NO. **86**

The Newsletter

MIGRATION

IS NOT A CRIME

The Study

Asian migration studies

The Focus

Waste and social mobilisation

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Economic and social effects of the pandemic

IAS

International Institute for Asian Studies

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In this edition of the Focus

Environmental issues, social activism and policy challenges

Aysun Uyar Makibayashi

Environmental change issues, both sudden shocks and gradual changes have been forcing states, communities and individuals to transform their ways of coping with these adversities. Recently, not only governmental and state-to-state international initiatives but also non-state interactions are joining the decision-making processes through their public discussions, demonstrations and official involvement in the actual processes of law-making with regard to these environmental change issues. This short Focus section pays attention to this multi-level involvement of our societies to the policy challenges and policy transformation processes of the local, national and international decision makers to face and bring more responsive as well as responsible solutions for our pending environmental change issues. Academic partnership, social activism, mass mobilisation and raising awareness about day to day adjustments to these ongoing environmental changes, as well as people's understanding of already changing concepts of environmental and social changes, are some of the main issues raised in the articles of this Focus.

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

I would like to start by expressing my extreme gratitude for everyone who contributed to this issue. I have been most impressed with everyone's commitment to deliver, despite the demanding circumstances. It wasn't easy, but together we managed to compile yet another fantastic issue. Many thanks!

We hope you will all join us in Kyoto next year for ICAS 12. Find details about submitting a proposal to the conference, and your titles to the Book Prize, on p.4 of this issue.

On pp.5-9, IBP General Secretary Paul van der Velde, tells us the 'Story of the IBP'. Read about its beginnings and how it grew into the largest book prize of its kind.

Three of our regional editors have contributed to this issue: The Asia Institute in Melbourne, NYU Shanghai and Fudan University, and the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. Find their articles on pp.40-47.

The report on pp.48-49 is the latest update of a project in the IIAS Humanities across Borders programme: 'Retelling the neighbourhood'.

Our fellows and latest announcements can be found on pp.50-51; IIAS research programmes, networks and other initiatives are described in brief on pp.52-53; and on pp.54-55 you will find the beautifully haunting images of this issues' Portrait: 'Forgotten Faces'.

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International Institute for Asian Studies

Nurturing community during COVID-19

Philippe Peycam
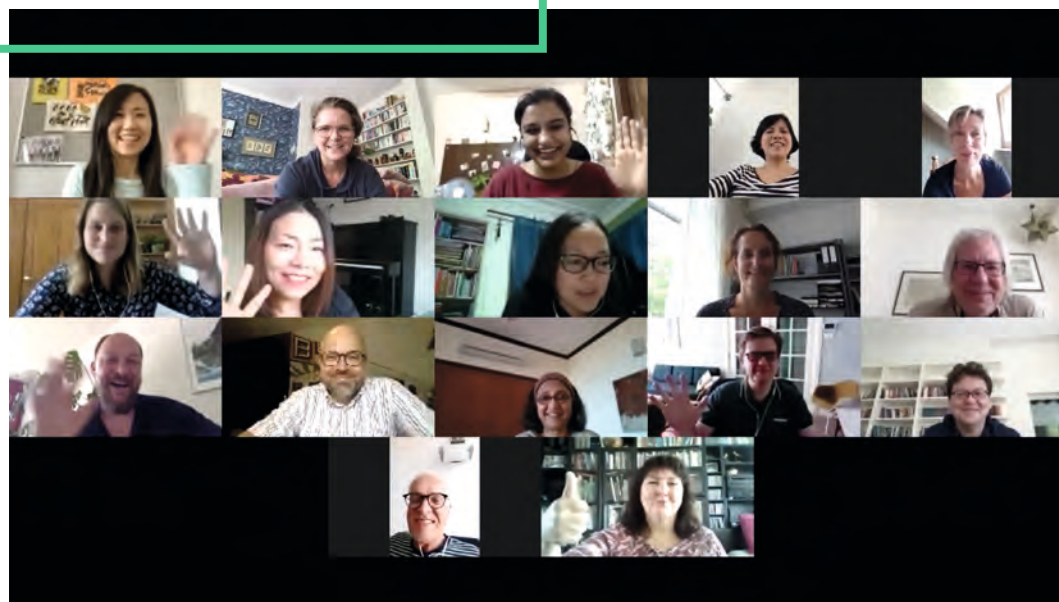
Below: IIAS staff keeping in touch through online meetings.

Amidst the anxieties and grief brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, IIAS – a mediating space for dialogue and generation of knowledge on, in and with Asia – is witnessing the disruption of many of its activities and plans. Many programmed events have been either cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Our sense of purpose and way of functioning as a global-local platform of engaged scholarship is being put to the test. Yet, with the little hindsight we already have, I can say that the confinement period, if at first unsettling, is somehow turning into a meaningful experience for us. We, like so many other organisations all around the world, have had no choice but to brace ourselves and to reflect upon our mission and methods. To what extent can IIAS's mode of functioning withstand the challenges of navigating the present crisis and its future unfolding?

To ensure that the IIAS team would not turn into an assortment of scattered colleagues, left to work on their separate tasks in isolation, our first decision was to organise everyone into virtual 'working groups', with the aim to synchronise our actions and shape them into broader collective efforts. One of the underlying issues we sought to address was the extent to which our actions would respond to the emerging needs and aspirations of not only the staff, but also the resident and incoming fellows, project partners and colleagues at large, that might result from the COVID crisis.

National borders were closed and international travel was brought to a near-complete standstill. Yet, this new exploration of the local, at the expense of what had perhaps become an addictive dependence on the global, may paradoxically not necessarily mean the end to universally framed concerns and interests. On the contrary, thanks mainly to social and digital media, people and communities have become even more receptive, more dependent on each other, a realisation reinforced by the fact that each and every region of the world has experienced the crisis almost simultaneously. An urge to return to a simpler approach to the basic elements of life has been coupled with an enhanced desire to transcend cultures and geographies around shared values and aspirations. The recent demonstrations across the world – from Tokyo to Santiago, from Delhi to London – against systemic racism, following the tragic killing of George Floyd in the United States, is an example of the emergence of this new collective consciousness.

I see this as pertinent to a shared desire for basic solidarity – between generations, between societies and segments of society – a sentiment born out of the threat of a socially blind virus. In terms of a human life, the idea is emerging of a common shared space that cannot be infringed upon for narrow economic or power gains, a basic realm that

concentrates on the value of a dignified life in its multiple expressions. This idea is certainly compounded by the sentiment that COVID is just one of nature's responses to human hubris, and that it is yet another warning against a global ecological crisis that is ahead of us. Economic and social disparities may appear less acceptable now, especially when the effects of the virus tend to reinforce them, with large swaths of society, in both the global North and South, left without jobs, education or healthcare. Observing the fact that service providers hitherto deemed subalterns – nurses, cleaners, carers, farmers, postal workers, and so forth – enabled us to continue to live our lives under lockdown, is the kind of collective realisation that is bound to drastically alter our perceptions of the world, of the role of youth, of the falsity of artificial structures, and the space of action and reflection that is needed to recalibrate social relations at large.

Against these needs and aspirations arising from a new urgency impinging upon both global and local actors, IIAS stands as a model of engaged scholarship. The institute has long taken steps that in the present context have become even more relevant: initiate and assist programmes that instil inclusive local grounding while supporting meaningful interactions at the global level; and make a commitment to a sense of commonality in which differences are respected while mutual understanding through reasoned thinking is sought after. IIAS's 'touch' is its capacity to reach out to human experiences, wherever they are, without the mediation of artificial boundaries or hierarchies imposed by disciplinary, institutional or national structures.

What now appears even more essential is IIAS's combined sets of approaches: at the same time a research facilitator, a network builder, a pedagogical enabler, a cross-sector knowledge disseminator and a promoter of dialogue between cultures and communities. For instance, when put together, the IIAS fellowships, *in situ* graduate schools, and publication and dissemination instruments, define IIAS's role as a facilitator of research. Likewise, the institute's border-transcending initiatives link academic endeavours with other practices of knowledge in such a way that they enrich each other's texture; initiatives such as the pioneering pedagogical model developed by the programme 'Humanities across Borders' (HaB), or the direct civic interventions enacted by the institute-coordinated Southeast Asia Neighbornhoods Network (SEANNET).

Within the organisation, a number of post-COVID resolutions are what will help IIAS to further its mission and unique methodology. I see them growing around already existing strengths of the institute:

- **From collaboration to mutualisation:** allowing other partners and projects to (reciprocally) use the platforms and

networks we have created so as to deepen each other's experience and mission.
- **Systematically anchoring activities in contexts,** at regional, national, and local levels, based on respect for the diversity of conditions and an equal belief in trans-local trans–cultural understanding.
- **Moving beyond the narrowly individualistic, fragmented model of scholarship** through processes of collective deliberation around themes that have the potential to produce transformative shared outcomes.
- **Innovation through creative disruption** by bringing into contact peoples, ideas and approaches otherwise unlikely to interrelate; to support 'experiential' meeting formats that can instil new debates, and encourage new consciousness or solutions.
- **Consciously choreograph** these multiple innovations-disruptions to create conducive situations for new conviviality, new meanings, new understandings.

One word can sum up IIAS's post-COVID method of action and resolve, rarely used for an academic institution: *community,* or the art of *community formation* and *community nurturing.* Concretely this means that we at IIAS believe that people will still want to meet in person, to discover, exchange and learn to 'unlock' themselves. They will still travel, but for better reasons than to conform to a narrow academic habitus. To this communal desire must be added a shared aspiration for situated knowledge, hence the need for organically shaped multi-purpose events or activities for which online instruments are used to the extent that they *include* and *facilitate,* not become an end in themselves.

Take the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS). During confinement, with no clear outlook as to when preparation work for ICAS 12 in Kyoto could resume, we, together with our partners at Kyoto Seika University, decided to stick to our original plan to hold the ICAS biennial conference on 24-27 August 2021. In the midst of the lockdown, we took the stand that people will want to meet again and that ICAS's unique ecology of knowledge exchange, built on multiple collaborations, and modified to foster a combination of physical and digital connectivity, will continue to thrive. We have no doubt that people will still want to enrich themselves by partaking in more than one exchange format because knowledge and its clarification occurs through dialogue and in conversation with each other, in moments when one least expects.

Thanks to these deeply ingrained convictions, helped by a few additional innovations and resolutions, I believe IIAS and its team will not only weather the COVID crisis and its consequences, but will come out of it stronger.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

Davide Grieco on unsplash.com

ICAS 12 – Call for Proposals

The 12th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12) will be held in Kyoto, the cultural heart of Japan, from 24-27 August 2021, in the iconic Kyoto International Conference Center. The city is famous for its world-heritage sites, temples, gardens, palaces and craft centres.

Kyoto Seika University (SEIKA) will be the main host of ICAS 12. Delivering programmes to more than 3,500 students across five faculties – Art, Design, Manga, Popular Culture and Humanities – SEIKA promotes a spirit of independence and freedom through progressive, liberal and humanistic education.

Participate at ICAS 12 in Kyoto and enjoy a multitude of networking opportunities, possibilities to share your research, meet with publishers, and participate in cultural activities.

Deadline 1 October 2020
Full call for proposals and submissions portal at
https://icas.asia/icas12-cfp

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The ICAS Book Prize 2021 – Call for Submissions

The biennial ICAS Book Prize (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 worldwide visibility and recognition.

For the current edition (IBP 2021), books in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese are eligible.

For the English language edition we also welcome dissertations on Asia in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences. Please consult the rules for eligibility before submitting a title.

Deadline 1 October 2020*
Publishers, submit your publications at
https://icas.asia/icas-book-prize-2021
Authors, make sure your publisher knows about this competition!

* Deadline may vary for some of the language editions

The ICAS Dissertation Awards

Question: what do studies of the everyday life of 18-19th century Swedish East India Company employees, Santal architectural history, gay life in 21st century Manila, and 19th century Iranian portrait photography and Persian painting, have in common? Answer: they have all won an ICAS Award for the Best Dissertation in the Humanities or Social Sciences. (The full list of previous winners can be found at https://icas.asia/previous-ibp).

Since its inception in 1998 when the first ICAS conference was held in Leiden (The Netherlands), the International Convention of Asia Scholars has become the largest gathering of its kind in the world. The ICAS Book Prize (IBP) was instituted by ICAS Secretary Paul van der Velde for ICAS 4 in Shanghai (2005), which also from the start included an Award for Best Dissertation in Asian studies. Two conventions later, at ICAS 6 in Daejeon (2009), the Dissertation Awards started to recognise two categories, Humanities and Social Sciences. Following this development, Reading Committee Accolades were added in both categories so as to recognise dissertations that, while not of the standard of the main Award Winner, represented the best work in a specific area: (1) Most Accessible and Captivating Work for the Non-specialist Reader; (2) Specialist Dissertation; and (3) Ground-breaking/ Innovative Subject Matter.

The Reading Committee, generally composed of previous Award or Accolade winners, takes on the task of reading and assessing the entries. Committee members first produce a public Longlist of the leading contenders in each category, then a Shortlist, and finally the Winners. The Winners of the current edition will be announced at ICAS 12 in Kyoto (24-27 August 2021). The Committee also grants the Accolades, which are not necessarily dissertations that have made it onto the Longlist. The number of dissertations submitted was low to begin with, but over the years the numbers have grown enormously, with around 150 submissions for IBP 2019.

The qualities that make a dissertation the best in its category are hardly unexpected – originality, intellectual quality, depth of research, significant conclusions that make it of interest to the wider field, properly thought out theoretical and organisational framework, and so on – but the very best works have something else. They attract, they intrigue, they quite simply shine and demand that they be published and read by a wide audience of Asia scholars.

Winning an Award or an Accolade, or being on the Shortlist or even the Longlist, entails more than a cash prize or certificate. It brings the dissertation to the notice of academic publishers, who are naturally keen to acquire the best works, and provides a considerable boost to a younger scholar's resume, greatly improving their chances of building an academic career. That was the intention in establishing the Awards, and the presence of numerous academic publishers at each ICAS gives winners the very best opportunity to arrange publication of their work.

The ICAS Dissertation Awards have always been about giving newly endowed PhDs those opportunities. While the 'submit by 1 October' date is indeed fixed, the organisers have always retained a certain flexibility with regard to other aspects, recognising the ways in which new technologies can impact on the format of a PhD, understanding 'Asia' in the broadest sense, and encouraging submissions from any recognised Institute that awards PhDs in the English language.

The submission process could hardly be simpler. Anyone can enter their dissertation online at https://icas.asia/icas-book-prize-2021. We encourage anyone whose doctoral dissertation is related to Asia, is written in English, has not previously been submitted to the IBP, and is dated post 1 June 2018, to enter.

Alex McKay PhD, ICAS Dissertation Reading Committee Chair

Leksa Lee, Winner of the IBP 2019 Award for Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences

The ICAS Book Prize:
A multilingual window on the world of Asian studies

Paul van der Velde

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), founded in 1997, had its first gathering in Leiden (1998). During ICAS 2 in Berlin (2001) the ICAS Secretariat was officially founded, and since its creation it has been hosted and (partially) funded by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden, the Netherlands). After the success of the first two meetings the ICAS Secretariat decided to move its conferences into Asia, and ICAS 3 took place in Singapore (2003), in cooperation with the National University of Singapore. As to further establish its brand and position in the field of Asian studies, ICAS launched two significant initiatives: the ICAS Publication Series in cooperation with Amsterdam University Press (AUP), primarily based on articles presented during ICAS, and of course, the ICAS Book Prize (IBP).

Right from the start, the IBP was designed to be different in nature than the (few) prizes in the field of Asian studies at that time. The existing prizes were limited to particular regions or disciplines, and often named after one of the professorial stars in the field. Access to and judgement of the prizes tended to occur in a rather closed circle of familiarity, and was mostly resistant to outside interference. There was clearly room for improvement and innovation.

Turning the first page of the ICAS Book Prize

The main idea behind the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) was to create, by way of a global competition, an international focus for academic publications on Asia so as to increase their visibility worldwide, also beyond academic circles. As a result, the IBP was conceived as a general prize for academic publications on Asia, in both the humanities and social sciences. The IBP Reading Committees consist of scholars in diverse disciplines, focusing on various regions, working on and originating from different continents: a composition that reflects the transcending nature of ICAS.

The ICAS Secretariat approached a diverse group of participants of the first three ICAS meetings with the question if they would be willing to become a member of the IBP Reading Committee. Excellent remuneration was offered, including a return ticket to ICAS, free lodging for the duration of the meeting, plus of course they could keep all the submitted books. No wonder there were more than enough candidates to choose from. The first Reading Committee consisted of four members, a secretary and a chair. They originated from Asia, Australia, Europe and North America, and represented the broad fields of the humanities and social sciences in relation to Asia.
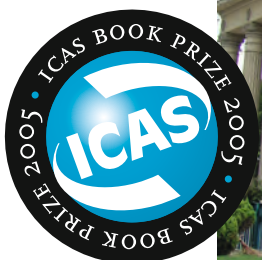
IBP 2005, Shanghai

All books on Asian topics

With a Reading Committee in place we started promoting the IBP through various platforms, including the *IIAS Newsletter*. On page 42 of issue 34 (2004), the IBP was announced to the world for the first time: "All scientific books published in 2003 and 2004 on Asian topics are eligible. Three prizes will be awarded: (1) best study in the humanities; (2) best study in the social sciences; and (3) best PhD dissertation." We reached out to a large number of (academic) publishers, who in general welcomed the new concept. In all we received 38 books (23 humanities and 15 social sciences) and five dissertations. The shortlists of three books per category were made public during a brief ceremony in the ICAS exhibition booth at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in Chicago on 1 April 2005.

The Reading Committee met in Shanghai, one day before the opening of ICAS 4, for final deliberations during the so-called 'decision dinner'. The first IBP Awards Presentation took place on 20 August 2005, in the Friendship Hall of the Shanghai Exhibition Center. At the end of the ICAS Opening Ceremony the IBP Secretary presented the jury report, which was based on citations provided by members of the Reading Committee. The IBP Awards Presentation would become a permanent feature of all future ICAS Opening Ceremonies. Shortly after the ceremony, the jury citations were put on the ICAS website (where they can still be found) and shared with multiple Asia studies outlet, such as H-Asia.

The winners of the first IBP were both present at the Awards Ceremony. They were Elizabeth C. Economy for her *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future* (Cornell University Press, 2004) and Christopher Reed with his *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876-1937* (UBC Press, 2003). Sam Wong was the first winner of the IBP Best Dissertation Award with his thesis 'Community participation of Mainland Chinese migrants in Hong Kong – rethinking agency, institutions and authority in social capital theory'. As a prize, his dissertation was published by AUP in the ICAS Publications Series: *Exploring 'Unseen' Social Capital in Community Participation. Everyday Lives of Poor Mainland Chinese Migrants in Hong Kong* (available from http://oapen.org). It was no small wonder that three publications on China won prizes, since a substantial part of the submitted books were about this upcoming political and economic powerhouse. In a special section of the *IIAS Newsletter #37* - 'Publishing on Asia' - this was further contextualised and a rich tapestry of publications on all parts of Asia were highlighted. (https://issuu.com/iias/docs/iias_nl_37)

IBP 2007, Kuala Lumpar
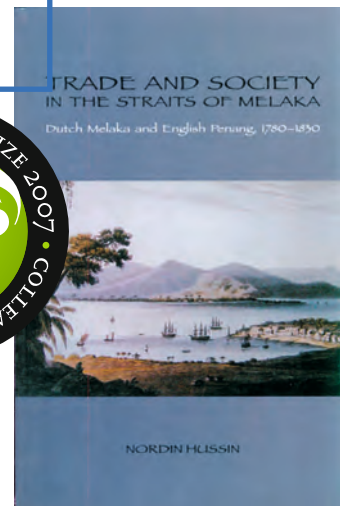
Nordin Hussin – the first winner of the IBP Colleagues' Choice Award.

IBP Colleagues' Choice Award

Based on comments from ICAS 4 participants, the ICAS Secretariat was motivated to initiate the Colleagues' Choice Award, in order to enable persons interested in Asia to cast a vote for their favourite book. This was only possible thanks to recent IT developments. An online polling system was established, and voting was possible from mid-March to mid-July. Giving a voice to the practitioners was in line with the ICAS bottom-up approach to the field of Asian studies. From the beginning we were aware of the fact that the winning title of the Colleagues' Choice Award would not necessarily be the 'best' publication, but rather the book with an author or publisher best equipped to mobilise votes for their publication. In order to be a successful author this is not an unimportant aspect of publishing.

The first winner of the IBP Colleagues' Choice Award was Nordin Hussin, working at the Institute of Occidental Studies of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, the organising entity of ICAS 5. Here follows a part of the citation, which sheds light on why voters liked his book: "Without a doubt *Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830* (NIAS Press, 2006) is a truly pioneering study of urban history, one that we rarely see in Southeast Asia. This study compares Melaka and Penang in the context of overall trends, namely, policy, geographical position, nature and direction of trade, morphology and society, and how these factors were influenced by trade as well as policies [...] By documenting the impact of imperialist ambitions on the economy and society of two major trading centres, this book will provide a point of reference for all future research concerning the period."

The Reading Committee reviewed 80 books and 10 dissertations. The members of the Reading Committee were: Jennifer Holdaway, Christopher Reed (winner of the IBP 2005 Humanities), Paul van der Velde (Secretary), Anand Yang (Chair), and Guobin Yang. The prizes were awarded by Deputy Prime Minister Dato'seri Najib Tun Razak during the ICAS 5 Opening Ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on 2 August 2007.

The winner of Best Book in the Humanities was Madeleine Zelin, with her *The Merchants of Zigong* (Columbia University Press, 2006); the winner of Best Book in the Social Sciences was Pei-Chia Lan and her *Global Cinderellas. Migrant Domestics and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan* (Duke University Press, 2006). Winner of Best Dissertation in Asian studies was Karen Laura Thornber, for her thesis 'Negotiating and Reconfiguring Japan and Japanese Literature in Polyintertextual East Asian Contact Zones: Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan' (Harvard University).

For the first two editions of the IBP, the Reading Committee reached their final decisions during a dinner one day before the Awards Presentation. After IBP 2007, it was decided to expedite the decision-making process so that the shortlisted authors could be informed earlier in the year, so as to increase the likelihood that they could and would attend ICAS.

IBP 2009, Daejeon

The network search for dissertations

The third IBP Awards Presentation took place during ICAS 6, on 6 August 2009, in the Grand Ballroom of the newly built Daejeon Convention Center. The Awards were presented by the members of the Reading Committee: Mehdi Amineh, Vinesh Hookomsingh, Xiaoming Huang, Alex MacKay, Paul van der Velde, and Anand Yang. After the ceremony, all ICAS 6 participants could pick up two free copies of the ICAS Publications Series, of which eight were launched during a special session with more than fifty editors and contributors present.

The 2009 winner of Best Book in the Humanities was Anthony Barbieri-Low, *Artisans in Early Imperial China* (University of Washington Press, 2007); the winner of Best Book in the Social Sciences was Anne E. Booth, *Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); Laurent Pordié was the winner of the Colleagues' Choice Award, for the edited volume *Tibetan Medicine in the Contemporary World: Global politics of medical knowledge and practice* (Routledge, 2008); Best Dissertation in the Humanities was won by Birgit Abels for her thesis 'Sounds of Articulating Identity: Tradition and Transition in the Music of Pulau'; and the winner of Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences was Iza Hussin with 'The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in Malaya, India and Egypt'.

While the number of books submitted for this edition of the IBP had neared one

Winner Birgit Abels (left) and Martina van den Haak.

Winner Laurent Pordié (left) and Alex McKay

hundred, the dissertations were lagging with just 12 submissions, which were obviously only a fraction of all dissertations written on Asia in English. What could be done to increase that number for the next IBP? We thought the best way to tackle this situation was to put in place a special Reading Committee for Dissertations, consisting of peers of the young

doctors. Whom better to ask than the IBP 2009 Best Dissertation winners: Birgit Abels (humanities) and Iza Hussin (social sciences). We invited them to scout for dissertations all over the world and use their growing academic networks to at least double the number of dissertation submissions for the following IBP in 2011.

IBP 2011, Honolulu

Above: Iza Hussin (left) and Winner Imran bin Tajudeen (right).
Left: IBP General Secretary Paul van der Velde.

From traditional to contemporary Asian studies

The fourth IBP Awards Presentation took place on 1 April 2011 in the Kalakaua Ballroom of the Hawai'i Convention Center, during the Opening of ICAS 7; it was combined with the Ceremony of the seven Association for Asian Studies (AAS) regional book prizes. President of Ceremonies was four-time IBP Books Reading Committee Chair, Anand Yang, not only one of the pillars of the IBP but also one of the promoters of the joint meeting of ICAS 7 and AAS in Honolulu, which took place from 30 March to 3 April 2011. No less than five thousand participants attended the meeting,

making it the biggest ever held in the field of Asian studies. It was a clear signal to the outside world that Asian studies was alive and kicking.

The public relations campaign around the combined meeting also had a positive impact on the number of books and dissertations submitted to the IBP. Book numbers doubled while the number of dissertations even tripled. The latter also implied that the newly created IBP Dissertations Reading Committee had done an excellent job. In all, 174 books were submitted by more than 40 publishers worldwide; 75 in the humanities and 99 in the social sciences. A trend that had already been noticeable in IBP 2009 became fully manifest

during the fourth edition: whereas for the first IBP, 65 percent of the books had been in the humanities and 35 percent in the social sciences, it was completely the other way around for the fourth edition. This marked a clear shift in the field of research from traditional (orientalist) to contemporary Asian studies. This also became clear in the supplement of *The Newsletter* #56 'Asian Book Series as Global Currency'. Many of those featured series were contemporary in nature (https://issuu.com/iias/docs/icas_nl56_supplement).

This was not the only shift we observed. We also saw a clear change in geographical backgrounds of the authors. During the first IBP only 10 percent of the participating authors were of Asian descent; the fourth edition of the IBP saw a marked increase to 40 percent. Asian studies were clearly more and more being carried out by Asian scholars, yet their books (in English) continued to be predominantly published by Western publishers. Unsurprisingly, a third of the books submitted for the IBP 2011 were about East Asia, but Southeast Asia and South Asia also counted a large number of publications. Popular themes were art and culture, (post)colonial, gender and identity,

history, international relations and politics, literature, media, Islam (a newcomer), literature, nationalism and state formation, society religion and society. With such a wide diversity of excellent books we started thinking of ways to reward more books than only the main winners. This was successfully developed for the next IBP in 2013.

The IBP 2011 Reading Committee for Books consisted of Manuela Ciotti, Derek Heng, Alex McKay, Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce, Paul van der Velde (Secretary) and Anand Yang (Chair). The Reading Committee for Dissertations consisted of Birgit Abels and Iza Hussin. For the Humanities, Stein Tønnesson won Best Book for his *Vietnam 1946. How the War Began* (University of California Press, 2010), and Carmen Perez Gonzalez won Best Dissertation for her 'A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting'. The Reading Committees chose the following winners in the category Social Sciences: Uradyn E. Bulag, *Collaborative Nationalism. The Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010) and Imran bin Tajudeen for his thesis 'Constituting and Reconstructing the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Emporia in Nusantara: Historic Adaption and Contemporary Accentuations'. The public voted online for the winner of the Colleagues' Choice Award. It went to Alexander Huang and his *Chinese Shakespeares. Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange* (Columbia University Press, 2009).

IBP 2013, Macao

Guide to the IBP and the addition of Reading Committee Accolades

At ICAS 8 in Macau we celebrated the fifth edition of the IBP. Within one decade the IBP had grown from an experiment with 38 books and 5 dissertations to an established prize with 250 publications submitted by 60 publishers worldwide and 100 dissertations. As previously mentioned, we wanted to start recognising more titles for their excellence, not just the main winners. In order to increase the diversity and creativity of the judging process and so that the Reading Committees would be able to single out a larger number of books and dissertations, we decided to create the Reading Committee Accolades. The Accolades were to be awarded to any of the books and dissertations submitted, not just those which had made it onto the long/shortlists for the main prizes.

The IBP Reading Committee Accolades were, and continue to be, awarded separately for the two main categories, humanities and social sciences, but the exact Accolades can vary each year (and not all need to be allocated). Accolades are awarded to both Books and Dissertations. Since their inception,

the Accolades have included: Publisher's Accolade for Outstanding Production Value; Most Accessible and Captivating Work for The Non-Specialist Reader Accolade; Specialist Publication Accolade; Ground-Breaking Subject Matter Accolade; Teaching Tool Accolade; Best Art Book Accolade; and the Edited Volume Accolade. The Accolades bring prestige rather than cash prizes with them, but all winners receive an IBP certificate, and some even proudly hang them on their wall. To be a winner of an IBP Main Prize or Accolade, or to be included on the long/shortlist, is an important career milestone; importantly, the inclusion alerts academic publishers to the quality of the authors' work.

To assist the Reading Committees, I had already in 2009 prepared a modest 'Guide to the ICAS Book Prize', which contained an alphabetical enumeration of all submissions so that the readers could check if they had truly received all books. The sharp increase in the number of books in 2013 made it necessary to create a more elaborate 'Guide', which now contained structured information to help the Reading Committees to better navigate the multitude of publications. It included an overview of not only titles, authors and publishers, but also the categorical division of books, the regional distribution and the most important topics treated in the publications. The guide also included the procedural regulations, a timetable, and the rules for eligibility of submissions.

The fifth IBP Awards Ceremony took place during ICAS 8, in the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel on 25 June 2013. The IBP 2013 was sponsored by The Kingdom of the Netherlands represented by the Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macao; ICAS' mother institution and co-host, The International Institute for Asian Studies; Amsterdam University Press; and the University of Macau. The members of the IBP 2013 Reading Committees were Birgit Abels, Michiel Baas, Sebastian Bersick, Annu Jalais, Alex McKay, Imran bin Tajudeen and Paul van der Velde (Secretary). Together they awarded the following prizes: Best Book in the Humanities went to Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyi Shen, for their *The Art of Modern China.*

(University of California Press, 2012); Best Book in the Social Sciences was received by Miriam Kahn and her *Tahiti. Beyond the Postcard. Power, Place, and Everyday Life.* (University of Washington Press, 2011); Best Dissertation in the Humanities was awarded to Birgit Tremml for her thesis 'When Political Economies Meet: Spain, China and Japan in Manila, 1517-1644'; Roberto Benedicto won the Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences for his thesis 'Bright Lights, Gay Globality. Mobility, Class, and Gay Life in Twenty-first Century Manila'; and the 2013 Colleagues' Choice Award went to Fabrizio M. Ferrari, *Guilty Males and Proud Females: Negotiating Genders in a Bengali Festival* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2011).

Above: Winner Julia Andrews receiving her Award

Above: Winners have been known to proudly display their awards

IBP 2015, Adelaide

Above: Winner Khoo Salma Nasution (left).
Left: Winner Jinghong Zhang receiving award from Asia Library director Kurt de Belder.

The New Asia Scholar

The Focus section of *The Newsletter* #72 (Autumn 2015) was devoted to a phenomenon that we were calling 'The New Asia Scholar' (https://www.iias.asia/the-newsletter/newsletter-72-autumn-2015). During ICAS 9 in Adelaide we took note of new trends and developments in Asian studies. The meeting was a particularly useful observatory due to its diversified cross-continental nature. A number of ICAS 9 participants were invited to contribute a piece to *The Newsletter*, focussing on the question: "Who is the New Asia Scholar?"

The IBP itself has also proven to be an excellent trend identifier and forecaster. For a start, in 2015 we noticed that Asian studies was moving from Western based Asian studies to studies coming from the region itself, based on local conceptual lexicons and theoretical tools. Secondly, the shift from humanities to social sciences, already perceived in 2009, continued and intensified; and thirdly, 50 percent of the authors had an Asian rather than Western background, which was a remarkable rise in numbers.

An issue that had come to worry us more and more was the language in which these submissions were written. International publications have always been dominated by English language works. Presuming English as the *lingua franca* of Asian studies produces at least two implications: English speaking authors are writing about other cultures in a non-local language, thus missing much of the specific nuances (even though they might proudly speak the local language, they do not tend to publish in it); and non-English writing authors are limited in their international reach (or at the most, their works have been translated into English only after an international publisher has deemed their work 'interesting enough'). As organisers of the IBP we recognised the growing challenge of having only one language centre stage, and in response to demands from the field we realised the need for a change. Prospective partners were approached to either organise and/or sponsor a number of non-English language editions of the ICAS Book Prize. These were to be launched on time for the next IBP in 2017.

One of the incentives for a more diversified and decentralised approach came from our colleagues in Africa, and accordingly, the first 'A New Axis of Knowledge' conference was held in Ghana in 2015, to be followed in 2018 by the second meeting in Dar es Salaam. Alongside the two meetings also came the regional version of the ICAS Book Prize: the Africa-Asia Book Prize. Books submitted to this prize focussed on Africa-Asia relations and Asian studies in Africa. The first two editions were organised by the ICAS Secretariat, but the third edition of the Africa-Asia Book Prize (probably 2021) will be organised by the African Association for Asian Studies (A-Asia), the main force behind the establishment of the Africa-Asia 'New Axis of Knowledge' meetings.

Another interesting, more logistical development, was the sheer number of books being shipped to our offices every two years. Publishers were sending us 6 copies of each submitted title, which we then forwarded to the Reading Committee members. For the IBP 2015 we received approximately 1500 books! Our offices turned into a warehouse *cum* distribution centre. Someone finally came up with the bright idea to ask the publishers to send the hard copies straight to the Reading Committee members. This was only one of the solutions to the many practical problems when running what had become one of the biggest book prizes in the world. Another solution found was to the problem of the growing collection of books from previous editions of the IBP; by now more than six hundred books filled two book cases in the ICAS Secretariat's office. What could be a better destination than the Leiden University Library, especially since it was precisely at that time building a whole entire floor to house its new Asian Library? Consequently, an agreement was signed between the Leiden University Library and our mother institute, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), that the Asian Library would become the sponsor of the IBP. In return, we gifted the library all remaining books from previous (and future) IBP editions.

The IBP 2015 Awards Presentation took place in the Adelaide Convention centre during the ICAS 9 Opening Ceremony. The Reading Committees were composed of Christina Firpo, Duncan McDuie-Ra, Alex Mckay, Aysun Uyar, and Paul van der Velde. They awarded Best Book in the Humanities to Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun: The Dutch Encounter with Tokugawa Japan* (Columbia University Press, 2014); Best Book in the Social Sciences went to Jinghong Zhang, *Puer Tea. Ancient Caravans and Urban Chic* (University of Washington Press, 2014); awards for Best Dissertation went to (respectively for Humanities and Social Sciences) Deokhyo Choi for his 'Crucible of the Post-Empire: Decolonization, Race, and Cold War Politics in U.S.-Japan-Korea Relations, 1945-1952' and Tutin Aryanti for her 'Breaking the Wall, Preserving the Barrier: Gender, Space, and Power in Contemporary Mosque Architecture in Yogyakarta, Indonesia'. Finally, the public voted for the winner of the Colleagues' Choice Award, which in 2015 went to Khoo Salma Nasution, *The Chulia in Penang: Patronage and Place-Making around the Kapitan Kling Mosque 1786-1957* (Penang: Areca Books, 2014).

IBP 2017, Chiang Mai

A multilingual discourse at the IBP party

ICAS is a successful facilitator of localised but connected knowledge about Asia, and an enthusiastic actor in the decentring of knowledge about and in Asia. As a reflection of this approach the IBP enacted its existing wish to diversify its language basis. The ICAS Secretariat successfully enthused relevant institutes operating in Chinese, French, German and Korean to take on the challenge to organise their own respective language editions of the IBP: The Education University of Hong Kong (Chinese Edition), Groupement d'intérêt scientifique Études asiatiques (GIS Asie) (French Edition), the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and the Schweizerische Akademie für Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW) (German Edition), and Seoul National University Asia Center (SNUAC) (Korean Edition). Together with the Asian Library/Leiden University (English Edition), the IBP was now shouldered by six institutions in Asia and Europe. All books were submitted centrally through the ICAS website, but each Language Secretariat was responsible for their own Reading Committees, for contacting publishers/submitters, and for collecting hard copies. They all succeeded in receiving at least 30 books (a commendable start, comparable to the first IBP instalment); the Korean Language Secretariat outdid all with nearly 100 submissions.

The Secretariat of each language edition, and in cooperation with the IBP General Secretariat, put together a Reading Committee of four persons, representing the field of Asian studies in the widest sense. Towards the end of this new multi-language edition I decided to relinquish my position as Secretary. I handed over those duties to Sonja Zweegers, Editor of *The Newsletter* at IIAS, and I took on my new role as General Secretary of the IBP, in order to coordinate the various language editions, and secure all necessary agreements and sponsorships.

The IBP 2017 Awards Presentation took place on 20 July in the Plenary Hall of the Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Centre. It was memorable to see the winners of all the language editions on

Above: IBP 2017 All Winners. Inset: IBP 2017 Booklet.

stage. Upon leaving the hall everyone was given the *ICAS Book Prize 2017* publication, a new initiative by the ICAS Secretariat. The booklet listed all shortlisted books, winners, citations, Reading Committees, organisers and sponsors.

In previous years there had always been a small IBP dinner organised for the winners and Reading Committee members, but with the growing numbers involved we decided to throw a proper IBP party. The winners were given the floor to say a few words (which had not been possible during the ceremony). Our first multilingual ICAS Book Prize party was a roaring success, lasting well into the wee hours.

The English language Reading Committee members for Books were Manuela Ciotti, Tom Hoogervorst, Claudio Pinheiro, Tina Shrestha and Paul van der Velde (Secretary). They awarded the Best Book in the Humanities to Seth Jacobowitz, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan. A Media History of Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2015); and Best Book in the Social Sciences was awarded to Han F. Vermeulen, for his *Before Boas. The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

The Reading Committee for Dissertations included Tutin Aryanti, Deokhyo Choi and Alex McKay (Chair). They awarded Best Dissertation in the Humanities to Lisa Hellman, for her 'Navigating the Foreign Quarters: Everyday Life of the Swedish East India Company Employees in Canton and Macao 1730–1830'; and Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences to Gauri Bharat, for her 'Place-making Through Practice: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Santal Architectural History'. And finally, the Colleagues' Choice Awards (respectively for Humanities and Social Sciences) went to Christina Elizabeth Firpo, *The Uprooted: Race, Children, and Imperialism in French Indochina, 1890-1980*. (University of Hawai'i Press, 2016) and Adams Bodomo, Africans in China: Guangdong and Beyond (New York: Diasporic Africa Press, 2016).

And for the first time, the German language edition awarded their main prize to Hans van Ess, *Politics and Historiography in Ancient China: Pan-ma i-t'ing*; the Chinese language edition Best Book went to Lui Tai-Lok, *Hong Kong Model: From the Present Tense to the Past Tense;* the main prize of the French language edition was received by Marine Carrin, *The Language of the Gods. Santal Ritual Discourse Between the Oral and the Written* (India); and the Korean language edition recognised as Best Book: Jaehun Jeong, *The History of Turk Empire 552-745: The Rise and Fall of Ashna's Power.*

A number of publishers also attended the IBP party, as they had travelled to Chiang Mai to exhibit their products and services at the ICAS Asian Studies Book Fair. The number of publishers involved in the IBP English edition had been quite stable (at 60) for a few years, however, for the first time we could clearly discern a core group of seven publishers that had submitted more than 15 books. These were, in alphabetical order: Amsterdam University Press, Brill Publishers, Cambridge University Press, Harvard Asia Center, ISEAS Publishing, NIAS Press, and the University of Washington Press. The following 13 publishers submitted five to ten books: Columbia University Press, Cornell University Press, Hong Kong University Press, Hurst & Company, Lexington Books, NUS Press, Oxford University Press, Peter Lang, Polity Press, Primus Books, Routledge, SUNY Press, and University of Hawai'i Press. The remaining publishers, most of them academic, submitted up to five books. It was clear that the majority of publishers producing books on Asia (in English) were located in either USA or Europe, although we were also made aware that an increasing number of these companies were opening up branches in Asia, so as to be able to effectively scout new authors in the field, the majority of whom are from Asia. This was also the main reason for them to exhibit at ICAS, where most of the participants hail from the region.

IBP 2019, Leiden

The IBP Books and Dissertations Carousel

The IBP Books and Dissertations Carousel had been set in motion as an experiment during ICAS 9 in Adelaide, had matured at ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai, and had now come of age during ICAS 11 (15-19 July 2019) in Leiden. Eighty presentations took place during 15 sessions, nearly half by young doctors for whom the IBP Carousel was initiated in the first place: "to offer young doctors the opportunity to briefly present the significance of their work to an audience of interested scholars, publishers and potential employers, who in turn may question the candidates on their findings. This is also intended to be a relatively informal chance for presenters to meet others interested in their field of enquiry". A number of presentations (in English) were about books written in languages other than English, and we hope that this platform will indeed see even more non-English language authors during future editions.

With another hat on, as IIAS Publications Officer, and together with my assistant Mary Lynn van Dijk, we convened a panel at ICAS 11 on the three IIAS Book series ('Global Asia', 'Asian Cities', 'Asian Heritages'), with the aim to look back on the 25 monographs and edited volumes published in these series in the past four years. The series editors took the lead in explaining how they work and what kind of manuscripts they want to include in their series. Tak-Wing Ngo (organiser of ICAS 8 in Macau and IIAS alumnus) said the following about his 'Global Asia Series' (although this could also apply to the IBP and ICAS in general): "The Series takes issue with the conventional practice of treating Asia as merely the empirical testing ground for universalized theories developed from Western experiences. Instead, it underlines the contributions of Asian knowledge, values, and practices in making our modern world. The Series deliberately keeps a broad scope to include studies that focus on a wide range of topics and disciplines. Books published under the Series are unified not by a common theme or theoretical approach, but by a critical stance that highlights the autochthonous contributions of Asia to social sciences. As such, the Series as a whole addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region, as well as Asia's projection into the world through the movement of goods,

people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies, and so forth. Priorities are given to well-researched manuscripts that seek to develop new perspectives and theories about global Asia".

The IBP dinner was, with over 30 guests, a particularly generous affair this year as we had now added yet another language edition to the group: a combined Spanish/Portuguese edition, organised by Sephis. Its Chair, Claudio Pinheiro, had performed in-depth research into the state of affairs of Asian studies in Latin America before establishing the Secretariat. His efforts resulted in no less than 66 publications submitted for their first IBP in 2019. With this new language edition successfully in place, I was motivated to add yet 2 more to the array: Japanese and Russian. ICAS 12 will take place in 2021 in Kyoto, and so I invited Aysun Uyar Makibayashi from Doshisha University (and former IBP Reading Committee member) to the 2019 dinner, in an attempt to convince her to join the team. (I can now announce that she agreed and there will indeed be a Japanese language edition of the IBP 2021). Another guest at the dinner was Alexey Maslow, Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IFES), and keynote speaker in the SASS-IIAS Forum on the Belt and Road Initiative at ICAS 11. Alexey had been invited for the dinner after he had made clear his ambition to set up the Russian Edition of the IBP (as with the Japanese edition, I can share the good news that indeed, there will also be a Russian language edition for the IBP 2021). There are very strong Asian studies traditions going back centuries in both Russian and Japanese. It is only natural that they are part of the IBP, along with the excellent studies written in those languages, which should become part of the international discourse on Asian studies. In his editorial for The Newsletter #84 (Autumn 2019, p.3) 'Reinventing the academic conference' the director of IIAS, Philippe Peycam, a supporter of the IBP's multilingual approach, commented: "ICAS now runs an inclusive space in which different social stakeholders – from academic to cultural institutions, from citizen associations and regions – work hand-in-hand to promote scholarly knowledge in society".

The IBP 2019 awards ceremony took place during the opening of ICAS 11, in Leiden's Hooglandse Church, on 16 July 2019. More than 2000 people attended the ceremony, and all were presented the *ICAS Book Prize 2019* publication at the end of the session. The booklet included all shortlists, winners, sponsors, organisers, reading committees of the IBP 2019. The English language Reading Committee for Books included Seth Jacobowitz, Rachel Leow, Thien Huong Ninh, Olga Sooudi, and Sonja Zweegers (Secretary). The prize for Best Book in the Humanities went to Howard

Chiang, *After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China* (Columbia University Press, 2018); Best Book in the Social Sciences was awarded to Sareeta Amrute, *Encoding Race, Encoding Class: Indian IT Workers in Berlin* (Duke University Press, 2016). The members of the Reading Committee for Dissertations were

Bart Luttikhuis, Alex McKay (Chair) and Anna Romanowicz. They awarded Best Dissertation in the Humanities to Leonor Veiga for her 'The Third Avant-garde: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia Recalling Tradition'; and Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences to Aleksandra Lee for her 'Modeling China: Business, Politics, and Material in China's Museum Industry'. The Colleagues' Choice Awards (respectively for Humanities and Social Sciences) went to Abdur-Razzaq Lubis, *Sutan Puasa: Founder of Kuala Lumpur* (Areca Books, 2018) and Azmil Tayeb, *Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia: Shaping Minds, Saving Souls* (Routledge, 2018).

The Main Prize for the Chinese language edition was awarded to Feng-mao Li, *Transforming 'Sacred Religion' into Daoism: Festival, Belief, and Culture in the Chinese Society of Malaysia* (National Taiwan University Press, 2018). The French language Reading Committee recognised as Best Book, Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevan and Marianne Bujard, *The Qin and Han Dynasties: General History of China (221 BC-220 AD)* (Les Belles Lettres, 2017). Thomas Zimmer, *Awakening from the Coma? A Literary Positioning of Today's China* (Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, 2017) was the winner of the 2019 German language edition. Best Book in the Korean language was awarded to Jae-hoon Shim, *From a Vassal to the Hegemon: The Birth and Rise of the State of Jin in Early China* (Ilchokak Publishing, 2018). And for the first time, the Spanish/Portuguese edition presented its ICAS Book Prize; in fact it had two winners: Madalena Natsuko Hashimoto Cordaro, *Japanese Erotica in Painting and Writing of the 17th to 19th centuries, 2 volumes* (USP, 2017) and Óscar Figueroa, *The Preceding View: Visionary Power and Imagination in Ancient India* (UNAM, 2017).

Above: IBP 2019 Booklet.
Left: Winner of the French language edition Marianne Bujard (left) with the Secretary of the French language edition, Aurelie Varrel (right).
Below: Winner Korean Language Edition Jae-hoon Shim (left).

Above: IBP 2019 All Winners.

