Do the performing arts play a role in sexual selection? How does music influence mating practices in different cultures? Can the performing arts create social settings where sexual relationships germinate and grow – even where sex is a disruptive force, an arena for competition and conflict? And if so, where does this power of the performing arts come from?

The performing arts everywhere play an important role in expressing erotic feelings. Playing an instrument is often used to attract the other sex, and the singing of amorous songs between young men and women is widespread in Asia. According to one colonial travelogue, skill and verbal ability in poetry were a passport to female favour among the highland Malays of Sumatra: ‘A kind of flirtation goes on independently of the open and public display of skill, and it is often accompanied with the interchange of flowers and other mute symbols which all have a mystical meaning’ (Malayan Miscellanies 1821). The highland Malays ascribed evocative powers to lovers’ verses: in the past, when young men went travelling, they might give their beloved a piece of bamboo with an inscription, which the girl was to read aloud daily to ensure the success of her lover’s venture and his faithful return to her.

This supposed magnetism of music is not unique. Similar seductive scenes abound in early travellers, ranging from the courtiers of the celestial city Kin-Sai, famed from Marco Polo’s descriptions, to later stories of Kyoto-Gion’s geishas who lured their customers with their three-stringed shamisen. Drawing upon notions of the seductive Asian woman, oriental dancers such as Matahari and Little Egypt brought this art of seduction to the West. Many descriptions of such arts, as critics like Edward Said, Rana Khubani and Ashis Nandy have shown, are based on misunderstandings, sometimes intentional and generally say more about the western audience’s longing for a sensual other expressed through a depiction of the East as a place of lust and sexual pleasures. As a result, the Orient has long been perceived through the seductive performances of its women, something that the journalist Sheridan Passo (2005) describes as the ‘Asian Mystique’. Given all this, it is surprising how little is actually known about these arts and the often intricate ways they lured and seduced their audiences.

Passions performed: is there an erotic component to the arts? Seduction stands for different things in different places, but little attention has been paid to local conceptualisations. Western dictionaries define seduction as an act of winning someone’s love or sexual favour, though seduction has also been interpreted more negatively as enticing someone to stray from the straight and narrow path. From the sirens of Greek mythology, Indian celestial nymphs (apsaras) who seduced both gods and men, to the attractiveness of today’s pop idols, special evocative powers are often attributed to the lovers’ song. Indeed, many believe there is something inherent in music that affects people.

What makes the human voice seductive and what defines a sexy voice? Is a sexy voice a biological given or a play upon cultural expectations? Wim van der Meer (this issue, p.6) suggests...
Confucius Inc., Plato & Co.

With its growing worldwide network of Confucius Institutes, China is catching up in the propagation of its culture and language. The Confucius Institute Project, a non-profit organization administered by the Chinese Ministry of Education through the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, intends to establish 100 Confucius Institutes around the world by 2010.

The project, named after the sage who encapsulates the ‘...longevity and profundity of Chinese language and culture’, is a move by the Chinese government to accelerate the integration of Chinese language and culture into the world of the 21st century. The worldwide franchise has its headquarters in Beijing, which supplies the overall strategy, the image, the promotional material, and the ‘Great Wall Chinese’ multimedia coursework.

Most recently founded Confucius Institutes are co-operative projects between the main office and an existing centre of Chinese learning, such as those at San Francisco State University, the University of Melbourne, the University of Manchester, the Freie Universität Berlin and the Nanyang Technological Institute. The strategy of engaging existing centres of Chinese learning will most likely work to their mutual advantage, for funding, visibility and creating legitimacy. These institutes could emerge as focal points within overseas Chinese networks while offering Chinese students abroad the opportunity to work as teachers. In contrast to the open-minded pragmatism of the Chinese enterprise, the national European institutions abroad such as the British Council, the Goethe-Institut and the Alliance Française seem like relics of the colonial past.

Will the fractious tribes of Europe collectively manage to inaugurate 100 Plato Institutes worldwide by the year 2010?

