Liu

Above (left to right): Önder Düran, Oussouby Sacko, Cha-Hsuan Liu, Janice Duel, Chahida Bouhamou, Seong Bin Hwang, and Elena Valbusa.

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), the most inclusive international gathering in the field of Asian Studies, held its 11th edition in Leiden, the Netherlands (15-19 July 2019). Among a flurry of activities, the roundtable 'Negotiating the Global Identity' took place on 18 July. It aimed to open up a dialogue on the value of diversity and how individuals identify themselves in the contemporary globally connected world. Intense discussions broke out about, for example, the 'identity mismatch' and the limitations of seeing identity as an asset in a multicultural society. In order to tackle such challenges regarding identity, it was proposed that we negotiate the 'global identity'.

Instead of focusing on just academic opinions, the panel consisted of members from various backgrounds to enrich the discussions regarding the complexity and the challenges of identity matters. The composition of this roundtable was noteworthy: firstly, the five panellists included two academia (both education and research fields), one policy communication advisor, one journalist cum fashion activist, and a project leader for social inclusion. At the last moment, two students from a Dutch University, two professors from Asian Universities and one Japanese female conference participant joined the discussion. All participants held different ethnical and national identity combinations: Dutch, Chinese (China and Taiwan), Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese, Japanese, Korean, Nigerian, Italian and Malian. The diversity stimulated spontaneous debates and enriched the conclusion of this roundtable.

Is identity a label?

Is identity a label that you assign to yourself, or that is ascribed to you? The roundtable started with moderator Cha-Hsuan Liu's statement that "the term 'identity' is perceived differently in different parts of the world". In Asia, identity is not explicitly mentioned in parenting or fundamental education. In Western culture, however, identity is a recurring topic; it has, for example, become common in Europe to ask people to identify themselves in terms of the ethnic background and/or religion. Cha-Hsuan, currently a lecturer of Multicultural Society and Generation Study at Utrecht University, regards identity formation as an action of making choices: individuals may present various identities in different settings. She argued, how to present 'oneself' seems to be a choice to create a favourable position in the communication with 'others' rather than a fixed label.

Janice Deul, an activist in the fashion industry, saw the power of fashion as a tool to influence the way in which an individual can be perceived. Fashion, according to Janice, is not (only) about shoes, clothes, and so forth, but it is also about representation, emancipation and a way to express one's identity. It can be used to determine how an individual wants to be perceived by others. In her presentation, Janice provided evidence of how fashion photography can positively/negatively influence public opinion of (images of) ethnic minorities. She discussed how fashion communicates perceptions of beauty, however, it does not reflect the inclusion of a multicultural society in most parts of the world. Janice gave an example of this: a Dutch magazine portrayed and celebrated 'Dutch beauty' by presenting only blonde skinny models with blue eyes. Aside from the fact that beauty is relative, this presentation excluded the Dutch with different ethnic backgrounds. Unintentionally, it proposed to the public that this is the ideal beauty. In this way the industry plays a role in identity creation.

Önder Düran, a lecturer of Interdisciplinary Social Science at Utrecht University, shared his concerns about how he should present himself in public; for example, what he should wear, or how he should 'profile' himself – as a lecturer first? What comes second? He claimed that he carries various identities with him: Islamic, Turkish, and Dutch. In addition, being born in Brabant, perceived as a 'less developed' province by city dwellers in the Netherlands, he was confronted with his provincial accent when he started working at Utrecht University. Önder also shared his worries about identity formation among the second or the third generation migrant youths in the Netherlands. His comments led to discussions about 'identity confusion'.

Elena Valbusa is the project manager of the *Incluusion* Program at Utrecht University. The program offers people with a refugee background the possibility to study. According to Elena, and the discussions she has had, the 'refugee label' leads to stigmatization and polarization; the program gives them the 'option' to use 'student' as a new label, with which they can proudly introduce themselves. The goal of the program is to allow the refugees to peel off the stigmatized label by replacing it with a new one and to empower them for acceptance in the host society. However, participants in the program have different opinions regarding this student identity. While one participant expressed gratitude towards this student identity for giving her more confidence in the host country, another person indicated that it is just a 'sugarcoating' of reality.

The fourth panellist, Chudi Ukpabi, originally from Nigeria, is a senior international cooperation and development professional, working in governance, strategic communication, and nation building projects in the Netherlands and over 35 African countries. He argued that diversity is not about losing your own values, but gaining new values and identities from other cultures – as is learnt in Nigeria, where people live side by side with diverse identities, languages, religions, ethnicities, traditions, modern and traditional communities, etc. Chudi argued that understanding and respecting cultural diversity is fundamental for building relations, reconciliation, breaking down stereotypes, cultural assumptions. It helps us to deal with global social challenges, such as poverty, conflicts, environment, equality, genders issues and migration. Therefore, diversity should be seen as a strength not a weakness. He further proposed that global citizenship can be used positively to incorporate different social elements that make up the identities that we are proud of. The 'global identity' is the capacity to remove ourselves from our cultural comfort zone. It does not mean that we have to surrender our own native identity, instead, we can gain new identities and values.

Cha-Hsuan then invited the guest participants to join the roundtable discussion by asking the question: what is identity to you? Chahida Bouhamou, who just obtained her Master's degree at Utrecht University, contributed her experiences of seeking her identity as a second generation Dutch-Moroccan in the Netherlands. In her youth, she felt and believed that identity is one-dimensional: with both parents being born in Morocco, it was never a question what her identity was at home – it was Moroccan without a doubt. However, in her twenties her perspective shifted. She was no longer satisfied with being perceived as Moroccan, which in fact legitimized the lack of access to resources and possibilities in Dutch mainstream society. For that reason, Chahida insisted on presenting herself as Dutch and correcting people when she was referred to as a Moroccan. Over time, she came to understand that she is the one who determines her identity. According to her, identity involves more than ethnicity or nationality, and for that reason identity should be seen as fluid and not static. Chahida's experiences heated up the discussions and debates in the second session of the roundtable. Three themes emerged with regard to identity: the 'identity mismatch', identity is 'an asset', and negotiating a 'global identity'.

The identity mismatch

Yiran, a PHD candidate at Leiden University, identifies herself as Chinese and not Dutch even though she migrated to the Netherlands many years ago. She found it difficult to fully understand Chahida's identity struggle and wondered why Chahida insisted on her Dutch identity. Interestingly, Elena stated that some newcomers in the Netherlands (e.g., Syrian refugees) share similar thoughts as Yiran. One could consider the fact that Yiran, Elena and the refugees mentioned are first generation migrants, whilst Chahida is second generation. While first generation migrants tend to carry their original identities to the host country, the second generation have fewer emotions linked to the lands where their parents came from. For example, first generation Dutch Moroccans use the Moroccan word for 'going home' to refer to their yearly vacation to Morocco. On the other hand, the later generations, born or raised in the Netherlands, do not necessarily share that perspective and seek to be validated as Dutch citizens. There seems to be a discrepancy between the generations in the understanding of identity, which might not yet be explored in academic debates. The second generation's selfidentity and their identity proposed by the family are mismatched. Furthermore, the majority of the host society tend to ignore the fact that later generations of migrants identify with their current home and continue to identify this group as 'foreign'.

Önder addressed his experiences with a mismatch concerning his religion. In the Netherlands there is freedom of religion, however, the normative situation is different than society claims. When being in contact with the majority of the Dutch, he has always felt that his religious identity wasn't allowed to be presented. Contrary to the ideology of the Netherlands to respect all values and expressions of religion, Önder indicated that he does not have the same freedom to manifest his religious beliefs when it comes to Islam, which is still largely perceived as a threat to the Judeo-Christian society and to Democracy. Nonetheless, he does not want to deny this part of his identity; that would be like erasing a part of his family's history and memories.

Elena faced a contradictive situation. Ever since she married a Dutch man and moved to the Netherlands, her Italian family perceives her identity as a mixture of Italian-Dutch and not solely Italian. Some members of the family find it difficult to accept or to understand her choice to move to another country, and therefore frame her living abroad as some sort of 'betrayal' to her Italian cultural heritage. It seems that her acceptance of Dutch identity is regarded as the abandonment of her cultural roots.

The mismatch takes place when the self-identity(ies) of an individual does not match with the identity(ies) ascribed by others, often the majority. Oussouby Sacko, President of Kyoto Seika University, joined the discussion. As a Muslim from Mali living in Japan, he stated that when meeting new Japanese people, conversations usually start with the other person saying: "We love animals. We envy you. You are able to see lions and elephants every day". And even though he has the Japanese nationality, he is never perceived as Japanese.

Seong Bin Hwang who is a professor in Japan, shared a similar story. He was born in South Korea but has lived in Japan for more than half of his life. He is respected in Japanese society for his academic accomplishments and career, yet the majority still do not consider him as Japanese, regardless of the fact that his appearance does not differ from the natives and that his Japanese is better than his Korean. He argued that acceptance by the majority can only be enhanced by creating awareness of such issues through education.

It was concluded that a few of the factors leading to a mismatch include one's cultural/ethnic background, religion and/or appearance. This raised a further question: is a mismatch inevitable or is there room to adjust the narrow perspective of what a true (national) identity entails. If there is indeed room, how much space is there for identity to be altered and claimed. Yiran made a valid point by stating that she sees identity as a tool with which to identify herself, and not one with which others can identify her.

Yoko, a Japanese woman married to a Caucasian Dutch man, who has lived in the Netherlands for quite some time, but who has had no experience in the Dutch labour environment, stated that she has not had the negative experiences (e.g., discrimination) in the Netherlands that were shared by some of the other participants of the roundtable. She also could not recognize the experiences shared by Oussouby and Seong Bin about her home country Japan. This led to agitated reactions from a few of the participants. The explanation offered for Yoko's experience by the roundtable members was that Yoko might not acknowledge her privileged position in both countries. In Japan, Yoko is part of the dominant majority and therefore might overlook the discrimination that the minority is confronted with. In addition to her Dutch family's status, the Japanese in the Netherlands are considered to be 'honoured Western migrants' – Japan is classified as 'Western' because it is a rich and industrialized country. In other words, Yoko's Japanese identity appears to be an asset that secures her living circumstances. And so at that point, and in line with Yiran's earlier statement that identity is a tool, the focus of the debate shifted from identity mismatch to the positive aspects of identity.

Identity as an asset and its limitations

Both Yiran's and Yoko's statements indicated that identity can sometimes be seen as an asset to negotiate one's space in a multicultural society, consciously or unconsciously. They are both very confident about their own identities and even present it to their advantage. For instance, as Chinese are perceived to be 'model migrants' in many countries, Yiran's contribution to the University is appreciated. These positive stories stimulated the roundtable participants to view identity from an intersectional point to gain insight into how differently identity can be experienced. A clear thin line was revealed between the experiences of the privileged and nonprivileged. Based on the stories of Yoko, Oussouby and Seong Bin, their socio-economic related identities create a privileged position in which they are accepted by the host society regardless of being seen as a member of the majority or not.

Not all people with a bi-cultural back-ground are able to enjoy the same privileged position to climb up the socio-economic ladder. The participants argued that people with a bicultural background with higher education, or even with a high financial status, may still, up to a certain point, need to claim the value of their identity instead of have it be granted. For those with a bi-cultural background who are low on the socio-economic ladder, their social space might be strongly determined by factors such as gender, class, ethnic background, educational level, physical ability, sexual orientation and so forth. We cannot deny that improving one's socio-economic status can create valuable identities that increase acceptance by the majority. Such a privileged position can also grant access to other countless rights (e.g., job opportunities), in turn further increasing one's position on the socio-economic ladder. Nevertheless, this positive influence is limited. Just like in the caste system in India, once an individual is bound to the caste they were born into, their education or wealth may not be enough to move upwards on the socio-economic ladder. In the Netherlands, although there is no such caste system, there are still symbolic and social boundaries that limit the social mobility for some minority groups. This means that agency is only effective up to a certain point and societal changes have to be made to ensure social mobility for all groups regardless of factors such as gender, ethnic background, religion, etc.

Negotiating identity

In the roundtable discussion, there were increasingly dissatisfied sounds heard from participants with bi-cultural backgrounds. Some felt that their social position undermines the equal access to resources and opportunities. Some shared their experiences of investing effort to fight against discrimination and racism; for example, Janice's work to create space for models with darker skin tones in the fashion world, and Önder's blog about positive identity formation amongst migrant youths. Cha-Hsuan then invited the participants to rethink ways of empowering minorities to gain societal space, beyond the negative images of certain identities, and the limitations of identity as an asset.

A soft approach was proposed: redefine the identities that an individual carries. Cha- Hsuan gave an example of a Taiwanese female friend of hers who, instead of introducing herself as a migrant, uses the term 'cultural enricher' to advocate for the value of her presence in Dutch society. Oussouby shared his observation of how Africans in Japan nowadays align their identity with the African American pop culture to turn the negative images of, for example, people from low-income African countries, into a cultural trend and a perception of economic power. According to Oussouby, it is not an easy process to change misconceptions and stereotypes, but through intercultural exchange both sides can advance their views about each other. Following the previous discussion about 'identity as an asset', acquiring a valued identity for social mobility was also suggested. Socially desirable identities that are seen as 'positive' and 'valuable', such as a master's degree may facilitate individuals in claiming social space.

The roundtable participants argued that the success of these soft approaches depends on how much space the majority chooses to share with the minority members. The process of an attitude change in a society can take a long time. Therefore, it is understandable that some members from disadvantaged cultural groups elect to demand respect from society through activism. Petitions or demonstrations are used to provoke the issues around identity and social acceptance. However, the hard approach also has its limitations because resistance does not always inspire goodwill from the majority.

The approaches mentioned above all aim to convince the majority of the valuable contribution of diverse groups in a multicultural society, and to demand inclusivity, regardless of any cultural background. As Chahida stated, she should be appreciated as a member of Dutch society, rather than be seen as being part of a specific cultural group. In other words, a society with diversity, not a society with minorities. In such an egalitarian society all members can be respected and have equal access to human rights on the basis of their innate merits, not the value defined by secular social desires.

Oussouby further suggested that Chudi's idea of having a 'global citizen identity' can be an ideal solution to the identity challenges that many people are facing. The 'global citizen identity' is conceptualised as the ultimate form of an inclusive identity that tackles the mismatch between the self-identity and identity ascribed by others in a multicultural society. The global citizen identity can be understood as a melting pot of multiple identities in which there is a dialogue concerning values, cultures, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and so forth. Chudi suggested, the global citizen identity – a collective term of having multiple identities – will be an asset that can be used all over the world. Multiple identities allow you to adapt depending on the place or situation you are in. Oussouby and Chudi outlined an ideal situation in which people can define themselves as global citizens whose cultural capital is heavily valued.

To what extent is this global identity feasible? An important condition would appear to be that the proposed identity is recognized and respected by others. For example, in recognizing the need for a third gender choice, an 'X' was introduced for Dutch passports in 2018. This movement provided the choice of a non-binary gender identity to people who do not want to be identified as male or female (gender neutral) or those who identify themselves both as male and female (gender fluid). Participants agreed that manifesting the 'global identity' can reinforce the 'we' feeling and allow us to embrace all identities perceived.

Oussouby added that since acceptance of diversity concerns the (ethnic) minorities more than the majority, the effort to change this perspective has to come from people of colour. Unfortunately though, access to rights, resources and possibilities, is very much tied up with one's identity and position in society. Yet to make the global identity a success, it is essential that this perspective on identity should become mainstream and not an idea promoted only by people with different cultural backgrounds. It was a pity that there was only one roundtable participant considered to be a member of Dutch society's majority. Dominique Voskuyl, a Dutch student of Wageningen University & Research, shared her mixed feelings about being a minority at the table, yet also expressed her gratitude for the knowledge and emotions shared by the participants with bi-cultural backgrounds. Following her reflection, those present raised their concerns about the lack of communication between the majority and minority and welcomed the majority's voice to provide different views in the debate.

The debate on the mismatch of identities, the acknowledgement of a fluid identity, and the acquisition of a global identity, led to the suggestion of three approaches to deal with the negative impacts of identity and with shaping benefits of identity. From an individual's aspect, one could try to redefine their identity to one with more value, or to advocate for the value of their existing identity. From society's aspect, an inclusive society that respects all cultural values should be encouraged. And last but not least, a global identity is proposed to overarch the strengths of an individual's multiple identities – thereby creating a new global 'we'. More discussions regarding the inclusivity of identity in a multicultural society are necessary. If all society members participate in such identity discussions, then equality and inclusivity between and among the diverse identities can be achieved.

Chahida Bouhamou and
Cha-Hsuan Liu, Utrecht University

We would like to thank the participants of this roundtable for their bright minds and valuable contributions to this article:

Moderator
Cha-Hsuan Liu, Utrecht University

Panellists
Janice Duel, journalist and fashion activist
Önder Düran, Utrecht University
Elena Valbusa, Utrecht University
Chudi Victor Ukpabi, Chudi Communication Consult the Netherlands

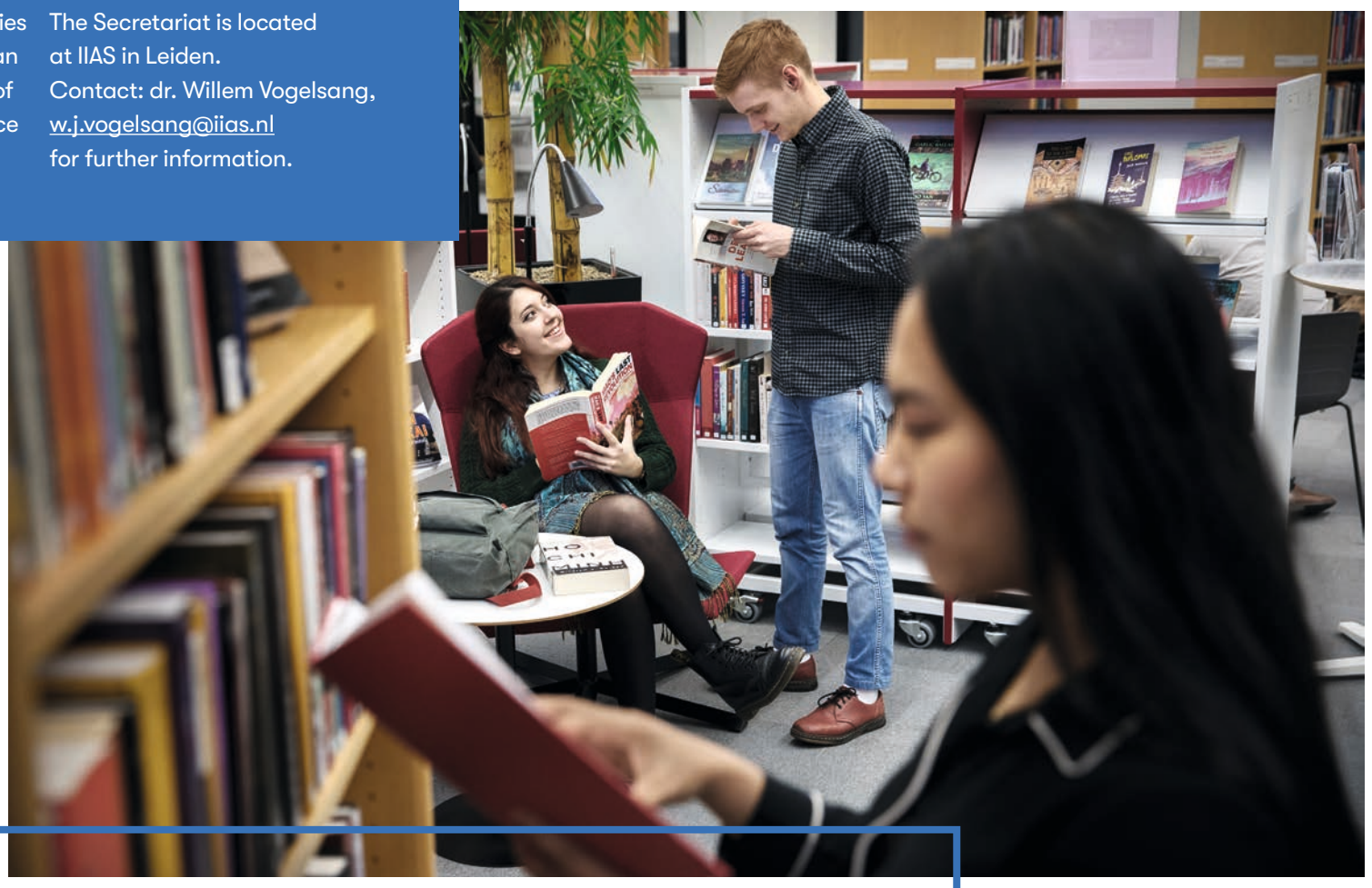
Participants
Chahida Bouhamou, Utrecht University
Seong Bin Hwang, Rikkyo University Japan
Yoko Odaka, Japan
Oussouby Sacko, Kyoto Seika University
Dominique Voskuyl, Wageningen University & Research
Yiran Yang, Leiden University

European Alliance for Asian Studies

The European Alliance for Asian Studies is a co-operative platform of European institutions specialising in the study of Asia. Please read all about the Alliance on its website: www.asiascholars.eu

The Secretariat is located at IIAS in Leiden.
Contact: dr. Willem Vogelsang, w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl for further information.

Below: Asia Library, photo courtesy of Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies.



The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University

Asian studies, university politics, and the future

Marina Svensson

The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies (hereafter the Centre) was established in 1996 as a result of a government initiative and long-term efforts at Lund University to promote education and research on the region (https://www.ace.lu.se).

History and early institutional set-up

Education and research on Asia have been conducted at Lund University since the 1970s, mainly at the Department of East Asian Languages. The focus was on China and Japan although languages such as Thai and Indonesian were taught until 2006 (when there was a general cut-back on languages with the result that no Swedish universities any longer offer Thai or Indonesian). The department began an undergraduate programme in East and South-East Asian Studies in 1984 that combined languages with area studies. Only in 1989 did the department get its first professor, who had a focus on China. The department had started its Ph.D. programme the year previously with a focus on Chinese modern history, literature, and language. Individual scholars at Lund University were involved in research on East and South-East Asia, as well as on South Asia, but they were few and scattered across departments of anthropology, sociology, history and political science.

Sweden has quite a strong tradition in Sinology, represented by eminent scholars such as Bernard Karlgren and Göran Malmkvist, but it was an interest in contemporary socio-economic and political developments, as well as the growing global importance of some countries in East and South-East Asia, that motivated the establishment of the Centre in 1996. The aim was thus to stimulate research and education on East and South-East Asian contemporary societies. In the period up until 2012, the Centre's permanent staff was quite small and consisted only of a professor, who served as the director, administrative staff and librarians, whereas researchers were either postdoctoral fellows or researchers with external funding on a non-permanent basis. The Centre from the beginning ran a master's programme in Asian studies that has developed over the years (see further below). The Centre also established its own library and in 1999 it was merged with the library at the Department of East Asian Languages. The Asia library was then run jointly until 2006 when the Centre took over sole responsibility as the Department of East Asian Languages was incorporated in the newly established Centre for Languages and Literature.

Although the postdoctoral fellows and other researchers at the Centre were very active, the nature of their positions made it difficult to develop a sustainable teaching and research environment. The restriction on permanent staff was lifted in 2012-2013 when new directives were adopted, which led to two lecturers being appointed (and one later promoted to professor). In mid-2016, planning ahead of the retirement of the director and the future retirement of one of the two lecturers, the Centre was allowed to recruit three associate senior lecturers on a tenure track, and in late 2018 to promote one researcher to lecturer. This means that the Centre today has a permanent staff consisting of one professor and four lecturers. It also has one researcher, and in 2020 two postdoctoral fellows will join the Centre. It is currently the only institution in the Nordic countries that conducts both teaching and research on contemporary East and South-East Asia.

New institutional set-up

When the Centre was established it was decided that it would be based outside of the faculties as were all other interdisciplinary centres. This had several advantages but also meant, among other things, that the Centre was not allowed to develop its own Ph.D. programme. With a new university management came a decision around 2016 to transfer all the existing interdisciplinary centres, including for example the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, to a faculty. This was more of a pragmatic rather than a visionary decision, and raised concerns about how to maintain the interdisciplinary nature in a new institutional environment. After much discussion, the Centre decided to choose the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology rather than the Faculty of Social Sciences. This choice was motivated by the promise by the former that the Centre could establish a Ph.D. programme, and by a generally more positive view on and experience of area studies.

Due to the institutional and administrative set-up at the faculty the transfer in January 2019 also meant that the Centre became a division within the larger Department of History that apart from the division of history also houses the division of human rights. The Asia Library remains at the same premises as the Centre but is now run by the faculty library management. The Centre has adopted new directives to ensure its interdisciplinary focus, something which is also reflected in the advisory board that has members from other faculties as well as one external member. Furthermore, the Centre maintains its social science focused master's programme and aim to promote cross-faculty inter-disciplinary research. During this first year, the Centre has begun a number of undergraduate courses as well as had its Ph.D. programme in East and South-East Asian Studies approved. The programme will begin in September 2020.

The above overview of the background to the establishment of the Centre and its development shows that its birth was motivated by a public and governmental interest in the region coupled with some visionary thinking at Lund University. But university politics, administrative restrictions, and the strong power of faculties and disciplines at Swedish universities, have hampered the Centre in its development. Interdisciplinary area studies have difficulties to get a footing at universities due to quite conservative institutional set-ups that privilege more disciplinary institutions. Right now, however, the Centre is in a more favourable and stable position than before with a larger permanent staff and the ability to develop its own interdisciplinary Ph.D. programme.

Interdisciplinary education

The master's programme is today a two-year long interdisciplinary programme conducted in English with a focus on contemporary East and South-East Asia. Each year around 25 students begin the programme. The first semester consists of an introduction to area studies and the region's economic and political developments. In the second semester students can choose to focus on a sub-region or a country, currently China, Japan and Korea, and South-East Asia, as well as take a course in methodology. The third semester consists of several elective courses on topics such as economics, development issues, human rights, digital developments, and international relations in the region, in addition to an obligatory data collection course that prepares students for their master thesis work during the fourth semester. Students are also able to take an exchange semester in East and South-East Asia as well as conduct their fieldwork with the help of some of our partner universities in the region. The masters' programme thus enables students to both get a good overview of developments in the region as well as focus thematically and with respect to a specific country. Many former students go on to a Ph.D. programme whereas others take up jobs in NGOs, government bodies, and private companies.

Research, networks and activities

The master's programme reflects some of the research interests at the Centre. Individual research projects currently cover topics such as civil society and domestic politics in Cambodia, microcredit programmes and economic developments in China, labour and migration in China, China's digital society, cultural heritage issues, film and media in China, Japan's foreign policy, and international relations in East Asia more generally. The Centre has been working to consolidate its research profile. There are currently three interlinked interdisciplinary research themes. The first, 'Digital Asia', builds on and expands the Digital China project (funded by the Swedish Research Council from 2013 to 2018) as manifested in a recent conference and Ph.D. workshop (see opposite page). The second, 'Human Rights and Social Justice', addresses topics such as academic freedom, freedom of speech, labour rights, and civil society developments. The Centre is a member of the Human Rights Research Hub at Lund University. A recent joint call for a postdoctoral fellow in human rights in East and South-East Asia is also part of this research focus. The open access journal *Made in China*, with one editor based at the Centre, can also be regarded to be part of this focus. The third theme, 'Global Challenges and International Relations', addresses the region's role in global economic development and geopolitics. This theme is also reflected in individual projects dealing with sustainability issues, migration, human rights and flows of cultural products. The research agenda at the Centre is thus underpinned by a focus on flows of people, ideas, and goods – and the impact of these flows on individuals, communities, the environment, and human security. This focus opens up for new ways of studying the region, and links between domestic, regional and global developments.

The Centre hosts visiting scholars and in recent years has provided accommodation and office space as well possibilities to organise research seminars for visiting Ph.D. students. The Centre organises public lectures, film screenings and photo exhibitions in order to engage with the public and interested students and staff at the university. It also organises workshops and international conferences.

The Centre has extensive contacts with scholars and institutions in East and South-East Asia and elsewhere. It is also a member of different associations and networks, including the European Alliance for Asian Studies. The Centre is a paying member of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Nordic Council. This for example means that students and staff at Lund University can access data bases and journals held by NIAS. It has also resulted in collaboration such as the recent conference 'Digital Asia'.

Future work and challenges

At the Centre we are confident that the interdisciplinary field of area studies will remain relevant. Knowledge of individual countries and the region is necessary in order to understand many current global challenges such as climate change, human rights and security issues, and the growth of populism. Furthermore, the region is a site for new developments and applications of digital technologies that both harbour possibilities and new dangers, e.g., increase states' surveillance capacities. Another cause of concern is the lack of and threats to academic freedom in many countries, including in particular China, that have serious implications for research as well as make collaboration difficult. Being able to engage and collaborate with researchers in the region is central for the future of Asian studies. The Centre has thus been involved in discussions and seminars on academic freedom and how best to support scholars from the region. This was also the topic for a panel at ICAS 11 in 2019 that the Centre organised under the auspices of the European Alliance for Asian Studies.

Marina Svensson, Professor of Modern China Studies; Director, Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University

Digital Asia

Conference report

Nicholas Loubere, Astrid Norén Nilsson, and Paul O'Shea

An academic conference in Sweden in December may not at first glance seem an appealing prospect: the days are short and the weather is, well, cold. The semester is coming to an end and exams and administrative tasks are taking priority. On the other hand, attendance at panels is more or less guaranteed, as the darkness and cold keeps participants indoors! Whether this was intentional or not, the 12th Annual Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (NIAS) Council Conference and PhD Course at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University in December 2019, was, regardless of the weather outside, both a lively and timely event.

Lively, because of the engaged presenters coming from far and wide, including Asia, Australasia, North America, as well of course Europe and the Nordic region. Timely, because of the theme—*Digital Asia: Cultural, Socio-Economic, and Political Transformations.* Aside from having the largest Internet population, Asia is at the forefront of digital developments in many fields, from governance, entertainment, and e-commerce. The vastness of the region also means that these developments take divergent directions, reflecting local cultures, histories, socioeconomic, and political realities. Given the theme, the papers presented cut across a wide range of disciplines and methods, diverse but unified in their aim of understanding the past, present, and future of the digital in Asia. For the programme see https://www.digitalasia2019.com

Keynotes: recovering the human in the digital

Four innovative and intellectually lively keynotes framed the conference, exemplifying the wealth of approaches that a focus on 'Digital Asia' enables. Conjuring up vignettes of Asian digital kinship and performative cartography (place-making through mobile media), Larissa Hjorth offered fascinating perspectives on how 'dataveillance' can be caring and benevolent, rather than exploitative as we typically imagine it to be. Diving into the related question of trust, Aim Sinpeng explored patterns of trust in social media across a range of Southeast Asian countries during election times, concluding that social media is informative in an environment of low trust, but becomes transformative when trust is high. Strikingly, the profoundly human traits and needs that infuse digital life emerged again as a main theme in Pauline Cheong's keynote, which explored human-machine interactions and the role of human communication in robotic systems. Human emotions were also an important part of Florian Schneider's exploration of what happens when Chinese nationalism goes digital, which suggested that nationalism today is a combination of human psychology and technological design (algorithms), and an emergent property of online networks.

Digital politics

A roundtable on Internet politics, populism, and digital authoritarianism brought together expertise on Southeast Asia, China and Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. The various insights offered from these diverse contexts fuelled a productive—and sometimes even passionate—debate among those taking part. Participants had different perspectives on key questions, such as whether social media platforms inherently give anti-democratic politicians an advantage, pointing variously to a digital bias and the liberal values that some argue are also spread by social media applications. Nor was there a consensus on the usefulness of the term populism for understanding the role of the digital in Asian politics, whilst concern was raised over the ease with which popular sentiment is dismissed through it.

Similarly highlighting regional differences, a panel on digital politics and governance gave insights into disparate patterns of digital politics across Southeast Asia, Japan, and South Korea. The role of Facebook for bureaucratic governance in rural Cambodia was explored, highlighting the technological difficulties encountered by local officials. Conversely, the potential of the digital for oppositional politics was laid out with regards to neighbouring Thailand and Japan, putting a spotlight on the Future Forward Party and Rikken Minshuto respectively. We were also introduced to the animated sphere of political podcasts in South Korea. Refreshingly, a long history of post-truth politics in South Korea was traced, putting the current hype about 'post-truth'—Oxford Dictionary's 2016 Word of the Year—in perspective.

A striking but perhaps sadly unsurprising insight offered by a separate panel was how the Japanese internet is dogged by misogyny and racism similar to that witnessed here in Europe. We learnt how both UK-based Facebook-Brexiters and Japanese nativists use similar tactics, and how female politicians on Japanese Twitter face the same kind of vitriol as seen in Europe. But we also learnt of Japanese social justice activists, whose online counter-protests against the far-right use gamification to increase participation and scope. Methodological innovations were in evidence here as elsewhere—getting access to vast amounts of social media data is one thing, but researchers still have to make sense of it. It was gratifying to see how advanced this research is, combining the best of Asian Studies in terms of context, nuance, and language, with the latest software to shed new light on older topics of research.

Digital imaginaries and urban futures

The conference provided a space for early career scholars to present cutting-edge research on the ways in which digital transformations are fundamentally reorganising life for Asia's urban residents. Papers were presented on emerging platform societies, smart cities, and the digital sharing economy—exploring the ways in which big data is facilitating new forms of algorithmic control both by companies and governments, as well as attempts to subvert and game these digital systems by those subjected to them. Other presentations focused on digital subjectivities, looking at how apps and rating systems

have been internalised by different populations, shaping social interactions in unpredictable ways. ICTs and digital finance technologies, including the emerging phenomenon of cashless societies, were also examined in depth, revealing uneven digital geographies and new spaces for both exploitation and resistance. Combined, these papers and the ensuing discussions provided an unflinching—and often uneasy—glimpse into our shared digital futures.

Preparing for the next generation of digital scholarship

The conference concluded with a two-day course for PhD students working on topics related to digital society and/or with digital methodologies. This included presentations on digital ethnography, digital data visualisation tools, and techniques for gathering and organising rich data from social media. There were animated discussions in sessions on emerging ethical issues in digital research and the role of digitisation in transforming academic publishing. Participants also broke into small groups for peer review sessions, providing an opportunity for detailed discussions about ongoing research projects and facilitating collaborative thinking for future research directions. All in all, the conference provided fertile ground for researchers across disciplines, fields, and areas of expertise to come together and compare notes on the digital developments that are transforming society and life in Asian contexts.

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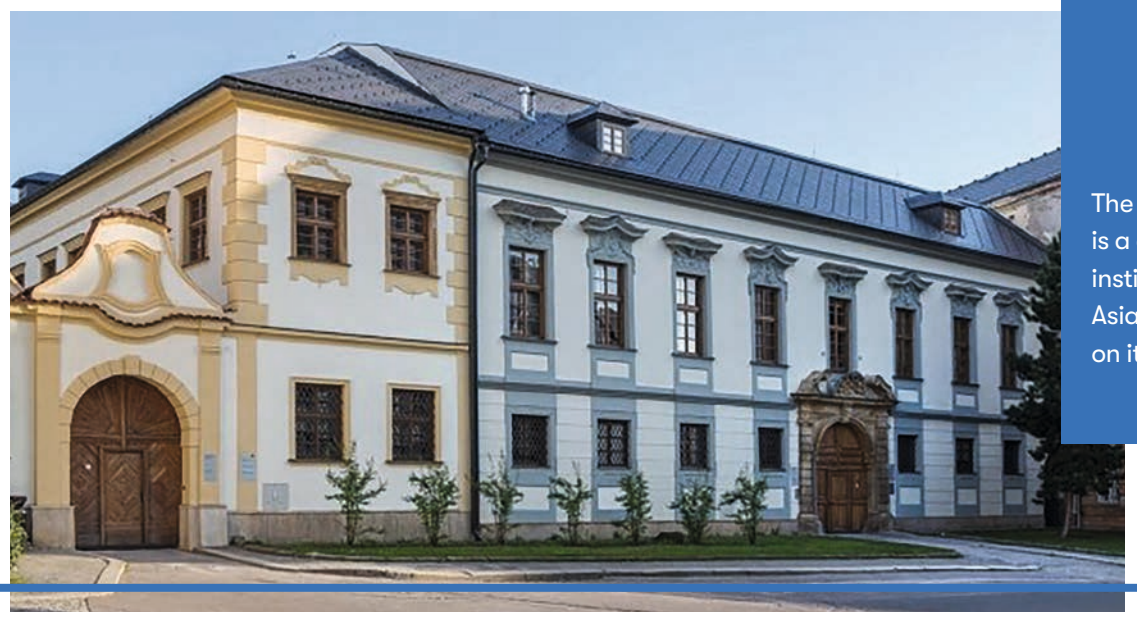
https://www.ace.lu.se

Below: Current premises of the Department of Asian Studies at Křížkovského 12 & 14 in Olomouc.



A Moravian view of Asia

Oriental and Asian Studies at Palacký University Olomouc

Olomouc, the historical capital of Moravia, is home to the second-oldest Czech university. The history of Oriental and Asian Studies at this institution spans three periods of bloom upset by periods of political gloom. The first period (1573–1773) coincides with the founding of the Bohemian province of the Jesuit order. Jesuits opened their college in Olomouc and recruited the brightest minds for missionary work in Asia and the New World. Shortly after the suppression of the Jesuit order, Olomouc lost its university status for fifty years, only to be restored in 1826. The institution changed its status several times: diocesean, public, imperial and royal, before being reduced to the Faculty of Theology, which alone survived until 1939, when the Nazi regime closed all Czech universities. The university was reopened in 1946 but the brief bloom period for Oriental Studies (1946–1951) ended with their transfer to Prague. When in 1991 the Rector Josef Jařab initiated the reopening of Asian studies in Olomouc, the current period started (https://kas.upol.cz/en).

Jesuit college (1573–1762)

"shedding own blood in the vineyard of the Lord"

So characterises Bochuwaldus Carolus Ledniczkus (born in 1623), in his *litterae indipetae*, his own desire to join the mission in Asia.[1] His poetic tone and missionary zeal were triggered by the visit of the future missionary B. Diestel, who sailed to China in 1659. Ledniczkus mentions the death of 52 martyrs in Japan and his strong desire to follow in their steps.

Palacký University was founded in 1573 by the Jesuit order as a public university in the historical seat of Moravian bishops. Theology was soon accompanied by other fields: philosophy, law, medicine, astronomy and languages. The Jesuit college educated scores of missionaries who travelled to Asia and the New World, and who contributed to various sciences. Although the detailed history of the Czech Jesuit mission remains to be written, the most significant Olomouc alumni certainly include the following.

Wenceslas Pantaleon Kirwitzer (Qi Weicai, 祁維材, 1588–1626), was an astronomer and among the second wave of Jesuit missionaries to China, brought together by Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628), who himself was sent from China back to Europe by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), one of the founders of the Jesuit mission in China. The Kirwitzer's group sailed from Lisbon in 1618 and included other well-known astronomers such as Johann Schreck (1576–1630), Giacomo Rho (1593–1638) and Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666), who later became the president of the Astronomical Office in Beijing. Kirwitzer published his astronomical observations of comets and wrote about the history of the Jesuit missions in China and Japan.

Valentin Ignác Stansel (also Estansel, 1621–1705) was a Jesuit missionary. He studied in Olomouc and later also taught rhetoric and mathematics in Olomouc and Prague. He requested a mission appointment and travelled to Portugal to wait for the boat to take him to India. Unable to travel to Asia he was sent to Brazil. He is known for his astronomical work: in 1668 he discovered a comet whose position was confirmed by Jesuit F. de Gottignies in Goa. The comet is named after both: the Estancel-Gottignies Comet.[2]

Augustin Strobach (1646–1684) studied theology and philosophy in Olomouc and in 1681 departed via Mexico to the Mariana Islands. He described the local Chamorro customs, with special focus on funerary rites and documented local fauna and flora. He documented the abuses of the Spanish administration but ironically died during an uprising against the Spanish in 1684. He is considered a martyr.[3]

Unknown author, memorial print of Augustin Strobach, kept with the martyr's relic at St. Ignatius of Loyola Church, Jihlava, Czech Republic (foto courtesy of Tomáš Blažek).