IBP 2021, Kyoto

Davide Grieco on unsplash.com

Looking back to the future

From the beginning the IBP has been a general book prize of a region and discipline transcending nature. From its seventh edition in 2017 it also became multilingual; by adding Japanese and Russian for the upcoming ninth edition in 2021, the ICAS Book Prize will be considering nine languages that have (long) established research traditions in Asian studies. Is it conceivable to add even more languages to the IBP without it imploding? I am of the opinion that because English is one of the official languages of India, Hindi or Tamil editions will be unlikely. Bahasa Indonesia, spoken throughout the Malay world, Swahili as the biggest East African language, and Arabic spoken and read throughout the Islamic world, could be possible candidates.

The number of submissions for each language in 2019 varied from 20 to 100 (not taking into account the English edition with 400 submissions plus 150 dissertations). The various language editions together received a total of 754 submissions in 2019, and we expect that next time we will reach the one thousand mark.

Each language edition is organised and sponsored by an Asian studies institution, and has its own Reading Committee (normally of 4 academics). The scholars who have been a committee member in the past have experienced the horizon-widening experience of the IBP. They received and processed books from not only their own fields of study, but far beyond. Many of them have used the submitted books as pedagogical tools in their teachings on Asia. They work together with the other committee members, and somehow always seem to agree on who should be the winner. A detail that may change during the next few instalments of the IBP, is 'how' they read the submissions. So far, publishers have always been asked to send hard copies of all submitted titles, but as we speak we have opened submissions for the IBP 2021 and have decided to include the option of e-books (at least for the English language edition).

The idea has been floating for a while, but during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis we have been made aware that many packages are not reaching their destination. For that reason, we deliberated with our Reading Committee members and gave them the choice. Some chose for e-books, also out of environmental considerations, others continue to prefer hard copies. We shall see how this develops in the future.

How the IBP will be further impacted by the de-globalising tendencies in the world today, no one can be sure about. However, we do predict that the new Russian language edition will attract a higher number of titles on Central Asia, the Japanese edition will likely introduce us to topics we have never even heard of before, more and more of the authors will originate from Asia and be published by Asia-located publishers, more Asian authors will write about Asian countries other than their own, more books on Asia will be written in a language other than English, etc. And the ICAS Book Prize will continue to boost and document all these developments through its original aim: to increase the global visibility of and interest in academic works on Asia.

Another way in which the IBP works to make Asian studies and its publications more visible and accessible is through the ICAS Book Fair. The last few ICAS meetings have seen between 30-40 publishers exhibit their wares and services, but this number could rise because of the increasing number of languages involved in the IBP. Closely connected to the IBP is the ICAS Books and Dissertations Carousel, in which authors present their recent work; it has witnessed a clear growth in the number of presentations of books not written in English,

thus familiarising wider and wider audiences with works written in non-English languages. We have also seen how presentations of dissertations are increasingly impacted by developments in IT. Quoting the Chair of the IBP Dissertations Reading Committee, Alex MacKay: "What is also notable is that the form of a doctoral dissertation has lost the traditional boundaries of extensive text and relevant illustration. Many submissions incorporate video and other technological innovations of the last decades, once tentatively but now confidently deployed by a generation that has grown up with new tools of expression. That tendency, like ICAS itself, is likely to only grow". So far, the IBP has only accepted dissertations written in English, but this does not exclude the possibility of dissertations in other languages in the future.

The Colleagues' Choice Award was introduced in 2007, and has been included in every instalment of the IBP ever since. However, with the steep yearly rise in the number of votes we are no longer able to guarantee the validity of the polls, and so after the IBP in 2019 we decided to stop awarding this prize. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the Colleagues' Choice Award has made the IBP more popular by highlighting books that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. Fortunately, we will of course continue to award Reading Committee Accolades to the submitted Books and Dissertations. The Accolades are an invaluable method to acknowledge a larger number of very deserving titles.
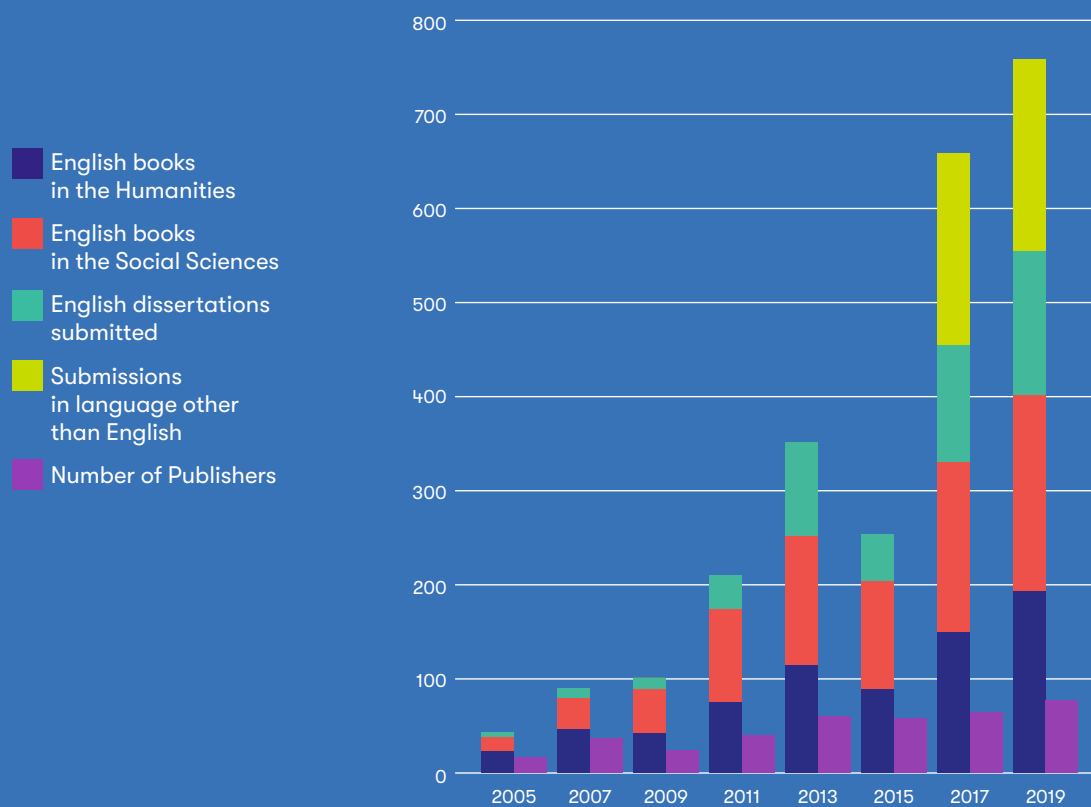
Why compete for the ICAS Book Prize? Where will it get you? Well, Alex MacKay, one of the pillars of the IBP, wrote on that matter

in The Newsletter (issues 76 and 83): "The best dissertations will have the primary merit of originality, along with scholastic qualities such as depth (and breath) of research, evidence of intellectual quality, clear and sophisticated arguments, good organization and presentation of evidence leading to significant conclusions liable to be of interest to the wider field, a consistent and properly considered theoretical and/or methodological framework, and of course it must include due acknowledgement of sources and proper presentation of bibliography, notes and associated scholastic apparatus. They will also have the minimum of typographical errors and the standard writing and use of English language will be of a good standard." The criteria for the IBP Book Reading Committee were summarised as follows: "There are several criteria which determine what is a good book: originality in the treatment of the topic; the depth of the research; opening up a new field of research; providing a definitive study on a certain topic; being well written or making clear arguments. […] Inclusion on the [long]list is a significant achievement and means that the author belongs to the top tier of Asia scholars." With these considerations in mind the Reading Committees start their yearlong reading process, which results in longlists, then shortlists. Being included on those lists is already a great honour and references to them frequently pop up on CV's of scholars to enhance their resume. The winners of the prizes are ultimately those that come closest to the criteria outlined above and for them it means a boost to their careers and a reward for many years of meticulous and intensive research. The recognition for one's work, knowledge and dedication that comes with winning the ICAS Book Prize is priceless, often leading to unexpected but well-deserved career-related rewards.

The ninth edition of the IBP is on the horizon; during its Awards Ceremony I will step down as General Secretary, yet this will by no means be the last page of the IBP. I am convinced that the Book Prize will further blossom in the capable hands of my successor. It is no exaggeration to state that the IBP has grown from just one of the book prizes in the field of Asian studies to the leading Book Prize in its field. Who could have dreamt that when we announced the ICAS Book Prize at the beginning of this century?

Paul van der Velde, General Secretary of the ICAS Book Prize

IBP Submissions 2005-19

- English books in the Humanities
- English books in the Social Sciences
- English dissertations submitted
- Submissions in language other than English
- Number of Publishers

The Shanghai lilong

A new concept of home in China

Gregory Bracken

The *lilong* is an attractive, versatile, and socially vibrant house type that developed in Shanghai in the 19th century. It came to be seen as such a feature of the city that it is almost as much of an icon as the Bund itself. Stylistically it is a hybrid of Western architectural details and traditional Chinese spatial arrangements; but it is more than architecturally interesting, it is socially very important. Apart from generating a vibrant street life in the city, it was also instrumental in changing the concept of home [*jia*] in China. Traditionally, a home was something to be handed down through the family, from generation to generation, but the Shanghai *lilong* changed all that. Home-ownership came to assume a more Western attitude, where the house was seen more as a commodity than an heirloom, something that could be easily bought and sold.
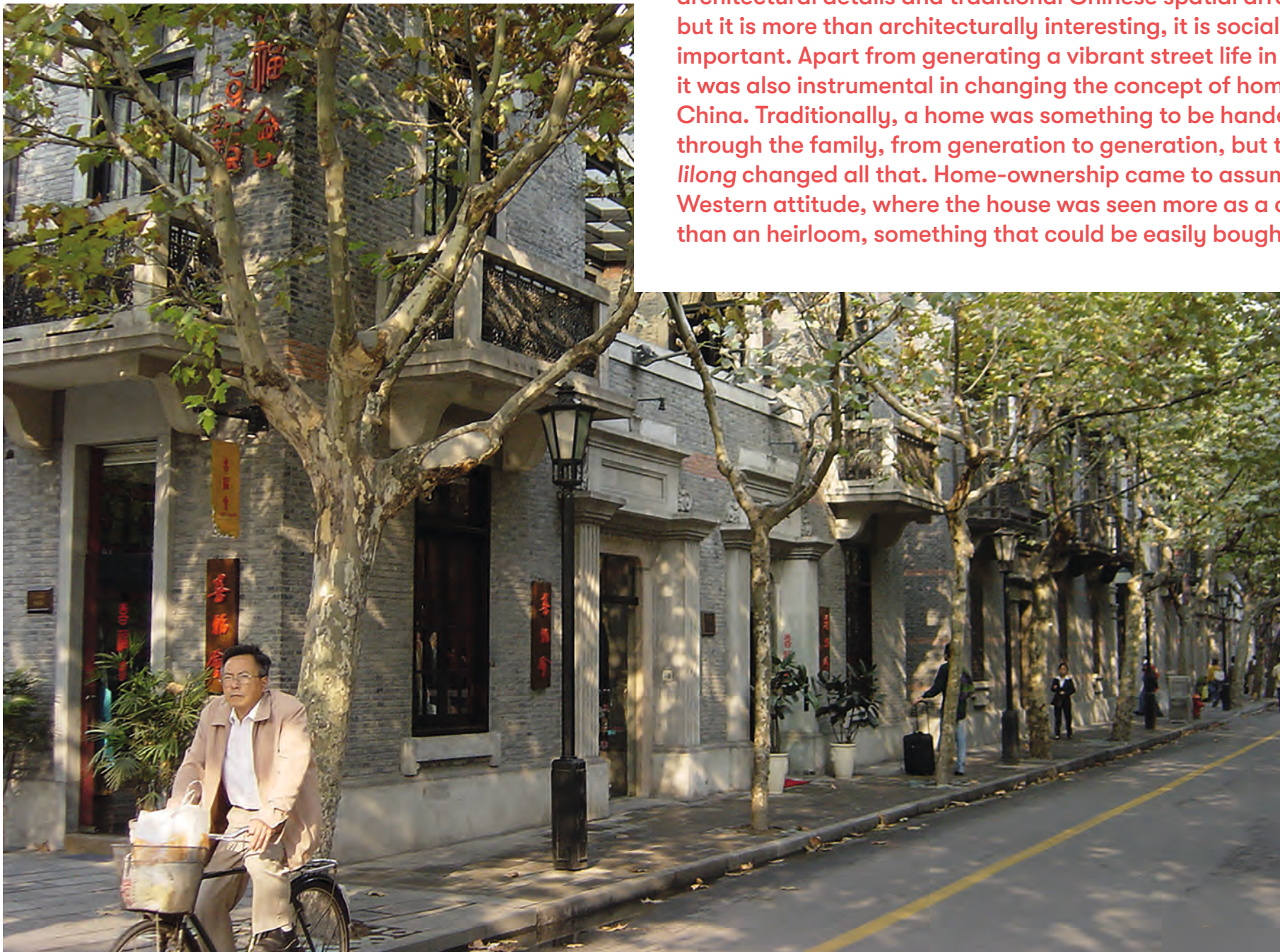
Left: Restored *lilong* on Xingye Road, Xintiandi. Photo by author.

The Shanghai *lilong* flourished during the 19th and early 20th centuries, becoming the most common building type in the city up to World War II. Once the Communists took over in 1949 the *lilong* entered a decline. It was seen as a reminder of an era the Chinese would rather forget: the Treaty Port era (1842-1943). As a result, the *lilong* became increasingly run-down and dilapidated, as well as overcrowded and unsanitary due to the lack of development in the city from the 1950s to the 1970s. When capitalism was reintroduced from 1978 onwards, the *lilong* came under even more stress because of the increased space constraints in the city-centre and soaring land values, which meant that such a low-rise house type was no longer seen as economical or a good use of space. Vast swathes of them were demolished, to be replaced by high-rise offices, hotels, and apartment complexes, often with large shopping malls in their podiums. Perceptions began to change, however, in the first years of the 21st century when the architectural merit of this charming house type was once again beginning to be appreciated; they have been enjoying something of a revival ever since.

This paper looks at how the *lilong* came into existence in the first place. It also briefly explains the historical backdrop of the Treaty Port era, a time when Shanghai began to develop into the glittering global city it is today. It then goes on to examine what life

was like in the *lilong* on a daily basis, taking Nelson I. Wu's concept of 'graduated privacy'[1] (which he used to explain the sequences of spaces in the traditional Chinese courtyard house or *siheyuan*) to show how this graduated system of space was mirrored in the layout and hierarchical arrangement of the streets and alleyways of the *lilong*, where it became what we could call a graduated *urban* privacy; it was this that was instrumental in allowing the *lilong*'s famous vitality to flourish.

Treaty Ports in China

China was forced to open itself to Western trade in the 19th century, primarily by Britain. At that time the country was still dominated by Confucianism, where society was divided into four basic classes: scholars, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants (in descending order of importance). Robert Nield saw the Western powers' belief in trade as being as natural a human function as breathing; these powers believed that countries should be able to trade with whomever they pleased.[2] China did not share this view. Chinese mandarins, the scholar-gentry elite who ruled the country for most of its history, saw trade and indeed any sort of commerce as vulgar, low-class, and unrefined, not the sort of activity appropriate for a cultivated Confucian gentlemen [*junzi*].

China in the early 19th century was complacent. It had good reason to be. It was stable, it was rich, and it was producing some of the world's most sought-after products – things like tea, silk, and porcelain. As a result, the country was gradually absorbing a substantial portion of the world's supply of silver. The British (who had taken to tea more than most) were envious, not to mention out of pocket. Wanting to redress this financial imbalance, they decided on importing something lucrative of their own, notoriously deciding on opium. They fought two wars to do so (the First Opium War was from 1839 to 1842, and the Second from 1856 to 1860). These Wars led to a series of treaties, beginning with the 'Treaty of Nanking' (Nanjing) on 29 August 1842. Known as the 'unequal treaties', they were foisted by Britain (and later, by others) onto an unwilling China and have rightly been seen as a low point in the country's history ever since.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Nanking, China had to pay a massive indemnity of $21 million, it also had to cede the island of Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity (it was handed back in 1997 when it became a Special Administrative Region of China). The Treaty also stipulated that five ports were opened to foreign trade: namely Canton (Guangzhou), Amoy (Xiamen), Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningpo (Ningbo), and Shanghai. Henceforth known as 'Treaty Ports', these were the first in an ever-increasing series of settlements that spread

themselves across China throughout the 19th and early 20th century, until the system was finally ended after 101 years with the signing of the 'Sino-British Treaty for the Relinquishment of Extra-Territorial Rights in China', on 11 January 1943.

Opium may have begun as illegal, but it was legalised on 8 November 1858 and remained legal in China until 1917. Jacques M. Downs tells us that China, quite naturally, saw the opium trade as an unmixed evil.[3] It corrupted, it demoralised, and it drained national funds. The more the Chinese tried to stop it, the more it took hold because higher bribes meant greater incentives to subvert the law and made corrupt officials rich. The British government had always acknowledged China's right to prohibit the drug, but, as Downs points out, the trade's economic value outweighed its moral turpitude. Besides, British military and naval strength at the time enabled them to get away with whatever they wanted.

Bad and all as this was for China, it did have some long-term positive effects because wherever opium went, other goods soon followed. Downs highlights how this trade in opium led to other, more legitimate activities. The new conduits of trade also introduced something else into the country: modernisation. And this could be seen in the changing attitude to home-ownership that began to emerge in Shanghai with the *lilong*. Even missionaries played a role in

this modernisation because, according to Robert Nield, their schools introduced Western concepts such as democracy to increasingly politically aware students. These ideas, along with a new attitude to trade, meant that China was beginning to transform. This may have been painful at first, but it eventually allowed the country to blossom into the globally competitive giant it is today.

Chinese commerce and trade would have probably developed anyway, even without British prompting, but the presence of British commercial culture certainly accelerated that change, and it was in the Treaty Ports that the conduits of this trade made their biggest mark, as we shall see.

Shanghai as Treaty Port

Shanghai was, without doubt, the most important Treaty Port in China. It was bigger, it was richer, and it was more sophisticated than any other city in the country. It began life as a fishing village before growing into a small walled city, whose location at the mouth of the Yangtze made it ideal for trade. The British recognised this and within twenty years of becoming a Treaty Port, Shanghai became the world's sixth-largest port. It became so rich and powerful in fact, that Shanghai's leaders proposed turning it into an independent republic in 1862. This was rejected as being unrealistic (besides, it would have contravened the whole Treaty Port system).

Shanghai's rapid growth saw every part of the city develop at a staggering pace. The cost of an acre of ground went from around £50 in 1850 to £20,000 in 1862.[4] The city was dominated by an International Settlement, which was a self-governing entity governed by a Municipal Council. There was also a French Concession, the original Chinese city, and an ever-expanding periphery, which was Chinese administered. A tiny colonial elite was in charge and had little interest in mixing with the vast majority of the city's native population, except when they had to. They saw themselves as separate, even identifying themselves as 'Shanghailanders', as opposed to the native Chinese who were 'Shanghainese'. The Shanghailanders worked and socialised in the massive neoclassical and Art Deco buildings that decorated the Bund and the smarter parts of the city centre, but most ordinary Shanghainese lived in the much humbler *lilong*.

By the early 20th century Shanghai had become synonymous with modernity; it had the country's first trams, first stock exchange, and first nightclub. Not only did it have the largest population of any city in Asia (around three million by 1930), it also had the region's tallest buildings, freest press, and most dazzling social life (as well as Asia's most notorious gangsters, drugs, and gambling dens). All of which came to an end, however, on 8 December 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and annexed Shanghai's foreign concessions, and the city found itself under one jurisdiction for the first time in a century (albeit Japanese rather than Chinese). 1943 saw the revocation of the Treaty Port system, and after World War II Shanghai went through a brief boom followed by a cataclysmic period of corruption and economic mismanagement before being taken over by the People's Liberation Army on 24 April 1949. The People's Republic of China was declared later that year, on 1 October, ending once and for all the one-sided foreign incursions into China.

The layout and use of the Shanghai Lilong

Treaty Ports were popular with Chinese looking for work, or fleeing from the upheavals that convulsed the country in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of those who came to Shanghai lived in *lilong*. These were gated, hierarchically organised residential compounds, laid out in large blocks subdivided by alleyways. The name *lilong* means 'neighbourhood alleyway' (*li* meaning 'neighbourhood' and *long*, 'alleyway'). They are also sometimes known as *lilongtang* (the term most often used in Shanghai). *Lilongtang* actually refers to an entire cluster of houses (*tang* meaning 'sitting room' and longtang being the alleyway-house itself, i.e., 'alleyway-sitting room').[5]

The alleyways were differentiated, with a main one, which could be up to four or five metres wide and ran perpendicular to the public street from which it was accessed,

> ... *Lilong* came to be seen as a transferable commodity rather than a permanent home.

and smaller ones crossing it at right angles. Access to the compound was via a gate, closed at night (sometimes during the day as well). There were often a number of gates, depending on the size of the compound, but as these tended to close at different times it meant that shortcuts could only be used by those who knew the daily rhythms of the *lilong* well.

The houses themselves were usually two to four storeys and varied in size and decoration. Invariably small, the basic unit was 60 to 105 square metres, with only two rooms per floor. Commercial activity was confined to those houses facing onto boundary streets, although some informal commercial activity occurred on the main alleyways. Smaller alleyways were used for household chores, informal work, or simply for recreation. The chief factor in their flexibility was the hierarchical system of graduated urban privacy. 'Graduated privacy' was a term first coined by Nelson I. Wu to explain the use and sequence of spaces in traditional Chinese courtyard houses [*siheyuen*]. It explains the series of spatial progressions within the house, where certain visitors would only be allowed as far as the entry vestibule, but friends and family could come right into the courtyard and its adjacent halls. The deeper recesses of the house were reserved for family members.

Taking the concept of graduated privacy and applying it to the urban layout of the Shanghai *lilong* allows us to see how these spaces actually worked. There is a sequence of space in the *lilong* compound that almost exactly mirrors the traditional Chinese house. Visitors and/or residents can move from a public street, through a main alleyway – which is semi-public because it is behind a gate that can (and regularly does) close – into the semi-private side alleyways, where locals congregate and can keep a friendly eye on activities, before finally moving into the house itself, which is totally private. The *lilong* is in fact able to form an almost village-like neighbourhood (not unlike the old *lifang* residential wards of ancient Chinese cities, although more complex, given its more subtly differentiated alleyway structure).

It can be no accident that the graduated privacy of the traditional Chinese house came to be echoed in the placement of the different activities in Shanghai's *lilong*, where inhabitants (and/or strangers) could move from a main street through the main alleyway, into smaller semi-private alleyways before eventually reaching the private home. These graduated sequence of spaces determine what sort of activities take place, and where, depending on how private or public they are. We can see this in the main alleyway, where vendors set up stalls to catch passing traffic, whereas the smaller side alleyways see residents preferring to sit and watch the street without being in the way. There were no rules for this regulation of space, people simply took their cue from the spaces themselves. This is a subtle, specialised, and strictly hierarchical use of space that determines the activities of the *lilong*. At first glance this can seem quite random, but on closer inspection it reflects a deeply logical use of space, all based on unwritten rules, and all taking its cue from the layout of the *lilong*. This use of space, in both home and alleyway, is informed by ancient and deep-seated understandings of space use and its relations to social behaviour in China, and these have mediated between the public and private realms for millennia. What emerged in the Shanghai *lilong* was a vibrant new articulation of these relations.

The Shanghai *lilong*: a new concept of home in China

A large proportion of Shanghai's population in the Treaty Port era, both Western and Chinese, were known as sojourners, temporary residents who saw the city as a place to get rich before returning home. And this had an effect on their attitudes to the concept of home. The word for 'home' in Chinese is *jia*, which also denotes 'house' and 'family', concepts that cannot be separated as they are

in the West. The ideograph for *jia* consists of ten strokes and is said to represent a pig under a roof, which, according to Nancy Jervis, can mean a related group of people who eat out of one pot.[6] This can be meant literally, as in the daily meal, or figuratively, by the sharing of family income (traditionally from the raising of pigs). The family could therefore be seen not only as a group who consumed pork, but also as a basic economic unit of society by producing that commodity.

Samuel Y. Liang sees the *lilong* (or *li*, as he prefers to call them) as having radically reconfigured China's traditional residential and commercial spaces.[7] Visibility and openness now replace walls and containment. He sees this as a subverting of the traditional spatial order and hierarchy of Chinese space, with the borderline between elites and the lower classes being transgressed and redefined. This would have been the case in 19th-century Shanghai, where Chinese, rich and poor, were thrown together as they fled upheavals in the rest of the country. Liang also argues that the social spaces of the *lilong* demonstrate an analogous transformation, with walls and the traditionally self-contained residential spaces also being breached. It is important to note that this spatial transformation was not simply a passive response to Western influence in the city, it was actually a reflection of Shanghai's dynamism as a result of new circumstances, both opportunities and constraints, that were seen here in the Treaty Port era.

One vitally important point that Liang makes about the *lilong*, and it is something that is related to the sojourner status of so many of the city's residents, is the fact that these houses were no longer regarded as something a family would hand down through the generations. This made them radically different from the traditional Chinese house.

The *lilong* lacks flexibility in terms of expansion or contraction – something that was possible in the traditional courtyard house's more spacious compound, and which was one of its most useful features when families needed more (or less) space, depending on births and deaths and the impact they had on the size of a family. This traditional flexibility was simply impossible in the tighter constraints of Shanghai's more limited (and expensive) city space. As a result of these new conditions in the city the *lilong* came to be seen as a transferable commodity rather than a permanent home, to which generations of the same family would have a sense of belonging.

This new attitude to the home that emerged with the *lilong* may also explain how the house type came to have such flexibility in terms of its use, from the most common, the family home, to other more commercial uses, like shop houses, workshops and studios, galleries, restaurants and offices. The *lilong*'s polyvalence may seem to point to a bright future, but this may not be the case. The question now is, what role can there be for this fascinating house type in the 21st century? But, as Rudyard Kipling said, that's another story.

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Notes

1   Wu, N.I. 1968. *Chinese and Indian Architecture: The City of Man, the Mountain of God, and the Realm of the Immortals.*
2   Nield, R. 2015. *China's Foreign Places: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1943.*
3   Downs, J.M. 1997. *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844.*
4   Dong, S. 2000. *Shanghai: The Rise and Fall of a Decadent City.*
5   Bracken, G. 2014. *The Shanghai Alleyway House: A Vanishing Urban Vernacular.*
6   Jervis, N. 2005. 'The Meaning of Jia: An Introduction' in R.G. Knapp and K. Lo (eds.) *House Home Family: Living and Being Chinese.*
7   Liang, S.Y. 2008. 'Where the Courtyard Meets the Street: Spatial Culture of the Li Neighbourhoods, Shanghai, 1870-1900'. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67(4): 482-503.

Above: Neighbours chatting on a side alleyway in Jing'an Villa lilongtang. Photo by author.

Asian migration studies

Recent publications and new directions

Michiel Baas

In recent years the field of migration studies focusing on Asia has not only made important strides in capturing the lives, livelihoods and trajectories of Asian migrants but also made significant contributions towards the development of the field in general. The Asian Migration cluster of the Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore, together with collaborating institutions at Humboldt University (Berlin), Sorbonne (Paris) and Waseda University (Tokyo) have been of particular influence here. These collaborations have also shed important light on the way the Asia-Pacific region is connected with Africa, Europe and the Gulf through skilled migration. This article pays attention to a number of recent publications that have emerged out of these collaborations; while I will be paying attention to some publications of which I am the editor or lead author, the main point is to show that the field of Asian migration studies is in motion and to highlight the new directions it has been taking in recent years.

Paradigmatic shifts[1]

The field of migration studies has gone through various paradigmatic shifts over time, influenced by research findings as well as changes in the geopolitical, sociocultural and economic landscape across sending and receiving nations. Initially the field was characterized by a deeply functionalist approach that sought to explain migration via various push and pull factors. The eventual goal here was not just 'explaining' but also 'predicting' migration. Migration was understood to describe a process from A to B with an eventual return home, which was conceptualized in terms of failure or success overseas. Questions of integration and assimilation initially also built upon this and especially in Europe this led to significant public debates.

The 1990s introduced an important paradigmatic shift with its introduction of the concept of transnationalism. A growing number of migrants were observed to maintain multiple ties and connections between home and host country and these transnational lifestyles were made possible by the arrival of budget carriers and advances in telecommunications and media. As a result, migration studies had to refocus its attention on the multiplicity of migrant lives.

The introduction of the 'new mobilities paradigm' by Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006) confronted the field with new questions of how to understand the mobile trajectories of migrants across the globe.[2] This new paradigm is not simply about asserting that the world is more mobile than ever, rather it seeks to highlight the complex character of mobility systems that regulate movement. Migration is not only about crossing borders but also about not-moving, waiting, and related constraints imposed by sending and receiving nation-states.

Migration industry and brokerage

The recent focus on the question of mobility itself has made scholars realize more than ever before that migration cannot solely be understood by focusing on either the sending or receiving side. While studies of transnationalism had already tried to unite both in its focus, the (commercial) networks that facilitate migration – and which in fact made it possible to migrate in the first place – remained understudied. Meanwhile, the commercialization of migration pathways has opened up the opportunity to live and work in another country to an ever-widening group of migrants. This seems to stand in direct relation to the ongoing formalization and regulation of migration trajectories that make it almost impossible for low-skilled migrants to seek out the services of specialists (agents, brokers, etc.). The emergence of a migration industry – composed among others of agents, brokers, and training institutes – across Asia needs to be understood in this light.

Recent publications that have engaged with the functioning of the migration industry in Asia usually do so taking Johan Lindquist, Xiang Biao and Brenda Yeoh's (2012) important assertion to think of it as a black box, as a point of departure.[3] It was also an important source of inspiration for an ARI-held workshop in 2017 titled "The Migration Industry: Facilitators and Brokerage in Asia", which brought together a variety of researchers with a strong ethnographic focus on the topic. Three distinct publications have emerged from this workshop. The first was a special issue with *Pacific Affairs* (2018) edited by Tina Shrestha (now with Waseda University), whose own work focuses on Nepali outmigration to Malaysia and Japan.[4] This special issue's focus is determinedly on the practices of brokerage (mediating, facilitation) and the making of migration infrastructures. Together, the articles put the spotlight on the specific histories and political processes that have contributed to the emergence of brokerage practices and the way they stand in relation to migration regimes.

It is a line also followed in a recently published Palgrave Pivot edited volume *The Migration Industry in Asia: Brokerage, Gender and Precariousness* (2020),[5] which brings together another set of papers from the workshop. Here the focus is more on the pragmatics of the industry, the ways in which agents/brokers negotiate these, and the impact this has on migrants themselves. In my own contribution to this volume, I try to understand the composition of the amounts low-skilled migrants from Tamil Nadu pay to their agents and brokers, and by doing so also try to find an answer to the question why certain destinations such as Singapore are so much more expensive to migrate to than those in the Middle East. Bringing together case studies focusing on internal migration in Indonesia, issues of legality and illegality among Myanmarese migrants in Thailand, and the complexity of regulating and mediating migration from India, the volume is primarily set up to encourage future research on the topic.
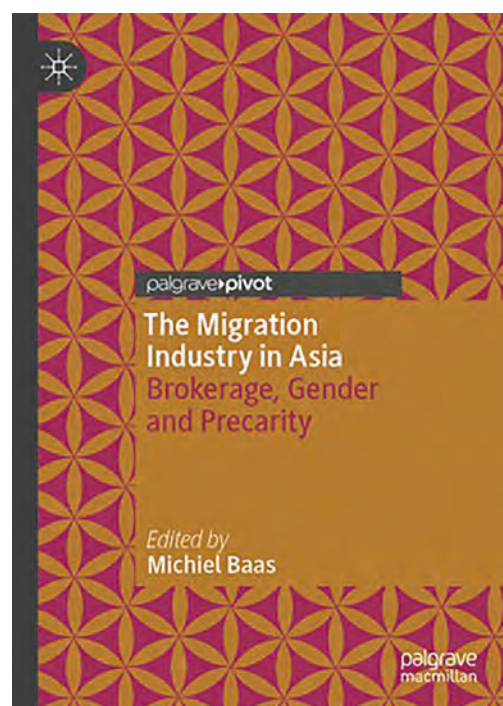
A final set of papers appeared in a special section with *International Migration* (2019) and pays attention to the emerging category of student-migrant and the entanglement of the education and migration industries in the Asia Pacific region.[6] While it may appear that this constitutes a separate type of industry that offers migration pathways to a very different group of (often high-skilled) migrants, it is revealing for the way skilled migration programs are interlinked with various interests related to nation's economies and industries.

The question of skill

The rapidly growing number of so-called student-migrants in Asia has not only zoomed in on the way skilled migration programs and international education ambitions speak to each other, but has also contributed to a renewed focus on questions related to skill in general. As is the case in Australia, Singapore and elsewhere, international students are often welcomed as 'potential' skilled migrants who may eventually stay on (either permanently or temporarily) after graduation. As such they have increasingly become integral to skilled migration programs. While in Australia this has led to critical questions about the actual skills student-migrants possess upon completion of their degrees, such developments have also contributed to a more general inquiry into what 'skill' actually is and how skills are ranked in terms of high and low.

In light of such discussions, a recent (2020) special issue with the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (JEMS) addresses the social construction of the idea of skill.[7] In it, Gracia Liu-Farrer, Brenda Yeoh and I ask who the arbitrators of skill are, how skill is constructed in the migration process and in turn, how it affects mobility. It brings together a set

> Migration studies had to refocus its attention on the multiplicity of migrant lives.

concerns a new generation of migrants who actively challenge the boundaries and constraints of migration systems. Earlier-mentioned student-migrants could be considered as one such category, especially in terms of their (part-time) employment in professions that do not match their qualifications. But as the work of emerging migration scholars also shows, this field is surprisingly diverse. Seonyoung Seo's research on Nepali 'middle class' migrants in South Korea is particularly relevant here. Experiencing downward mobility as part of their migration trajectories, their position within the country's Employment Permit System also puts them in a particularly precarious position.

One of Seo's publications appeared in a special issue with *Current Sociology*, co-edited by Brenda Yeoh and myself, which focused on migrant temporalities in an attempt to raise awareness for the role time itself plays in migration trajectories.[11] In this special issue, we suggest to think of this focus as another paradigmatic shift, which like the focus on the migration industry builds on the mobilities turn and its focus on non-movement, waiting and other constraints that migration regimes put in place for cross-border mobility. It is in particularly Western Sydney University scholar Shanthi Robertson's work that has shed important light on how the concept of time and temporality can help add understanding of how migrants negotiate their lives across borders, not just being dependent on the way migration infrastructures occasionally put constraints on opportunities of employment, and, more in general, their life on hold, but also literally demands of them to organize their life according to the schedules of their employers while keeping in mind the time-zone their family back home 'exists' in.

Migrant's body and visibility

Above-mentioned research has also contributed to a growing awareness of the migrant's body (and associated emotions, feelings and experiences). Amsterdam University Press published an edited volume titled *The Asian Migrant's Body: Emotion, Gender and Sexuality* (2020).[12] It raises two important questions: How is the migrant's body impacted by the trajectory embarked on? And how is this body utilized as part of this? In the co-authored Introduction, Peidong Yang and I unpack how we may ground this question in theory, especially with respect to questions of embodiment, agency and visibility. As the contributions to the volume show – ranging from female beer sellers in Southeast Asia (Denise L. Spitzer) and migrant domestic workers in Lebanon (Amrita Pande) and Singapore (Maria Platt et al.), to same-sex migrants in the Middle East and South Asian employees in the beauty industry in California (Hareem Khan) – factors of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity all contribute to the way a migration trajectory is experienced at an individual level.

The question of visibility also speaks to issues of diversity and visibility that were central to two different collaborative workshops between the Asia Research Institute and European Universities. The first such workshop (2017) was with Humboldt University (initiated and hosted by Magdalena Nowicka) and focused specifically on migrant encounters and diversity of urban space. Bringing together papers from all-over the world it gave important impetus to the question of how diversity is experienced and the way migrants are 'encountered'. The latter also figured as an important question in a jointly organized workshop in Paris, hosted by INALCO (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientals) and the Sorbonne. Through Delphine Pages-El Karoui and colleagues' contributions – whose work is primarily oriented toward the Middle East – we were able to develop a comparative perspective on migrant diversity and visibility in respective cities. Ongoing attempts to segregate low-skilled migrants from day-to-day urban life by housing them in far-off dormitories and restricting their movement contrasted markedly with these cities' ambitions to radiate cosmopolitanism, characterized by diversity.
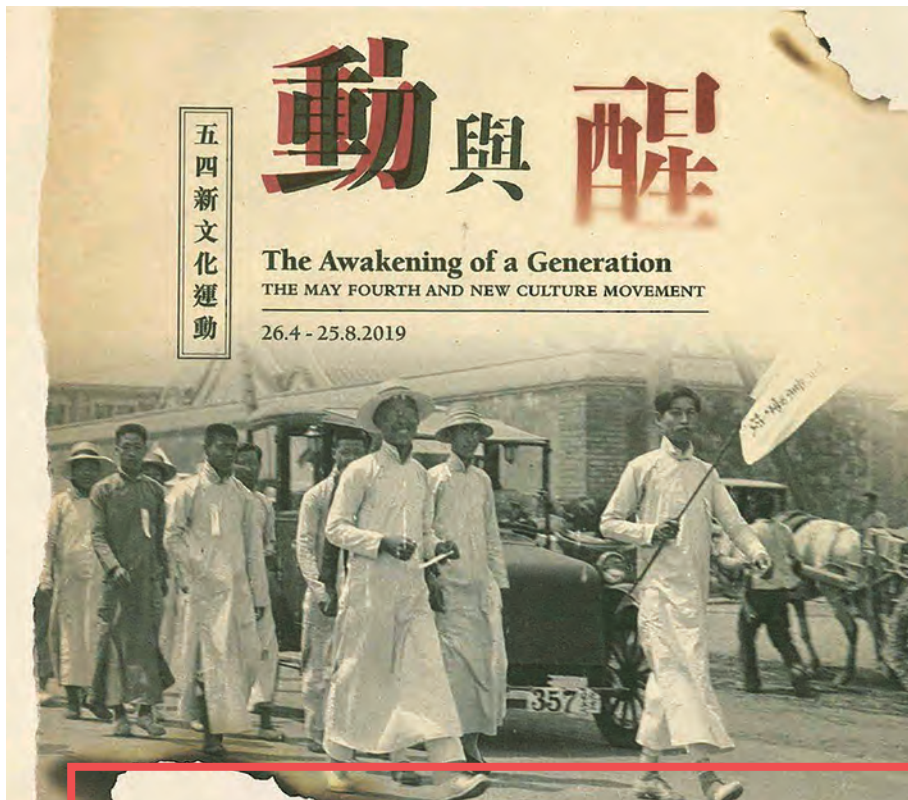
New directions

What these publications and the collaborations show is not just that the question of mobility is integral to the study of migration, but that the field itself is constantly in motion as well. As Peidong Yang's more recent work also underlines, with its focus on Chinese 'foreign talent' students in Singapore and Indian medical students in China, the profiles across the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly diverse. Asian nations like Japan, South Korea and China, which were formerly mainly known for restricting immigration policies themselves, are now actively recruiting variously skilled migrants. Important factors of influence here are not just the desire for global competitivity – thus resulting in a talent race for the best and brightest – but also rapidly ageing societies and low fertility rates.

The corona-crisis which is likely to be ongoing when this Newsletter goes to press, has again raised awareness to the plight of migrant workers across Asia and the Gulf. The mass exodus of migrant workers from Indian cities to their hometowns and villages has already made headlines and underlines the importance of research in internal as much as international migration. A first publication that addresses this has just come out. Carefully edited and brought together by Ranabir Samaddar, it is titled *Borders of an Epidemic: Covid-19 and Migrant Workers* (2020).[13] There is no doubt that in the coming years we will see important analysis of the impact the outbreak of the virus has had on the lives, well-being and futures of migrant workers everywhere. But with the limitations it has put on mobility, the question of mobility more general will be at the forefront of many new research projects and publications. In line with the earlier-mentioned mobility turn, questions will more than ever revolve around immobility and the governance of mobility. Who gets to migrate, under what conditions, for how long and where to, will be more important to such projects than ever before.

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Notes

1   This introduction draws upon Baas, M. & Yeoh, B. 2019. 'Introduction: Critical Temporalities and Migration Studies', *Current Sociology* 67(2):161-68; https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0011392118792924
2   Sheller, M. & Urry, J. 2006. 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 38(2): 207-226; https://doi.org/10.1068/a37268
3   Xiang, B., Yeoh, B. and Lindquist, J. 2012. 'Opening the Black Box of Migration: Brokers, the Organization of Transnational Mobility and the Changing Political Economy in Asia', *Pacific Affairs* 85(1):7-19.
4   https://pacificaffairs.ubc.ca/ubc-product/volume-91-no-4
5   Baas, M. (ed.) 2020. *The Migration Industry in Asia: Brokerage, Gender and Precariousness.* Palgrave MacMillan: Palgrave Pivot.
6   Baas, M. (ed.) 2019. 'The Education-Migration Industry: International Students, Migration Policy and the Question of Skills', *International Migration* 57(3):222-234; https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12540
7   Liu-Farrer, G., Yeoh, B. & Baas, M. 2020. 'Social Construction of Skill: An Analytical Approach Toward the Question of Skill in Cross-Border Labour Mobilities', Introduction to a Special Issue for *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies;* https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2020.1731983
8   Liu -Farrer, G. 2020. *Immigrant Japan: Mobility and Belonging in an Ethno-nationalist Society.* Cornell University Press.
9   Farrer, J. 2019. *International Migrants in China's Global City. The New Shanghailanders.* Routledge.
10 Baas, M. 2017. 'The Mobile Middle: Indian Skilled Migrants in Singapore and the 'Middling' Space In-Between Migration Categories.' *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration* 1(1):47-62; https://doi.org/10.1386/tjtm.1.1.47_1
11 ibid. Baas & Yeow, 2019.
12 Baas, M. 2020. *The Asian Migrant's Body: Emotion, Gender and Sexuality.* Amsterdam University Press.
13 Available for free online: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2020/COVID-19.pdf (visited 19-05-20)

of papers that were initially presented at a workshop held in Tokyo and jointly organized by Waseda University and the Asia Research Institute. Welcoming researchers working on Asia, but also including those whose work focuses on the Middle East, helped broaden perspectives and develop an understanding of how different migration regimes compare with and speak to each other. What is striking is how much skill and its hierarchical layering is often deeply subjective, and how migration pathways are as a result characterized by unequal opportunities and rights.

The JEMS special issue pays specific attention to the emergence of Japan as a migration destination. In contrast to the country's former image as one of Asia's most closed-off nations to migrants, more recently it has come to boast one of the most open skilled migration programs. This is also the focus of Gracia Liu-Farrer's recent and timely book *Immigrant Japan: Mobility and Belonging in an Ethno-nationalist Society* (2020),[8] just published by Cornell University Press. The fact that former Asian sending nations are now becoming destinations for skilled migrants themselves, also emerges from James Farrer recent book *International Migrants in China's Global City*, with its focus on, as he calls it, 'the new Shanghailanders'.[9] While central to his exploration are migrants ('expats') from the West who have made Shanghai their home prior to China more generally becoming a migration destination for skilled migrants,

it also illuminates how old- and newcomers relate to each other. Besides that, Farrer pays specific attention to how the perspective of *laowai* or foreigners itself has changed. The emergence of Shanghai as a financial powerhouse and global city forms an important backdrop for the analysis. As such, it also points at important geopolitical changes that have put the spotlight on Asian nations, not just as 'emerging', but now ranking as among the most important economies. Recent work, which I won't discuss here in detail has, for instance, investigated how this has changed dynamics of race, and especially that of 'being white', as a factor of privilege in migrant/expat trajectories in Asian cities.

Temporalities and transience

Migration-focused journal *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*, which Melbourne-based RMIT-scholar Catherine Gomes recently launched and continues to helm, speaks to some of the concerns that also percolate through earlier mentioned studies. Especially the emergence of mid-level skilled migrants – that I myself conceptualized as the 'mobile middle' (2017) in the journal's opening issue[10] – raises new and important questions here. Often highly-educated but not employed in positions that neatly correspond to their level of education, this

May Fourth at 100 in Singapore and Hong Kong

Memorialization, localization, and negotiation

Els van Dongen and David Kenley

As 2019 marked the centenary of China's May Fourth demonstrations, in this piece, we reflect on how this event and the broader movement surrounding it were commemorated in Singapore and Hong Kong, with reference to Southeast Asia. We probe the question of how the movement's 'memorialization' and 'localization' in these two settings were shaped by both their connection with China and the history of British colonialism. Politicians, intellectuals, and students negotiated the meaning of the movement congruent with a variety of agendas, whereas the commemorations also coincided with another anniversary in Singapore and occurred amidst political protests in Hong Kong.

When the centenary of China's 1919 May Fourth demonstrations drew near, China watchers turned their gaze towards the politics of remembrance in the People's Republic of China. They noted the official emphasis on patriotism and the 'spirit of youth', thus leaving the May Fourth legacy of 'Mr Science' and 'Mr Democracy' all but buried. Official interpretations foregrounded what is now known as the May Fourth Incident, or the gathering of thousands of students at Tiananmen in Beijing in response to the transfer of Germany's former rights in Shandong to Japan. Later, however, the term May Fourth also came to denote a range of cultural, political, social, and ideological advancements in the years before and after 1919. Seen through this lens, the movement spurred the reorganization of the Kuomintang, witnessed the rise of '-isms' – individualism, nationalism, liberalism, and feminism among them – and facilitated the adoption of the vernacular. Furthermore, it instigated student and workers' movements and the expansion of the public sphere. Since the movement contained all these facets, it is not surprising that there are as many 'May Fourths' as there have been commemorations of May Fourth.

While the shifting meaning of May Fourth in the People's Republic of China has been gaining attention, a less frequently asked question is: What did and does the movement mean for Chinese communities outside of mainland China? To answer this, we first need to revisit developments in scholarship. In an article written for May Fourth's centenary, the historian Edward Wang pinpoints three main trends in Chinese scholarship on May Fourth since the 1990s. He terms these trends 'individualization', 'localization', and 'memorialization'. The first trend, individualization, refers to research on renowned intellectuals associated with the

movement, such as Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) or Lu Xun (1881-1936). Remarkably, their ranks now include previously denounced liberal intellectuals such as Hu Shih (1891-1962), or critics of the movement, such as those around the journal *Critical Review* [學衡], including Wu Mi (1894-1978), Mei Guangdi (1890-1945), and Hu Xiansu (1894–1968). Renewed interest in the latter also relates to the so-called 'Republican fever' and scholarly trends such as 'national studies', as well as to the reassessment of 'conservative' critics of May Fourth as moderns and cosmopolitans.