Wim Stokhof
Director, IIAS

The International Institute for Asian Studies is a postdoctoral research centre based in Leiden and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Our main objective is to encourage the interdisciplinary and comparative study of Asia and to promote national and international cooperation in the field. The institute focuses on the humanities and social sciences and their interaction with other sciences.

IIAS values dynamism and versatility in its research programmes. Postdoctoral research fellows are temporarily employed by or affiliated to IIAS, either within the framework of a collaborative research programme or on an individual basis. In its aim to disseminate broad, in-depth knowledge of Asia, the institute organizes seminars, workshops and conferences, and publishes the IIAS Newsletter with a circulation of 9,000.

IIAS runs a database for Asian Studies with information on researchers and research-related institutes worldwide. As an international mediator and a clearing house for knowledge and information, IIAS is active in creating international networks and launching international collaborative projects and research programmes. In this way, the institute functions as a window on Europe for non-European scholars and contributes to the cultural rapprochement between Asia and Europe.

IIAS also administers the secretariat of the European Alliance for Asian Studies (Asia Alliance: www.asia-alliance.org) and the Secretariat General of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS: www.icassecretariat.org). Updates on the activities of the Asia Alliance and ICAS are published in this newsletter.
Unrepresentative, pusillanimous @ politically correct

Dear Editors,

Your recent special issue on ‘the Asia-Pacific War 60 years on’ was seriously unrepresentative and defective in its neglect of both Burma and Thailand. Of course, even these days, different though they are, both are still treated all too often as non-countries. But Thailand (formerly mis-represented as ‘Siam’) has a good claim to be considered the real Southeast Asia, as the one historic local polity never colonized, and therefore best able to develop according to its own needs. And Burma, no ‘imperial construct’ like many others in Asia, was perhaps the land least happy to be subordinated to western rule, as indicated by its unique refusal on regaining its independence in 1948, to join the British Commonwealth.

As I pointed out in a review article in the Cambridge Historical Journal as long ago as 1987, Thailand unfortunately but understandably indulged from 1944 in a ‘fudge’ of its earlier policies in order to limit the postwar punitive Allied reaction to a minimum. And Burma can be considered to have done much the same in order to gain its independence. One thinks of General Slim’s comment to Aung San when at last, in May 1945, he marched his troops through the Japanese lines to join the British forces: ‘You only come to us because you see we are winning’.

For that matter, there is extensive evidence from right across Southeast and South Asia – Chandra Bose for instance – of local support for the Japanese war against western colonial hegemony, up at least to the point when the return of the western powers began to seem likely, and the locals could recognize the need to make their peace with them. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner. By the same token, as defeat began increasingly to stare them in the face, some Japanese began to treat local Southeast Asians in a much more repressive manner.

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N.J. Bradley
Senior Research Fellow, University of Bristol

The future of Asian archaeology

The future of Asian archaeology at Leiden University was debated at the workshop ‘Current issues in the archaeology of Asia’ following the first IIAS masterclass on this topic. I would like to re-emphasize some of my own observations from this meeting.

In my opinion, there are four main requirements for effective research on archaeology in Asia, in particular in my own area of Southeast Asia. The first is an archaeology department able to provide the training and practical methodology necessary for field research. The second is access to modern facilities and specialist knowledge required to analyze archaeological material. The third is broad expertise in the history and material cultures of Asia as a whole. As early as 1937, J.C. van Leur argued that Indonesian history could only be understood within a wider Asian context and this is also true for Indonesian archaeology, even for the earliest periods of prehistory. The last and rarest resource is a centre of learning for area languages and cultures. The decline Southeast Asian Studies was noted at an earlier seminar in Amsterdam. Terry King, summarizing the present situation in the UK, noted that the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies in Kent was closed in 1991 and the Department in Hull in 2002, leaving only London as a collective centre of learning in this area.