Matěj Kukulín (Mathias Cuculinus, 1641–1696) finished a doctoral degree in philosophy in Olomouc and joined Strobach on the mission to the Marianas. He described the local revolt against the Spanish colonial government. His letters documented the local culture. Kukulín is also known for his reports, copied from a knowledgeable source, on Tonkin *(Relatio continens qvaedam de statu Christianitatis in Regno Tunqvin)*, Cochinchina *(De Cochinchina)*, Cambodia *(De Camboya)*, and Siam *(De Regno Siam)*. He described in detail the Siam kingdom, the local custom and the position and treatment of Christians. He praised the Siam king for his benevolent attitude towards Christianity. The autograph of the report is kept in the Moravian Provincial Archive in Brno.

Pavel Klein (also Pablo Clain, 1652–1717) joined the fourth mission from Bohemia and Moravia to the Philippines in 1678. The company, consisting of medics and pharmacists, sailed from Spain via Mexico (1681) and arrived in the Philippines in 1682. Klein became the Jesuit Provincial Superior, a professor at the Jesuit college and later the rector of Colegio de Cavite and Colegio de San José. He is known for his linguistic work: he compiled the first substantial Tagalog dictionary which was published after his death in Manila in 1754 as *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala*. Building on his pharmaceutical training, Klein compiled a herbarium of medicinal plants of the Philippines. Besides their medicinal use, he collected the local names in Tagalog, Visayan and Kapampangan, and added Latin and Spanish names. Finally, Klein is associated with the Spanish discovery of Palau Islands in 1697, when he interviewed a group of shipwrecked Palauans in the Philippine island of Samar.

Karel Slavíček (嚴嘉樂, 1678–1735) studied theology and philosophy in Olomouc. In 1713 he was appointed professor of mathematics and Hebrew. Slavíček came from a family of organ builders and had a keen interest in music, astronomy, mathematics and linguistics. He joined the Jesuit order and for his knowledge of mathematics and astronomy was selected to be sent to China. In 1716 he travelled to China from Portugal. After his arrival in Macau in 1717 he was sent to the Beijing court and was introduced to the Kangxi Emperor. Slavíček learned Chinese and is considered to be the first Czech sinologist. The Emperor ordered Slavíček to make a map of Beijing. It was the first precise map of Beijing and Slavíček clarified the exact latitude of the city and its landmarks. Slavíček compiled a treatise on Chinese music but it did not survive. His stay in Beijing is described in his many letters to various European scientists. After he passed away in 1735, he was succeeded in the position of the Court musician by another Czech Jesuit, Jan Xaver Walter (1708–1759), about whom much less is known.

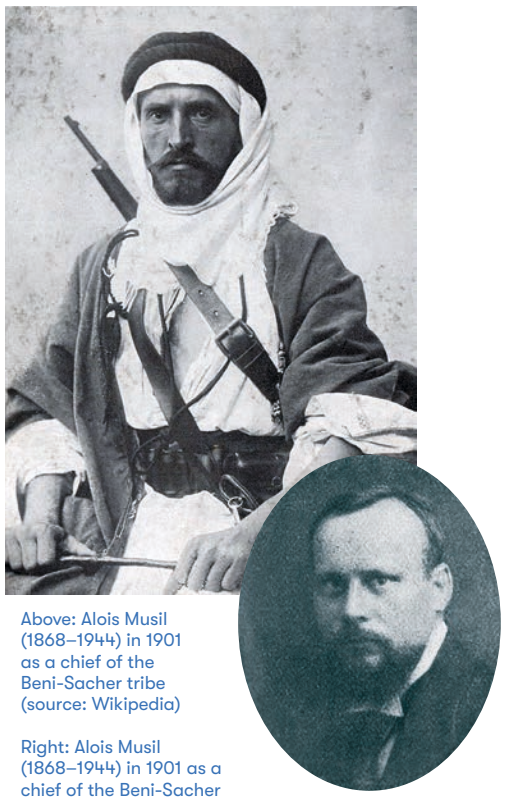
Ignatius Sichelbart's Baojiliutu, Taipei National Palace Museum (source: Wikipedia)

Ignatius Sichelbart (Ai Qi Meng 艾启蒙, 1708–1780) was a Jesuit missionary in China, a painter and a musician. He studied theology in Olomouc and was selected for the China mission in 1745 with two more painters: Giuseppe Castiglione and Jean Denis Attiret. All three served as artists at the Imperial court and combined Chinese and western painting techniques. He was named a mandarin in 1777 by the Qianlong Emperor and given a state funeral. Only about 25 of his paintings are preserved.

Christian Schneider (1742–1824) was a Franciscan missionary and an orientalist. He studied theology in Olomouc but following the example of his uncle, Herculanus Schneider, a Franciscan missionary to China (石若翰, or 石耐德, d. 1747), Christian decided on missionary work.[4] In 1772 he departed on a mission to Egypt and Ethiopia which lasted seven years. Although the mission failed to establish a missionary base, Schneider gained direct experience with the area which influenced his later work about the history and anthropology of Egypt.

Jan Koffler (1711-1780) studied philosophy and theology in Olomouc. In 1738 he travelled to Lisbon to join the next Jesuit voyage to China, arriving in Macau in 1740. He was sent to the city of Sin-hoa (present-day Huế) in Cochinchina, where he served as a mathematician and a medical doctor at the court of the Nguyễn Lord Nguyễn Phúc Khoát (1714–1765). In 1755 Koffler was expelled from Cochinchina and returned to Macau until 1759 when he was transferred to Paraguay. In 1762 he was arrested and deported to Portugal and imprisoned. Upon the intervention of the Empress Maria Theresia, Koffler was released and returned home. He briefly worked as a prefect in the Jesuit college in Litoměřice before leaving again as a missionary to Transylvania where he died.

During the reign of Queen Maria Theresia of Austria, tertiary education in the Habsburg monarchy underwent a reform that escalated into a conflict between the monarch and the Jesuit order. Maria Theresia took away the Jesuit monopoly to appoint the rector and appointed her secular favourite. She turned Olomouc into a fortress to counter the Prussian expansion in Silesia. Her son, Joseph II pressured Pope Clement XIV to dissolve the Jesuit Order and in 1773 the Pope obliged. Several university buildings were assigned to the Habsburg army, leaving the university with a single building. Finally, in 1777 the university was downgraded to a lyceum. The Habsburgs decided to centralise the tertiary education in their monarchy to Prague, Vienna and Lviv. Olomouc regained its university status after half a century, in 1827. Only a few remarkable Orientalists are known from this period.



Above: Alois Musil (1868–1944) in 1901 as a chief of the Beni-Sacher tribe (source: Wikipedia)

Right: Alois Musil (1868–1944) in 1901 as a chief of the Beni-Sacher tribe (source: Wikipedia)

Johann Martin Jahn (1750–1816) was a theologist and orientalist. After studying philosophy and theology in Olomouc he was recruited to teach exegesis and oriental languages in 1784. In 1789 he moved to Vienna where he taught oriental languages, biblical archaeology and dogmatics until 1806. He published a Hebrew grammar and works on Chaldean, Aramaic, Syrian, and Arabic. He was forced to give up his position and accept cannonry at St. Stephan's cathedral.

Alois Musil (1868–1944) was a theologian, orientalist, and explorer. In Olomouc he studied theology and obtained his doctoral degree in 1895. He continued his studies in Jerusalem, Beirut, London, Cambridge and Berlin. He is known for his discovery of the 8th-century desert castle Qusayr 'Amra in Jordan. In 1902 he was appointed professor of theology in Olomouc and in 1909 professor of Biblical studies and Arabic at Vienna University. After WWI he became a professor at Charles University in Prague. He was one of the founders of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences.

1946: University rebuilt

The first independent sinology program in Czechoslovakia was opened in 1946 at the newly reopened University, which was named in honour of the 19th century Czech historian and politician František Palacký (1798–1876). The initiative to open sinology and indology came directly from the rector Josef Ludvík Fischer (1894–1973), a sociologist and philosopher interested in both Chinese and Indian philosophy. Oriental Studies at Palacký University flourished especially thanks to guest lecturers invited from Prague, including indologist Vincenc Lesný and sinologist Jaroslav Průšek, who was replaced in 1948 by his student Augustin Palát. In the turmoil of 1950s the Oriental Studies in Olomouc was closed and the faculty and students transferred to Prague.

Vincenc Lesný (1882–1953) was a scholar in indology and Iranian studies. After completing classical philology, Sanskrit, and Old Indian culture at Charles University of Prague, he continued his studies of modern Indian and Iranian languages in Bonn and Oxford. In 1924 he was appointed professor in indology at Charles University and served from 1937 until the dissolution of Czech universities as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. After WWII Lesný was recruited by Fischer to teach in Olomouc. At the same time, he served as the director of the Oriental Institute in Prague. Lesný was one of the founding members of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. He is known for his translations of the Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore. Lesný published on Marathi grammar and various topics linked to Buddhism. Lesný and Průšek, who will be discussed next, translated *The Analects of Confucius*.

Sinophone Borderlands Project

In 2018, the European Structural and Investment funds (ESIF), through its *Operational Programme Research, Development, and Education*, funded the Sinophone Borderlands project at Palacký University Olomouc. It is a 5 year project the aim of which is to introduce a new interdisciplinary approach towards rising China. The project leader is Ondřej Kučera.

The approach is grounded in the dialogue between key regions bordering on China and methodologies in humanities and social sciences. The key regions are Mainland and Insular Southeast Asia, Tibet, Central Asia, Russian Far East, and Taiwan. Each of these key regions is investigated by a number of researchers who are organised in disciplinary clusters: literature and linguistics, international relations and political science, material culture, anthropology, and socioeconomics. Investigated topics include international relations and conflict in the South-China Sea, Belt and Road Initiative, cross-border Chinese economic engagement in Russian Far East, changes to traditional production networks and taste in Central Asia, narrations of identity in Tibet and Taiwan, language contact and linguistic history of Taiwan and South China and others.

The project develops means to gauge China's global impact and disseminates its findings to the public, scientific audiences, as well as national and EU policy makers. The international team conducts research on cultures and societies in the Chinese borderlands, Taiwan, Russia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam and beyond.

Above: Sinophone borderlands team.

The funding allows a substantial upgrade of the infrastructure of the research centre. Laboratories are being built for instrumental study of language, material culture, and statistical analysis of society. Once completed, these laboratories will enable the team to measure trends in language change, manufacturing competition, public opinion, or migration between China and its neighbours.

It is our long-term ambition to develop a permanent Research Centre for Asian studies in Olomouc and this project is an important milestone to that goal. The project brings an opportunity to host a number of important events in the near future which may bring you to Olomouc:

- 25-27 September 2020: 11th International Conference of the European Association of Chinese Linguistics, (EACL-11) https://sites.google.com/view/eacl-11/home
- 28 June-2 July 2021: 15th International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics (ICAL15)
- September 2021: The European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS 2021)

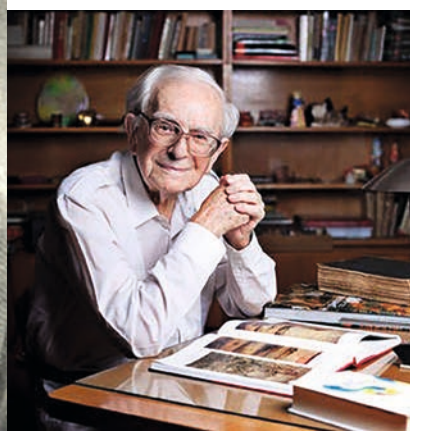
Detailed information about the project can be found at its website and social media: http://sinofon.cz

Jaroslav Průšek (普實克, 1906–1980) was a sinologist. He graduated from Charles University in Classic history. He learned Chinese in private before continuing his studies under Bernard Karlgren (1889-1978) and Gustav Haloun (1998-1951) first in Gôteborg and later in Halle, where he finished his doctoral degree in 1930. Průšek was employed by the Oriental Institute and in 1932 sent to China and Japan. He returned to Czechoslovakia in 1937 and taught Chinese and Japanese. In 1945 Průšek started the Department of East Asian Studies at Charles University and was one of the founders of the journal *Nový Orient [*New Orient]. Průšek was a close friend of Fischer and between 1946-1948 taught in Olomouc. He developed the Olomouc sinology program and trained Augustin Palát, who replaced Průšek in 1948. In 1952 Průšek became the director of the Oriental Institute in Prague. He was forced out in 1971 during the Normalisation that followed the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia of 1968. He is known for his work on mediaeval and modern Chinese literature, oral tradition and history of Chinese civilisation.

Augustin Palát (1923–2016) was a student of Průšek and replaced him in Olomouc in 1948, when Průšek could no longer fulfil his commitments in both Prague and Olomouc. Palát taught in Olomouc until 1951, when the Oriental Studies were closed. After several years in the diplomatic services he returned to the Oriental Institute until his forced retirement in 1973, under similar circumstances as Průšek. He produced a number of language textbooks and works on Chinese medieval history. He is known for his translations of Tang poetry.

Karel Werner (1925–2019) was an indologist and religious studies scholar. He belonged to the circle around Josef Ludvík Fischer who attracted him to Olomouc. He studied philosophy and classical Chinese with Jaroslav Průšek. Privately he learned Sanskrit and modern Chinese. Later he pursued the studies of Chinese under Vincenc Lesný and became an assistant in the Indology section. He defended his PhD in comparative linguistics and appointed to teach Sanskrit and Indian history. After the Oriental Studies in Olomouc were closed down in the autumn of 1951, Werner became one of the early victims of Communist prosecution. He lost his academic position, despite the appeals by Lesný and Fischer. During the 1950s he worked as a clerk. Privately he continued his studies and published in academic journals in the UK, Germany, India and Sri Lanka, which led the Secret Police to bring spying charges against him. He was sent to work in coal mines, worked as a plumber and a tram driver during the 1960s.

During the same period Werner turned his attention to hatha yoga and led a secret circle of practitioners and published about it in samizdat. His appeal for rehabilitation in 1968 was turned down and he left to exile two days after the Soviet occupation in August 1968. He became a Cambridge University librarian and was appointed as a supervisor of Sanskrit in Churchill College. In 1969 Werner was appointed Lecturer in Indian Philosophy and Religion in the University of Durham where he remained for the rest of his career.



Far left: Jaroslav Průšek (普實克, 1906–1980) Source: Czech Academy of Sciences.

Near left: Augustin Palát (1923–2016). Source: Lu Xun Library, Oriental Institute Prague.

1991: Asian studies starts for the third time

In 1991 the rector of UP Josef Jařab initiated the reopening of Chinese philology. The task was entrusted to Jiří Černý, Head of Department of Romance languages. The Far East Section was established and scholars were recruited to prepare the Chinese and Japanese programmes. In the pre-Bologna system, these were five-year double-degree programmes initially in combination with English philology. Both programmes admitted their first students in September 1993. The Chinese programme was developed by Lucie Olivová (*1956, presently at Masaryk University in Brno) and Oldřich Švarný (1920–2011). The Japanese programme was developed by Alice Kraemerová (*1950) and Pavel Flanderka (*1962).

In 2002 the Far East Section became the Department of Asian Studies. The department was led between 2002–2014 by David Uher (*1970), between 2014–2016 by Ivona Barešová (*1974) and since 2017 by František Kratochvíl (*1976). The department gradually expanded in both student numbers and its programme offer. It started language courses for Korean and Malay, which were developed into full-fledged programmes. Korean for Business (BA) was opened in 2015. It was followed in 2016 by Indonesian for Tourism (BA) and Vietnamese (BA) in 2019. All five language specialisations are included within a single MA programme in Asian studies from 2019. Finally, the department offers two doctoral programmes (Languages and Cultures of China and Japan & Asian studies). Over the last three decades the student enrolment has grown steadily in both BA and MA programmes. In 2019, over 200 students were admitted to the five undergraduate programmes and about 40 to the MA programme.

An important figure for the department was Oldřich Švarný (1920–2011), a phonologist and orientalist. Švarný studied European languages and later also Chinese and phonetics at the Charles University in Prague. In 1951 he joined the Oriental Institute in Prague, where Jaroslav Průšek assigned him to study Spoken Chinese and to develop a Czech romanisation system for Chinese. He lost his position at the Oriental Institute under similar circumstances as Průšek and Palát in 1976. He returned to the academic life in 1990s and taught in Olomouc from 1994. His life-work is a prosodic description of spoken Chinese, based on a large transcribed corpus of recordings accompanied by a grammatical description. A research cluster led by David Uher continues Švarný's work on Chinese prosody.

The department publishes its own journal Dálný východ [Far East]; its editor-in-chief is David Uher (https://kas.upol.cz/en/academics-research/journals/dalny-vychod-far-east/) Its most recent issue is dedicated to Švarný's work on the prosody of Spoken Chinese that appeared in English or German and summarises his work published in Czech.

Research interests of the department members cover a wide range of topics from linguistics to international relations and history. Recent titles published in English are:

- *On 'doing friendship' in and through talk: Exploring conversational interactions of Japanese young people* (H. Zawiszová, 2018),
- *Koreans in Central Europe: To Yu-ho, Han Hŭng-su, and Others* (A. Schirmer, 2018),
- *Japanese Given Names: A Window Into Contemporary Japanese Society* (I. Barešová, 2016),
- *The exotic other and negotiation of Tibetan self: representation of Tibet in Chinese and Tibetan fiction of the 1980s* (K. Hladíková, 2013).

The Department also organises an Annual Conference of Asian Studies (http://acas.upol.cz) and a Summer School for graduate students.

While we still face various challenges, we believe that we are becoming a mature member of the European Alliance of Asian Studies that can educate the next generation of Czech Asia scholars and offer a distinct view on Asian cultures and peoples worthy of our predecessors.

Contributors to article:
František Kratochvíl, Sylva Martinásková, Iveta Nakládalová, Joanna Ut-Seong Sio, Richard Turcsanyi.

Central European Institute of Asian Studies

The Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS) https://ceias.eu is an independent think tank with branches in the cities of Bratislava (Slovakia), Olomouc (Czech Republic), and Vienna (Austria). Building upon the activities of the Institute of Asian Studies in Bratislava, CEIAS is a joint venture of the Institute of Asian Studies, Palacky University's project 'Sinophone Borderlands – Interaction at the edges', the Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy, and the Department of East Asian Studies at Comenius University.

The main purpose of CEIAS is to spread knowledge about Asia among scholars, experts and professionals in Central Europe and beyond, while at the same time to inform the wider world about Central European engagements with Asia.

To meet our aims, we conduct and publish our own research, organize public seminars and conferences, support education about relevant Asian topics, and communicate with the media. Our activities focus mainly on international relations and security studies in the geographical regions of East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia. CEIAS cooperates with similar organizations and like-minded individuals in the region and beyond to help achieve our goals. CEIAS researchers are regularly quoted and contacted by media in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and beyond on a wide range of issues, especially related to China and international relations.

Some of the notable CEIAS publications include:

- Monthly briefing about most important policy-related news from Asia (in Slovak/Czech language): https://ceias.eu/sk/asia-briefing-2
- Bi-monthly briefing about Central and Eastern Europe's relations with Asia (in English, starting from January 2020).
- Chinese Media Watch: overview of Chinese media discourse of various policy-related issues with the connection to (Central) Europe: https://ceias.eu/chinese-media-watch-2
- CEIAS Insights: our op-ed section covering broad range of topics: https://ceias.eu/sk/ias-insights
- Research papers: Some recent ones discussed issues related to (Central) Europe's relations with China and East Asia, domestic issues in China, or other aspects of Chinese international relations including soft power or Belt and Road Initiative: https://ceias.eu/policy-papers-2

CEIAS participates in international projects and initiatives. Most recently these have included:

- ChinfluenCE: Research and public awareness project mapping Chinese influence in Central Europe: www.chinfluence.eu
- CHOICE: An initiative grouping researchers and 'China watchers' from Central and Eastern Europe: www.chinaobservers.eu
- ETNC: European Think Tank Network on China as of 2019 and participates in all the activities of the network, including workshops, publications, and presentations of the findings to the public.

CEIAS
Central European Institute of Asian Studies

Notes

1 *Litterae indipetae* (short for *litterae ad Indiam petentes*) are petitionary letters by Jesuits sent to their generals asking for foreign missions. Only a fraction were granted their wish; for example, out of 114 such petitions in Poland, only 4 were granted. See Miazek-Męczyńska, M. 2018. 'Polish Jesuits and Their Dreams about Missions in China, According to the Litterae indipetae', *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 5(3):404-420. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00503004

2 Camenietzki, C.Z. 2003. 'The Celestial Pilgrimages of Valentin Stansel (1621–1705), Jesuit Astronomer and Missionary in Brazil', in Feingold M. (ed.) *The New Science and Jesuit Science: Seventeenth Century Perspectives.* Springer.

3 Boye, E. de. 1691. *Vita et Obitus venerabilis patris Augustini Strobach è Societate Iesu ex Provincia Bohemiae pro insulis Marianis electi Missionarii, et à Rebellibus Sanctae Fidei in iisdem insulis barbarè trucidati Anno 1684. Mense Augusto.* Olomucii: Typis Joannis Josephi Kylian. E-book: http://eod.vkol.cz/34415

4 Liščák, V. 2014. 'Franciscan Missions to China and the Czech Crown Lands (from the 16th to the 18th Century)', *Archiv Orientální* 82:829-841.

The Borderlands of Northeast Asia

Ilhong Ko

Borderlands are places where different social, political, and economic systems come into contact with one another. Borders may act as barriers, hindering interaction, but they may also act as bridges facilitating contact between different cultures and traditions. Borderlands are diverse in nature; some borders can be extremely porous whereas others are guarded with great vigilance. In this issue of News from Northeast Asia, we examine the borderlands of Northeast Asia.

The way in which even the hardest of borders can be a node of cross sections rather than a place of severance is examined by Hyunjoo Jung of Seoul National University in "Porous Borders and a Negotiated Sense of Place: Re-imagining Kaeseong Industrial Complex as the *Borderlands*".

In "Tsushima, an Island of Hybridity", Todoroki Hisroshi of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University explores how the people of Tsushima Island have negotiated a borderland existence from ancient times. The borderlands of Okinawa, located around its American bases, are remnants of war.

However, Keun-Sik Jung of Seoul National University reminds us, in "Shuri Castle as a Symbol of Peace in East Asia", of a different, more peaceful, type of borderland identity that had been present in the islands during the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom.

The meeting of asymmetrical systems that takes place in the borderlands results in great economic opportunities, as well as hybrid regional cultures. This fact is well illustrated by Li Yinhe of Yanbian University in "Hun Chun: An International Cross Border Economic Region".

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Porous borders and a negotiated sense of place. Re-imagining Kaeseong Industrial Complex as the borderlands

Hyunjoo Jung

Railway yard of Panmun Station at the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy Christian Latze on Wikipedia.

'Borderlands' is the fuzzy area where different powers compete; a place of multiple oppressions and violence. As implied by the Chicana feminist writer Gloria Anzaldúa,[1] a border is a porous area rather than a clearly fixed line; it becomes a node of cross sections rather than a place of severance. The hardest border, if any in the real world, would be the national boundary between the two Koreas. The DMZ, the most intensively armed zone in the world, symbolizes the clash between the two most powerful ideologies of the modern world. It has come to be regarded as an almost sacrosanct place where two irreconcilable nations maintain a distance from each other.

Such an infusible boundary, laden with power and hostility, is nevertheless sometimes dissolved. One momentous event was the construction of the Kaeseong Industrial Complex, located just 1.5 km north of the DMZ's Northern Limit Line and 60km from Seoul. Until its suspension in 2016, 125 companies based at the complex were hiring 55,000 Northern Korean workers on an annual basis, and the cumulative gross product had reached 1,506,490,000 dollars. In order to operate the complex, both governments constructed a road and railroad within their territories, which were later connected. South Korean corporations (such as the Korea Electric Power Corporation, Korea Telecom, Korea Land Corporation, and Hyundai Asan) provided infrastructure, including power, communication, and all facilities for the industrial complex, while North Korea transferred the right to use land (66.1 km^2 for 50 years). Both governments cooperated in making new laws and rules for this area, which had become open to common governance for the first time since the separation of the two Koreas. The Kaeseong Industrial Complex Foundation, the administrative organization established by South Korea, ran almost 300 shuttle buses covering 5 routes to carry 55,000 North Korean workers every day. The buses were all manufactured by Hyundai, provided by the South Korean government and firms of the complex, yet driven by North Korean drivers.

The intermingled co-operation of Kaeseong Industrial Complex by North and South Koreas generated numerous 'contact zones' for both parties: spaces where geographically and historically separated groups or individuals come into contact with one another.[2] They are places where borders may facilitate connections rather than act as barriers. Many scholars have explored Kaeseong Industrial Complex from the perspective of contact zones, where the mental landscape of the people of the North and the South come to be integrated through daily interactions.[3] It is a place of 'Choco Pie-zation', a metaphor that symbolizes the cultural translation and capitalization of North Korean tastes through the circulation of Choco Pies, the South Korea daily snack that was a favorite among North Korean workers, provided by South Korean firms. In addition to Choco Pies, innumerable goods and ideas came to be circulated among the people in the complex, and eventually beyond its walls. They spread to the city of Gaeseong (Kaeseong), changing the fashion of women, the building materials of individual houses, and dietary habits (such as caffeine addiction, thanks to South Korean instant coffee mixes, another favorite snack provided daily within the complex).

These examples illuminate merely the surface of bigger and deeper transformations that occurred. The changes that emerged in Kaeseong Industrial Complex demonstrate how the borderlands may operate within and beyond its territory. This may also bring about changes to our thoughts and imaginations of the faces and minds of North Koreans and vice versa. Cracks were created in the world's hardest boundary through the building of infrastructure and the flow of materials; it was made porous through roads, communication, and the migration of people between the borders, as well as through transculturation. The boundary was also made porous by North Korean workers commuting on South Korean shuttle buses, which traveled around vast areas of the city of Kaeseong and three other adjacent provinces.

As Doreen Massey claimed in her essay of global sense of place, the identity of place is never inwardly created or discovered but negotiated through social relations outside the place.[4] Kaeseong Industrial Complex as a borderland shows how a tiny piece of land may act as a bridge towards bigger social transformations by making cracks in the borders from the bottom up. This case demonstrates the need to change our geographical imagination of the borderlands, from margins to node of interactions where new social relations and experiments emerge.

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Notes

1 "to survive the Borderlands/you must live sin fronteras/be a crossroads", Anzaldúa, G. 1999 (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, p.217.
2 Pratt, M.L. 1992. *Imperial Writing and Transculturalism*. Routledge; Carter, P. 1992. 'Making contact: history and performance', in Carter, P. (ed.) *Living in a New Country: History, Travelling and Language*. London: Faber and Faber.
3 Lee Y.W., et al. 2016. *Connecting Divided Minds: the Contact Zone of North and South Korea*. Seoul: Sahoi Pyeongron; Paek, Y. 2019. 'Spatial Features of the Gaesong Industrial Complex as a Contact Zone', *Cultural and Historical Geography 21(2):76-93*.
4 Massey, D. 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*. University of Minnesota Press.

Tsushima, an island of hybridity

Todoroki Hiroshi

Aso Bay viewed from Mount Jo. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy Saigen Jiro on Wikipedia.

Tsushima is located closer to the Korean peninsula than Japan; it is less than 50km away from the Korean island of Geoje. From the Kankoku Lookout in Waniura, at the northern end of Tsushima, the landmarks of Busan, South Korea's second largest city, can be seen on clear days and even its fireworks at night. Since the beginning of history, the island has been a geopolitical mirror of Korea and Japan; its people have survived by negotiating the politics between the two. Indeed, the reason that the people of Tsushima are described as 'cunning' in a number of historical and literary documents may be due to their strategies for survival.

Over 90% of Tsushima consists of mountains and a ria coastline meaning that there is almost no flatland for agriculture. Residents can only make a living with fishery and hunting. This has resulted in an economic dependence on Korea, its closest neighbor yet a foreign country. Tsushima's particular relationship with the Korean Peninsula and the rest of the islands of the Japanese Archipelago is illustrated in the earliest historical account of the island, which appears in the Biographies of the Wuhuan, Xianbei and Dongyi in the 'Book of Wei' of the *Records of the Three Kingdoms*. The passage mentioning Tsushima describes the navigation route from Korea to Japan: Daifang Commandery – Geumgwan Gaya – Tsushima Province – present-day Iki Island – present-day Kyushu.[1] It demonstrates that Tsushima was a key point in maritime travels to Japan from ancient times. The passage also mentions Tsushima's farmlands and the underdeveloped nature of its traffic routes.

After the middle ages, Tsushima became a base for Japanese raiders and the powerful So clan was able to monopolize trade rights with Joseon by controlling the raiders. The system of governance by So clan endured through the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 and up to the Meiji Restoration. The So clan established Japanese settlements at three Joseon ports for trade and diplomatic purposes, and it was due to such economic and diplomatic concessions acquired from making use of its geopolitical position that Tsushima could survive and the So clan's governance could be continued.

Tsushima's prosperity depended on peace between Korea and Japan, and therefore the island endeavored to avoid war even before the 1592 invasion. Upon unifying Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi sent word to Tsushima to request the King of Joseon for his surrender. Joseon obviously declined. Even when Joseon eventually sent a diplomatic envoy [*Joseon Tongsinsa*] to Japan, it was under the condition that Tsushima was to give up the leader of Japanese raiders. However, when peace negotiations fell apart and the invasion of 1592 commenced, Tsushima became an informant of Toyotomi, guided the Japanese troops, and even participated in battles.

After the end of the war, Tsushima acted as mediator for conciliatory diplomatic relations between the Tokugawa Edo Bakufu and the Joseon Dynasty in order to survive. When the Joseon Dynasty demanded a statement of apology for the invasion and the Bakufu refused, Tsushima forged an apology and succeeded in dispatching a mission for reconciliations. Once diplomatic relations were recovered, Tsushima was able to maintain its trade concession once again and even re-established a Japanese settlement in Busan. It was through such trickery and diplomatic aptitude that Tsushima was able to successfully act as an intermediary between Korea and Japan.

The Korean understanding of Tsushima is well illustrated in the journals of the *Joseon Tongsinsa* diplomatic envoys to Japan. The chief of the 1764 envoy, Jo Eom 趙曮, noted, as he sailed near the shores of Tsushima, that the pulse of the Korean Peninsula's mountain range (the Baegdudaegan Mountain Range) is even connected to Tsushima through the Straits of Korea.[2] In this case, Jo Eom appears to be using nature to state his view that Tsushima was originally a subordinate area of Joseon. In a more explicit passage, he states that Tsushima had changed its belonging from Joseon to Japan without his knowledge.[3] Indeed, at the time there was a wide spread awareness that Tsushima was *de facto* subjugated to Joseon even though it was officially within the Japanese domain.

Even in the modern era, the ties between Tsushima and Korea have been inseverable. In the late Joseon Dynasty, the island acted as a place of exile for independence fighters (such as Choi Ik Hyeon). Many residents of the island are said to have visited Busan to buy goods for marriage.

In the 21st century, the number of Korean tourists visiting Tsushima drastically increased, leading to a multifold increase in investments on the island. However, as a result of the souring of relations between Japan and Korea in 2019, visitors to Tsushima have decreased by almost 90%. This illustrates that, even in present times, the livelihood of Tsushima's residents is directly related to Japan-Korea relations, as it has always been in the past. Tsushima is a geopolitical community that shares its destiny with both countries. The island's hybrid identity has played a key role in ensuring a sustainable existence. How the residents of Tsushima will negotiate the troubled political currents and use the island's hybridity to their advantage will be a litmus test for Northeast Asia in 2020.

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Notes

1 始度一海千餘里、至對馬國、其大官曰卑狗、副曰卑奴母離、所居絶島、方可四百餘里。土地山險、多深林、道路如禽鹿徑。有千餘戸。無良田、食海物自活、乘船南北市糴。(三國志 魏書 烏丸鮮卑東夷傳)
2 盖聞石脈在水中、相連於我国長鬐地境、而自豊崎入海数十里、則或露出或隠伏 (海槎日記)
3 盖此馬島本是朝鮮所属、未知何国何時入於日本… (海槎日記)

Shuri Castle as a symbol of peace in East Asia

Keun-Sik Jung

On 31 October 2019, Okinawa's Shuri Castle was completely destroyed by fire. The soul of the Ryukyu Kingdom, which had carefully been restored for 30 years starting in 1989, burned down entirely. For Koreans, this tragic event brought back memories of the 2008 fire that destroyed the wooden structure of Namdaemun (Soongrye Gate), the southern gate of the Joseon capital. Just as Korean history had unfolded under the watchful gaze of Namdaemun, Shuri Castle had stood witness to the fates of Ryukyu and its hybrid people. This piece was written in order to commemorate Shuri Castle, a symbol of peace in East Asia.

Shuri Castle became the seat of power of a unified Ryukyu Kingdom with the founding of the Sho Dynasty. The tablet that read 'A Country of Good Proprieties' [守禮之邦], which adorned Shurimon (the southern gate) and the tablet featuring the inscription 'Land of Chinese Mountains' [中山之土], a gift from Emperor Kangxi of Qing Dynasty that hung in the main hall of Shuri Castle, symbolized the kingdom's status as a tributary state of China. In the early 17th century, the Ryukyu Kingdom was invaded by the Satsuma domain of Japan, which subsequently controlled the kingdom to profit from entrepôt trade with China. Nevertheless, the fact that the Ryukyu Kingdom signed a trade treaty with the United States in 1854 demonstrates how it had remained an independent kingdom.

The Ryukyu Kingdom's misfortunes began with the Meiji Restoration. In 1872, the King of Ryukyu became the king of a mere 'domain'; in 1879, the domain was abolished, Ryukyu became Okinawa Prefecture, and the king was degraded to a noble and forced to relocate to Tokyo. The latter process is known as the 'Ryukyu Disposition', but Professor Namihira Tsuneo of Ryukyu University, who has studied this period in detail, argues that as this term reflects only Japan's position, the more objective term 'Ryukyu Annexation' should be used, in the way that Joseon is regarded to have been formally 'annexed' by Japan.

Following the Manchurian invasion, Japan pursued a strategy of assimilation of the colonies into subjects of the emperor, in order to strengthen the role of the internal colonies as key components of the empire; on the other hand, it also carried out a policy designating important historical monuments as places of cultural heritage in order to elevate the pride of its colonial residents. It was in this wider context that Shuri Castle was designated as a national treasure, just as the Japanese Government General of colonial Korea had designated Namdaemun as Korean Treasure No. 1. However, the hills of Shuri Castle were taken over by the headquarters of the 6th Division of Japanese troops to prepare for the Pacific War. The aftermath was terrible. In May 1945, as the American campaign to capture Okinawa was carried out, the Japanese headquarters and Shuri Castle were completely damaged by bombardment from warships. The monument of cultural heritage containing Ryukyu's soul had disappeared completely.

During the American occupation, the government of Ryukyu was established and Ryukyu University was built on the ruins of Shuri Castle. As a result of the Cold War in East Asia, the American presence became permanent. The US military base in Okinawa proved its value through the Korean War and the Vietnamese War. Along with the other military bases deeply embedded in East Asia, it allowed the US to operate as a living power in the region.

The Ryukyu government restored Shuri Castle in 1958 but the restoration of the main hall took more time. Ryukyu at this time did not belong to Japan; only the potential sovereignty of Japan had been recognized. It was in 1972, during the Vietnamese War, that Ryukyu was 'returned' to Japan, becoming Okinawa Prefecture once again. After Ryukyu University was moved in 1979, Okinawa Prefecture and the Japanese government made plans to rebuild Shuri Castle. The actual restoration began in 1989, and the construction of the main hall, south hall and north hall buildings was completed in 1992. The castle became a park open to visitors. In 2017, it was visited by 2.85 million people.

Hun Chun, an international cross-border economic region

Li Yinhe

The 'three language landscape' of Hun Chun. Photo by the author.

Hun Chun is situated in the borderlands of China, North Korea, and Russia. This fortuitous geographic location has allowed the region to become an international logistics hub for Northeast Asia. The Tumen River Development Program, proposed by Jilin Province in 1990, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) that followed in 1991, laid down the building blocks for the region's development.[1] The end of the Cold War in East Asia led to improved international relations in the region, and brought about the possibility of multilateral, rather that bilateral, economic cooperation. Globalization has led to an increase in the frequency of cultural exchange. As a result of this, Hun Chun has become an extremely hybrid place in a short period of time.

The Border Economic Cooperation Zone in Hun Chun is a national border economic cooperation zone that was approved by the state council in September 1992, with a planned area of 21.77 square kilometers. In April 2000 and February 2001, the state council approved respectively the establishment of the Hun Chun Export Processing Zone and the Hun Chun Russia-China Trade Zone within the cooperation zone, implementing a 'three areas in one' management mode. In April 2012, the state council approved the establishment of China's Tumen River Region (Hun Chun) International Cooperation Model Zone, which ushered in the historical opportunity for leapfrog development.

The Hun Chun Export Processing Zone is one of the first 15 export processing zones in China, with a planned area of 2.44 square kilometers. With the continuous adjustment of national industrial policies and increasing requirements for the transformation and upgrading of export processing trade, export processing zones experienced rapid development. They feature a characteristic industrial pattern of woodwork processing and seafood processing, supplemented by cross-border e-commerce and bonded logistics. At present, the planned area has been adjusted to 1.038 square kilometers, and the area consists of 'seven connections and one leveling'. The Hun Chun China-Russia Trade Zone covers an area of 9.6 hectares. It was put into trial operation in December 2001, and officially put into operation in June 2005. It is the only border trade functional zone open to Russia in Jilin Province, meeting the need for the development of border trade.

At present, there are 808 registered enterprises in the Border Economic Cooperation Zone, including 41 foreign-funded enterprises from eight countries and regions including Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, the United States, Hong Kong. It has successively introduced a number of well-known enterprises both at home and abroad, and has come to develop a characteristic industrial system. In the Cooperation Zone, the non-ferrous metal industry is gradually maturing, while the aquaculture processing industry is rapidly developing, and the textile and garment industry continues to grow. The development of new and high technology industries has accelerated and the tertiary industry has emerged.

These developments taking place in the Cooperation Zone have meant that Hun Chun has come to experience the full force of globalization. An increase in the cross-border flow of goods has been accompanied by the flow of information, capital, services, and people. The result of this has been the emergence of a fluidity and hybridity in the region. This is best observed in its cityscape, an example of which is the system of signage used in Hun Chun. Following the guidelines of the Hun Chun government, all of the signs in the city are in three languages: Chinese, Korean, and Russian. The 'three language landscape' of Hun Chun demonstrates how the region's fluid and hybrid nature has brought about unique regional cultural characteristics.

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Notes

1 Matsuno, S. 2011. 'International Cross Border Economic Regions in East Asia, Greater Tumen Region (GTR) and Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)', *Ritsumeikan International Affairs* 10:143-158.

Naha Okinawa Japan Shuri-Castle. Photo by CEphoto, Uwe Aranas. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy Uwe Aranas on Wikipedia.

Shuri Castle was used to project the image of Ryukyu's past, as a place of coexistence and peace. This tied in with Okinawa's strong tradition of peace movements that had taken root around the US military base. Amidst the attempt to relocate Kadena air base to Henoko and the resistance that emerged, many peace activists in Okinawa further called for the removal of US bases to Guam. However, the geopolitical atmosphere of the region changed in 2010 with the sinking of the Cheonan warship in the West Sea of Korea, and calls for US military base transfers from Okinawa fell silent.

In the 30 years since its restoration, Shuri Castle stood as a beacon of peace in East Asia. Its presence acted as a reminder that these islands, which have played such a crucial role in US strategies in East Asia, were once a peaceful and prosperous place of trade. It is therefore hoped that Shuri Castle will be soon be restored so that it may once again project our aspirations for peace East Asia.

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Enticement: Stories of Tibet

Natalia Moskaleva

Enticement is a new window into contemporary literature about Tibet created by a Tibetan author and made accessible for all by its translators in English. Originality of the stories' plots, which to some extent could even be called exotic, runs hand in hand with descriptions of universally shared feelings and challenges experienced by many people in their everyday life. Being a graphic piece of art, the book pictures a beautiful faraway world of Tibetan grassland, snowy mountains, and local people. Witty, naive, cunning, loving, joking, or distressed and going through hardship Tibetan characters frequently remind a reader of something personal and forgotten. The stories could refresh a memory from one's childhood, something once felt or seen somewhere else. However, at the same time, a peculiar twist or twists of each story returns the reader back to the realities of Tibet.