Secondly, localization denotes a change from the study of May Fourth in Beijing to cities and regions across China, but also to transnational connections with movements such as the March First Movement in Korea. A well-known study in this regard is Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment* (2007), which links May Fourth with other national self-determination movements through the Paris Peace Conference. May Fourth has hence also become subjected to the so-called 'transnational turn' in academia. Finally, memorialization, or how May Fourth has been remembered, reveals the influence of the international turn to history and memory since Pierre Nora famously popularized the notion of *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory]. In recent publications on May Fourth, scholars interrogate existing ways of remembering the movement.[1]

Singapore and Hong Kong: local identities and connections

To explore how the localization and memorialization of May Fourth intersect in the May Fourth centenaries in Singapore

and Hong Kong, the authors of this piece, together with Huang Jianli, held a panel discussion at the National Library in Singapore in November 2019.[2] To some extent, we have all studied May Fourth from the angles that Edward Wang describes. Els van Dongen has investigated the re-evaluation of May Fourth 'conservatives' in mainland China and transnational interactions involving debates on 'radicalism' and the meaning of May Fourth after 1989. David Kenley was an early exponent of the transnational perspective on May Fourth and analyzed its meaning in Singapore in his well-known monograph *New Culture in a New World* (2003). Finally, Huang Jianli has written extensively on questions of commemoration, historiography, and student activism in both China and Singapore.[3]

Why Singapore and Hong Kong? One reason is that both witness a complex dynamic in terms of how they relate to mainland China. In his book, Kenley asked: What did a movement with nationalist traits come to signify among members of the Chinese diaspora? He has answered this by situating the movement between the oft designated twin themes of the movement, namely 'nationalism' and 'enlightenment', and that of 'transnationalism'. However, both cities also manifest a strong sense of local identity shaped by both interactions with China and the history of British rule. Indeed, in *May Fourth in Hong Kong* [五四在香港] Chan Hok Yin has analyzed interpretations of May Fourth based on three historical perspectives: that of British colonialism, that of nationalism before British rule, and that of local identity.[4] In spite of the vastly different trajectories of both cities, local identity has been shaped and discussed through and in response to this double connection of the changing relation with mainland China and the long shadow of British

rule. What's more, in both places ideological divisions have intersected with linguistic divisions, including but not limited to an English-educated versus a Chinese-educated elite.

Returning to the May Fourth period, what forms did the movement take in Singapore and Hong Kong? Although it is equally hard to define May Fourth outside China, large-scale protests also occurred in these places in the spring of 1919. Throughout May, Chinese residents of Singapore called for boycotts and strikes, and these calls amounted to violence on the night of 19 June 1919. The *Straits Times* reported that a mob "made bonfires in the middle of the roads, and with the air filled with piercing screams and shouts, scenes of wild confusion reigned".[5] Eventually the Governor called on the sailors of the docked warship *Manchester* to help patrol the city. By the early morning, the demonstration died out, but it had caused severe damage, had claimed four lives (two Chinese and two Indians), had seriously injured eight individuals, and had led to the arrest of over 130 participants. Similarly, in Hong Kong, students and journalists led rallies and demonstrations while business leaders called for a boycott of Japanese-made products. Nine students were arrested and fined. Their crime? They marched in the street holding umbrellas with 國貨 [national products] written on top.

Nevertheless, as was the case in China, these 1919 protests in Singapore and Hong Kong can best be understood as part of a larger, multi-year movement that transcends temporary nationalist concerns. Community leaders were also motivated by a commitment to greater democracy, and by a desire to implement new intellectual trends and ideas. They sought to destroy the icons of the past and usher in a new era of science and enlightenment. But May Fourth in Singapore and Hong Kong had some

rather distinct elements as well. Intellectuals in Singapore used the movement to call for more local control over Singapore affairs. In some ways, the movement was an internal power struggle over the issue of what it meant to be Chinese in Singapore. Essayists, poets, and commentators repudiated some of the literary trends emerging in China, calling instead for greater attention to local themes. Often, the struggles pitted the more recently arrived immigrants against the more long settled Chinese residents within Singapore.

Negotiating the meanings of May Fourth in 2019

While this brief detour to the May Fourth period already reflects the tensions between the connection to events in China and the quest for local distinction, commemorations of May Fourth since 1989 also reveal the impact of the legacy of colonialism and the Cold War. With reform and opening up in China, renewed interactions occurred between scholars in mainland China and those in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Europe, and the United States. Under the dominant narrative of economic reform, and with debates on the East Asian economic miracle, May Fourth became negatively associated with 'radicalism' and 'revolution', both among Chinese communities worldwide and among mainland scholars.

In a 2009 article published in Singapore's *Lianhe Zaobao* [联合早报], leading intellectuals Wang Gungwu and Zheng Yongnian already criticized the 'ideologization' of May Fourth and argued instead for an open attitude of discussion. They called for a move beyond the simplistic praise of the 'May Fourth spirit' in revolutionary times and the drastic denouncement of May Fourth as radical in peaceful times. Whether this objective was achieved in 2019 was, however, another matter.[6] In Singapore, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Yeo, used social media to pen an essay on the May Fourth centennial. He wrote in glowing terms about its legacy and the tremendous accomplishments of the Chinese people in the century since. The 'dramatic change', according to Yeo, was that China, from being spat upon a century ago had now become 'increasingly feared' by major powers. But he also used the opportunity to issue some warnings and veiled criticisms from the vantage point of the globalized and multi-ethnic city-state. He said: "It will be a mistake if the centennial message of May Fourth is a continued emphasis on standing up to foreigners". Instead, he called for a revised New Culture Movement that would be beneficial to all mankind, embracing multiculturalism and religious diversity.[7]

Besides politicians, Singapore's intellectuals and associations also took part in the commemoration of the May Fourth centennial. For example, on 4 May 2019, the Nanyang Confucian Association held a symposium in the historic Chinatown entitled 'From Opposing Tradition to Returning to Tradition', which featured speakers from Taiwan and mainland China. At the event, reference was also made to a Facebook post by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in which the latter wrote: "A people

without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots". Also, several historians, sociologists, political scientists, and literature studies scholars contributed to the 2019 publication *May Fourth in Southeast Asia* [五四在东南亚]. The editors of the volume considered May Fourth to have ushered in an age of democracy, knowledge, and science, calling it "a precious cultural heritage for all mankind". But contributors also noted how the Chinese in Southeast Asia had reinterpreted May Fourth for their own benefit. For example, Guo Huifen discussed the emergence of a unique form of writing, namely New Malayan-Chinese Literature. Referring to Fang Xiu, she ascribed the emergence of this literature to the 'internal' demands of local Chinese and the 'external' influence of May Fourth's Literary Revolution.[8] Other contributors to the volume discussed May Fourth in relation to themes such as education, newspapers and periodicals, Sinophone literature, translations of May Fourth writings, or anti-colonial sentiment across Southeast Asia.

In other words, local intellectuals utilized May Fourth to create an intellectual space between them and their counterparts in China. This 'localization' of May Fourth in Singapore had also been present in previous commemorations according to Huang Xianqiang and Shi Yan, who studied May Fourth remembrance in Singapore through newspaper articles and Chinese associations. Similarly, writing about May Fourth in Hong Kong, Chan Hok Yin has argued that the May Fourth legacy has been subjected to reinterpretations by various actors to achieve shifting goals at critical moments in Hong Kong's history. Calling for patriotism, progress, reform, or democracy, they defended their respective political positions with the help of May Fourth vocabulary.[9] Even a century after the events, negotiating the meanings of May Fourth is by no means complete.

Commemorations and coincidences

Both Singapore and Hong Kong also witnessed unintended, coincidental activities that seem strikingly reminiscent of the May Fourth Movement of a century ago. In Singapore, 2019 also happened to be the 200-year anniversary of the 'founding' of Singapore by the British Stamford Raffles. In January of last year, Singaporeans woke up to find the statue of Raffles—perhaps the most visible icon of Singapore's colonial past—literally erased from public view with the help of creative artists employing optical illusions. A few days later, Raffles was visually restored to his former perch but found himself joined by four new statues of Sang Nila Utama, Tan Tock Seng, Munshi Abdullah, and Naraina Pillai. These four, representing the main ethnic groups of Singapore, challenge the traditional colonial narrative privileging the role of the British. While the vanishing Raffles statue was not directly tied to the centennial May Fourth commemorations, the iconoclastic link between the two is striking. Interestingly, one *Straits Times* letter writer quickly pointed out that Raffles was joined only by other men and asked, "where are the women?"[10]

Likewise, Hong Kong also had official and unofficial commemorations coinciding with the May Fourth centennial. For example, the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum in Central, Hong Kong hosted a multi-month exhibition titled 'The Awakening of a Generation: The May Fourth and New Culture Movement'. The exhibition contained copies of *New Youth* [新青年] and other journals from 1919, as well as a collection of photographs and biographies of the movement's leaders, and discussions of the participants' goals. Most of the items were on loan from the Beijing Lu Xun Museum and the exhibition largely held to the Communist Party's official interpretation of May Fourth as having developed into a "nationwide patriotic movement supported by all walks of society" distinct from the iconoclastic intellectual, cultural, and political trends of the era.[11]

There were, however, some newer artefacts displayed in the exhibition. Students from the Academy of Visual Arts of Hong Kong Baptist University created original artwork interpreting the meaning of the movement in the form of sculpture, calligraphy, seal engraving, and collage. One of the images showed the character 民 (meaning 'people' or even 'democracy') dripping blood and transforming into a question mark. In the caption, the artist asked: "As time goes by, what will democracy become? What will people think of it? Will it make society fairer and better? Or will it become a means of exploitation?" Another student wrote in calligraphy, 'Nation, Power, Traitor'. The accompanying caption read, "Inspired by the slogan of the May Fourth Movement 'Fight for sovereignty externally, get rid of the traitors at home'. Power and traitor are always in a close relationship, even now". Still another student created a collage of the May Fourth intellectual Hu Shih. The artist explained, "The work originates from Hu Shih's article entitled 'Our Hopes for the Students'. It stresses that those in power should not suppress the student movement, and reminds the students not to be snared by politicians".

Umbrellas played a role in the 1919 Hong Kong student boycotts and protests. Not surprisingly, the student artists also co-opted the umbrella in their contemporary art works. In one seal engraving, the artist depicted a police officer chasing after a group of umbrella-wielding students. In another piece, the artist repurposed umbrella handles to create seal engravings. The caption read: "This set of seals invites visitors to reimagine and develop their understanding of how the movement has shaped contemporary times". While the symbol of the umbrella is more often associated with 21st century Hong Kong protests, these works of art clearly demonstrate the use of the May Fourth past to empower the activists of today.

While the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum staff planned and created the May Fourth commemoration before the protests erupted in the streets of Hong Kong, it is impossible not to reflect on those protests in light of the May Fourth centennial. On 9 June 2019, approximately 1,000,000 demonstrators took to the streets in Hong Kong. Much like their compatriots of 1919, they were angry at their government and demanded greater accountability and democracy. Specifically, they asked for the withdrawal of the controversial extradition bill that they claimed was eroding Hong Kong's civil liberties. But beyond this, the protests were also about asserting independence and distinctiveness relative to the mainland. We cannot ignore the significance of student leadership in both cases, with students wielding their umbrellas as a sign of resistance.

One hundred years after the events in Beijing, it is clear that scholars, politicians, and activists are still contesting the legacy of the May Fourth Movement, both in China and across Chinese communities. As seen in Hong Kong and Singapore, the designated May Fourth themes of 'nationalism' and 'enlightenment' could take on transnational forms in support of China, but they could also be transformed for the advocacy of distinct local identities and contemporary concerns.

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Above: The statue of Stamford Raffles surrounded by four new statues of Sang Nila Utama, Tan Tock Seng, Munshi Abdullah, and Naraina Pillai.

Notes

1 Wang, Q.E. 2019. 'The Chinese historiography of the May Fourth Movement, 1990s to the present', *Twentieth-Century China* 44(2):138-49; Lin, C.Y.-K. & Mair, V.H. (eds) 2020. *Remembering May Fourth: The Movement and its Centennial Legacy.* Brill; Hon, T. 2019. 'Introduction: One movement, many voices: May Fourth after one hundred years', *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 50(1-2):1-4.

2 van Dongen, E., Kenley, D. & Huang, J. 2019. 'What was the May Fourth Movement and what did it mean for Singapore?: Perspectives on its hundredth anniversary', Public lecture and panel discussion, NTU History Series, National Library, Singapore, 28 November 2019.

3 van Dongen, E. 2019. *Realistic Revolution: Contesting Chinese History, Culture, and Politics After 1989.* Cambridge University Press; Kenley, D. 2003. *New Culture in a New World: The May Fourth Movement and the Chinese Diaspora in Singapore, 1919-1932.* Routledge; Hong, L. & Huang, J. 2008. *The Scripting of a National History: Singapore and Its Pasts.* NUS Press and Hong Kong University Press; Huang, J. 1996. *The Politics of Depoliticization in Republican China: Guomindang Policy Towards Student Political Activism, 1927–1949.* Peter Lang AG.

4 Chan, H.Y. 2014. *Wusi zai Xianggang: Zhimin qingjing, minzu zhuyi ji bentu yishi* [May Fourth in Hong Kong: Colonial Scenario, Nationalism and Localism]. Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Book Company; see also Chan, H.Y. 2019. *Jiaguo zhijian: Wusi zai Xianggang bainian huiwang* [Between Local and National: A Centennial Retrospection of May Fourth in Hong Kong]. Hong Kong: Xianggang chengshi daxue chubanshe.

5 *Straits Times,* 20 June 1919.

6 Wang, G. & Zheng, Y. 2019. 'Xu san: Xunhui, er fei gaobie "wusi"' [Preface three: Retrieving and not saying goodbye to 'May Fourth'], in Wang, R. & Pan, G. (eds) *Wusi zai Dongnanya* [May Fourth in Southeast Asia]. Singapore: Bafang wenhua chuangzuoshi, pp.xxi-xxvi. Originally published in *Lianhe Zaobao,* 24 April 2009.

7 George Yeo, Reflection on the Hundredth Anniversary of May Fourth, Facebook post, 4 May 2019, https://tinyurl.com/ GeorgeYeo-May42019, accessed 8 June 2020.

8 Nanyang Confucian Association, 'Wusi yundong bainian jinian guoji xueshu yantaohui: Cong fan chuantong dao huigui chuantong' [May Fourth centenary international academic symposium: From opposing tradition to returning to tradition], Symposium at Furama City Centre, Singapore, 4 May 2019; Wang, R. & Pan, G. (eds) *Wusi zai Dongnanya,* back cover; Guo, H. citing Fang, X., 'Zhongguo Xin Wenhua Yundong zai Dongnanya de chuanbo' [The spread of the Chinese New Culture Movement in Southeast Asia], *Wusi zai Dongnanya,* p.84.

9 See Huang, X. & Shi, Y. 2010. 'Wusi jinian zai Xinjiapo: Yi Huawen baozhang de baodao he Huashe jiyi wei zhongxin' [May Fourth remembrance in Singapore: With Chinese newspaper articles and Chinese associations at the center], in Niu, D. & Ouyang, Z. (eds) *Wusi de lishi yu lishi zhongde Wusi: Beijing daxue jinian Wusi yundong 90 zhounian guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* [May Fourth's History and May Fourth in History: Proceedings of the International Academic Symposium at the Occasion of the 90th Anniversary of May Fourth at Peking University]. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, pp.619-41; Chan, H.Y. 2014. *Wusi zai Xianggang.*

10 Tan, G. 'Why Raffles flanked by statues of only men', *Straits Times,* 12 January 2019, https://tinyurl.com/raffles-statues. On bicentennial politics in Singapore, see also Huang, J. 2018. 'Stamford Raffles and the 'founding' of Singapore: The politics of commemoration and dilemmas of history', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 91(2):103-22.

11 This quote is taken from the exhibition program titled 'The Awakening of a Generation: The May Fourth and New Culture Movement'. The exhibition ran from 26 April through 25 August 2019 at the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum located at 7 Castle Road, Mid-Levels, Central, Hong Kong. All quotes are taken directly from the student-written captions as recorded during the author's visit to the museum on 15 July 2019.

Ode to the 'little sun'

Everyday thermal practice and energy infrastructure in Chongqing (China)

Madlen Kobi

The 'little sun' [小太阳] is a small electronic infrared heater used to warm one's body. Since the implementation of the 'Great Heating Divide' in the 1950s, apartments in cities in the southern subtropical part of China are built without connection to a central or district heating grid. The materiality of architecture reinforces the cold, as insulation is deficient, windows are often only single glazed and there are many air-leak points in the façade. How then, do residents keep themselves warm during the cooler months? And how are everyday objects embedded in urban energy landscapes?

century, traditional wooden stilted houses [吊脚楼] regulated the hot summer temperatures by virtue of their location on hilly terrain, where cold air from the river would flow up through natural microclimatic air movements. High humidity was combated with bamboo walls to facilitate ventilation and summer sun radiation was minimized by constructing houses on terraces, thereby reducing the surface area of each individual dwelling. Between the 1960s and 1980s, characteristic socialist, sometimes Soviet-inspired, six-storey brick buildings, often arranged in work unit compounds [单位], came to dominate the built landscape. Cross-ventilation was achievable by having window or door openings on two opposite sides and through the use of open staircases as well as lattice-style openings above doors and windows. In the 1990s, high-rise buildings started to emerge, but even those maintained characteristics appropriate for passive climate control, such as air and light shafts. Due to the availability of state-subsidized and thus affordable electricity, many residents have installed air-conditioning to cool their apartments during the hot summer months. However, the predominant approach to architectural structure barely considers the cool and moist winter conditions.

This neglect is embedded in the materiality of the buildings themselves: one of the features of the rapidly expanding cities in China since the 1990s has been the implicit state support of houses being built with cheap materials. Apropos thermal issues, the workings of the construction business impede the construction of solidly insulated and long-lasting housing infrastructures. In general, there is a lack of trust towards construction companies because, as an architect from Chongqing commented, "if something can be done with cheap materials, construction companies will do it, even if more ecologically

Urban energy infrastructure results from the mutual engagement of builders, residents and designers choosing and forming materials along ecological, economic or aesthetic guidelines. In light of recent climate change discussions, energy consumption is increasingly scrutinized. As a response, the Chinese government is continuously developing energy efficiency standards for the building industry. This includes promoting low carbon dioxide and sustainable construction through national and local insulation guidelines. Institutional changes are, however, only efficient if the practices and habits of individuals change too. In Chongqing, residents give little thought to energy consumption when they switch on air-conditioning or radiators; they do so as a necessary means to create thermal comfort indoors because the existing infrastructure does not aid in this task.

While use of air-conditioning in summer,[1] and heating infrastructures in cold regions,[2] have been researched extensively in Asia, less attention has been paid to heating practices in the subtropical regions. My research on the thermal practices of urban residents in Chongqing focuses on this under-researched climatic region. I emphasize that architecture and household practices respond to one another in what Castán Broto pointedly describes as the "urban energy landscape".[3]

Living below the 'Heating Demarcation Line'

Chinese cities are known for their heavy air pollution, caused mainly by traffic and the burning of coal. Besides this pan-Chinese phenomenon, local urban climates vary greatly and are determined by topography, winds and seasonal variation, ranging from the arid continental climates in the northwest to the tropical regions in the southeast. Cities are also characterized by microclimates resulting from, among others, urban heat island effects, built structures and green areas.

Chongqing, the capital of an eponymous municipality under direct administration of the central government, has roughly 8 million inhabitants and is located on the shores of the Yangtze river, in a humid subtropical climate in Southwest China. Even if its extreme climate periods are short (July/August in summer and December/January in winter), citizens have developed various strategies to stay warm or keep cool accordingly. With temperatures ranging between 5°C and 10°C in the coolest months, Chongqing winters seem mild. However, most apartments have no heating appliances installed. This is a legacy from socialist times, when the government defined an arbitrary line separating the north of China from the south. District-supplied heating is only installed in urban apartment buildings in the north. In Chongqing, as in other cities south of the line, such as Wuhan, Chengdu or Shanghai, thermal responsibility for the winter period is left to residents.

Subtropical architecture in Chongqing

During the cooler months, indoor and outdoor temperatures are often much the same. The coldness of urban apartments in Chongqing stems from the fact that the main concern of the subtropical architecture is mitigating the heat of the summer months. This is traceable in the architectural history of the region. At the beginning of the twentieth
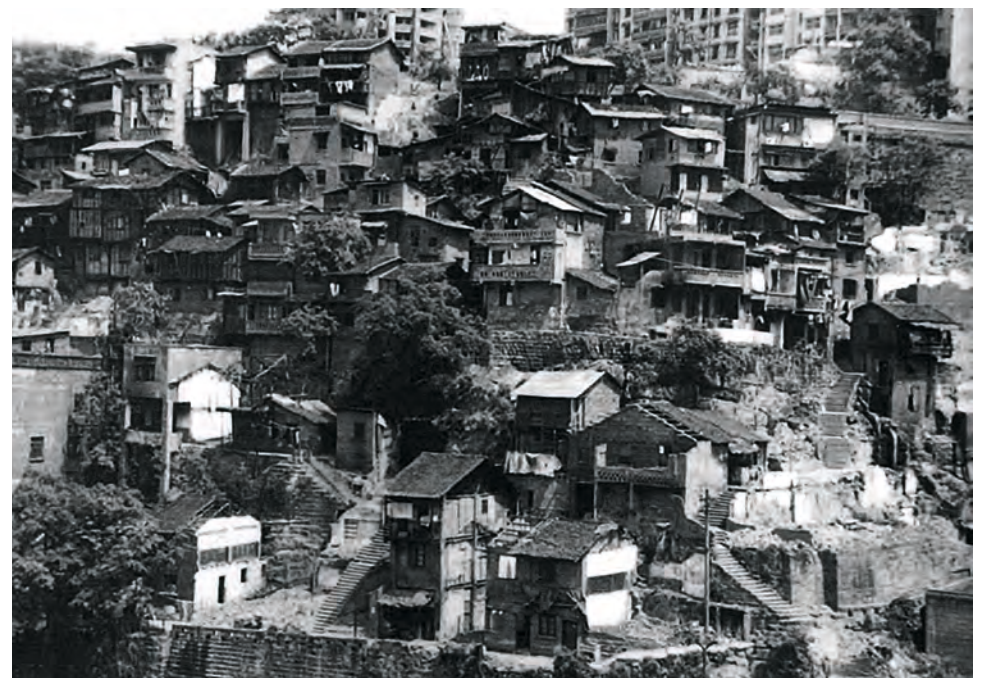
Quilted pyjamas in a clothes shop in Chongqing at the beginning of the winter season. The sign reads: 'New on the market; no bargaining'. (Kobi 2017).

Warming the body with a 'little sun'. (Kobi, 2018).

friendly materials such as triple-glazed windows are now available".[4] In all areas of urban development, the implementation of sustainable development goals seems more difficult on the ground than its proclamation in policy. Designs may meet the stipulated codes, but there is little control of the finished building. Another problem is that, for instance, thicker walls consume precious floor area where every square metre is valuable for pricing an apartment. While it would be relatively easy, from a material-technical point of view, to apply insulation boards or vapour and air barriers to the interior surfaces of walls, constructors and tenants both prefer to have more floor space.

These findings underline the fact that despite high-rise buildings all over the world looking alike from the outside, there are fundamental differences in their materiality and social use. While the thermal structure of buildings is defined by national policies and construction companies, the indoor thermal environment is very much dependent on the inhabitants' agency, as they compensate for and adapt to the lack of insulation with their own flexible practices.

Thermal infrastructure and everyday material culture

Given that the structure of houses in Chongqing does not provide comfort in winter, I argue that we have to include residents' everyday practices in response as part of thinking about thermal infrastructure and urban energy landscapes. The regulation of temperature, humidity, sunshine or air quality is related to the use of objects, materials or technologies. Some of my informants indicate that they employ devices such as air-conditioning machines in the heating mode, electric blankets or radiators to keep warm. Others prefer non-electrical practices such as drinking hot tea, dressing in quilted pyjamas or using heat patches. This combination of objects, technologies and material culture for the production of comfortable and liveable spaces forms a "system of thermal-material culture".[5] Besides such thermal-material cultures depending on geographical climatic contexts, they are also shaped along intersections of socio-economic status, age and gender.[6]

The 'little sun' is one of the objects employed to improve comfort. Through the infrared waves it emits, the device warms all parts of the body in the focus of its radiation. While it cannot be used to heat rooms or entire apartments, it serves well for warming the body. In shops, sales personnel put the device under the table to warm their legs while waiting for customers. Students use it when sitting at their desks. And people enjoy its heat radiation in apartments, too. One informant told me that his mother prefers her 'little sun' to the conventional radiator as it emits a reddish-yellow light that reminds her of the open fire in her rural childhood home. It is this warm glow but also the (often) round form of the heaters that have led to their nickname. Because Chongqing winters are damp and foggy and there is almost no sun, the 'little sun' is also kind of a substitute – filling in between the rare moments when the 'real' sun shows up.

Energy transition and social inequality

In the Chongqing winter, people keep themselves warm through the use of objects such as the 'little sun'. We often neglect to properly consider how such use of everyday material culture complements thermal infrastructure. The construction of thermal comfort should not be conceived as a linear relation between a technology and its beneficiaries, such as a heating infrastructure being employed to warm apartments. Rather, when thinking about energy transition, I suggest that not only institutional improvements (such as greening measures, low-carbon transport options or carbon dioxide reduction guidelines) but also everyday practices should be considered. Through detailed studies of urban energy landscapes, the interrelatedness of thermal structures, thermal regimes and thermal practices becomes apparent. As Castán Broto writes, "[m]any of the factors that shape current energy systems, from electricity networks to the type of houses in which people live, have emerged over time as part of a historical process through which different features of energy systems become embedded in our societies and economies".[7]

In that sense, any sort of energy transition in Chongqing needs to address the particular socio-political context in which local architecture emerges. It is not sufficient simply to change the energy source or the building material; we have to consider how the materiality of the urban energy landscape is embedded in everyday rhythms.

Access to state heating benefits for Chinese urban residents north and south of the Heating Demarcation Line has been unequal for decades. Installing district heating infrastructure in southern China, with all the necessary pipes and heat production plants, seems out of question in light of current energy transition aims. However, by improving structural insulation, electricity consumption could be significantly reduced – both in summer and in winter, as there would be no need for excessive air-conditioning or 'little suns'. Further, it would lessen socio-economic division within the south, as at present financial means decide access to different forms of heating. Well-off residents can afford to install electric underfloor heating, while less privileged people have to rely on quilted pyjamas or small heating devices at best. In contemporary China, energy transition is related to fundamental questions of who has the right to access governmental heating infrastructure and how far keeping one's body warm is a private issue.

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Characteristic apartment houses in Chongqing. Note the self-installed split-unit air-conditioners and the clothes hanging outside due to the high humidity indoors. (Kobi 2017)

Notes

1 E.g., Sahakian, M. 2018. 'Indoor Urbanism: Air-Conditioned Microclimates in Metro Manila (The Philippines)', in Roesler, S. & Kobi, M. (eds) *The Urban Microclimate as Artifact: Towards an Architectural Theory of Thermal Diversity.* Basel: Birkhäuser, pp.64-81; Hitchings, R. & Lee, S.J. 2008. 'Air Conditioning and the Material Culture of Routine Human Encasement: The Case of Young People in Contemporary Singapore', *Journal of Material Culture* 13(3):251-65.
2 E.g., Collier, St. 2011. *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics.* Princeton University Press.
3 Castán Broto, V. 2019. *Urban Energy Landscapes.* Cambridge University Press.
4 Fieldwork conversation. September 2017.
5 Shove, E., Walker, G. & Brown, S. 2014. 'Material Culture, Room Temperature and the Social Organisation of Thermal Energy', *Journal of Material Culture* 19(2):113-24, p.115.
6 Kobi, M. 2019. 'Contours of an Urban Architectural Anthropology: Built Environment, Climate Control and Socio-Material Practices in Winter in Chongqing (Southwest China)', *Social Anthropology* 27(4):689-704.
7 Ibid. Castán Broto, p.8.

Asian Studies in Pakistan

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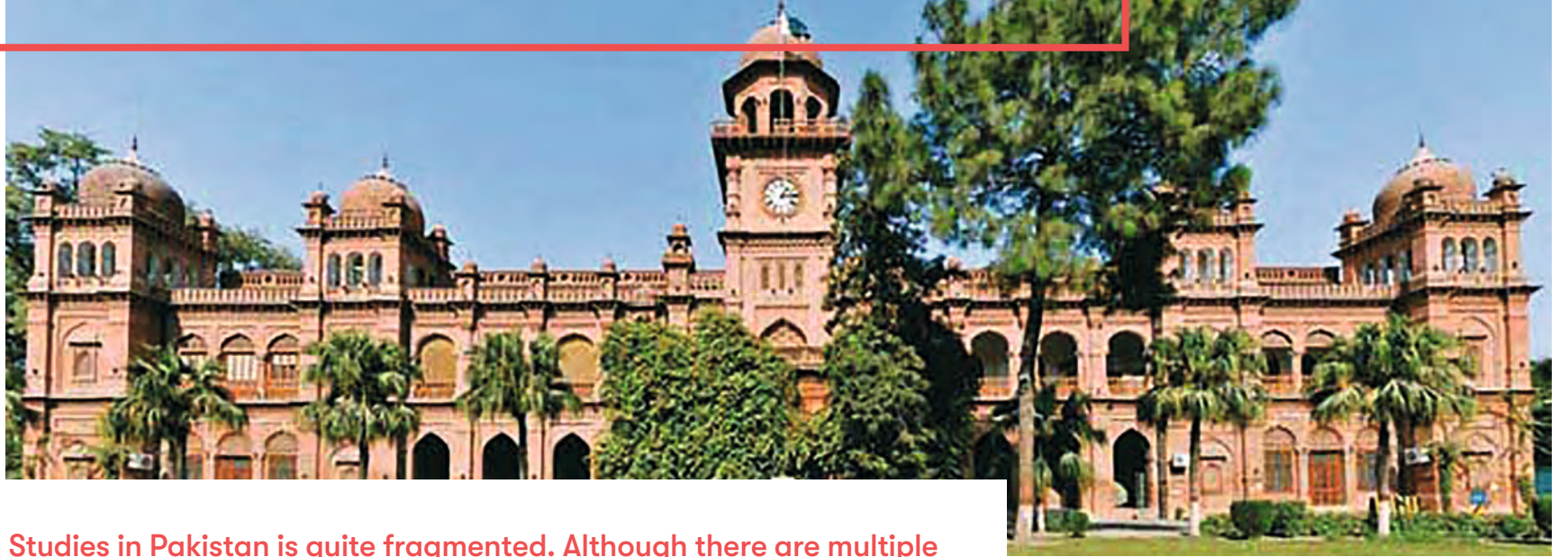
University of the Punjab, Allama Iqbal Campus (Old Campus).

The status of Asian Studies in Pakistan is quite fragmented. Although there are multiple educational, research and policy institutes working on various topics related to different countries and regions within Asia, there is a lack of a well-defined inclusive 'Asian' academic space that engages with all regions of the continent.

While most of the educational institutes in Pakistan offer graduate and undergraduate courses and specialisations focusing on Asia and Asian languages, only a few universities have dedicated departments or research centres to carry out Asia-specific research. There are even fewer institutes that offer an entire degree program with an inclusive Asia-wide curriculum or Asia-centric research clusters. This is not to say that there is a lack of knowledge on Asia in the academic sphere of Pakistan, but rather to argue that Asian expertise does not concentrate under one banner, hence, limiting the scope of 'discursive' and 'non-discursive' knowledge production on Asian Studies in Pakistan.

Apart from the educational institutes, there are multiple independent think tanks, policy and research centres as well as NGOs working on Asia-related research, such as The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), Pakistan China Institute (PCI), China Study Centre at Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), and Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), to name a few. These institutes engage in diverse topics on Asia, covering politics, security, economy, culture, history or foreign affairs. However, the predominant focus of the research is South-Asia centric, and recently more centred on China rather than having an inclusive 'Asian' studies research approach.

Given this, I argue that the status of Asian Studies in Pakistan is asymmetric as some regions within the continent dominate the academic and policy-oriented research space. Pakistan, strategically located at the Arabian Sea and surrounded by India to the east, Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the southwest, and China to the northeast, is of much geopolitical significance at the Asian as well as global level. Moreover, its rich history and cultural tapestry have much to offer and share with other countries through research collaborations on Asian knowledge. In this article, I survey the major gatekeepers of Asian Studies research in Pakistan and trace out some possible factors and explanations for this Asian research asymmetry and the lack of an inclusive approach on Asian Studies in Pakistan.

Asian Studies Institutes in Pakistan (1973 – to date)

When it comes to Asian Studies in Pakistan, who is at the forefront of the production of knowledge in Pakistan? Which universities partake in this endeavour and what research capacities do they use to disseminate their knowledge on Asia? Area Study centres came into existence in Pakistan in 1973, and were based on the National Education Policy of 1972-1980, following the Indo-Pak War and the separation of East-Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) in 1971.[1] This renewed education policy catered to the political need to study foreign societies that were of utmost significance to the national interest of Pakistan. Moreover, in 1975, the Area Study Act No. XLV passed by the Parliament of Pakistan mandated the establishment of six Area Study centres funded by the federal government. Of these six centres, three had an Asian-oriented focus, namely, the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Punjab in Lahore; Far East and Southeast Asia Study Centre at the University of Sindh in Jamshoro; and the Area Study Centre (Russia, China, and Central Asia) at the University of Peshawar.[2] These Area Study centres engaged in interdisciplinary research through teaching, research training, and organising conferences and seminars to assist decision makers in Pakistan in designing more informed foreign policymaking.

The Centre for South Asian Studies is located at Pakistan's oldest and largest university – the University of Punjab in Lahore – and started its research in 1973, with a focus on the socioeconomic and political developments in South Asia, covering India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Besides offering Master and Doctorate degrees in South Asian Studies, the Centre also publishes two biannual journals: the *International Journal of South Asian Studies* and the *Journal of Indian Studies.* Moreover, the University of Punjab also hosts the Confucius Institute, which actively promotes Chinese culture and language.

The research of the Far East and Southeast Asia Study Centre at the University of Sindh in Jamshoro, focuses on countries such as Japan, North Korea, South Korea, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Brunei, Thailand, Laos, and East Timor. The Centre publishes the *Asia Pacific* research journal annually. The Area Study Centre (Russia, China, and Central Asia) at the University of Peshawar caters to the research and academic needs of Peshawar, as well as of the whole province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Along with its biannual research journal *Central Asia*, the Centre actively offers training in Chinese, Russian, Pashto, and Uighur/Uzbek languages. Moreover, the University of Peshawar started the China Study Centre in 2016 after the launch of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In addition to the above mentioned centres, there are some other academic institutes that provide Asian linguistic training, such as the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), and the Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). NUML is the most prominent language institute, with multiple departments for Asian languages, such as Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Pushto, Punjabi, among others. Established in 1969, initially it served as a platform for language training for government personnel, but later upgraded to University status in 2000. It now teaches 27 oriental and occidental languages and offers degree programs in multiple campuses across Pakistan. The Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature at LUMS was founded in 2010 and specialises more on South Asian languages, such as Urdu, Persian, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Arabic.

Although all of these Asian study and research centres have been engaging quite actively over the past years in Pakistan, some of them have fallen dormant because of either a shortage of funds or unavailability of qualified teachers.[3] This has mostly led to the degradation of the research endeavours of these institutes. As most of the funding came from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan in the past, these Asian Study institutes must enhance their existing funding or access some external funding to invigorate their research and Asia study programs.

Moving forward

Up until 2013, the number and regional distribution of Asia Study Centres remained more or less the same. However, with the recent launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, there has been a surge in the number of research institutes on China, as we are witnessing the strengthening of the Sino-Pak inter-governmental ties. Consequently, many educational institutes have initiated China Study Centres, such as the China Study Centre at the University of Balochistan, University of Sargodha, Government College University in Lahore, COMSATS University, Bahria University, and the China Pakistan Management Initiative (CPMI) at LUMS University. This increase in China-related academic study and research avenues aptly aligns with political needs and the foreign policy trajectory of Pakistan. Sino-Pak bilateral relations have always been strong as both countries have supported each other over the years; however, with CPEC, China has become the most important international actor for Pakistan. Hence, thoroughly understanding Chinese politics, economy, culture, history and language, as well as developing collaborative research with China in various fields, is of vital significance for Pakistan moving forward.

As most of the scholarly work in the field of Asian Studies was sparked by the political need for understanding other societies for policy purposes, area-specific research clearly served utilitarian purposes, rather than scholastic goals. Be that as it may, there is also an academic need to reorient and recognise the gaps within Asian Studies in Pakistan by developing a more inclusive approach and bringing other under-represented Asian countries into the fold. Yet, with the existing de-globalised forms of knowledge production, we need to reconfigure our globalised theories of knowledge with the local and regional theory building processes. It is crucial to reframe the Asian Studies narrative by including non-Western theories on Asia rather than heavily relying on the Euro-American centric accounts of Asian Studies. Additionally, Asian Studies should not only be confined to geographically defined regions but efforts should also be made to study Asia from a thematic, i.e., interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. In the case of Pakistan, this could be achieved by enhancing public funding to promote multidisciplinary and inclusive Asia research in colleges and universities, and by encouraging public-private partnerships and external funding initiatives among policy and research centres. Furthermore, we should continue to facilitate cross-border research collaborations and academic exchange programs for Asian Studies scholars in Pakistan, especially with regard to our neighbouring Asian countries, as they will enable us to advance and co-produce theoretically and methodologically rigorous knowledge on Asia. We would gain much more in academic and scientific ventures by mutual Asian knowledge gathering and sharing than confining this corpus of knowledge flow within our own borders.
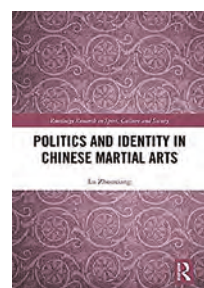
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Notes

1 Islam, M. 2005. 'Area Studies in Pakistan: An Assessment', in Inayatullah, R.S. & Tahir, P. (eds) *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile.* Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences Pakistan, pp.285-303
2 The other three centres were: Area Study Centre for Europe (ASCE) University of Karachi, Karachi; Area Study Centre for the Middle East and Arab Countries, University of Balochistan, Quetta; Area Study Centre for Africa, North and South America, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
3 Ibid., note 1

Politics and identity in Chinese martial arts

Henning Wittwer

Some readers may raise an eyebrow reading the term 'Chinese martial arts' as it is often entailing stereotypes of an infantile hobby, screaming actors in kung fu films or orientalist fantasies. However, for centuries Chinese martial arts, in the broadest sense of the word, were an important part of the culture of China and played roles in its politics and identity building. In spite of this English language scholarly treatments of their historical, cultural or political dimensions are still rare, which underscores the high relevance of any new publication in this particular field. Lu Zhouxiang's mission in writing the book under review was to highlight and to prove exactly these aspects. Using a historical approach, he starts the first half of his project with developments during the Shang dynasty in the Bronze Age and follows the dynastic chronology until the Qing dynasty. Subsequently the second half of the work covers the 20th Century until the most recent time. Lu's enthusiasm for the subject matter shines through his easy to read, thoroughly referenced text. Each chapter is equipped with its own bibliography. A small drawback is the lack of Chinese characters in many cases, which may render more difficult the identification of some names and sources.

Real fortes of Lu's text are the numerous quotations of various historical sources like poems, songs, chronicles, etc. often translated by the author himself. They make reading the anyway interesting monograph enjoyable and even more entertaining. Right from the beginning Lu manages successfully to demonstrate the importance of martial arts as ritualistic and pragmatic facets in the reality of life of China's early aristocratic respectively political circles. It becomes evident that the nobility's circumstances of living and surviving demanded the appreciation of martial practises. Among other things they assisted in the "construction of the feudal pyramid of power" (p.7) or in diplomatic exchanges (p.20). His investigation of the roles martial arts played in those social mechanisms evinces the importance of academic engagement with Chinese martial arts.

Folkloristic martial entertainment and pragmatic combat skills intermingled and mutually influenced each other under certain circumstances at times. Hence, Lu's well-presented overviews of martial arts related novels and theatre shows through the history may be of special interest to readers with an interest in Chinese literature and drama. Not only were they significant factors in the creation of what Lu labels 'martial arts culture' (p.48), they were also used as means for identity building and political messages (p.119). When politics are involved, the possibility of censorship has to be considered sometimes, which in turn leads to different consequences for martial arts writings and their authors (p.152).

For me one of the most impressive information delineated by Lu is the great extent of governmental support of and involvement into martial arts in the 20th century until today. Besides the obvious and not so obvious effects for China itself, it raises questions about the situations in China's neighbouring nations with their own martial traditions. To give one example, in 1959 and 1975 China's State Post Bureau issued stamps with martial sports motives (pp. 140 and 150). Similarly in 1964/65 stamps were issued depicting the martial traditions of the Ryukyu Islands which were under US administration at that time (http://baxleystamps.com/rymartialarts.htm, accessed 10 March 2019). In both cases native martial arts were officially legitimised and upheld as cultural legacies by these stamps.

In two or three cases the reviewer feels that a little more extended source criticism could have been fruitful. For example on pages 63 and 64 Lu is presenting his rendering of a 17th century epitaph that was and is well known among martial arts literati because of its content. Therein a categorisation of Chinese martial arts into the so-called 'internal family' and 'external family' (Lu's translation) is proposed. A certain Zhang Sanfeng is named as the founder of the 'internal family' of martial arts and said to have acquired his skills while dreaming. Of course, the last statement reveals a legendary character of this story. Rightly, therefore, Lu points out the fact that the Zhang Sanfeng legend was dismissed with scholarly criticism in the 1920s and 1930s (p.115). According to Sinologist Stanley Henning the epitaph in question appears to have been meant as a more or less camouflaged political statement. He argues that it contains several verbal attacks of a Ming loyalist against the then still young Qing dynasty. The latter was established by 'foreign' Manchu invaders, symbolized as 'external family' in said source, while the ingenious Ming are disguised as 'internal family' (Stanley Henning, Chinese boxing: The internal versus external schools in the light of history and theory, *Journal of Asian Martial Arts* 6(3), 1997: 10–19). For this reason we may probably better read it as a political declaration of a person who seeks identity in a bygone period. And because this interpretation would perfectly be in line with Lu's overall discussion, the reviewer somehow sensed a missed opportunity. Lu does not refer to it. Yet, my sentiment with regard to this point is not meant as criticism, but it was merely a brainwave that hit me while reading the book.

Noteworthy – at least in my opinion – are Lu's conclusions regarding the possible future of Chinese martial arts. In tandem with the "increasingly industrialised, urbanised, and globalised world" China is facing, Lu proposes that its native martial arts probably should better follow a path of "reform and modernisation" in the direction of a unified sportive tournament system (p.222). While this suggestion may be helpful in creating a more global identity and stronger diplomatic relations it appears to potentially wipe away all the cultural and technically diversity and depth outlined meticulously in the same work before. Therefore the main argument that Chinese martial arts have "always been evolving" (p.223) appears to me as a sweeping statement. His view is balanced by an earlier presentation of more critical voices of these modernisation and sportification trends, and it is part of his discussion of these disapproving statements. So in the end the reader is provided with reasonable material in order to draw his own conclusions regarding this problem and further engagement with the topic is elicited.

In short, Lu's work offers a real contribution to the understanding of Chinese traditional culture in the form of martial arts, politics, and identity. Sinologists and students of sinology will find it useful in better comprehending the diverse roles martial arts played in Chinese culture. Students of Asian studies in general may be provided with insights and inspiration for future research. Furthermore, it is worthwhile for teachers and practitioners of Chinese martial arts who want to learn more about the history and culture of their passion.
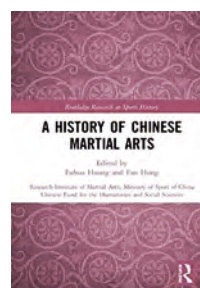
In 1997 a long awaited in-depth historical overview of martial arts in China was published with the support of the Ministry of Sport of China. Since it was written in Chinese the English speaking world had to wait for a scholarly chronical of Chinese martial arts until 2012, when Peter Lorge published his book *Chinese Martial Arts: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). Because of the later publication date and the importance of the 1997 work it is not surprising to find it in the bibliography of Lorge's work. Still, another six years had to pass until Fuhua Huang and Fan Hong finally present us their easy to read English translation of *A History of Chinese Martial Arts.* Both editors have to be congratulated on their decision to translate such a work with its many technical terms, which require specialist knowledge as well as patience. The list of contributors is impressive and contains some well-known names in the field of Chinese martial arts history like Ma Mingda (editorial committee), Kuang Wennan (author) or Kang Gewu (author) to name just a few.

From the time of the Sinanthropus right into the 1990s the subject matter is presented chronological over 10 chapters. Different authors are responsible for different chapters. While the chronological arrangement is similar – but not identical – to Lorge's work, Lorge is providing a discussion on defining the term 'martial arts' in his introduction (Chinese Martial Arts, p.3). This is certainly a good starting point for readers without any idea of martial arts; yet, the lack of such an extended definition in *A History of Chinese Martial Arts* is not really a drawback. Because by reading the book under review the term 'martial art' is filled with varied meanings so that a distinguished picture of 'martial arts' in China is created. However, as this short comparison shows Lorge's work may be regarded as complementary to *A History of Chinese Martial Arts.*

A real forte of the work is the many facts which follow sometimes in furious succession, among them biographical and hagiographical entries from classic texts and archaeological findings. Bibliographic references are given at the end of each chapter, so that further research is possible. I wish to highlight this point because the history of martial arts in China is intermingled with many legends. The authors and editors approach many of these legends, which muddle the more factual history, in a critical way. To give one popular example, fabricated tales concerning the Indian monk Bodhidharma describe him as the inventor of 'Shaolin martial arts'. In his section on the 'Origin of Shaolin martial arts' Kuang Wennan clearly refutes such accounts (p.75). Still, a few legends slip through the overall scholarly rigour of the text, like in the case of Chen Yuanyun. Said Chen is treated as the legendary Chinese forefather of Japanese judo (p. 151). More recent research has shown that Chen was probably not involved in martial arts (Thomas A. Green and Joseph R. Svinth (eds), *Martial Arts of the World: An Encyclopedia of History and Innovation*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010, 122).