Despite the problems faced by university departments across Europe, it is notable that all four areas of expertise are present at Leiden University. With the gradual centralization of both Asian studies and non-western archaeology, it is now the only institution in the Netherlands where in-depth research is possible. For the study of Indonesian archaeology, the situation is even more serious, as much of the essential literature remains in Dutch and archival resources (such as the photograph archives of the Oudheidkundige Dienst) are available only in Leiden. The university is a centre of European importance for Southeast Asian archaeology, and a unique centre of learning on Indonesia. Moreover, the strength of both the Sinological and Indological departments makes the future potential for Asian archaeology even greater.

Teaching remains integral to long-term research strategy. The four key speakers at the meeting – John Miksic, Pierre-Yves Manguin, Bion Griffin and Ian Glover – all supported PhD students as part of their archaeological programmes. This teaching and supervision is vital, and I do not believe long-term archaeological programmes can be maintained in Leiden without the continuity of teaching staff and faculty. Finally, I have constantly been impressed by the high quality of research in Asian archaeology currently being undertaken by graduate and doctoral students in Leiden, and the long academic tradition established here. To allow this tradition to be broken, notwithstanding the financial pressures now involved, would, in my opinion, not only be a loss, but a tragedy.

William A. Southworth
Research fellow, IIAS

Rubicon Grants

IIAS invites young and promising postdoctoral researchers to apply for Rubicon Grants at the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) for twelve months fellowships in the Netherlands. The NWO Rubicon Grant is a programme for young researchers, who have recently obtained a PhD and are no longer affiliated with their previous university. All areas of South Asian studies are eligible for the NWO Rubicon Grant. IIAS offers Rubicon grantees affiliated fellowships in Leiden or Amsterdam. We also offer to mediate in finding a suitable Dutch host university or research institution for Rubicon applicants conducting research in Asian Studies. IIAS Rubicon fellows are offered office facilities, while the institute will assist in gaining access to libraries, archives and other institutions in the Netherlands. Fellows are expected to be productive in writing, possibly give a lecture or organise a workshop, remain in contact with European researchers, and give preference to IIAS and NWO in (future) publications. For more information on Rubicon Grants, please refer to rubicon@nwo.nl

Who can apply?
Postgraduates who are currently engaged in doctoral research or who have been awarded a doctorate in the twelve months preceding the relevant deadline. Applicants who are still engaged in doctoral research may only apply if their supervisor provides a written declaration agreeing their application.

Applications are now being accepted for IIAS Rubicon Grants. Rubicon grants are awarded every year. The 2006 deadline is 15 December.

For more information on IIAS fellowships and the Rubicon Grant see the IIAS website at: www.iias.nl
For specific information on IIAS fellowships, please contact Annemiek Oerlemans at: iiasfellowships@let.leidenuniv.nl
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Letters

Dear Editors,

Your recent special issue on ‘the Asia-Pacific War 60 years on’ was seriously unrepresentative and defective in its neglect of both Burma and Thailand. Of course, even these days, different though they are, both are still treated all too often as non-countries. But Thailand (formerly mis-represented as ‘Siam’) has a good claim to be considered the real Southeast Asia, as the one historic local polity never colonized, and therefore best able to develop according to its own needs. And Burma, no ‘imperial construct’ like many others in Asia, was perhaps the land least happy to be subordinated to western rule, as indicated by its unique refusal on regaining its independence in 1948, to join the British Commonwealth.

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gestures is not only an aesthetic enjoyment but also a sensual experience, revealing the physical and emotional qualities of the performer. The art of seduction traditionally plays upon all the senses simultaneously and its study might not only gain from biological or musicological perspectives, but from recent work on the anthropology of the senses. Veit Erlman’s 2004 book *Hearing Cultures* observes that ours is essentially a visual age.

Popular music is a good illustration of this, as image is often favoured over sound. This can be seen in singing competitions like American Idol and its spinoffs. At the same time, the performing arts perpetuate sensual cultures and ‘languages’ that convey things that in ordinary circumstances would be censored or create unease.