Reviewed title

Enticement: Stories of Tibet

Pema Tseden. 2018. ed. and trans. by Patricia Schiaffini-Vedani and Michael Monhart

Albany, NY: State University of New York Press
ISBN 9781438474267

As Pema Tseden puts it in the Author's Preface: "Many times I write fiction for no other reason than to enter this state in which I can see and know myself more deeply. ... All the words you want to say can be found in the texts you write" (p.1). *Enticement*, indeed, does not show modern Tibet as a flat postcard. Tseden's words written down as stories set a reader on a trip of deeper contemplation – deeper into the wondering minds of Tibetans and deeper into one's own inner world. *Enticement* as a compilation of ten stories touches upon completely different aspects of life: friendship, love and care, birth and death, treachery, loyalty, cruelty, modernization and globalization, Buddhist beliefs and local superstitions, extraordinary coincidences, and human reflections about life. While many stories tend to present rather realistic descriptions, in terms of literary styles one could encounter elements of traditional Tibetan folk tales (e.g. the traditional frame of the Golden Corpse Tales), examples of magical realism, or even science fiction.

Interwoven with Buddhist themes and traditional Tibetan cultural markers, *Enticement* goes further beyond the commonly understood topics of human happiness or grief. Tseden introduces a reader to the way of life on the Tibetan Plateau that is gradually going through changes. Alongside the main line of the plot, the author offers a glimpse of modern Tibet and the ongoing social transformations there: be it the existing tradition of religious reincarnations facing the modernity, Mao Zedong's literary heritage still vividly living in the memory of Tibetan people, first encounters of Tibetans with a modern flow of Westerners enchanted with Tibetan culture, rural Tibetans not being able to speak Chinese or lacking the practical grasp of the urban Tibetan population and being beguiled by them, Tibetans being swept over by the wave of modernization in the form of compulsory ID registration, or struggling with the gambling plague.

The reader is travelling through Tibetan villages, cities and pastures. One gets to meet the curious minds seeking to see a bigger picture behind the average routine life, one gets to laugh at the funny perplexities of life, one gets to share the joy and pain of the protagonists, one gets to peek into modern Tibet and the various happenings there. Besides, there is no politics or anything didactical. These stories describe things simply as they are, void of any moralization. *Enticement* is Tibetan and universal at the same time. Despite the fact that the protagonists are Tibetan and are living in the conditions quite often unfamiliar for the bulk of us, a reader still can relate to their feelings. Most stories finely catch your attention and keep in suspense till the end.

I can assume that the perception of Tseden's stories might vary for a reader with a different cultural background. However, being limited as a Western urban dweller and a Tibetan Studies student, I believe that *Enticement* is an exciting ride in the world with Tibetan flavour worth taking by anyone – be it a keen Tibetologist or any other interested reader. I would highly recommend reading this book to any reader willing to learn more of modern Tibet and would certainly suggest adding this book to a reading list for classes on modern Tibetan literature or culture.

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Media Theory in Japan

Tom Mes

Reviewed title

Media Theory in Japan

Marc Steinberg and Alexander Zahlten (eds). 2017.

Durham and London:
Duke University Press
ISBN 9780822363125

Dating back to the 1950s at least, the study of Japanese film can rightly be considered a venerable discipline in Western academia. Its research agendas, though, have to a significant extent been decided by scholars' mastery of the Japanese language, or rather by the lack thereof. This has at times resulted in what Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto has identified as an 'interpretative machine', which supplied scholars, even those who lacked linguistic skills, with 'stock images of national character, tradition, and fixed cultural traits' that allowed them to 'understand' and comment on their research object.

Partially as an extension of this problem, scholarship has also suffered from a skewed perspective, with Japan's films and filmmakers receiving ample devotion, but scant attention being paid to the country's wider media landscape, even at a time when Film Studies has widely evolved to include media more broadly. This is a rather peculiar phenomenon, since, as Marc Steinberg and Alexander Zahlten point out in the introduction to their new anthology *Media Theory in Japan*, Japan possesses "one of the largest and most complex media industries on the planet" (p.2). Not only does it make sense for scholars to more frequently consider it as a case study, but Japan also is a nation with its own long and chequered history of theoretical writing on media. As Akira Mizuta Lippit observes in a preface that is, characteristically, as playful as it is challenging: for too long have we thought that understanding and theorizing media only happens in the West – even when the media themselves were made elsewhere.

This blank spot which Japan currently occupies on the 'Euro-American media-theoretical map' is allegorized most effectively in Marilyn Ivy's contribution to this volume, which begins with the realization that she is the first person to ever check out from her university library a volume of *InterCommunication*, one of Japan's most authoritative journals of media scholarship, which ran from 1992 through 2000. So either there are too few Western media scholars that can read Japanese – an understandable phenomenon – or too few Japanologists have an interest in media studies. Probably, it is a good deal of both.

Media Theory in Japan boldly volunteers to begin filling this gap. It does not limit its ambitions there, however; as Steinberg and Zahlten point out, this is not just the first 'systematic introduction to and contextualization of' the history of Japanese media theory in the English language, it is the first book to do this in any language, including Japanese. Aware of the challenges their pioneering effort faces, the editors propose a shift in how to view concept of 'media theory', away from a deceptive pretence at universality that is in fact firmly Western-centric, and toward seeing it as "a practice composed of local, medium-specific, and culture-inflected practices" (p.6).

Steinberg and Zahlten are no strangers to such an approach, having deftly demonstrated its pertinence in their respective monographs *Anime's Media Mix* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012) and *The End of Japanese Cinema* (Duke University Press, 2017). Both these volumes investigated examples of the kind of constellations of interlocking and cross-fertilising media and their social functions that we have come to refer to as media ecologies.

The scope of what *Media Theory in Japan* considers as constituting 'media' is wide and varied. Some are familiar staples, such as Aaron Gerow's essay on television theory in Japan, in which he observes how much of this echoed the preoccupations of many pre-war film theorists that had been dismissed, ignored or forgotten in the intervening years. Other choices come across at first as rather more unexpected, such as Yuriko Furuhata's consideration of architecture as a medium. Yet her chapter provides what is surely the finest possible example of a literal media ecology, of media forming a ubiquitous environment – considering Tokyo's media-saturated cityscape with its multitude of gaudy advertisements and giant video screens blaring and flinging messages into the urban atmosphere. Her consideration of architect Tange Kenzo's theories from the 1960s provide the necessary historical framework for something that has come to represent a popular techno-orientalist image of a hyper-urbanized, hyper-saturated future through such films as Ridley Scott's 1982 sci-fi classic *Blade Runner*. While this image needs to be seen in some degree of perspective – so much of Tokyo is a sprawl of bland cookie-cutter functionalism, with the media saturation mostly concentrated in the urban centres surrounding such major railway hubs as Shibuya, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro – its hold on the popular imagination across cultural borders is undeniable.

Quite a number of contributors to this volume shine a light on past theorists and on the journals and other avenues through which they published, thus providing a roadmap that connects previously unconnected (and many cases unknown) dots, while also offering anchoring points from which future scholarship can begin charting further areas and topics. A fine example is Zahlten's chapter on the wave of 'New Academism', which during the 1980s saw unparalleled commercial success and popular media exposure for such theorists as Asada Akira, Nakazawa Shinichi, Yomota Inuhiko and Ueno Chizuko. Though on occasion, people, discourses, or practices under review tend rather too much toward the insular, especially in terms of their pertinence for anyone not already firmly and profoundly engaged with the study of the Japanese media landscape, as is the case with Ryoko Misono's chapter on television critic Nancy Seki.

Other contributors cover what may seem at first like familiar ground, yet delve deeper to adjust an all too limited popular image, such as in Takeshi Kadobayashi's essay on Azuma Hiroki, primarily known internationally as the man who theorised the otaku figure in his influential *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (Kodansha gendai shinsho, 2001). Kadobayashi charts Azuma's career and thematic fixations well beyond his most famous work, charting what he suggests is an ongoing process to shift emphasis from media theory to media strategy. Steinberg explores how Marshall McLuhan's theories were adopted and assimilated to fit an existing need in the Japanese advertising industry, in a way that suited the local situation rather than necessarily remaining true to intended meanings. Tomiko Yoda too looks at advertising, specifically its role in the creation of a consumer demographic that had previously been ignored, and its disposable time and income left untapped: single young women. In the same breath she also charts the shaping of Tokyo's Shibuya district into the consumer-driven, media-saturated cityscape noted earlier.

Media Theory in Japan is divided into three sections, though the choice for which essay fits which section occasionally comes across as somewhat arbitrary: the chapter on Azuma Hiroki, for example, is found under 'Communication Technologies' alongside the essays on television and architecture, rather than under one of the more appropriate-sounding sections 'Practical Theory' and 'Mediation and Media Theory'. Also, given co-editor Zahlten's familiarity with the topic (as he demonstrated in *The End of Japanese Cinema*, an investigation into home video could have lent the 'Communication Technologies' section a more robust profile. The global impact of the VCR, which was developed by Sony and JVC, and our almost complete lack of knowledge of Japanese theoretical writing on the topic certainly form enough reason for its inclusion in a collection of this kind. The editors even mention in their introduction how the popular success of the VCR contributed to a boom in 'new media' discourse during the 1980s, but the medium is conspicuous for its absence from all subsequent pages, index included.

But these are minor quibbles (admittedly from someone who makes video his own field of research), since this is an otherwise rigorously conceived and realised tome that provides solid foundations for future research in a wealth of disciplines, not limited to media studies and Japanology, but also notably for the social sciences.

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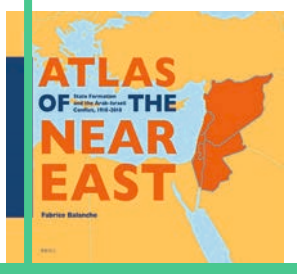
Rashomonic Rhapsodies in the Near East



Sebastian Musch

Reviewed title

Atlas of the Near East: State Formation and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1918-2010

Fabrice Balanche. 2017.

Leiden and Boston: Brill
ISBN 9789004344297

The Near East or Middle East, and especially the Israeli–Arab conflict, is rashomonic to its core, a web of contradictory narratives that are, more often than not, mutually exclusive. Too many justified claims populate the area – too many for a peaceful understanding and certainly too many to do justice to in one book.

It would, therefore, be an easy task to show that the author of this highly instructive atlas favours one narrative over another, is biased towards one actor, did not consider this or neglected that, etc. However, this would just display a misunderstanding of what the author aspired to do and even what a project like this atlas is capable of. Maps are intellectual tools, which allow us to see connections we have not previously considered and bring to light the internal logic of a narrative, as Franco Moretti in his seminal *Atlas of the European Novel* (Verso, 1998) reminds us. So, what is the internal logic of the narrative presented by this author? It is one of a geopolitical area hamstrung by environmental factors like aridity and, due to the scarcity of resources, demographics. Population movement, migration, the urban–rural divide and consequent demographic pressure, have played and continue to play, according to the atlas, a decisive role in state formation in the Near East and the Israeli–Arab conflict. Since the atlas was already complete in 2011 and was first published (in French) in 2012, more recent developments (the civil war in Syria and subsequent waves of refugees heading to neighbouring countries and beyond, the rise and fall of ISIS, and re-emergence of the Kurdish question, to name but a few), which have transformed the region, are not featured in the atlas. This is unfortunate but not surprising and certainly not the author's fault. The Near East has been, for most of the 20th and 21st centuries, in a state of flux, and any publication going beyond a historical analysis but aspiring to depict the present is almost doomed to be overtaken by events. However, this hardly diminishes the value of the work, especially the section on Syrian nation building, which offers key insights into the still raging civil war. As such, the atlas can contribute to our understanding of recent developments, even if it does not cover them.

A handy teaching tool

Furthermore, this is a beautifully designed book, multicoloured eye candy, even though its steep price will limit its wider distribution. The maps are, for the most part, beautifully executed, illuminating and rich in detail. There is much to discover here. Plus, for historians of the Near (or Middle) East, many of the maps would come in handy as teaching tools. The accompanying texts generally provide succinct information, allowing a newcomer to understand the context of the maps. Personally, I learnt a lot about environmental factors in the history of the region, many of which shine a fascinating new light on a wide array of contexts and caused me to reconsider foregone conclusions, especially regarding recent migration trends in the Near East. The atlas does a stellar job in highlighting the implications and ramifications for a large number of idiosyncratic contexts. However, the original French title, *Atlas du Proche-Orient arabe*, is much closer to its scope. While the Israeli–Arab conflict is sufficiently represented to justify its prominence in the English title of the atlas, it is striking that the atlas falls short on the Israeli side.

The place of Israeli space

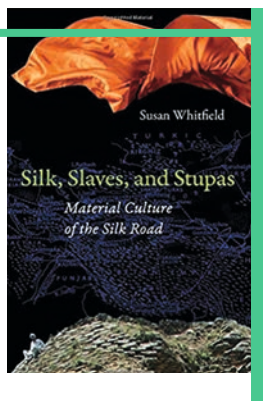
Even aside from the question of the web of narratives that form a mental map of the Near Atlas, it is notable and regrettable that Israel is only featured as a part of the hyphenated conflict. In the same vein, Zionism is here only featured as a foil, and the author is not interested in its history and different currents. Unsurprisingly, the author, more often than not, returns to quotes from Theodor Herzl to explain recent Israeli politics, a historically myopic choice. Furthermore, by separating Israel from the rest of the Near East according to its pre-'67 borders, referring to the Golan Heights as the Alsace-Lorraine of Syria, the author reinforces the notion of the Israeli state being a European spearhead, somehow separate from its Near Eastern surroundings. Yet, for various reasons, it can hardly be denied that the state of Israel forms an intrinsic part of the Near East. At one point, the author almost concedes this much when he writes that "even if the Palestinians are not living in symbiosis with the Israelis, the Palestinian space is subject to the political, economic and military influence of Israel"(p.88). Then is the same not true for Israeli space, which is subject to the influence of its Near Eastern neighbours? Where is the place of the Israeli space, one wonders. Must Israel not be seen as part of the Near East – maybe even more so today than a couple of decades ago? That Israel – its politics, economy, military, culture, and society, and, yes, its space – are deeply intertwined with the Arab Near East is indubitable. By not acknowledging this fact, an opportunity is missed in my view.

However, these objections do little to reduce the overall value of the atlas, whose practical achievements are beyond doubt. The author is to be lauded for having crafted a comprehensive and smart tool, which will help to understand a region whose competing narratives often conceal its multilayered history and ever-changing present.

Sebastian Musch,
University of Osnabrück, Germany

Silk, Slaves, and Stupas

Patrick Vanden Berghe



Reviewed title

Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road

Susan Whitfield. 2018.

University of California Press
ISBN 9780520281783

The history of the Silk Road (for the sake of convenience I will use the term Silk Road instead of Roads as this is also the term used in Susan Whitfield's book) is usually written in terms of transfer and exchange; this is transfer of goods, people, fashions, and ideas. While we know now that its history (or should we write 'their' as there were many routes that ran criss-cross the vast area between China and Europe) is difficult to write, we may assume that the foundations were laid from the 6th century BCE onwards when the Persians dominated large stretches of land from the Aegean Sea until the Himalayas. From then we see a rapid growing pattern emerging in which intellectual exchange goes together with the transfer of more tangible goods. While for the vast majority of people in this region (and in others as well) horizons were local, the web of exchange wove into each other to create a world that was international, multilayered and ever-changing. Along this web things could travel fast and it is not difficult to imagine how objects and commodities had the potential to travel from east to west or the other way.

The Silk Road and its material history

It is tempting to see the Silk Road as unidirectional with things always moving from the east to the west. This may be due to the emphasis on goods such as silk that were unknown in the west. However, history has provided us with many examples of *items* going the other direction. Religions and ideologies such as Christianity and Buddhism are just some of them. And while changes often happened because of events hundreds (or thousands) of miles away, some happened independently from each other, as does the history of early Christianity shows. So, it is not always easy to see the right relations between events, changes, and actions. For objects found in places that sometimes lay at the other end of the road this is true as well. How did it end up there, was this incidental or planned, how and when did it travel to its new place? These are questions that Susan Whitfield asks in *Silk, Slaves and Stupas: Material Culture along the Silk Road*. In this book she showcases ten objects found somewhere along the Silk Road, nine of them being tangible and materialistic, while one is human and must be seen rather as a concept, since it is referred to as 'the unknown slave'. Blinded as we may be by the spectacular objects, their shape, colour, or delicate form, we tend to forget that the Silk Road was also a slave road. Tribes from the four directions were engaged in fights in order to conquer huge numbers of slaves. These slaves came from the North, sub-Saharan Africa, Turkic tribes of Central Asia, etc. Slave markets thrived across the Silk Road, slaves often being presented as gifts to rulers.

Why this choice for this approach? As the author testifies: "Telling history through objects ... is not a new approach, but over the past two decades it has become more central in teaching and in popularizing world history" (p.2). Objects do tell a tale, a narrative which is different for the three sides concerned: the creator, the user, and the (contemporary) historian, collector, or spectator. Their history often comprises a shift from an object (or tool) to a piece of art. But objects (unless they were too heavy to carry) were not always meant to stay in place. So, movement of objects is essential to the concept of a trade road, in particular the Silk Road. This book is about objects and not about raw materials, such as silk, paper, herbs, etc. By focussing on one particular object Whitfield can tell a much more intriguing tale.

Objects enter in a dialogue with the cultures they encounter. Their function and meaning can be changed by the receiving culture, but objects can also change cultures as they may lie at the basis of new ideas and new concepts. They may be the reason why one culture changes its ideas or approach towards another culture. Objects may be the axis around which new trading routes are opened (or old ones closed) or they may be the instigator for engaging in a war. And so, objects do not only tell their own story, but also the story of moving materials, technologies, and craftsmen, some of which have disappeared.

We must be careful at the same time as most of the objects that make it to our time were either luxurious goods that were deemed fit to be preserved – and as such were given enough care – or they were monumental items such as buildings, stones with inscriptions. So, being the only objects that survived they tell just one part of history, usually a tale of leaders, of wealthy and influential people. Only a rare example will give us a glance of a world that is less familiar.

The quest for each object

It is with this perspective that one should read the story of the ten objects that Whitfield selected. Each object is given full attention in its own chapter, with each chapter answering more or less the same questions: what does the object look like and where was it discovered, how was it transferred to its place of discovery and its present place, how and by whom was it made, why was it made, and what was its meaning during its lifetime. While of course these questions cannot always be answered for each object, Whitfield digs as deep as possible. For most of the objects she can use the findings of other researchers, but she has given herself the task of bringing a coherent story of each object.

Well written, although she lost me sometimes when being too detailed in explaining techniques, this book is at times a page-turner comparable to a good detective story. While each object is a character with its own story, the ten objects are part of a new story, in this case the history of the Silk Road. These objects (to name just a few: earrings, a glass bowl, coins, a stupa) show how the exchange along the road was huge, but that knowledge of this exchange is still poorly documented. A lack of interest and understanding still blocks our view on the Silk Road. This book is a station on the way to the final destination of comprehension!

Patrick Vanden Berghe,
Independent researcher

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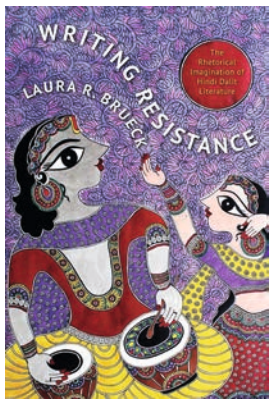

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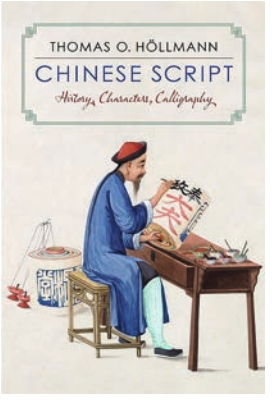

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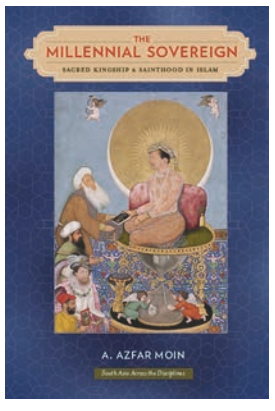

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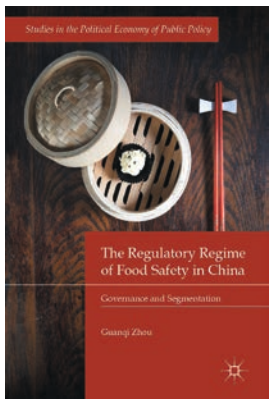

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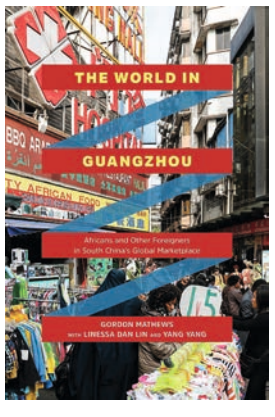

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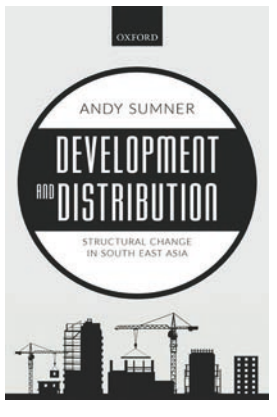

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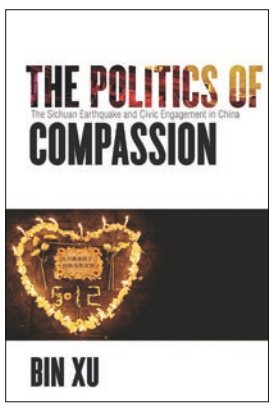

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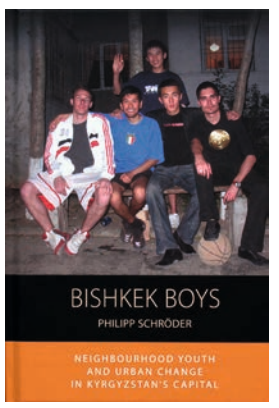

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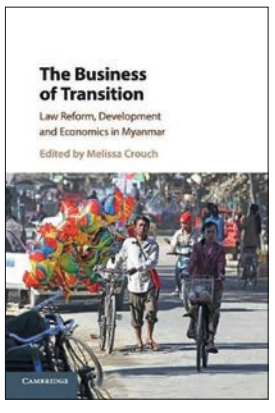

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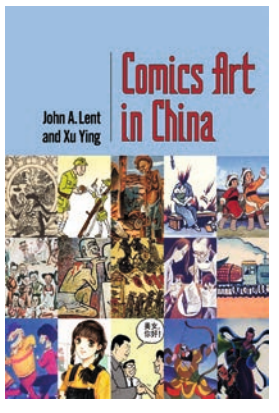

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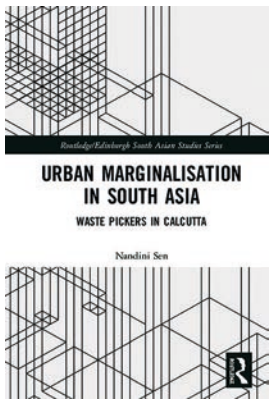

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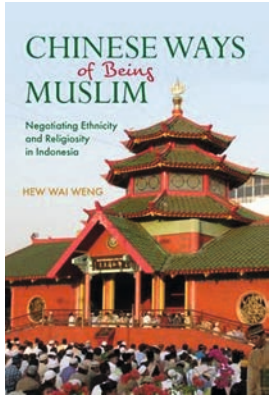

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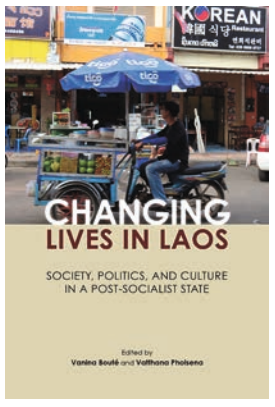

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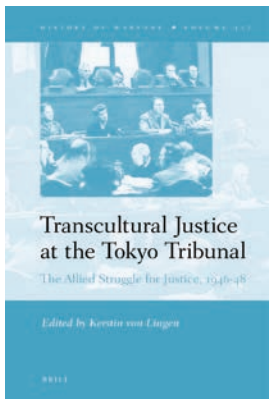

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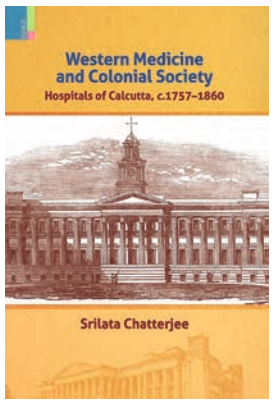

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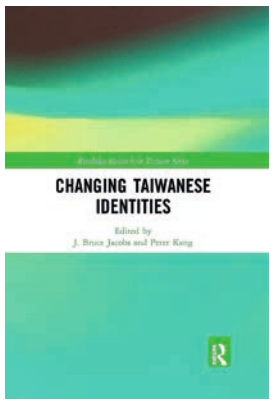

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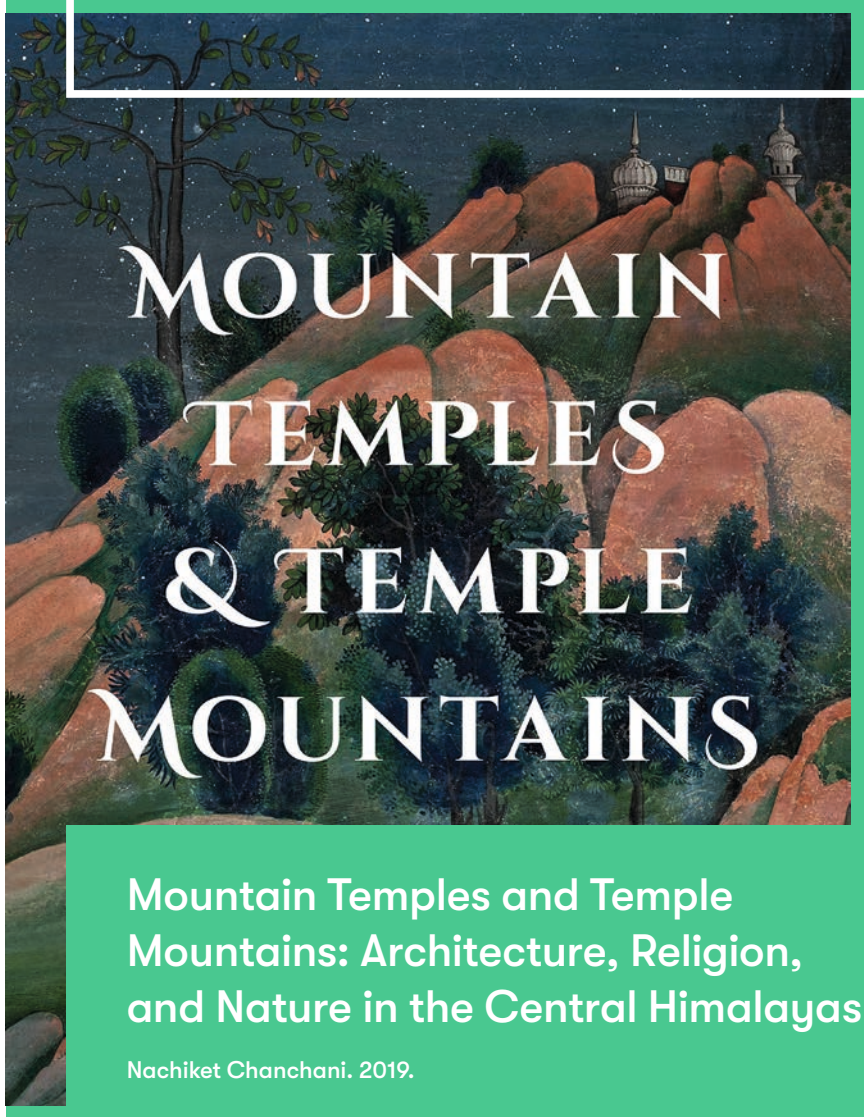

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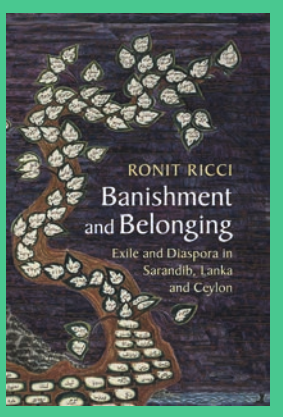

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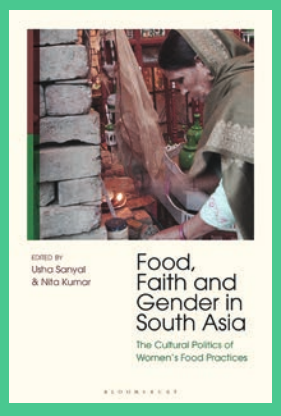

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Jayati Bhattacharya
and Carola Erika Lorea

The interconnected world history of the Bay of Bengal is re-enacted in people's memories, habits and everyday practices. The word for 'star anise' in Central India is *Singapoor ke phool* [Singapore flower], a colloquial echo of a pre-modern network of maritime trade. The Bengali word for window [*janala*] is directly borrowed from Portuguese, a reminder that language witnessed the syncretic impact of early European settlements around the Bay. Epic stories from the Ramayana, originating in ancient India, are re-enacted daily in Javanese traditional theatre. These are just a few of the examples that can serve as metaphorical mappings of the past and present of a network of interdependent livelihoods, a busy seascape, and a web of littoral hubs, which constitute the life of the Bay of Bengal.

Above: Sadarghat harbour in Dhaka. Right: A monsoon day in southern Bangladesh, June 2011. Photos by Carola Lorea, 2019.

The Bay of Bengal, a web of maritime highways as well as a chessboard of relationships and mobilities, is a vital region for several countries; both littoral (India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Thailand) and landlocked (Nepal, Bhutan, China, Northeast India, Nepal). Often disregarded as the periphery and the liquid borderland between South Asia and Southeast Asia – two macro areas that came to define much of the modern scholarship about this region – the Bay of Bengal can be seen as the nodal crossroad and the cultural hub for a network of exchanges and contacts of diverse kinds.

In the new millennium, the Bay has emerged as a significant subject of debate in popular as well as academic discourses, particularly with rising sea levels, and attention to maritime trajectories in policy approaches of different Asian states in and around the region. This waterscape has been characterized by an absence of any major territorial conflicts or claims; perhaps one of the reasons for traditionally receiving less attention – in the larger realm of Indian Ocean studies – than the western Indian Ocean region. Yet, the eastern Indian Ocean has been one of the busiest seascapes, with overlapping circuits of interaction between the regional nodes of exchanges and the global economic order. The 'monsoon winds' established and connected the dominant trade routes and shaped migratory trends till the onset of colonial intervention and consequent introduction of steamship navigation. European trading settlements, experiments and ambitions, left a trace of Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, French, British and other presences. A successive period of colonial intrusion and governance both separated and united communities, commodities, cultures and ideas across the region. The hegemonic (British) colonial domination over the seascape and adjoining hinterlands and littorals was often achieved through destruction and violence. Yet, administrative subjugation also generated a sense of unity in the Bay. This complex area has thus witnessed multiple and mutual borrowings across the seas, littorals and borderlands, with strong legacies of circulations in culture, economy, life-style and languages.

However, porous borders and circular migrations slowly turned into isolationism and rigidly monitored frontiers in post-colonial Asia, with the emergence of decolonized geopolitical territories, the dominance of nation-centric visions and inward-looking policies for most of the states around the rim of the Bay. Borderlands and border*seas* were divided into South and Southeast Asian states, a binary conception that became deeply embedded in academic, political, and public discourses. It is only recently that increasing globalization and inter-state interactions have facilitated looking beyond the conventional categories sanctioned by the history of Area Studies. The Bay of Bengal thus emerges as an incredibly fertile field of inquiry as an in-between space of borrowings, contacts and interactions that shape the vision of the past, the present and the future of a considerable part of the global population. Moreover, the increasing importance of borders, borderlands and trans-border studies in academic discussions[1] has often laid more emphasis on mainland 'barbed-wire borders' rather than on maritime borders, shared maritime heritages, and the hydroscapes of bordering regions, pointing to another lacuna that our focus on the Bay of Bengal region aims to fill.[2]

Continued overleaf

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A new phase of Bay of Bengal studies: economic and cultural contexts beyond geopolitical strategy

This Focus section of The Newsletter has been inspired by the need to emphasize the spaces and trajectories between the two macro areas of South and Southeast Asia, strongly embedded in popular imagination and academic discourses. Transcending methodological nationalism, it focuses on transnational and transregional movements, practices and institutions that connect people, histories and knowledge across the Bay.

For example, present-day impermeable borders and nationalist rhetoric in countries like Burma and Bangladesh are better understood if compared to a long history of exchanges and colonial connections between the historical province of united Bengal and British Burma. Contrary to the dominant discourse in contemporary Myanmar, which strives to identify members of the Rohingya community as 'Bengalis' or foreign infiltrators, making way for a tragic humanitarian crisis, nineteenth and early-twentieth century histories of the Bay of Bengal demonstrate that the two regions were linked through common movements of resistance, intellectually constructed pan-Asian sentiments, but also mutually influenced by anti-colonial political activists.

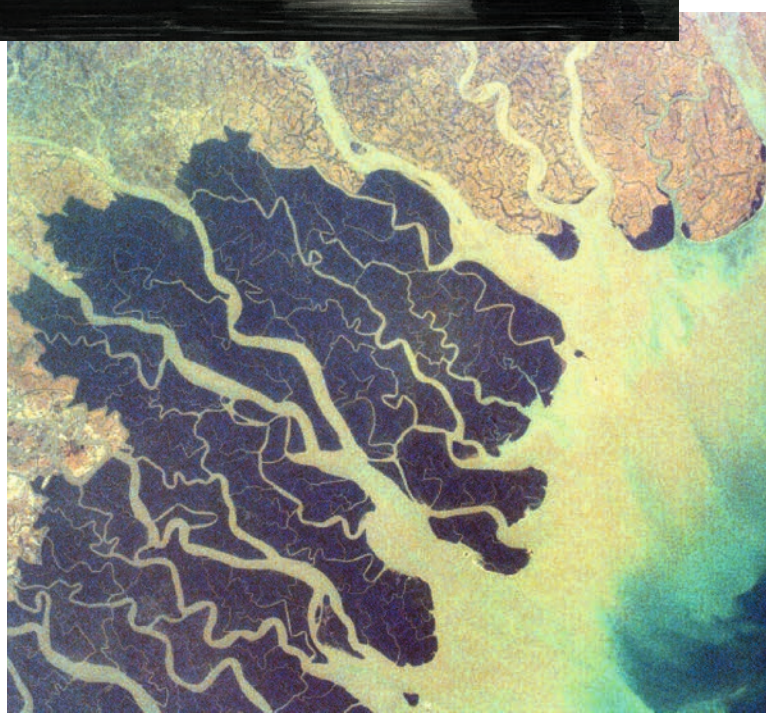
Whereas mainstream popular discourses depict the Bay of Bengal as a strategic area both at the convergence of two geo-political blocks (ASEAN and SAARC) and at the confluence of two competing maritime powers (India and China), this special Focus considers not only the high politics but also the everyday lives of the Bay of Bengal by gathering perspectives from historical, anthropological, sociological, literary and multidisciplinary research.

The nine contributions by scholars from different disciplines and areas of expertise are based on the discussions held at a day-long intensive roundtable session at the 11th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in Leiden, on 18 July 2019. The roundtable titled 'The Bay of Bengal: Perspectives across Disciplines', was divided into four different thematic clusters ('Cosmopolitan Connections', 'Contested Heritages: Arts and Politics', 'Liquid Migration and Solid Borders' and 'Environment and Littoral Ecologies') and featured fifteen participants from different parts of the globe, along with an enthusiastic international audience. The discussions consciously looked beyond the mainstream geopolitical debates that dominate the mediatized discourse around the eastern Indian Ocean. The participants focused instead on historicizing, contextualizing and problematizing the flows of people, ideas, livelihood and traditions. The presenters analyzed travel narratives, entangled histories, material culture and maritime heritage across the Bay. Rich in ethnographic detail, some of the papers discussed the local variants of environmental activism and ecological histories, the disruptions of coastal livelihoods, and the experiences of disconnection, forced migration and displacement, which also constitute the living fabric of the Bay of Bengal. Critically responding to an idealized and often romanticized focus on flows and connections around the Indian Ocean, the participants underlined the instances of inequality and power struggles that dictate connectivity or lack thereof within the Bay of Bengal region.

In the new millennium, the rise of China and India as emerging global powers and the restructuring of their respective foreign policies have steered and influenced regional geopolitical interactions in Asia, thus leading to the emergence of the Bay of Bengal as a significant subject of research in the larger realm of Indian Ocean studies. India's Look East Policy (LEP), introduced in the 1990s led to a rediscovery of its historic ties with its eastern Asian neighbors and reintegration with a primarily maritime Southeast Asia. There was also a shift of policy orientation from the territorial to the maritime, the most prominent outcome of which was the big boost to the organization of the Indian Navy and naval installations. China's rise as a potential global power had already been spectacular in different ways by then. In 2013, China announced the One Belt One Road (OBOR, now better known as BRI, Belt and Road Initiative) project that would connect the Mediterranean to the Pacific through a network of overland roads, pipelines, economic corridors and also maritime routes. Though we are not discussing Chinese or Indian foreign policies and strategies in this Focus, it is indeed significant that China's Maritime Silk Road (MSR) plans to traverse the Bay of Bengal, implying the possibility of significantly impacting bilateral relations, economies and communities.

While the BRI is much larger in scale, vision and economic prowess, India's LEP, later renamed as Act East Policy (AEP), has gained ground through its benign and non-assertive approach both within the region and further to the east. Partly as a joint attempt to counter Chinese assertiveness in their maritime borderseas, India and Indonesia are strengthening their ties, from economic, diplomatic and military angles. Their maritime partnership unfolds in the Bay of Bengal and in the Andaman Sea, with regular bilateral naval exercises, with the Indian endeavor to assist and access ports in Aceh, and with the expanding trading opportunities between Sumatra and Port Blair. Similar diplomatic endeavors are equally at play between India and other states around the rim of the Bay. The extent of this east-looking influence may be reverberated in the transformation of the rhetoric of 'Asia-Pacific' region into 'Indo-Pacific', introducing the concept of 'extended neighborhood' and claiming larger inclusivity of maritime and territorial spaces. Interestingly, India has not joined the grand vision of the BRI, and yet the Bay of Bengal region remains the converging ground of India's Look/Act East Policies, and China's ambitious MSR projects. Drawing in the participation of many located 'outside' its periphery, like the USA and Japan, these contemporary dynamics enhance geopolitical complexities and increase global attention for this waterscape.

Above: *The Conflagration of Dalla, on the Rangoon River.* From Series 1 of *'Views taken at or near Rangoon, and Combined operations in the Birman Empire'*, by Lieutenant Joseph Moore. Description: Plate 17: moonlit river view, with smoke rising from fire on the right horizon, near pagodas, seen from the river in the foreground where ships and boats are mooring or rowing, some figures on them spotting the fire. Year: 1826. Hand-coloured aquatint with etching.



Left: Ganges Delta. JPL space images. This image was taken from the Space Shuttle on January 13, 1997. Image credit: NASA/JPL /UCSD/JSC

Cosmopolitan connections, liquid borders, and endangered livelihoods

Looking at the history of communication, transportation and connectivity across the Bay, our contributors highlight a past of movements and mobilities populated by elite travelers, nationalist intellectuals, colonial proto-tourists, and upper-class locals. However, migration in the modern and early-modern Bay was also populated by subaltern people and marginalized communities, by laborers and pilgrims. This long history of subaltern migration connects the past to the present. For example, some of the contributors follow the history of migration and resettlement of indentured laborers and post-Partition refugees from mainland South Asia to the Andaman Islands.

Besides migrations and connections, the history of the Bay of Bengal is also a history of natural calamities and catastrophes, of unkind weather conditions and of tragic disruptions that mark the social and political history of maritime borderlands and islands. The 2004 tsunami, for example, acts as a watershed in the history of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in terms of conservation policies, development of mass tourism, threats to vulnerable ecologies, and to the coastal livelihoods of fishermen and informal settlers.