By following the historical survey it becomes obvious that martial arts cannot be regarded as a mere footnote in the history and cultural history of China. In fact they played a central role from the beginning when weapons and their use were not restricted to hunting and fighting, but were present in ritual martial dances or early paintings, too. This eye-opening relationship between martial arts and other, more civil cultural pursuits is also apparent in the chapters on later periods. In modern China one aspect of this liaison has been labelled 'martial arts diplomacy', and it means that martial arts performances, competitions or training camps are purposeful used for political goals (p.208). Other types of martial arts exchange between China and adjacent nations took place in the centuries before. For example, when the so-called Japanese pirates *(wokou)* invaded China, their Japanese sabres became a threat so that Chinese martial artists seemed to be eager to learn Japanese sabre techniques and to acquire Japanese sabres (p.151). On the other hand, Chinese fighting techniques exerted some influence on the development of martial arts in the Ryukyu Kingdom, the subsequent Japanese Prefecture of Okinawa (p.152). In the latter case the exact details given in the book are slightly outdated; however, the basic idea of a certain Chinese influence remains a fact. So these examples demonstrate clearly that martial knowledge crossed borders of nations, be it for reasons of survival or less cogent motives. Therefore the subject of Chinese martial arts concerns not only China itself but many other Asian countries, and nowadays it has become a rather international phenomenon.

Worth mentioning is a discussion of early Chinese schools of thought and their association with martial arts (p.30). Among them the most obvious and convincing ones are the teachings of Chinese military classics like Sunzi. Insightful comments are given on Confucianism, Mohism, and Taoism with regard to possible influences on martial arts ideologies. Later in the book Kang Gewu in his survey of martial arts in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) underlines that it was in this period that literate martial artists tried to 'enrich the content of their martial arts' by integrating them into traditional Chinese culture (p.160). These considerations are definitely provoking further interest and research into the topic. At the same time they demonstrate that martial arts cannot be generally reduced to only a brutal and mindless physical activity.

Two of the more recent developments presented in the last chapter include a centralisation of sportive martial arts in China and a large scale operation in order to classify martial arts legacies. This second campaign obviously resulted in a huge amount of collected source materials, and raises my hope that other publications on this worthwhile and captivating subject may follow in the future.

In short *A History of Chinese Martial Arts* is a most welcome and interesting book, providing the combined insights of several specialists. Students of Sinology as well as practitioners, teachers or researchers of China's martial arts will find it to be a helpful overview and may refer to it time and again. Furthermore it will be insightful to students of Asian Studies in general in order to understand the importance of martial arts as cultural knowledge that flowed and flows back and forth between China and its neighbours.

Both titles reviewed by
Henning Wittwer,
Independent scholar, Germany.

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The Review

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Rewriting revolution

Robert Winstanley-Chesters

2018 saw the world turn what appeared to be a new page on interactions and relations with North Korea. There were moments of inter-Korean interaction that might never have been imagined. Rituals and practices of friendship, connection and relationship grown through centuries of shared cultural development and growth. Some exchanges seemed almost parodically Korean, tangibly of the peninsula in a way which was difficult to quite fathom. At the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, North Korea's extraordinary cultural gift of 250 colourful cheerleaders confounded the world's media and attention. 250 energetic, brightly coloured, snappily dressed North Korean females moving with a synchronicity that seemed both impressive and anachronistically confusing at the same time. Surely the only 250 North Korean women together in one place that many people watching would have ever seen, they were both present and unreachable at the same time. This is of course one of the truisms of any moment about North Korea, just as it might seem to become accessible and knowable, its people and politics confound the outside world. Writing on North Korea is much the same, so much at the present that is of the past, so much grasping at straws, even with the great opportunity available, so little creativity. How much readers and thinkers would welcome its rewriting anew for any changing situation.

Immanuel Kim's *Rewriting Revolution: Women, Sexuality and Memory in North Korean Fiction* is nothing therefore if not ambitious in its aims to offer something new on North Korea, and specifically on the place of women in that nation's revolution. Of course just as North Koreans in North Korea, even at the historical moment of 2018, are difficult to access, so *Rewriting Revolution* encounters the nation's women in a context in which they have become easier to connect to and encounter, its literary products. Kim's work essentially explores the place of women in North Korean revolutionary society and politics through elements of the nation's cultural production. It must be said at the outset that the book primarily does so through literature produced in North Korea during the 1980s, though it does look backwards to work from earlier decades. So readers looking for a particularly current review of North Korean literature which reflects or mirrors the era of the post-Arduous March, *byungjin* ('parallel development'), *donju* ('masters of money'), and Kim Jong Un might be disappointed. Aside from the recent publication of Immanuel Kim's own translation of *Friend*, a novel by the North Korean author Paek Nam-nyong, and the academic work of Sonja Ryang, Suzy Kim, Ruth Barraclough, Hyaeweol Choi, and Sandra Fahy, few authors have really sought to unpick or uncover the lives and experiences of women in North Korea and the activist and paramilitary communities before it, which are claimed to have birthed its politics. Kim's *Rewriting Revolution* therefore is surely one of the first works which seeks to consider, at least even in passing, female sexuality, women's role in marriage and family and divorce in North Korea.

For most readers North Korean writing and literature is primarily the work of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un, or is about them. There is a voluminous body of material claiming to be written by North Korea's leaders, written on their behalf, or written about them. This writing of course has North Korea's politics, and its social, cultural, and historical messaging writ loudly and boldly through it. North Korea's politics, its charismatic politics as Heonik Kwon and Byung-ho Chung have termed it, is inescapable within the country and is certainly seemingly omnipresent in its cultural production. This has led to a widely held opinion within academia that this is so much the case that in fact there is no cultural production in North Korea, it is only political production by other means. Essentially there is no art or culture in North Korea, only politics. Scholarly work that has focused on North Korean literature such as the feisty B. R. Myers's writing on Han Sorya suggests that unlike other dictatorships and autarkies like the Soviet Union under Stalin, North Korea has not even been able to produce a recognisable or authentic socialist or autocratic realism in its cultural products. In a nation where the only reality is politics, how can there even be the reflection necessary to create a cultural product, at least for one that is removed from that political reality.

In *Rewriting Revolution*, Immanuel Kim suggests that not only are authentic cultural products possible in North Korea, but in its literature, what externally we term 'subaltern' experiences, opinions and possibilities can be found. These experiences and possibilities can even run counter or be disruptive to the needs, ambitions and directions of North Korea's politics. A very careful parsing of works such as Paek Nam-nyong's *Friend*, Kim Kyo-sŏp's *Heights of Life*, Ch'oe Sang-sun's *Morning Star* and Ri Hui-nam's *Eight Hours*, *Rewriting Revolution*, is replete with gaps, fissures, and potential 'lines of flight' (as Deleuze would understand them) for women and female experience in North Korea. The reader must bear in mind that since this is North Korean literature we are talking about, passed by its authorities and institutions of control and censorship generally these experiences cannot be as explicit as South Korean writing such as Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*. If the reader is looking for an exploration of the outer reaches of female sexuality in North Korea, or earthy experiences of female *donju*, they will be disappointed. It is worth saying that for the most part Kim's focus is on female roles which are deeply embedded in conventional North Korean political, social, and cultural practice. The women of these works are good North Korean women as Pyongyang would understand what that means.

Rewriting Revolution thus encounters female partners living and struggling under the political and cultural weight of North Korean expectation. Frustrated at their husbands' dreams of research success and other futures, yet constrained in potential critiques by both their social role and the political demands upon individuals to contribute to the greater socialist good. Like all regular North Korean's they are expected to give up things, to subjugate desires for the collective and for the wider success of the nation, yet Kim's analysis of their narratives, demonstrates the cognitive dissonance, psychological dislocations, and emotional trouble experienced by the nation's women. It is not easy being a woman of North Korean literature, and it is acceptable to Pyongyang's authorities and the wider framework of the nation's politics, that that dis-ease is at least visible or knowable to the careful reader.

A careful reader of *Rewriting Revolution* might also note the unease within the book itself, perhaps the unease of the author. Given its well organised and well edited structure and form, Kim's work on occasion, seems to encounter its own struggle with politics, strain to break its own tight reins. In particular Chapter Five of *Rewriting Revolution* includes some of the most erudite and considered writing on the industries of North Korean defector narratives and publishing, this reviewer has yet read, and which emerges in the middle of a chapter focused on redefinitions of motherhood in the North Korean context. There is a work, influenced by the great Norman Finkelstein in these ideas, but perhaps just as the North Korean women of the literature Kim is primarily tasked to write about, the politics and cultural expectations of audience, commissioner, and other authorities demand that it is restricted and difficult to write about. These strains are held in common with the characters and stories Kim uncovers in *Rewriting Revolution*, a careful work of uncovering and encountering in North Korean cultural production, a welcome contribution to a growing body of writing which really seeks to know the nation, and not just by its fissures, ruptures, and collapses.

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Capture or co-optation?
Making sense of official ulama's authority in Malaysia and Indonesia

Azmil Tayeb

Throughout the Islamic history, ummah (the Muslim community) in general perceives the authority of ulama (religious scholars) in the context of the ulama's distance from the seat of power. In other words, an ulama's authority is highly regarded if the ummah deems him capable of exercising independent judgment free from the self-serving sway of the rulers. Nevertheless, starting in the late-1800s, the expansion of modern bureaucracy provided the ulama with a new coercive and deep-reaching tool to exert their authority over the ummah, in return for bestowing religious imprimatur on the policies of the ruling regime. Official ulama, as these religious functionaries are known as, are conventionally seen as 'rubber stamps' and 'lackeys' of the ruling elites, who surrender their theological independent judgment in exchange for material rewards and status (p. 24).

However, Norshahril Saat's empirically rich and theoretically informed study of official ulama in Malaysia and Indonesia illustrates that the power relations between official ulama and their state patrons is not as clear-cut and lopsided as it is conventionally believed. The book argues through the theoretical lens of Joel Migdal's 'state-in-society' that official ulama in Malaysia, despite the initial co-optation, have managed to assert their independence and agency, to an extent that they have successfully captured some parts of the state. This stands in contrast to the official ulama in Indonesia, who have been less successful than their Malaysian counterparts in doing so. Simply put, official ulama are not as toothless and less influential as they are made out to be since they are able to employ the legitimized powers of the state to extract compliance and respect for their authority from the Muslim populace, albeit to varying degrees of success.

In this book, official ulama in Malaysia are represented by the National Fatwa Committee [of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia] (Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ugama Islam Malaysia), the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia), and the Malaysian Institute for Islamic Understanding (Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the Ulama Council of Indonesia (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) forms the collective authority of official ulama in the country. Even though the aforementioned institutions can be considered as official ulama in their respective countries, their official roles and status vary, which explain the differences in their capacities to capture the state.

The book puts forth three factors in explaining why the official ulama in Malaysia have been more successful in capturing the state than their counterparts in Indonesia: a clear institutional role, coherent ideology, and organizational unity (p. 41). Firstly, the official ulama in Malaysia have been deployed by the state as agents of Islamization since the onset of the Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s, which gives them a clear institutional role, namely to defuse the political threat posed by the Islamic opposition such as the Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (Parti Islam Se-Malaysia). The Ulama Council of Indonesia does not enjoy similar core clarity in institutional role since the threat of political Islam to the state legitimacy in Indonesia is not as dire as it is in Malaysia. Secondly, official ulama in Malaysia are institutionally stronger due to their ability to rally around a coherent ideology that propagates the interests of the regime and the sultanates, particularly the five tenets of the state philosophy Rukunegara and the belief in Ketuanan Melayu (literally Malay supremacy). In comparison, the religiously neutral Indonesian state philosophy Pancasila severely circumscribes the ability of official ulama in Indonesia to advance their religious agenda, and thus depriving them of a powerful ideology with which they can instrumentalize. Finally, by being organizationally cohesive the official ulama in Malaysia are able to confront threats to its interests and authority in a more effective and forceful manner, in comparison to the Ulama Council of Indonesia, which is riven with ideological divisions and internal rivalries that, in turn, weaken its authority.

Mughal occidentalism

Catherine B. Asher
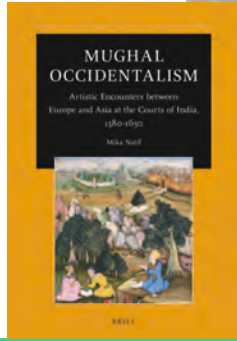
Reviewed title

Mughal Occidentalism: Artistic Encounters Between Europe and Asia at the Court of India, 1580-1630

Mika Natif. 2018.

Leiden and Boston: Brill
ISBN 9779004371095

This book concerns the encounter between western mode of image making and the artistic output by artists of the Mughal court between the 1580 and 1630. Mika Natif's goal is to reconsider this complex issue which has long fascinated scholars. Rather than see Mughal painting as a simple result of courtly interest in western modes of artistic depiction, she argues that Mughal contact with the west occurred on multiple levels. Her text probes these contacts giving Indian artists more agency than done in previous scholarship. Her goal is to the present a balance between the role of the patron and the insight of artists. Before defining her own choice of the title and term Mughal Occidentalism she details how previous scholars have used the term occidentalism. She also provides examples of how western art and its motifs have been employed throughout Islamic artistic production prior to the Mughal period. She sees in the Mughal case that the use of occidentalism is not pure copying but that these are cases of cross-cultural use. This book is a welcome addition to the many books on Mughal painting that have appeared in recent years. Here we see a more clearly defined link between Akbar's policy of toleration and European elements in paintings than has been suggested in previous works.

This volume opens with a detailed study of Akbar's policy of *sulh-i kull* (peace with all) and its adoption by Akbar's successor, Jahangir. This policy of tolerance is the key, Natif argues, to the Mughals' acceptance of European and particularly Jesuit presence at court. She suggests that Europeans, rather than seen as a wildly foreign element, were considered as part of the varied multi-cultural multi-ethic landscape of South Asia. She also suggests, as have others, that Akbar and Jahangir may well have been aware of differences between the subcontinent and Europe through the material culture they acquired as gifts as well as political and economic reports through envoys.

This concern with *sulh-i kull* and encounters with Europeans shifts to a consideration of primary sources. Here Natif rightly warns the reader to not take European accounts, especially those of the Jesuits, literally, for as she argues, examples cited are often tropes for conversion found in Jesuit texts from China to Latin America. Part of the issue is what the Jesuits wanted to believe; another part was their incomprehension of Mughal tradition.

The Jesuits, as is well-known, brought gifts to win favor with the Mughal emperors. Among those most cited by scholars is the multi-volume Polyglot Bible whose illustrations have been seen as the source of much Mughal Occidental visual content. However, Natif argues that we do not know how long this Bible stayed in the Mughal court for it may have been returned to the Jesuits. Even if it had remained she questions whether a single source can be linked to Mughal Occidentalism, arguing for a more nuanced understanding of links between European sources and Mughal output.

Natif also discussed depictions of Mary and Jesus once seen on palace walls and today in paintings in museum collections. Her conclusion that such imagery is dynastic in meaning is not new, but she argues her case well. Following this is a discussion of transmission and copying in the royal workshop. Here Natif considers three Mughal paintings which clearly are modeled on well-known Europeans masterpieces. She posits that the artists of these works, two females and one male, were not copying at all but recoding the style, identity, technique, and subject matter (p.84). Natif's analysis for these illustrations is brilliant, removing all the original Christian context and meaning, replacing it with meaning that is specific to the Persianate world and relates to each work's inscriptional content. It would be instructive to see her observations extended to other Mughal paintings often assumed to be poor or inaccurate copies of western art. Can her conclusions apply to all paintings in which elements of Mughal Occidentalism occur or are these examples limited?

Renaissance prints were adapted in two different manners. One is the cutting of parts of a European print and incorporating them into a Mughal album page. The other is including articles found in European art work and including them into a Mughal painting. Here Natif focuses on two particular articles: globes and organs. She argues effectively that both these modes change the article's original meaning – Christian most of the time – into an image associated with reason and just rule. Often her explanations involve complex socio-economic factors: the sizeable group of middle-class Muslims and the neo-liberal economic policies. The white-hot economic growth rate especially in the decades leading up to the 1997 Asian financial crisis has produced a significant population of largely conservative middle-class Muslims, who require the culture of modern consumption to accommodate their strict religious way of life. The demand, in turn, creates a niche in the economy for syariah-compliant consumer activities to thrive, in particular the halal-certification of food and beverages and Islamic banking and finance. The new market niche provides lucrative opportunity for the official ulama to become actors in the capitalist economy, chiefly to exploit the insecurities of conservative middle-class Muslims who are looking for the official certainty that their material consumption does not run afoul of their religious beliefs. It is within this socio-economic context that the authority of official ulama in Malaysia and Indonesia resonates the strongest.

levels of understanding indicating a high level of intellectual engagement for patron and painter alike.

Landscape as Mughal allegory for the virtuous city and ideal Mughal governance is another focus. Natif argues that around the 1580s, concurrent with the adaptation of *sulh-i kull*, receding distance landscapes, akin to those found in northern European painting, begin to be incorporated into paintings of a non-historical nature. These landscapes are not found in pages of the Akbarnama or other histories relating to the Mughal house, but in manuscripts such as the Kulliyat of Sa'adi or the Khamsa of Nizami. Not only does the appearance of these landscapes parallel the rise of *sulh-i kull* they also are executed during a time when Tusi's Akhlaqi Nasiri (Ethics of Nasiri) was extremely popular. Nasiri promoted the concept of the Virtuous City akin to the ideal world seen in these landscapes. European landscape is adapted as were objects and images of Jesus and Mary for specific Mughal ideological ends.

Diverse types of Mughal portraiture that developed during the late-16th century. Portraiture in Mughal India had multiple purposes. It ranged from the practical to the spiritual; some were made as diplomatic gifts and others were worn by the elite to signify their devotion to the ruler. Natif suggests that the goal of the portraitist was to reveal a man's outer appearance and inner soul. Artists focused attention on detail and used European techniques of light, shade, depth and profile-views to indicate the prowess and nobility of the Mughal subject. The Mughals, like other cultures, used portraiture to indicate their superiority over lesser dynasties and enemies of the state. Natif does not address this commonality in the practice of portraiture across cultures and it would be interesting to hear her views on this.

This volume is beautifully illustrated with over 100 color plates. Natif shows her erudition in her extensive citations revealing a profound knowledge of both Mughal and Islamic painting in general. This book is a must read for anyone interested in Mughal art, kingship and concepts of state. Perhaps not everyone will agree with all of Natif's arguments but certainly, she has given us new and exciting ways to think about Renaissance art in the Mughal milieu.

Catherine B. Asher, University of Minnesota, United States

Mosque in Indonesia. Image reproduced under a creative commons license, courtesy of M. Timur on Flickr.

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Malaysia use their state-endowed coercive powers as a way to consolidate their authority, sometimes to the point of defying the wish of the regime. Official ulama in Indonesia, by contrast, find themselves in a tenuous position to seek recognition for their authority in the post-authoritarian era, namely to break away from their 'rubberstamp' (stempel pemerintah) label and compete with other Islamic mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. In short, the empowerment of official ulama in Malaysia allows them to establish their own power base that is immune to influences from the society, which is not the case for their counterparts in Indonesia.

The rise of official ulama in Indonesia and Malaysia also coincides with two interrelated the religious sensitivities of Barisan Nasional's Borneo component parties, lest it would squander the electoral vote bank it had long depended on to remain in power. The haphazard way the former Barisan Nasional government dealt with the Malay bible hullabaloo and its obvious foot-dragging when it came to passing the RU355 (the so-called hudud law) proved this point. In Malaysia, while the author does discuss the tussle between the Ulama Council of Indonesia and the Ministry of Religious Affairs on the issue of halal certification, the discussion on institutional tensions can be made more salient by adding the fact that the two institutions also diverge widely in ideological orientation, with the Ulama Council of Indonesia being more religiously conservative and dogmatic than the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Apropos to the author's argument, the institutional fragmentation divided along ideological fault line can help to explain the weakness of the Ulama Council of Indonesia's authority vis-à-vis other agencies of the state.

While the book is meticulous and systematic in structuring its argument, enriched by a host of elite interviews, it under-discusses some aspects of political Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia that the reviewer believes warrant more emphasis in order to provide a holistic narrative of ulama authority in these two countries. In Malaysia, electoral calculation played a crucial role in moderating the Islamic views of the former Barisan Nasional-led federal government, which then constrains the authority of official ulama. The United Malay National Organisation, the political patron of official ulama in Malaysia, had to take into account

In all, this book is a welcome addition to the comparative study of political Islam in two Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia. Not many books have been written that compare these two countries in an equal, empathetic, and substantive manner, and Saat's book is one of the very few that strive to fill this knowledge lacuna. In this regard the author has done splendidly in explicating the differences between the two countries despite their many shared characteristics.

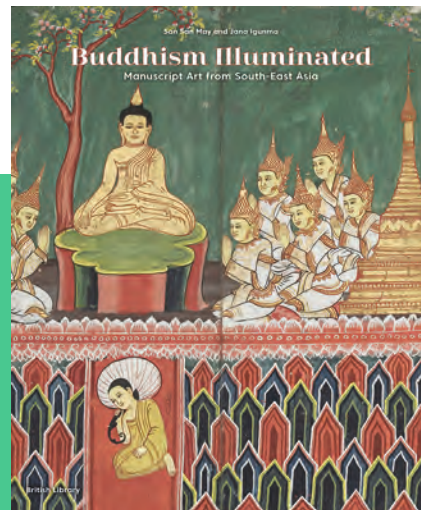Azmil Tayeb, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Buddhism illuminated

Donald M. Seekins

Like the Abrahamic religions of the West (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), Buddhism has employed art in many forms to convey its message to people. In the Theravada Buddhist countries of mainland Southeast Asia (Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos), the most well-known and visually arresting expressions of Buddhist teachings have been monumental or finely-crafted structures (e.g. pagodas, temples, and monasteries) that have over the centuries functioned as places of study, meditation and pilgrimage for devotees. These include the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon/Yangon, Burma, the temples and pagodas of Pagan/Bagan in central Burma, the Phra Pathom Chedi (pagoda) outside of Bangkok, Thailand, Wat Doi Suthep on a mountain outside of Chiang Mai, Thailand, and the Phra That Luang Chedi in Vientiane, Laos. Also playing a role in the propagation of Buddhist teachings have been famed Buddha images such as the Maha Myat Muni image in Mandalay, Burma, and the Emerald Buddha located in the royal temple-palace complex in Bangkok, as well as colossal reclining Buddha figures of which the most famous are found in Pegu (Bago), Burma, and the palace in Bangkok. Many of these sacred places have been elaborately decorated with frescoes and paintings illustrating the life of Gotama Buddha or the Jataka Tales, which tell of his previous lives before becoming the Enlightened One, as well as representations of elephants, nagas (dragons/snakes), demons, and other real or fantastic creatures from Hindu and Buddhist mythology.

In 21st century Burma, where Buddhist values remain exceptionally strong, the prominence of Buddhist art is one of the things that impresses the visitor the most, as military governments in recent years have striven to add to the country's inventory of Buddhist sites (for example, the White Stone Buddha image in Rangoon and the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Naypyidaw, Burma's new capital). The goal of the country's military rulers has been not only to earn Buddhist merit for themselves (Burmese: *kutho*) as pagoda-builders or restorers, but to assert their political legitimacy in Buddhist terms. The old saying, 'to be Burmese is to be Buddhist,' is still valid for 90 per cent of the country's population who identify as followers of Buddha's teachings.

Although such large and splendid Buddhist structures and imagery are difficult for the visitor to miss, the Theravada countries of Southeast Asia also possess a much less known art form that is very similar to the illuminated manuscripts of medieval Europe. Like their western counterparts, they present intimate and condensed visual religious 'lessons' in bright and appealing colors, highly stylized (there is little room for innovation) and directed toward helping the viewer to make his or her own progress on the road to nibbana (nirvana). Usually combining miniature pictures with sacred text or at least an explanation, they encompass depictions of the Cosmos in Hindu-Buddhist terms, the Birth Tales, the lives of Gotama Buddha and his disciples and scenes of Buddhist festivals and ceremonies, especially those sponsored by the royal family. As in the European illuminated manuscripts, rarely, if ever, is effort made to place these scenes in their original (Indian) context; instead, episodes of sacred history, including their human participants and physical surroundings, are placed in Burmese or Thai settings and often give us a vivid picture of what life was like – at least on elite levels – in pre-colonial mainland Southeast Asia.

Relatively little attention has been paid to these illuminated manuscripts in the West. In her *Arts of Southeast Asia*, Fiona Kerlogue makes brief mention of Burmese illuminated manuscripts (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004, 124-125). In 1992, A specialist at the British Library, Patricia Herbert, published a volume, *The Life of the Buddha* (London: the British Library: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1993), using two Burmese manuscripts in the library's collection and contributed a chapter on this genre to Alexandra Green and Richard Blurton's *Burma: Art and Archeology* (Burmese cosmological manuscripts, in Alexandra Green and T. Richard Blurton (eds) *Burma: Art and Archeology*, London: British Museum Press, 2002, 77-98).

The work under review here, San San May and Jana Igunma's *Buddhism Illuminated: Manuscript Art from Southeast Asia*, represents a major development in the study of Buddhist illuminated manuscripts not only because it includes a much larger selection of this genre, but also since it includes works from central and northern Thailand and the Tai-speaking Shan States as well as central Burma. Its great merit lies in the fact that the editors have not only created a beautifully illustrated volume in the coffee table book mode (given its size and heaviness, this is hardly the book one would choose as travel reading), but also have presented it in a form in which the illuminations are grouped together to depict and explain (Theravada) Buddhism's basic doctrines: lavishly illustrated chapters are devoted to the Buddha, his teachings (Dhamma), the Buddhist monkhood (the sangha), cause and effect (*kamma*, more widely known as karma), and the supremely important work of making merit in daily life through donations to Buddhist monks and holy places and the performance of good deeds (*punna*). For western readers interested in Buddhism, *Buddhism Illuminated* provides a compelling combination of pleasing-to-view pictures and clearly-written text that that is necessarily missing from prose-only books – with perhaps only a few illustrations of pagodas or Buddha images – that attempt to explain the religion in abstract terms.

For example, on page 11, the authors provide a 19th century Burmese illumination of the legend of Taphussa and Bhallika, two Mon merchants who meet the Buddha just after his Enlightenment, giving him offerings and hearing his first sermon. Gotama Buddha bestows on them eight hairs from the top of his head, which after many adventures they take back to their native country in Lower (southern) Burma and enshrine in the Shwedagon Pagoda, recognized by Burmese Buddhists as the single most important sacred place in their country. This illumination is far more arresting visually than the 15th century stone inscriptions donated by King Dhammazedi to the platform of the Shwedagon which first relates the legend of the two merchants (who in earlier legends were Indian) and connects them to Burma.

Many of the Thai (or Tai) manuscripts deal with the legend of Phra Malai, a monk endowed with immense merit who travels to the Buddhist heavens and hells in a manner broadly similar to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, learning of the future decline of Buddhism as well as its revival by the Metteyya or Future Buddha.

In the Introduction, the physical characteristics of the manuscripts and their bindings are described in great detail: one type, known as *parabaik* in Burmese, were painted on strips of paper which were folded tightly together, bound with cords and protected with often intricately decorated wooden covers or binding-boards. Other manuscripts were inscribed on palm-leaves, usually lacquered or gilded around the edges, which were also stacked together to make separate volumes. Usually, the *parabaik* volumes were comprised of mulberry paper, which is still used today in Burmese crafts. The *Tipitaka*, the Buddhist scriptures, were inscribed on palm leaves, often using a special script of Burmese letters known as tamarind seed (or 'square') script, because of their special shape. Given the heat and humidity of mainland Southeast Asia, the manuscripts were traditionally wrapped in silk, tied up with special and often beautifully decorated ribbon-bindings and stored in wooden chests – usually made of teak – which themselves were often attractively decorated. These chests had to be made capable of tight closing, lest rats or insects enter and devour the manuscripts.

Buddhism Illuminated is comprised of over 100 illuminations in the British Library's collection, most of whom originated in Burma or Thailand. The authors comment that a large number of Burmese manuscripts were 'acquired' from a royal collection in Mandalay, the old royal capital, after the Third Anglo–Burmese War of 1885 (p.9). A more accurate term might be 'stolen' since the Mandalay Palace was thoroughly looted after the British victory by locals as well as British soldiers. But perhaps this is not the place to accuse the British Library of being a treasure house of looted artifacts, though is doubtful that the Burmese items – most of which date from the 19th century – were obtained fairly or peaceably.

The splendor of this volume does lead the reader to wonder whether treasures such as these, spirited off to the colonial Metropole during centuries of European expansion into Asia and Africa, shouldn't someday be returned to their countries of origin – at least when suitable facilities for housing them can be built so that local people can enjoy access to the glories of their past.

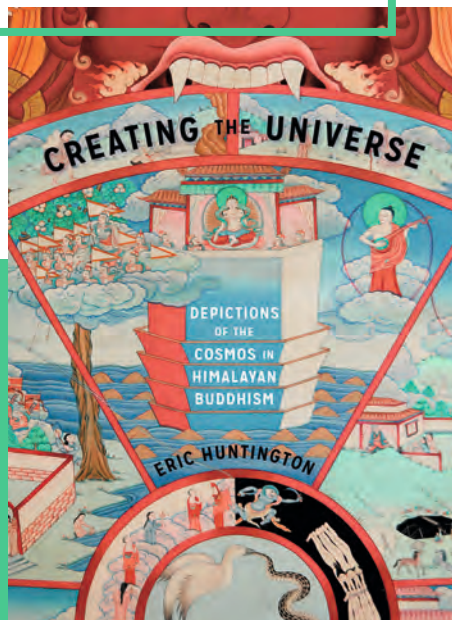Donald M. Seekins,
Meio University, Japan

Creating the universe

Simon Wickhamsmith

When the 19th century Mongolian monk-poet Danzanravjaa named a small rectangular area of the Gobi Desert close to his monastery at Hamarin Hiid 'Shambhala', he was showing his students how Indo-Tibetan Buddhist cosmology could be translated into their own lived experience of the teaching in Mongolia. Right before them the Gobi was transformed into a Pure Land, and their world was forever changed at the point of the intersection of the guru's teaching with their practitioners' minds. Today, Shambhala remains a place of pilgrimage for Mongolians and foreigners alike, its reputation in spiritual power growing even as its appearance remains essentially the same.

Eric Huntington's lucid and beautifully-illustrated book deals with how, through image and through contemplative practice, the mundane world – such as the otherwise unremarkable part of the Gobi Desert that is Shambhala – is realized as a potent and transcendent space of spiritual transformation. The understanding of the cosmos as a dynamic aspect of the process of enlightenment reminds us that, in the Vajrayāna practise of Himalayan Buddhism, the world and the mind are reflections of one another, and in the recognition of the cosmos as inherently enlightened, the practitioner likewise recognizes the inherent enlightened state of mind.

The book's four chapters explore this cosmological process of realization through four key ideas. The first offers an examination of the creation of the cosmos through text, one which reminds us, scholars and practitioners alike, that such a description (as with any text) is merely an approximation, bound in time and space, of the spiritual experience of an individual author, or set of authors. As Huntington says of Vasubbhandhu's Treasury of Abhidharma (*Abhidharmakośakārikā*), compiled in the 4th or 5th century, "Vasubhandhu's descriptions emphasize the features that fit his agenda, while his omissions make the unmediated use of his texts in other contexts problematic" (p.30). This acknowledgement of the slippery quality of spiritual texts is nothing new in scholarship, but for this book it bears repeating insofar as texts such as Vasubhandhu's are believed by practitioners, who rely upon such descriptions

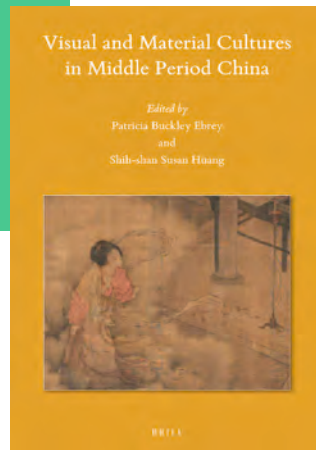# Visual and material cultures in middle period China

Hang Lin

Reviewed title

Visual and Material Cultures in Middle Period China

Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Shih-shan Susan Huang (eds). 2017.

Leiden: Brill
ISBN 9789004348981

In the dynastic history of China, the period from 800 to 1400 is conventionally remembered as a discreditable age of political disunity and intricate interstate relations, bracketed by the mighty Tang (618-907) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. It was also a time when 'barbarian' incursions from the north intensified again as the Khitan, Jurchen, Tangut, and Mongol successively established their regimes and conquered parts or all of China. On the other hand, this period has witnessed a dramatic upsurge of visual and material sources that significantly deepen our understanding of the vitality and prosperity of the time, as well as the specific multi-state and multicultural contexts. Consisting of in-depth case studies of various forms of sources, this volume, which originates from the grand Conference on Middle Period China held at Harvard in 2014, represents a collective effort of scholars at the forefront of Chinese art history, archaeology, and history to illuminate this pivotal age in Chinese history. Through examinations of a multiplicity of visual and material cultures, it aims to show the numerous connections between these visual cultures and politics, literature, trade, religion, class, and region (p.12).

The eight essays contained in the volume are divided into four pairs – 'Making Art in Funeral and Ritual Contexts', 'Setting a Scene', 'Appreciating the Written Word', and 'Cross-Cultural Transfers'. Relying on a meticulous study of 12th-century decorated tombs in Henan and Shanxi, Deng Fei tackles "who made these […] tombs" and "how were they built and decorated" (p.42). By taking a look at the brick makers, clay carvers, and painters, Deng labels these decorated tombs as 'modular construction' that testify the emergence of 'moderately wealthy families' that did not follow the cultural lead of the literati (p.75). Focusing

on three late 12th-century paintings depicting the Buddhist saints of arhats, Phillip Bloom interrogates the specific approaches adopted by the painters to show the mediation between the mundane and supramundane. In particular, these paintings render that otherwise hidden aspects of internal ritual visible, thus mediating and enacting Buddhist belief.

Fan Jeremy Zhang sets out to examine the popular culture of the 13th century by linking paintings, bronze mirrors, ceramic pillows, printed illustrations, and poems and plays of the period. By scrutinizing the complex interconnections between the performing arts and visual arts, as Zhang cogently argues, secular theater exerted different influences on viewers of different walks of life and it also provided venues for the spread of the Quanzhen Daoism, thus "constitut[ing] a crucial development of Jin and Yuan visual culture [and] heralding the full blossom of theatrical imaginary in the subsequent Ming dynasty" (p.147). Drawing on poems, maps, and paintings about the Ten Views of West Lake, Duan Xiaolin investigates the interplay and tension between text and image and their influences on the viewers "to capture ephemeral moments and to associate them indelibly with this cultural landmark" (p.183). Rather than solely illustrating the scenes, that paintings provide a particular way of describing and representing the landscape and function as an effective medium to enhance people's attachment to certain locations around the lake with the lake.

The third pair of essays center around the educated literati during the Southern Song

(1127-1276) to demonstrate how intellectual values and market forces combined shaped the viewing process. Hui-Wen Lu begins with a study of a brick epitaph that was attributed to the 4th-century eminent calligrapher Wang Xianzhi (344-86) to analyze the fierce debate upon its authenticity in the early 13th century. Relating the brick to Wang Xizhi's (303-61) Orchid Pavilion Preface (蘭亭序), Lu forcefully argues that although it was a fabricated work, the circulation of its rubbings and imitations reflected Song literati's enthusiastic endorsement of calligraphy and connoisseurship, displaying the creation story of the tradition that elevated the Wangs to the position of gods of calligraphy. Patricia Buckley Ebrey focuses on some 200-odd colophons written by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) to show the Southern Song literati's interest in antiquities and collecting of art and books. From these colophons, modern readers are able to grasp the "social world in which educated men found meaning and pleasure in showing others pieces of writing that they carefully preserved" (p.250). Thanks to the development of woodblock printing and neo-Confucian academies, this world further expanded the audience for handwritten documents and facsimiles of them.

The two essays in the last section turn to the aspects of cultural contact and material exchange of the period. Inspired by the motif of 'bird and basin' in two late Tang tomb murals, Liu Jie links them to the Tang practice of setting small pools in gardens, which she traces to the influences of Persian products. Although being a quite popular theme in the Tang, in later times it gradually became rare due to "the fading of interest in foreign gold and silver objects" (p.280). In contrast to these Chinese paintings appropriated Persian artistic traditions, Li Yiwen shows in her chapter how Japanese users added inscribed Buddha images to Chinese bronze jars and mirrors and made them serve new ritual purposes. While these Chinese objects landed at Japanese ports, their social and cultural contexts changed accordingly so that their perception was mixed with both the Chinese makers' craftsmanship and the Japanese users' imagination of China, thus revealing "the unwritten interactions and exchanges among different groups of people from different regions" (p.313).

Visual and material sources have been traditionally extensively utilized by art historians and they together depict a vibrant artistic world of China between 800 and 1400. The essays in this volume show, however, that visual and material cultures are being more widely studied by scholars across the disciplines, because they "reflected, adapted to, and reproduced the culture and society around them" (p.18). Through analysis of paintings, ceramics, tomb bricks, and bronze mirrors, many previously obscured aspects of the cultures and societies became more visible and accessible. Thanks to the visual and material cultures, we are now able to have a stronger appreciation of the richness of the period, ranging from theater, travel, trade, ritual practices, to life of commoners and cross-

cultural exchanges, of which extant textual sources are limited whereas visual materials are relatively abundant.

More importantly, this volume represents a rapidly advancing trend of the field to go beyond conventional dynastic periodization of Chinese history. As the title of the volume suggests, the essays are devoted to the 'Middle Period' instead of the Eurocentric designations such as 'medieval' or 'Middle Age.' Covering approximately six centuries from the second half of the Tang to the early Ming, 'Middle Period' is far broader than a dynasty or a century, thus enabling a better understanding of the linear narratives of Chinese history. In doing so, the contributors collectively remind the readers to shift away from periodizing visual and material cultures on the basis of dynastic changes but to pay more attention to this "grey zone in transformation, where old and new ideas overlapped and converged" (p.1).

For someone whose interest rests more on the non-Han peoples of this period, I am pleased to see that two essays (Deng's and Zhang's) touch upon the question of non-Han ruling houses, including the Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongol. Yet in both cases we can detect only little impact in the change in the ethnicity of the ruling house on tomb design and decoration. In many respects, this resonates with Li Qingquan's insightful study of the Liao dynasty (907-1125) tombs at Xuanhua, as locality comes through as more important than political legitimacy to the development of visual and material cultures.[1] However, if our focus of our observation is shifted further north, we may acquire a more lively picture of the visual and material cultures marked by indigenous traditions of non-Han peoples and trans-regional interactions.[2]

This minor caveat aside, this volume is a timely addition to the existing scholarship about visual and material cultures of China from 800 to 1400, extending our understanding of the cultural and economic dynamism during the period. Full with intriguing observations and thought-provoking syntheses, it is bound to an indispensable book which will definitely inspire future researchers on the perennial topic in Chinese and Asian history.

Hang Lin, Hangzhou Normal University, China

Notes

1 Li Qingquan 李清泉, 宣化辽墓: 墓葬艺术与辽代社会, (Liao Tombs at Xuanhua: Burial Art and Society of the Liao), Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2008.
1 See, among others, Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, Liao Architecture, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997; Dieter Kuhn, *How the Qidan Reshaped the Tradition of the Chinese Dome-Shaped Tomb*, Heidelberg: Edition Forum, 1998; Wu Hung (ed.), *Tenth-Century China and Beyond: Art and Visual Culture in a Multi-centered Age*, Chicago: The Center for the Art of East Asia/University of Chicago, 2013.

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as they embark upon their practise, until such a time as they perceive the cosmological form through their own understanding.

The second chapter investigates the graphic and cosmological construct of the maṇḍala, the palace of a Buddhist deity (a personification of enlightened mind), architecturally rendered to emphasize the qualities associated with the deity in question. Each of these maṇḍalas is seen as "one particular place within the Buddhist cosmos and [the means by which] conceptions of that place relate to the achievement of enlightenment" (p.105). These 'conceptions' relate to the construction and absorption of maṇḍalas in contemplative practise, in which the practitioner experiences the maṇḍala and realizes (makes real) him- or herself with the deity. Thus it is that two practitioners sitting side by side, or on different sides of the world, can experience directly, and *according to their own understanding*, the maṇḍala of the same deity in different ways. The idea of the local becomes translocal, as Huntington says, and it is through this process that the transformative power of the maṇḍala is experienced.

By extension, the offering of the maṇḍala is one of the four foundational practises *(ngon 'gro)* in Vajrayāna Buddhism, and includes both mental and physical construction of a maṇḍala representing the realized universe. The physical construction of the offering, the theme of Huntington's third chapter, includes objects of sensory enjoyment, such as rice and jewels, piled upon a base. The omission of the hell realms, which as Huntington points out would not make for a pleasant offering, is interesting, since it reveals the presumed gap in the (as yet unenlightened) practitioner's mind between offering the physical representation of the enlightened cosmos and realizing (that is, making real) its idealized and conceptual form. Nonetheless, in making the maṇḍala offering, as in making any offering, the physical, restricted by time and space, is a limited form from which the imagined form, with no such restrictions, develops. Moreover, the mudra form, in which the hands interlace to make a representation of the cosmic Mount Meru surrounded by the four continents (of which our own Jambudvīpa is one), offers another approach. In this way, and with the

spoken prayers of offering, the practitioner conjoins the body–speech–mind triad in an act of cosmic realization.

In his final chapter, Huntington discusses the architectural construction of sacred space, as a simulacrum of the spiritual cosmology with which the preceding chapters have dealt. This ordering is especially welcome, since it places – conceptually as well as physically – the translocal before the local, and so emphasises the state of realization over the process. This is not to say, of course, that the process of construction of a temple is not in itself an aid to contemplative practise; indeed, it emphasizes how the spiritual trajectory necessarily returns to the physical place in which the practitioner is located.

Huntington's exploration of the cosmological architecture of religious buildings reminds us that their relationship with the spiritual world is mediated by time and space, as well as by the choices of those who commission, design and build them. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of this book is its subtle observation on how human perception and comprehension of the spiritual

is made explicit in the buildings in which, and through whose construction, it is approached, and this is greatly aided by the illustrations which accompany the text.

The creation of the universe, and the rendering of cosmological constructs in physical form, is a complex aspect of Vajrayāna practise, and while this book provides a scholarly treatment of one important cultural aspect of the Buddhist spiritual path, it also comes close to being a contemplative text. While its language and discourse is firmly rooted in scholarship, its multitude of explanatory and artistic images and its profound investigation into the relationship between the physical and the mental will surely appeal to those with both an academic and spiritual interest in the subject matter. *Creating the Universe,* then, is an especially notable achievement, and I look forward to future work based upon Huntington's innovative and important approach to the study of Buddhist cosmology and Buddhist practise.

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Constructing democracy

Mélanie Vandenhelsken

Ethnicity and Democracy in the Eastern Himalayan Borderland is one of a number of recent books on the formation of ethnicity in the present-day eastern Himalayas, notably including Suresh Kumar Gurung's Sikkim: Ethnicity and Political Dynamics – A Triadic Perspective (Kunal Books, 2011), Townsend Middleton's The Demands of Recognition: State Anthropology and Ethnopolitics in Darjeeling (Stanford University Press, 2015), and Sara Shneiderman's Rituals of Ethnicity: Thangmi Identities Between Nepal and India (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). Mona Chettri's monograph focuses in particular on the situation of the 'Nepali' in east Nepal, Darjeeling, and Sikkim – whose role, she argues, is central to the understanding of regional politics (p. 14) – and dwells on the transformation of Nepali ethnic identity into a political resource and a base of political action. The author analyses this process in the light of the combined influence of the state – or more accurately, the people's view of the state – and of the connections and interactions between the three geographical areas under discussion. The transborder perspective adopted in the book is based on the people's experience of the region as a 'cultural cross-road with a multi-directional flow of goods, ideas, and peoples' (p. 13). The author also advocates a reframing of the perspective of the region as a set of bounded areas linked in particular by kinship, religion, etc. (pp. 18–9), as against a 'political dissection' of the areas in the region that 'reinforces a static approach' to its people (p. 18).

The monograph concentrates on unravelling the conditions of existence of the ethnic 'frame' (defined on pp. 95–6) of political action and inequality in the region: how it has been given life and strength by the function and dysfunction of both the Indian (in Darjeeling and Sikkim) and Nepali states and how it unfolds in people's views and practices. Although the greater part of the book focuses on the ways this ethnic 'frame' has been deployed and is maintained through views and practices, the first part describes the historical construction of the ethnicisation of politics in the region. In this chapter, the starting point of the process of construction of the 'Nepali' is located in the Gorkha conquests (18th century), which led to the formation of an unequal access to sources of production, or of a 'tributary mode of production' (p. 41), based on the Hindu hierarchical principles, in particular the institutionalised economic and cultural domination of high castes over 'Adivasi/Janajati' or 'tribes'. Chettri argues that this was one of the main factors of outmigration of non-Hindus towards Darjeeling and Sikkim.

The book then further clarifies the direct link people make between empowerment of their ethnic community or the making of an 'ethnic homeland', and political and economic emancipation. It discusses in detail the emergence and various expressions of people's view of economic and political inequalities as an outcome of ethno-cultural domination, more particularly of high Hindu castes in Nepal, and of the majority population in India.

The comparison between the three regions highlights contrasts and continuities in the part played by the states in nourishing the process of ethnicisation of politics (and of politicisation of ethnic categories). Nepal and West Bengal have in common the absence of the state in people's daily difficulties, and the pervasiveness of clientelism, leading to economic insecurity – which people nevertheless attribute to ethnic discrimination in Nepal, and to 'socio-political subjugation by the ethnic other' in Darjeeling (p. 79). The author argues that Sikkim stands outside this pattern, as dependency rather than the politics of discrimination fuels ethnic politics there (p. 84). Another important point made in the book is that the ethnicisation of political categories and action does not run counter to democracy, but is today an instrument for negotiation with the state, and more generally allows the formation of political agency and the collective mobilisation of ordinary people in the Eastern Himalayas, as Susan Hangen had shown for eastern Nepal (The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Nepal, Routledge, 2010, Chapter 5).

The strength of this book is that it gives a clear understanding of the main debates and questions concerning a number of points on ethnicity and its construction in the region – to give only a few examples: the role of state policies in differentiating Nepali in India and in Nepal, the centrality of ethnic belonging in political struggles and collective action, the role of the state in the development of claims focused on ethnic categories – which also shows the prime interest of the comparison between the three areas in adding comprehension to this topic. Interestingly, the author's fieldwork – which unfortunately is rather too briefly described – provides the basis of her analysis through highlighting the 'ethnic framework' which people give to their economic and political situation. Throughout the book, this 'framework' is unfolded through the lens of the local people before being analysed by the author.