Risque songs, fertility and the social function of seduction

Ted Hugh Holdridge

Youth throughout upland Southeast Asia and among the many minorities of southern China have traditionally exchanged repartee songs in which male and female singing alternate. Primarily associated with agricultural rites, these songs were often sung while collecting in the forest or working the fields. Such courtship songs were part of village feasts or temple festivals in Buddhist Southeast Asia: youths of neighbouring villages were invited for a communal meal, dancing, and questions-and-answer games during which candidate-lovers were questioned. In the course of the night, screened from view, such songs easily became a battle of the sexes, and in some cases turned into sexual play.

is a sexy voice a biological given or a play upon cultural expectations?

Risque songs with an overt double entendre, erotic puns and sensual implicitly derived from society can, in one carnivalesque moment, become the norm. In his contribution Frank Kuenenhouse (p.7) describes such performances in northeast China: ‘flirting is directed towards the gods, and there is a begging for life, for protection of the crop, and for fertility of the women’. The lam klaw of northwest Thailand, the pha pha songs of the Hmong and the huaer songs described by Kuenenhouse all seem to point to the importance of singing seductive songs in the selection of marriage partners. In Southeast Asia such ritualised courtship songs were part of a wider set of entertainments, including cockfighting, couple dances, and riddling games meant to express wit and sexuality.

Such song festivals were often fruitful arenas for contact – traditional dating agencies as it were – supervised by elderly persons experienced in such affairs, and with performers ultimately proposing marriage to one another. In the mountains of northwest China, love affairs during these festivals might even result in extramarital children, a welcome gift to women whose marriages had not been consummated. Fertility was the message of such festivals and an explicit theme in the songs. Ritual courtship through the performing arts therefore contributed in important ways to the general welfare of society. The temporarily release and the free reign of the formerly highly-respected mujariwali, choreographers and dance teachers were also mainly men, who dictated the way women should behave and move to depict seductiveness. This ‘male gaze’, as Rohekar writes, later reappears in many Bollywood movies devoted to courtesans: ‘... consequently the rules of sexuality, and the male gaze determines much of the action, in real life the courtesan knows how to play this male gaze to get what she wants.’

Male versus female gaze and the third sex as seducers

It is, however, not only female entertainers who seduce, as Akiko Takeyama shows in her contribution (p.9) on today’s male host clubs in Tokyo. To perform as seductive men, hosts style all aspects of their appearance and bodily movements to live up to the fantasies of their female clients. According to one female informant: ‘I also perform as if I eagerly adored my host so as to heighten the romantic mood and feeling of intimacy. In that way, he treats me even more specially. Professional seduction or performance as seduction – the boundaries tend to blur, but what they have in common is that once sensual fantasies take over, people are easily persuaded into other things, in this case ordering another bottle of expensive liquor, which will gradually be brought to the table by the male host.

In many Asian societies the third sex was thought to have qualities that enabled them to seduce in ways that ordinary males or females could never manage. In Indonesian theatre, transvestites often personify fantasies of the other sex, using sexual parody and erotic gestures that ordinary people would not get away with. Another example of performing transvestites is the Indonesian community of self-confessed nemenkha known as hijra. Most hijras specialize in song and dance and act in sexually provocative ways, dancing in public, using coarse and abusive speech and gestures, and lifting their skirts to expose mutilated genitals when their authenticity is challenged.
the third sex was thought to have qualities enabling them to seduce in ways ordinary males or females could never manage

My own description of narsid – Islamic boy-band music in Southeast Asia (p.12) – seems to be the anathesis to many of the arts discussed thus far, as it is seemingly the art of seduction. Especially in religious contexts, seduction has more often than not not been negatively valued and equated with sin and immorality. With their moral behaviour, clean-cut appearance and lyrics that stress there is no love other than God’s, narsid bands seem to have little in common with their western counterparts. At the same time, the moral messages conveyed seem to be yet another form of the persuasion that music is so well-known for. The success of this Islamic pop music has thus far led to only a few female pop groups: Islamic hardliners fear the perils of the female voice, in which the fear of seduction is a key argument. The transformation of the art of seduction, however, is due not only to changing norms or a new moral climate, but also to new ways of mediating it.