The contributions in this Focus remind us that the northern Bay, spreading from the unique ecological reality of the Bengal Delta seamlessly into the Indian Ocean, is a space that challenges established notions of water, land, soil and sea. Whereas disciplines at the service of the Empire, such as cartography and oceanography, have striven to separate navigable sea from taxable land, the Bengal Delta defies these binary notions through its tidal landscape, its ubiquitous ponds, swamps and wetlands, its *métissage* of salt and fresh waters, and its cyclical reshaping of sandbars, flooded soil, temporarily emerged land, and submerged coastlines. Studying the nature and the human course around the Bay of Bengal, with its fluid and moving relation between water and land, can help us to shift conventional paradigms surrounding land-water visions, a starting point to secure the future of coastal cities in a world of rising waters.

The backwaters of the Bengal Delta, with their forbidding wilderness, thick forests, merciless salinity and natural impediments, discouraging settlement and cultivation, opened up to the markets and routes of the Bay of Bengal and the greater Indian Ocean long before the coming of European sea voyagers. This pre-European cosmopolitanism of trade across the Bay was not only made of traffic and exchanges between Malacca, Sumatra, Borneo, the Persian Gulf, Bengal and the Coromandel Coast, Sri Lanka and Malabar; but also of raids of pirates and fortune-hunters. This inter-littoral world of trade, of spices and fabrics, sugar and silk, sandalwood and muslin, preceded the advent of the big European overseas trading corporations. It is from this time period that our contributors retrace the steps of the social, cultural, economic and political history of the Bay of Bengal.

In this Focus

The articles of the Indian historians Sonali Mishra and Smarika Nawani look at the early-colonial life of port cities around the Bay and their importance in studying power dynamics, but also religious networks, and cultural etiquette. Sonali Mishra points out that neutrality regulated the trade regime of the cosmopolitan port of Masulipatnam, where Europeans, Asians and several indigenous merchants collaborated. Their opportunities transcended normative categories based on caste, religion, ethnicity and political belonging. She argues that this relative

Above: A 1650 map by Jan Jansson of 'sinus gangeticus', or the Bay of Bengal. Titled *Sinus Gangeticus, vulgo Golfo de Bengala nova descriptio*, printed in Amsterdam: Apud. I. Ianssonium, 1657.

freedom in the complex socio-political milieu of the region, requires us to re-evaluate the parameters to understand the pre-modern state in South Asia. Smarika Nawami's contribution focuses instead on the Portuguese presence around the Bay, which provided long-lasting cultural and linguistic influences, and on the town of Mylapore, a cultural heart of Catholic Christians for locals, Portuguese and Eurasians. Both articles highlight examples of cosmopolitanism and inclusive living of different communities in two different ports. The essence of similar co-existence continued into the colonial phase, particularly in the port cities around the rim of the Bay, like Penang, Singapore, Calcutta, Madras, Akyab, Rangoon, and Colombo.[3]

With the territorial establishment of the East India Company and the Dutch VOC in South and Southeast Asia, trajectories and interactions across the Bay of Bengal took a different shape. Mikko Toivanen's contribution looks at specific transport nodes at Singapore, Penang, Calcutta and Galle, extending to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies. Following the introduction of the steamship in the region, these points were closely connected by overlapping circuits of trans-colonial elite travelers seeking leisure, convalescence, healthier climates, and sightseeing. Their experiences are embedded in a colonial reinvention and re-appropriation of local spaces and local histories as culturally 'European'. This created walls between the colonial (and local) elites and the subaltern local population on the one hand, but also fashioned and reproduced replicas of European-styled living in certain locales.

Linking ancient and modern sites of interaction across the Bay, Himanshu Prabha Ray's article explores the stratified history of coastal shrines. Prior to the development of oceanography and the making of nautical charts, sailing vessels largely depended on coastal shrines and structures that connected the coast with communities living inland, while functioning as visible coastal markers and recipients of devotion. For example, a lighthouse was built in 1887 on top of the Mahishasuramardini cave at the Mahabalipuram temple complex on the Tamil coast in proximity to an older seventh century structure that had possibly served the same function. These coastal structures were religious spaces maintained by communities who lived close to them. Their distribution constitutes an important and yet underestimated mapping of the economic, social and religious life across the Bay.

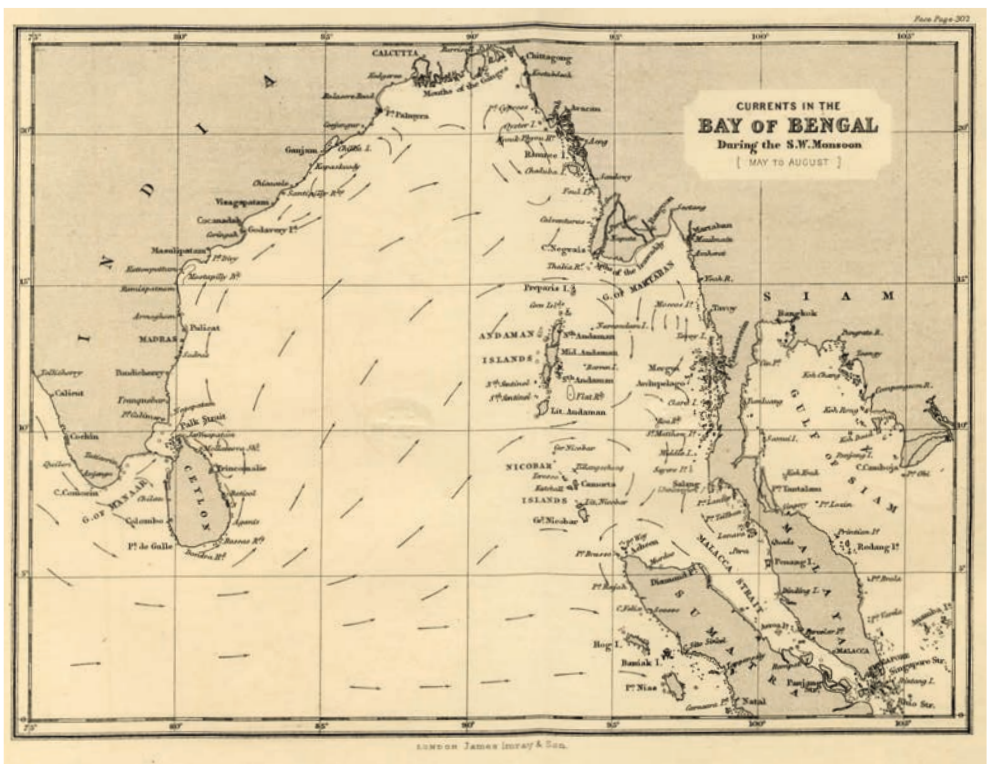
The contributions of Sanjukta Dasgupta and of Maitrii Victoriano Aung Thwin explore connections and parallelisms between British India and British Burma. Maitrii's article highlights the need to contextualize key events of national history, such as the 1930-1932 Burma Rebellion, in a transnationalist perspective that embeds local resistance movements within the larger scenario of rebellions and insurgency across the Bay. The Burma Rebellion (later called the Saya San Rebellion), the Chittagong Armory Raid (1930-1931) in Bangladesh, and the Malabar /Moplah Rebellion of southern India, in this view, can emerge as connected histories of the Indian Ocean. Sanjukta Dasgupta offers a precious reflection on Bengali travel accounts of Burma, with particular reference to the experiences and perceptions of Indumadhab Mallik, and Sarala Debi Chaudhurani, who demonstrate diverse, complex and layered approaches to the idea of Asia, determined by their own class sensibilities and specific social and political interests. Their response to visiting Burma and their comparisons between the self and the 'other' was to a large extent shaped by internalized Orientalist assumptions. Their views, however, are also a result of the contemporary nationalist rhetoric and Pan-Asian discourse. While they shared an understated, yet tangible antagonism towards the British, they had also internalized much of the racial and civilizational categories of the colonial gaze through which British rulers established cultural and political hegemony.

Above: A Calvinist Church in Batavia. 1806. From "A Voyage to Cochin China, in the years 1792, and 1793" by Sir John Barrow, page 221.

Bengali refugees and Burmese early settlers live side by side on the Andaman Islands, an emblematic site of the entangled national histories of India and Burma in the heart of the Bay of Bengal. Geographically and geologically closer to Burma, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands became an Indian Union Territory in 1956, although disputed sovereignty on some of the islands continued until 1986. Two of our contributions, both rich in ethnographic material, are dedicated to the contemporary history of the Andaman Islands through anthropological perspectives. Raka Banerjee explores the intersection of gender and migration in the language and the oral histories of the Bengali refugee women settlers on the Andamans. In a considerable departure from existing approaches in understanding the gendered experience of Partition-induced displacement, she argues that statist vocabulary permeates the settler women's speech. These primarily English words – for example, riot, border slip, dole, colony, etc. – entered the unlettered Bangla-speaking women's vocabulary because of the experience of forced migration from East Pakistan and resettlement in the Andaman Islands.

Equally resulting from extensive fieldwork, the contribution co-authored by Philipp Zehmisch and Ruhi Deol looks at the subsistence livelihoods of farmers, fishers, and forest villagers in post-Tsunami Andamans. The Tsunami exacerbated a shift in India's state policies, from commercial exploitation to the conservation of resources. As in other parts of the globe, the conservation paradigm has created new vulnerabilities, especially related to human activity in marine and forest ecosystems. Their article reveals the ways in which aspects of the conservation discourse impact local perceptions of environmental change in the Andamans. The authors argue that the 2004 Tsunami functioned as a "revelatory shock" for the island population. Accompanied by the increasingly popular conservation paradigm and the rapid rise of tourism in the Andamans, the event of the Tsunami triggered both ecological awareness as well as debates on the vulnerability of the island ecosystem and its populace. In some respects, local migrants and settlers internalize these vulnerabilities; in others, they develop contextual ways to cope, respond, or adapt to their changing environment.

Climate change and the rising sea levels of the Anthropocene are problematically evident in the Sunderbans, the largest delta and estuarine mangrove forest of the world, shared between the southern coast of West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh. Calynn Dowler's piece explores the Sundarbans as a changing waterscape, with particular attention to how the meaning of water in the Bengal delta is shifting as a result of intersecting socio-natural transformations. A focus on the materiality of the Bay of Bengal – its rivers, sea, estuaries, etc. – and on the everyday ways in which coastal communities engage with water, can challenge some of the flattening assumptions of global climate change discourse, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of human-nonhuman agency and the meaning of water for the ritual life of the delta.



Above: Currents in the Bay of Bengal. From 'The Bay of Bengal Pilot: A nautical directory'. Compiled by James F. Imray. London, 1879. Page 341.

The relevance and future avenues of Bay of Bengal studies

The articles in this Focus contribute to the understanding of the history, the socio-cultural ecologies, and the geopolitical interactions across the Bay, by adding complexity and texture to the public discourse around the strategic importance of the Bay of Bengal. Inspired by and indebted to the recent academic scholarship on the historical connections of the Bay,[4] which is dominated by arguments of continuity and circularity of interactions throughout history, our contributors also seek to de-romanticize notions of transnational flows, and bring up instances of disconnections, disruptions, and unequal mobilities within and across the Bay.

Available scholarship on the region has already established that the Bay was never a static region, nor an impenetrable web of political boundaries, but interactions and power dynamics across the Bay in different time-periods played out in multifarious manners. Thus, the colonial port city connections of Calcutta, Penang, Singapore, Rangoon and Colombo, gave way to Chittagong, Sittwe, Hambantota, and Colombo, connecting the eastern section of the 'String of Pearls' in the contemporary politico-economic order. The increasing interest of the nations-states in the maritime resources of the region has added another dimension to the competition and collaboration, adding to the vulnerability of marginal people and delicate ecosystems. At an important juncture of history, when we are moving beyond strictures and demarcations of Area Studies, this platform provides us with an opportunity to explore transregional issues, cosmopolitan linkages and heritage, communities and cultural traditions. It also attempts to address the concerns of a post-disciplinary academia, encouraging inter-disciplinary research and influencing future pedagogical frameworks.

Keeping in view the significance of the region and tremendous possibilities of research, we aim to establish a long-lasting network of scholars from diverse disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. Sprouting from the fruitful discussions at the roundtable sessions during ICAS 11, this Focus in The Newsletter is the first concrete step in this direction. We have been receiving further expression of interest from different scholars and institutions, and our network is expanding quite rapidly, suggesting a very promising future for the studies of the Bay of Bengal as both a physical region and a conceptual framework.

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Notes

1 Some exemplary works in this field are: van Schendel, W. 2005. *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*. Anthem Press; Scott, J. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press; van Schendel, W. & de Maaker, E. 2014. Special issue on 'Asian Borderlands', in *Journal of Borderland Studies* 29(1).

2 Some exceptions that do address these concepts are, for instance, Ray, H.P. 1994. *The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Links of Early South Asia*. Oxford University Press; Ray, H.P. & Chandra, S. (eds) 2013. *The Sea, Identity and History: From the Bay of Bengal to the South China Sea*. ISEAS Publishing; Ray, H.P. 2015. *Beyond Trade: Cultural Roots of India's Ocean*. Aryan Books International; Bhattacharyya, D. 2018. *Empire and Ecology in the Bengal Delta: The Making of Calcutta*. Cambridge University Press.

3 For a broad view of connectivity across the Bay in the colonial period, see Bhattacharya, J. 2019. 'Connectivity Across Colonial Bay of Bengal in the 19th and 20th Centuries', in Ludden, D. (ed.) *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*. Oxford University Press.

4 For some groundbreaking work in this direction of research, see Bose, S. 2006. *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*. Harvard University Press; Bose, S. & Manjapra, K. (eds) 2010. *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas*. Palgrave Macmillan; Mukherjee, R. (ed.) 2013. *Oceans Connect: Reflections on Water Worlds across Time and Space*. Primus Books; Amrith, S.S. 2013. *Crossing the Bay of Bengal: The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants*. Harvard University Press; Laffan, M. (ed.) 2017. *Belonging Across the Bay of Bengal: Religious Rites, Colonial Migrations, National Rights*. Bloomsbury; Acri, A., Blench, R. & Landmann, A. (eds) 2017. *Spirits and Ships: Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia*. ISEAS Publishing.

European private trade in Masulipatnam

Intercultural dynamics in a pre-modern cosmopolitan hub

Sonali Mishra

Masulipatnam represented the hub of a metropolitan port complex of the seventeenth century Northern Coromandel conglomerate of ports and production centres. At the crux of the Coromandel textile trade, this port in the Bay of Bengal fed a lion's share of the pre-modern and early modern Indian Ocean trade, which, at its zenith, linked Europe, Africa, West Asia, South Asia, the Indonesian Archipelago and the Far East. As yet relatively under-researched, European private trade in this port complex offers interesting insights into the prevalent socio-political ethos of the region.

'Masulipatam des Villes Capitales et des Residences'. Coloured engraving by Johann Christoph Nabholtz (1752-97) of Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, dated sometime between 1770 and 1800.

Archival material and contemporary travelogues reveal that this cosmopolitan port, then under the reign of the Persian Qutb Shahis of Golconda, was neutral in its trade, open to Europeans (Portuguese, English, Dutch, French, Danes), Asians (Persians, Arabs, Pathans, Chinese, Armenians, Achehnese, Malays, Siamese, Burmese, Javanese, Peguans, etc.) and several indigenous merchants of the subcontinent (Tamils, Chulias, Telugus, Klings, Kannadas, Indian Muslims, etc.), who were either diasporic residents, communities, agents, or itinerant merchants in the port and its environs. Collaborations and conflicts among these entities often transcended normative social and political categories, such as place of origin, lineage, religious affiliations, caste, occupation or 'nationality', as well as their access to economic and political opportunities, which was not entirely exclusive. Furthermore, a blurring of boundaries between political, administrative and commercial functions, not merely among the ruling elite but also Europeans and local indigenous mercantile communities, points to relative freedom and flux in the complex socio-political milieu of the region, which would perhaps require a revaluation of the parameters of the pre-modern state in South Asia.

Pre-modern littoral India was dotted with several ports of importance, which gained greater significance with the advent of the English and the Dutch trading companies. It was during the early seventeenth century that Masulipatnam, situated on the Krishna-Godavari delta, emerged as the prime port of the kingdom of Golconda, supported by a conglomerate of subordinate ports, inland towns and production centres. It became well embedded not only as a sub-regional economic unit of the Coromandel Coast, but a very significant port of the entire Indian Ocean trading system of the 17th century. Coromandel cotton textiles were the backbone of the Indian Ocean trade during this time. They had a flourishing demand in the Indonesian archipelago, the Spice Islands, and had also developed a burgeoning westward market to the Persian Gulf and Red Sea areas. Further, the Dutch and the English opened up Europe, as well, as a very lucrative market for Coromandel textiles.

Masulipatnam attracted a host of diverse indigenous and foreign merchants, both itinerant and emigrant. The European contemporary sources offer rich empirical data on this port and its environs, and a deeper analysis allows one to investigate the prevalent socio-cultural, economic and political matrix of the region that the Europeans encountered, and the ethos of the age, giving a better understanding of the pre-modern state and society in southern India. An enquiry into the adaptations of the Europeans in the region is very useful to understand the mechanisms through which the 'outsiders' converted a situation of several disadvantages with respect to finances, local knowledge and experience, language, climate and cultural differences, into inconceivable advantages. This, in turn, elucidates the indigenous socio-cultural, economic and political systems and processes of the region, as they operated in said period, which could allow such momentous transitions to occur.

Masulipatnam was not naturally well endowed as a favourable port; rather it had many disadvantages. Despite these, it attracted a multitude of indigenous and diasporic merchants, due to its textile-producing hinterland and suitable political and economic infrastructure. The climate of Masulipatnam was ostensibly unfavourable and the Europeans in particular were susceptible to the adverse environment. However, they settled there undeterred, to partake in the highly profitable trade, by making suitable adaptations.

Ecology and hinterland

Among the ecological disadvantages of Masulipatnam, was its vulnerability to cyclones. For instance, in October 1679, a fierce cyclone hit the port with violent winds, and the sea submerged half the town causing great loss of life and property. The Dutch and the English warehouses suffered heavy damage, and about 20,000 inhabitants drowned.[1] Masulipatnam's hostile environment manifested bad air and inadequate drinking water, which was brackish and saline, and a stifling city layout. Sea-water flowed inland during high tides and when combined with rains, inundated the port. The result was a permanent large swampy area with stagnant water, a foul stench and high humidity. This was partly remedied by the construction of two bridges by Mir Abdullah Baqir, a Persian administrator cum merchant magnate.

A contemporary traveller, John Fryer, an English physician, noted that Masulipatnam had no rain from November to May, during which, "the Land-Breezes....torment them with a suffocating Heat; so that the Birds of the Air as they fly, often drop down dead, the wind coming as hot as the Steam from an Oven, by the reflecting of the Sun upon the Sands, which are hurled about the Marshes."[2] He further described that the relief from the rains, however, brought intolerable insects and diseases with it.

These considerations were especially prejudicial to the Europeans, and in the initial years at least, the mortality rate among them was considerably high. Many of them preferred country residences in the adjoining pleasant surroundings of Madapollam, Narsapur, Navarazpuram, Petapuli, Divi etc., as retreats during the particularly bad months at Masulipatnam. About three miles into the countryside, Fryer described a better environment, where one could obtain 'infallible cures' for the diseases prevalent in Masulipatnam. These inland towns and villages were the preferred sanatoriums of the Europeans, with many trees, fruit orchards and gardens, rendering them very agreeable for residential purposes. They had elite residences of English agents like Christopher Hatton, Richard Mohun, Nathaniel Cholmley, Edward Winter, the nefarious private trader, Robert Fleetwood, another English agent who amassed great wealth through private trade, a Dutchman, Turner, and local elite such as the mentioned ship-owning Persian merchant Mir Abdullah Baqir. As shall be seen, ecological adaptations were not the only ones the Europeans successfully established.

These inland towns were also subordinate feeder ports and inland textile weaving centres in the vicinity of Masulipatnam. An example was Petapuli, one of the first settlements of the English in the region. It is interesting to note that the Company's agents at Fort St. George were disinclined towards abandoning their establishments at Petapuli and Madapollam, likely because of their concerns regarding the extensive private trade they derived from there, apart from many other advantages, including textile production and ship building facilities.

The English Company in the Coromandel

The early beginnings of the English Company were rather tentative and dismal, while the Dutch had better fortunes. The English East India Company began its operations in 1611, and English private trade, against the Company's rules, was evident from the very beginning. As early as 1624, the agents were ordered that private trade was to be "rigorously suppressed".[3] Private trade had several disadvantages for the English Company, but its implications were far more complex.

For one thing, English private trade often set precedents for the English Company in terms of the types of commodities invested in and areas serviced in terms of trade. The English Company did not initially engage in the textile trade of the Coromandel, their prime interest being the procurement of spices for Europe, while selling English wares like porcelain, broadcloth, quicksilver etc. The English agent Methwold, around 1620, reported that private traders informed him that they tripled their investments by selling Masulipatnam cloth at Bantam, and doubled their profits at Siam. So, the English private traders began by participating in the already established eastward trade cycle, investing in goods that the natives, as well as the Dutch, already invested in. This way they could circumvent the Company's prohibition on private trade, particularly while freighting their goods on the native vessels. It was also in these initial years that the Dutch and the English, following the example of the natives, started trading very profitably in diamonds from the Golconda mines.

In 1620-21, Methwold sent samples of Masulipatnam cloth to the Company in England for their consideration. At this point, the Company was exploring alternative routes, strategies, and other commodities for England from Masulipatnam, like diamonds and cotton cloth, which gained popularity in Europe. They were also attempting participation in the Red Sea trade from Masulipatnam, and envisaged profits and leverage from the protection they could offer to native merchants in this trade, following the Portuguese example. The westward Surat-Persia trade of the English was also significant from the point of view of their trade from the Coromandel Coast, as later, in 1634, they were able to extract a promising deal from the King of Golconda, in the form of the 'Golden Farman' - the right to customs-free trade in the kingdom of Golconda for a lump sum payment - on the basis of their trade links to Persia and the amity that they had with the Shah of Persia.[4] The English were even entitled to a share in the customs at the port of Gombroon on account of the help that they had given to the Persians to capture Ormuz from the Portuguese in 1622.[5] The Sultan of Golconda anticipated that the favourable rapport the English had with the Shah of Persia would foster the trade between Bandar Abbas and Golconda. Further advantages would be English protection to native shipping, as well as obtaining prized Persian horses and other rarities for himself.

From 1624 until the end of the 1630s, the English strove to expand to suitable places southwards, in the Hindu territories of the Nayaks of Tanjore and Gingee on the Coromandel Coast, from where they hoped to operate with more strength, security and liberty. They were relocating due to problems faced at Masulipatnam, accruing from "the abuse ... being growne unsuferable by the evell disposicion of the Governour there". The English settlement at Masulipatnam was ordered to be dissolved in 1628.[6] However, the English agents realized that it was indispensable and in 1630, it was re-established.

After the procurement of the Golden Farman, from the mid-1630s, English prospects began to improve. Their customs-free trade in all Golconda ports like Masulipatnam, Nizampatnam (Petapuli), and others, far exceeded the Sultan's estimate at the time of granting the Golden Farman. Further, the founding of Fort St. George at Chennai was a milestone for the English, as it provided a fortified enclave, as well as the benefit of procuring excellent textiles – which were increasingly demanded in England – at reasonable rates. The benefits and privileges, which accrued from this settlement, negotiated with the Hindu Raja of Chandragiri in 1641, were immense, as time was to prove.

By the 1650s, the English agents at Masulipatnam were making profitable investments sending and receiving goods from Bantam, Pegu, Syriam, Johore, Achin, Europe, Persia and Gombroon. This period also witnessed a greater scale of private trade that was being conducted by English agents and free-merchants. European trade in the Coromandel registered a sharp increase in the second half of the seventeenth century. From the 1660s onwards, the Coromandel absorbed about a third of the total investments of the English in India, the great bulk of which went towards the procurement of textiles.

European trade and native political authorities

Trading privileges were not easily obtained by the Europeans, and required constant negotiations. This often involved the payment of bribes and presentation of *tashrifs* (gifts of honour) to significant officials and lower level functionaries to gain access to the King, or to the relevant authority. Further, the maintenance of the privileges granted, as well as the procurement of additional grants, required that the Europeans kept amicable relations with the rulers and important political personages. For the Europeans, their power at sea, as well as their ability to provide safe passage to the ships of the natives was their leverage. However, they could not trade in a region if they were denied permission from the local authorities. Until the 1630s the Europeans had been largely unsuccessful in this endeavour, and constantly complained about the extortionist tendencies of the local authorities. The initial trading concessions were meant only for Company trade, but were frequently misused by the Europeans to cover their private trade as well. This naturally antagonised the port authorities who would be deprived of their due share of customs duties.

Accessing the political elite for negotiating trading privileges involved a complex protocol. The English learnt the etiquette through the friendships they developed with local authorities and native merchant magnates on account of their private trade. Apart from this, brahmins in their employment served as liaison, communicating with their counterparts similarly employed by native authorities. *Peshkashes* or customary gifts to such influential people not only secured trading concessions, but had other implications too. In October 1674, English agents wrote of the expectation of gifts by Mirza Ibrahim, the 'great governor' of Masulipatnam, who could have caused immense damage to the trade of the English,[7] either directly by impeding their business in the area under his jurisdiction, or indirectly by encouraging the Dutch or other competitors, to the detriment of the business of the English Company. He could also injure the interests of the English by jeopardising their reputation with the King of Golconda, which could have resulted in the loss of their trading privileges in his dominions.

Such expenditure on acquiring and maintaining good relations in the political circles was more in the nature of investments, ensuring better trading terms to the Europeans. On the whole, these expenses were insignificant compared to the profits obtained through the edge that the Europeans got in their business. Besides, the prevalent politico-cultural ethos required such customary exchanges and courtesies, as integral to the local elite culture.

This is in stark contrast to the dealings of the English with local governors in the initial decades of the century, when they resented the payment of bribes and peshkashes to the local authorities. They even lost out on an opportunity to gain trading concessions in 1630, when they failed to get the *qaul* [promise or consent] of the governor of Petapuli ratified by either the 'great governor' or the King, resulting in its invalidity. They admitted that this lapse was due to their ignorance of the local customs.[8] However, they gradually became better acquainted with the ways and means of obtaining favours and maintaining them.

Private trade and the socio-political ethos of early-modern South Asia

The connections between the European private traders and the local authorities, especially in the interior towns and villages, had important implications in the politico-economic scenario. As a result of the greater experience and contacts gained by the European agents in the course of trading activities, they entered into lucrative arrangements with Asian merchants, ship owners, and also with the local authorities. It is not insignificant to note that Europeans were even farming out revenues of towns on their personal accounts, emulating the native revenue farmers. Robert Fleetwood for instance, an English agent at Masulipatnam, had farmed out the revenues of the town of Virasvaram, an important textile production supplier to Masulipatnam, in the 1670s.[9]

From the 1670s in particular, the Company's affairs were particularly disturbed by the private trading activities of Company agents like Edward Winter, Richard Mohun, Matthew Mainswaring and others. Great irregularities had been occurring in the Company's books of accounts of Masulipatnam, entailing detailed enquires and strict regulations. Agents like Richard Mohun, who had been the Chief of the English Company at Masulipatnam at this time, were investigated for misappropriating the Company's funds.

The charges against Richard Mohun were rather serious. The agents noted that his misuse of the Company's money for his own investments and debts, resulted in dead freight for the Company's ships as the Company's investments could not be made on time. However, he was not the only agent indulging in private trade. In fact, most of the English agents in and around Masulipatnam, Madapollam, Petapuli, and other interior towns, were involved in illegal private trade. Further, the private trade of these Europeans was often in connivance with the local authorities of ports and towns.

Private trading by Europeans did not only have negative consequences for the Companies, it also facilitated commercial relations with influential local magnates like Mir Kamaldin, as well as officials and administrators of the ports and important market towns and production centres, who often had mercantile interests. It also entailed the mutual exchange of freight services and 'other benefits', which could possibly extend to using each other's links with the port and customs authorities for abatements, smooth passage of goods, and other advantages. The English agents also seem to have extended some Company privileges and services to such influential administrators-cum-merchants. Consequently, through private trade, the English agents were actually building a tacit nexus of relationships with the native mercantile and political entities, which would have given them a better understanding of the commercial system of the region and much firmer leverage and entrenchment. So, they could serve as precious consultants on how to conduct a more a profitable business, whether on their own account or on behalf of the Company.

English Company agents like Robert Fleetwood, Edward Winter, Richard Mohun, and Mathew Mainswaring, carried on extensive private trade, in Masulipatnam, Madapollam, and Petapuli. At least some of them engaged in a range of other activities apart from trade, which were actually forbidden by the English Company. For example, Fleetwood engaged in revenue farming, though Company agents were strictly forbidden from seeking employment with local authorities. In doing so, he operated like the Persian merchant magnates, although at a lower level, by combining revenue farming in their range of activities. The chief native merchant of the Company at Fort St. George, Kasi Viranna, was also farming out revenues of several villages around Madras, as well as of San Thomé.[10] In that sense, revenue farming can be interpreted as a commercial enterprise, rather than solely a political function. Not only did people with political authority use their power to profitably delve into commercial enterprises, but the reverse was also possible.

An interesting point that emerges is the relative freedom and social mobility that was possible in this historical period of the region, blurring boundaries between political and commercial functions. Privileges were sought to be zealously guarded by those who possessed them, but opportunities and enterprises with diverse groups and individuals were also possible. Given the cosmopolitan nature of the Masulipatnam, it seems that the Europeans were not quite so alien to the natives, many of whom were migrants themselves, temporary or permanent. Besides, as demonstrated by the changing political boundaries and ruling groups in the medieval and early-modern history of the Deccan, the socio-political ethos permitted flux and was not quite limited by place of origin, lineage, religious affiliations, caste, geography, region or occupation. Subrahmanyam, Rao and Shulman have shown the upward movement of originally non-political groups and even low castes, like Balija merchants, formerly *Sudras* (lowest caste), as well as pastoralist and agrarian groups, who could become *Nayaks* (local chieftains) in the Tamil area, indicating social, political, economic and cultural mobility and dynamism.[11] Changes and adaptations seem to have been both feasible and socially accepted. Social categories of caste were not rigidly restrictive. Brahmans played diverse roles as revenue farmers, accountants, astrologers, liaison and protocol officers/informants, at times coming directly into political power, like Madanna and Akanna, the chief ministers of the Qutb Shahi ruler. Overlaps and adaptations of roles seem to have been more situational, rather than restricted by caste, religion, or other identity markers. Collaborations and conflicts often transcended these boundaries. The socio-cultural ethos allowed for adventurers and opportunity-seekers to aspire to accumulate political and economic fortunes, unfettered by their origins. Perhaps, when we talk of early-modern or modern South Asia, we need to re-evaluate the parameters of these terms to make them applicable to these highly cosmopolitan and dynamic contexts.

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Notes

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Rhythms of the Portuguese presence in the Bay of Bengal

Smarika Nawani

In the physical seascape of the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal is an enclosed region nestled between the ports of Nagapattinam and Aceh, historically lacking good harbours and anchoring spots. The hydrospace of the Bay includes and connects different bodies of water, such as Coranga and Combermere Bay, Andaman Sea, Gulf of Martaban, straits such as Cheduba, deltas of the Krishna, Godavari, Ganga-Brahmaputra and Irrawaddy rivers, and freshwater lakes like Pulicat and Chilka. Its long coastline is interrupted, among others, by mangrove forests in the north, and the Mergui archipelago and other islands to the east. Tropical cyclones periodically destroy its coastal habitats, yet various littoral communities resist, re-build and carry on with their socio-economic activities. Such aspects of continuity in the history of the Bay are well marked in observations and imageries of various travellers who moved across it. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, such narrations were often observed in the writings of Tomé Pires, Duarte Barbosa, Varthema, Nicholas Pimenta, Linschoten, Peter Floris, Thomas Bowrey and others. With its restrictive natural conditions for sailing and harbouring, the Bay established itself as a distinct region throughout history.

View of Fort St. George by Thomas and William Daniell painted in 1797. Source: British Library, Online gallery, Open access

"Shadow empire" of Goa

The imagery of the Bay of Bengal and its nomenclatures are considerably present in the Portuguese descriptions of the 16th century. In 1572, Luis Vaz de Camões lyrically described the region from Mylapore (in present-day Chennai and known to the Portuguese as São Tomé de Meliapore) to Singapore, as one of exchanges and connections.[1] His epic poem was a precursor to chronicler João de Barros's depiction of *Enseada de Bengal* [Bay of Bengal] published posthumously in 1615.[2] Yet another important Crown-sanctioned Portuguese work, António Bocarro's *Livro das Plantas de Tôdas as Fortalezas Cidades e Povoações de Estado da Índia Oriental* (1635),[3] described the fortresses, cities and settlements of *Estado Português da Índia* [the Portuguese State of India]. Of all the regions of the Indian Ocean, it was only in the Bay of Bengal that the Portuguese Estado did not have a fortress. Except for Bocarro's description of the settlement of Nagapattinam and of the city of Mylapore (also known to the Portuguese as *São Tomé de Méliapor*), there is no description of the Bay or any of its ports in this official document. However, a Portuguese diaspora thrived and was part of commercial, ecclesiastical and local political networks on the coast and sometimes in the hinterland too. Earlier, G.D. Winius had observed that the Bay was a "shadow empire" of Goa, with Mylapore as its capital, and had credited it with being part of the Portuguese "informal" presence.[4] Sanjay Subrahmanyam understood the Bay as a frontier zone of the *Estado*.[5] Studying the region further, different transitions can be noticed between the 16th and 19thcentury, which give it a distinct appearance in the context of people, commerce and traditions.

A noticeable transition is the increasing movement of people around the Bay due to internal and external political exigencies of the *Estado* in the 16th and 17th centuries. The runaway functionaries and soldiers of the *Estado* chose niches, like Hooghly, as their new homes in the 16th century; places far away from Goa or Malacca and difficult to access. From the second decade of the 17th century, the shorter 'Brouwer route' from South Africa to Java via the southern Indian Ocean was often preferred when travelling to Southeast Asia, thereby bypassing the Bay of Bengal. This factor also contributed to the relative segregation of the Bay. The contest for hegemony between the *Estado* and the Dutch Company took place due to the importance of the textile-spice trade and led to subsequent political retreat of the Portuguese in the 1660s. This led to the relocation of the Portuguese population from settlements like Nagapattinam and Mylapore to safe havens like Fort St. George of the English East India Company in Madras.

The Portuguese of the Bay

These historical sources can also help us to observe the changing character of the Portuguese demography around the Bay. It was not only composed of run-away functionaries and soldiers who had moved from Europe, but also increasingly comprised of the mixed 'Eurasian' population [*mestiçoes*] as well as the newly converted indigenous Christian population of the Bay. Religious and quasi-religious institutions like Bishoprics and *Santa Casa da Misericórdia*,[6] which had helped the *Estado* to connect with the Portuguese of the Bay, as well as different missionaries, also played an important role in furthering indirect Portuguese interests in the world of the Bay. They became the guiding light of the emerging Catholic community around the region. It is in this context that Mylapore, a place related with the martyrdom of St. Thomas, assumed importance and became the radial nerve of the Bay.

The small town of Mylapore[7] was also known for textiles, but had no harbour. Yet, it controlled the Bay in the 16th century and beyond, as far as political, commercial as well as religious aspects were concerned. The shrine of St. Thomas bonded the region's Catholic Christians. It inspired devotion and prayers of the believers who sought protection from the furious winds and rough waters of the Bay.[8] The testimonies of Linschoten and Nicholas Pimenta record the same. Mylapore continued to enjoy the same aura even after it had reeled under Dutch and later French control. As late as the 19th century, Mylapore continued to be the cultural capital of Catholics in the Bay. In virtually every area where the Portuguese diaspora moved and settled, they carried their traditions and their reverence for St. Thomas, and eagerness to visit his shrine never died off. Despite the Portuguese transitions, continuities in terms of religious practices carried on. Ever since the 16thcentury, the Portuguese of the Bay had been treated differently by Goa when compared to those in the formal settlements of the *Estado*. However, they maintained a strong affiliation with Goa. It was a question of identity for the ones who were located in the Bay. Associating with Goa provided the feeling of a community and the sense of being 'Portuguese'. The Portuguese presence in the Bay of Bengal underwent transitions and changes which were externally conditioned, while at the same time, they maintained age-old practices which can be noticed through the ever-growing importance of Mylapore, itself a place of deeply felt transformations since at least the 16th century.

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Notes

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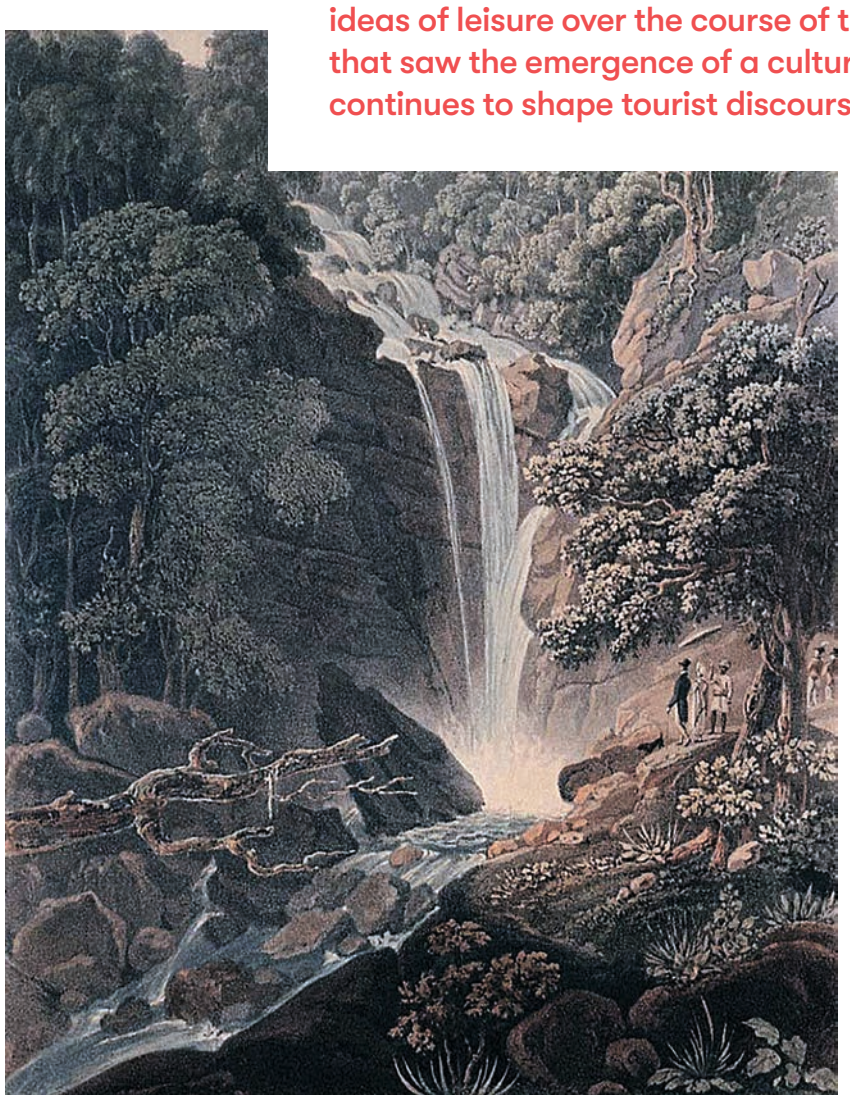
7 João de Barros qualified Mylapore in the following manner: "Here many of them, tired of the spoils of war, settled down, not only because the country was very rich and afforded great traffic, but chiefly to renew the memory of the Apostle St. Thomas ...". Barros, *Da Ásia*, Década Primera, Parte Primera, Livraria Sam Carlos, Lisboa, 1973, p. 303.
8 In a letter of 27/5/1846, while enumerating the area and functions of the Bengal Mission, it was noted that "Araccan which geographically speaking belongs to Ava and Pegu has till lately been a part of the Bengal Vicariate", and the latter was under Mylapore. Hosten Collection, Bengal IX-X, Vidyajyoti Institute of Theology, Delhi.