On a more critical note – if such is needed for a book which, generally speaking, is both intellectually fulfilling and displays a sound theoretical basis – ethnic politics in Sikkim is described as mere instrumentalism (pp. 110–16), and unlike the approach the author adopts elsewhere in the book, as well as for her treatment of Darjeeling and East Nepal, it omits any account of the way in which recognition as one of the categories framed by the state (Scheduled Tribe, OBC, MBC, etc.) functions for people as a means of compensating a past history of political domination (cf. here Marc Galanter's analysis of the Indian reservations policy as 'compensatory discrimination' (Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India, University of California Press, 1984); the transposition to Sikkim of the narrative, which developed in Nepal, of domination by high Hindu castes, is thus deserving further scholarly investigation. In addition, more extensive ethnographic description of both rural areas and the agents of the state would have allowed the author to reveal the gap between the discourses maintained by politicians, state anthropologists and activists, and actual common practices and ideas. Concerning Sikkim itself, the author's analysis of the situation in terms of ethnic 'fragmentation' (p. 131) – which is actually a political statement based on the idea that the term 'Nepali' labels an historically and ethnically cohesive group, as much as the political class wanted them to be politically – contradicts her demonstration in other parts of the book of the flexibility over time of the inner and outer ethnic boundaries of the category of 'Nepali' and its internal diversity and heterogeneity.

This point highlights a difficulty faced by all researchers on this region, namely the need to maintain critical distance and to deconstruct the ethnic categories built by the people themselves. In Chettri's monograph, the people of focus are called the 'Nepali ethnic group' (for example p. 117), whereas the book also provides the elements allowing for a deconstruction of this label. This problem pertains for all ethnic categories, but is particularly acute when speaking of a composite one, as it would be with the terms 'Mongoloid' or 'Kirant' as used in present-day political discourses. The view of Nepali as an ethnic group reflects the Nepalis' own endeavours for more than a century to establish cohesion and solidarity in order to be recognized as full-fledged citizens in their place of residence. However, for the sake of analysis, a distinction between the category as viewed by the people and the researcher's own category could be made. One might wish here that research on this area could find a way to adequately express people's claims for recognition and fight against discrimination, while also maintaining analytical distance from the categories created as part of these political struggles; this would also allow further discussion of the lack of alternative categories and forms of citizenship other than the ones promoted by the state.

Nevertheless, this book is a major contribution to the knowledge of the eastern Himalayas, above all because it lays the foundations for a new approach that foregrounds the experience of this region by its inhabitants as a space connected and shared across state borders and territorialisation.

Mélanie Vandenhelsken,
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Sunshine across the sea?

Niels Mulder

Mistaken by the book's title, I expected to review a comparative study. The subject matter, however, is Filipino migration to Japan in contemporary times, and the complex issues this entails. It is this entanglement that is hinted at in the idea of 'thinking beyond the state' as, until recently, studies of migration were held hostage by the role of the state and its policies in the process. With the shift to transnational approaches, however, other actors, such as the migrants themselves, migrant organizations and networks, came to the fore. Consequently, in the present collection of contributions, migrant agency receives its due.

The editor/contributor, Johanna Zulueta, introduces the subject matter with lucid, albeit very condensed, observations on the complicated questions the book addresses, at the same time she provides the reader with historical data about the movement of people between Japan and the Philippines. In this regard, we are informed that, as of December 2016, Filipinos –almost a quarter million of them – rank as the third largest group of immigrants, next to Chinese and Korean nationals. In contrast to this stood the then mere 17,021 Japanese nationals in the Philippines.

With their focus on the experiences of Filipino migrants, the nine author-contributors present us with the wide range of pressing issues these migrants are facing. In doing so, the limits of state-centric discourses become obvious, and by 'thinking beyond it', the various authors problematize contemporary migration processes. Substantially, their contributions have been thematically divided into three main parts – Challenges to Policies; Agency in Structure; Communities and Integration.

The challenges consist of a review of immigration policy in contemporary Japan; the policy failure of the Japan–Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement regarding the healthcare workers' migration scheme, which notes the low passing rate of Filipino nurses in the national licensure examinations; the issues and concerns of Filipino domestic workers to Japan; and the impediments on reaching human security for migrants. From the very titles, it is already obvious that all these contributions can recommend no more than utopian policy solutions.

The part on agency highlights migrants decision-making regarding staying in or leaving Japan; issues of child upbringing and citizenship of the offspring of mixed marriages; the perspectives of Japanese-Filipino youth, while noting the importance of Japanese nationality as cultural capital; and how Filipino rap music by Japanese-Filipino youth can serve as a strategy for visibility and acceptance.

The last part relates the role of Migrant Support Organizations in the process of migrant integration through social bonding, bridging and linking; and the inflow of and its consequences for Filipinas working as entertainers in the big city, highlighting the role of the Filipino Migrant Center in facilitating communication with other, often undocumented, Filipino migrants, the locals, and the local administration.

Whereas the editor claimed that Japan–Philippines migration is well and alive as an object of interdisciplinary study, she also points to subjects that have so far eluded attention, such as aging Filipino migrants, Filipino entrepreneurs and highly skilled migrants in Japan, Japanese educational migrants and Japanese retirement migration to the Philippines. As the latter drew my attention as missing, I inquired about the result of the Philippine Retirement Authority's long-standing effort in attracting Japanese retirees. The result is not world-shaking, as the Philippine Retirement Authority informed me that a mere 2,223 Japanese retirees had currently availed themselves of the privileged Special Resident Retiree's Visa status (March 2019).

Be this as it may, I still quote Professor Mina Roces's prefatory observation, "This is a very important seminal study that will be a major contribution to the robust field of Filipino migration studies. In addition, the research findings have implications for future policy-making and underscore the need for transnational approaches to migration that, as the book's title suggests, 'think beyond the state'" (p.xii).

Niels Mulder, Independent scholar, the Philippines
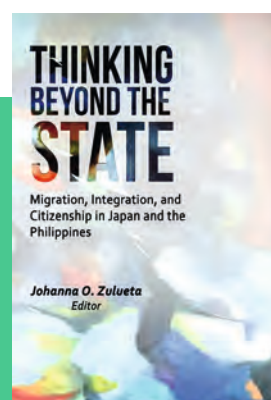
Lesser dragons

Stephen Roddy

Lesser Dragons: Minority Peoples of China explores the recent history of a dozen or so ethnic groups scattered across China's continental periphery and in various parts of China proper. It devotes separate chapters to the largest and most prominent of these groups (Tibetan, Mongol, Uighur, Hui, Miao, and Manchu), as well as to Han subgroups such as the Hakka people in Taiwan and on the mainland. Written in a fluid style and unburdened by disciplinary jargon, it is replete with vivid descriptions of geography, ethnography, and other relevant subjects that general readers will find enlightening. Indeed, considering that very few social scientists have studied the full array of China's minority regions and cultures, it can serve as a handy reference work for almost anyone, including specialists, in search of a comprehensive introduction to the subject.

Particularly useful are its opening chapters, in which the author sketches the various historical and political roots of People's Republic of China's policies toward the 56 ethnic groups that came to be designated (not always willingly) as such by the state. The author identifies the institutional framework of minority policy as the product of a 'top–down' approach to classifying nationality (民族), first adopted based on the Soviet concept of *natsionalnost*, and discusses how it has evolved through accommodation to local conditions even while retaining elements that continue to be resisted by multiple groups. While the widely varying cultural and physical settings make each region's story unique, he refers regularly to nationwide trends, and leaders like Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping, where their impacts on minorities were particularly noteworthy.

Also intriguing is the author's devotion of an entire chapter to the multi-ethnic history of the city of Beijing, as exemplified by the venerable Yonghe Temple, a Tibetan Buddhist temple that dates from the early 18th century, as well as the contemporary Beijing Chinese Ethnic Culture Park. Both institutions reflect the state's efforts over multiple eras to promote interethnic harmony, or in the ambitious phrase of the post-1978 era, the 'great unity of the nationalities'. Following this examination of such symbolic gestures toward the lofty goals of social cohesion, however, much of the book focuses on the thornier issues of widening economic disparities and growing resentment among minorities toward Han rule. Post-2000 Xinjiang, in particular receives an extended treatment that sifts through conflicting explanations and descriptions of the significant incidents of violence there. Readers will find the accounts of this situation, and of local separatist movements or other dissident political trends there, helpful in understanding the roots of local antagonism toward Beijing's policies.

Although evenhanded in evaluating both the achievements and the shortfalls of official policies toward minorities, the author does not explore some of the dimensions of these various crises that do not lie within the framework of a dichotomous relationship between minority groups and Han-dominated officialdom (or Han migrants in places like Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang). In the case of Xinjiang, for example, tensions between Kazakhs and Uighurs in the northern and central areas of the province are not mentioned at all, even though this has been a significant factor in the persistent unrest there. Given the near impossibility of conducting any sort of non-state-sponsored research in that area for the time being, we will probably have to await a more peaceful era to be able to dig deeper into the complex layers of the problematic state of Xinjiang,

Tibet, and other sensitive areas. In the meantime, the book provides a very readable overview of a rich spectrum of peoples and events up to 2017, and offsets the more contentious regions with the more placid conditions in areas like Yunnan, Guangxi, and Manchuria.

As the author notes, the sheer size of his subject required him to leave out potentially interesting groups and topics, or to provide only cursory descriptions such as that of the Naxi and Moso of Yunnan and Sichuan. If he were to supplement this already rich trove of information in a future revision, he might consult more Chinese-language sources, especially historical texts like the 18th century literary accounts of the Miao by Zhao Yi (1727-1814) and other visiting literati. Zhao's surprise at Miao sexual habits is similar to that of the missionary Samuel Pollard (1864-1915), cited by the author; less burdened by Christian prudery, however, Zhao is much less judgmental. Similarly, mid- to late-Qing Han writers in Taiwan recoil from the practice of headhunting by indigenous groups, but many write with considerable sympathy for the groups whose lands were being encroached upon by waves of settlers from the mainland.

In short, *Lesser Dragons* is a very accessible introduction to a formidably large and complex subject, especially suitable for adoption in courses on minorities or even general courses on modern Chinese history and society. One quibble: South Koreans are described (p.181) as still regularly using Chinese characters alongside *hangul*, the Korean alphabet, (unlike the North Koreans who have migrated into Yanbian in recent years); in fact, Chinese characters only rarely appear in print in South Korea these days.

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Revisiting the fairy and the woodcutter story

Justine Guichard

Contemporary South Korea is seldom thought of as made up of towns and immigrants. In *Elusive Belonging*, Minjeong Kim studies both, providing an ethnographic account of the lives of Filipina women who married South Korean rural bachelors in two close localities where the author conducted fieldwork in the mid-2000s. By the time Kim immersed herself in the activities and experiences of this community, more than one in every 10 new marriages concluded in South Korea was defined as international, i.e. as involving a foreign-born individual. This proportion represented a marked increase compared with the rate of one in every 100 unions at the beginning of the 1990s. From one decade to the next, change in international marriage trends has not only

been in numbers, but also in diversity. While international marriages were overwhelmingly contracted between Korean women and foreign-born men – notably American soldiers – until the early 1990s, they have since primarily involved Korean men and foreign-born women from countries such as China, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

Although recent, these demographic transformations have already attracted significant scholarly attention as Kim does not fail to mention. Research to date has not only centered on marriage immigrants and their families but also on the response of the South Korean state through its multiculturalism project. The gendered and ethnocentric foundations of this project have been analyzed

by a large body of literature particularly critical of how South Korea's multiculturalism expects and incites marriage immigrants to work and assimilate in the domestic space through their role as caregivers. In Kim's words, "Marriage immigrants' maternal citizenship presupposes immigrant mothers as 'Other subjects' to be Koreanized and domesticates them as mother citizens" (p.48). The contribution that *Elusive Belonging* adds to the existing critical scholarship rests on telling the intimate stories of Filipina women engaged in the process of building this and other forms of citizenship in the South Korean countryside, where no less than one third of the marriages involve foreign-born brides. The focus of the book is therefore on marriage immigrants' own agency and the varied emotions – such as love, gratitude, and anxiety – underpinning the choices they can make as well as those that are imposed upon them in the private and public realms.

By adopting such a lens Kim is enabled to reject "the image of international marriage immigrants as passive brides or victims of sex trafficking" while venturing "beyond the problems faced by marriage immigrants that have inundated popular and academic discourses", such as social discrimination and domestic violence (p.22). Her aim is obviously not to negate the reality of these experiences but to enrich our understanding of how women who immigrated for marriage to rural South Korea navigate their lives in the early 21st century. Following the 'emotional turn' that has affected migration and citizenship studies, Kim explores the attachments and frustrations shaping these women's sense of belonging in the country of their spouses, who are neither depicted as villains nor princes charming. Husbands themselves are not only taken into account in the book but they are also given a voice, alongside the state and civil society's multicultural agents as well as the Unification Church, the main matchmaker for the couples Kim encountered. In accordance with her objective to revisit the dominant perception of marriage immigrants as passive victims, Kim also challenges the assumption that their spouses are fundamentally abusive and exploitative.

In this respect, the book's central chapters (three and four, out of seven) can be seen as written against two kinds of fairy tales in which women are alternatively portrayed as saved or oppressed by marriage. Chapter 3 discusses the possibility of love among foreign brides and rural bachelors without romanticizing it, offering the idea that 'heterosexual scripts' can account for the intimacy that may develop between strangers despite communication barriers posed by language and culture. Even when love is present in their lives, the fate of Filipina women is never idealized as they join husbands who are importantly situated as "subordinate subjects of Korea's neoliberal economic system" (p.90). This position is analyzed by Kim as bringing about a range of anxieties in rural families. Chapter 4 argues that the material insecurity these families face can translate into adverse effects on foreign-born wives, particularly under the form of restrictions on their physical mobility and economic agency. Yet, the author refuses to reduce domestic tensions and conflicts to 'the Fairy and the Woodcutter Syndrome', an expression coined by the South Korean media after a folktale believed to capture the unequal power dynamics of international marriages.

In the tale, a solitary woodcutter entraps a fairy into marrying him by stealing her clothes while she is bathing. This leaves the deceived creature no choice but to escape after having given birth to two children that she takes away with her. The many trajectories that Kim retraces include some of departure – a term she prefers to escape – toward the book's end. Even then, her emphasis remains on the diversity and complexity of Filipina women's lived experiences, making *Elusive Belonging* a necessary read for anyone interested in the marriage immigrants' side of the story – a story of 'immigration for marriage' rather than 'marriage for immigration' that Kim convincingly chooses to tell in the plural rather than in the singular.

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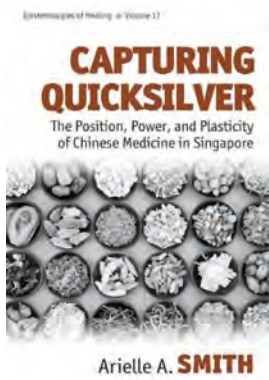

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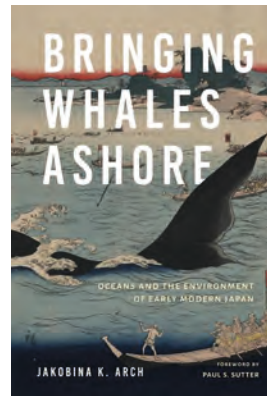
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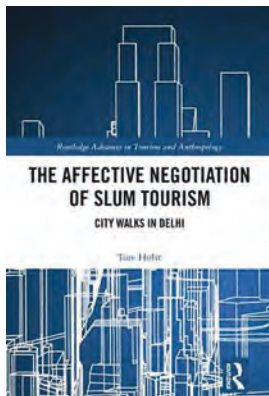
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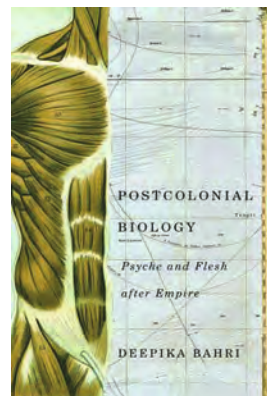
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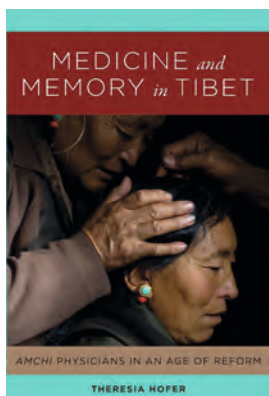
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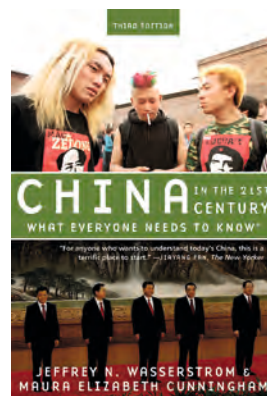
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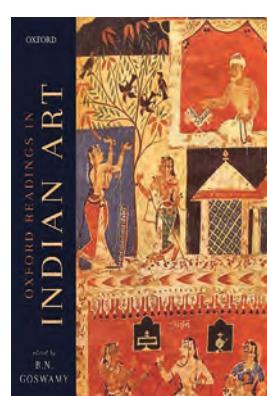Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press
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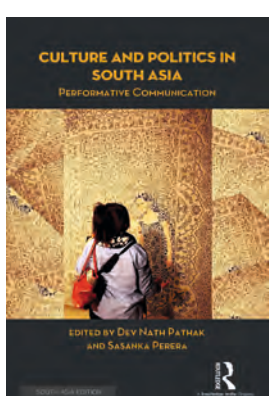
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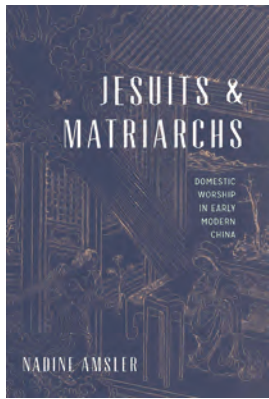
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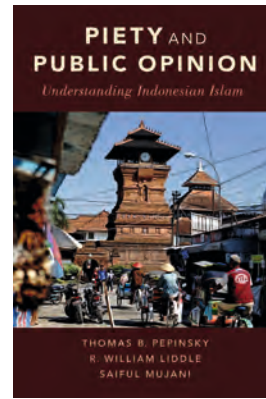
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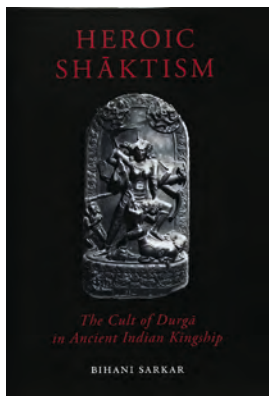
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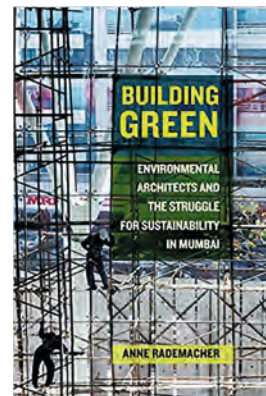
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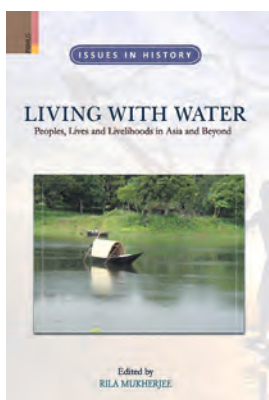
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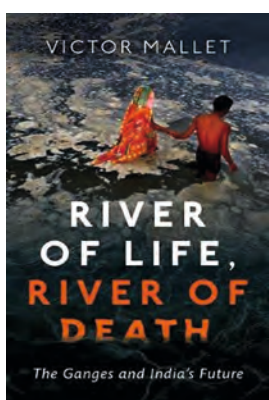
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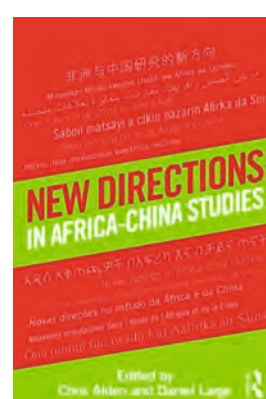
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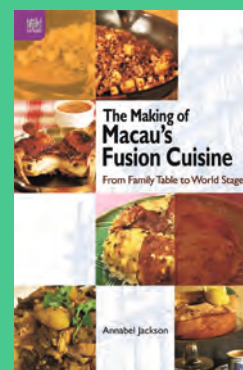
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Aftermath of Indian Ocean Tsunami in Galle, Sri Lanka 2004. Image courtesy of the UN on Flickr. Reproduced under a Creative Commons license.

Environmental issues, social activism and policy challenges

Aysun Uyar Makibayashi

Environmental concerns are top on the list of any local, national or international agenda due to the increasing scale and frequency of these issues. Our daily lives, behaviours and actions are all somehow intertwined with the environment in its larger sense. Sustainability discussions have been putting more emphasis on the environment, environmental protection, and environmental governance, within its three-legged frame (economy and society being the other two legs). The governance mechanisms involved are no longer taking place on just a state-to-state platform, but rather, other interstate and non-state initiatives have been taking the lead while addressing, questioning, raising awareness, and taking action *vis-à-vis* these rising issues of sustainability and environment. Most of the non-state actors, namely communities, civil society initiatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and non-profit organizations (NPOs), raise their voices in an attempt to influence and amend public policies concerning the environment, for the attainment of sustainability on local, national, and international levels, with the goal of a more ecologically fair society for today's and future generations. Their motivation to act and become involved is often because they have been first-hand witnesses and victims of environmental degradation or disasters.

Environmental changes can be gradual or sudden. Sudden events usually take the form of natural disasters, climatic conditions, and related infrastructural accidents. Natural disasters can range from geophysical disasters (avalanches, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions) to hydrological disasters (floods, landslides, and tsunamis), and meteorological disasters (storms, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires). The 2011 Great Eastern Japan Triple Disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown) is an example of just how quickly our lives can be devastated by a sudden natural occurrence.

Gradual environmental events include the catastrophic impacts of general climate change (the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions pose the largest threat for all communities), shifting weather patterns, ecosystem degradation (especially in vulnerable locations such as coastal, low-lying and agrarian land), rising sea-levels (particularly for rural areas by the coast), deterioration of water and air quality, and loss of biodiversity (plants and animals). This list is not exhaustive yet covers many issues facing the world's population in general, in particular those vulnerable communities and social groups who live in environmentally insecure areas of developing countries.

Uncontrolled urbanization is another problem. With increasing numbers of migrant communities from rural areas packing into city centres and fringes, the new city surroundings present new risks. Sudden and gradual environmental events are a threat to people's daily lives and their basic human needs, such as clean air, (drinkable) water, food, shelter, sanitation, heating, among others, that provide a secure living environment. In most cases, immediate or mid-term responses by service providers, namely local governments, governmental agencies, and national governments, are too slow or insufficient, so that people are forced to try and create their own protective measures and coping mechanisms.

Contributions to this Focus

ICAS 11 (International Convention of Asia Scholars; 16-19 July 2019) hosted three consecutive sessions on 'environmental issues, social activism, and policy challenges' by successfully gathering various papers on different regions, issues, and communities of Asia. In all, there were 11 presentations that focused on various environmental issues in different regions/countries; social activism and responses from small-scale gatherings to mass movements; and challenges to environmental policies, thereby looking at (local) government responses to environmental events and the growing environmental activism among civilians.

The first session hosted four presentations that concentrated on policymaking and implementation of environmental governance (on university collaboration at an international level to cope with rising environmental issues of urbanization, and the re-definition of an environmental migration framework), and bottom-up mobilizations and ways in which NGOs are struggling to cope with the hard-core policymaking practices of central governments.

Left: People struggle with poor sanitation facilities while simultaneously trying to turn their beautiful natural water resources into a touristic income (Photo taken by the author, February 5, 2013).

Right: Man walking through a flooded rice field. Image courtesy of the World Bank on Flickr. Reproduced under a creative commons license.

Above: Otsuchi Town, three months after the Great Tohoku Earthquake, Iwate Prefecture, Japan (Photo taken by the author, June 25, 2011).

The following session hosted three papers on the betterment of organic farming conditions in rural areas and local markets while connecting them to larger markets; reactions and response capacities of central and local authorities to disaster preparation and resilience in Southeast Asian countries; and central governments' role in promoting nationwide environmental policies on climate change. The final session of the series presented its audience a variety of topics, including energy politics at the national level; environmental activism and social mobilization with the use of social network services (SNS); cultural sensitivities and attitudes while practicing voluntary activism; and legal aspects of protecting the environment through learning mechanisms of the political culture.

This short Focus section of The Newsletter comprises four of the papers presented during the ICAS 11 sessions on environmental change, social activism and policy challenges. The first piece, written by Nguyen, focuses on the learning practices of people on their way to becoming environmental citizens in Vietnam. Bottom-up approaches, ranging from small size SNS activities to large scale, highly-participated and even internationally acclaimed protests to protect the natural environment in Vietnam, are scrutinized alongside various interesting and engaging case studies. People have practised, learned, and emerged as active participants of the culture of opposition and criticism of local

and central governments. In the meantime, an already evolving political structure in Vietnam has also started to transform the way the government responds to its people.

The article by Schlehe looks at public awareness about waste and waste production in Indonesia by focusing on cultural traits, perceptions, and transformations within society, from an anthropological point of view. She outlines the rationalist approaches to waste management practices in the country and how moral reasonings and communal initiatives are shaped by cultural environment and personal perceptions, while awareness for environmental changes and challenges is increasing. She underlines the importance of joining all efforts not only on an individual or community basis, but also at commercial and transregional levels, in order to cope with environmental challenges.

The third piece is co-written by Chica-Morales and Domenech. It discusses the university-level collaborations between South Korea, Spain and Mongolia, that are creating an intellectual and research environment for those stakeholders concerned with environmental degradation and urbanization in Mongolia. Environmental shifts have already started to force people to adapt cultural habits, such as living in their traditional tents, known as *Ger*. The university initiative presents a transnational and multidisciplinary approach to mobilize communities within the academia to look at issues of environmental change and find solutions for both people and policymakers at local and central government levels.

The last article is by this author, Uyar Makibayashi; it challenges our existing policymaking agendas by redefining the concept of migration from the perspective of environmental change. Underlining the growing significance of environmental change within migration discussions, it is plausible that policymakers on all levels need to find better solutions to the environmental issues faced by increasing numbers of migrating groups and emerging migrant communities, both in their sending and receiving countries.

Towards better communication and sustainable governance

As can be seen in the following articles, there is much potential in social network services and other digital media for communicating the details of environmental issues (the dangers and threats of both sudden events and gradual changes) and presenting the options of how to take action, ranging from online social activism to gatherings of the masses. New policy agendas emerge, to be presented to local and central governments, to help them change their policies to be more humane and environmentally friendly.

There is no fixed or absolute way in which to mobilise and activate these non-state actors and civil voices, because there exist a multitude of political cultures, regimes, and institutions in different countries and regions. In all truth,

the bottom-up movements to challenge and amend environmental policies, and the top-down initiatives by local and central, as well as international governance mechanisms, to hear, invite, integrate, and realize these challenges and recommendations from the public, are both relatively new constructions. The fierce speed of communications through the internet and social network services, as well as cheaper and faster modes of transport for people to mobilize, gather and communicate with other participatory actors of policymaking, have transformed the way we plan, discuss, and implement our politics. Though there are still many hurdles to people's free participation and involvement in politics, adjusting ourselves to the still transforming phenomena is crucial. More people-based approaches in which we are more receptive, more participatory, more active in taking initiatives to change and protect our livelihoods and environment are being accomplished in a growing number of instances. The next step is for our political cultures and governance mechanisms to strive for just and fair (both for ourselves and for our environment) legal frameworks, and more sustainable solutions for the inevitable sudden and gradual environmental changes.

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From cyberspace to the streets

Emerging environmental paradigm of justice and citizenship in Vietnam

Quang Dung Nguyen

Vietnam's state-society relations in the arena of environmental governance have changed remarkably since online forums and social networks have become popular in promoting the more vibrant and active participation of civil society. Moving from the background to the forefront of the political scene, and from community level to a nation-wide scale, environmental activism, one of the most vocal branches of Vietnam's civil society, addresses environmental concerns as matters of justice. Intellectuals, scientists, tech-savvy netizens, urban youths, and others, have used social media to generate critical environmental discourse and social mobilization and have then translated such online activism into other forms of advocacy. All these people have come together virtually for discussions and to sign petitions, and physically in the streets to join protests, which primarily involve demands for ecological justice, environmental justice, and more civic participation in decision-making processes. The emergence of elite and grassroots environmental activism has forced the state to rethink its environmental politics and to consider citizens' basic rights to environmental decision-making and environmental citizenship.

What does environmental citizenship mean in Vietnam?

On social media, Vietnamese nationals share their collective understandings with regard to the sustainability of development and nature conservation. Such sentiments are circulated across the country, engendering nationwide environmental activism. Those people joining the movement are environmental citizens. Environmental citizenship refers to the rights and responsibilities towards the livability of citizens' ecological space, and the "responsibility of those who are occupying too much of that space to reduce their ecological footprint".[1] Prominently incorporated into policy making processes in many societies worldwide, environmental citizenship is "a means of promoting the goals of sustainability and environmental protection and integrating environmental concerns into the modes of political engagement".[2] However, environmental citizenship in Vietnam during the past decade has been primarily manifested through environmental activism by groups of Vietnamese citizens, mostly the grassroots, challenging the state's monopoly in environmental politics. Such manifestations range from micro-acts of online participation (such as reposting images or posts/critical viewpoints from activists, 'liking' posts, posting comments and Facebook Live videos, signing petitions) to participation in physical protest events. Environmental citizenship in contemporary Vietnam has three modes of activism:

1. Activism for environmental justice, regarding all issues of environmental politics that involve fair/unfair distribution of environmental hazards, livelihood, inequality, power, benefits among humans, people's 'vulnerability to ecological disasters', their exposure to environmental risks, and the lack of civic engagement in environmental politics over their immediate environment;

2. Activism for ecological justice, regarding justice for nature, nature conservation or moral relationship with nature.

3. Activism for both environmental justice and ecological justice.

In the following sections, typical environmental movements are discussed in an analytical framework to provide more insights into these modes of activism.

Nation-wide environmentalism, starting with intellectuals

The first symbolic environmental activism that showcased the emergence of environmental citizenship via social media was the anti-Bauxite Mining movement in 2009, against the government's 'Master Plan' for "the exploration, mining, processing, and use of bauxite reserves" across the country.[3] The Plan involved building seven different factories to process bauxite-alumina and alumina for mine clusters in five provinces of central highland areas. In response to such a massive project, widespread opposition with environmental concerns emerged, starting with the country's intellectuals. During the first half of 2009, diverse individuals and informal networks of prominent intellectuals, bloggers, domestic reporters, government scientists, and former political leaders – including General Vo Nguyen Giap, Vietnam's most popular military leader[4] – joined a highly controversial public debate over the imminent harms the mining project might cause to environmental sustainability and local livelihoods.

They created a critical public advocacy against the state's hegemonic decision – mostly through workshops, seminars, articles, online discussions, and online petitions.[5] The widespread reach of the anti-bauxite advocacy started from online reports about the workshops attended by the economists, environmentalists, experts on mining technology, and scholars of cultural and social studies from universities and institutions. These activists raised their disapproval of the bauxite project, drawing special concerns from the mainstream press. Environmental debates by these activists were based on specific quantitative technical data, especially cost-benefit analyses with evaluation of possible harms to land resources, employment, deforestation, loss of local traditional livelihoods and hundreds of millions of tons of red mud discharge. Many popular newspapers then followed to bring the 'bauxite debate' into the spotlight, instigating a massive concern for environmental risks of the project. Revolutionary hero General Vo Nguyen Giap, aged 98, sent the government a short letter, and then the most widely known and accomplished Vietnamese intellectuals sent a petition with 135 signatures. These elite activists then launched the Bauxite Vietnam website, the formal blog site for the petition.[6] The website has become a platform for a few democratic voices to inspire many others to speak up and practice more on environmental citizenship and was still a point of departure for online environmentalism years later, instigating more public awareness about environmental issues in the country.

The anti-Bauxite Mining movement demonstrated how the popularity of the Internet has facilitated the much wider production and circulation of environmental knowledge and environmental concerns. For the first time in Vietnam, digital networks could mobilize collective sentiments and actions for environmental and ecological justice. The movement could mobilize

Fig. 1: Bauxite Vietnam Website in its original format before 7 July 2009. (Image Courtesy of Jason Morris, see endnote 5). Other websites existed upon which these intellectuals had been posting their blogs and commentaries for several years. However, none of them had attracted so much mainstream attention as did Bauxite Vietnam then. By the time the website was successfully hacked and paralyzed in December of 2009, it had registered some 17 million hits (Morris, J. 2013:124).

individuals from diverse groups (intellectuals, members of parliaments, environmental activists, pro-democracy activists, retired high-ranking officials, and many others) and it marked the emergence of the quest for environmental citizenship in the state's decision-making process.

The government's response included arrests of high-profile bloggers during May and June of 2009. In addition, in July 2009, it imposed strict censorship on scientific research and scholarly works, while intimidating the leaders of the Bauxite Vietnam website until early 2010. Although the movement could not suspend the project, it posed a "considerable challenge to the party-state on the ground of critical environmental knowledge".[7] During the years following the bauxite mining controversy, a growing population of environmental citizens across the country, mostly urban youth, have been exposed to diverse critical environmental discourses on digital platforms, especially Facebook. These young individuals have put in huge amounts of energy to practice their environmental citizenship, to become environmental activists and citizen journalists. The #SaveSonDoong movement that emerged years later shows the youths' passion for nature conservation in pursuit of ecological justice.

#SaveSonDoong: a hashtag of ecological justice

Son Doong cave in Quang Binh province is the world's largest cave, and has only been accessible since 2013. Just a very limited number of tourists are allowed to visit the cave, and only through eco-tours organized by tour company Oxalis. In early 2014, the mainstream news reported that the Quang Binh provincial authority planned to allow the Sun Group – the country's biggest cable car operator – to build a cable car that would traverse the cave. The cable car would mean that the 800 visitors per year would increase to 1,000 people per hour. This would be a direct threat to the cave's pristine ecosystems.[8]

In response, a group of young environmentalists led by the young teacher Le Nguyen Thien Huong,[9] created collective and organized forums to mobilize social attention and action to save the cave from the environmental damages that the cable car would most certainly cause. The movement started with a Facebook fan page and a website, using the hashtag #SaveSonDoong. The Facebook fan page quickly attracted hundreds of thousands of followers, drawing much attention from the mainstream media. A subsequent online petition quickly received 173,729 signatures. The petition was sent to Vietnam's then Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, UNESCO World Heritage Center, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Campaign organizers mobilized Vietnamese celebrities to join a video and photo series in an effort to spread the message of the #SaveSonDoong movement. A 57-second video clip titled 'Save Sơn Đòng' was published on a YouTube channel, featuring 10 famous young individuals, who together – with a few words by each – created a complete message to the public: "Let's together save Soon Doong by joining hands to prevent the construction of cable cars into the cave". As of 6 March 2020, the video had been watched 17,129 times.[10] The video and photos were shared on their Facebook fan page and the website 'savesondoong.org'. Celebrities changed their Facebook profile pictures into the #SaveSonDoong sign. Followers were mobilized to take photos with #SaveSonDoong signs to post onto their personal Facebook pages.

The campaign quickly raised public awareness and the hashtag #SaveSonDoong was highlighted through domestic mass media, including national television news channel VTV and Ho Chi Minh City TV (HTV). The discourse of nature conservation was extended to a greater public after media briefings attended by large numbers of journalists were released. The campaign's leader, Le Nguyen Thien Huong, was featured in the 'Welcome New Day' program broadcast by HTV, a daily 30-minute news report from

6:30 to 7:00 a.m., in a 3:36 minute report about the #SaveSonDoong movement. In this TV report, she explained the urgency of conservation and need for action to save the cave. Other campaign supporters wearing #SaveSonDoong T-shirts were also featured in the report, with each person giving a few words to make a complete message. An impressive excerpt from that message is that "Five billion years of nature's creation would be destroyed by a drill".

The #SaveSonDoong movement gained more steam with 'One day to save five million years', a whole-day event on 24 January 2015. The event included a display of international award-wining photos of Son Doong, previously featured in The Telegraph, New York Times and Outdoor Magazine. There was also a screening of the 'World's Biggest Cave' documentary by the National Geographic, and a debate/talk show on 'Heritage Preservation vs. Mass Tourism'. Interactive activities between activists and journalists facilitated the massive media coverage of the #SaveSonDoong campaign. Public advocacy was able to put pressure on the provincial authorities to have a dialogue with the people during a press conference in late 2014, in which the authorities promised to consider the environmental concerns over the cable construction plan.

In August 2017, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc endorsed a cable car line into the National Park where Son Doong is located, yet requested a thorough study be conducted before construction. In response to the PM's in-principle agreement to the proposed 5.2 kilometer cable car project, activists initiated another petition on 8 September 2017. It too received over 170,000 signatures and was sent to the Prime Minister of Vietnam, UNESCO World Heritage Center, IUCN, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. Furthermore, #SaveSonDoong Virtual Reality Exhibitions were organized on many campuses and other locations across the country – Da Nang, Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho. The organizers applied new technology to bring to life the science lessons of the world's most pristine ecosystem. At the events, guests could explore the Son Doong Cave virtually and learn more about the initiative to save it.

Then, on 9 April 2019, a representative of the Quang Binh provincial authority declared that the province would not approve proposals by developers to construct cable cars and there would be no construction in the core zone of the National Park. This marked the tremendous success of the more than four-year campaign by young environmentalists. The #SaveSonDoong movement by tech-savvy urban youths utilized the power of online social networks to mobilize the public into taking

action for ecological justice. It demonstrates the young citizens' desire to have their voices heard by the state. Online mobilization and event organization substantially contributed to raising public awareness of civic engagement in environmental politics (aka environmental citizenship) and social awareness of nature conservation and the human moral relationship with nature, among young Vietnamese people.

Fish need clean water, citizens need transparency

In early April 2016, fishermen from coastal villages of the Vung Ang port region encountered an alarming number of dead fish. Close to 70 tons of dead fish washed up along 125 miles of the coastline of Ha Tinh, Quang Tri, Quang Binh, and Thua Thien Hue. Locals suspected that the fish had been killed by chemicals discharged by the Formosa Ha Tinh Steel Plant, a subsidiary of Formosa Plastics Group, located in the Vung Ang Special Economic Zone. Amid rising accusations against the Taiwanese company, the mainstream press focused on the steel plant's wastewater treatment after three local divers found a hidden underwater pipeline leading from the plant to the ocean, releasing a black and yellow discharge. Online public activism soared by the end of April, with the hashtag #toichonca or #ichoosefish becoming

Fig. 2: Collage of famous Vietnamese urban youths and other young activists taking photos with the #SAVESONDOONG sign to endorse the campaign (posted on Facebook in January 2015) https://tinyurl.com/FBSonDoong

Fig. 3: On 1 May 2016, on King Ly Thai To Monument Square, one of Ha Noi's most famous landmarks, demonstrators held up signs demanding cleaner water and transparency of the state in its dealings with the Formosa disaster. Image Courtesy of Van Do, a Hanoi student who attended the protest.

a manifestation of national collective sentiment, bonding environmentalists and concerned citizens all across the country. In addition to online activism, an anonymous environmentalist created a petition on the White House's website, requesting that the American government intervene and evaluate the environmental disaster, and that President Obama raise the topic during his visit to Vietnam in May 2016. The petition received more than 128,000 signatures in just a few days.

After weeks of silence from the government, on 27 April, Vice Minister of Resources and Environment announced to the public that a toxic algae bloom could have been responsible, with a final result pending as a joint investigation by relevant state agencies and ministries were underway. The Communist administration was criticized on social media – such as Facebook and YouTube – for its slow response. Environmentalist Facebookers shared their speculations that the government was biased towards the steel plant, that it had supported it with favorable tax agreements and charged a bargain price for the real estate where the company had built its plant. On Facebook, thousands of people accused the company of irresponsible and unsustainable business practices.

Online activism led to thousands protesting on two consecutive Sundays (1 and 8 May 2016) in major cities, with the most crowded protest groups in Ha Noi at the Opera House, in the '30 April' Park in Ho Chi Minh City, and the affected areas of Ha Tinh province. In the coastal cities of Vung Tau, Da Nang, and Nha Trang, protesters gathered in groups of a few hundred. Protesters in all locations carried the same placards that read 'I love fish', and 'Fish die today, we die tomorrow', calling for Taiwanese investors to leave Vietnam. Other banners and signs read, 'please return a clean sea to us', 'stop discharging toxic waste into the sea' and most popularly 'Fish need clean water, citizens need transparency'. All the demonstrations were peaceful. Regretfully, those two first protests were suppressed by the state, with crowds forced to disperse after hours of marching along major streets of the cities and some key activists were arrested and taken into custody. People had also reported that key words such as 'ca chet' [dead fish], 'Formosa', and 'bieu tinh' [protest] were being blocked in their messages by mobile phone service providers. On 15 May 2016, the third Sunday of the nation-wide protests, the police (in uniforms and plainclothes), with more preventative measures and large-scale deployments, were quick to stop the crowds. Over three challenging Sundays of May, more than 500 people were arrested, and multiple protesters were beaten by the police.[11]

On 29 June 2016, at the office of the Ministry of Resources and Environment, representatives of the company officially took responsibility and apologized to the Vietnamese people for causing the environmental disaster, pledging US$500m for a cleanup and compensation, including assistance for fishermen. Local people expressed their dissatisfaction with the inadequate amount of compensation and the non-transparent negotiations between the state and the company. No opinion polls or surveys had been conducted on the real economic loss and the plight of local livelihoods. Activists and environmentalists argued that the compensation amount could not match the damage if thoroughly calculated. Sporadic protests in these four impacted provinces continued on a smaller scale into 2018. With more heavy-handed measures to suppress protesters, the state arrested and jailed many key activists for their online 'subversive' discussions and social mobilization. Among the many arrested was the famous environmentalist blogger Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh (known as Blogger Mother Mushroom).[12] She was very passionate about this issue, and contributed substantially to the online critical discussions.

Despite much stricter censorship and clampdowns, activism still continued in 2019, with online analyses of the aftermath of the incident that can be found on many activists' Facebook pages. Most recently, on 16 March 2019, 'Don't be afraid', a documentary film about civic movement for environmental and ecological justice after the 'fish death', was released in Ha Noi. Despite a lot of opposition, the documentary was successfully completed by Green Trees Group.[13] Upon its release, the Ministry of Public Security arrested Cao Vinh Thinh, a key person involved in the production of the documentary. Hoang Binh, an important environmental activist of the group, was sentenced to 14 years in jail. The documentary was publicly screened in April in many of Ha Tinh's churches. It has been speculated that anti-government groups from overseas – rather than environmental and ecological justice groups – allied with the grassroots movement to mobilize protests. At times the movement might have carried with it other implications, blending environmental activism with political motives by some protesters whose linkages and identities are complex and difficult to identify. However, the common thread throughout the years of protests has been rational people practicing their environmental citizenship in a quest for environmental and ecological justice.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, environmental activism – as an arena of contestation in Vietnam's state-society relations – has challenged the state's legitimacy by opening up a new paradigm of ecological sustainability and equitable development. New narratives of society and nature amidst development and ecological degradation have led to greater demand for more representation of the people in environmental politics. Environmental activism for environmental commons in Vietnam has been extended beyond the scope of environmental justice for humans to include non-human environments, where ecological and social spheres are intertwined. In other words, such activism corresponds to the rights of humans and nature, in which ecological degradation goes hand-in-hand with social destruction. Environmental movements by groups of citizens have framed nature in interconnection with communities; accordingly, any harm to nature would lead to damages of human habitat, livelihood and sustainability.

With public scrutiny as a counter-balance against hegemonic decisions, environmental governance is no more a monopoly of the state. Environmental activism in Vietnam demonstrates that social inclusion needs to be recognized in environmental decision-making, aka environmental citizenship, which should be considered as the practice of basic rights of citizens. Environmental justice movements – from cyberspace to the streets – showcase an emerging environmental citizenship from a critical citizenship. Such citizenship has not yet been recognized in Vietnam's environmental politics, but it is now reshaping state-society relations, in which environmental governance needs more civic engagement.

Environmental activism in Vietnam offers profound implications for the role of social media in broadening the scope of civil society, facilitating civic engagement in environmental politics and generating critical discourses of environmental and ecological justice to the masses. Online activism expands the reach of attitudes and actions that engender environmental citizenship. Through social media, environmental issues in Vietnam have been turned into justice issues, which are "socially constructed claims defined through collective processes".[14] Social media has strengthened the agency and capability of social groups in their responses to social inequalities in association with environmental hazards. A closer look at how environmental citizenship manifests itself, both online and in the streets in the socio-political context of Vietnam, provides more empirical insights to help answer questions such as: "What could, should, and does an environmental citizen look like?", "To what extent can contemporary environmental concerns be aligned with citizen rights and duties across a range of political and socio-cultural contexts?", "Is it possible and/or desirable to encourage en masse enactments of particular attitudes and practices that could be labeled as acts of environmental citizenship?", "What sorts of environmental citizens are being 'worked up', through what means, and to what ends?"[15] and "What are the possibilities and limitations of environmental citizenship in the pursuit of environmental and ecological justice?"

The above-mentioned examples of environmental movements have intensified the political culture of opposition and criticism. In an authoritarian context where people in power and economic groups dominate environmental decisions to the exclusion of people's involvement and at the expense of the environment, environmental activism carries democratic meanings at its core. At times, environmental activism faces heavy-handed suppression. With the cyber-security law effective as of 1 January 2019, environmental activism in Vietnam will continue to encounter censorship and suppression, especially when translated into street protests. The pathway of environmental activism in Vietnam's civil society depends on the strong will and toughness of activists, their ways to navigate censorship, and international pressure on the Vietnamese government to respect the rights to environmental citizenship alongside other civil rights for its citizens.

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5 According to Jason Morris, these wide-ranging critiques started with discussions on social and environmental impacts of the project, then quickly became "embroiled with such divisive issues as national security, Sino-Viet relations and, not least of all, the relations of the communist party to the Vietnamese people"; see Morris, J. 2013. 'The Vietnamese Bauxite Mining Controversy: the Emergence of a New Oppositional Politics', PhD Thesis, UC Berkeley, p.1; https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3jz331gj
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10 https://tinyurl.com/sondoongvideo
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12 Mother Mushroom's environmental and political activism earned her an International Women of Courage Award from US First Lady Melania Trump in March 2017. She was released on 17 October 2018 to fly to the United States.
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Images: Participants of the Recycle Fashion Carnival, with outfits made from recycled materials (Bantul, 2018). All photos by Judith Schlehe.