Empire at leisure

Nineteenth-century Bay of Bengal as a space of trans-colonial recreation

Mikko Toivanen

Historians have long appreciated the importance of bodies of water, from Fernand Braudel's seminal work on the Mediterranean to the more recent trend in oceanic histories, whether Atlantic, Indian or Pacific. In that intellectual lineage, the Bay of Bengal is long overdue its moment in the spotlight. One fascinating and thus far under-researched facet of the region's long history of diverse mobilities can be found in its central role in the development of imperial ideas of leisure over the course of the nineteenth century. It was a period that saw the emergence of a culture of trans-colonial recreational travel that continues to shape tourist discourse and practices in the area to this day.



Left: The waterfall on Penang Island, 1818. One major attraction for travellers making a circuit around the Bay of Bengal. Image on wikimedia courtesy Penang State Museum and Art Gallery.

The promise and suitability of global and transnational approaches to the history of the Bay of Bengal has recently been demonstrated by the influential work of Sunil Amrith. In an evocative passage of his magisterial *Crossing the Bay of Bengal*, Amrith instructs us to consider the diversity of the region's histories:

> "Picture the Bay of Bengal as an expanse of tropical water, still and blue in the calm of the January winter or raging and turbid with silt at the peak of the summer rains. Picture it in two dimensions on a map, overlaid with a web of shipping channels and telegraph cables and inscribed with lines of distance. Now imagine the sea as a mental map; as a family tree of cousins, uncles, sisters, sons connected by letters and journeys and stories ... There are many ways of envisaging the Bay of Bengal as a place with a history – one as rich and complex as the history of any national territory."[1]

What Amrith is suggesting here is that the Bay of Bengal, like any comparable area of cross-cultural engagement and interaction, is and always has been a space with a range of meanings attached to it, playing diverse roles in the lives of various actors. My work, though in many ways very different from Amrith's, deals with a few of these imaginaries and associations connected to the region, specifically in the (trans)imperial imagination of the British and the Dutch around the middle of the nineteenth century.

I do not generally consider myself a historian of the Bay of Bengal, but my work on (trans)colonial travel in and between British Ceylon and the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca and Penang) and the Dutch East Indies obviously draws attention to the mobility and interconnectedness that have historically defined the area and its immediate surroundings. In the 1840s, the starting point of my research, steam-powered shipping created regular, fast and reliable connections throughout the triangle enclosing the Bay, with Ceylon's Point de Galle as one of its points, Calcutta as another and Penang and Singapore on the Malay peninsula as the third. Moreover, Dutch navy steamers soon latched on to this new circulation by establishing a monthly connection between Singapore and Batavia. These connections were of crucial importance to mail delivery and cargo shipments, but were also used by passengers. Amrith, in his work on regional migrations, has studied the better part of those flows; but among those passengers, occupied with rather different conceptions of travel, were also British officials based in India and touring the region on leave, as well as their Dutch counterparts taking advantage of the leisure of brief stays in Singapore or Galle for brief excursions or a spot of sightseeing. In doing so, and borrowing freely from the culture of tourism that was flourishing at the time in Europe – from the Alps to the Rhine and to the British Lake District – these travellers created a kind of colonial proto-tourism with the Bay of Bengal at its heart.

Invalid travellers and health resorts

Perhaps the most recognisable kind of travel undertaken by these people was the phenomenon of so-called 'invalid travel': leisurely travel for the purpose of convalescence in what were deemed to be healthier climates. There is some evidence of this sort of travel forming the basis of, if not quite a tourist industry, then certainly a kind of competitive regional market for travellers, where profits could be made. A contemporary piece in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, titled "Advice to invalids resorting to Singapore", laid out recommendations for officials based in India looking for a change of scenery, including tips on the best hotels, on what to eat, on where to go for excursions and, notably, on the top sights or, in the language of the day, 'lions' of the city – the Chinese temples of Telok Ayer Street get a special mention.[2] In both style and content, the piece is not too dissimilar from a modern tourist guide.

While seasonal travel to the hill stations of India, a practice that long predates European colonisation, has been extensively studied, it is less known that this kind of health tourism also had a fundamentally regional aspect, involving travel across the Bay and the boundaries of individual colonies. Officials from Calcutta, and further inland, would cross over not only to Singapore but also to Penang, with its famous waterfall already a noted attraction in the 1850s. The *Singapore Free Press* wrote in August 1845, just ten days after the arrival of the first P&O steamer in the city, about the "large number of Strangers, many of them Invalids, which we may shortly expect to see the various monthly Steamers bringing to our Island".[3] Similarly, just a year later, the Colombo-based *Monthly Examiner* reported on a health resort being set up in Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon, with the rejoinder that "we may yet hope to see Nuwera Ellia [sic] become a favourite place of resort for the invalids of the Presidencies [of India]".[4] Moreover, many would continue their tour beyond the confines of the British Empire to Java, then under Dutch rule. One example is Charles Walter Kinloch, who explicitly positioned his 1853 travel book *De Zieke Reiziger*, as a guide for aspiring tourists, suggesting in his preface that "...in the absence of any work whatever of the nature of a Hand Book relative to the Straits and Java, even the crude notes of 'De Zieke Reiziger' or the Invalid Traveller, would not be without their use, particularly at the present time, when through the arrangements lately concluded with the Peninsular and Oriental Company, the chief port of Java has been brought within twelve days sailing distance of the Hooghly."[5]

It is apparent that travel across the Bay of Bengal, in all directions, was becoming rather fashionable at the time; its popularity can be inferred from the way that Kinloch casually mentions running into two of his "Indian friends" in Buitenzorg (Bogor) on Java, without registering so much as a hint of surprise.[6] Indeed, Buitenzorg was a favoured destination not only for the Dutch elites of Batavia, but for an international body of visitors. Among its attractions were, in addition to a salubrious climate, the expansive and widely admired botanical gardens that provided an aesthetically pleasing backdrop for a pleasant stroll, and the dinner parties of the *beau monde* of colonial Java.

The imperial imagination

The popularity of this sort of travel had various consequences for the Bay of Bengal in the imperial imagination. The act of travelling is inevitably bound up with the creation of narratives. Travellers do this, for example, by picking out and visiting symbolic locations within a space that, over time, come to stand for something greater and more general. In the case of this kind of colonial proto-tourism, such sights were often selected to suggest something about the entangled histories of empire and colonisation. To give just two examples of such symbolically loaded sites/sights, there is the memorial to Olivia Devenish, the wife of Stamford Raffles, a reproduction of which can still be found in the Bogor botanical garden – a monument that was mentioned without fail by British visitors to Buitenzorg not so much because of its aesthetic or sentimental value but as a way to connect the space of the Dutch colony to the British historical experience: to make a story. Similarly, and for the same reasons, Dutch visitors to Ceylon liked to mention the VOC emblem on the gate of Fort Galle, even if they only stopped at Galle for a day or two on their way back to Europe.

The prevalence of these kinds of sites in the emerging imagery of colonial travel, and in published travel writing, also meant that other, local and/or Asian stories were simultaneously being pushed out of the picture. The cosmopolitan story of an Anglo-Dutch Bay of Bengal, packaged in a nicely touristic, entertaining narrative, was also an exclusive story of a European Bay of Bengal. In that narrative, as exemplified by early guidebooks like the Bradshaw's *Over-Land Guide to India* (1858), Asian cities such as Madras were presented side by side with popular European destinations such as Florence, with the same sets of instructions and tips, while the local cultural and environmental specificity of each was smoothed out under the unstoppable advance of a globalising tourist discourse. In this way, early tourism had the same distancing and decontextualising effect on imperial culture as did the colonial sciences that have been well studied by historians, and that emerged at roughly the same point in time.

The Bay of Bengal came to be incorporated in a global imagery of touristic travel over the course of the middle decades of the nineteenth century. This imagery was cosmopolitan and cross-cultural but only in a tightly defined, European sense, and it served to erase a range of Asian agencies and presences from European travellers' conception of the region, and helped obscure the violent underpinnings of colonial society. This despite the fact that this culture of travel and its attendant practices were also, in turn, adopted and adapted by elite and middle-class Asians across the region as a veritable tourist industry began to emerge towards the end of the century. Of course, tourism still continues today, in ever more overpowering and homogenising guises, around the Bay of Bengal as well as globally, and it is therefore all the more crucial that its roots in a set of deeply exclusionary colonial practices and power structures should not be forgotten.

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Notes

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Anchoring maritime crossings

Coastal heritage of the Bay of Bengal

Himanshu Prabha Ray

The objective of this essay is to highlight the important role of coastal architecture in fostering maritime connectivity and to bring coastal monuments on the east coast of India into dialogue with those located across the Bay of Bengal for a holistic understanding of maritime cultural heritage both in the past, as well as its continued significance in the present. The demarcation of sea spaces may be understood through intellectual traditions of writing, but more importantly through an active engagement with the nature of coastal installations that physically circumscribed the seafaring world and framed interactions of several travelling groups. The presence of coastal shrines affiliated to Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are indicative of the shared cultural traditions that spread across the Bay of Bengal.

Fig. 1 (above): Replica of Our Lady of the Happy Voyage at Bandel church built by the Portuguese.

I start with briefly highlighting the contribution of James Rennell (1742-1830) as he surveyed and mapped the river Ganga in Bengal under the aegis of the East India Company, which had established control over eastern India in the 18th century and had occupied Penang in the Straits of Malacca in 1786. In the 19th century, a hydrographic survey of the Indian coastal areas was undertaken and in 1878 Clements R. Markham, Secretary of the Royal Geographic Society published in one volume the history of British Indian marine surveys. What was the nature of sailing networks prior to the establishment of colonies in eastern India and the Malay peninsula by the East India Company? The methodology adopted here is to focus on the deep history of coastal shrines and to trace transformations and continuities along the east coast of India and other sites across the Bay of Bengal dating from the beginning of the Common Era, to highlight the multiple ways in which shrines provided anchorage to sailing groups prior to the development of oceanography and the nautical charts of the 19th century. Also of interest is the changing nature of sailing networks as a result of the introduction of new technologies and the increasing mechanisation of ships.

James Rennell, considered the father of oceanography, was the first to take advantage of the development of the chronometer towards the end of the 18th century, which made it possible to collect information on ocean currents on a wide scale. In 1760 he secured a place as a midshipman on the frigate *America* and sailed for Madras on the southeast coast of India. After six years of meritorious service and having made charts not only of the Tamil coast, but also of the Nicobar Islands, Malacca and northwest Borneo, Rennell left the British navy in 1763. The following year he had procured a commission as Surveyor-General of the East India Company's dominions in Bengal and in the autumn of 1764, he commenced work on surveying the river Ganga. The innumerable streams of the Ganga delta intersected each other in a maze, and only one of the streams, namely the Candana, which flowed from the Padma to the Bay of Bengal through the Harinaghata estuary, was navigable throughout the year. Between 1764 and 1772, Rennell explored for the East India Company the lower reaches of the Ganga, in what is at present known as the Sunderbans, in search of the shortest route from Baratala or Channel Creek to the river Padma.

After his return to England, in 1778, Rennell spent his time on study and research. In 1779, he published the *Bengal Atlas* comprising several large-scale maps of Bengal based on his fieldwork. He then started work on the *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, a purely geographical work. Without a doubt, hydrographic surveys and scientific mapping initiated attempts to tame rivers and control the coastal areas of Bengal by the East India Company. This was different from strategies adopted by other European Companies who had established enclaves in India in the 16th and 17th centuries, as examined in the next section.

European architecture along the east coast of India

With the entry of the European trading companies in the Bay of Bengal, new forms of architecture developed along the east coast of the subcontinent comprising not only port cities, such as Calcutta and Madras, but also churches, forts and cemeteries. For example, the Portuguese had established their settlement at Bandel in the 1530s in the vicinity of Satgaon on the river Hooghly, the principal distributary of the Ganga. A monastery and church were built at Bandel in 1599 dedicated to Our Lady of the Happy Voyage who saved her worshippers from shipwreck. The church was burnt down during the Mughal siege of 1632, but the image was saved and still adorns the renovated church (fig. 1). The mast of a ship was dedicated to the church in 1655 by the captain of a Portuguese ship who survived a storm due to the grace of the Virgin Mary. Another 16th century church was built by the Portuguese further south along the Tamil coast at Velankanni, about 300 km south of Madras (present Chennai). It is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother Mary, the 'Star of the Sea' who is said to have saved a Portuguese merchant vessel sailing to Colombo in Sri Lanka from shipwreck. The grateful sailors built the church as a mark of their reverence.

The notion of a deity saving her devotees from shipwreck goes back to an even earlier period along the east coast. The goddess Tara is featured prominently in the monastic establishment at Ratnagiri in present day Odisha. It was in Odisha that the major expansion of Buddhism took place from the 5th to 13th centuries and the stupendous monastic complexes of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitagiri were constructed in the hill ranges of Jajpur district. Two standing images of *aṣṭamahābhaya* (the goddess as saviour) Tara saving her devotees from the eight perils, including shipwreck, were found at Ratnagiri. One of these is in Patna Museum, while the other is preserved at Ratnagiri itself.

In addition to the setting up of churches, the entry of Europeans in the Bay of Bengal led to the demarcation of space for graves and tombs and many cemeteries still survive along the east coast. One of these is the Cemetery of Dinamardinga at the town of Balasore in Odisha. Another cemetery is inside the fort at Sadras, 15 km south of Mahabalipuram, which was built by the Dutch in 1648. The Dutch lost Sadras to the British after the siege of 1780, though they regained control for a short time from 1818 to 1854. The nineteen graves at Sadras date from 1620 to 1769.

Another example of European heritage is evident in the case of Tranquebar (Tharangambadi), a small fishing town on the coast of Tamil Nadu, which was a Danish trading colony from 1620 to 1845, when it was sold to the British. The first Protestant church was founded in Tranquebar in 1707, and the core of the settlement was fort Dansborg, locally known as the Danish fort (fig.2). The Danish East India Company was established in Copenhagen in 1616 and a mission was sent to India with Admiral Ove Gjedde (1594-1660). He signed a treaty with the king of Tanjore (Thanjavur), after which the fort was established. However, what is overlooked in the process is the pre-European settlement at the same location, and the complex relationship between the trading post and the kings of Tanjore to whom the Danes paid tribute. For example, a Masilamani Nathar temple to Shiva, dating from the early 14th century, still stands in Tranquebar and continues to be in worship by the local communities (fig.3). The temple would have been a major centre coterminous with the presence of the Danes in the 17th century since the Tanjore court patronised the *devadasis* [female dancers] serving at temples not only in Tanjore and Tranquebar, but also in larger towns such as Tiruvarur, forty kilometres southwest of Tranquebar. Thus, Tranquebar was a part of the cultural network of Tanjore and its ruling elite. The example of the Tanjore court sponsoring ritual performances at temples is indicative of the social role of the Hindu temples and the participation of the political elite in sponsoring a range of activities, as discussed in a longer study that examines the importance of the coastal shrine in sailing networks in the ancient period.[1]

Pre-European maritime networks across the Bay of Bengal

It is apparent that the maritime landscape was by no means the result of only European initiative, and this is further corroborated by the history of the town of Nagapattinam, 35 km south of Tranquebar. Tamil tradition refers to the semi-legendary saint Shahul Hamid of Nagore, whose 16th century shrine is situated a few kilometres to the north of Nagapattinam. The site had several benefactors all of whom contributed to structural additions to the shrine, including Maraikayar ship-owners, Nayak rulers, as also the Dutch East India Company. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the King of Srivijaya (Sumatra) and Chinese patrons made donations to the Buddhist temple at Nagapattinam. This trans-oceanic mobility should not be seen as an isolated event, but as a continuation of a

long cultural process across maritime routes connecting the southeast coast of India to Sumatra, Vietnam and China, that had roots in the 1st millennium BCE. These Iron Age networks underwent changes around the 2nd /1st century BCE as Buddhist monastic centres came to be established. Temples affiliated to Buddhism continued along the Tamil coast well into the 16th century. It would be useful at this stage to shift focus and to trace the beginnings of Buddhist monastic centres on the east coast and indicate their linkages with those across the sea.

In the coastal region of Andhra the presence of Buddhist structures clearly coincides with the 3rd century BCE Mauryan period; indicators of contact include Asokan inscriptions in the Kurnool district, and a fragmentary pillar inscription at Amaravati. Current evidence shows that the extant architectural components of the early Amaravati stupa in the Krishna valley mostly date from the post-Maurya period (ca. 200-100 BCE). The stupa was enlarged around 50 BCE and the railing was gradually constructed between 50 BCE and 250 CE. The bulk of the sculptural pieces also date from this period. Contemporaries of the Amaravati stupa are other Buddhist sites such as Jaggayyapeta, Vaddamanu and Garikapadu, which were also established or enlarged about the same time. Along the Krishna river, the Kesanapalli stupa was built in the plateau area and the Bhattiprolu stupa near the mouth of the river Krishna and also perhaps the Ghantasala stupa in the deltaic region. 140 early (300 BCE-300 CE) historic sites in Andhra are known, concentrated along river valleys and the coast.

Further south, a major Buddhist site on the Tamil coast was that of Pallavaniswaram at Kaveripumpattinam, which was excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India over several seasons in the 1960s and 1970s. It yielded remains from the 2nd century BCE to 6th century CE. A Buddhist *vihara*, *Buddhapada* and temples from the 4th and 5th centuries CE, as well as a small bronze image of the Buddha, were unearthed during excavations. This brief overview shows the presence of Buddhist monastic sites all along the east coast from the 3rd century BCE onward. It may be mentioned that Amaravati was the largest and longest lasting Buddhist site on the Andhra coast, which continued to be revered by pilgrims from across the seas from 300 BCE well into the 13th century CE. These Buddhist sites not only received donations from the local elite such as the raja or king, but also from a wider community of lay devotees across the seas.

The lower Irrawaddy valley

The oldest surviving examples of Pali in the world were inscribed on gold and silver and placed in the Khin Ba relic chamber at Sri Ksetra located along the Irrawaddy river that flows north to south in present Myanmar. The site is described as an important Pyu settlement; the term Pyu being used to define a population group with shared characteristics including funerary customs. Inscriptions from the valley in Prakrit, Pali and Pyu originate from the 3rd to 13th centuries CE. It is suggested that the sizes of bricks used at Sri Ksetra match those known from early sites in Andhra and date from the 1st century BCE to 1st century CE. 4th and 5th century Buddhist and Hindu artefacts have been found in the burial terraces around Sri Ksetra, including Buddhist clay sealings and Visnu images. Around the middle of the 1st millennium CE, pottery urns gave way to large stone urns, cylindrical in shape with a flat base. Five such stone burial urns with one-line inscriptions in Pyu were excavated 70m south of the Payagyi Stupa, outside the northwest walls of the city at Sri Ksetra, indicating names of Sanskritic origin of elite groups using the urns for royal burials.

The Khin Ba mound is a part of the cluster of three stupas, many stepped burial terraces, city walls and moats. These stupas are considered some of the earliest Buddhist monuments in the country and date from the middle of the first millennium CE. An outstanding find inside the brick-lined relic chamber was a manuscript of twenty gold leaves in the form of a palm-leaf manuscript inscribed with excerpts from eight Canonical texts. The sandstone slabs covering the relic chamber were carved in low relief and showed an 'Andhra style' stupa with five tiers of *chhatras* or umbrella-like structures. Clearly the enshrinement of relics shared several features in the two regions of coastal Andhra and the Irrawaddy valley, though practices varied in other parts of the subcontinent, such as coastal Odisha. Subsequent research has focussed on identification of Pyu inscription (inventory number PYU040) held at the Hanthawaddy Archaeological Museum in Bago, Burma, and its possible links to the Andhra region. Another region of interest is the west coast of the Malay peninsula dotted with caves and shrines affiliated with both Hinduism and Buddhism. Did these ancient coastal temples have relevance in the 17th and 18th centuries, after the entry of the Europeans in the Bay of Bengal?

The coastal temples

The temples on the east coast of India were often referred to as pagodas by European sailors and provided an easy means of identification of regional centres. Mahabalipuram, 55 km south of Madras, was known by seamen as the Seven Pagodas; the Sun temple at Konarak on the Orissa coast was called the Black Pagoda. Interestingly another temple site referred to in sailors' accounts is the White Pagoda, or the temple of Jagannatha in Puri, Odisha and the Chinese pagoda at Nagapattinam on the Tamil coast. All these temples were monumental structures dating from the 9th to 14th centuries CE. Their construction at strategically chosen locations made them easily visible to sailors, merchants and travellers, when approaching the coast.

The 13th century sun temple at Konarak, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, faces the rising sun. This temple is a monumental representation of the sun god Surya's chariot; its 24 wheels are decorated with symbolic designs, and it is led by a team of six horses. While secondary writings refer to Tamil merchant guilds and Arab and Persian merchants in the 13th century, much less is known about the participation of the Odisha coast in Bay of Bengal's maritime networks.

Mahabalipuram is located on the River Palar, which joins the sea at Sadras, about 50 km to the north. The site comprises rock-cut cave temples, nine monolithic shrines known locally as *rathas*, three structural temples referred to as Shore temples, and several rock-cut images that dot the area along the coast. Human activity in the area started in the Iron Age and continued well into the present. Several European travellers, such as William Chambers who visited Mahabalipuram in 1772 and 1776, refer to local memory that mentions several temples on the coast, some of which are described as having been swallowed by the sea. Another traveller, J.W. Coombes, stated that the pagodas once stood on the edge of the shore, and their copper domes reflected sunlight and served as nautical landmarks. There is also evidence of a lighthouse on the rocks behind the temples and caves. The so-called Chinese Pagoda at Nagapattinam no longer survives as it was demolished by French Jesuits in the 19th century to make way for a college building (fig.4). How do these coastal structures inform us about the nature of sailing across the Bay of Bengal?

Trans-oceanic maritime connectivity: transformations

Maritime connectivity is traditionally discussed as a network of shipping routes, each linking two or more coastal landing places. Scholars have argued that before the invention of the steamship, maritime navigation was practiced as a circuit rather than as a simple return journey between two coastal centres. This was due to winds and currents, but also had to do with the sale of commodities on board: triangular trade typically exported cargoes to places where they were needed without necessarily importing goods from the same place; rather, chains of circulation were established in order to rectify trade imbalances and draw profit from regional demand.

Two island groups that are important for this discussion are the Andaman and Nicobar Islands located between India, Myanmar and Sumatra. The Andaman Islands show less compelling evidence of linguistic contact with Malay or other Southeast Asian speech communities, though morphological similarities between Nicobarese and Malayo-Polynesian languages have been pointed out by scholars. Archaeological research conducted on the Andamans has investigated the nature and extent of contact between the Andaman archipelago and the neighbouring regions, even though the islanders have been represented as hostile to outsiders in historical accounts. Rigorous archaeological research has shown that the Andaman Islanders were hunter-gatherers who nonetheless made ceramics and kept domestic pigs. They appear in textual sources from around the 2nd century CE and radiocarbon dating conducted at the large limestone cave known as the Hava Beel Cave on Baratang Island would seem to confirm that the islands may have been occupied from the early centuries of the Common Era onward.

These links were altered around the 16th and 17th centuries as maritime networks shifted with the entry of Europeans in the Indian Ocean, and with developments of ship-building technology. It was in the 1860s that regular cargo services entered the ocean with the establishment of the liner companies. The all-weather steam vessel was larger, faster, safer and more reliable than indigenous craft on long-haul coastal and trans-oceanic voyages. This resulted in the indigenous sailing craft being driven to short-haul marginal and feeder routes. Reduced demand for cargo carrying meant reduction in the number of vessels being constructed and the closure of traditional boat-building yards. The skilled manpower required for manning these mechanised vessels could no longer be provided by the littoral sailing communities, and this led to the marginal-isation of coastal groups to traditional fishing activities. These operations are now in turn being threatened by mechanisation, the introduction of commercial fishing and coastal degradation.

The engagement of the British East India Company with the countries of the Indian Ocean was of a different order from that of its predecessors. The establishment of colonies in South and Southeast Asia resulted in the introduction of new disciplines, which had far-reaching implications for the cultural identity of the sea and the communities who navigated across it. The 19th century thus raised a different set of issues with the colonisation of large parts of South and Southeast Asia. Micro-studies across disciplines are critical to an understanding of the dynamic nature of trans-oceanic exchanges as well as the diverse communities involved in these networks. It is nevertheless judicious to include large swathes of time to appreciate the transformations and continuities that characterised trans-oceanic cultural interactions. Coastal architecture and heritage is admired for its aesthetics, but more importantly there is a need to research the monuments within their larger cultural networks and links across the seas. This deeper history is essential not only for the protection and preservation of maritime heritage, but more so for a holistic understanding of sea spaces.

Fig. 2 (right): Danish fort at Tarangambadi constructed in 1620 by Naval Col. Ove Geddy with the permission of King Raghunath Nayakkar of Thanjavur. The fort consists of two levels. The lower level was used as godown, prison and resting area for soldiers while the upper floor was the residence of the governor and priests.

Fig. 3 (above): 14th century Siva temple on the sea coast at Tharangambadi, which continues to be worshipped by local communities.

Fig. 4 (right): The Jesuit college built at Nagapattinam after demolition of the Buddhist temple in the 19th century. The building is at present used as District Court.

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Notes

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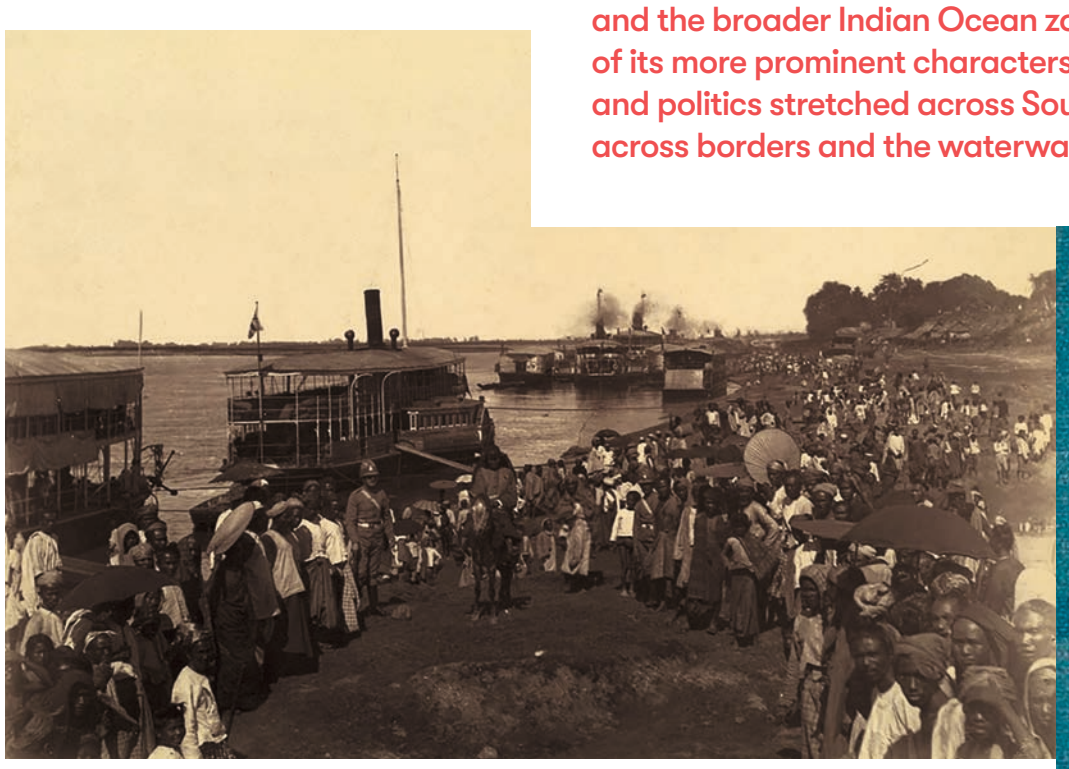
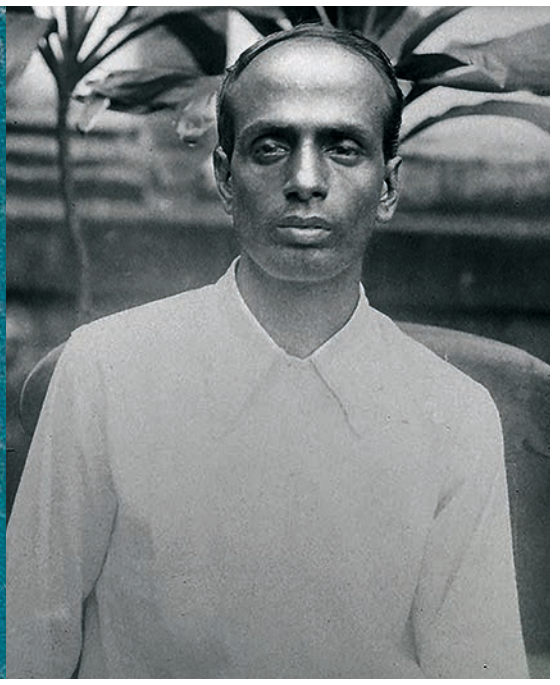
Resistance narratives along the Bay of Bengal border-zones and the expansion of Myanmar's rebellion geography

Maitrii Aung-Thwin

In his celebrated book *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh writes of the connected lives and experiences of families that tie the main characters to the lands surrounding the Bay of Bengal and the broader Indian Ocean zone during the last century. When read through the experiences of its more prominent characters, the novel highlights how the bonds of family, commerce, and politics stretched across South and Southeast Asia, linking people to places via circuits across borders and the waterways that bridge monsoon Asia.





Above: British forces arrival in Mandalay 1885, photo by Willoughby Wallace. Centre right: U Ottama with prison uniform. Far right: Surya Sen before 1934. All images in the public domain on Wikimedia.

Writing about a Burmese temple in north Calcutta, Ghosh relates how the temple became a place for displaced, overseas communities – Gujaratis, Bengalis, Tamils, Sikhs, Eurasians – who grew up or had spent much of their lives in Burma, but had to flee during World War II. The temple had become a place to gather, celebrate Burmese holidays, and to speak in Burmese, which was for many, their mother tongue. Ghosh's Calcutta was in some ways more connected to Rangoon than it was to Delhi, as result of the characters' life experiences and movement across the Bay of Bengal.

Bay of Bengal as a region in its own right

For Ghosh, Burma is a place of reference for the book's main protagonists who move beyond its borders, circulating across the Bay of Bengal, but remain emotionally, psychologically, and culturally connected to it despite settling in different locales and despite official borders. Read from this angle, Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* captures the essence of what scholars refer to as 'inter-Asian referencing' and provides readers with a more nuanced understanding of how we might understand what being 'Southeast Asian' or 'Burmese' entails.

The promotion of inter-Asian referencing and the revival of interest in the connections between (and across) South and Southeast Asia is a welcome return for scholars in the field. Scholars have long recognized the enduring interaction between the two regions and the renewed attention towards the Bay of Bengal reminds us of the continuity of broader interconnectedness.[1] At the same time, inter-Asian perspectives have also attempted to transcend the regional distinctions that earlier area-studies approaches might have sustained. Just as scholars of borders and borderlands have shifted attention to those terrestrial spaces within and alongside nation boundaries, the adoption of the Bay of Bengal as a unit of study achieves something similar by allowing scholars to re-conceptualize the waters stretching from the southeastern coast of India, to the western coasts of Bangladesh-Myanmar, and down the western coastlines of Thailand and Malaysia as 'a region' in its own right.[2]

Viewing the history of Myanmar within the context of the Bay of Bengal has been useful, especially in the study of early-modern trade, religion, and migration to the Arakan region. In fact, much of Burma's colonial history might be better understood as a chapter in the broader history of Bay of Bengal connections with Burma. The establishment of British authority over India and neighboring territories alongside and across the Bay is one moment that provides insight into these connections. British India's creation of British Burma in the late 19th and early 20th centuries amplified pre-existing ties across the Bay but introduced new linkages that altered the intensity of that interaction. Cultural, financial, transport, educational, legal and penal infrastructure produced the means to support exchanges and networks across Madras, Bengal, the Andaman Islands and Burma Province. At the same time this very same infrastructure inspired acts of resistance and empowerment that sought to weaken the connections across the Bay of Bengal border-zone.

Creating a rebellion topography

Resistance to the establishment of these infrastructural systems is one way to trace the interconnections across the Bay. Rather than treating the histories of the Burma Rebellion (later called the Saya San Rebellion of 1930-1932), the Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930-1931) in Bangladesh, and the Malabar/Moplah Rebellion (1921) of southern India within the context of their respective national histories, we might take them as part of a connected history of the Indian Ocean, the Bay, and the infrastructure that linked border-zone communities.[3]

The Burma Rebellion of 1930-1932, provides a case example of how the Bay of Bengal might serve as a more appropriate spatial and intellectual framework for understanding this event to its fullest extent. While classic studies applied comparative approaches that expanded how the rebellion could be conceptualized within a regional and global perspective, connecting the series of peasant uprisings in the Irrawaddy river delta region to the histories of Madras, Calcutta, Chittagong, and the Andaman Islands reveals the potential that the Bay of Bengal model offers to Burma Studies. The Burma Rebellion of 1930-1932 erupted in the rice paddy fields of the Irrawaddy river delta region at the height of the worldwide depression and the maturing of anti-colonial nationalism throughout the British Indian world. Galvanized by a mixture of socio-economic, cultural, and political grievances, rural rice cultivators, political monks, and grassroots activists took their frustration out on colonial infrastructure and local representatives of the colonial state.

Officials at the time regarded the series of uprisings as a political movement aimed at overthrowing the British and resurrecting the now defunct Burmese monarchy, which had been dismantled following the annexation of the kingdom in 1885. By 1930, rumors circulated that a prophesized *min-laung* (or pretender king) had returned to reassert the country's sovereignty and restore Buddhism, compelling many to believe that the alleged leader of the rebellion, a former healer and grassroots activist named Saya San, would protect them from harm via his magical incantations, charms and protective tattoos. As local police forces were unable to cope with the size and breadth of the outbreak, Rangoon authorities requested military support from across the Bay in order to restore order. Special counter-insurgency legislation and emergency powers provided the Burma government with the rationale to arrest and prosecute detainees under the jurisdiction of special tribunals.

At first, local authorities were convinced that a Revolutionary Bengali Party had radicalized student groups in Rangoon and added local nationalists to a broader network of revolutionaries that stretched across the Bay of Bengal. While this narrative was contested by local politicians, the connections to Bengal's anti-colonial activities were entrenched; legal and ethnographic assertions were made to create a rebellion topography that stretched across the north-eastern and eastern coastlines of the Bay of Bengal.

It would not be the first time that Bengal was used as a reference to understand rebellion in British Burma. Authorities in Rangoon also attempted to connect the 1930 Chittagong Armoury Raid to revolutionaries in Bengal and Burma. Burma's most celebrated 'political monk', U Ottama, was also linked to sympathetic political groups in British India and other parts of Asia. Viewed from this angle, there is much room to consider how anti-colonial movements and sentiments in British Burma were associated with groups and conversations beyond its borders. While the Burma Rebellion of 1930 is almost exclusively examined within the context of Myanmar's national history, exploring how it was viewed by, and connected to, overseas communities in Calcutta, Chittagong, and the Andaman Islands – where convicted rebels were sent – is one key thrust of future research.

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Notes

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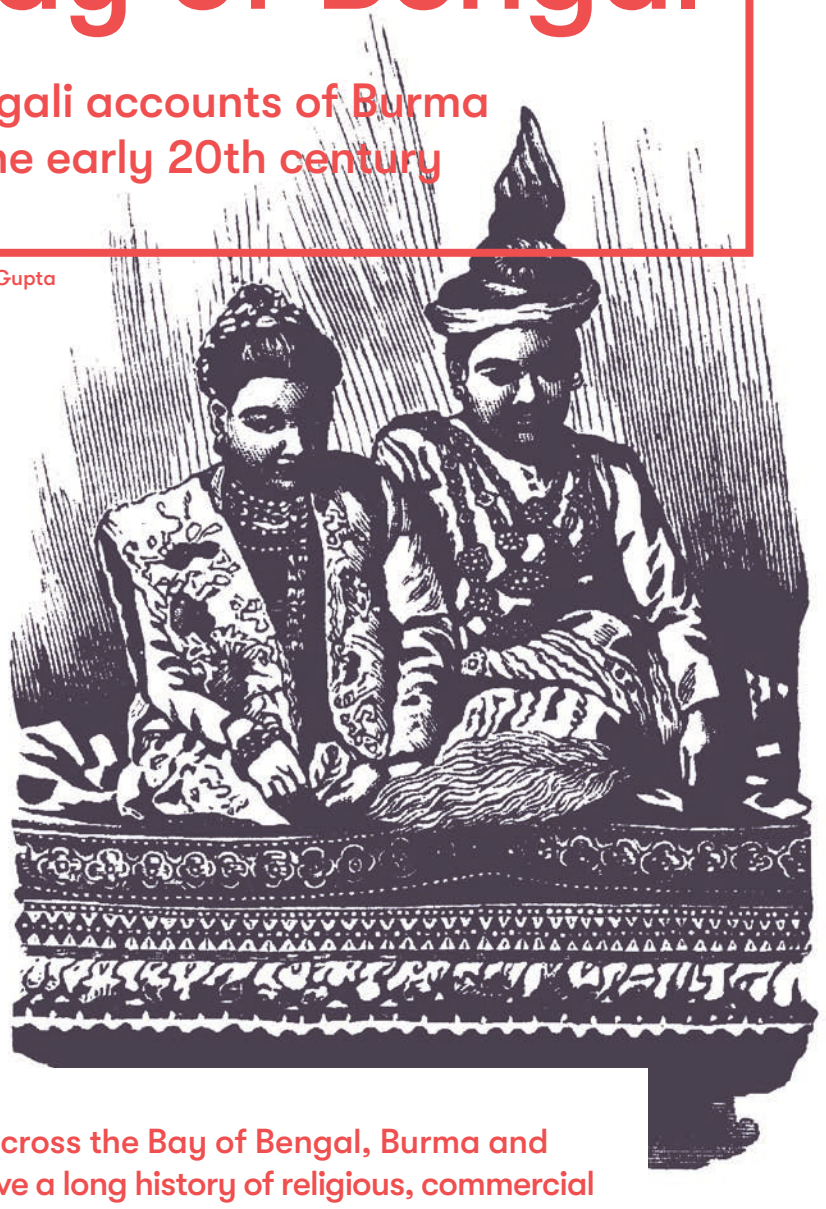
Writing travel across the Bay of Bengal

Bengali accounts of Burma in the early 20th century

Sanjukta Das Gupta



Located across the Bay of Bengal, Burma and Bengal have a long history of religious, commercial and political inter-connections and migration. These connections were strengthened towards the end of the nineteenth century when Burma was annexed to the British Empire in India after its defeat in the Third Anglo-Burmese War in 1886. This essay traces some facets of the Bengali perception of Burma during the early twentieth century through an analysis of two travelogues written by Indumadhab Mallick and Saraladebi Chaudhurani. These Bengali travellers exhibited complex and multi-layered understandings of Asia in general, and of Burma in particular.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Calcutta, the intellectual and cultural capital of British India, became the focal point of attraction for Burmese students who flocked there for higher education. The Theravada Buddhist rebel monk U Ottama, for instance, studied in Calcutta for three years and it was largely through his efforts that Burmese and Bengali nationalists came to establish and maintain a close contact. Burmese Buddhist political leaders emphasized the centuries-old (economic, religious and cultural) ties that Burma had with Bengal. Anagarika Dharmapal, one of the founders of the Mahabodhi Society in 1891, drew attention to the shared Buddhist pasts of Bengal and Burma. This was reiterated by the famous Bengali professor of Indian linguistics, Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay, who in his Presidential Address at the Burma Bengali Literary Conference in 1936 described India and Burma as "distant cousins" and "religion-brothers", who had accepted the same spiritual ideology of Buddhist saints.[1]

Burma, moreover, provided myriad opportunities for migrant labourers to earn a living, or for middle-class Bengalis in search of bureaucratic employment, as well as for businessmen in search of a fortune. Not only was it the 'golden land' of infinite possibilities, it was above all, as Devleena Ghosh points out, a space where it was possible to shatter and reinvent social norms by circumventing the constraints of caste and religion.[2] Furthermore, Burma became a political haven for Bengali revolutionaries, particularly those belonging to the Anushilan and Jugantar groups, fleeing the colonial police in Bengal. Simultaneously, it was a place of detention for Indian political prisoners who were deported and jailed in Burma. These varied experiences were reflected in the literature of the time, for instance in the novels of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay and in the works of Rabindranath Tagore, as well as in a number of travelogues and memoirs published in literary journals.

Above: Illustration of the Burmese king and queen, found in Indumadhab's *Voyage to China*. https://archive.org/details/dli.bengal.10689.7886/page/n35

By the early twentieth century, travel-writing had developed into an accepted genre of Bengali literature and had a ready market in the numerous literary journals of the time. Indumadhab and Saraladebi's accounts of their experiences in Burma had a didactic purpose of informing and educating the reading public about the neighbouring land. However, in this endeavour they had to engage with a readership who were not entirely unacquainted with the country. Hence their accounts also served to reiterate or controvert commonly-held assumptions and beliefs. Their writings reveal a range of often-contradictory influences: Orientalist assumptions, together with concepts of anti-colonial universalism, cosmopolitanism and internationalism and the notion of 'Greater India', which stressed India's civilizational influence and colonizing presence in other Asian lands in the 'golden' days of the past.

Indumadhab Mallick: Burma, India's closest neighbour

A philosopher, physicist, botanist, lawyer, physician, inventor and social reformer, Indumadhab Mallick (1869-1917) travelled to China in 1904. Rangoon was the first port of call across the Bay of Bengal. He devotes two chapters to Burma – the first entitled 'Rangoon' and the second, 'History and customs of Burma' – in his travelogue *Chin Bhraman* [Voyage to China], published in 1911.

Burmese people, he asserts, were the "closest neighbours and relatives of India".[3] As the ship approached Rangoon he observed that all the sampans that gathered around the ship, were manned by Muslim lascars from Chittagong and that no Burmese could be seen among them. Neither were any Burmese to be found among the dock labourers who were all 'Madrasis' (i.e., South Indians). The coachmen were upcountry Muslims from India; the guards, Sikhs; traders and shopkeepers were Muslims from Surat, Chinese, Jews or Persians. While some of the shops seemed to be owned by Burmese women he was astonished by the general absence of Burmese men in any productive capacity. Most of the Burmese men whom he encountered seemed to be "feeble" and "lifeless". His conclusion – which echoed British ethnographic descriptions – was that Burmese men were idle and averse to labour. They preferred to while away their time in pursuit of primitive entertainment and leisure. Being childlike, they had no concern for the future and were happy to live off the labour of their womenfolk. And, as a result, the women had an "excessively dominant" role in society.

In the following chapter, Indumadhab provides a detailed description of the history of Burma. The city of Rangoon, he states, had been established with five strands of the Buddha's hair. But the history of Burma went further back. The royal family had been established a few centuries before the birth of the Buddha by a king belonging to the Sakya clan. The name Burma was, in fact, derived from Brahma from whom Buddhists and Hindus believed that the entire human race originated. The Burmese were all devout followers of the Buddha and Indumadhab discovered that 'Hindustan' was considered to be a sacred space and a site for pilgrimage.

Indumadhab also discussed at length the incidents that led to the Anglo-Burmese wars and which culminated in the annexation of the country to British India. Although critical of the British role in Burma, he did not question the British arguments of the oppressions of the Burmese king towards the English traders. In his view the Burmese defeat was ultimately due to the palace conspiracies and intrigues, which he stated were inevitable in all "uncivilized countries". Yet, Burma scored above India at least in one respect – it had never been conquered by Muslims. Hence there had been no need for the *purdah*, which accounted for the free public movement of Burmese women. Like other educated Bengalis of the time, Indumadhab accepted uncritically the tripartite periodization of Indian history introduced by James Mills, which saw the 'Muslim period' as constituting the Dark Ages between the classical past and British modernity.

Saraladebi Chaudhurani: Burma and 'Greater India'

A prominent political activist and campaigner for women's rights, Rabindranath Tagore's niece Saraladebi Chaudhurani's (1872-1945) trip took place nearly thirty years later. Unlike Indumadhab, her intended destination was Rangoon itself, where she had been invited to the provincial Hindu Conference in Burma in 1931.[4] The account of her experiences was later published in a serialised form in the prestigious Bengali journal *Bharatvarsha*, between 1931 and 1932.

In her role as the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha she hoped to spread 'the dream' of 'Greater India'. While her days were taken up by the conference, she arranged to meet a wide range of Burmese political leaders in the evenings. Among them were pro-Indian nationalists who opposed the separation of Burma from India – a topic that was at that time hotly debated in Burma. Other leaders were opposed to Indian presence in Burma. In fact, in the previous year in 1930, anti-Indian riots had taken place in Rangoon – a major change from the years when Indumadhab had visited the city. Saraladebi considered the anti-Indian sentiment to be a betrayal of the cultural dues that the Burmese owed to India. Believing that the Burmese were indebted to India for their religion and civilization, Saraladebi was deeply disturbed to hear the popular Burmese argument that Buddhism came to Burma from Sri Lanka, rather than from India, and that the Burmese people were Aryans from Tibet. Saraladebi subscribed to the 'Greater India' concept that had become popular among a section of the Bengali intelligentsia of the time. Buddhism, she argued, played a civilizational role in Burma and had turned the Burmese into a peaceful people.

Nonetheless, contemporary India, Saraladebi opined, had a lot to learn from Burma. Once converted, the Burmese people stayed true to their new faith, unlike Hindus in India who never valued their own religion and readily took to the ways of the others. Conversion to Islam, she noted, had only been possible because Hindus lacked any firm conviction in their own beliefs. In fact, she declared, 'Indian religion' in its original form was today to be found in existence outside India, in Burma. This had been possible because of Burma's traditional form of education, which required the novice to reside in the house of a Buddhist guru. As a result, even the poorest peasants were literate.

Concluding remarks

The perceptions of Indumadhab and Saraladebi were determined by their specific educational background and social and political interests. Their response to Burma was shaped as much by Orientalist assumptions, as it was by the current nationalist rhetoric and pan-Asian philosophies. Despite their anti-British stance, they had internalized much of the racial and civilizational categorizations of the British colonial rulers and expressed their implicit belief in the 'primitiveness' and backward propensities of Burma.

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Notes

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2 Ghosh, D. 2016. 'Burma-Bengal Crossings: Intercolonial Connections in Pre-Independence India', *Asian Studies Review* 40(2):156-172.

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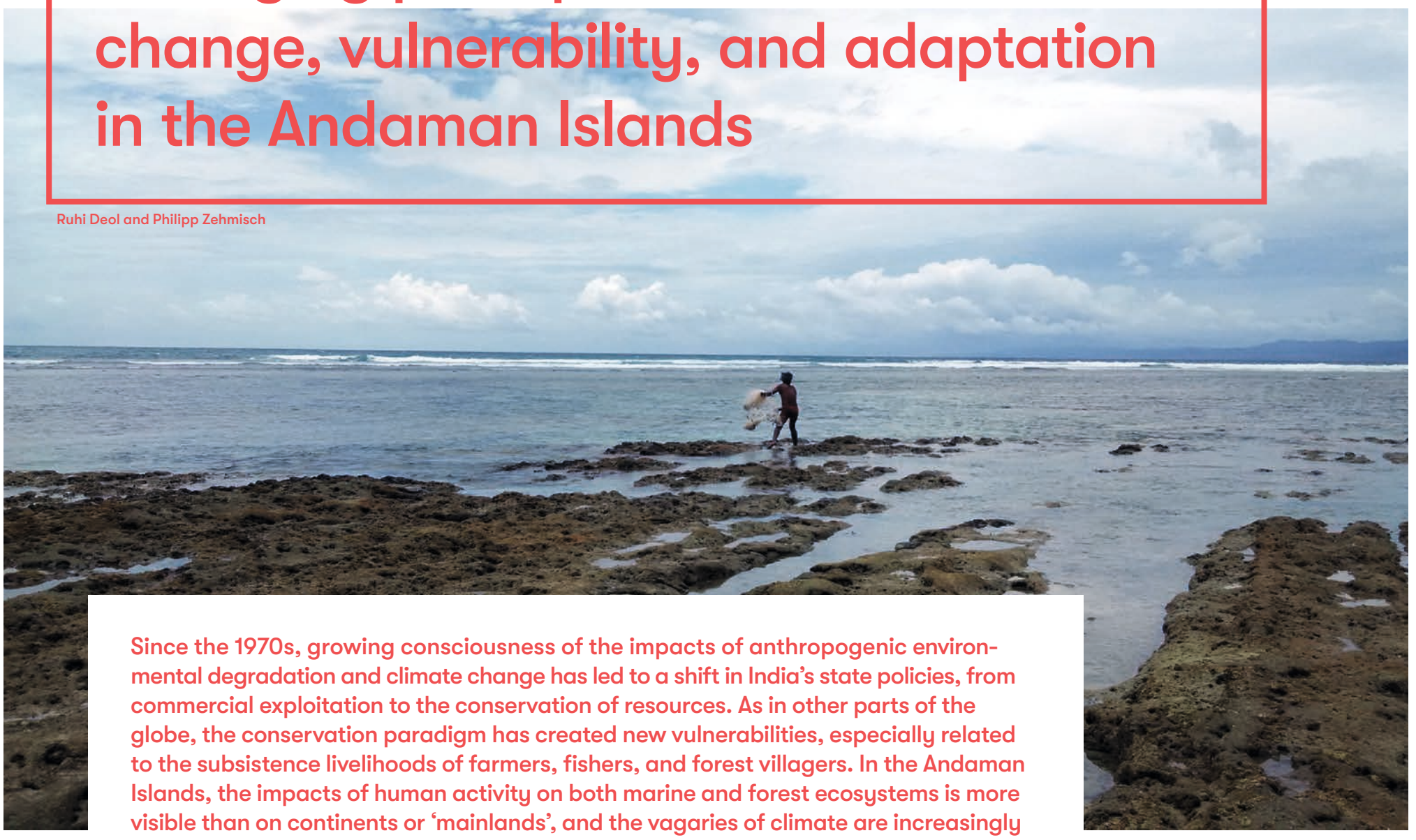
Changing perceptions of environmental change, vulnerability, and adaptation in the Andaman Islands

Ruhi Deol and Philipp Zehmisch



Off-shore fishing on an exposed reef in Ritchie's Archipelago. Photo by Ruhi Deol, 2016.

Since the 1970s, growing consciousness of the impacts of anthropogenic environmental degradation and climate change has led to a shift in India's state policies, from commercial exploitation to the conservation of resources. As in other parts of the globe, the conservation paradigm has created new vulnerabilities, especially related to the subsistence livelihoods of farmers, fishers, and forest villagers. In the Andaman Islands, the impacts of human activity on both marine and forest ecosystems is more visible than on continents or 'mainlands', and the vagaries of climate are increasingly felt. This article reveals in which ways aspects of the conservation discourse impact local perceptions of environmental change in the Andamans. We argue that the 2004 Tsunami functioned as a 'revelatory shock' for the island population. Accompanied by the popular conservation paradigm and the rapid rise of tourism in the Andamans, the event of the Tsunami triggered both ecological awareness as well as debates on the vulnerability of the islands' ecosystem and its populace. In some respects, local migrants and settlers internalize these vulnerabilities; in others, they develop contextual ways to cope, respond, or adapt to their changing environment.

Circulations and flows: legacies of Empire

The Bay of Bengal is a geographically and culturally diverse region. Owing to ancient forms of mobility and connectivity such as trade and periodic expansions of maritime state power, the region embodies an intersection of multiple movements of ideas, peoples, and goods. These movements intensified during the age of imperialism and colonialism, despite the Bay being (and remaining till today) a highly volatile region. Located in a level 5 seismic zone, at the edge of the Pacific Ring of Fire, and in a region of high cyclonic activity subject to El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events, the populations living in and around it are exposed to various natural hazards.

As the only large archipelago in the Bay, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are especially susceptible to climatic and geological stressors. In recent history, they have experienced a devastating earthquake followed by a Tsunami (2004), several cyclonic storms, including the Very Severe Cyclonic Storms 'Lehar' (2013) and 'Gaja' (2018), and unprecedented coral bleaching through ENSO events (2010, 2016).

Lying between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, these islands are also a heterodox space where cultural exchange processes, mobilities, and socio-economic activities converge. Here, assemblages of ideas, discourses, materials, and species from across the Indian Ocean world and beyond, create a unique social and cultural landscape, containing multiple histories and possible futures.

This heterodoxy has unequivocally altered the ecology and environment of the islands. The British Empire constructed the Andamans as a permanent penal colony from 1858 onwards, using convict labour to clear large tracts of tropical forests, dredge swamps, and to eventually create settlements for rehabilitated prisoners. The colonial project gained another dimension with the formation of the Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department in 1883, which aimed to capitalise on the huge potential of forestry. Timber extraction and export, especially of valuable hardwood species like Andaman Padauk, formed the main commercial activity for more than a century to follow. Andaman timber, among many other uses, adorned Buckingham Palace and formed the 'wooden backbone' of the Indian railway network. The increasing demands of the Empire, and the two World Wars in between, meant that felling increased exponentially, without any thought to scientific management or conservation. Between 1858 and 1951, the primary forests of the Andaman Islands were decimated at a shocking pace.

Territorial expansion into the forests also influenced the social composition of the islands. Increasing timber extraction in the first decades of the 20th century led to the contracting of specialized migrant labour forces from the tribal regions of central India, the so-called Ranchis.[1] Further, in 1925, the Karens from Burma were given land by the British to increase the zone of settlement to the Northern parts of the islands. The population of the penal colony and settlement grew in correspondence to the decline in numbers of the Islands' indigenous hunting and gathering communities. Thus, apart from drastically altering the ecological landscape, the colonial will to transform 'empty land' and 'unproductive' forests into commercial resources led to displacement, habitat destruction, and near-extinction of the indigenous population.[2] After India gained Independence in 1947, the exploitation of both environment and people continued in similar ways. Refugee settlers from East Bengal, repatriates from Sri Lanka and Burma, and landless communities from all over the Indian subcontinent were settled through rehabilitation and colonization schemes. In this process, roughly 5000 families of Bengali settlers were cast as "agricultural pioneers".[3] Characteristic of a specific, localised form of settler colonialism, indigenous communities and multiple species were still considered as "wilderness", and subordinated to settlement priorities. By and large, development continues to follow a land-oriented imagination and practice fashioned by mainland policy-makers. "Island vulnerability", though a key factor in scientific analyses, did not always penetrate at the level of governance.

From exploitation to conservation

The settler-colonial framework influenced policy-making processes in post-Independence Andamans on various levels, principally adhering to the imperial ideology of rendering the environment productive through subjugation and exploitation. This ideology was, however, not uncontested. During colonial times, scientists and administrators working in tropical regions had already started to warn of environmental and climate change – their warnings came especially from tropical islands where the bounded optics allowed easier comprehension of the ecological impacts of colonial plantations and timber extractions. This led to what historian Richard Grove referred to as "green imperialism";[4] protectionist ideals, which were formulated in the colonial period, continue to function as the foundation of the contemporary global conservation ideology.

Initially, both colonial and postcolonial regimes paid lip service to these ideas, but the 1960s and '70s heralded the rise of a global conservationist agenda that could not be entirely ignored. The Andaman Islands came to be gradually recognised as a bio-diversity hotspot with a high degree of endemism; a hotspot that was, however, environmentally degraded as a result of a century and a half of resource exploitation without regard for conservation. Massive deforestation, infrastructure development, and the needs of a constant flow of settlers and migrants created enormous visible impacts on the islands' ecology: the loss of multiple species; the introduction of invasive species; soil erosion; damage to littoral, coral reef, and mangrove ecosystems; and the overall disruption of a fragile ecological balance.

Around the turn of the millennium, conflicts over resource management, prevalent across India since the inception of the Forest Department, led to pressure on policy-makers to increase indigenous and environmental protection. This created a "paradigm shift" – in the words of an official – in the Andaman Forest Department, from resource exploitation to conservation of the bio-diverse eco-system. Such significant changes must be regarded as being heavily influenced by a landmark order of the Supreme Court in 2002. The order was based on a report submitted by a former bureaucrat, Shekhar Singh, who had conducted

Migrant farmer in his field, yielding uneven growth. Photo by Ruhi Deol, 2016.

a seven-week long survey about the condition of the ecology and the state of protection of the indigenous islanders. The order included, among others: a ban on logging of naturally-grown trees, with some exceptions for plantation wood and bona fide use by the local population; a ban on timber export to the Indian mainland; the closure of the Andaman Trunk Road leading through the reserve of the indigenous community of the Jarawa; stopping sand mining from beaches; the removal of post-1978 encroachers of forest land; and the reduction of immigration from mainland India. Though in parts problematic and still contested, this order had long-standing consequences for the forest and marine environments as well as the islanders themselves. It has helped the forests visibly regenerate in the last two decades. However, by redefining the institutional agenda of the Forest Department, it has also made thousands of workers redundant, increased conflicts with local businessmen, and imposed harsh measures on so-called encroachers and poachers.

Local perceptions of environmental change

This shift in policies was accompanied by the rise of tourism in the Andamans in the 1980s and '90s. According to the Andaman Tourism Department's website, the number of tourists visiting has increased from 10,000 in 1980 to almost 500,000 in 2017. The conservationist agenda was strengthened through reports and plans by environmental organizations and academics suggesting the promotion of sustainable ecotourism and development. Beyond government policies, the shrinking resources and space available to the dwindling indigenous communities became part of local discourse through journalistic and civil society endeavours. Further, interactions with tourists, service providers and government servants moulded local perceptions of environmental change. Consequently, the need to conserve the Islands' fragile marine and forest ecosystems came to be slowly internalised by the populace.[5]

Empirical evidence from our fieldwork with local communities reveals that the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, which devastated not only wide parts of the Bay of Bengal, but also the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, functioned as a "revelatory shock"[6] for the local migrant and settler population. This watershed event, apart from the human dimensions of damage to life and property, wrought long-term and large-scale ecological destruction to mangrove and coral ecosystems, as well as to forests and agricultural land through subsidence, inundation, and salt-water intrusion. Fifteen years later, the Tsunami remains the cataclysmic event that creates a common periodization into 'before' and 'after' in local memory and ecological consciousness. Environmental change, occurring for decades, is now more evident, and climate change, interpreted by some as being caused by the Tsunami but by most as having escalated since, has entered local discourse. Amongst others, perceptions include the decrease in rainfall, leading to drought and falling water tables, a corresponding increase in heavy rainfall events, causing soil erosion, and a rise in both land and sea surface temperatures. Farmers, fishers, and forest dwellers have started to link climate change to other environmental hazards and the idea of ecological balance (or imbalance) has gained ground.

New vulnerabilities and modes of adaptation

Changing policies and perceptions of the environment impact migrants and settlers' understanding of their own vulnerabilities, too. Forest villagers feel they are rendered socially vulnerable through the very discourse of conservation. Stricter enforcement of forest laws since the 2002 Supreme Court Order purport to protect the indigenous communities and the environment, but also vilify the settler communities. Many settlers have for decades used forest and marine resources for subsistence activities such as hunting, fishing, gathering, and utilizing forest produce for construction, etc.[7] Labelling land occupied 'with impunity' by several generations of migrants as 'encroachment' and evicting the occupants, can be interpreted to function as an attack in defence of an 'empowered forest'.

On the other hand, the Andaman Trunk Road has not been closed, in blatant ignorance of the Supreme Court order, citing its economic and development benefits. Running through the tribal reserve of the Jarawa, this road continues to be used in order to exploit the Jarawa and their land, in part through illegal poaching and hunting, encroachments, barter of illicit goods, and so-called '' 'human safaris', which implies that tourists travel through the reserve in buses or vans hoping to spot some Jarawa 'in the wild'. The selective aspects of the conservation paradigm adopted here seem to be furthering certain interests at the expense of both the settlers and the indigenous population.

Further, farmers and fishers are facing livelihood issues due to decreasing yields and catch. As policies often do not provide them with enough inputs, these communities, especially in the most popular tourist islands of the Andamans, are shifting *en masse* into the tourist business. However, the state-led agenda of promoting tourism as a panacea for economic development produces unintended and unwanted side effects. Apart from instabilities of the global tourism industry and the world market, mass tourism causes air and water pollution, waste problems, as well as rising prices for commodities and real estate.

Amongst these myriad vulnerabilities, one can identify modes of adaption on the part of the local communities. A standard response is to diversify livelihood strategies. Revenue generated through traditional agriculture and fishing, and now tourism, is supplemented by gardening, share-cropping, daily wage labour, and high-value plantations. Collective forms of organization centred on livelihoods, such as fishermen's associations or farmer collectives, have emerged and gained power. In some cases, they have challenged authoritarian rulings regarding environmental governance, such as the declaration of a marine national park and no-take zones without community consultation or participation. Further, actors have entered electoral politics on rights-based platforms, to represent their communities' interests. Forms of resistance have also emerged, circumventing administrative dominion through so-called 'black markets' for agricultural inputs, or decisions to collectively encroach forest land for subsistence activities and high-value plantations.

There is no denying that the State has played, and continues to play, a crucial role in the lives of the settlers. One can observe both collaboration and conflict between the two. Being a Union Territory, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are governed directly by the Central Government in New Delhi, which result in more intrusive, and sometimes ignorant and alienating, decisions. The State's settlement, development, and economic policies have impacted the indigenous islanders deeply, a fact that is gaining recognition amongst the local settler population as well.

Battling environmental change and the vulnerabilities it produces can be regarded as deeply linked with social justice concerns, and must involve the participation of all the affected communities, including the indigenous populations. This needs to be a concerted effort, and foster exchange between different entities: governments and all their citizens, islands and mainland, inland and coastal communities, scholars and practitioners. Circulations and flows, perceptions of the environment, as well as vulnerabilities and modes of adaptation discussed here show similarities and contiguities with wider transoceanic and global realities. The incubation of a Bay of Bengal network presents one possibility to foster such collaboration by sharing knowledge and research across methodological, semantic, and physical borders.

Pillar of the Planet, commemorating 125 years of forestry in the Islands. Photo by Philipp Zehmisch, April 2009, Chatham Island

Ruhi Deol, Department of Geography, and Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU Munich.

Philipp Zehmisch, Lahore University of Management Sciences.

Notes

1 Zehmisch, P.2016. 'The Invisible Architects of Andaman: Manifestations of Aboriginal Migration from Ranchi', in Heidemann, F. & Zehmisch, P. (eds) *Manifestations of History: Time, Space and Community in the Andaman Islands.* New Delhi: Primus, pp.122-138.

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3 Sen, U. 2011. 'Dissident Memories: Exploring Bengali Refugee Narratives in the Andaman Islands', in Panikos, P. & Virdee, P. (eds) *Refugees and the End of Empire – Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration in the Twentieth Century.* Palgrave Macmillan, pp.219-44.

4 Grove, R. 1995. *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and The Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860.* Cambridge University Press.

5 Chandi, M., Deol, R. & Shetty, R.S. 2012. 'Socioeconomic Monitoring for Coastal Managers of South Asia: Field Trials and Baseline Surveys, Havelock and Neil Islands, Rani Jhansi Marine National Park, Andaman Islands'. Port Blair: ANET; https://tinyurl.com/repo-chandi

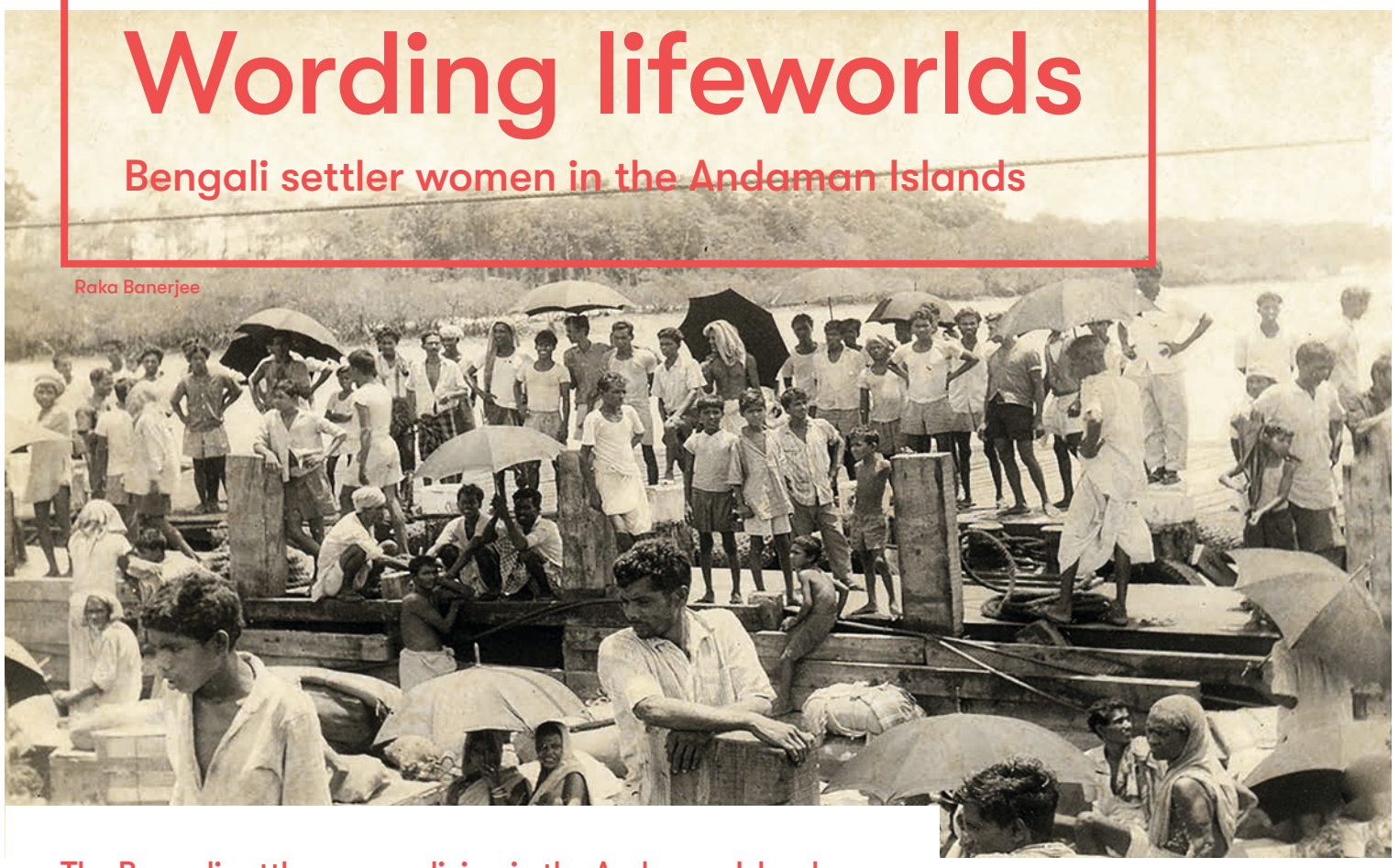
6 Deol, R. 2019/2020. (forthcoming) 'Double Disaster: Impacts of the 2004 tsunami on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India'; http://www.environmentandsociety.org/arcadia

7 Zehmisch, P. 2017. *Mini-India: The Politics of Migration and Subalternity in the Andaman Islands.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Wording lifeworlds

Bengali settler women in the Andaman Islands

Raka Banerjee



Settlers at the jetty. Photo from the collection of Dr. Swapan Biswas.

The Bengali settler women living in the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal are witnesses of a long history of displacements and migration. These first generation settler women – the youngest of whom are now in their sixties – migrated with their families from East Pakistan to India after the Partition of India in 1947, and arrived in West Bengal. However, the state government unable and unwilling to accommodate their large numbers dispersed the refugee population to camps across the country. Some of the women were born in these refugee camps as their families awaited rehabilitation. Assembled from the camps, the 'willing' refugees were brought to Calcutta where they started their journey for Andaman from Kidderpore dock.

The words that have entered their vocabulary through these experiences, especially in the process of settlement in the Islands, can be a valuable resource for understanding the women's lifeworlds. The article presents three vignettes from the island, followed by a discussion on the taxonomy of the settler women's lexicon, and finally, a note on the importance of female settler subjectivity in writing a gendered account of Partition rehabilitation.

Vignettes from Neil

1. Reminiscing the scarcity of resources on the island during the initial years of settlement, Shushila Das says "There was not a thing in Neil. We had to boil the seawater to make salt. The boat service wasn't regular. Over time these facility improved. So much so, one needn't go to Port Blair in preparation for big events anymore. One can find everything right here. The mainlanders [*mainland'er lok*] have taken over the market, all non-Bengalis [*obangali*], had our settler families been proactive no one would have been able to take over the market!"[1]

2. The settler's brush with the 'wild' comes out strongly in Shushama Roy's recollection: "Men could not go out for fear of elephants. There were 14 elephants. The *mahout's* [elephant minder] house was close to our land. The elephants used to drag the huge trunks till the jetty, then they would be loaded. Before we had come, we heard, that a man in No.5 [2] was killed by the elephants and then the elephant crossed the sea and went off to Havelock. But this is something we have only heard. When the elephants were to be taken away, the feisty ones refused to board the LCT (light cargo transport), there was one obedient elephant who went ahead and boarded the LCT and then one by one all the elephants were guided by it to board the LCT. There were no cameras back then or else we would have captured these sights forever. It was a female elephant, very intelligent. There was nothing here and a few souls were brought to such a place! (laughs)"[3]

3. The following dialogue with Probha Bawali[4] demonstrates the intergenerational changes in gendered practices across locations:

Raka Banerjee: So, what was the first wedding – your wedding – on the island like? Was it in keeping with all Bengali rituals and customs?
Probha Bawali: Yes, in observance of all customs and rituals. We were living next to each other, when we were in No.1 we used to live next to each other in the quarter. My aunt-in-law and my mother arranged the marriage. I was merely 13 years old. I couldn't study for too long either, while living in Uttar Pradesh I attended school for 2-3 years. After coming here, I wasn't sent to school and was married off early. My father used to say, what's the point in educating a dark girl! [*kalo meye r porashona koraye ki korbo!*] (laughs)
RB: In Bangladesh, women's lives were mostly restricted to the household ...
PB: Yes
RB: ... and they would observe purdah ...
PB: Yes
RB: ... did that change while in the camp or after coming here?
PB: It didn't change in the camp. There were people from different places, right. After coming here, well, now, no one cares for such rules – not even in the villages.
RB: In the camp, there must have been many people and perhaps it wouldn't be possible to stay indoors all the time ...
PB: Even so! It's up to the person to maintain their dignity [*jar shonman tar kache*]. Even to this day, my mother – we don't cover our head – but my mother still won't give up covering her head.

Womanspeak in understanding identity

The *namasudra*[5] refugees were dispersed across India as labourers for the development of inhospitable areas. Their settlement on the Islands is part of this violent history and the politics of rehabilitation in post-Partition India. However, women's contribution to the process is hidden and overlooked in the study of post-partition resettlement, because women were not understood to be primary owners of land, but simply persons 'attached' to the male head of the family unit.

The permeation of words like *migration*, *refugee*, *rehabilitation* and *settler* into the women's vocabulary, and the use of the state's vocabulary by the women to identify themselves, reveals the impact of the rehabilitation process on the women's lives. While discussing the changing gender norms in island society, Shushila Das responded, "We have been freed [*shadheen*] by Indira Gandhi, even then everyone should have a sense of judgement ... (assertively) it depends on each individual as to how they should conduct themselves."[6] The invocation of the state in a matter as seemingly innocuous as women covering their head demonstrates the far-reaching impact of Partition. It exposed the settler women to the functioning of the state and placed them in an 'everyday' relationship with the state. In the first vignette, we find the words *boat*, *facility* and *mainland* indicating a change in the subject's location away from the mainland and on to the island where they faced hardship over material scarcity, while simultaneously locating the Bengali settler community's marginal position in the island's local economy in the present day.

In the second vignette, the words *jetty* and *LCT* are used in narrating an incident of transporting elephants off the island, which must have been a public spectacle for the settlers; Shushama Roy chose to juxtapose the departure of the animals with the arrival of the settlers to the wilderness, to better express the irony. The third vignette, read alongside Shushila's assertion, indicates the changing gender norms for the settler women over time, where women's honour and respectability are shown to be closely governed by the logic of the public domain. The word *settler* refers to a category devised by the state to set apart a group of refugees as 'pioneering agriculturalists' who would contribute to the development of the island.[7] The statist category is used by the population to identify themselves and to assert legitimacy of claim over social, economic and political resources.

A taxonomy of the words according to their meaning constructed by the settler women, which may or may not differ from the words' dictionary meaning, offer eight thematic groups. The claim-making words (*migration*, *border slip*, *batch*, *settlement*) form the biggest category, followed by words for authority (*commander*, *department*, *military*), and words for state benefits (*paddy land*, *plot*). Words for accommodation (*camp*, *quarter*, *colony*), transport (*rail*, *ship*, *LCT*), and organization (*meeting*, *leadership*, *group*) are primarily used to describe the period of waiting and being transported from camp to camp before being transported to the island. The settlers' experiences and major life events like riot form a more conceptual category, which offers insights into the women's subjectivity. Contemporary conditions on the island have led to the incorporation of several words, such as *tourist*, *lodge*, *agent* and *tsunami*. An analysis of the words not only narrates Partition from the settler women's standpoint, but also firmly places them as participants in the resettlement process.

Becoming 'settler women'

The permeation of statist vocabulary into the settler women's speech is indicative of the impact of displacement and settlement on their lives, which is not necessarily configured around a public-private division of spaces and roles. The settler women worked in the household and on the land in order to 'settle' on the island. They participated in public meetings about the development of the new settlements. Their lives were less restricted than their mothers', yet, early marriage, gendered expectations of running the household, and post-marriage restrictions on mobility persisted.

Partition has been studied and narrated from a predominantly Bengal and Calcutta-centric perspective, with little focus on the large numbers of people rehabilitated across India. Moreover, gendered refugee experiences have found limited space within such accounts.[8] Inclusion of the voices of settler women, subsumed under the patriarchal family and the protectionist state, living in locations of cartographic and discursive oversight, can bring out complex narratives of their negotiation with the rehabilitation regime. Not only will such inclusion help in understanding women's contributions to their rehabilitation, but also in studying gender and Partition through the intersectional lens of caste-class-location and formation of identities.

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Notes

1 Interview with Shushila Das, Bharatpur (No.4), Neil Island (Shaheed Dweep), dated 25 Jan 2019.
2 Neil consists of five settlements. No.1: Lakshmanpur, No.2: Neil Kendra, No.3: Ramnagar, No.4: Bharatpur and No.5: Sitapur.
3 Interview with Shushama Roy, Bharatpur (No.4), Neil Island (Shaheed Dweep), dated 24 Jan 2019.
4 Interview with Probha Bawali, Ramnagar (No.3), Neil Island (Shaheed Dweep), dated 25 Jan 2019.
5 Lower-caste population in Bengal who were the worst affected of the Partition refugees and had little or no resources to start over in India.
6 ibid note 1
7 Sen, U. 2011. 'Dissident memories: Exploring Bengali refugee narratives in the Andaman Islands', in Panayi, P. & Virdee, P. (eds) *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration during the Twentieth Century*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, pp.219-244; Sen, U. 2017. 'Memories of Partition's "Forgotten Episode": Refugee Resettlement in the Andaman Islands', *Südasien-Chronik - South Asia Chronicle* 7, S.147-178.
8 Menon, R. & Bhasin, K. (1998) 2017. Borders & Boundaries: *Women in India's Partition*. 70th Anniversary Edition. New Delhi: Kali for Women. Reprint, New Delhi: Women Unlimited; Butalia, U. (1998) 2017. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. Reprint, New Delhi: Penguin Random House India; Bagchi, J. & Dasgupta, S. (2003) 2007. *The Trauma and the Triumph: Gender and Partition in Eastern India, Vol.1*. Kolkata: Stree. Reprint, Kolkata: Stree; Chakraborty, P. 2018. *The Refugee Woman: Partition of Bengal, Gender and the Political*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Water and human-nonhuman agency in India's Sundarbans

Calynn Dowler

The brackish waters formed where the Ganges-Brahmaputra river system meets the Bay of Bengal not only sustain the world's largest mangrove forest, they also play a critical role in the lives of the more than 4.5 million people who call the Sundarbans home. Over the past century, the mangrove forest has been partially cleared and settled, and today, more than 3,500 km of earthen embankments snake across the 54 inhabited islands of the West Bengal Sundarbans, separating low-lying villages and rice paddies from vast saline rivers. Life in the region depends upon the constant negotiation of diverse flows of water. Survival is shaped by the rhythm of tides, abundant monsoon rains, and the seasonal replenishment of freshwater lakes, ponds, and aquifers. Attention to the everyday ways in which coastal communities engage with water brings diverse forms of human, natural, and supernatural agencies into a common analytic frame, allowing for a more nuanced discussion of human-nonhuman relationships in a context of global environmental change.

A statue of the Hindu river goddess Ganga is transported from the home of the artisan to the riverside for pūjā. Sundarbans, West Bengal, India, June 2019. Photo by author Calynn Dowler, all rights reserved.

In 2018-19, I spent 18 months researching shifting meanings of water in the West Bengal Sundarbans. During that time, I collected oral histories and conducted participant observation and semi-structured interviews with domestic water-users, farmers, fishers, NGO staff, and local government officials. While most academic and policy discourse on the Sundarbans delta approaches water as either a threat to be contained or a scarce resource to be managed, I came to focus on everyday engagements with water, including its cultural and religious significance. My research explores what the waters of the Sundarbans mean to those who navigate them daily, and how changes in the waterscape are experienced and understood. I argue that a focus on coastal communities' engagements with water can contribute to current efforts to 'provincialize the Anthropocene'.

'Provincializing' the Anthropocene

The Anthropocene looms large in contemporary discussions of the Sundarbans. Scientists understand the term Anthropocene as the current geological age, in which human activity has come to shape the earth. The term is commonly invoked in discussions of anthropogenic climate change, which scientists argue poses an existential threat to low-lying coastal regions like the Sundarbans. Such predictions should undoubtedly be taken seriously, but unfortunately the Anthropocene discourses remain overwhelmingly rooted in scientific communities in the global north, while the perspectives of people from places like the Sundarbans are seldom incorporated. As Arne Harms points out, when Sundarbans islanders do appear, they are usually filtered through a victimization frame that casts them as the "hapless objects of nature's whims". Sundarbans islanders' vulnerability is offered as proof of climate change to convince skeptical audiences in the global north.[1] Little attention is paid to islanders' own experiences and understandings of the natural world, which might diverge from hegemonic Anthropocene framings.

Scholars in the social sciences and humanities increasingly call for a more diverse range of perspectives in work on the Anthropocene. As Elizabeth DeLoughrey argues, "Anthropocene scholarship cannot afford to overlook narratives from the global south, particularly from those island regions that have been and continue to be at the forefront of ecologically devastating climate change".[2] DeLoughrey points to a need to bring postcolonial and indigenous perspectives into conversation with Anthropocene scholarship, and to ground universalizing Anthropocene discourses in specific contexts. Much as postcolonial studies sought to 'provincialize' the discourse of Europe,[3] scholars today must work to 'provincialize' the Anthropocene. This demands "a multiscalar method of telescoping between space (planet) and place (island) in a dialectic or 'tidalectic' way to see how they mutually inform each other".[4]

Focusing on local waterscapes offers one possible way to provincialize the Anthropocene. The concept of a waterscape (or water-produced landscape) can help us think about how culture and power interact at multiple scales over time to produce hybrid socio-natures.[5] Beyond this, the concept of waterscape brings attention to the fact that water is not just a resource flowing through abstract space, but a culturally and experientially meaningful substance that constitutes the places people inhabit.[6] Understanding the Anthropocene in the Sundarbans involves recognition of global forces that act on the local waterscape and render it unruly and precarious, as well as an awareness of how this precarity is negotiated locally. Below, as a brief example, I consider the role of religion and ritual in a precarious riverine waterscape.

Ganga Pūjā in the Sundarbans' unruly waterscape

In June 2019, I joined a group of fishermen for Ganga Pūjā on a riverine *char*[7] next to the Bidhyadhari river in the West Bengal Sundarbans. It was a heavy, hot day. We sweltered under a plastic tarp and listened to the recitations of the Brahmin priest. Across the Gangetic plains, the Ganges river is venerated as the goddess Ganga Devi. On Ganga Dussehrā, festivals are held to mark the day the sacred river is said to have descended from heaven to earth via the Lord Shiva's matted locks. The temporary Ganga Devi statue [*mūrti*] constructed for the occasion took the shape of a beautiful young woman with hair flowing past her waist. The goddess sat atop her vehicle, known as a *makara*, represented in Hindu mythology as a fantastical aquatic creature in the shape of a crocodile or dolphin or a combination of both. She wore a white sari with golden trim, flower garlands, and a gold and fuchsia crown, evoking her status as a goddess of good fortune and plentitude.