Waste and social mobilisation

Anthropological explorations beyond Asia and Europe

Judith Schlehe

Waste, especially plastic and toxic waste, is a man-made disaster rooted in the historical relations between humans, materials, and environments. The global waste trade is a multi-billion-dollar industry in which Western countries relocate their waste to the Global South, turning the land, oceans, and atmosphere into dumping grounds. This waste problem challenges the notions of growth, modernisation, and human-nonhuman relations. There is a need for global solutions that overcome binary frames of representation such as 'Asia' and 'Europe'. An inclusive approach, as well as engagement in mutual transformations, requires increased global environmental awareness and transregional collaboration. However, awareness does not automatically translate into action. Furthermore, emerging global environmental regimes tend to ignore local diversities in waste practices, related worldviews, and ways in which people are mobilised to think about and act on waste solutions. Waste is always embedded in social, gendered, and political asymmetries and economic contestation. Furthermore, it is tied to peculiar moral sensibilities. Differences in context, thought, and practice, as well as in socio-environmental relations and frictions, should thus be acknowledged as bases of mobilisation and collaboration.

In order to illustrate such differences, I will present an example of locally specific waste-related social mobilisation. The central question here is: what are the main driving forces for bottom-up, communal recycling initiatives in rural and urban Java? This study is based on field research in Java in 2017 and 2018, partly conducted together with my colleague Vissia Ita Yulianto.[1]

Rationalist approaches

Recently, the Indonesian media has regularly reported on the government's efforts to return containers of toxic waste and trash to their countries of origin, including the United States, Australia, and several European

countries. This may change the hitherto widespread public, scholarly and media discourse in Indonesia, which focusses on the 'bad' behaviour of the Indonesian people. For example, one 2015 study identified Indonesia as the second-largest contributor to plastic waste in the oceans (after China).[2] Indonesians have been blasted for improperly discarding their garbage, yet burning waste, burying it in underground, and dumping it into rivers that carry it to the sea, are behaviours that really only became problematic after the introduction of new, non-degradable materials. Packaging, clothing, furniture, toys, and many more everyday items that are readily discarded once they are no longer needed, are now made of or contain plastic. When we talked to people in

Yogyakarta, Bantul, and Gunung Kidul about the effects of their habits and the fact that environmental degradation is rapidly increasing in Indonesia, or when we mentioned the immediate danger of toxic fumes from burning plastic, the usual answer was "tidak apa-apa" [it doesn't matter], "there is still enough land", or "it is just practical to burn the rubbish". Some people blamed the government for not providing better facilities or complained that they would have to pay a small fee for public garbage disposal. A majority of Javanese perceived other everyday problems to be more important.

As with other external projects that are often based on education, information-based arguments that rely on numbers, and which

transfer the responsibility to the, allegedly, 'uneducated' people, are not effective. Western recycling practices, propagated as modernising projects and means of development, do not concern them. Even though environmental and waste-related education has recently become integrated in school and pre-school curricula, and even though public institutions such as universities prohibit (for instance) plastic bottles for drinking water, these efforts have yet to significantly affect public indifference. The Javanese continue to buy 'modern' or 'practical' things that are made of or wrapped in plastic, without caring about their disposal. As such, the dissemination of information on the detrimental effects of waste will not necessarily generate a less consumptive lifestyle.

Considering waste is a problem that accompanies consumer capitalism and economic growth, this study finds that neither an environmentalist nor a rationalist approach is very helpful if one tries to understand waste behaviour and attitudes in Java. Moral and social dimensions are much more important. The Javanese people wish to protect their social reputations and many decades of government programmes have linked personal and social hygiene. Place-based approaches are thus necessary to mobilise citizens to think about and act on waste solutions in their communities.

Moral reasoning and communal initiatives

This moral orientation towards the social environment is also a strong driving force when it comes to communal initiatives that strive to implement greater public engagement in waste management, for instance sorting. Many kampung [villages] have weekly community service clean-ups [kerja bakti] that are propagated by the government as part of the traditional system of non-monetary mutual assistance [gotong royong]. At times, the government, working together with private and civil society actors as well as religious communities, has also sponsored collaborative initiatives that reach beyond the kampung level. This matches with Tsing's observation that environmentalism often generates unexpected social collaborations that bring different political cultures together.[3] However, our impression also corresponds clearly with a study by Tanu and Parker in Surabaya,[4] which found that students join environmentalist activities not so much due to their environmental awareness but because of the fun of socialising and doing things together.

As there is a need for locally owned and community-driven solutions, a noteworthy initiative in dealing with waste is the bank sampah [waste/garbage bank], a community bank system. It began in 2008 and was developed to address the crisis of waste produced by local communities in Yogyakarta. Sorted garbage (papers, plastics, metal, and in some banks also glass, cooking oil, and wet, compostable garbage) is deposited at certain collection points, it is then weighed, and a credit is subsequently recorded. This system relies on locals sorting their garbage and 'banking' it. Once a year, often before Idul Fitri, the celebratory feast at the end of the fasting month (when people need money), the recorded credit is paid out.[5] The money comes from the sale of waste, sold by the bank sampah to entrepreneurs [pengepul] who take it to big factories. After all, the waste trade is good business and many people can make a living from it.

Bank sampah are usually managed by local activists, and practical work is most often performed by female volunteers. Stressing the economic advantage of waste separation, the bank sampah system has also been adopted by religious organisations, by Unilever and Shell Indonesia as a means of demonstrating 'corporate social responsibility' (critics would rather say 'greenwashing'), and by the Indonesian government as the currently best way of dealing with waste. By November 2017, there were more than 5,000 bank sampah in Indonesia. The chairman of a middle-sized bank sampah explained that people are mainly motivated to take their waste to the bank not for

environmental reasons, but for economic gains and social factors. These programmes are connected to the *gotong royong* system, which strengthens social solidarity, binds people together, and regulates the common social life. An abstract notion of nature [*alam*] is not an issue, he says. Obviously, people manage waste when it is in their social interest to do so.

At the same time, it should be acknowledged that in many parts of Indonesia there is a severe lack of public waste infrastructure. In spite of the Zero Waste rhetoric that promotes a sustainable, resource efficient circular economy, and despite the government having incorporated waste disposal into its national climate change strategy, implementation is still lacking. The government does not provide sufficient and appropriate facilities for household waste, let alone solid waste and sewage from mines, factories, and agricultural industries, as well as other hazardous and toxic substances such as medical and electronic waste. It could thus be asked whether the main responsibility for waste organisation or, even better, zero-waste consumption is the individual, a household, a *kampung*, a city, a sector of production or a country. Nonetheless, the bottom-up communal initiatives that are the focus of this article (and the related moral reasoning) are crucial for changing everyday perceptions.

Interestingly, once again, the social embeddedness of the *bank sampah* is crucial for their efficiency. I observed cases where volunteers lost their enthusiasm after a while and the *bank* had to close down. The most sustainable are those that are closely tied to the established communal structures, such as *arisan* (a saving, credit, and lottery scheme in Indonesian communities), PKK (the Family Welfare Empowerment Movement), and Islamic prayer groups. However, I also found cases where *bank sampah* were not well received by the local community, such as where they had been founded by activists

who were not socially integrated and thus regarded as suspicious.

Some *banks* also conduct clean-up or other waste-related events, for which they receive external financial support not only from the government agencies (such as the offices for environmental services), but also sponsors such as Unilever.[6] A few *bank sampah* have grown to a relatively professional level. Interestingly, owing to different political attitudes, this has led to conflict at times: some activists consider it acceptable to receive money from industrial sources so long as this money is used for good purposes, whereas others associate this practice with corruption.

A carnival for recycling

In March 2018, we were able to witness an outstanding event in the small town of Bantul (the capital of Bantul Regency), namely the first 'Recycle Fashion Carnival'. Financially supported by an electricity company, several *bank sampah*, the Office of Environmental Affairs, and many local schools collaborated on this one-day event. Around 500 people paraded through the streets displaying colourful, richly decorated costumes made from trash: plastic bags were sewn together to make beautiful dresses, packaging materials were used to create jackets, water bottles were transformed into skirts, and drinking straws were put together to become the wings of birds and angels. Each group displayed its own creative style, with some combining fantastic costumes with Islamic headscarves and others imitating sexy pop-culture celebrities. References to a shared image of the global environmental movement ('Save the water') and mass-mediated popular culture were mixed with references to local mythology. A final performance in the public square was accompanied by music and slogans that pushed spectators to become active in and committed to the struggle against waste, and to work together for a clean environment.

This event was joyful, full of humour, surprise, and admiration for the various costumes and creations. There were no heavy moralistic lessons or rationalised threats, but rather inspiring pleas for joint efforts and a spirit of communal engagement. The carnival communicated with a new visual language by translating indifferences about waste into the language of art activism and positive forces. Strategic, aesthetic, and social goals were combined, and the passion of the initiators and actors came to the forefront even beyond the embodied and sensory experiences.[7]

This case corresponds with the aspect that was emphasised by the most of our interlocutors: as we have already seen in the case of *bank sampah*, the main motivation to sort waste and properly dispose of it is not the fear that 'nature' could be destroyed, the natural environment could become polluted or food and water might become toxic. It is *gotong royong*, the idea of joint efforts within the immediate community. In short, the main driving force for bottom-up, communal recycle initiatives in rural and urban Java is the social environment. Therefore, one should not expect that the described communal initiatives will have an immediate effect on consumption and waste habits. Indeed, it can sometimes be observed that participants in clean-ups or similar events use small plastic cups for drinking water and do not care at all about disposal. Nevertheless, new ideas are introduced and everyday perceptions are challenged due to the overwhelming visibility of the rubbish at certain places, the fear of disease, the worry that visitors and tourists might dislike it, the general perception of cleanliness and, most importantly, the increasing social and moral emphasis on proper waste disposal.

All in all, the current initiatives remind us that waste is not just producing and reflecting the social and symbolic order—as we learned from Mary Douglas, who suggested that the classification of things as waste reflects the structuring capacities of cultures. There is also a potential for change. Civic movements can bring disparate social groups together in joint practical activities and, step by step, reorient people towards improved awareness and care.

Conclusion

No matter if a global political ecology subscribes to the notions of Anthropocene, Capitalocene, or Plasticene (referring to interactions of micro plastic debris throughout the ecosystem), there is no doubt that waste and pollution affect all humans and non-humans alike. While globalised environmentalist discourses emphasise a new feeling of entanglement with nature as a tentative path to transforming the waste problem, our fieldwork among both urban and rural citizens in Java revealed that an abstract notion of – or relation to – nature is not considered crucial by most actors. At the same time, rationalist arguments do not impress the majority of people either. Individuals are more immediately affected by their social environment. Collective problem

solving at the neighbourhood level – including 'grassroots' groups, bottom-up initiatives such as community-based 'waste banks', communal 'clean-ups' and 'recycle fashion' street carnivals that address various social, economic, and emotional aspects – reflect the mobilisation of the local social and moral world. These initiatives and events bring different social groups together in joint practices and joyful performances, and they combine discursive empowerment and performative enactment.

If we wish to both understand and actively respond to environmental and waste-related problems in transregional collaboration, the most important thing is to think through the differences in thoughts and practices. Waste is always tied to morally complex, peculiar situations and sensibilities. The much-needed reduction of waste can only be achieved once we engage in both mutual understanding and in transformative ways of world-making. Social mobilisation, with the goal to change consumer-conscience, can take many paths. However, we must remember that neither morally responsible individuals nor social collectives can resolve waste problems so long as the industry continues to produce detrimental materials, and so long as the waste is an economic category of global significance.

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Above: *Ger* District Panorama. Image courtesy of Anthony Knuppel on Flickr. Reproduced under a Creative Commons license.

The Green *Ger* Village Master Plan

University cooperation and achieving the SDGs

Patricia Chica-Morales and Antonio J. Domenech

In Mongolia, climate change has resulted in infrequent rains, desertification of the steppes, and degradation of the forests, which is in turn creating a lack of access to food and other resources for Mongolia's nomad society. In the face of these hardships, during the 1990s, nomads started to migrate from the countryside to urban areas and to install, without any government planning, their traditional *ger* (yurts) in the areas surrounding the main cities. One of these cities was Darkhan, located in northern Mongolia. The lack of urban planning and social infrastructure in the *ger* districts has caused a slew of public health and environmental problems. In this context, an International Cooperation for Development alliance emerged between the University of Malaga (Spain), Incheon National University (South Korea) and the Mongolian University of Life Sciences (Mongolia) in order to provide solutions for the public health problems in Darkhan city. The following article aims to highlight the synergies that flourish when working through university partnerships in development cooperation projects, as an alternative to individual and traditional solutions.

Human activities and climate change are having negative impacts on the lives of people all over the world, and so it is essential for policies and actions to move us towards a more sustainable development. Responses in search of new global solutions include the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promoted by the United Nations. The Agenda 2030 and the SDGs were built on the previous experiences with the Millennium Development Goals and address, in a multi-dimensional way, a set of goals and targets that promote the eradication of social and economic inequality, the effects of climate change, and environmentally sustainable development. The Agenda 2030 proposes an international commitment by all countries from the South to the North, from the East to the West.

Universities play an important role as driving agents and integrators of SDGs, and their involvement in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is crucial in coping with the problems of today's world. The University of Málaga (UMA) in Spain, and the Incheon National University (INU) in South Korea, are responding to the needs of the globalized reality through a twinning alliance, whereby both universities have representative offices at the other partner university. Collaboration is promoted in the academic and research fields, but also in the field of cultural and institutional exchange and promotion for a better understanding between Spain and Korea. The project that has been ongoing for the past 10 years was consolidated with an alliance that works as a whole despite the distance between the countries. The alliance works as a single platform, based on the bonds of trust between the networks of each party.

UMA and INU act as cultural and institutional facilitators to support and encourage new projects (http://uma.es/oficinapuentecorea).

In such a favorable context, the opportunity arises to link the experiences and influences of Spain and Korea, represented by the UMA and the INU respectively, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals with the aim of providing new global and integrating solutions to economic inequality, and environmental and social problems. UMA has extensive experience in technical cooperation and institutional relations with Latin America, while INU has an established network of universities and projects around the Asian continent. In this framework both universities agreed in 2018 to launch a joint international cooperation program based on the experiences and resources of both. Specifically, two triangular university development cooperation projects were designed and implemented in Colombia and Mongolia.

The project in Colombia was developed in Bogota through the close relationship between UMA and the National University of Colombia as part of the Ibero-American Network of Korean Studies. The objectives of the project were "to give voice and space to all parts of the armed conflict in Colombia to build memory and, consequently, to build ties that help achieve peace in the country". In general, the project consisted of interviews with victims of

Ger in urban area. Photo by Antonio J. Domenech.

the conflict and the later creation of a short documentary piece. The project in Mongolia was developed through the close relationship of INU with the Mongolian University of Life Sciences. The objectives, context and work of the project are detailed in the following section.

South Korean international cooperation in Mongolia

One of the main agents of the SDGs is Official Development Assistance (ODA). ODA is defined as the allocation of resources from official organizations (both multi or bilateral) to developing countries in order to facilitate and promote sustainable economic and social progress. The members of the Development Association Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) sets out broad lines and objectives to ensure that aid is implemented in a transparent and efficient way to maximize the priorities of the developing countries.

An interesting case of an ODA donor country is South Korea; it is a successful example of a former recipient country that is nowadays one of the big donors of ODA. After the Korean civil war and the division into North and South Korea in 1953, the South

Korean government received a big volume of ODA resources from the United States and Japan. South Korea is in fact considered to be the country that has benefited most from international aid.[1] The government allocated the received ODA to economic and social infrastructures, transforming the agriculture-based economy into a technology-intensive production economy. Nowadays South Korea is the 13th economic power in the world and plays a crucial role in Asian politics. It enjoys a strategic geopolitical situation that, together with its diplomatic connections, allows it to have strong partners in both Asia and the United States. Korea has been part of the OECD-DAC since 2010, bringing new points of view to the cooperation arena and providing a regeneration of the traditional donors of ODA. Knowing both sides of development, South Korea created its own ODA strategy largely based on its own experience as recipient.[2]

One of South Korea's main tools for carrying out international cooperation is the Korea Official International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). KOICA works on strategic areas of aid defined in the Mid-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation 2016-2020: Education, Health, Governance, Agriculture and Rural Development, Water, Energy, Transportation, Science, Technology and Innovation, Climate Change and Environment, and Gender Equality. South Korea's ODA network is made up of a group of offices represented in 45 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, through which projects are carried out in the fields of education, health, infrastructure or production, among others. KOICA's offices also have an important presence in their own country through offices opened in some Korean universities with the aim of integrating cooperation policies into society through education and research.

South Korea formulated a Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) agreement with the clear objective of improving the effectiveness of Official Development Assistance in Mongolia. The CPS is a direct and bilateral agreement with a country reviewed every 3-5 years that includes "volume of ODA, priority areas, medium-term allocation plans and implementation strategies based on Korea's ODA strategy and national development plans".[3] The CPS between Mongolia and Korea includes the development of the following areas: improving vocational training programs and higher education environment, strengthening capacity to prevent diseases, increasing access to water and sanitation facilities, improving the system of electronic government, developing the capacity for the management of logistics, and transport infrastructure. Specifically, the CPS refers to the "need to increase access to improved sources of water and sanitation services [...] especially in the ger district".[4]

Environmental and health problems in Darkhan ger districts

The deterioration of the environment in Darkhan, as in the rest of the country, is caused by climate change and human activities. Rainfall shortages, desertification and extreme cold are causing difficulties for food crops and livestock activities.[5] Unsustainable human activities such as mining, herding, and building around the city river basin, have provoked serious problems for the water, soil and air of Darkhan.[6] UNICEF reported in 2017 that Mongolia is suffering an air pollution crisis. Most of that pollution is caused by the carbon monoxide and microparticles from the mining industry, home heating methods (burning of low-quality coal and other waste), and traffic. Air quality worsens when winter arrives due to increased fuel consumption. Although Darkhan's population of 105,000 is much lower than the capital's (1.5 million), the levels of outdoor air pollution are nevertheless worrying and cause a vast number of respiratory diseases. These problems are amplified in the unplanned ger districts that surround the city.

Major problems affecting the ger districts include the lack of health, social, and communication infrastructures. Ger do not have direct access to running and drinkable

Left: Herders in Mongolia cultivating fodder or animal feed that is more resilient to extreme weather changes, using plants that adapt to droughts. Image courtesy of Asian Development Bank on Flickr. Reproduced under a Creative Commons license.

water, and there are only 33 water kiosks in the whole of Darkhan city. Moreover, the increase of mining activities uncontrollably pollute their main water source, the Kharaa river. The districts also lack any form of sewage and waste management. With the absence of official landfills and scarce garbage collection, waste accumulates in the streets and leaks into the ground causing soil and water deterioration. Direct effects are disease, a meager agricultural output, and poor hygiene. Inadequate public transport, roads, power supply, schools and health centers are significant factors that have led to a marginalized population on the city's fringes.

Green Ger Village Master Plan

In view of the problems of Darkhan city, the local government together with the Mongolian University of Life Sciences (MULS) contacted the KOICA Office at Incheon National University (INU) in 2016, with the aim of finding sustainable and lasting ways to improve the quality of its citizens' lives. After two years of research, MULS and INU signed an agreement to create a 'Green Ger Village'. The University of Malaga (UMA) joined the project in 2018, thereby creating a multilateral project with the aim of creating synergies that contribute to a better design and establishment of the project. The project is led by MULS and INU and funded mainly by KOICA, but also a variety of local, regional, national, and international actors cooperate.

The objective is to create a sustainable ger district in Darkhan, with an improved public health of the local population. Specifically, the project will be carried out over 20 years through two main actions: the creation of a sustainable 'Green Ger Village Master Plan' and the creation of an 'Action for Climate Change and Environment' research center. The project pursues the following SDGs: SDG 3-Good health and well-being, SDG 6-Clean water and sanitation, SDG 7-Affordable and clean energy, SDG 11-Sustainable cities and communities, SDG-13 Climate action, and SDG 17-Partnerships for the goals. The first point of action includes the promotion of public services and facilities such as sewage, sanitation, power lines, and paving of roads as well as the use of renewable energy sources. The project counts on the close collaboration of the ger district families who participate in the construction of components of the plan. They do so through the NGO Citizens' Initiative – Development Driver. The research center for Climate Change and Environment is to be designed by the three partner universities. This center has a clear objective of training and research in environmental issues and sustainability, but will also serve as a meeting place for citizen participation.

In the first stage of the project, in 2017, delegations from INU and MULS conducted local fieldwork. They interviewed the local population to explore the perceptions of their environmental and social situation and to define their socioeconomic needs. In the next stage of the project, in 2017 and 2018, the three university partners worked together in the following ways:
- repair the district roads called 'model streets' under the Public Participation Program, which will be reproduced in the future in other areas of the district;
- continue fieldwork/interviews with regard to local perceptions of the environmental and social situation;
- provide support to the urban landscape management;
- professional training courses about the environment, provided by UMA-INU professors;
- conduct research into energy alternatives and solutions for the lack of basic public services.

Results from the collaboration

Although the Green Ger Village Master Plan is at a very early stage, we can draw some conclusions and results from the collaboration. Firstly, the joint participation of UMA, INU and MULS has established an institutional relationship through the signing of a MoU agreement for the exchange of professors and students between the parties. Volunteers and professors from UMA an INU participated in three different periods of fieldwork between 2017 and 2018.

Also, there has been joint participation at international congresses and conferences held at MULS, UMA and INU, with researchers from the participating universities and external researchers. The Erasmus+ Inter-national Credit Mobility (KA107) granted a series of scholarships within the framework of the Plan, with which three students from MULS studied at UMA during the academic year 2019-2020, and two students from UMA studied at MULS during the same period. Additionally, two professors from each university carried out teaching missions and short research stays at the partner universities. Lastly, two doctoral theses are being carried out within the framework of the project, planned for completion by the end of 2020. The first one is being written by a MULS research professor who is conducting her doctoral thesis at Incheon National University in the field of public participation and waste management of the Green Ger Village Master Plan. The second thesis is by a researcher from the University of Málaga on the decision-making process and its application to the

Green Ger Village Master Plan through system dynamics. The results of these investigations are expected to be fully incorporated into the Green Ger Village Master Plan.

In conclusion, we state that the implementation of the Green Ger Village Master Plan will be successful thanks to the synergy created by the three partner universities and the national and local parties. Guided by the SGDs, the improvement of public health in ger districts will bring enormous benefits to the local population. Finally, we conclude that the creation of such collaborative projects contributes to the construction of a critical, participatory, and caring citizenship, while promoting cultural exchange and research between students and lecturers from different regions.

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Environmental challenges of international migration in East Asia

Aysun Uyar Makibayashi

International migration has become one of the major trends that shape the highly urbanizing societies of East Asia, and in a broader sense Southeast Asia. Groups are drawn towards the newly established cities in these regions. Environmental change has also been one of the signifying elements on the global agenda. Even though the impact of international migration is already a usual suspect when it comes to environmental change, the cause and effect relationship is yet to be analyzed from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Fig. 1: Earthquake-stricken coast in Otsuchi Town, Iwate Prefecture, Japan (Photo taken by the author, 25 June 2011).

As part of the panel sessions presented at ICAS 11 on 'Environmental Issues, Social Activism and Policy Challenges', this study looks at the multiple dimensions of the causal relationship between migration and environmental change (environmental change can be the reason for migration, but it can also be caused by migration); the study aims to link the 'environmental issues' and 'policy challenges' of these panel sessions in order to set a new framework with which to consider the causal relationship between environmental change and migration and how they affect each other during people's movements from one place to another. One result from this short survey, would be that these two processes, especially in East Asia, are on the verge of securitization (a situation in which they are pushed out of the arena of regular politics into becoming a matter of security). Clearly, regional responses for sustainable adaptation practices and better inclusion of immigrants in host communities are needed.

Recent dynamics of international migration

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 3.4% of the world's population in 2018 (about 258 million people) live outside their country of birth. This percentage rose from about 2.7% in the early 2000s. Top destinations (host/receiving countries) have consistently included the USA, Germany, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UK, and UAE, while top origins (home/sending countries) are India, Mexico, Russia, China, Bangladesh and the Philippines, in terms of the total number of people in the migration lane. If we consider internal migration, it is even more striking in terms of environmental change: of the 68.5 million internally displaced people (due to conflicts and disasters), 18.8 million in 135 countries were displaced because of sudden environmental disasters (2017 data).[1]

Migration as a process is complicated enough as there are many reasons, push

and pull factors, flows of emigration and immigration, difficulties in defining categories, and various dimensions while settling the migrant groups in their host countries, and potential outcomes in the host countries. This study aims to combine and present the causal relationship among all these segments of the whole migration process, in a comprehensive framework (table 1). As can be seen in this framework, environmental change issues are of course involved in the migration process from the very beginning. The framework starts with an initial separation of 'internal' and 'external/international' migration by focusing on the main drivers. Environmental degradation, economic necessities and hardships, conflicts/wars, political/social pressures and identity crisis in the home countries, might be some of the reasons for people to leave their original birth places, both internally and internationally.

Categories and dimensions of migrants could be endless, so too could the outcomes of migration in terms of policy or governance, but this study attempts to cover as many facets as possible in the figure. It is crucial to differentiate between categories such

as legal/regular vs. irregular/illegal/undocumented, permanent vs. temporary/seasonal, or voluntary vs. forced migration. Migrants and refugees should also be approached differently as their push and pull factors are entirely dissimilar. Governance policies within and between the host and home countries depend on whether these countries have sufficient economic, political, and sociocultural capacity to send and, more importantly, to welcome migrant groups. Most migrants experience a force to leave their home countries due to economic, political and/or security related issues, however, there is a small number of migrant communities of high-skilled experts and students who leave their home countries with none of these concerns, but who migrate voluntarily for career or educational aspirations. The duration of migration (short or long-term) also affects the nature, documentation, and outcome of migration flows. This overview hopefully helps to grasp the difficulties faced when drawing an overarching migration framework covering legal, economic, political, sociocultural, and environmental phases.

Environmental challenges and migration in East Asia

Although migration has many forms and definitions, natural disasters and other environmental changes have increasingly become some of the main motivators. The initial reason for the movement of people might be any sort of environmental change, but this movement leads to the *securitization of environmental change* issues with emerging environmental problems in the host countries as a result of the increasing number of residents. This process occurs similarly with internal migration, whereby the environment in particular areas of a country experience the direct effects of migration. The impact of migration on the environment leads to developments in the governance of migration, and the securitization of environmental changes.

When we look at the mention of 'environment' in migration history and literature, throughout the 20th century, primarily political-economic push and pull factors were at the core of the migration discourse. During the 1990s, the growing global environmental crisis was mostly considered to be a humanitarian disaster by media, politicians, and NGOs; the academic circles started to include it as one of the side-effects of migration. The unprecedented, repetitive, and large-scale natural disasters of the 2000s, as well as drastic environmental changes throughout the world, led 'environmental concerns' to be reintroduced into the migration literature.[2] The increasing frequency and scale of natural disasters (both gradual changes to our ecosystems and sudden devastation of environment) led to the use of environmental concerns, frameworks, and solutions as adaptation strategies by international organizations, politicians, and migration and environmental scholars in the following years.[3] As a result, 'environmental migrants' came to be defined by the IOM as "persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged

Table 1: Migration (internal and international)

Internal and External/ International drivers	Emigration Push factors	Immigration Pull factors	Mixing categories	Dimensions	Outcomes
- Environmental degradation	- Economic reasons	- Economy	- Legal vs irregular (undocumented)	- Men and women	- Political
- Economy	- Population rise	- Betterment of lifestyles	- Permanent vs seasonal/temporary	- Old and young	- Economic
- Conflict/war	- Threat to one's life	- Family/relatives	- Voluntary vs forced (Human trafficking vs migrant smuggling)	- New and family lineages	- Demographic
- Political/social pressure	- Conflict/war	- Culture/religion	- Migrant vs refugees and asylum-seekers	- Home (sending) and host (receiving) country	- Environmental
- Identity/culture	- Environmental degradation	- Environment	- Developing vs developed countries	- Images of sending and receiving societies	- Social/cultural
	- Threat from government		- Immigrants vs global migrants (highly skilled experts and students)		- Legal
	- Disasters		- Short vs long-term stay		- Security

Compiled by the author

to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within their country or abroad".[4]

IOM's definition garners various aspects of the migration framework in table 1. We can rewrite this framework from an environmental point of view, to produce a more environment-oriented migration scheme, as can be seen in table 2. This table shows how environment-driven causes of migration can, to start, be divided into two big groups: migration as a result of sudden environmental hazards, natural disasters, and industrial accidents (as a result of an environmental event), and migration happening as a result of gradual changes within the environmental conditions of one's home country, such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, rise of sea-levels, infrastructural changes, and land grabbing. The lists are not exhaustive, but show the most common incidences we encounter. Depending on the sudden or gradual character of the environmental change, all push and pull factors, categories, and dimensions lead in different directions. The response and adaptation processes also change from short to mid- and long-term measures. As a result of these emerging drivers (both within the same country and across borders), migrant groups are usually considered within the forced migration category whereby categorization, legalization, and engagement mechanisms in the host communities (in the same country) and societies (in receiving countries) become increasingly difficult. Governance of both migration and environmental change faces security-related questions such as 'how to cope with sudden events and gradual changes?' and 'How to respond and adapt appropriately, both in the immediate as well as the long run?'

How does East Asia (and in a broader sense this includes Southeast Asia) play a role in framing the processes of environmental change and migration? From a migration studies perspective, Asia receives and sends more than 40% of all international migrants and has a majority of the top sending countries.[5] From an environmental viewpoint, Asia experiences the highest frequency of natural disasters (around 150 disasters in 2017) compared to the Americas, Africa, Europe and Oceania.[6] According to the same resource, Asia saw 37% of all global natural disasters in the years 1998-2007, and even 41% during the following decade (2008-2017). The growing occurrence of environmental disasters is a crucial fact of our times. Compared to Asia, in the decade 2008-2017, the Americas experienced 24%, Africa 20%, Europe 11%, and Oceania 4%, of the global natural disasters. However, during that same time, the percentage of people actually affected by the disasters was about 80% in Asia, with only 11% in the Americas and 9% in Africa.

Natural disasters are some of the main causes of forced migration, leading environmental refugees to flee to other areas of their own country, or even into other countries in search of safety. The main disasters occurring in East Asia between 2008-2017 were floods (38%), storms (24%), earthquakes (12%), epidemics (10%) and extreme temperatures (3%).[7] On 11 March 2011, the Tohoku Earthquake (9.0 magnitude) and the subsequent tsunami devastated the eastern prefectures (Tohoku region) of Japan, and even affected areas further away throughout the entire Pacific region (fig.1). The earthquake and tsunami triggered the man-made disasters of a

nuclear meltdown, hydrogen explosions, and radioactive contamination in the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima Prefecture, leading to the loss of 15,000 lives, a further 7,500 people missing, and 125,000 people displaced and forced to live in temporary shelters.[8]

The impact of these natural disasters on (inter)national migrants in both home and host countries ranges from the emergence of internally displaced people, increased vulnerability (alienation, sense of being forgotten, unplanned shocks for illegal migrant groups, or inability to reclaim the bodies of loved ones), lack of access to assistance (since illegal groups are usually invisible to governmental and international humanitarian aid schemes), unemployment, loss of assets, identity loss, psychological effects, political disempowerment, loss of communication with relatives in the home countries, and emergence of new refugees.[9] Moving into urban areas is usually one of the first and foremost reactions by migrant groups, adding more pressure onto urban infrastructure and services.

Gradual changes of environmental conditions, or mid/long-term responses and adaptation mechanisms vis-à-vis environmental changes, have their own set of implications. Climate change, for example, is one of the most impactful factors affecting people's living standards. The most vulnerable groups are those living in low-lying areas, landslide areas, and agrarian areas, as well as coastal communities and island communities. The effects of climate change are seen in coastal areas and low-lying areas, food production systems, movement of people towards cities, industry, infrastructure, human health, human security, livelihoods, and poverty. In fact, poverty and growing urbanization are the main consequences of climate change. Environmental (and other) drivers force people to move to cities in their home countries, or when moving across borders migrants tend to settle in urban areas in the host country. The urban population has already exceeded the rural population in Asia (in 2018), and the whole region (especially South and East Asia) has the fastest growth rate of urbanization (60% now live in cities); it is expected that more than two thirds of the population will live in cities by 2050.[10] It is clear that unplanned or mismanaged urbanization will lead to further environmental and social problems, such as strained urban services (for example, sanitation and health care), poverty, growing urban-rural divide, worsening agricultural support for the cities, added discrimination among ethnic groups or against new settlers such as migrants.

Securitization of international environmental migration and potential regional responses

The classical understanding of 'security' was always a state-based one (national security), thanks to the long-lasting wars of most of the 20th century. The scope of the concept of security started to change with globalization, societies opening up to more inter-state interactions, economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, and the emergence of new non-state actors.

The concept of 'human security' was initially framed by leading UN experts and various UN institutions, as well as their programs. The UN 1994 Human Development

Report was devoted to the concept of human security, stating that security should refer to the safety of all human beings from the threats of hunger, disease, crime, repression, and protection from sudden disruptions of people's daily lives.[11] The seven pillars of human security include economic, political, food, health, personal, community, and environmental security. Here environmental security means both protecting people against the risks of environmental hazards and changes, and also protecting nature from man-made damages and threats. This two-way understanding of environmental security brings us to the recent framework of migration and environmental migration flows. As shown in the above examples, when lives and livelihoods are threatened by the risks associated with sudden or gradual environmental changes, forced migration is a very plausible outcome. When these threats are merged with the other pillars of human security, such as economic or political threats, then migration becomes even more likely and greater in number of people. The migration process leads to further problems, and additional threats to human security, leading to the even higher levels of securitization of the environmental migration processes.

East Asia presents a noticeable trend in international migration (with all its drivers) while occurrences of environmental changes (both sudden and gradual) have also increased dramatically in recent years. The most visible instance would again be in the cities where most migration movements happen, especially in developing countries. The sudden or gradual rise of population poses immediate or mid/long-term environmental risks for urban dwellers, including migrant communities. Some of the threats to people's environmental security include increasing carbon emissions and deterioration of air quality in big or mega cities, water degradation, rise of urban surface temperature, heatwaves (especially during monsoon seasons and sub-tropical regions, and it is reality for most of the Southeast Asian countries), waste, lack of sanitation, and increasing health risks due to mismanagement of all these issues.

There are of course steps taken at both national and international levels. Governments and their agencies, especially those of sending and receiving countries, work on migration governance programs through bilateral agreements, multilateral agreements together with regional and international organizations, and trans-governmental tracks by including labor unions, migrant community representatives, migration-relation business groups, and non-governmental initiatives. In the meantime, there are also international initiatives focusing on the establishment of migration regimes between sending and receiving countries, multilateral forums, and regional initiatives. Among these, special attention is paid to regional organizations (like ASEAN in the Southeast Asian case), forums, and other inter-governmental, and non-governmental initiatives at the regional level. The most important reason for this is that those regional forums already have experience in dealing with regional economic, political, and sociocultural issues and they already have the organizational structures to launch the initiatives for these emerging issues of environmental migration and their

outcomes. Though there are international migration regimes set by other international organizations, regional organizations know the realities, and especially the sociocultural dynamics and specifications of their own regions and sub-regions, and they have better means to implement those international migration and environmental systems in their regions. Indeed, ASEAN is a good example, in that it has been focusing on the Southeast Asian dynamics of migration and working hard to establish new and more plausible regimes to govern migration flows and the environmental impacts of the movement of people.

Conclusion

This short overview looks at the environmental migration processes in East Asia with an attempt to frame the migration agenda with a focus on environmental change issues. The recent dynamics of international migration and environmental changes have a cause and effect relation since the environment has become one of the main drivers of (inter)national migration in recent years. Sudden and gradual environmental changes have led to migration at an unprecedented scale. The new migration flows lead to the further securitization of environmental change issues and migration processes, as increased risks of substantial environmental changes in the receiving areas are very likely.

Governing mechanisms of international migration also lead to further securitization of environmental migration processes since they necessitate multi-actor and multi-level involvement. Governmental and non-governmental initiatives at the regional level could be among the more realistic platforms to communicate those migration governance regimes and environmental change agendas, and to recognize as well as put emphasis on the environmental aspects, drivers, and outcomes of recent migration trends.

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Table 2: Environmental migration (internal and international)

Sudden outbreaks	Gradual changes	Push factors	Pull factors	Mixing categories	Dimensions
- Environmental hazards	- Climate change	- Threat to one's life	- Adaptation	- Immediate vs gradual migration	- Men and women
- Natural disasters	- Ecosystem degradation	- Conflict	- Betterment of lifestyles	- Irregular vs legal	- Old and young
- Industrial accidents	- Sea-level rise	- Mismanagement	- Environment	- Temporary vs permanent	- New and family lineages
	- Infrastructure	- Population rise	- Governmental policies	- Forced vs voluntary	- Home (sending) and host (receiving) country
	- Land grabbing	- Ecomomic risks	- Security	- Environmental refugees vs migrants	- Country and IO regulations
		- Health risks		- Short vs long-term stay	- Images of sending and receiving societies
		- Segregation			
		- Insecurity			

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The Region

News from Australia and the Pacific
Rethinking the Philippines: networks
and media of empowerment

Regional Editors
Edwin Jurriëns and Andy Fuller

Rethinking the Philippines

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

Articles are edited by Edwin Jurriëns edwin.jurriens@unimelb.edu.au and Andy Fuller fuller.a@unimelb.edu.au, from the Asia Institute in Melbourne https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/asia-institute

Filipino family life at a distance in a digital era

Earvin Charles Cabalquinto

In one of the many bustling spaces of the university, a petite woman, wearing cleaning gloves and an earphone, was seen cleaning windows, mopping the floor or assisting students and university staff in some other way. After several encounters in the building hallway, I eventually met her. She is Marie, a 59-year-old cleaner, who was born in the Philippines, and one of my informants during my research project in Australia on transnational family life and mobile media.

Marie moved to Australia in the late 1980s through a de-facto visa with her Australian husband. She does not have any children and had a hysterectomy. Whilst living in Australia, she has been supporting her six siblings and their families in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. She does this through constant communication, money transfers on a monthly basis, and the occasional shipment of consumer goods. For Marie, the smartphone plays a vital role in sustaining her relationships to her left-behind family members. As she said during one of our conversations: "Of course, it is very important. I can contact them in an instant. Unlike before, when I had to write letters. When there was no mobile phones yet, it's quite difficult to communicate at a distance."

Marie is one of the millions of Filipinos who have embarked on an overseas journey for diverse reasons. Cross-border mobility among Filipinos is fundamental in coping with the changing demands and policies of a global economy. According to a 2019 report released by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), 2.5 million Filipino workers were deployed overseas in 2016. As transnational family life becomes mainstream in Philippine society, a diverse range of digital communication technologies serve as conduits for the flow of money, consumer items and expressions of affection.

According to the 2018 census released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 232,284 Philippine migrants in Australia in 2016. Historically, the first wave of Filipino migrants, who were called 'Manilamen', came to Western Australia and Queensland to work as pearl divers, wharf labourers, and seamen in the pearling industry.[1] To date, Filipinos work across various professional and skill-based industries, such as hospitality, aged care services and education. The Filipino migrant community is in the top ten migrant communities of Australia.

A family life on the move

My research focusses on how migrant Filipinos in Melbourne, and their left-behind family members in the Philippines, use digital communication technologies to forge and maintain family life at a distance. I have examined my data through a critical mediated mobilities lens,[2] emphasising how mobile devise use is engendered and undermined by the intertwining of social structures and technological infrastructures. It is through this approach that I have uncovered the emergence of communicative benefits and tensions in a transnational and digital household.

Mobile device use has brought positive experiences to members of the transnational Filipino family. For instance, Rachelle, a 28-year-old sales manager in Melbourne, and her left-behind siblings in the Philippines, utilised a messaging application to exchange intimate, playful and often random texts and visuals. The constant flow of personalised content primarily contributed to making each one of them feel connected and valued.

In some cases, a social media channel and a photograph were used in the planning, coordinating and completion of a family-based business project. As I presented elsewhere,[3] Cherry, a 45-year-old accountant in the
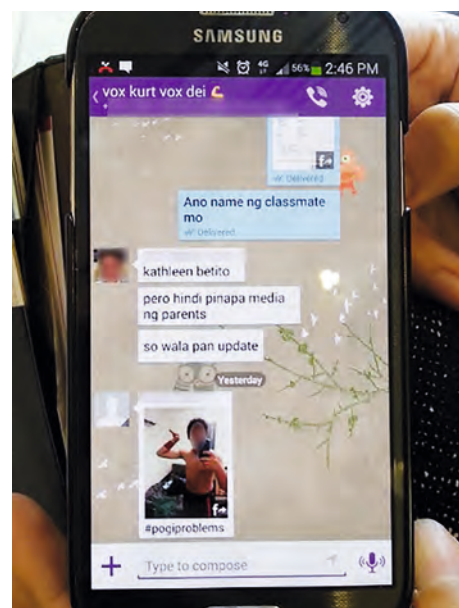
Transnational Filipino family members exchange random and creative contents through a family group chat in Viber.

Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila. Photo by Earvin Charles Cabalquinto.

Philippines, used Facebook to update her overseas husband about the making of a *Jeepney,* an iconic public transport in the Philippines. Cherry was taking photographs, uploading them to Facebook, and tagging the husband. It was through such practices that Cherry and her husband shared this activity.

However, both intimate connections and negative tensions can be enabled through mobile device use. As showcased in a previous publication,[4] Efren, a 38-year-old chef in Melbourne, posted a photo of a newly bought pair of shoes on Facebook. This photo generated a comment from his left-behind mother, reminding him to prioritise his financial obligations back home instead of buying material items. Little did his mother know, it was his wife who bought the shoes. The lack of context of a Facebook post allowed for misinterpretation in this case. In this regard, for transnational family members, sustaining ties through networked platforms often warrants strategies. In Efren's case, the solution was to be mindful when posting content on social media.

Overseas Filipinos and their left-behind family members often struggle with poor technological infrastructures to sustain transnational linkages. The widespread use of digital communication technologies can thus reinforce the pre-existing social inequalities in Philippine society. In a report released by Speedfest Global Index, the Philippine's 2019 average internet speed of 19.51 Mbps was much slower than the global average of 57.91 Mbps. Nevertheless, transnational families have to manage the pains of physical separation through the use of mobile devices, money transfers and the continuous flows of care packages. In this regard, as care support becomes more family-based and networked, the Philippine government can escape from its responsibility in prioritising the social welfare of its citizens. This point is of high importance especially when the plight of Filipino migrants is symptomatic of the lack of stable job

opportunities, free access to public services and provision of social welfare programs in the Philippines.

In conclusion, dispersed Filipino family members rely heavily on communication technologies to forge and maintain transnational ties. Yet, communication at a distance also comes with challenges and issues. In this vein, there is a need to further re-think the kind of support that should be given to Filipinos who serve as the lifeblood of the nation. One must start by critically reflecting upon how a digital family life can become a crucial site to critique the uneven effects of a globalising economy and thus map out ways of improving the lives of those who have been displaced and marginalised in a mobile society.

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News from Australia and the Pacific
Rethinking the Philippines: networks and media of empowerment

Regional Editors
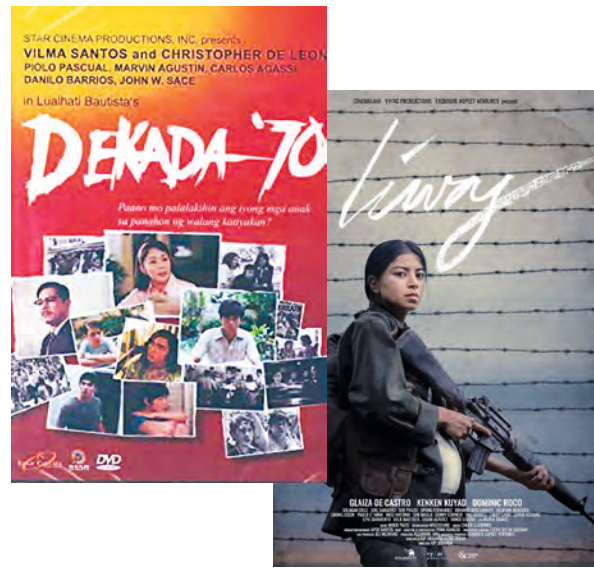Edwin Jurriëns and Andy Fuller

The Region   41

When watching films is resistance

Laurence Marvin S. Castillo

In November 2018, Brigadier General Antonio Parlade Jr. of the Armed Forces of the Philippines accused university and school-based screenings of films about the Martial Law as being part of the 'Red October plot' to recruit for the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (CPP-NPA). The accusation gave rise to statements of condemnation from hundreds of independent filmmakers, scholars, cultural workers and activists. These statements emphasised the danger that Parlade's accusation poses to the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Philippine constitution.

The military's linking of the memory of the Martial Law period to communism shows how the state cultivates "authoritarian nostalgia"[1] in the Philippine public sphere. The spectre of the communist revolution is brought up to whitewash the atrocities of the earlier authoritarian order, and more disturbingly, to justify the return of dictatorial rule, this time under the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte.

My doctoral research project, which began in 2018, is about how the communist revolution is imagined in films and literary works produced in the decades that followed the toppling of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the 1986 EDSA People Power. Some of these works are films set in the Martial Law era. For many Filipinos who lived through this period, the memory of the dictatorship is intertwined with the memory of the revolutionary movement. Marcos invoked and magnified the threat of communism to justify the declaration of the Martial Law in 1972. The repressive conditions under authoritarian rule compelled a lot of Filipinos to join the revolution, which did not only embody the most radical form of anti-dictatorship resistance, but also offered a comprehensive agenda for the transformation of Philippine society.

For Filipinos like me, born during the post-authoritarian period of democratisation and living through the present in which the revolution continues to rage on, Martial Law films are forms of "imagined memory".[2] They enable us to imagine and remember the experiences – of state violence, as well as of radical political involvement – during the Martial Law period. One prominent example is the commercially successful and critically acclaimed period melodrama *Dekada '70 (The 1970s*, 2002). This film, produced by a major commercial film company, depicts the experiences of middle-class family in the titular milieu. In this film, the eldest son decides to join the communist armed movement, bringing to the fore the deep-seated contradictions that have long incubated in the family. At the centre of the film's narrative is the political awakening of the mother, who not only begins to understand her son's involvement, but also gradually liberates herself from the constraints of the social role she performs inside and outside the family home.