For fishermen in the Sundarbans, rivers are an important source of livelihood. Approximately three decades ago, Ganga Pūjās became common along this stretch of river due to an increase in fishing for tiger prawn hatchlings. In recent years, however, demand for prawn hatchlings has dropped, and fishing has declined. Ganga Pūjā celebrations have similarly been reduced; this year the organizers struggled to get families to contribute financially. The Ganga Pūjā had been suspended entirely in the years following cyclone Aila in 2009, but fishermen helped to reinstate the festival. One of these fishermen, Mano, explained the importance of the ritual, and told me how he calls on Ganga Devi when venturing out on the river to collect his nets. "She can give so many fish and crabs", he explained; "She can make you rich, give you a big house, anything". The ritual was sponsored with these hopes in mind.

For Mano and others living along the river's edge, however, Ganga Devi is not just a goddess of plenty; she is also a protective maternal figure. The fishermen I met in the Sundarbans call on 'Ganga Ma' for protection on both water and land. As Mano explained to me, the earthen embankment holding back the river is fragile. The Gram Panchayat – a local village-level elected body – is responsible for embankment maintenance, but the funds allocated for embankment repair do not always reach the intended recipients. As a result, breaches are frequent. When saline river water washes in, Mano and his neighbors call on Ganga Devi: "Mā! Bāṅcāo!" [Mother, save us].

I was struck by the complex entanglements of human, nonhuman, and supernatural agency that animated the Ganga Pūjā I attended. With these thoughts in mind, I returned home. Later that night, water began falling to earth in a manner that recalled the myth of Ganga Devi's thundering descent from the heavens. During the storm, a bamboo Ganga Pūjā *pandal*[8] alongside the river was toppled. Riding my bike through thick mud along the embankment the next day, I found a group of fishermen repairing the *pandal* and delicately repainting the *mūrti*. They were preparing the goddess for her eventual *bisarjan*, which refers to the ritual immersion of the *mūrti* in the river that concludes Bengali Hindu festivals.

The moment stayed with me: the figure of a river goddess, destroyed by rain, repaired only to be submerged in water once again. Anthropocene discourses that cast Sundarbans islanders only as victims of global climate change reveal little of the everyday texture of these sorts of engagements with unruly waterscapes. It is true that those who live in the Sundarbans are affected by forces beyond their own control. However, as Ganga Pūjā demonstrates, people in the Sundarbans also engage in ritual actions that temporarily order the uncertain waterscapes in which they dwell, and in so doing exert intentions and agencies of their own.

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Notes

1 Harms, A. 2015. 'Dwelling in Loss: Environment, Displacement and Memory in the Indian Ganges Delta'. Unpublished Dissertation, Berlin: Free University; p.90.
2 DeLoughrey, E.M. 2019. *Allegories of the Anthropocene*. Duke University Press; p.2.
3 Chakrabarty, D. 2008. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Reissue, with a new preface by the author. Princeton Studies in Culture, Power, History. Princeton University Press.
4 In her discussion of 'tidalectics', DeLoughrey (see note 2) draws on the work of Barbadian poet and scholar Kamau Brathwaite. The concept of 'tidalectics' draws on island geography and the cyclical nature of tides to critique the linear synthesizing nature of the European dialectic.
5 Swyngedouw, E. 1999. 'Modernity and Hybridity: Nature, Regeneracionismo, and the Production of the Spanish Waterscape, 1890-1930', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89(3):443–65; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1111/0004-5608.00157.
6 Orlove, B. & Caton, S.C. 2010. 'Water Sustainability: Anthropological Approaches and Prospects', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39(1):401-15; https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.105045.
7 The Bengali word char refers to sandbanks/alluvium that appear and disappear in the shallow riverbeds of the lower Gangetic plains of deltaic Bengal.
8 *Pandals* are temporary structures, usually erected for the veneration of deities.

The Endangered Archives Programme

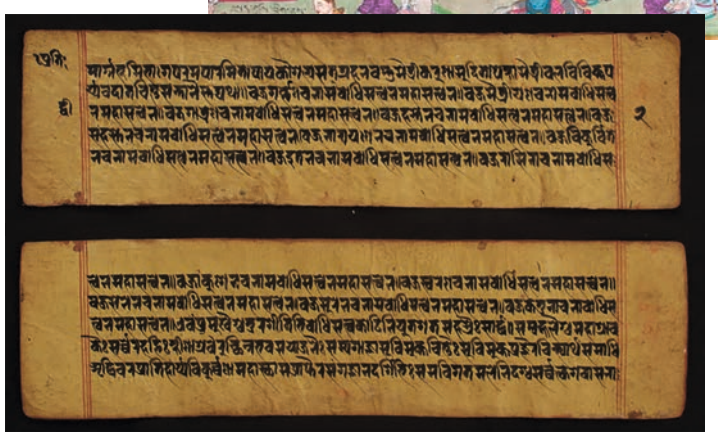
Towards a different kind of collection

We live in a world of incredible cultural diversity, which over the last century has been increasingly threatened by global capitalism. In many countries a response to this has emerged in a growing nationalism, an assertion of local, specific culture. But this is an equal threat to the diversity of voices, stories and ways of being that make up every culture. And if we cannot preserve these stories, these alternative ways of being, we will be poorer, subject to the flattening out that is the end result of both globalisation and nationalism.

Sam van Schaik

Left: EAP749/12/1/1 - An old wooden statue of Tangtong Gyalpo. Tangtong Gyalpo's face and body have been recently repainted golden, his hair black. The statue was cleaned and painted in bright colours prior to the 1996 Kalachakra initiation at Tabo monastery. The statue was blessed and consecrated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at that event. On the reverse of the statue a strip of yellow cloth covers the space inside the statue that contains written prayers. The statue is unclothed. Approx 350 mm high. The material is owned by Jigmed Thakpa and has been handed down through several generations. All the materials in the archive are kept within the prayer room of the house.

Right: EAP749/10/1/1 - A narrative thangka illustrating the story of Drowa Zangmo. Early 21st century. New Thangka commissioned from Sonam Angdui in Kaza. The material is owned by Meme Gatuk Tenzing and has been handed down through several generations of head Buchen. All the materials in the archive are kept within the prayer room of the house. Image (Melong) size 790 x 555 mm. Full mounted size 1365 x 900 mm.



Left: EAP790/2/15 - Manuscript containing the Sutra of Five Protectors, from the collection of Suprasanna Vajracharya.

The Endangered Archives Programme

There is no easy solution to this, and some would argue that change and development are inevitable. No doubt they are, but remembering is also what makes us human. And a rich memory gives us more ways of thinking about our future as well. This is the belief and motivation behind the Endangered Archives Programme, which was established by Lisbet Rausing (Arcadia Fund) in 2004. She summarised the aims of the programme thus:

> "The Endangered Archives Programme captures forgotten and still not written histories, often suppressed or marginalised. It gives voice to the voiceless: it opens a dialogue with global humanity's multiple pasts. It is a library of history still waiting to be written."

The Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) is dedicated to the digitisation of any kind of archive that is at risk of being lost forever. This includes manuscripts, documents, photographs, sound recordings, newspapers and magazines. A huge variety of material has been digitised under the programme, from ancient Arabic manuscripts to photographs of the everyday life of Buddhist monks in Laos. How does this work?[1]

Individuals or teams propose projects to EAP for funding, and if successful, work wherever the archives are located, to survey and digitise them. The archives are not taken away, and the digitised images or recordings stay in the country where the archives are found. Copies are sent to the British Library, the home of the EAP, and these are shared on the programme's website (eap.bl.uk). Over seven million images and recordings are now available on the website, a massive and diverse digital collection crossing multiple regions and fields of study. These collections are only made available with the consent of their custodians, for research and greater understanding, and not for commercial gain.

A holistic picture of a tradition

Many of the major museum and library collections in Europe are the direct result of the collecting activities of colonial explorers, soldiers and administrators. As such, these collections represent the interests and prejudices of these people, rather than the values and practices of the original custodians of the material. This has directly affected how generations of scholars have conceptualised the cultures that they study. In Buddhist traditions, for example, the study of manuscripts has favoured canonical textual traditions with their roots in India, or the works of well-known individuals. The way that these manuscripts formed part of personal or monastic collections has largely been ignored.

In two projects funded by EAP between 2012 and 2016, Patrick Sutherland surveyed and photographed the collections of a group of Buddhist ritual specialists called Buchen.[2] Living in the Pin and Spiti valleys of Himachal Pradesh, India, the Buchen are a class of Buddhist ritual practitioners and storytellers whose traditions are now under threat. Recognising this, several Buchen families worked together with Sutherland to document their manuscripts, paintings, and other religious objects. The Buchen consider themselves to be the spiritual descendants of the 15th century saint Tangtong Gyalpo, a visionary adept in meditation who is also thought to have designed and constructed over fifty iron suspension bridges in Tibet, and to have invented the Tibetan tradition of opera known as *Ache Lhamo*. It is this latter achievement that links him to the Buchen, who use art and performance to communicate the essentials of Buddhist teaching: the round of rebirth and the role of karma.

The collection of a single Buchen comprises manuscripts in the Tibetan loose leaf form known as *pecha*, containing both ritual texts and stories to be used in performance. Alongside these are *thangka* paintings, used to illustrate Buddhist principles, musical instruments such as the *kogpo*, a six stringed wooden instrument, and statues of the Buchens' patron saint Tangtong Gyalpo. The ritual accoutrements of a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner are also present, including the metal *vajra* and bell, the rosary, amulet boxes and ritual daggers, swords and bows. Thus the Buchens' collections offer a holistic picture of their tradition, based on the logic of their own practice, rather than the categories of European museum and library collections.

The custodians

The Kathmandu Valley is one of the culturally richest regions in the world. It has also been the site of massive urban development in recent decades, and was hit by a tragically destructive earthquake in 2015. In the medieval period, the valley was a hub connecting the Buddhist cultures of India and Tibet, and home to renowned experts in the Vajrayana, the texts and practices of tantric Buddhism. These teachings have been passed down through the centuries in family lineages of Vajrayana teachers known as *vajracharyas*. These families hold rich collections of manuscripts, which are now under threat from the forces of modernisation and environmental catastrophes.

In 2013, Shanker Thapa, of Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, started an EAP-funded project to identify and photograph the manuscript collections of vajracharya families.[3] Reaching out to Buddhist families in Kathmandu and Patan, Thapa found that many were concerned about preserving their traditions, and keen to have their fragile manuscripts digitised for posterity. As with other EAP projects, these manuscripts were catalogued as family archives rather than separated by external categories such as genre or format. Thus the manuscript holdings of these Buddhist families were recorded in a way that allows us to understand much better what the texts meant to them.

In the nineteenth century, British colonial officials in Kathmandu, such as Brian Hodgson, collected Sanskrit manuscripts or had manuscripts copied especially for them by local Buddhists. These manuscripts are now in the university libraries of Oxford and Cambridge, the British Library, and the Royal Asiatic Society. They are vital sources for understanding Buddhism, in many cases containing the earliest Sanskrit versions of key Buddhist texts. Yet their original context is hard to establish; which families owned them, were they still in use, how were they acquired? Moreover, the choice of manuscripts reflects the British collector's own interests in reconstructing the history of Buddhism, rather than recording the collections of contemporary practitioners.

The digital collections created by Shanker Thapa with the support of vajracharya families are different: here we see the logical structure of family collections, and we can understand the part the manuscripts play in their own practices, and their relationship with those who rely on them for rituals. Thus in a single collection we see, for example, prayers to Buddhist deities, along with mantras to be chanted for a long life, astrological texts for divination, and tantric texts for the accomplishment of enlightenment. There are fewer of the famous Buddhist canonical texts than in Hodgson's collections, and this reflects which texts were (and still are) actually used in the Kathmandu Valley. This gives us a different perspective, one more closely aligned to that of the custodians of the manuscripts themselves.

Supporting the collections

The Endangered Archive Programme continues to give grants to applicants on an annual basis with a call going out every September (eap.bl.uk/grants). For those interested in exploring the digital collections, they are freely available on the programme's website (eap.bl.uk/search/site). These collections are held in trust for the original owners and their descendants, and offer the potential for an approach to research based on a greater understanding of the custodians of the traditions, who have preserved and transmitted them through to the present day.

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Notes

1 Kominko, M. (ed.) 2015. *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme.* Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
2 Sutherland, P. & Tsering, T. 2011. *Disciples of a Crazy Saint: The Buchen of Spiti.* Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum.
3 Thapa, S. 2005. *Newar Buddhism: History, Scholarship and Literature.* Lalitpur, Nepal: Nagarjuna Publications.

Right: Forox-caaya. Photo by Bruno Diomaye Faye.
Below: Preparation of lunches in large pots placed inside, around or in front of the restaurant.
Photo by Jeanne T. F. Diouf.

Street food practices in Dakar and its environs

Bruno Diomaye Faye, Jeanne Thérèse Fatou Diouf and Assane Kébé

From 5-7 July 2019, Jeanne Thérèse Fatou Diouf and Assane Kébé conducted a survey on street food in Dakar (Senegal) as part of the project *Atelier Populaire:* Building New Knowledge and Practices on Street Food in Saint-Louis, Senegal, led by Gaston Berger University, Saint-Louis, one of the participators in the Humanities across Borders programme at IIAS.[1] On 27 October 2019, Bruno Diomaye Faye visited Saint-Louis in a similar capacity. The main objectives of this project include the creation of a resilient urban community and the organisation of an experimental school and street food festival. In this article, the authors reflect on what they encountered during their research and offer a window to the changing cultural world of 'food'.

Delicious food across borders

Bruno to vendor: *Are you a Moor?*
Vendor: I am a Pulaar *(an ethnic group from Senegal) sir, and I am from Aere Lao. You can't read? It's nevertheless well written on my beautiful stove! … I know this way of preparing meat better than the Moors. It is a job, like any other, that does not belong to any ethnic group.*
(Exchange between forox-caaya salesman and Bruno at Ngoumba Guéoul, a stopover 91 km from Saint-Louis.)

Forox-caaya in Wolof (pronounced *forokh thiaya*) is the shortened form of *forokh thiaya neex dibi*, which in Wolof literally means 'dirty pants but delicious meat'. This popular expression in Senegal comes from a joke about the *Thiaya*, which are baggy pants typically worn by the Moors. The word *forokh* here should not however be taken in the first degree (dirty), because it can also designate something with a fermented taste, so delicious. *Forokh thiaya* is here a way to explain in a joyful yet teasing way the excellent taste of this preparation.

In the above exchange that lasted less than five minutes, the pride and ownership of the vendor comes through clearly. What made Bruno ask the vendor if he was a Moor? Why did the vendor respond thus? What does this exchange say about the dialogues and practices around food? Food, practice, cuisine, food preparation, food-related identity and a whole spectrum of aspects related to food can belong to a specific group and yet have the capacity to cross both cultural and geographic borders.

Spaces, flavours, sounds and aromas of street vending

When we started the survey on street food in Dakar and its environs, the impressive number of shops alongside the busiest roads immediately struck us, giving the impression that the whole city had turned into a street food market. There was a buzz of sounds, smells, voices, languages, and colours; a rush of yellow-black taxis honking away, buses and the constant flow of passengers.

On every street corner, various food outlets seem to compete for customers with other types of businesses. These places are either 'canteens',[2] or private garages converted into catering spaces, or metal and wooden kiosks on the side of the road or fixed to a wall. The majority of the places offer very basic facilities. Some have simple tables set in the open air; some in full sun, while others, like breakfast sellers, tie sheets together to create a form of shelter. The makeshift nature of the physical structures seems to match the clientele consisting of commuters, workers, shoppers and other visitors.

The food preparation facilities are usually quite rudimentary: stainless steel, plastic and glass containers, spoons, dishes, a gas stove or coal furnace, plastic tubs for cleaning, a few 20-litre oil cans recycled into water reserves and a stack of newspapers used for packaging. In the middle of the day, it is also common to find a salesman immediately next door who, after the meal, offers local sweets and fresh juices or coffee and tea.

These canteens and makeshift eating spaces can be found near all major arteries, markets, bus and taxi terminals, schools, hospitals and large companies. They are sometimes cleared by the municipality, which struggles to cope with the congested sidewalks, yet their physical structures seem to fit in well with the constant flow of people through the city.

On his field trip to Saint-Louis, a three hour bus ride from Dakar, Bruno came across a similar set-up at one of the stops along the way (Ngoumba Guéoul, 91 km from Saint-Louis). It was quite a large place, with a shop, a refreshment bar, a fast-food restaurant, toilets and a large courtyard. Several types of food were displayed on the cement and tiled tables standing side by side in front of the restaurant. There were people in red T-shirts who all seemed to belong to the same establishment. There was also a table with eight coffee and tea thermos cans, and a music system broadcasting Islamic songs.

Depending on the location and the type of food, you encounter several types of vendors. At markets, for example, lunch is usually prepared by women who have moved to the capital to devote themselves to the restaurant business. In residential neighbourhoods, breakfast vendors are generally local residents who set up on a corner near their homes to offer food to neighbours and passers-by. There are also a large number of migrants from sub-regions (Hausa of Niger, Fulani of Guinea, Moors) who tend to sell meat prepared in a unique way. The clientele is just as diverse, ranging from bus and taxi drivers, market and construction workers from nearby sites, to students and families.

We were amazed by the growing trend among Senegalese to eat outdoors. Before the 1990s, for cultural reasons, eating out was formally forbidden, as was to buy and eat food on the street. In fact, it was prohibited to eat anywhere else than in the family home, with the only exception being family events, such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. Eating in public was considered very 'risky'. Growing up with these taboos, eating on the street is still extremely difficult for the older generation. This is not the case for the generations that followed; young students, for example, developed the habit because they spend the whole day at school, away from home; and some woman nowadays work outdoors, not in their homes, and no longer have the time to cook like they used to. As a result of these developments, street food has become a convenient alternative for modern Senegalese families.

As many customers as there are tastes

Depending on the time of day, a variety of meals and tastes are served to the diverse clientele. For breakfast, for example, sales-women present bowls on a table containing different sauces so that they can prepare sandwiches tailored to each individual customer. These are consumed either on-site or taken away, wrapped in newspaper. Arame's table displays bowls containing mayonnaise, tuna, pea sauce, spaghetti, french fries, canned meat, *ndambé* (local bean stew), etc. He adds seasonings and spices (chilli, pepper, broth) to suit the taste of his customers.

At lunchtime, most dishes are served with rice. The favourite Senegalese dish, *ceebu jën* (fish-rice), is cooked everywhere. However, because of the different kinds of people passing through the city and with people willing to try out more dishes, most food stalls offer more than just one dish. *Ñaari cinn* [lit. two pots] refers to all dishes that are prepared in two separate pots: one for the white rice and the other for the sauce. Arame shared: "There are as many tastes as there are customers. You have to prepare as much as possible to have good sales daily." Khady, another vendor was of a similar opinion. Apart from fish-rice, she prepares *mafé*, white rice and peanut sauce, *supp-kànja*, white rice and okra sauce, and other examples of 'two pots', all Senegalese dishes. The dishes on her menu reflect the clientele that she caters to. Around 5 p.m., small tables or kiosks are set up and offer '*fataya* sandwich', '*accra* sandwich' and '*bread-thon*', which are increasingly popular, especially in residential areas. At 7 p.m., millet porridge [*laax*], millet couscous [*ceere*, *caagiri*] and also dishes from sub-regions [*latiéké*] are served in the main streets. Later in the evening, there are many sellers of chicken, liver or grilled meat sandwiches.

All of us noted the fluidity of the food, vendors, origin, customers, structures, spaces and tastes. All familiar, and taken-for-granted, sights for the people who live here, yet when they were asked to consider them in the context of the survey, the layers and stories of the food and people helped them place street food in broader perspectives.

The food served at these canteens and other spaces is of single-origin or taste, yet not quite. The *fataya* sandwich is of Lebanese origin. It is a much-loved choice. The sandwich is a delicious little stuffed meat slipper (beef, chicken, fish, seafood) found on West African markets. When eaten on the go, it is quickly wrapped in paper and bagged. *Accra niébé*, so-called in Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria, are doughnuts of haricot found throughout Africa. Some of these foods have been transformed over the years. The thick millet porridge accompanied by sweet curd, long consumed by peasants, also has a less thick variant, *fondé*, which is eaten in urban areas for dinner or as a dessert. *Laax* and *Caagiri* are very popular for particular occasions, such as baptisms or the end of Ramadan. *Forokh Thiaya* is a meat soup usually prepared and sold by Moors. The vendors walk around with an oven mounted on wheels or with an aluminium container carried on their head, to keep the meal warm, and paper to pack the meals to go. Rice is undoubtedly the staple food for lunch. For dinner, bread still occupies a central place along with products made from cereals (couscous, porridge, etc.).

Food preparation: ideas and judgements

Breakfast is often prepared at home and, if desired, warmed up just before being served to customers. However, in some places breakfast dishes, such as omelettes, french fries, roasted meat and fried potatoes, are cooked in the presence of the customers. This is part of the concept of *tangana* [it is hot] and refers to the place where the food is cooked, which is often very hot because the same cramped room is used as a kitchen and a dining room at the same time. In some places, lunch is also prepared on the spot in large pots in front of the restaurant.

The way meals are prepared is an important matter. Abdallah, one of the stall owners, told us: "Since I am Muslim, I cannot eat or sell directly what comes from Europe, because I do not know what we did to cut". He added, "Happiness sought in the afterlife must be reflected in every profession. If the work is not well done, one cannot gain access to salvation. We lose twice: we get tired of looking for money here, and tomorrow, before God, it will be a difficult report". He believes that, after the difficult conditions of life on earth, Africans cannot run the risk of losing salvation in the afterlife. That is why he does not give in to the ease of using meat that comes from Europe. Meat should be labelled 'halal' to at least reassure the consumer. For many like Abdallah, the entire preparation chain is a very serious, even personal matter, especially for reasons related to Islamic (halal) precepts.

Amid the colours, smells and stories, we could not help but notice the different standards of hygiene in the preparation of food. When we brought up the issue, some of the sellers said they were in good standing with the State Services in charge of hygiene control, and that they had all their documents in order. They also pointed out that customers are generally very demanding when it comes to hygiene issues. Listening to their answers, we wondered what meaning the Senegalese and others attach to the concept of 'hygiene'. When the three of us sat down to discuss our experiences, it emerged that while a vendor will respond in terms of state services and official papers, the customer will refer to the cleanliness of the place, the utensils, or even the appearance of the vendor.

Towards a street food manifesto

This survey was undertaken as part of the HaB project, *Atelier Populaire:* Building New Knowledge and Practices on Street Food in Saint-Louis, Senegal, by project volunteers. This project, led by Gaston Berger University, Saint-Louis, aims to create a local community of slow food activists, practitioners, consumers, agriculturists, food processors and packers, researchers, students, and politicians, to collectively build a fair food ecology in Saint-Louis. The various activities undertaken by the volunteers of the project have helped them see street food as a window to understanding the diverse worlds of food, people, cultures, ecologies, economies, food practices and more.

This reflection is based on a survey and fieldtrip, which are just the first of more to follow. Another survey that has been recently completed is on the *louma* [weekly market] in areas of central Senegal. In the near future, there will be a second phase of investigations on *louma*, but in the northern areas of the country. There is also a very special investigation in the works, which will explore 'how Saint-Louis eats'. These surveys are essential for the other main objectives of the project, namely the creation of a resilient urban community and the organisation of an experimental school and street food festival.

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Notes

1 https://humanitiesacrossborders.org/projects/atelier-populaire
2 Premises of variable dimensions built side by side in markets or along busy roads and intended to accommodate businesses.

Above: Canteen, an extension of the house. Photo by Jeanne T. F. Diouf.
Left: One of the concrete food-stalls, Ngoumba Guéoul. Photo by Bruno Diomaye Faye.

Connections and disconnections

Xiaolan Lin

Some of the participants at the UKNA symposium.

UKNA 'Ambivalent Infrastructures' symposium Dimapur, Nagaland, India 28-30 November 2019

Set in Dimapur in northeastern India, this international symposium looked at large-scale infrastructure developments and their functions, meanings, and wide-ranging implications for cities and their hinterlands. The symposium's location was appropriately chosen; residents of this urban center who until recently moved around on unpaved roads will soon find themselves situated on one of Asia's East-West economic corridors. Dimapur was formerly a tertiary city, very much on the periphery, but this is about to change as there are advanced plans to connect this region to the rest of India and Southeast Asia.

The symposium was an initiative of the IIAS' Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) and Ambedkar University Delhi's Center for Community Knowledge (CCK) and the School of Global Affairs (SGA). It was co-organised with Hong Kong University's Faculty of Architecture, New York University Shanghai, and the Kohima Institute, Nagaland, India.

The event started on an inauspicious note that highlighted the geopolitics and remaining 'disconnections' in Asia, which stand in stark contrast to the discourse of 'connections' emphasized by governments and development banks planning infrastructure networks in the region. Our Chinese colleagues Zhe Ren, Xiaoxuan Lu and Ye Liu were promptly deported from Nagaland for unclear political reasons (see the personal account below, entitled "An 8 hour stay in Nagaland" by Zhen Ren). Another Chinese colleague, Yifei Li from New York University Shanghai, was notified mid-travel about the ongoing developments and had to abort his itinerary, not making it further than Delhi. So, unfortunately, the symposium had to take place without them, robbing our Chinese colleagues of the opportunity to present their research in person, and depriving them and the other researchers of an intensive exchange of views and debates, which is, of course, one of the main purposes of conferences such as this one.

The meeting started with a guided excursion led by the Heritage Publishing House in Dimapur, who introduced all remaining participants to local places of interest, including a series of mushroom domed pillars, the Rajbari ruins. The excursion continued with visits to some of the major infrastructure projects around Dimapur. During the lunch break, the group visited the Bamboo Emporium, a reserch center and retail outlet for bamboo, which also offers bamboo workshops and a craft museum—a good place to learn about the various uses of bamboo in, among others, construction, furniture making, foodstuffs, and textiles.

The next day, Dr Kekhrie Yhome of the Kohima Institute gave a very inspiring opening keynote speech about the historical 'connectedness' and 'disconnectedness' of the Northeast Indian states vis-à-vis the rest of India and Asia. This was followed by five panels on the following topics: Experiencing Infrastructure (organized by Ambedkar University Delhi Center for Community Knowledge); Transnational Approaches to Infrastructure (organized by Hong Kong University Faculty of Architecture); Rethinking Himalayan Infrastructures (organized by Ambedkar University Delhi School of Global Affairs); Infrastructure in the Age of Global China (organized by NYU Shanghai); and Infrastructure in the Future City (organized by IIAS). The papers of the absent Chinese participants were read out loud by the panel chairs.

The symposium concluded with a roundtable session on Saturday, leading most of the participants to express their keen interest in publishing the papers and the keynote speech, preferably both in the form of journal articles and an edited book. It was agreed that an editorial committee would be assembled to work on the production of an introductory chapter, based on the papers, for an edited book.

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An 8-hour stay in Nagaland

Zhe Ren

On 27 November 2019, I landed at Dimapur Airport in Nagaland, in northeastern India, to participate in UKNA's symposium 'Ambivalent Infrastructures'. There were many others attending the conference, and the small airport was buzzing with foreigners from across the world. We were excited to have arrived, but that is when our strange experience began.

Dimapur airport

Foreigners visiting three of India's north-eastern states (Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram) are required to register at the local police station upon arrival. In recent years it has become easier for foreigners to travel to this region, with the exception of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese nationals; they still need special permission. Therefore, as a Chinese national living in Japan, I contacted the Indian consulate in Tokyo before travelling, and they advised me of all the necessary documents. Then, during my layover at Kolkata airport, I mentioned my destination to the immigration officer, but he waved me through without comment. At this point, I was confident that all my documents were in order, and I would have no trouble reaching Dimapur.

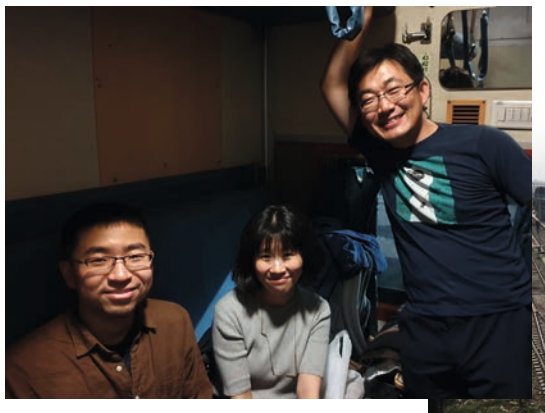
Upon arriving at Dimapur airport, everyone presented their passports to the airport police, as had been instructed. All passports were quickly returned to our group, except for the Chinese passports. There was no problem with the visa; the only problem was our nationality. Having registered with the police, further action was apparently required. The airport police were clearly uncomfortable, and were not quite sure how to proceed. The local (symposium) staff soon started negotiating in local languages on our behalf (Nagaland is known for its diverse ethnicities and languages); they explained that we had an official invitation letter from the Chief Secretary of Nagaland, that the state government had promised freedom of activities for the participants, and that we had a visa issued by the Indian consulate. After waiting for more than an hour, a police officer informed us that they could not make a decision and that we had to go to a police station in the city. We were escorted by local staff and a policeman on a scooter.

City police station

Twenty minutes later, we arrived at Dimapur East Police Station, which turned out to be just opposite our hotel. So we first dropped off our luggage, and then headed over to the police station, accompanied by a few Indian scholars and the local staff. Eventually, an officer returned our passports with a smile, but it was still not certain if we would be granted permission to stay. We excitedly talked about the history of China and India, appreciating that, with a history of war and many other issues, it is understandable that the police had to keep an eye on Chinese nationals. At the same time, we thought, Nagaland is far away from the conflict areas between China and India and there are no official regulations to prohibit any Chinese from coming. Otherwise, surely, we would have been stopped at Dimapur airport, or even in Kolkata. Nevertheless, soon after, the final decision came that we had to leave the state within 24 hours.

At this time, the airport had already closed and the only way to leave was by train or car, so we assumed we would stay the night and catch a flight the next day. Later that evening, however, the local staff explained we had to leave Nagaland by night train and that the police had already arranged our tickets. Perhaps they wanted to rid themselves of an awkward situation as soon as possible. The train would take us to Guwahati, the capital city of Assam state where foreigners can stay without registration. From there, we could easily reach Delhi or Kolkata. The police officers gracefully allowed us to wait in the hotel lobby until departure time.

After learning about our situation, the symposium organizers were furious and suggested that all participants should move to Assam. Realizing that this was impracticable, they looked into the possibility of holding the meeting in a town just across the Nagaland border. However, this might even be more troubling to the police if they knew that the three Chinese nationals would be 'active' right at the border. Moreover, although it would only be a twenty-minute drive from Dimapur, the Chinese scholars would have to travel by train from Guwahati, a further six hours away. We agreed that it was all too much and, unfortunately, we had to accept that we could not attend the conference.



Above: Catching the night train out of Nagaland

Right: Dimapur train station.

Dimapur station

A police officer accompanied us to the railway station, apologizing many times in English. His comment, "I am sorry to let you have such an experience in this corner of the world", was unforgettable. We arrived at the railway station at 20:30; a shabby train was waiting at a platform crowded with people waiting to board. It was a disheartening sight. Two police officers who awaited us handed us our train tickets, and then took a group photo as proof that we had left the state. After that, the police were so kind as to arrange a private, quiet and comfortable place for us to rest before boarding.

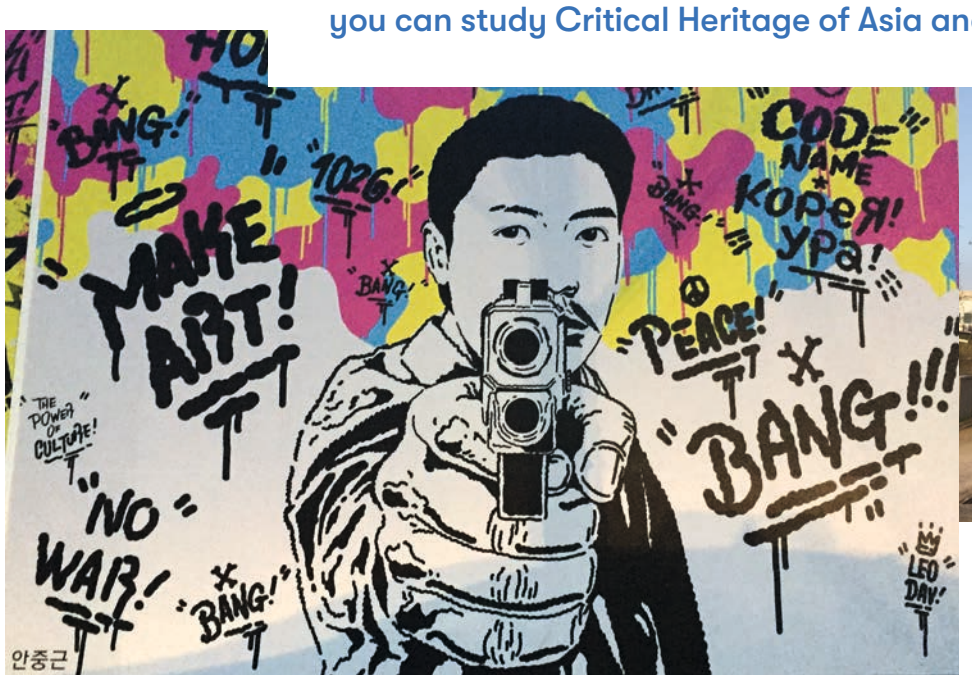
When we boarded our sleeper coach, many colleagues escorted us to our seats. It was heartwarming, but our feelings were otherwise mixed; we had been expecting academic discussions at the conference and instead were confronted with an unexpected expulsion. The train started moving slowly, and the police officers waved us goodbye. Three Chinese who did not know each other 8 hours previously, embarked on a journey together to a strange place. But that is a story for another time.

Zhe Ren, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

Double Degree Programme in 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe'

Elena Paskaleva

Originally a concept coined by the nation-state, heritage has become the object of intellectual reclamation by academics, activists and associations. Institutional and non-institutional social actors in Asia and in Europe are increasingly involved in debating the legitimacy as well as the need to 'safeguard' different expressions of culture. Who controls heritage? What is the role of heritage in the constructed narratives of nationalism? How is heritage being used as a cultural practice to shape the discourses on nation-building and nation-branding? If you have a special interest in heritage studies, you can study Critical Heritage of Asia and Europe at Leiden University.



Above: Young girls in *hanbok* in the gardens of Gyeongbokgung Palace, Seoul.

Left: Street art Seoul 2019.

Leiden programme

The master's programme of Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe was established in 2013 in collaboration between the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). The courses allow you to explore the contested character of all representations of culture, the plurality of notions of heritage in Asian and European contexts, and the ways conflicting values of indigenous and official state discourses are negotiated. In the last couple of years, the programme has been attracting an increasing number of international students with diverse academic backgrounds. Following the success of the master's programme, LIAS decided to open admission to all tracks of Asian Studies for the first time in the academic year 2019-2020.

The programme focuses in particular on the politics of heritage and the questions of its legitimacy. The process of heritage-making entails various forms of conflict over the definition, ownership, and use of cultural attributes. These issues are widely covered in the curriculum, which includes the compulsory courses Critical Approaches to Heritage Studies taught by Dr Elena Paskaleva, Critical Museology taught by Dr Mariana C. Françozo, and a number of electives that focus on specific regions of Asia, and the study of Asian languages. Once a term, Professor Michael Herzfeld delivers guest lectures and meets with all student during individual appointments.

New Course: The Politics of Destruction: Targeting World Heritage

Heritage is always political. Targeting world heritage sites has led to the deliberate shattering of history and national identity worldwide. Massive intentional destruction of cultural heritage has been employed in recent decades as a dogmatic tactic of ethnic cleansing and religious persecution. Although cultural heritage is legally protected, and its ruination in times of armed conflict is widely considered a war crime, most of the targeted sites have been considerably damaged and their reconstruction has become a complex political conundrum.

Giving a voice to the different stakeholders engaged in the reconstruction projects and providing a nuanced discussion on the political circumstances that led to the destruction of world heritage sites will be the topic of a new course to be offered within the Leiden programme of Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe in the summer semester of 2021. In addition, the new course will acquaint students with the legal framework prohibiting targeted destruction of heritage (*The Hague Convention*, 1954; *The Geneva Convention Protocol*, 1977, etc.) and will introduce them to key concepts of critical heritage studies in the context of transnationalism, globalisation and decolonisation.

Double Degree Programme

Following the MA degree at Leiden University, students also have the opportunity to pursue a Double Degree Programme, which is offered by Leiden University, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and one of our Asian partner universities, including the National Taiwan University and Yonsei University in South Korea.

The Double Degree programme includes a one-year MA course in Asian Studies (60 EC) at Leiden University, which, upon completion, is recognised as part of an independent two-year MA programme at one of the Asian partner universities. In this way, students from the National Taiwan University and Yonsei University can spend the second year of their two-year MA at Leiden University. Vice versa, graduates of the Leiden University MA programme do a consecutive second year of heritage studies at one of the partner institutions in Asia.

Certification

As far as certification is concerned, upon successful completion of the Double Degree Programme, students obtain the following diplomas and certificates: the Leiden University MA diploma in Asian Studies and a special IIAS certificate for completing the MA programme Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, the partner university master's diploma and a separate certificate for the Double Degree Programme in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, issued by IIAS.

Fees and scholarships at Leiden University

We are very happy to announce the extension of the Leiden University Excellence Scholarship (LExS) to Double Degree students from all partner institutions. Annually, Leiden University provides a number of LExS scholarships that reduce the total tuition to the statutory tuition fee, which is €2,143 in the 2020-2021 academic year.

In addition, all Double Degree students receive a monthly scholarship of €500 for the duration of 10 months from the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). This scholarship is arranged upon successful admission at Leiden University and all partner universities.

Partner institutions

Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

Leiden University
Established in 1574 Leiden University is the oldest university in the Netherlands. It is an internationally oriented and research-intensive university, offering bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes; most of them are taught in English. The master's programme of Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe is provided by the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) at the Faculty of Humanities. LIAS houses the School of Asian Studies, with well-developed programmes focusing on China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia and South Asia. The research and education of the Institute relies on a dynamic synthesis of area expertise and disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

The one-year Leiden MA curriculum in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe (60 EC; European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) includes courses in Asian Studies, Thesis and Methods, and Critical Approaches to Heritage Studies, and a number of electives that focus on heritage management, specific parts of Asia, or the study of an Asian language. The writing of an MA thesis forms an important part of the curriculum (15 EC). The programme examines, among others, key issues, concepts, and international frameworks related to the disputed distinction between tangible and intangible heritage.

The courses offered at Leiden University explore the genesis and working practices of international heritage administration, charters and conventions. Furthermore, the social impact of heritage themes such as diaspora, ethnicity and nationalism are debated. In this context, special attention is paid to the museum as a facilitating actor in the process of understanding and showcasing cultural identity. Prof. Michael Herzfeld is involved in the Leiden programme by giving additional guest lectures and providing tutorials to all heritage students.

National Taiwan University
Both the Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, College of Engineering are partners in the Double Degree Programme. The Department of Anthropology, established in 1949, became the first academic institution in Taiwan to offer a full programme of anthropological study from undergraduate to PhD level. The Department of Anthropology offers a two-year MA curriculum in Heritage Studies that requires 40 NTU credits plus the writing of a thesis. The curriculum officially leads to a degree of Master of Arts.

The Graduate Institute of Building and Planning was established as an independent graduate institute in 1988. It offers a two-year master's curriculum in Heritage Studies that requires 39 NTU credits plus the writing of a thesis. The curriculum officially leads to a degree of Master of Science.

Within the Double Degree Programme, students with a Leiden MA receive a waiver of NTU credits, and they can use their Leiden-based thesis for their MA thesis at the National Taiwan University.

Yonsei University
Established in 1987, the Graduate School of International Studies is Korea's leading professional graduate school of international studies. The dynamic and rigorous curriculum equips students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to excel globally, in the private and public sectors. The Graduate School offers a two-year curriculum in Heritage Studies that requires 48 Korean credits, which officially leads to a degree of Master of Science. The programme at the Graduate School of International Studies requires the Double Degree students to successfully attend two compulsory classes plus a series of elective courses. Students may opt for writing a thesis, based on their Leiden work, which will provide additional credits.