A visible commonality between *Dekada '70* and other recent films on the revolution is their examination of how gender and sexuality figure in an individual's radicalisation. Such thematic concern relates to contemporary identity-based advocacies and social movement practices that prompt a nuancing, if not rethinking of, the class-oriented and nationalist politics associated primarily with the revolutionary movement. The independent films *Barber's Tales* (2013) and *Liway* (2018) centre on women characters, whose expressions of empowerment are depicted as contingent upon, and linked to, their involvement in the communist movement. In other independent films like *Muli (The Affair*, 2010) and *Lihis (Wayward*, 2013), the experiences of gay members of the communist movement are highlighted, challenging the macho stereotypes associated with the popularised figure of the NPA guerrilla depicted in some post-EDSA action films. Apart from relating stories of courage shown by these revolutionary characters who have been cast as sexual minorities within and without the guerrilla zones, these films offer critical reflections on the communist movement's own painful contradictions, as particularly evinced in their straightforward depiction of the persistence of heteronormative and patriarchal lifeways and values that revolutionaries need to wrestle from, and overcome.

The potency of these films lies in their capacity not only to memorialise the violence of the dictatorship, which continues to be the subject of systematic historical revisionism, but to also make use of the power of fiction cinema to examine the relevance and persistence of the revolutionary vision, especially in light of contemporary concerns such as identity politics. They produce fictionalised versions of the radical past that are significantly shaped by, while dialoguing with, the socio-political sensibilities of the present. And indeed it is the current nominally democratic order's shared features with, and gradual transition to, authoritarian rule that urgently demand the surfacing of such radical memory practices.

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Researching the Philippines in Australia: the Philippine Studies Network in Australia (PINAS)

Reagan Maiquez

Filipinos are the fifth largest migrant group in Australia with around 236,000 residents. In 2017-2018, 10640 migrants came from the Philippines. Additionally, around thirteen thousand student visas from the Philippines were granted in 2018-2019, a significantly marked increase (108%) from the 2017-2018 program year. Historically, prior to Australia's birth as a modern nation, this second largest archipelago in the world was already linked to the world's largest island. During the late 1800s, Filipinos pearl divers, known as 'Manila Men' arrived in the island-continent and intermarried with Indigenous Australians. The Philippines has maintained diplomatic relationships with Australia for 70 years, longer than most of the ASEAN countries.

The Philippines has also become an important site for examining modern, democratic, and postcolonial states in Asia and beyond. Philippine Studies is the juncture between Area studies and the interdisciplinary investigation of Filipino culture, history, language, art, heritage, internal and global diaspora. Over the past decades, it has been relevant for examining not only the growth and challenges of the Philippines, but also how this country and its people are linked with the rest of the world, including Australia.

It is with this impetus that PINAS, the Philippine Studies Network in Australia, was conceived and formed in early 2017 by independent scholars and postgraduate research students of several Victorian universities. Inspired by Filipino migrant researchers who have made earlier engagement efforts in other diasporic sites like the United States and Europe, the group aims to contribute to and examine Filipino and Filipino-Australian community-formation within Australia. PINAS is a collective of scholars in the humanities and social sciences, particularly the interdisciplinary studies of culture, society, politics, and art known as Philippine Studies. PINAS welcomes scholars from all disciplines and focusses on topics, issues, and challenges faced by the Filipino community in both Australia and the Philippines. It aims to foster connection, dialogue, research and creative projects among academics, artists, activists, and the larger Filipino and Filipino-Australian public.

PINAS, in the last three years, has responded to the problems and issues faced by Filipinos through critical and creative engagement in both digital and live venues. It has also served as a study circle for research and coursework scholars who are working on research projects and papers on the Philippines. Many of them are research students at Monash University, The University of Melbourne, and La Trobe University in Melbourne. Melbourne-based scholars are part of the advisory team of this newly-emerging collective, including the author, Dr Reyvi Marinas who completed a research in Citizenship Studies and Law, Dr Walter Robles of Swinburne University, and Dr Gary Devilles, who completed his urban research project at La Trobe University and has now returned to teaching and research at Ateneo de Manila University.

In September 2017, PINAS together with postgraduate students from various Victorian universities initiated a roundtable dialogue at The University of Melbourne regarding the prospect of Philippine Studies in Australia. The following month, PINAS hosted a lecture-forum at Monash University by the prolific Filipino migrant scholar Robyn Rodriguez, Professor of Asian-American Studies at the University of California Davis, and founding head of the Bulosan Center for Filipino Studies. The title of his lecture was "Decolonizing Filipino Migration Research".

In 2018, PINAS became a major academic partner of the yearly International Research Forum on the Philippines organised by the Filipino-Australian Student Council of Victoria. PINAS contributed to the development and curation of the conference's theme *Becoming Filipino*. It was also involved in the development of a conference panel that interrogated the connections between community action and research, particularly regarding various Filipino community organisations in Victoria, like Migrante Melbourne, Gabriela Australia, Advanced League of Peoples' Artists Incorporated, Philippine Australia Solidarity Association, and Anakbayan Melbourne.

Following the success of the conference, PINAS hosted another forum that examined the link between community issues and the formation of diasporic communities in Australia through critical reflections by visiting Filipino academics, including University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD) film and cultural studies professor Dr Rolando B. Tolentino, Filipino creative writing scholar and translator Dr Vladimeir Gonzales (UPD), and multi-award winning writer, commentator and sociologist Arnold Alamon, who is Assistant Professor of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology.

Currently PINAS is conducting research led by this author, Monash University's PhD Candidate Katrina Ross Tan, and PINAS member and data analyst Candice Rabusa. The project, "Understanding Filipino Youth Immigrant Lived Experience in Melbourne, Australia: A Preliminary Study", explores how Filipino youth in Melbourne view and understand their cultural values in an ongoing formation of hyphenated and complex Filipino identity abroad. Through a qualitative enquiry from focus-group discussions among 1.5 (young people who were born in the Philippines but migrated to Australia with their parent/s before the age of 9) and second generation Filipino-Australians, the study seeks to interrogate issues surrounding the identity and cultural formation of this demographic segment. It also aims to examine the problems of this particular segment of the Filipino-Australian population and to mobilise the potential of the young Filipino-Australian voice and contribution to community engagement in Australia as well as in the Philippines.

Amidst the difficulty of navigating the terrains of community formations and academic networks in the context of the diaspora, and the defunding of university research in the humanities, social sciences, and Area studies, PINAS represents an important effort to bridge the gap between research and grassroots communities. In the coming years, PINAS aims to continue to be a critical voice for engaging the Filipino and Australian publics in topics of importance, such as migration, politics, community building, globalisation, culture, the arts, the ongoing relationship between Australia and the Philippines, and problems in the Asia-Pacific Region.

The challenges faced by Area/Philippine Studies in Australia include the lack of an academic institution for advancing research on one of the largest migrant communities in the world. Also, with more global economic woes and ongoing environmental and social catastrophes, the government, private institution and public funding of research in the arts, humanities, social sciences and Area studies has been dwindling. Furthermore, there is a changing landscape of research globally, in which academic institutions are faced with increased pressure to measure their impact not only in terms of their research publications but also their active role in community and nation building.

Nonetheless, Australia's role in developing world class research in the region also lies heavily in collaboration with nations in the Asia-Pacific region, and in the innovation and scholarship produced in this part of the world, including the Philippines. It is with this in mind that PINAS in Australia seeks to involve the academic community, independent scholars and the general public in research and community engagement about pressing topical issues in both Australia and the Philippines.

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News from Southeast Asia
Economic and social effects
of the pandemic

Regional Editor
Su-Ann Oh

Economic and social effects of the pandemic

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE

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Su-Ann Oh

The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening lives around the world, and the measures to contain it are badly affecting economies and livelihoods. The various countries in Southeast Asia are using a multitude of coping strategies, some more effective than others, while grappling with the socio-economic costs of the pandemic.

In these short articles, we bring you concise and diverse insights into the economic and social effects of the pandemic from a macro and micro level. We have an overview of the impact on ASEAN economies by economist Jayan Menon, and the Indonesian government's struggles to contain the outbreak while balancing economic needs by economist Siwage Dhama Negara. For Malaysia, environmental anthropologist Serina Rahman provides a micro-level perspective of how pandemic mitigation measures have affected the poor. Finally, political scientist Nyi Nyi Kyaw considers the nature of panic and vigilantism that has emerged in pandemic Myanmar.

Su-Ann Oh, Visiting Fellow at ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Managing Editor of SOJOURN, and Regional Editor for The Newsletter, oh_su_ann@iseas.edu.sg

How is COVID-19 affecting the ASEAN economy?

Jayant Menon

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a human tragedy. By early May 2020, about 3.5 million infections and 250,000 deaths had been reported worldwide, and about 35,000 infections and 1,600 deaths in ASEAN. Measures introduced to deal with the pandemic could save lives but are having wide-ranging economic effects and inducing economic contagion.

The IMF predicts that world output will contract by 3 per cent this year, with growth in most ASEAN countries either flat or negative. There is, however, significant variation in projected growth across ASEAN this year, ranging from -6.7 per cent in Thailand to 2.7 per cent in Vietnam. In contrast, the Asian Development Board (ADB) is less pessimistic, projecting growth in Thailand at -4.8 per cent and Vietnam at 4.8 per cent. The IMF sees the ASEAN group contracting by about 1 per cent this year, while the ADB sees it growing by about the same. This variation in rates across countries, as well as between forecasters, suggests two things. Greater focus is needed on the transmission mechanisms of the economic contagion and in critiquing how assessments of the economic impacts are made. This will enable a more informed evaluation of the assessments, as the numbers keep changing, and a better understanding of the under-lying processes to gauge the impacts of an uncertain and evolving shock.

Economic transmission mechanisms

The effects of COVID-19 are hitting ASEAN economies at a time when other risk factors, such as a global growth slowdown, were already taking place. COVID-19 is disrupting tourism and travel, supply chains and labour supply. Uncertainty is driving negative sentiment. This all affects trade, investment and output, which in turn affects growth. Tourism and business travel, as well as related industries, especially airlines and hotels, were the first to be affected.[1] And the conditions are worsening as more countries go into shutdown.

The supply disruptions emanating mostly from China will reverberate throughout the value chain and disrupt production. Since China is the regional hub and accounts for 12 per cent of global trade in parts and components, the cost of the disruption in the short run will be high.[2] The negative effects of quarantine arrangements on labour supply could also be high depending on duration and sector.[3] Manufacturing has been hit harder than service industries, where telecommuting and other technological aids limit the fall in productivity.

All these disruptions will lead to sharp declines in domestic demand. And their impact on economic growth will further propagate these disruptions. This com-pounding effect can magnify and extend short-run effects into the long run. The highest economic cost could come from the so-called intangibles. The effects of negative sentiment about growth and general uncertainty — which is already affecting financial markets — will feed into reduced investment, consumption and growth beyond the short run. Rolling recessions around the world now appear inevitable, despite the stimulus measures being contemplated.[4] The contraction is not only likely to be greater than the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, an economic depression is on the cards. Even in a best case scenario, there will be sharp increases in unemployment and poverty. Some degree of decoupling from China, or de-globalisation in general, may also be a permanent reminder of this pandemic.

Among ASEAN countries, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are heavily integrated in regional supply chains and will be the most affected by a reduction in demand for the goods produced within them. Indonesia and the Philippines have been increasing supply chain engagement and will not be immune either. Vietnam is the only new ASEAN member integrated into supply chains with China and is already suffering severe supply disruptions. Given time, supply-side adjustments will alter trade and investment patterns. The main adjustment will involve relocating certain activities along the supply chain from China to ASEAN countries. Although the pandemic will disrupt the relocation phase, ASEAN countries can benefit from the new investments, mitigating overall negative impacts. Vietnam and Malaysia could be major beneficiaries.[5]

Tourism contributed almost $400 billion to the ASEAN economy in 2019.[6] Thailand and Malaysia will be most affected in ASEAN by the drop-off in tourist arrivals. Although intra-ASEAN tourism flows have been growing, spearheaded by Malaysia, the main sources of tourist arrivals are the 'Plus Three countries' – China , Korea and Japan – and all are contracting severely.

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Indonesia faces tremendous challenges in its handling of the public health emergency

Siwage Dharma Negara

Indonesia recorded its first instance of COVID-19 - two cases of infection - on 2 March. Slightly more than a month later, on 13 April, President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo declared COVID-19 a national disaster. That day, the number of COVID-19 cases had jumped to over 4,500 with almost 400 fatalities. On 5 May, Indonesia reported a total of 11,587 COVID-19 cases with 864 deaths. As of writing, the country has the highest number of COVID-19 fatalities in South-east Asia, with a death rate of around 8 per cent of total confirmed cases. Many commentators believe that the figures are significantly underreported as the official data does not include deaths of patients suspected to have had coronavirus, but who were not tested. In fact, with only 200 tests per 1 million people, Indonesia has the lowest testing rate in the region. The Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI) has projected that the death toll from COVID-19 is likely to be double the official figure.

Line of command

This reveals the country's extreme lack of hard and soft health infrastructure to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. The lack of reliable data and information is a huge challenge for the government. Initially, the government's response to the crisis was very slow due to a lack of information, and its unpreparedness. This was exacerbated by an underestimation of the magnitude of the epidemic. Like many other governments, it does not have a coherent institutional response. Overall, we see a lack of clarity in protocols in responding to the epidemic, such as the line of command, in other words, who is in charge of doing what. The result is a series of blunders in the country's handling of the epidemic. Nevertheless, we also see the government learning from and fixing its previous mistakes. After declaring a public health emergency on 31 March, Jokowi instructed the implementation of stricter large-scale social and physical distancing measures within the community. Jokowi has also asked

the regional heads to coordinate their policies with the central and local governments. He specifically instructed the regional government not to implement a lockdown policy without coordinating with the central government.

It is noteworthy that Jokowi has resisted the demand to lock-down the country, citing concern about the serious social and economic implications of such a measure. While several countries have done so, lockdown is viewed as problematic in an economy with a large informal sector like Indonesia. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, of 126.5 million people working in Indonesia, 71 million (56 per cent) work in the informal sector. Many of these people cannot afford to stay at home as they live on a day-to-day basis, for example, ojek (motorcycle taxi) drivers, street cart operators, and informal carpark attendants. However, as the number of infected people and fatalities increases, the government is forced to take stricter measures to control people's movement.

On 21 April, Jokowi announced the government's decision to forbid Idul Fitri mudik to curb the spread of COVID-19 ahead of Ramadan. Traditionally, during Ramadan, some 20 million people from Greater Jakarta, the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia, travel to their hometowns to celebrate Idul Fitri. If enforced effectively, this travel ban will avoid further spread of COVID-19 on Java, an island of 141 million people, where many regions have far worse healthcare systems than Jakarta. To keep people from traveling back to their hometown, the government needs to prepare social assistance to support their incomes. In view of this, Jokowi has announced various social safety-net programmes to help the poor and most vulnerable groups. This includes expanding the cash transfer programme through the *Program Keluarga Harapan* [Family Hope Programme] by providing cash transfers to support around 10 million poor families. Besides, the government will also expand the food card programme [*kartu sembako*] to help around 20 million to get their food staples.

To help the informal workers, laid-off workers, and people who work in small-micro businesses that have been affected by the pandemic, the government has implemented a new pre-employment card programme in April. It aims to support around 5.6 million jobseekers in the form of training for up to six months. Also, the government has decided to provide free electricity for 24 million low-income households and to give a 50 per cent discount on tariffs for 7 million middle-income households for the next three months. Overall, the government has budgeted an additional IDR 405 trillion (USD 25 billion), about 16 per cent of the total national budget for 2020, to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. A quarter of the allocated budget is for financing various social protection programmes described above. An additional fund of IDR 75 trillion (USD 4.6 billion) will be allocated to the health budget. About IDR 70 trillion (USD 4.3 billion) is allocated to support SMEs and small-scale credit holders. The government has also set up an IDR 25 trillion (USD 1.5 billion) contingency fund to anticipate an increase in demand for basic staples.

Going forward

The government needs to accelerate mass testing and conduct more aggressive tracing. This is particularly important as many people have left Jakarta, the epicenter of the pandemic, to travel to other cities. In late March, it was reported that around 14,000 people from the greater Jakarta area travelled to West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java, ignoring the government's appeal to stay put. Looking ahead, there are at least three big challenges for the government to overcome. First, it needs to quickly and effectively roll out the social safety-net programmes simultaneously. It needs a credible targeting mechanism supported by accurate data of the beneficiaries, such as informal workers and daily workers who are entitled to get financial supports.

Alas, the data remains fragmented and often unavailable. It is a challenge to collect information on the most affected groups, such as petty traders, factory workers, construction workers, cleaners, daily workers, and ride-hailing drivers. The next issue to tackle is how to distribute the support to these affected people. According to the Financial Service Authority (OJK), 51 per cent of the adult population does not have a bank account. Second, within a decentralized system, the challenge

is often about the complex coordination between the central government and local government, and between different local governments. Jokowi has asked the regional heads to coordinate their policies with the central and local governments. Several regional heads, such as Tegal, in Central Java, and Tasikmalaya, in West Java, have taken the initiative to lockdown their respective cities from 30 March until 31 July without consulting the central government. On this issue, Jokowi has warned that all policies in the regions must comply with national regulations. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen if regional heads will do so.

Third, the capacity of the state and regional institutions to carry out the programmes is mixed if not lacking. The country lacks a good governance and monitoring system for implementing social-assistance programmes. The risk of corruption or cooptation remains high and needs close monitoring with the help of civil society. There is a need to minimize the risk of elite-capture as it is common that social programmes are used by regional heads for their political interests. The authorities, especially the police, need to ensure public order and security. They cannot rule out the potential risk of social unrest if people who are losing their jobs do not obtain the social assistance promised by the government.

Finally, the government's capacity to provide social safety nets for the poor and the vulnerable group is limited. As such, public participation and support are critical. We have seen rising community efforts to promote social solidarity and help the poor and the vulnerable. As of 31 March, the national COVID-19 special taskforce reported having received financial contributions of around 80 billion rupiah from the public to support government assistance programmes. There are also other community or religious organizations, as well as individuals, contributing separately through other channels. Moreover, around 15,000 higher-education students from all over the country have been volunteering to support government mitigation programmes. The capacity and resilience of Indonesia's government and society, like in many other countries, are being severely tested. We can only hope that Indonesia will pull through this uncertain and difficult time.

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Above: Philippines, April 2020. Image Asian Development Bank on Flickr, Creative Commons licence.

Cambodia and Laos receive most of their investment and aid from China, and a marked growth slowdown in China will affect them the most. A slowdown in the Plus Three countries will affect investment flows in the region as a whole.[7] The Philippines and Mekong countries have large overseas foreign worker populations and restrictions on their movement or employment prospects as borders close will affect sending and receiving countries. Brunei and Malaysia are net oil exporters and the price war indirectly induced by the pandemic will hit them hard. Others will benefit from lower oil prices, as will the struggling transport sector.

Assessing the assessments

In measuring the impacts of COVID-19, it is important to separate its marginal impact from observed outcomes. This is important because the remedy may vary depending on the cause of the disruption. This requires an analytical framework that can measure deviations from a baseline scenario that incorporates pre-existing trends. A model-based analysis, rather than casual empiricism, is required to reduce the problem. In addition, what is explicitly modelled and what is assumed, and what those assumptions are, need to be considered in understanding differences in projections.

Even before the outbreak, risks of a global growth slowdown were rising. The restructuring of regional supply chains had started, driven initially by rising wages in

China and accelerated by the US–China trade war.[8] While COVID-19 may further hasten the pace and extent of the restructuring, it is only partly responsible for what may happen. It would be misleading to attribute all of the current disruption to COVID-19. Had the trade war not preceded it, COVID-19 may have resulted in greater disruption to supply chains. Any assessment of impacts must recognise that the spread of COVID-19 is unpredictable, and so too the response by governments. It is difficult to estimate the impacts of a shock that is uncertain in itself. This reiterates the need for rigorous modelling and scenario analyses.[9] The current trend points to risks rising, often accelerating, as with previous epidemics. This uncertainty underscores the need for caution in assessing, and regular recalibration in producing assessments.

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Notes

1 https://tinyurl.com/EAF04032020
2 https://tinyurl.com/wts2019ch8
3 https://tinyurl.com/IDEpolbrief10
4 https://tinyurl.com/EAF23042020
5 https://tinyurl.com/MBIboost
6 https://tinyurl.com/statista2010-2019
7 https://tinyurl.com/EAF13032020
8 https://tinyurl.com/EAF09102019
9 https://tinyurl.com/stockheadcovid

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COVID-19 in Malaysia: impact on the poor

Serina Rahman

Above: COVID-19 screening at UNIMAS City Campus. UNIMAS's joint efforts with the State Government and the Ministry of Health have assisted in the ongoing process of screening COVID-19.
Image Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Malaysia on Flickr, Creative Commons licence.

In Malaysia's battle to contain COVID-19, a Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented to contain the spread of the virus by keeping most people at home. The MCO prevents travel of more than 10km from one's residence. In the first three phases of the MCO (18 March-28 April 2020), only one member of the family was able to leave the house in an emergency or to buy groceries, food or medicine, with only one person allowed in a car at a time. In the following phases, these restrictions are being eased, with two people from the same family allowed to travel together, but distance restrictions remain in place with a few exceptions. Roadblocks have been set up along many major roads across the country, manned by police and the army, requiring travellers to explain one's reasons for being on the road.

Only businesses or services deemed essential are allowed to remain open, such as banks, selected restaurants, pharmacies and supermarkets. Those that open run on a skeletal staff. The rest of the employees are often told to take no-pay leave. In some cases, jobs are simply terminated. Some industries and factories have also been forced to close for at least part of the MCO duration, if not throughout the entire period. Some companies have since totally closed down, leaving countless daily-paid and part-time workers suddenly unemployed. There is little avenue for recourse when they are terminated as a result of MCO restrictions.

There is little understanding of the impacts of these harsh, albeit necessary, restrictions on the poor. Most jobs held by Malaysia's bottom 40 per cent (B40) require their physical presence and cannot be done from home. Roadside food stalls and pop-up morning markets, often a mainstay of the poorest population's income, have been ordered shut. These shops also normally enable the poor to purchase food and other necessities at lower prices than in the supermarkets. Rural farmers and fishermen who continue to work find that

there are no buyers, as factories, restaurants and markets are closed. Stopping work is not an option for the farmers and fishermen as they live hand-to-mouth on a daily basis. In times of pandemic, when perhaps others in their family have lost their jobs, theirs is the only hope that they might be able to scratch together some income with which to buy non-agricultural necessities such as diapers and milk powder.

In the deep interior and highlands, indigenous people would ordinarily be able to survive, as their existence is usually isolated and dependent on wild food sources. But many forests that have been a lifeline for generations have been logged and cleared for plantations, industry or development; both food sources and forest medicines that could cure illnesses are gone. At the same time, rubber and oil palm middlemen are no longer collecting supplies. These are the few trades that the indigenous people now depend on. Their limited ability to buy provisions is further reduced and financial aid that NGOs may have banked into their accounts is inaccessible as most are at least an hour and many roadblocks away from a bank.

While the urban poor are closer to banking facilities and convenience stores, they too suffer. Most are daily-paid workers in blue-collar jobs or menial labour; many have since lost jobs. Those still employed but dependent on public transportation suffer from restrictions imposed on buses and trains. Those without their own vehicles are stranded as taxis are beyond their limited budget. The urban poor do not have wild sources of food or space for home gardens. They are entirely dependent on store-bought sources and have no alternative when they run out of cash. While myriad permutations of government aid were given out before and during the pandemic, amounts and disbursements vary. A 2018 study by the Khazanah Research Institute reported that on average, B40 households only had RM76 (USD17) in post-expenses disposable income every month.

Amongst the poor, there is little understanding of health, sanitation or the severity of COVID-19. Many live in physically compact communities and for the urban poor, in tiny apartments. It may not be tolerable for them to stay indoors when there are often many generations inhabiting a small confined space. A lack of refrigeration in many homes means they are unable to purchase a week's supply of food, even if they were able to afford to do so. Food delivery services are unlikely to be accessible or affordable. NGOs and social workers scrambling to get food and supplies to the poor, elderly, disabled and shelters, were initially advised to leave the provision of assistance to official government agencies. There was no clarity on where donated goods or aid would go, nor whether the established networks of the needy would get the supplies that they desperately need. Since then, the government has allowed NGOs to distribute food and provisions, but there are countless bureaucratic and impractical obstacles to overcome. On many occasions, government agencies have asked NGOs for aid and manpower.

While there were several measures announced to reduce the burden on the poor, most do not know how to access them, and many are not registered with the mechanisms through which aid is disbursed. Announcements that allay immediate pressures of public housing rental, loans and utilities are merely temporary. Once the MCO is lifted, multiple obligations will return with a vengeance, but jobs and income opportunities are not guaranteed. While it is vital to stop the spread of the virus, the lack of considered assistance to those on the edges means that many will suffer not just the possibility of contracting the virus, but increased difficulties in meeting the most basic of needs.

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Manifestations and targets of panic vigilantism due to Covid-19 in Myanmar

Nyi Nyi Kyaw

Panic precedes, accompanies, or follows grave political, economic, cultural, and public health crises. Reading about and seeing pictures of the global COVID-19 health crisis in neighbouring and faraway countries, the people of Myanmar simply could not believe that the coronavirus had not been detected in the country until February and March 2020. They felt that it would only be a matter of days or weeks until it was detected, and thus their panic was months in the making. Myanmar eventually announced the first two cases on 23 March. By 4 May Myanmar had 161 cases of infection, six of whom died. Since then, panic has turned several people in Myanmar not only into frenzied shoppers but also into vigilantes against people they 'believe' are currently or potentially infected with the coronavirus.

Different manifestations of panic

Panic can develop even before a crisis materializes, only to grow once it occurs. In the evening of 12 March, rumour spread in Myanmar that a patient at the Yangon General Hospital — Myanmar's biggest and best public hospital — had tested positive for COVID-19. Because of news, pictures and videos of infection, deaths, lockdowns, and panic-buying elsewhere in the world, Myanmar people immediately flocked to the malls and markets and stocked food items, household essentials, and medicine. When the government eventually announced the first cases on 23 March, people responded with more panic buying. Manufacturers and mall-owners quickly announced that there was sufficient stock for all. In a televised speech on 24 March, State Counsellor and de facto leader of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi guaranteed a continued food supply, and

warned that "panic buying just makes more people infected with the virus."[1] Generally, panic buying may lead to temporary shortages of goods. If it continues for an extended period, supply chains will have to be dealt with. When these are maintained, accompanied by restrictions on shopping, panic buying reduces.

However, more disturbing social and racial, or even racist, forms of panic have occurred recently. Numerous reports of panic-stricken people racially targeting and verbally or physically abusing Chinese people or those whom they think are Chinese, have emerged all over the world. Though somewhat understandable psychologically, such panic can be socially destabilising. People or communities may turn 'excessively' or 'extremely' vigilant. Such panic vigilantism has also been witnessed in Myanmar in recent months, and it has targeted a range of people – from Chinese workers, to returnees from foreign countries such as Thailand, to healthcare providers or frontline workers at hospitals and quarantine facilities, to even domestic returnees or travellers from COVID-19-infected places.

Different targets of panic

Since the first detected cases of COVID-19 originated in Wuhan, Myanmar vigilantes' first targets were Chinese workers at Myanmar factories owned by investors from China. On 31 January 2020, Myanmar workers refused to work after the Chinese company Myanmar Wanbao Mining Copper allowed its assistant manager, a Chinese national, to return from China to the Letpadaung Copper Mine in Sagaing Region. A Myanmar workers' representative said, "We are not entering the workplace if he doesn't leave".[2] Because the crisis coincided with Chinese New Year holidays, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar, Myanmar's largest workers'

association, said that they were 'watching' the outflow and inflow of Chinese workers.[3] Two Chinese nationals working at a factory in Chaung-U township, Sagaing Region were isolated on their return from a visa run to China on 19 March; the factory was closed for ten days.[4] Such cases of early panic vigilantism were generally settled without incident.

Then the targets shifted to Myanmar workers returning from Thailand, which is home to approximate 4 million Myanmar migrants. Overwhelmed by the sheer influx of returnees and the lack of government quarantine facilities, authorities on the border had no choice but to ask those returnees – who were asymptomatic – to self-isolate at their homes. Health and Sports Minister Myint Htwe's comment, reportedly made at a ministerial meeting on 27 March,[5] that those who could not tolerate a two-week quarantine away from their families might even face permanent separation, that is death. This only added to the sense of alarm. By the end of March, some 23,000 workers had returned home. Health and Sports Minister Myint Htwe, again, announced on 29 March that a big wave of infection was imminent from the wave of returnees.[6] By 31 March, Myanmar had 15 diagnosed cases, two of which had returned from or visited Thailand, only further inflaming the health minister's alarmist warning.

Panic vigilantism in Myanmar has occurred online and offline; offline and online naming and shaming are mutually reinforcing. Online 'keyboard vigilantes' on Facebook – the most popular social media platform in Myanmar – took to naming and shaming returnees, when reports (both online and offline) circulated of workers giving incorrect addresses, using 'brokers' to jump the border and bribing the authorities. Information about an unknown number of untraceable workers disappearing into the woodwork after arriving home and about some of them flouting quarantine restrictions was spread by mainstream media and individuals. On 31 March, Myanmar suspended the border crossing between Thailand and Myanmar, thereby temporarily stopping anti-returnee vigilantism. But estimating that up to 100,000 Myanmar migrant workers abroad would return if able, Aung San Suu Kyi said on 30 April, "we (Myanmar) must accept all returnees".[7]

These returnees are now on their way by land, not just from Thailand but also from China, and by air from Asian countries including Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore. Numerous villages and towns have refused to house returnees in quarantine facilities in their environs or to receive returnees or travellers from Yangon — the epicentre of the outbreak in Myanmar. A most unfortunate form of panic-induced vigilantism or discrimination has also been seen in cities such as Mandalay and Yangon. Some landlords have evicted healthcare providers and frontline workers, instead of valuing their work. The last target is patients themselves, making a Ministry of Health and Sports spokesperson defend them in the following way, "The patients who have tested positive are humans, too. They have been infected accidentally and we should be kind to them".[8]

Is this the end of the world?

All these instances of vigilantism and discrimination are serious social problems to be tackled. Some would say they are temporary and will go way once the crisis is over. But some discrimination may linger, because namers, shamers, vigilantes, and discriminators in Myanmar or elsewhere may now feel emboldened to say and do whatever they like under the pretext of promoting public health.

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Notes

1 Myanmar Times, https://tinyurl.com/MT24032020
2 The Standard Time, https://tinyurl.com/SD02022020
3 DVB, https://tinyurl.com/DVB10022020
4 News Eleven, https://tinyurl.com/eleven22032020
5 The Voice Journal, https://tinyurl.com/voice28032020
6 The Irrawaddy, https://tinyurl.com/IW30032020
7 The Irrawaddy, https://tinyurl.com/IW30042020
8 Frontier, https://tinyurl.com/frontier04052020

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Things on the move

Material culture and connectivity in ancient China

Fan ZHANG

Objects move, sometimes across cultural boundaries. They travel as tributes, commodities, and military booties. In this issue's 'China Connections', we explore how things perform as active agents, linking China and its outside world from the Bronze Age to the premodern era. Writing about the transcultural biography of things, essays in this section invite readers to reconsider the connectivity of the ancient world via various routes, including but not limited to the Silk Road. Coming from different disciplinary backgrounds, contributors to this issue demonstrate the potential of material culture studies as an interdisciplinary field that integrates art history, history, and archaeology.

Following chronological order, five essays outline a broad picture of transcultural exchange in the premodern Eurasian continent through the lens of objects. Each essay highlights a particular artifact; these objects are the witnesses, products, and agents of the cross-cultural interaction happening at varied levels and in diverse forms, such as trade, tribute, and pilgrimage. By tracing the movement of things, we interrogate the routes and networks that meshed together cultures in different parts of Eurasia. A diachronic survey shows that while the early transcultural connections were mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adopted and adapted in the local contexts.

Objects are the embodiment of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transcultural scale. Artifacts featured in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronze, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of our current era of globalization.

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Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

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The bronze mirror has long been viewed as a quintessentially ´Chinese´ object. However, the earliest mirrors discovered in the Central Plain are likely to have been imported exotica. This article draws attention to the geometric mirrors retrieved from Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. It argues that the style of the Anyang mirrors originated from the northwest borderland. Recent archaeological discoveries from the Inner Asian frontier further suggest that the early mirrors with geometric designs were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE.

Later literary sources, such as the seventh-century fiction Record of an Ancient Mirror [Gujing ji 古鏡記], often ascribed the invention of the Chinese mirror to the legendary Yellow Emperor in antiquity. However, actual mirrors made of bronze did not emerge in the Central Plain until the Late Shang period during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. So far, only six mirrors (fig.1) have been unearthed from three tombs at the Late Shang capital Anyang, from which more than two thousand bronze vessels have been unearthed. Fu Hao, the female general and consort of King Wu Ding (c. r. 1324-1266 BCE), owned four of the six mirrors. The fifth mirror belonged to a low-ranking elite (Dasikongcun Tomb 25), while the last piece was associated with a burial of six human victims (Xibeigang Tomb 1005) accompanying the royal cemetery. Because of their scarcity and random social distribution, these mirrors were hardly status markers, but personal exotic items occasionally acquired from the outer world.

These six Anyang mirrors are decorated with simple and somewhat crude thread relief, in stark contrast to the ornate, multi-layered zoomorphic décor on contemporary bronze vessels. The mirror décor can be classified into two subgroups: one is comprised of concentric rings, sometimes filled with short lines; the other is divided into quadrants filled with parallel lines. Producing a small, circular disc with thread relief would require only two halved molds, much more straightforward than the sophisticated piece-mold casting technique already mastered by the Shang casters. The stylistic and technical distinctions between the Anyang mirrors and their contemporary bronze vessels suggest that the former were imported from elsewhere.

As archaeological excavations in recent decades reveal, the two subtypes of geometric mirrors that predate the Anyang specimens already emerged in northwest China, including the two mirrors with radial triangles uncovered from the sites of the Late Neolithic Qijia Culture (2300-1700 BCE) in eastern Qinghai (Guinan; fig.2-1) and western Gansu (Linxia) as well as the three antecedents with radiating lines arranged in concentric rings found in Hami, eastern Xinjiang, dated from the nineteenth to the thirteenth centuries BCE (fig.2-2). The early evidence indicates the origin of the geometric mirror style in the northwestern periphery of present-day China.[1]

Rather than a direct long-distance movement across an area of several thousand kilometers, the transmission of geometric mirrors from the Inner Asian frontier to Anyang was likely an indirect process (fig.3). Several mirrors with radiating lines arranged in concentric circles, including three chance finds in Qinghai and Gansu and one specimen scientifically excavated from western Shaanxi, indicate the western route. Meanwhile, the steppe route seems equally possible. Archaeologists have reported at least four chance finds of analogous mirrors in the Ordos region of Inner Mongolia. The geometric mirror style traveled further east through southern Liaoning and northern Hebei before finally reaching the Shang territory. The most noticeable are the two mirrors (fi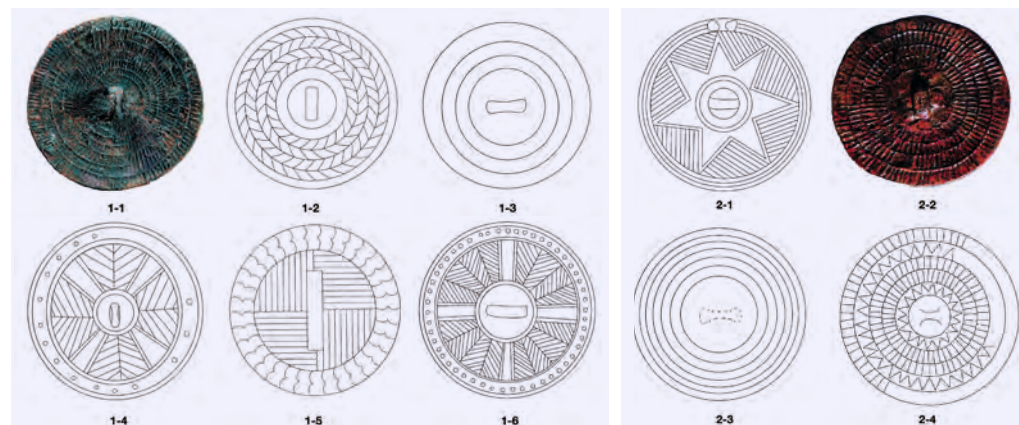gs. 2-3, 2-4) recently unearthed from a Late Shang tomb (Houqianyi Tomb 4) in Luanxian, Hebei,[2] whose owner, a local male elite, had direct access to bronze objects from both the Shang and the northern frontier. The geometric mirrors were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE, even though they remained occasional and failed to stimulate Shang artisans to cast their own mirrors.

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Fig. 1(above left) 1-1, 1-2, 1-4, 1-6: Mirrors from Yinxu tomb 5, Anyang, Henan, ca. 13th-12th centuries BCE. After Li Jaang. 2011. 'Long-Distance Interactions as Reflected in the Earliest Chinese Bronze Mirrors', in von Falkenhausen, L. & Brashier K. E. (eds) The Lloyd Cotsen Study Collection of Chinese Bronze Mirrors, Volume II, Studies. Los Angeles: Cotsen Occasional Press, UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, pp.40-41.
Fig. 1-5: Mirror from Houjiazhuang tomb 1005, Anyang, ca. 13th-12th centuries BCE. After Kong Xiangxing & Liu Yiman. 1992. Zhongguo gudai tongjing 中國古代銅鏡. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, p.14.
Fig. 1-3: Mirror from Dasikong tomb 25, Anyang, ca. 13th-12th centuries BCE. After Zhongguo shehuikexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo Anyang gongzuodui. 1989. '1986 nian Anyang Dasikongcun nandi de liangzuo Yinmu' 1986 年安陽大司空村南地的兩座殷墓, Kaogu 7:596. Tracings by Doris Yixuan Tang.

Fig. 2 (above right) 2-1: Mirror from Gamatai tomb 25, Guinan, Qinghai, 2300-1700 BCE. After Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji bianji weiyuanhui (ed.) 1998. Zhongguo qingtongqi quanji:di juan 16中國青銅器全集: 第16卷. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, p.1. fig. 2-2: Mirror from Hami, Xinjiang, 19th-13th centuries BCE. After Hami bowuguan (ed.) 2013. Hami wenwu jingcui 哈密

文物精粹. Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, p.89. fig. 2-3, 2-4: Mirrors from Houqianyi tomb 4, Luanxian, Hebei, 13th-11th centuries BCE. After Houqianyi yizhi kaogu fajue baogao ji Jidong diqu kaoguxue wenhua yanjiu, p.40. Tracings by Doris Yixuan Tang.

Fig. 3, (below): Geographic distribution of mirrors with geometric patterns in early China. Courtesy of Yanlong Guo.

Notes

1 Some scholars have proposed that this type of mirror may have originated in Southern Siberia or Central Asia during the late third millennium BCE. For example, Juliano, A. 1985. 'Possible Origins of The Chinese Mirror', Notes in the History of Art 4.2/3:36-45. But none of the early mirrors found in the two regions exhibit the geometric patterns.
2 Zhang Wenrui and Zhai Liangfu. 2016. Houqianyi yizhi kaogu fajue baogao ji Jidong diqu kaoguxue wenhua yanjiu 後遷義遺址考古發掘報告及冀東地區考古學文化研究. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, pp.175-177.

Tracing the exotica: Sasanian glassware in Inner Mongolia

Maliya AIHAITI

Fig.1: Glass bowl from the M1 Tomb (e), gilded necklet (f) and its inlaid glass sherds (a, b, c, d) from the M3 Tomb, Yihe-Nur Cemetery, Zhengxiangbai Banner, Xilingol League, Inner Mongolia, China. Fig.2: Glass bottle and its bulbous cap, Qilicun M20 Tomb, Datong, Shanxi, China. Fig.3: Glass ewer and glass bowl, Hwangnam Daechong Mausoleum, Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea.

From 2010 to 2014, a group of burials dated to the late fifth and early sixth centuries were excavated at Yihe-Nur, Inner Mongolia. This excavation yielded a number of exotic objects, including a sapphire blue glass bowl from Tomb 1 and a gilded necklet inlaid with pieces of glass from Tomb 3. Our compositional analysis using a non-invasive XRF analyzer shows that these glass objects are Sasanian plant-ash glass. This new discovery, together with the findings of the Sasanian plant-ash glassware from Datong (China) and Gyeongju (South Korea) provided crucial evidence to map out the spread of Sasanian glass along the Silk Road during the early medieval period.

In 2010, five burials dating to the Northern Wei period (386-534 CE) were discovered at Yihe-Nur, Zhengxiangbai Banner, Xilingol League, Inner Mongolia.[1] Despite tomb robberies, the archaeological team managed to retrieve some magnificent burial goods, including a sapphire blue glass bowl and a gilded necklet inlaid with glass shards (fig.1) among other luxury items. In January 2017, we collaborated with the Xilingol Museum to conduct a compositional analysis of the excavated glass products using the non-invasive Thermal Scientific Niton XL3t GOLDD+XRF Analyzer. The three samples we analyzed were the sapphire blue glass bowl from M1 and two light blue glass shards on the necklet from M3. The test showed that the proportion of potassium oxide (K2O) ranges from 2.39-2.88% in the blue-glass bowl, and is about 2% in the light blue glass shards of the gilded necklet. According to the study by Robert H. Brill at the Corning Glass Museum, ancient glass that contains potassium oxide between 2% and 4% belongs to Sasanian plant-ash glass.[2] The three samples we tested all fall into this category.

Sasanian plant-ash glassware was also found in Pingcheng, the Northern Wei capital and modern-day city of Datong, Shanxi Province. The blue glass bottle with a bulbous cap (fig.2), excavated from Qilicun M20 Tomb, contains a proportion of 3.26% potassium oxide, suggesting it is Sasanian plant-ash glass.[3] In addition to archaeological findings from China, the Korean Peninsula unearthed Sasanian plant-ash glass as well. The glass bowl and ewer (fig.3) recovered from the fifth century Hwangnam Daechong Mausoleum located in the city of Gyeongju (Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea) have long been identified as either Roman glassware or local production due to stylistic features. But the recent compositional analysis by Korean scholars revealed that both the glass bowl and the ewer are Sasanian plant-ash glass, since they contain 3.9% K2O.[4]

The discoveries of Sasanian plant-ash glass in Northern China and Korea is likely related to commercial and diplomatic exchanges during the Northern Wei Dynasty. *Wei Shu*, the dynastic history of the Northern Wei, mentions that merchants from Yuezhi brought glassware and the technique of making glass to Pingcheng. In the middle of the 5th century, the Goguryeo kingdom sent envoys to the Northern Wei court for the first time followed by more frequent tributary missions. It is possible that Sasanian glassware discovered in China and Korea was brought by Central Asian merchants to the Northern Wei court at Pingcheng and then transmitted to Inner Mongolia and the Korean peninsula.

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Notes

1 Chen Yongzhi et al. 2016. 'The Results of the Excavation of the Yihe-Nur Cemetery in Zhengxiangbai Banner (2012-2014)', *The Silk Road* 14:42-57.

2 Brill, R.H. 2005. 'Chemical Analyses of Some Sasanian Glass form Iraq', in Whitehouse, D. (ed.) *Sasanian and Post-Sasanian Glass in The Corning Museum of Glass*, Appendix 2, pp.65-96.

3 An Jiayao & Liu Junxi. 2015. 'Northern Wei Glassware in the Datong Region 大同地區的北魏玻璃器', in Yungang Research Institute (ed.) *Pingcheng Silu* 平城絲路. Qingdao: Qingdao chubanshe, pp.352-353.

4 Min Jeong Koh et al. 2012. 'Comparison in Characteristics of Chemical Composition of Glass Vessels Excavated from Neungsalli Temple in Buyeo, Korea, from Baekje Period', *Bulletin Korean Chemical Society* 33(12):4157, Table 2.

Making the sacred: relics and reliquaries in medieval China

YU Wei

Buddhist relics [*sārira*] are believed to be the physical remains of Buddha's body after his death [*Parinirvāṇa*] and cremation. Reliquaries, containers of relics, to a certain extent signify the existence of relics and act as the physical embodiment of relics that are hidden inside. The practice of venerating Buddhist relics has been commonly observed across Asia in history. This essay focuses on Buddhist reliquaries and practices of relic veneration in medieval China. Adopting a cross-disciplinary approach that combines art history, Buddhology, and history, my research hopes to shed more light on how reliquaries and relic veneration rituals are tied to the viewers, the political power, and the city space in medieval China.

The practice of venerating Buddhist relics first appeared in India, and later spread to Central Asia, and then to China. Our current understanding of the relic veneration ritual, by and large, depends on

Fig. 1: Stone reliquary, Lantian County, Shaanxi Province. After Taipei Lishi bowuguan bianji Weiyuanhui. 2010. *Shengshi huangchao mibao: Famensi digong yu dating wenwu tezhan* 盛世皇朝秘寶：法門寺地宮與大唐文物特展. Taipei: Taipei lishi bowuguan, p.198.

the archaeological discovery of reliquaries. Relic containers found in India, mainly made of stone or crystal, usually consist of a round bowl and a cover with a knot. Their decoration is relatively simple, featuring several circles of rings around the body. Reliquaries from the Gandharan region are larger in number and more diversified in shape compared to the Indian reliquaries. One type of Gandharan reliquary that had a cylindrical body decorated with rings around the body later entered into China proper. But it did not take long before this style was replaced by the 'square-body and mansard roof-cover' form, which first appeared during the fifth century and was regarded as indigenous Chinese style. When Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty (r.581-604) distributed relics nationwide in the years 601 to 604, he also preferred the 'square-body and mansard roof-cover' as the standard form of reliquary. This form persisted into the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE) and was visible in the visual representation of relic distribution. The decoration of the reliquaries developed into a more complex scheme, such as the stone reliquary uncovered in Lantian County, Shaanxi Province (fig.1). While the form of the Lantian reliquary follows the Chinese tradition, its decoration speaks about connections with early Indian legends and Gandharan Buddhist art. Details of the images carved on four sides represent scenes not just from the Buddhist cannon, but also inspired by Buddhist encyclopedia.

The relic veneration ritual reveals the interaction between Central Asia and China as well. In the year 403, Monk Faxian observed a ritual ceremony of displaying relics when he visited the city of Hidda (醯羅城), in modern-day Afghanistan. He recorded that the king held a ceremony involving the display of Buddhist relics in a glass case, and the stupa that hosted the reliquary was opened regularly. The practice of exhibiting the relics on a regular base was also observable in Tang China, where relics were taken out from monasteries to be displayed every 30 years. On the Lantern Festival of 704, relics hosted at the Famen Temple were taken from the pagoda's underground palace to Tang's East Capital Luoyang. The Famen relics were juxtaposed with the Nine Tripods (*jiuding* 九鼎, the symbol of heavenly mandate) in the Bright Hall (*mingtang* 明堂, the symbolic supreme shrine). In this way, the Buddhist relics and reliquaries were staged and shown as a statement of the political power, which was comparable to the Nine Tripods. The ceremony of displaying relics at Tang's Western capital Chang'an engaged more with the general public. We can conclude that displaying the Buddhist relics was of paramount significance since it invoked religious enthusiasm among worshippers, built a close connection linking the sacred relics and the urban space, and created a visual tie between the religious power and the political supremacy.

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China Connections
Things on the move

Regional Editor
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Blue-and-white porcelain on Shangchuan Island: Chinese-Portuguese trade during the Ming dynasty

XIAO Dashun
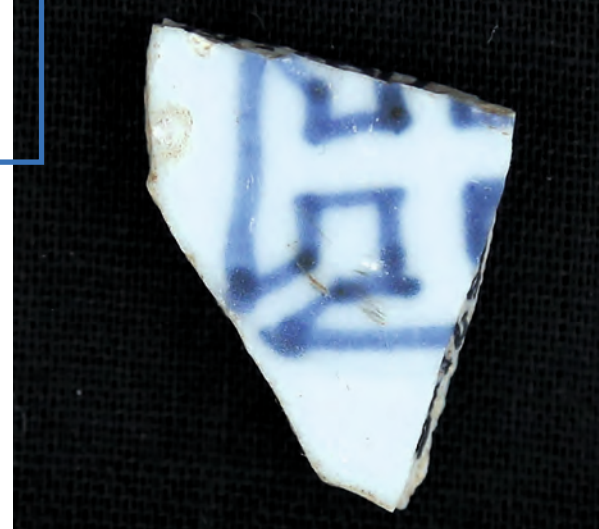

Fig.1 (above): Shangchuan Island, with the chapel attached to St. Francis Xavier' tomb on the left side. Courtesy of Guangdong Provincial Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology. Fig. 2 (left): Porcelain sherd decorated with Christ Cross, excavated from Shangchuan Island, Guangdong Province. Courtesy of Guangdong Provincial Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.

In 2016, the Guangdong Provincial Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology conducted a series of archaeological excavations and surveys on Shangchuan Island. The island (fig. 1), measuring 156.7 square kilometers, is one of the largest islands in the Pearl River Delta. It lies on the southern side of Guanghai Bay, about 9 kilometers off the south coast of Guangdong Province. Shangchuan Island is rich in natural harbors and has served as an important navigation mark for the maritime route since the Song dynasty. Cultural remains on the island can be traced as far back as the pre-Qin period. Our excavation carried out in 2016 was centered on Dazhou Bay; it unearthed a large number of blue-and-white porcelain pieces, the majority of which are export porcelain related to Portuguese trading activities along China's southeastern coast during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE).

These pottery sherds are fragments of bowls or plates. Features of the glaze and the paste, as well as the production technique, indicate these ceramics are products of Jingdezhen. Some of the sherds are inscribed with Chinese characters, including Da Ming Nian Zao 大明年製 [Produced during the years of the Great Ming] and Jia Jing Nian Zhi 嘉靖年製 [Made during the Jiajing reign], helping to date these remains to the 16th century. Most sherds are decorated with traditional Chinese patterns, such as flowers, clouds, and phoenix. Intriguingly, one piece of blue-and-white porcelain is painted with the Order of Christ Cross (fig. 2), the emblem of the historical Portuguese Order of Christ, thus testifying to the Portuguese and Catholic presence on the island. The discovery suggests that Shangchuan Island served as a transitional trading post for the Chinese-Portuguese trade before the Portuguese took Macao as their major settlement in 1557. After controlling the Malacca Strait, the Portuguese sailed through Southeast Asia to China with the help of the monsoon wind, seeking to establish connections with the Ming court. The Portuguese delegation paid their first official visit to China in 1517, followed by increasing trading and construction activities along the coast.

The blue-and-white porcelains were retrieved from a site near a chapel attached to St. Francis Xavier's cemetery. St. Francis Xavier, a Catholic missionary known for his extensive travels in Asia, arrived at Shangchuan Island in 1552, but died soon later in the same year. After St. Francis Xavier's visit, Shanghchuan island not only acted as a Chinese-Portuguese trading stronghold, but also became a bridge for the religious and cultural exchanges. The large quantity of recovered blue-and-white porcelain, and the Christ Cross found on the sherds, is an embodiment of the trading and religious network connecting the East and the West. In 1639, the Jesuits on Shangchuan Island were a tomb for the saint to mark the original burial site after the body was taken to Goa, the then capital of Portuguese India. From 1701 to 1864, Catholic activities on Shangchuan Island were largely restricted or even banned, and priests were expelled. After 1864, French Catholicism arrived on the island and continued St. Francis Xavier's mission.[1] The current chapel was sponsored by Bishop Guillemin between 1867 and 1869. Another Catholic Church in the Sunday Village south of St. Francis Xavier's chapel and a hilltop commercial monument showcase the later wave of Catholic presence.

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Notes

1 Davies, S. 2016. 'Achille-Antoine Hermitte's Surviving Building', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch 56:92-110.

Transnational exchange of metallic commodities during the Era of the Canton Trade

HUANG Chao

Fig. 1: A pair of candlesticks in the fluted pillar style, made of Chinese paktong but probably manufactured in Britain, ca. the late 18th century. Courtesy of HUANG Chao.

During the decades preceding the Qing empire's forced opening to the West in 1842, Canton (Guangzhou) was the only port open for foreign trade. The Sino-Western relations had mainly evolved around trades through Canton from 1700 to 1842, a period known as the 'Era of the Canton Trade'. Scholarship of the Canton Trade focuses mainly on the trade of tea, porcelain, and silk, yet the commercial exchange of precious and semi-precious metallic items has been largely ignored. During the 18th and 19th centuries, large quantities of manufactured goods made of silver, gold, tutenag, paktong, lead, tin, as well as the raw materials, were exported from Canton to Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Based on archival records, including journals and logbooks, and archaeological discoveries from shipwrecks, this essay examines the overlooked metallic items that embodied the commercial vitality and momentum of the transnational trade.

In 1684, the Qing court lifted the ban on maritime trade, reinitiating commercial exchanges with the outside world. Canton, located at the southeast tip of China's coastal line, gradually grew into one of the most important port cities of the 18th and 19th centuries, an era that witnessed the emergence of the transnational trading networks. The flourishing maritime trade left a rich body of materials that offers scholars the opportunity to look into every aspect of the Canton Trade, ranging from studies on companies and merchants to that of trading routes. The trading commodities have long been the subject to extensive research. However, most studies are concentrated on tea, silk, and porcelain. Metallic objects are largely ignored. In the second half of the 20th century, H.A. Crosby Forbes and his colleagues raised the awareness of export metallic artifacts through their breakthrough research into what was then termed 'Chinese export silver'.[1] Nevertheless, metallic commodities other than silver have yet to be studied systematically.

When conducting my post-doctoral project 'Trading Metals in Canton', in collaboration with Professor Paul A. Van Dyke, a renowned expert on the Canton Trade, I started to pay attention to the trade of gold with Spanish silver coins. Gold ingots were recovered from a number of shipwrecks, including the 'Nanking Cargo' in Amsterdam. These ingots are impressed with marks, such as yuanji 元記 that denotes the maker's name, and numerals such as shiliang 十两 that stands for weight and value.

Besides gold and silver, objects made of tutenag and paktong also constitute a significant portion of export metallic commodities. Tutenag is now widely accepted as zinc, thanks to the study by Alfred Bonin.[2] The 18th-century shipwrecks of the English East India Company uncovered tutenag items that were recorded as ballasts in the Company's journals and logs. Laboratory tests show that the composition of these tutenag items is comparatively pure zinc. Paktong, or 'white copper', a kind of copper-nickel or copper-nickel-zinc alloy, is usually made into candlesticks (fig.1). Not only were the paktong products exported to Europe, but the technique of manufacturing paktong items was also transmitted to the West, as demonstrated by some 18th century lab notebooks on paktong discovered in England and Sweden. Lead, tin, and iron were usually regarded as ballast cargoes or kentledge that were used to improve the ship's stability while sailing at sea. Commodities made of these metals were much smaller in scale. Pure copper was often imported from Japan to Canton by the European traders. Metallic commodities, though not a common topic of research, did play a significant role in the exchanges between China and the West. I hope this short essay can stimulate more interest in the transnational exchange of metallic commodities.

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Notes

1 Forbes, H. et al. 1975. Chinese Export Silver: 1785 to 1885. Massachusetts: Museum of the American China Trade.
2 Bonnin, A. 1924. Tutenag & Paktong, with Notes on Other Alloys in Domestic Use during the Eighteenth Century. Oxford University Press.

Retelling the neighbourhood

All cities and towns contain fragments of ecological and historic landscapes that are intimately linked to spaces of human residential and livelihood settlements. When the city or town is explored from the perspective of the people, a more humanistic understanding of the local emerges. The following articles are reflections from two 'Humanities across Borders (HaB)'-supported projects – 'Delhi Memory Archive' and 'From Forest to Town: Transformation of the Commons' – both carried out by the Centre for Community Knowledge (CCK) at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Although from two different perspectives, their shared attempt is to explore the various ways in which meanings and identities are associated with the neighbourhoods that make up a city or a town. These have been enriched by exchanges with other HaB projects. We warmly invite other scholars and practitioners to share with us their experience and understanding of 'neighbourhood' across all dynamic socio-cultural realities.

Above: Imitation of Stayfree sanitary pads sold at the Saturday Market. Photo by Shorbori Purkayastha.

Left: Vendor measuring spices in paper bags made of old newspaper. Photo by: Shorbori Purkayastha.

Sensing the layers: notes from a weekly market

Mesha Murali

I remember, as a teenager, reluctantly accompanying my mother to the weekly market in our neighbourhood in East Delhi every Thursday. In the evening, the usual shopping street would be taken over by street vendors selling clothes, artificial jewellery, utensils and miscellaneous household items and vegetables. The residents would tick items off their weekly shopping list. My mother would insist that we take our jute bags along to make it easier to bring home a week-worth of vegetables. To be sure, we weren't the only ones to stock-up for a week, and I would spot one or two, if not more, people dragging trolley bags or suitcases across the market.

Almost every neighbourhood in Delhi has a similar weekly market that acts as a one-stop shopping destination for the residents of nearby colonies. In the course of our fieldwork for the Neighbourhood Museum Project in 2014-15 and subsequent years, we developed the approach of reading the city and its people through neighbourhoods and sites such as weekly markets. While the site of my childhood memory is from a different neighbourhood, the Shadipur Shani Bazaar (Shadipur Saturday Market) is used in this article as a similar example, to explore how local voices and perceptions, however

small and commonplace, are important in understanding the complexities and multi-layered realities of a place.

More than the products sold there

The Shadipur Shani Bazaar is a large weekly informal market in XYZ block of Shadi-Khampur neighbourhood in West Delhi, India.[1] This weekly market is best known for its unstitched and stitched fabrics. Among its many customers are high-end boutique owners from West Delhi, who buy fabric and embellishments to accessorise their products. While some residents say that the market started around 1995-97, others remember its beginnings as a small cloth market in the late 1970s, to be discontinued and set-up again in the 90s. Today, this weekly market, like others, also has vendors selling food, spices, toys and knick-knacks. But it is much more than the products sold there. It is also a site where various interconnections between the city, neighbourhoods and its people are visible at the micro-level. These interconnections could be that of economic co-dependence between vendors and residents or of the power dynamics between genders in the market space.

An interesting way of observing these interconnections and relationships between people and place is through narratives and local walkabouts. In our walkabout, we noticed an exchange of money and a payment-slip between vendors and a group of men. During an interview with the market *pradhan* [organiser], we were told that each vendor selling at the weekly market is required to make a token payment, ranging from Rs 10-50 depending on the size of the stall. The *pradhan* uses a portion of the money collected to pay off the police while the rest goes to the local *Madrasa* [Islamic educational institution]. The *pradhan*, responsible for space management and for handling disputes at the market, provides access to the colony parks and streets where the vendors man their shops between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Since the streets are narrow, he also ensures that residents move their cars out every Saturday morning to make space for the stalls.

Visual observations such as these put together with narratives from people's memory and their experience of a place helped us understand the broader framework of how spaces within a city are managed and organised. Similarly, other sensorial observations or experiences, such as sounds, smells, touch and taste, also became

interesting tools in exploring the concepts of space, community, gender, identity and class aspirations, among others. These sensorial experiences are, however, not always independent of each other. It is when layered together that they reveal a holistic picture of the place and its people. To gain a meaningful and locally embedded understanding of a neighbourhood, it is important to go beyond the simplistic or literal meaning of the senses. For example, when we feel a texture or touch a person, the full experience of 'touch' is more than just a physical feeling.

Visuals of class aspirations

After a close look at a stall selling cosmetic products, one might very well spot a copy of some well-known brand. With brand imitation of everyday products such as sanitary napkins or make-up products, sold at low prices, this market primarily, but not exclusively, caters to customers from the middleclass who aspire to lead a certain lifestyle, as a marker of upward class mobility. In conversation, a local vendor stated that the daily soaps on TV also influence the demand for certain cosmetics. Female customers often ask for products sported by their favourite television actors. This makes the low-cost

weekly street markets a significant destination for imitation products. These products create distribution channels and establish an economic presence in society and also create local job opportunities.

Smells like home?

Filling the streets of the neighbourhood with mouth-watering aromas are food stalls selling meat, fish and vegetarian *chaat* (savoury bites of fruits or potatoes). Street vendors and customers alike visit these stalls to relish their delicacies. While most vendors prefer to save money and bring along their own food and water, some opt for the *tiffins* [lunchbox] of *dal chawal* (lentil and rice dish) or *rajma chawal* (kidney bean and rice dish) prepared at local stalls. The latter are generally migrants in search of a livelihood in the big city, without access to home-cooked meals. While studying a marketplace, such everyday negotiations of the workers are often overlooked. Details such as these give us a better understanding of who the service providers/receivers are in an informal market and from where they come.

When asked whether there had been any visible changes in the taste preferences of the customers, a resident of Shadipur told us, "You now get *sambar* (a type of South Indian curry) packets and all kinds of South Indian vegetables… we get a packet of mixed cut vegetables for *sambar* at Rs 30…". As the neighbourhood saw an increased influx of people from South India, especially Kerala, the market introduced new products and staples to cater to this specific demographic. Interpersonal relationships, in which the vendors know their customers, are important aspects on which such informal markets thrive. To know what will sell, one needs to know to whom one is selling. These patterns of consumption not only hint towards a changing demographic in the neighbourhood, but also illustrate the various economic flows in the market that connect people and food.

Multi-layered reality

Reading a place becomes more meaningful when we also take note of what is absent. What is it that is missing that one might find in other similar places? Easiest to notice are the visual absences. The Shadipur Saturday market barely has any female vendors, even though such markets are essential for the women who manage the household. The few female vendors shared that the lack of local contacts and inadequate facilities such as toilets were reasons that discouraged participation. Unlike male vendors, the female vendors didn't have an extensive network of already established vendors that made it easier to find a place in the market. While the male vendors can access the public toilets located just outside the colony, the women either have to hold it till they return home or rely on a resident to be kind enough to let them use their toilet. Taking note of such absences and using them as cues for exploration helps to unravel issues of infrastructure and space management and the ways in which they add to the gendering of spaces.

My memory of being dragged to the weekly market is now grounded in a larger perspective. The above exploration attempts to break away from stereotypes of city neighbourhoods by researching local histories, stories and places relevant to life within a community. Studying the flow of people, livelihoods, goods and commerce in Shadi-Khampur brings forth the multi-layered reality of the everyday, which usually tends to be ignored in the imaginings of the city space. The neighbourhood thus becomes a site of exploring micro-histories of living in a city and how places evolve to accommodate the changing needs and lifestyle of its residents. Using such sensorial experiences (not limited to those mentioned above) as tools of observation and exploration can help draw our attention to the complexities and nuances of everyday realities that are sometimes missed in research on neighbourhoods guided by abstract concepts alone.

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Below: Artisan Kamlabai Banskar stitches a basket, Ayodhya Basti, Pipariya, 2017, Photo from CCK archives.

Reading the silences: unheard stories of a town

Kumar Unnayan

The growing urbanisation in India has witnessed an exponential increase in census towns over the past few decades. Amidst the country's rapidly changing forest and farm landscapes, the rising townships are important sites of understanding everyday social mobilities at a local and microscopic level. The understanding of place-specific narratives in such settlements presents us with the opportunity to assemble a public-centric, multi-dimensional account of mobilities that draws upon the archives of orality and memory. A pool of local narratives can sometimes "reveal lesser-known stories of a place and have the possibility of disturbing meta-narratives with their access to alternative strands of knowledge."[2]

Beginning in 2017, the research project 'From Forest to Town: Narratives of Transformation of the Commons' aimed to look at the lived experiences of the local residents in one such town through first-hand oral narratives. The narratives were placed within an arena of tension and struggles of several local communities and the interconnectedness of their socio-cultural heritage. They are as much marked by a sense of resilience as by conflict. As private and public memories come together, a non-linear story of everyday negotiations unfolds around mobilities vis-à-vis power relations, caste hierarchies and local information networks.

A bustling new town

Pipariya in Madhya Pradesh, India, lies along the east-west cross country railway line at a wide point in the Narmada valley. Long-time residents often retrace the town's origins to the linking of Jabalpur-Itarsi section (March 1870) on the Bombay-Calcutta railway line in the colonial era. As a railhead brimming with avenues of trade and commerce, it didn't take very long for the then hamlet of Pipariya to attract people from the neighbouring villages and far-flung regions. The early Gond and Korku tribal inhabitants were soon joined by Goojar, Marwari, Kutchi, Sindhi, Barauaa, Borah, Jain, Irani, Kanjar, Mehtar, Basod and a number of other communities. Inevitably, the conjoined histories of the now bustling town emerge from the multiplicity of the diverse narratives of these groups.

In one of the recorded conversations, local pulse and oil trader Kishore Shah (83), a third-generation migrant businessman from Gujarat, iterated that, "in the early days, this town was synonymous with only the railway station. It still is". Railways are a significant marker in the quaint town's public history. But with more than two lakh registered voters, it has long ceased to be a mere railhead and is now a centre of a rapid growing agro-commercial economy. Pipariya assembles the agricultural and farm produce of the neighbouring villages. The in-flow of people from these villages is a familiar sight to the local populace. A fair share of small-scale vendors

flock to the town's daily/weekly bazaars to sell vegetables, fruits, spices, pickles, dry fruits, street-food, sugarcane juice, fish, broomsticks, toys, wood/bamboo paraphernalia and many other essential commodities. Many have lived on the outskirts for generations and aspire to find their feet within the urban epicentre. As he prepared the stall in the weekly Itwara bazaar, Radheyshyam Ahirwar (66) remarked, "I grew up in the nearby village of Gadaghat and worked as a farm-labourer in the fields of upper-castes. It's only after my son became a driver that we started selling vegetables. It pays better but not enough to live in the main town".

Living on the margins

While the quoted excerpt highlights a singular narrative, the equations between social strata and mobility become more apparent in the community narratives of the skilled bamboo artisans of Basod *samaaj*.[3] Munnalal Banskar (62), who was joined by other samaaj members as we spoke to him, recounted that many Basod families moved to the town from the nearby villages to escape the atrocities of upper castes. Concentrated at the Ripta Bridge, the families have been living on the town's peripheries for more than three decades. Bamboo products such as baskets, carpets, brooms, handheld fans, along with barrel-shaped drums, dot the sideways outside their huts. With insecure access to civic amenities, their unauthorised thatch roof huts are frequently bulldozed by the local authorities. The community's isolation is reflected in Munnalal's words, "[t]here is an old saying in our Bundeli language. 'Once you have had a taste of the village's water and the city's money, you can't forget either of them'. But we have been denied both. We were harassed in the village. The city has barely paid heed to us. We have lived here for so long. My daughter got married here. My grandchildren were born here. Yet we feel that we moved from one place only to become invisible in the other. Isn't this our home too?"

The Basods are one of the largest groups among the state's notified Scheduled Caste population, and most are also landless. Their experiences indicate how the local mobilities are regulated through the power relations and information networks of the upper as well as locally dominant caste groups. With no landholding of their own, a number of low-caste communities tackle the inequitable challenge of making a livelihood through such networks. The failure to become a part pushes them further to the margins of the local demographics. They are there but yet never noticed. At this juncture, community ethnographies that deal with the negotiation of the social fabric can operate from two tangents. While they counter the mainstream imaginations of a place/neighbourhood/community, they are also capable of becoming narratives of struggles and reclamation of space by the people that inhabit them.

Adapting to market demand

The community narratives of another notified backward community, Barauaa Kahaar *samaaj*, provide further insights in the matter. The *samaaj* traces their early caste-bound professions as water porters, fishermen and riverbed farmers. As the professions became obsolete, they resorted to becoming domestic and agricultural helpers as well as undertaking odd labour such as cattle herding. As vegetable sellers, caretakers and domestic helpers, they had to continually navigate the public and personal spaces of the town and thus became a part of the information network of the locale. The nature of their mobility marked itself as a somewhat familiar sight in the town over a period of time. It stands in sharp contrast to the Basods who did not venture out much, except during the fairs, bazaars and other festivities. Today, many Barauaas have built cement houses and set up small scale house-run-shops of their own.

Unlike the Barauaas, the Basods have been a community heavily dependent on their artisanal skills for a livelihood. The Basods' relatively late entrance to the town coincided with the arrival on the market of cheap plastic products, which only made them more vulnerable. The demand for bamboo products has gone down drastically. The artisans also claim that the nationalisation of bamboo and the government organisation of the bamboo industry has resulted in a mafia that controls the supply of the raw product. Naturally, they are challenged to expand their skill-set to earn a living. It doesn't come as a surprise that many from the new generation are unwilling to continue the work and have taken up new occupations such as playing the drums at wedding ceremonies or during funeral processions. The latter is another caste-bound profession in many parts of the country.

Social mobility denied

The narratives supplement the fact that disadvantaged communities such as Basods and Barauaas are continually denied a move upwards on the social pyramid, as the opportunities to wriggle out of caste roles are often made scarce. The mobilities of both communities are central to the town's transformation from the inside. Yet, it is rather telling that outside their inhabitations, most of the recorded local conversations remained either dismissive or reluctant to delve into their mobilities and struggles. In return, the communities have a lot to say, but are seldom heard. During a group conversation on the significance of oral testimonies in understanding social mobilities, a fellow researcher and a local resident shared an observation: "In any town, a few places are more silent than others."

The many oral, informal and personalised narratives of a growing township such as Pipariya can become instrumental in understanding how different stakeholders relate to the claims of social productions of collective pasts and present-day realities. The use of individual and community narratives can undo the popular discourses associated with a place. It also helps to contextualise the local realities against the wider global dynamics. Understanding experiences of mobilities among different communities is one among the many examples that emphasise the urgency to go past the top-to-bottom approach to reading a place.

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Notes

1 Officially known as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Colony, the XYZ block (known as such unofficially) was a resettlement colony for the families who lost their homes during the demolitions that took place during the Emergency in 1975-77 in Old Delhi area.
2 Sarkar, S. (unpublished) Preface, *Aise Basi Pipariya*, CCK, AUD.
3 Samaaj: The Hindi term is widely used by the locals to refer to different caste groups, rather than to 'society as a whole' or a voluntary association.

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

Rocco Cestola

When the meaning is not shut down. Language and word in the Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali

Currently, I am an IIAS fellow with a fellowship from the J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). The city of Leiden is the ideal place to conduct research because of its quiet yet lively international atmosphere and the access to Leiden University and its remarkable and richly furnished Asian Library. Being a fellow at IIAS not only allows me to fully focus on my research, but also provides a dynamic platform on which to engage and connect with a relevant community of inspiring scholars, both at IIAS and Leiden University. Moreover, being a musician next to a scholar, Leiden and the Netherlands offer plenty of opportunities to come into contact with stimulating artists who perform in a dynamic cultural landscape full of possibilities.

My research project covers the area of Pātañjala Yoga philosophy of language. It carries the following title: 'Sphoṭa and Śabda through Yoga śāstra of Patañjali: The Sphoṭa Theory and the Linguistic-philosophical Arguments According to Pātañjalayogaśāstra and Relative Commentaries'. I obtained my PhD in Indology from the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, for which I prepared a critical edition grounded on manuscript sources, the first English annotated translation and a study of the first Pāda of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's Vṛtti on Pātañjalayogaśāstra.

This present research proposal is committed to the study of the overall role and function of language [śabda], with a specific focus on the sphoṭa theory, namely 'the disclosing of meaning', which describes how meaning is conveyed and comprehended in the context of verbal communication according to the Pātañjalayogaśāstra and relative commentaries. This development will be contextualised both in the domain of Indian philosophy of language (Vyākaraṇa, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, Buddhism) and of contemporary theories of semantics, where the Context Principle (only in the context of a sentence does a word have meaning) and the Composition Principle (the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meaning of the words in which it is composed) will be employed as interpretive schemes.

Methodologically, this research is grounded on philosophy, historical contextualism, and intertextuality. This approach opens a research path that addresses both analytical and abstract thinking, and the historical context, the textual material, and other philological issues, which are discussed insofar as they are functional to a deeper philosophical understanding and are soundly grounded in the texts and their history.

The long-term aim of my research bears on the inclusion of classical and pre-modern South Asian philosophy of language among the larger history of Global Philosophy. The goal then is not only the comparison of one idea with another but the unravelling of new philosophical paradigms, a critical and analytical evaluation of conceptual paradigms in South Asian linguistic and philosophical theories. I am committed to highlighting points of contact but also differences so that the dialogue can be an enriching experience.

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

The usual deadlines are 1 March and 1 October of each year. Due to the the uncertainty about the further course of Corona outbreak the application round of 1 October 2020 has been cancelled.

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

The usual deadlines are 1 April and 1 October of each year. However, due to the global uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus, no new applications will be processed for the time being. Please see the Gonda website for current information.

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

Textiles in Motion & Transit

Conference postponed
Call for proposals closed

There will be no new call for proposals. All individual presentation proposals that have been accepted for presentation will remain in the programme.

This three-day international conference will explore the lives of textiles – their displacements and transformations – within the Asia-Pacific region as well as between the region and the rest of the world.

Venue: Leiden, the Netherlands

Date: This conference has been postponed due the Covid-19 pandemic. New dates will be announced in September/October 2020.

Organisers: International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands. Tracing Patterns Foundation, Berkeley, California, USA. Textile Research Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands.

Registration: Registration and registration fee payment will reopen once the new conference dates have been announced.

> More information
> https://www.iias.asia/events/textiles-motion-transit

Above: Detail of an embroidered panel with lines of multi-coloured inter-connecting diamonds of various sizes. Hazara, Afghanistan. Courtesy of the Textile Research Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands.

Cultural Precarities: Reading Independent Art Collectives and Cultural Networks in Asia
Joint IIAS/LASALLE In Situ Graduate School (ISGS)

Call for applications

Cultural networks and artist collectives are increasingly becoming key nodal points for cultural, social, creative and political intersections in Asia. Recent trends in Asia reveal that cultural networks and artist collectives symbiotically meet and inform each other. Networks in Asia are a composite of artist collectives, local/national institutional /inter-governmental agencies and foreign agency led initiatives. Networks demonstrate an increasing need to develop an inclusive methodology of work between artists and their communities. Moreover, artist collectives function as cultural intermediaries engaging with communities, governments or government-linked agencies to advocate for cultural inclusivity in economic and social development and to facilitate artist mobility across other networks and collectives.

This ISGS invites artists, social sciences and humanities graduate students (doctoral and research master's), independent researchers, cultural practitioners and 'artivists' to deliberate on the various intersections of artistic practice and networks and to foster dialogue on the emergence of independent cultural networks in Asia. This ISGS calls for the necessary and vital understanding of 'flow' between networks and within networks, their short-lived, 'precarious' character, and above all, their situatedness within communities. This ISGS aims to establish a critical reading of current developments in art networks in Asia thereby contributing to a body of emerging works. 'Conversations' with artists and cultural activists will be a key method of inquiry for the participants, so as to develop an appreciation of the complex inter-relatedness between art, history and politics.

Venue: KUNCI, Study Forum and Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Dates: 8-13 March 2021

Organisation: This in-situ Graduate School is jointly organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands and LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, and hosted by the UNCI Study Forum and Collective in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Conveners: Venka Purushothaman (LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore). Dev Nath Pathak (South Asian University, India). Chen Yun (Curator and Researcher, China). Syafiatudina (KUNCI, Indonesia).

The conveners will organise a series of studies in practice, using the environment of the city of Yogyakarta and its rural surroundings where many Indonesian networks and collectives are located. Participants will be exposed to a range of artists, local art spaces and sites of cultural engagement to test their methods and practices, enabling them to undergo a critique of their personal research projects in this field. The conveners and participants will function as co-learners to develop new paradigms to appreciate the developing field.

> Call for applications:
> https://www.iias.asia/masterclasses/cultural-precarities
> Deadline: 1 July 2020
>
> For additional details about applications, registration fee and financial support consult the relevant sections on our website.
>
> *The co-organisers reserve the right to modify the dates and general conditions of the ISGS should its logistics and safety of the participants be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Borderland Futures: Technologies, Zones, Co-existences

Conference postponed
Call for proposals closed

There will be no new call for proposals. All individual presentation, panel and round-table proposals that have been accepted for presentation will remain in the programme.

The 7th Asian Borderland Research Network (ABRN) conference focuses on three key themes – technologies, zones, co-existences – that aim to generate broader debate and intellectual engagement with borderland futures. Panels and papers will offer critical reflections on these key themes both theoretically and empirically.

Venue: Reconciliation & Coexistence in Contact Zone (RCCZ) Research Center, Chung-Ang University, Seoul, South Korea

Dates: 24-26 June 2021. These are new dates as the conference was postponed due the Covid-19 pandemic.

Organisers: Reconciliation & Coexistence in Contact Zone (RCCZ) Research Center, Seoul, South Korea. International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands. Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN).

Registration: Registration is required for all conference participants, including individual papers presenters, panel participants and observers. Students and scholars affiliated with the Reconciliation & Coexistence in Contact Zone (RCCZ) Research Center are eligible for a waiver of the registration fee.

> Conference website
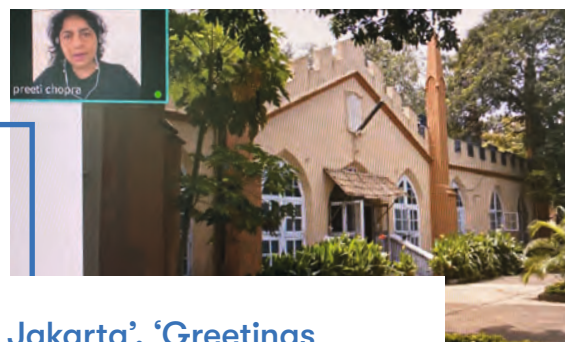> https://asianborderlands.net

ICAS 12 - Crafting a Global Future

Call for proposals

The 12th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12) will be held in Kyoto, the cultural heart of Japan, from 24-27 August 2021. Kyoto Seika University (SEIKA) will be the main host of ICAS 12. Participate at ICAS 12 in Kyoto and enjoy a multitude of networking opportunities, possibilities to share your research, meet with publishers, and participate in cultural activities.

> ICAS 12 Full call for proposals and submissions portal at:
> https://icas.asia/icas12-cfp
> Deadline: 1 October 2020

京都精華大学
KYOTO SEIKA UNIVERSITY

International Institute for Asian Studies

The new IIAS webinars

'Greetings from Jakarta', 'Greetings from Kansas', 'Greetings from Finland'. These were just some of the messages that popped up in the chat box during our first webinar by IIAS fellow Joppan George.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown of the IIAS office forced us to quickly rethink the format of our existing lunch lectures, in which our fellows and other scholars 'used to' present their work at our institute in Leiden. The idea to continue our lectures, to stay connected to our network and our fellows, soon evolved into the launching of our new online lecture series. And we are thrilled that the webinars have thus far been received with great enthusiasm by our speakers and participants.

The first lecture by Joppan was soon followed by talks from our IIAS fellows Preeti Chopra, Rocco Cestola and Gul-i-Hina Shahzad; these webinars alternated with those from the IIAS/UKNA Asian Cities Presentation Series, by Marion Sabrié and Creighton Connolly. Browse our Youtube channel, and make sure to subscribe so you don't miss any future episodes: https://tinyurl.com/IIASYoutube

The IIAS lunch lectures at our Leiden office were available to only a local audience, but now everyone with an internet connection has the opportunity to join in. All webinars are announced in our online events calendar at https://www.iias.nl/events. Joining is easy; just register and we will send you the login details. You are just an easy click away to learn, meet and exchange.

ICAS Book Prize 2021

Call for submissions

The ICAS Book Prize 2021 is open for submissions! Read more about the ICAS Book Prize on pages 4-9 of this issue.

> ICAS Book Prize 2021
> Follow the submission guidelines at:
> https://icas.asia/icas-book-prize-2021
> Deadline: 1 October 2020
> (deadline may vary for some of the language editions)

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.
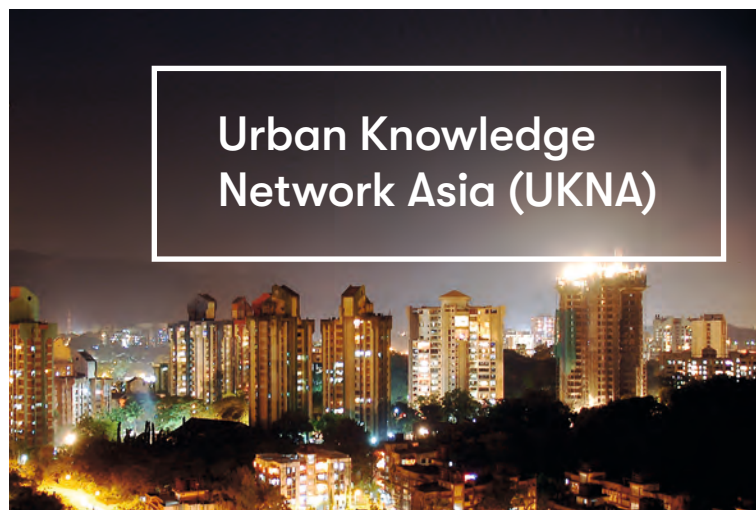
Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)

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.

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

Double Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

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

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

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, 24-26 June 2021.

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

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 in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish; and for PhD Theses in English.

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:
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ICAS
International Convention of Asia Scholars

Can art be a form of historical truth?

EXHIBITION

Forgotten Faces: Visual Presentation of Trauma and Mass Killing in Asia

DATE

25 Aug – 12 Dec 2020

LOCATION

Charles B. Wang Center, Stony Brook University, New York

More on the exhibition's website, including the virtual exhibition launched because of the current pandemic and the center's temporary closure: https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/wang/exhibitions/index.php

Fig. 1: Kim Hak, *Kettle and Chicken* (2014). 50 (H) x 70 (W) cm. C-Print.

Fig. 2: Kumi Yamashita, *Someone Else's Mess* (detail) (1997). 94 1/2 (H) x 59 (W) inches each (a total of 8 pieces). Military boot prints on bed linens. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 3: Federico Borella, *Widow of the Late Farmer* (2001). 70 (H) x 70 (W) cm. Print on Hahnemuhle paper. Courtesy of the artist.

In 2020, the world is experiencing the reality of mass death in a way we have never before. For many people, the Holocaust and other mass killings are either part of a heavy, dark past or are events that took place in distant countries. They are out of sight, out of mind, from our daily lives. But the coronavirus (Covid-19) has changed this. The pandemic has struck nearly every country around the globe, from advanced economies to vulnerable populations. The current omnipresent fear can serve as a reminder of forgotten civilian deaths and sufferings that we never cared for or knew about.

In the twentieth century, even within recent memory, mass killings and genocides have occurred in many Asian countries, especially as colonial empires began to collapse after World War II and as Cold War tensions escalated. These include Taiwan's 2.28 massacre (1947); South Korea's Jeju massacre (1948); China's Great Leap Forward and the resulting famine (1958–1962); the Indonesian mass killings (1965–1966); the Bangladesh genocide (1971); and Cambodia's killing fields (1975–1979). Cultural representations that convey victims' experiences of these traumatic events are quite rare, especially in the West. In contrast to the massive visual representations and remembrances of the Holocaust, many of the aforementioned tragedies are disappearing into the fog of time, leaving little to no mark in history or wider global public memory.

Stony Brook University's Charles B. Wang Center presents *Forgotten Faces: Visual Presentation of Trauma and Mass Killing in Asia*, an exhibition that will run from 25 August through 12 December 2020. It features artists Kim Hak (Cambodia), Kumi Yamashita (Japan), Federico Borella (Italy), Lim Ok-Sang (South Korea), Noh Suntag (South Korea), Choi Byungsoo (South Korea), Jung Min-gi (South Korea), Lee Yunyop (South Korea), Yi Seung-jun (South Korea) and Gary Byung-seok Kam (South Korea), Tenzing Rigdol (Tibet), Tung Min-Chin (Taiwan), and Joe Sacco (United States). *Forgotten Faces* traces the cultural phenomenon of mass killings and political trauma in Asia.

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge army began its brutal rule over Cambodia, which would last for almost four years. During this brief period, it would kill a quarter of Cambodia's

population. Although forty-five years have passed, little can escape the all-seeing lens of the photographer, as Cambodian photographer Kim Hak demonstrates with his series *Alive*. Kim looks for survivors of the genocide scattered around the world and illuminates the pain of those victimized by state violence. His evocative photographs capture victims' personal belongings, items they risked their very lives to protect against Khmer Rouge's destructive vision for a utopian Cambodia under communism. These trivial items hold immense historical and emotional weight – death, fear, anxiety, confusion, and a struggle for life and survival: English-language books and family photos that risk exposing an individual's identity, small Buddha statues that could be hidden in one's palm, a kettle used to cook a stolen chicken, among others. Each of these pieces memorialize the two million souls murdered in Pol Pot's march toward ideological purity. (Fig. 1)
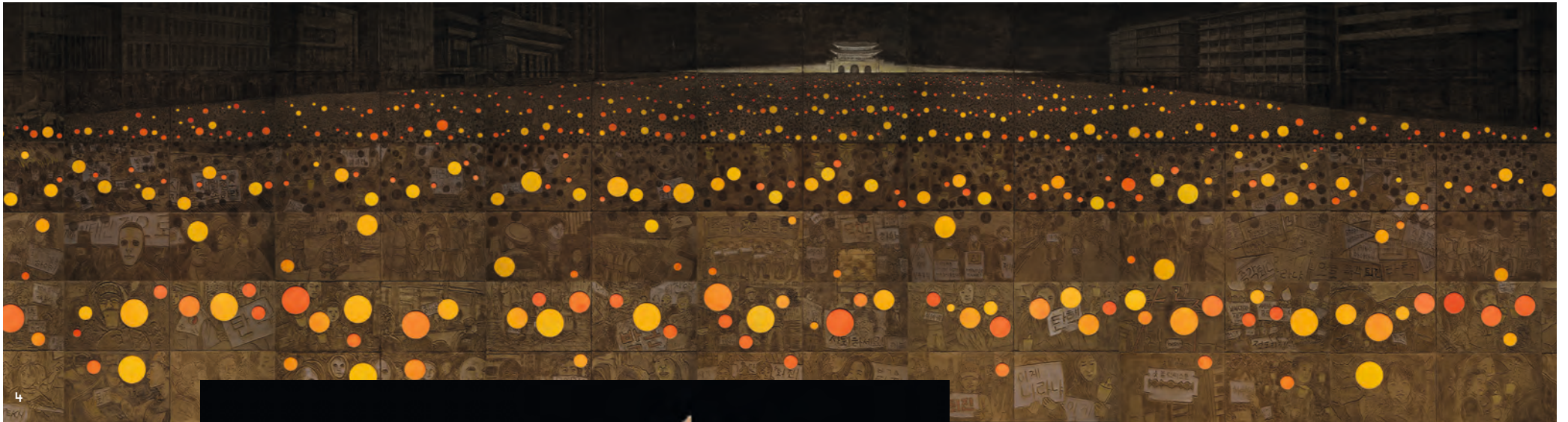
Fig. 4: Lim Ok-Sang, *Tide of Candles II* (2017). 300 (H) x 900 (W) cm (a total of 55 canvases). Mixed media on canvas. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 5: Choi Byungsoo, *Made in Korea Blade* (2018). 67 (H) x 56 (W) cm. Metal. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 6: Jung Min-gi, *A Country Where Mothers Mourn* (2020). 158 (H) x 400 (W) cm. Sumi ink, acrylic paint, and free-motion quilting machine sewing on canvas.

Fig. 7: Tung Min-Chin, *The Birth of a New Hero II* (2008). 52 (H) x 38 (W) x 38 (D) cm. Wood. Courtesy of the artist.

War seems almost inevitable in our increasingly fragmented, dehumanized world. Yet Kumi Yamashita rescues traces of humanity in art that challenges this status quo. In her work, she shows how art can shift our focus to civilian victims and their suffering, as well as how art can provoke deep questions regarding pain, trauma, and atrocity. Yamashita painted several large portraits of children on large cotton bedsheets. Although the bedsheets' floral patterns speak of comfort and warmth, Yamashita betrays any feelings of security by creating the brilliantly executed faces with 'muddy' prints from military boots. In a subtle yet powerful way, she points to the often overlooked and most vulnerable victims of war: children. She indicates how war tramples innocents in the reckless pursuit of glory and how trauma becomes part of a person, a metaphor brought to visual life in children's features created by and smeared with the boots of battle. (Fig. 2)

Perhaps an even more horrifying thought is that mass killings are not bygone events of the twentieth century. Unstable national systems, capitalism, globalization, social and economic inequality, and growing ecological challenges put us in danger on a scale never before seen, while also making it more difficult to address and eliminate these problems. These contemporary conditions are accelerating more indiscriminate genocide of peoples and cultures.

Italian photographer Federico Borella sheds light on this different kind of tragedy, one of environmental and societal disaster in Tamil Nadu, India. A five-degree increase in temperature does not sound like much, but it can have extraordinary effects on climate and, accordingly, agriculture. Farmers in this region face ever worsening conditions and droughts that are devastating their livelihoods and their communities. A combination of low farm yields, falling agricultural prices, limited labor, lack of government support, and difficulties repaying large debts have led to an astonishingly high rate of suicide, a rate that continues to rise. Borella eschews violent or graphic content, instead vividly capturing the despair of widows whose farmer husbands have taken their own lives. This is a slow catastrophe, a mass killing brought on by a globalized society that values profit above all else. Borella reveals the awful negligence caused by rapid industrialization and environmental degradation in his photography. (Fig. 3)

Let's move from rural India to urban South Korea. In 2014, the MV *Sewol* sank, killing 304 out of a total of 476 passengers, many of them schoolchildren. Yet this tragedy had wider repercussions. Investigations led to the discovery of failure and negligence by companies and government authorities on numerous levels. Public outrage and enormous protests eventually resulted in the impeachment and ouster of South Korean president Park Geun-hye. Six Korean artists – Lim Ok-Sang, Noh Suntag, Choi Byungsoo, Jung Min-gi, Yi Seung-jun and Gary Byung-seok Kam – use their art as an outlet to process this kind of communal trauma, a trauma that can lead to larger political action and social justice. Lim Ok-Sang's mural-like painting, *Tide of Candles II* (2017), depicts the nonviolent candlelight vigils that were held every week in Seoul over a six-month period. The painting, consisting of fifty-five canvases, contains the pain of millions of rally participants. (Fig. 4) Choi Byungsoo seamlessly blends absurdity with the *Sewol* ferry tragedy in his *Made in Korea Blade* (2018). (Fig. 5) His sculpture of a child teetering on the edge of an enlarged razor blade bitterly criticizes the South Korean government for its focus on commerce and trade at the expense of its underfunded welfare system. The cheerful posture and gestures of the girl belie the piece's darker metaphors. Jung Min-gi portrays deep scars, terrible sorrows, betrayal, anger, and despair by casting powerful images on canvas with extraordinary technical virtuosity using ink, paint, and free-motion quilting. His four-meter-long *A Country Where Mothers Mourn* (2020) depicts the faces of the forgotten victims. (Fig. 6)

The Oscar-nominated documentary *In the Absence* (2018) is also part of the exhibit. Directed by Yi Seungjun and produced by Gary Byung-Seok Kam, it asks damning questions about the absence of any rescue operations or first responders in the *Sewol* ferry incident, set against images of the ferry disappearing beneath the waves. However, the *Sewol* ferry incident cannot be regarded solely as a Korean event. It should be considered part of a global phenomenon of vulnerable people falling victim to larger forces in modern society. As capital, goods, trade, and information zip back and forth across borders and oceans, governments around the world are hollowing out their social safety nets and social services, increasing the fragility of all our lives as our communities wither. This individualized instability makes it much harder to collectively tackle these problems and meet the basic needs of citizens, invest in our societies, and provide for current and future generations. This increases the chances of mass killings, whether through capitalistic negligence or through the slow rotting of rights and necessary services.

Taiwanese artist Tung Min-Chin's sculptures defy the impossibility of representation of real massacres and posttraumatic expression. Tung, in his art, creates a complementary and contradictory sense of witnessing. On the one hand, his work bears witness to the physical reality of a historical event; on the other hand, it shows the inner psychological reality of the event's aftermath. In his *The Birth of a New Hero II* (2008), Tung expresses his mastery of woodcarving, revealing a figure trapped inside the wood. The smoothly polished pieces distill fear, becoming a visual metaphor of the broader problem of representing mass killings, as well as the deforming effects of pain on representation. (Fig. 7)

These works are not limited to any country or people. They are facets of a larger story, one we are all part of. The visual records of the wounded and the dead cannot be contained in just words, and perhaps not even in images. Through this exhibition, I hope that many forgotten massacres, those that have taken place in the past and those that are ongoing, will be remembered, and we take the opportunity to aspire to a better, more just world. There is no exception to human rights.

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