For additional information regarding the programme Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe or the Double Degree Programme, please contact:

Dr Elena Paskaleva (LIAS)
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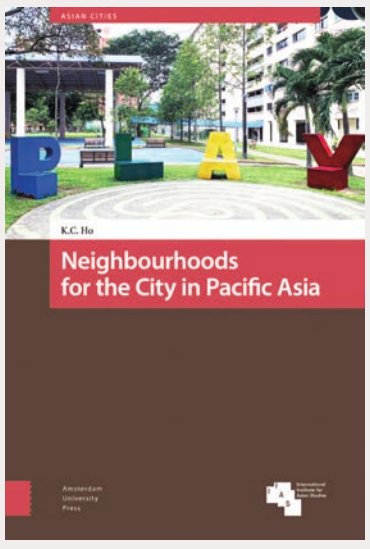
Dr Willem Vogelsang (IIAS)
w.j.vogelsang@iias.nl

Amsterdam University Press

Recent titles in Asian Studies

Amsterdam University Press (AUP) has a well-established list in Asian Studies, renowned for its solid source-based publications in the history, religion, politics, migration, and culture of the peoples and states of Asia. The Asian Studies programme is strengthened by a number of book series, focusing on a special topic or an area of study. Three of the AUP Asian Studies series are published together with IIAS: 'Global Asia', 'Asian Heritages' and 'Asian Cities'.

From the Series published with IIAS:

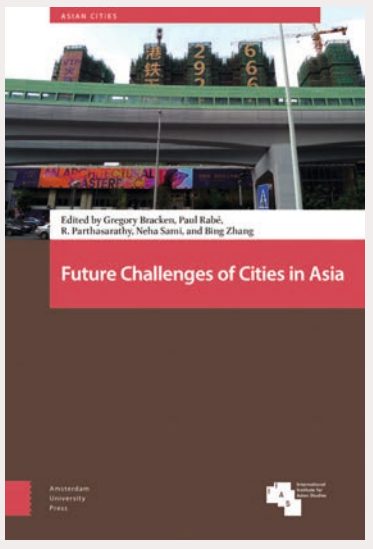


Neighbourhoods for the City in Pacific Asia

Kong Chong Ho. 2019.
From the IIAS Series Asian Cities

Neighbourhoods and the City in Pacific Asia looks at local collective action and city government responses and their impact on the community and the city. By adopting a multi-sited comparative approach in studying local action in five important cities in East Asia (Bangkok, Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore and Taipei), the book enables comparisons across a number of key issues confronting the city: heritage (Bangkok and Taipei), community involved provisioning of amenities in a number of different contexts (Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore), place making versus place marketing (Hong Kong). The collaborative efforts city governments establish with local communities become an important way to address the livability of cities.

https://www.iias.asia/books/neighbourhoods-city-pacific-asia



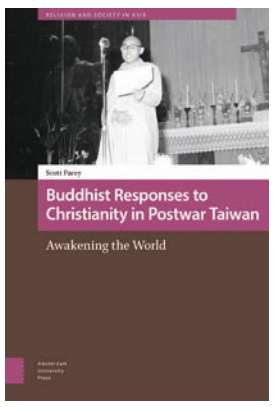
Future Challenges of Cities in Asia

Gregory Bracken, et al. (eds) 2019.
From the IIAS Series Asian Cities

The ten essays in this third Edited Volume of the IIAS Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) engage with some of the most critical urban questions of the near future across Asia. These questions comprise socio-economic and cultural transitions as a result of urbanization; environmental challenges – especially questions of climate change, natural disasters, and environmental justice; and the challenges of urban infrastructure, built form, and new emerging types of urban settlements. The essays demonstrate that it is increasingly difficult to conceptualise the 'urban' as one particular type of settlement; rather, it would be more accurate to say that the 'urban' characterises a global transition – in the way we are beginning to think about settlements.

https://www.iias.asia/books/future-challenges-cities-asia

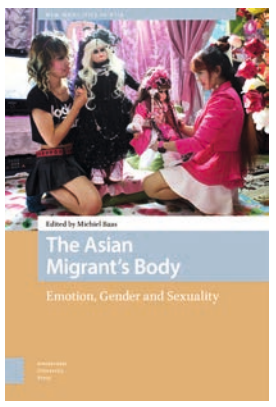
From other AUP Asian Studies Series:



Scott Pacey. 2020.

Buddhist Responses to Christianity in Postwar Taiwan. Awakening the World.

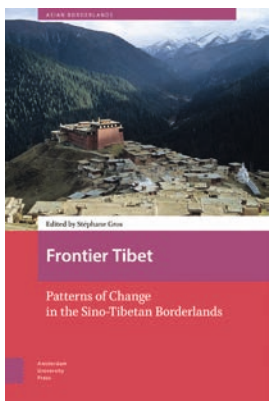
Series: Religion and Society in Asia



Michiel Baas (ed.) 2020.

The Asian Migrant's Body. Emotion, Gender and Sexuality.

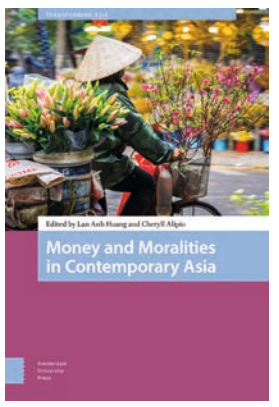
Series: New Mobilities in Asia



Stéphane Gros (ed.) 2019.

Frontier Tibet. Patterns of Change in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands.

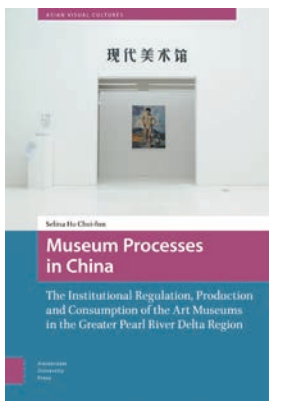
Series: Asian Borderlands



Lan Anh Hoang & Cheryll Alipio (eds.) 2019.

Money and Moralities in Contemporary Asia.

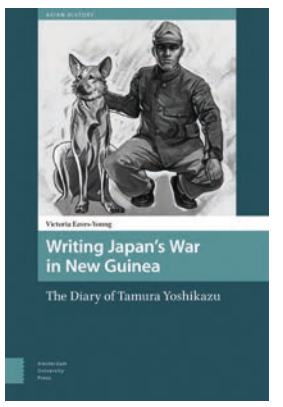
Series: Transforming Asia



Chui-fun Selina Ho. 2019.

Museum Processes in China. The Institutional Regulation, Production and Consumption of the Art Museums in the Greater Pearl River Delta Region.

Series: Asian Visual Cultures



Victoria Eaves-Young. 2019.

Writing Japan's War in New Guinea. The Diary of Tamura Yoshikazu.

Series: Asian History

For the entire Asian Studies collection, please visit:
https://www.aup.nl/en/academic/discipline/asian-studies

Amsterdam University Press

Workshop report: The Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections

Mehdi Amineh and Willem Vogelsang

Above: Workshop at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing.

On 15 January 2020, IIAS attended a workshop at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, in the context of the joint IIAS-CASS international research programme on China's Belt and Road Initiative. Papers under production were discussed as well as the further development of the programme.

The present research programme is entitled *The Geopolitical Economy of the Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections.* It is jointly coordinated by Mehdi Amineh, Director of the Energy Programme EPA at IIAS (EPA-IIAS), IIAS Deputy Director Willem Vogelsang, and Zhang Yuyan, General Director of the CASS Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP-CASS). It is the third international research programme co-managed by EPA-IIAS and a CASS institute.

This current programme concentrates on the international and transnational activities of and responses to Chinese corporations in a number of selected countries in Asia, Africa, and the European Union. The programme also studies the impact of related multilateral institutions set up by China, the regional and global reception of such multilateral institutions, their relationship to the activities and policies of Chinese corporations, and how these institutions could alter the existing regional and global order. More details about this and the previous programmes are available on the IIAS website at: www.iias.asia/programmes/energy-programme-asia

The workshop in Beijing, which was opened by IWEP-CASS Director Zhang Yuyan, was conducted in a very lively and positive atmosphere, with open and encouraging discussions of the papers submitted by the researchers involved in the programme. Zhang also concluded the meeting, reflecting on the papers presented and on the programme in general. Plans for the future were discussed, including a proposed series of meetings during the 12th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12) in 2021 in Kyoto, Japan.

The papers that were discussed are currently being prepared for publication in a new book series and peer-reviewed journals, including:

Mehdi Amineh (IIAS and Amsterdam University), *Towards Theorizing and Conceptualization of the Belt and Road Initiative*; Melanie van Driel (Utrecht University), *China's Statist Energy Relations with Iran, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan*; FENG Weijiang (IWEP), *The Political Economy of the Belt and Road Initiative*; Laszlo Maracz (Amsterdam University), *Evaluating the Hungarian Partnership in the Chinese BRI Project*; REN Lin (IWEP), *The Belt and Road Initiative and Global Governance*; SONG Jin (IWEP), *Industrial Structural Change in China and Industry Incentives to Participate in BRI, from the Perspective of the Supply Side*; TIAN Xu (IWEP), *Western Balkans with European Characteristics or Chinese Characteristics?*; Willem Vogelsang (IIAS), *BRI and Afghan-Chinese Relations: Another Quagmire?*; WANG Yongzhong (IWEP), *Facts on China's ODI in Belt and Road Countries*; Jeroen van Wijk (Maastricht University), *Case Study on the Political and Economic Impact of Chinese Developments in Ethiopia in the Context of BRI*; XU Xiujun (IWEP), *The Belt and Road Initiative and Third-Party Market Cooperation.*

Further development

The day after the workshop, EPA-IIAS Director Mehdi Amineh met with Director Prof. WANG Yongzhong and staff of the Energy Security Division of IWEP-CASS to discuss the further development of the programme. The meeting resulted in plans to expand the cooperation, working together on joint research on the study of energy supply security (oil and gas) and energy transition and alternative resources in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Mehdi Amineh,
Director of the Energy Programme
EPA at IIAS (EPA-IIAS)

Willem Vogelsang,
IIAS Deputy Director

New IIAS Programme: The Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD)

Dr Jennifer Holdaway.

As of 1 January 2020, FORHEAD has moved its international base to the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), where FORHEAD co-director Jennifer Holdaway is now affiliated and will continue to coordinate the network and its efforts.

The Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD) is an interdisciplinary network that brings together natural, medical and social scientists to explore the implications of environmental and social change for public health in China and beyond.

Environmental and social change have powerful impacts on public health, but interactions between natural and social systems are complex and fluid. Understanding and addressing them requires diverse forms of knowledge and the engagement of multiple actors. In China, the situation is complicated by the sheer pace of change and by the fact that different regions and populations face different problems as the result of their diverse environmental conditions and development pathways.

Since 2008, FORHEAD has sought to strengthen the knowledge base for responding to environmental and health problems in China and promote the more effective uptake of existing knowledge. It has fostered the development of a cohort of professionals able to work effectively on these issues from a perspective that is holistic and problem-oriented rather than narrowly discipline-based or technical. Our focus is on environment and health challenges associated with rapid industrialisation, the intensification of agriculture and urbanisation.

Programme focus

FORHEAD's work has evolved through several stages from field mapping, through the building of the network and development of research sites through small grants and summer institutes to a focus on specific issues through working groups.

In this current phase, the focus will be on distilling and disseminating the findings and experiences of the FORHEAD network through additional publications and curriculum materials that can be used by a wide range of different institutions. We will also be exploring the implications of China's experience for other countries, particularly in the context of China's growing international engagement.

Jennifer Holdaway

Jennifer Holdaway became an IIAS fellow in January 2020. As co-director of FORHEAD, she will continue to coordinate the network and its efforts during her affiliation with IIAS. Jennifer was formerly a Program Director and the China Representative at the Social Science Research Council and a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford School of Global and Area Studies. She holds a BA in Chinese Studies from Oxford University and a PhD in Political Science from the City University of New York. Her writing on environment and health and on various dimensions of migration and development has been published in journals including the *China Quarterly*, *the Journal of Contemporary China*, *Social Science and Medicine* and the *International Migration Review.*

Coordinator:
Jennifer Holdaway,
j.a.holdaway.2@iias.nl

Websites:
www.iias.asia/programmes/forhead
www.forhead.org/en_index.html

New Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University and IIAS

Dr Táňa Dluhošová.

Starting from 1 February 2020, the new Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University and IIAS is occupied by Dr Táňa Dluhošová, from the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic. She will be staying until the end of June 2020, to teach a course in Taiwanese history and culture at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). She will also continue her research into Taiwanese elite families at both LIAS and IIAS. Dr Dluhošová has developed several innovative, interdisciplinary methodological approaches to the study of social change in Taiwan.

The Chair of Taiwan Studies is supported by the Department of Cross-Strait Education of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China, the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University, and the International Institute for Asian Studies. See page 3 for the Call for Applications for the Chair of Taiwan Studies starting in September 2020.

Universiteit Leiden The Netherlands

International Institute for Asian Studies

IIAS Research, Networks, and Initiatives

IIAS research and other initiatives are carried out within a number of thematic, partially overlapping research clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents and built around the notion of social agency. In addition, IIAS remains open to other potentially significant topics. More information: www.iias.asia

IIAS research clusters

Asian Cities

This cluster deals with cities and urban cultures with their issues of flows and fluxes, ideas and goods, and 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 uses of culture and cultural heritage practices in Asia. In particular, it addresses a variety of definitions associated with cultural heritage and their implications for social agency. The cluster engages with a broad range of related concepts and issues, including the contested assertions of 'tangible' and 'intangible', concepts such as 'authenticity', 'national heritage' and 'shared heritage', and, in general, with issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage.

Global Asia

Asia has a long history of transnational linkages with other parts of the world, thereby shaping the global order, as much as the world at large continues to shape Asia. The Global Asia Cluster addresses contemporary issues related to Asia's projection into the world as well as trans-national interactions within the Asian region itself. In addition IIAS aims to help develop a more evenly balanced field of Asian Studies by collaborating in trans-regional capacity building initiatives and by working on new types of methodological approaches that encourage synergies and interactions between disciplines, regions and practices.

The Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) is an inclusive network that brings together concerned scholars and practitioners engaged in collaborative research and events on cities in Asia. It seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. The UKNA Secretariat is at IIAS, but the network comprises universities and planning institutions across China, India, Southeast Asia and Europe. Its current flagship project is the Southeast Asia Neighbourhoods Network (SEANNET).

www.ukna.asia
Coordinator: Paul Rabé p.e.rabe@iias.nl
Clusters: Asian Cities; Asian Heritages

Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET)

SEANNET is about research, teaching and dissemination of knowledge on Asia through the prism of the neighbourhood. The programme is supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, NY (2017-2020). Through case study sites in six selected cities in Southeast Asia (Mandalay, Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Manila, Surabaya), SEANNET seeks to engages the humanistic social sciences in a dialogue with urban stakeholders as co-contributors of alternative knowledge about cities. This is done through a combination of participatory field-research, in-situ roundtables, workshops, conferences, publications and new forms of pedagogy developed in collaboration with local institutions of learning. SEANNET's second ambition is to help shape and empower a community of early-career scholars and practitioners working on and from Southeast Asia. SEANNET's research teams comprise international and local scholars, students from local universities, and civil society representatives, all working together with the neighbourhood residents.

www.ukna.asia/seannet
Coordinators: Paul Rabé p.e.rabe@iias.nl and Rita Padawangi Singapore University of Social Sciences ritapadawangi@suss.edu.sg
Cluster: Asian Cities

The Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD)

The Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD) is an interdisciplinary network that brings together natural, medical and social scientists to explore the implications of environmental and social change for public health in China and beyond. Also see page 51 of this issue.

www.iias.asia/programmes/forhead
Coordinator: Jennifer Holdaway j.a.holdaway.2@iias.nl
Cluster: Global Asia

FORHEAD
健康、环境与发展论坛

Initiated by IIAS, this programme involves Leiden University in the Netherlands, two Institutes at National Taiwan University in Taiwan and one at Yonsei University in South Korea. Discussions with other possible partners in Asia are ongoing. 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 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.

www.iias.asia/programmes/critical-heritage-studies
Coordinator: Elena Paskaleva e.g.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Cluster: Asian Heritages

Humanities across Borders: Asia & Africa in the World

Co-funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (New York, USA) this IIAS programme (2017-2021) for global collaboration on humanistic education is carried out by a consortium of twenty-three leading institutes in Asia, West Africa, Europe and the United States, and their local partners in Asia and Africa. Its goal is to mobilise the development of a global consortium of universities and their local partners interested in fostering humanities-grounded education. Its substantive vision is that of an inclusive and expanded humanities. To this end, the program will initiate methodological interventions in teaching and research to surpass narrow disciplinary, institutional and ideological agendas. The programme facilitates border-crossing meetings, workshops and other collaborative pedagogical formats in its partner geographies. Jointly conducted, these events aim to shape a curricular matrix and framework for humanistic education across borders.

Follow the stories on the Humanities across Borders Blog
humanitiesacrossborders.org/blog

www.iias.asia/hab
Clusters: Global Asia; Asian Heritages

Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN)

This network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilisation and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner.

The 7th ABRN conference, Borderland Futures: Technologies, Zones, Co-existences. will take place in Seoul, South Korea, 5-27 June 2020.

www.asianborderlands.net
Coordinator: Erik de Maaker
maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl
Cluster: Global Asia

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

The new joint research programme between IIAS-EPA and the Institute of World Politics and Economy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing is entitled *The Political Economy of the Belt & Road Initiative and its Reflections*. It aims to investigate the policy, policy tools, and impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative. By focusing on China's involvement with governments, local institutions, and local stakeholders, it aims to examine the subsequent responses to China's activities from the local to the global-geopolitical level in the following countries: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Hungary, the West Balkans, and Russia.

www.iias.asia/programmes/energy-programme-asia
Coordinator: M. Amineh
m.p.amineh@uva.nl; m.p.amineh@iias.nl
Cluster: Global Asia

Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies

The Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies brings together people and methods to study the 'Indian Ocean World', aiming to co-organize conferences, workshops and academic exchanges with institutions from the region. Together with IIAS, the Centre facilitates an inclusive and global platform bringing together scholars and institutions working on connections and comparisons across the axis of human interaction with an interest in scholarship that cuts across borders of places, periods and disciplines.

www.iias.asia/programmes/leiden-centre-indian-ocean-studies
Cluster: Global Asia

The New Silk Road. China's Belt and Road Initiative in Context

The International Institute for Asian Studies has recently started a new project of interdisciplinary research aimed at the study of the Belt and Road Initiative of the Chinese government, with special attention given to the impact of the 'New Silk Road' on countries, regions and peoples outside of China.

www.iias.asia/programmes/newsilkroad
Cluster: Global Asia

Africa-Asia, A New Axis of Knowledge

'Africa-Asia, A New Axis of Knowledge' is an inclusive transnational platform that convenes scholars, artists, intellectuals, and educators from Africa, Asia, Europe, and beyond to study, discuss, and share knowledge on the intricate connections and entanglements between the African and Asian world regions. Our aim is to contribute to the long-term establishment of an autonomous, intellectual and academic community of individuals and institutions between two of the world's most vibrant continents. We aspire to facilitate the development of research and educational infrastructures in African and Asian universities, capable of delivering foundational knowledge in the two regions about one another's cultures and societies. This exchange, we believe, is a prerequisite for a sustainable and balanced socio-economic progress of the two continents. It is also an opportunity to move beyond the Western-originated fields of Asian and African area studies—something that would benefit Asian, African and Western scholars alike.

www.africasia.org
Cluster: Global Asia

International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)

With its biennial conferences, International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is the largest global forum for academics and civil society exchange on Asia. Founded in 1997 at the initiative of IIAS, ICAS serves as a platform for scholars, social and cultural leaders, and institutions focusing on issues critical to Asia, and, by implication, the rest of the world. The ICAS biennial conferences are organised in cooperation with local universities, cities and institutions and attended by scholars and other experts, institutions and publishers from 60 countries. ICAS also organises the biennial 'ICAS Book Prize' (IBP), which awards the most prestigious prizes in the field of Asian Studies for books and PhD theses in English, Korean, Chinese, French and German (more language editions are planned for the future).

Eleven conventions have been held since 1997 (Leiden, Berlin, Singapore, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Daejon, Honolulu, Macao, Adelaide, Chiang Mai and Leiden).

ICAS 12 will be held in Kyoto, Japan, 24-27 August 2021.

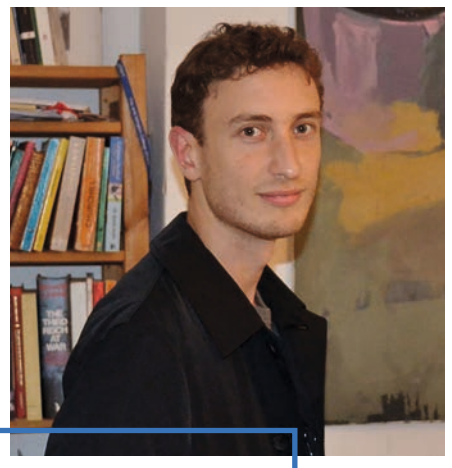
Website: www.icas.asia
IIAS/ICAS secretariat:
Paul van der Velde icas@iias.nl

International Convention of Asia Scholars

IIAS Fellowship Programme

In the spotlight

The International Institute for Asian Studies annually hosts a large number of visiting researchers (research 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. Meet our fellows at www.iias.asia/fellows



Oliver Crawford

Indonesian Translations of Marx and Engels

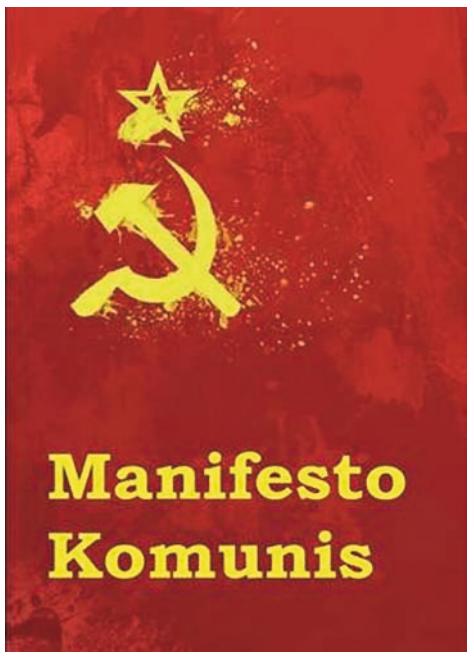
My research in Leiden explores translations of *The Communist Manifesto* made in Indonesia from the 1920s to the 1960s. During these tumultuous years, which saw the growth of the Indonesian nationalist movement, the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic (1945), and the initial period of democracy and 'Guided Democracy' after independence (1950-65), Marx and Engels were not only two of the most influential Western political thinkers in Indonesia, they were also the most translated. Their *Communist Manifesto* was translated into Malay and Bahasa Indonesia in 1923, 1925, 1946 (twice), and 1948, with various reprints being published until 1964.

These translations offer a valuable insight into how Indonesians engaged with Marxism and how this engagement evolved over time. Translators frequently noted the difficulty of translating the Marx and Engels texts, due to their heavy use of terms that referred to European history, society and politics, which had no obvious Indonesian equivalents. Yet the text itself seemed to invite translation, offering a universal schema of historical and social development that applied to all nations, including Indonesia. Indeed, many of the versions of the text that reached Indonesia *were themselves* Dutch and English translations of the German original, underlining the *Manifesto*'s translatability.

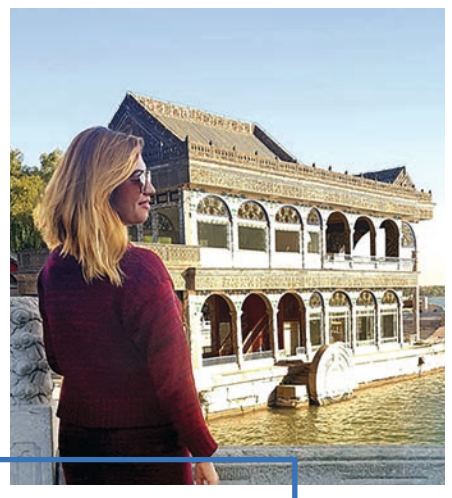
Through my research I will investigate the different approaches adopted by the Indonesian translators. Which terms were considered entirely foreign and so untranslatable? Which were exchanged for vernacular words? What role was there for Javanese and Arabic terms? Did the translations notably change between the 1920s and the 1960s? Answering these questions will show how Indonesians mediated between Western culture and their own, and how they attempted to make the writings of two nineteenth-century German philosophers comprehensible in a mainly Islamic, Southeast Asian country.

My project is a case study in a 'global' approach to intellectual history, which seeks to understand how transnational ideologies, such as Marxism, interacted with existing patterns of religion and culture as they spread, rather than treating these ideas as unproblematically universal. As such, my research fits with the IIAS's 'Global Asia' project's stated goal of seeing the circulation of ideas through Asia not as a hegemonic transmission of ideas from West to East but as a dialogue, in this case a dialogue between Marx and his Indonesian interpreters.

Leiden is the ideal place to conduct this research because many of the Indonesian translations of *The Communist Manifesto* are available in the collections of Leiden University. Leiden also has a distinguished history as a centre for the study of Indonesian history. I look forward to contributing to the vibrant intellectual community in Leiden and furthering our understanding of a central strand of Indonesia's intellectual history.



Indonesian translation of *The Communist Manifesto*.



Gul-i-Hina Shahzad

China's Belt and Road Initiative

My research stay at IIAS has been incredibly enriching. While working on my doctoral research project on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), I had a tremendous opportunity to be a part of and benefit from the ongoing project *Building the New Silk Road. China's Belt and Road Initiative in Context* at IIAS under the guidance of Prof. Richard Griffiths, who is coordinating the project. This project aligns aptly with my research goals as I analyze the BRI and its domestic political implications in the participating BRI countries focusing on two specific aspects, namely its impact on the processes of democratization and regime change in the countries involved. Specifically, I take the case of Pakistan to examine the variation as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is considered to be the flagship project of the BRI with its huge investment and infrastructure development. Prof. Griffiths has been generous enough to provide me with his time and constant feedback on my research and data collection.

The IIAS fellowship has not only enabled me to conduct my research in a conducive environment, but it also provided me with a dynamic platform to engage and connect with a relevant community of scholars. I was fortunate to participate in organizing the event for the Chinese delegation of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) only after two weeks of joining the IIAS fellows team. In this event, I presented my preliminary work on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and discussed the pertinent opportunities and challenges for Pakistan. This discussion allowed me to situate the case of Pakistan in a broader context.

During my stay at IIAS, I have spent most of my time in the IIAS office or the library, writing in beautiful Leiden and The Hague. My personal favorite has been the *Asian Library* at Leiden University which holds an immensely rich collection of Asian studies, including China. The Sinology collection of the library is one of the largest in the country with its indispensable sources, books, journals, and articles on Chinese Studies and several databases available both in English and Chinese languages.

Besides my research, I have also enjoyed exploring the local culture and travelling around the Netherlands. Other than visiting the major cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Haarlem, I ventured upon a road trip to a small Dutch village, *Volendam*, where I tried on the traditional Dutch costume and jewelry, and walked on the old sea dike alongside a stretch of colorfully painted houses. I also visited the beautiful historical fortified city *Sloten* in the Province of Friesland, and managed to attend the Chinese New Year celebration in the northern Province of Groningen. I value such cultural experiences immensely, for they are an essential part of living in a new place and equally crucial for one's learning and growth.

After my IIAS fellowship, I will be spending the next months in Milan, Italy, to continue working on my PhD research project. Later this year, I also intend to visit Pakistan and spend some time in Gwadar, Balochistan for my research. I am thankful to the IIAS team for making my research stay intellectually stimulating and rewarding. The staff and a vibrant group of fellow researchers have been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration for me. I will cherish the time spent here in the Netherlands as I continue on my academic journey.

The old silke rout as seen from Karakorum Highway. Courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

Current Fellows

Mehdi Amineh

Coordinator
Energy Programme Asia
1 Sept 2007 – 31 Dec 2024

Amirbahram Arabahmadi

1 Feb – 31 July 2020

Giuseppe Cappello

The Gulzār-i ḥāl by Banwālīdās: transmission and reception of an Indo-Persian text
1 Nov 2019 – 30 April 2020

Lisa Caviglia

9 Feb – 30 Nov 2020

Rocco Cestola

Sphoṭa and Śabda through Yogaśāstra of Patañjali
1 Nov 2019 – 30 April 2020

Ying-Kit Chan

Harry R. Caldwell and natural history in twentieth-century China
1 Nov 2019 – 31 Oct 2021

Preeti Chopra

Communities of care: the city and its fragments in colonial Bombay
1 Sept 2019 – 30 June 2020

Oliver Crawford

Translating Marx in Indonesia 1920-1965
7 Oct 2019 – 7 Aug 2020

Táňa Dluhošová

Chair of Taiwan Studies
1 Feb – 30 June 2020

Joppan George

Airborne Colony
1 Aug 2019 – 31 May 2020

Lennert Gesterkamp

The Shanhaijing and sacred geography in ancient China.
1 Oct 2019 – 30 Sept 2020

Mehkola Gomes

Command in copper: writing, religion and power in South and Southeast Asia, 300-1000 CE
1 Jan – 30 June 2020

Zoë Goodman

Indian Ocean legacies and uncertain futures in Mombasa
1 July 2019 – 31 March 2020

Richard Griffiths

Coordinator
The New Silk Road. China's Belt and Road Initiative in context
1 Oct 2018 – 31 Dec 2021

Jennifer Holdaway

Coordinator
Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD)
1 Jan 2020 – 31 Dec 2021

Manpreet K. Janeja

The aesthetics of school meals: (dis)trust, risk, and uncertainty
1 Oct 2019 – 31 July 2020

Pralay Kanungo

Indian politics
1 Sept 2013 – 30 June 2020

Ole Birk Laursen

Indian anarchism, pacifism, and anticolonialism, 1922-1954
1 Oct 2019 – 31 July 2020

Cha-hsuan Liu

July 2018 – 31 Dec 2021

Christian de Pee

The Chinese Renaissance
1 Sept 2019 – 30 June 2020

Roshni Sengupta

1 Aug 2019 – 31 July 2020

Gul-i-Hina Shahzad

China's Belt and Road Initiative: impact on regional politics
15 Nov 2019 – 15 May 2020

IIAS Fellowship possibilities and requirements

Apply for an IIAS fellowship

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

Combine your IIAS fellowship with two extra months of research in Paris

When applying for an IIAS Fellowship, you have the option of simultaneously submitting an application for an additional two months of research at the Collège d'études mondiales of the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (CEM-FMSH), in Paris, France, immediately after your stay in Leiden.

Application deadlines: 1 March & 1 October

Apply for a Gonda fellowship

For promising young Indologists at the post-doctorate level it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS.

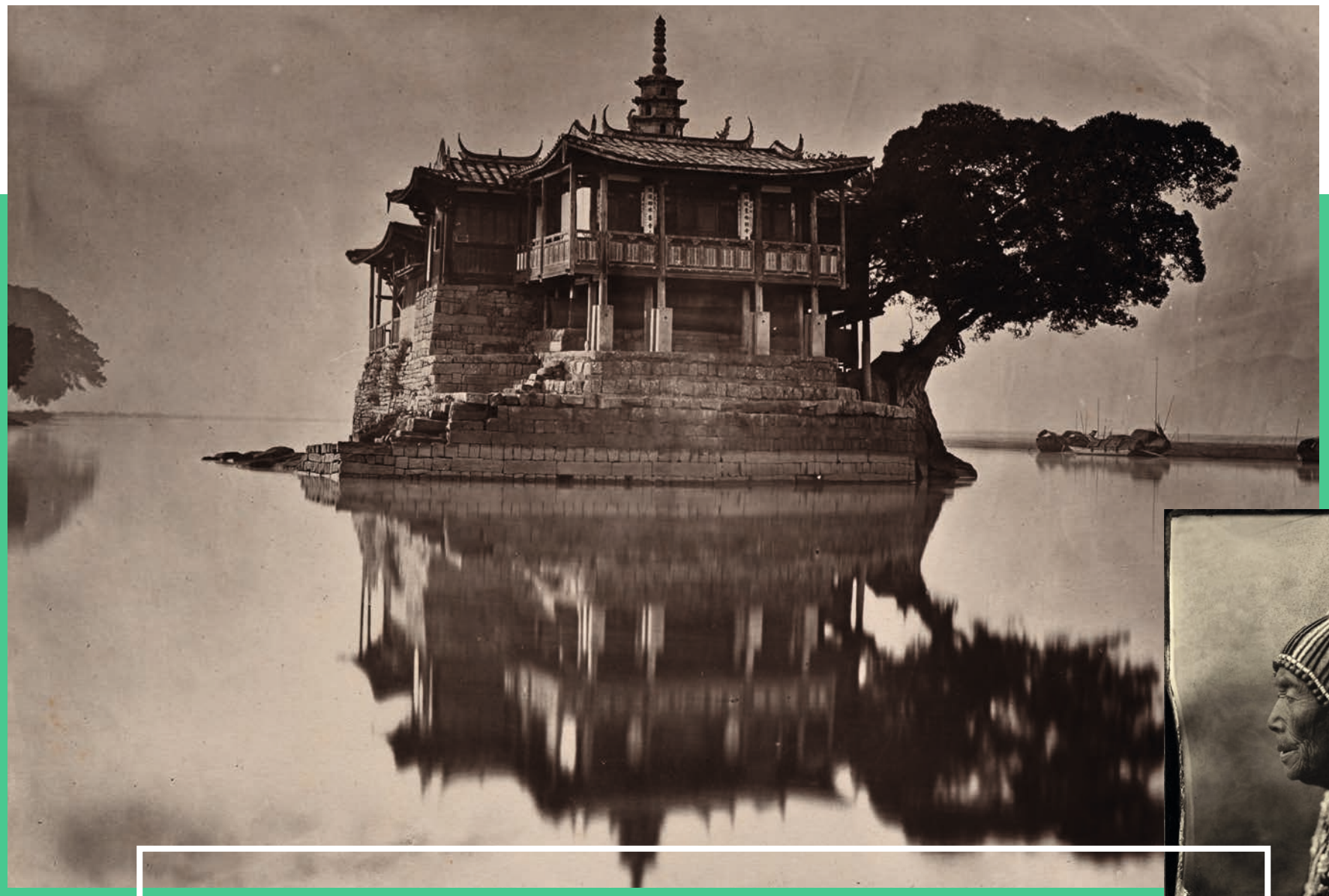
Application deadlines: 1 April & 1 October

Apply for the Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University

We invite applications for the Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University. The Chair provides a Professorial Fellow position of five or ten months for a visiting scholar in Taiwan Studies to teach and conduct research at Leiden University and IIAS. The Fellowship covers one or both of the two semesters September 2020–January 2021 and February-June 2021.

Application deadline: 16 April 2020

Information and application forms:
www.iias.asia/fellowships



Left: John Thomson, *The Island Pagoda*, 1873. Carbon print. Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Anthony Rives. © Peabody Essex Museum. Photography by Ken Sawyer.

Below: Luo Dan, *Simple Song No. 7 (Jin Ma Wei, Lao Mu Deng Village)*, 2010. Inkjet print from collodion negatives. © Luo Dan, Courtesy of M97 Gallery.

A Lasting Memento

John Thomson's Photographs along the River Min

Peabody Essex Museum
1 June 2019 – 19 April 2020
Salem, Massachusetts, USA
www.pem.org

The Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem (MA) presents a voyage into 19th-century China through one of PEM's photographic treasures, John Thomson's rare album *Foochow and the River Min*. More than forty striking landscapes, city views, and portrait studies will be on view, captured by Thomson as he traveled in the Fujian province in southeast China from 1870 to 1871. These prints are complemented by a selection of photographs by contemporary artist Luo Dan, who was inspired by Thomson to undertake his own journey in southwest China in 2010. *A Lasting Memento: John Thomson's Photographs Along the River Min* is on view at PEM from 1 June 2019 through 19 April 2020.

From 1870 to 1871, Scottish-born photographer John Thomson traveled 160 miles up the River Min to document the area in and around the city of Fuzhou (Foochow), one of the most picturesque regions in China. Thomson gathered eighty photographs from this voyage into an album titled *Foochow and the River Min*, which was sold by advance subscription to the foreign residents of Fuzhou — tea planters, merchants, missionaries and government officials — who wanted a way to share their experiences with friends and family back home. Of the 46 copies originally published, fewer than 10 survive today and PEM is privileged to own two of them, both of which are featured in the exhibition.

> "Many people have a conception of China as very industrialized and modern, even sterile, but these photographs complicate that notion and reveal the country's incredible beauty and geographic diversity", says Sarah Kennel, former PEM curator and current Curator of Photography at the High Museum. "The roots of China's rapid modernization go back to the 19th-century and are part of a larger history of maritime culture, trade, and globalization that are also entwined with PEM's origin story. This exhibition affirms how photography can bring us back to another place in time and can change the way we see the world".

Thomson was a renowned photographer, focusing on fine art, landscape, and architectural photos, and was often credited with being one of the first photographers to use pictures in conjunction with journalistic commentary. *Foochow and the River Min* is accompanied by introductory text, presenting a pictorial journey featuring the character of the growing city of Fuzhou, the beauty of the landscapes surrounding the River Min, as well as Thomson's studies of the people he encountered there.

Documenting Eastern culture

Thomson is considered one of the first photographers to document East and South Asia. Born in Scotland, he learned photography while still in school, working as an apprentice to a maker of optical and scientific instruments. In 1862, he joined his older brother William, also a photographer and watchmaker, in Singapore, where they established a studio. Thomson spent the next several years photographing throughout Asia, including Cambodia, India, and Thailand. By 1866, he had joined the Royal Ethnological Society of London, was elected a Fellow member of the Royal Geographic Society, and styled himself as an expert on Eastern cultures. In 1868, he established a studio in Hong Kong, a burgeoning center of photography and trade. For the next four years, Thomson traveled and photographed throughout China before returning to Britain in 1872, where he remained until his death in 1921.

The exhibition follows Thomson's journey up the River Min, from the city of Fuzhou to Nanping. Among the works on view are an extraordinary series on the Yuen Fu monastery, tucked high up a steep, rocky ravine. A strain of wistful romanticism is present, particularly in landscape photographs that incorporate a solitary figure.

> "Thomson's extraordinary gifts as a photographer are evident in his compositions, including his famous view of the floating island pagoda", says Kennel. "You can look at these as merely beautiful pictures, but if you unlock them a little bit they tell the story of an important moment of economic trade, cultural exchange, and political tension".

In order to make his negatives, Thomson used the wet-collodion process. This required him to set up a large camera on a tripod and prepare the photographic plate on the spot by dipping it into light-sensitive chemicals in a makeshift darkroom, putting it in a plate holder and making the exposure within five minutes. He experimented with these processes while traveling by boat or ascending very steep hills and traversing rough terrain with a coterie of Chinese employees who not only hauled his equipment but also sometimes carried Thomson himself. Missionary and business colleagues helped facilitate introductions and provide access to unique locations so that Thomson could make his landscapes and portraits. The albums were printed using the carbon process, which imbues them with a rich, purplish tonality.

Inspired by Thomson

140 years after Thomson photographed China, his work directly inspired a series of photographs, titled *Simple Song*, by contemporary Chinese photographer Luo Dan (b. 1968). Trained as a photojournalist, Luo Dan's work focuses on the impact of modernization and globalization in China. After seeing reproductions of Thomson's work at an exhibition in Beijing, Luo taught himself the nineteenth-century wet-collodion process through videos found on the Internet. He then traveled to the remote Nu River Valley in southwestern China, where he lived with and photographed the Lisu and Nu Christian ethnic minority communities for nearly two years. Luo was especially interested in what he perceived as the villagers' connection to local cultural traditions.

> "Luo's photographs challenge people to think about the passage of time and the tension between the past and present", says Stephanie Tung, Associate Curator for Exhibitions and Research. "The portraits blend elements of modern life with a sense of enduring timelessness, inviting you to reflect on notions of progress in society and history."

A Lasting Memento features 10 works by Luo that reflect on and reverberate with the spirit and enterprise of Thomson's 19th-century project.