The art of seduction (re-)mediated

Exotic dance has become yet another trendy pastime for western housewives desiring to seduce their husbands. Over the web one can acquire CDs such as Erotic Dance Rythm, Afrodisia or Kama Sutra Special, the latter promising an exploration of the sensuality of India by 25 musicians through an elegant interpretation of the ancient text: ‘Lovers will enjoy dozens of rare, authentic native instruments which blend Indian and ragas traditions and bring the Indian flavor of the Kama Sutra alive!’ The art of seduction is back, re-mediated in new and often unexpected forms. Such new appearances are not unproblematic. In his contribution on the gandrung of Banyuwangi, east Java, Bernard Arps (p.13) shows how today’s erotic singer-dancer is mediated by video CD recordings and radio broadcasts, but is also found in Banyuwangi’s public spaces. Arps takes the analysis of seduction in the arts further by pointing to its political utility for local power holders. The result is a decontextualized and sanitized gandrung, but importantly, she remains a seducer.

As the contributions that follow make clear, many of these arts of seduction have been influenced by the forces of modernity. In much of Southeast Asia courtship songs have disappeared, mainly due to the modernization of agriculture and the substitution of hired workers and machines for communal labour. As communal work dwindled, the context for performances such as paid performances and have been recorded, courtship songs out of context have often become overly associated with prostitution. An attraction to the sensual art of seduction is the rise of a new sensorial ideology that privileges the visual, with the art of seduction experiencing the same fate as many other traditional arts: the lack of an interested audience able to understand them. Often the arts of seduction are discreetly as being associated with the lower classes, especially with unfettered female sensuality. The arts of seduction have been cleaned up, decontextualized and reinvented to bring them in line with the national narratives of Asia’s post-colonial societies, or have otherwise been brought into conformity with a new moral climate fuelled by competition over the interpretation of religion.

As witnessed in ritual courting poetry published in SMS manuals for mobile phone users in the Philippines, China and Indonesia. In many Indonesian cultures it was common to have lovers’ verses written on bark cloth or bamboo to be reprinted at special occasions. Similar ready-made constructions, to improvise on and forward to others, are in use today – poems for different moods and occasions and sexually-implicit jokes and erotic puns not so different from the ones traditionally used in courtship songs.

The elderly nostalgically remember the Malay repartee songs, as they recount how they first approached their beloved through song, and how she responded by adding to it. Nowadays mass-mediated versions of such poetry exist, disseminated via cassette, radio broadcasts, and at modern versions of village feasts. Courtesans are now a popular topic for many Asian movies, from Ai Nu (Confessions Of A Chinese Courtesan, 1972), the much-acclaimed Rouge (1987) and Hais- banghau (Flowers of Shanghai, 1998) to the Bollywood court- sesan movies described here by Borecha. These films provide modern audiences with glimpses of the sensual regime that the art of seduction once was, thus positing a counter-modern, earthy aesthetic consciousness. How much it will contribute to our understanding of the ways seduction works through art remains a question. Early in the 2000s, the sensual Orient and its female performers once again stand in the limelight in the Broadway-style rendering of Arthur Golden’s 1997 novel Memoirs Of A Geisha (2006). Oriental beauty queen Gong Li and other seductive faces are teaming up with cosmetics giant Max Factor and its advertising campaign to lure new audiences to the theatre. Seduction is truly of all ages, and the arts have in many cases been its main advocate.

References
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Many of the essays collected in this issue’s theme build upon contributions to the ‘Music and the Art of Seduction’ conference, which brought an international group of musicologists, social scientists, scholars of literature and biologists to Amsterdam in May 2005. The conference was organ- ised by the Bake Society for Ethnomusicology and the Department of Music Studies of the University of Amster- dam. For more information please see the website of the Bake Society: www.abake.nl. Frank Kouwenhoven and Wim van der Meer are presently editing a book on Music and the Art of Seduction in various cultures worldwide, which will contain some of the contributions to the Amsterdam Con- ference.
Music is not meant to seduce lasses. It is a means of communication, a tool for expressing oneself and others. Music can be seen as a way to connect with others, to share feelings and experiences. It is a way to express oneself, to communicate with others, and to connect with the world around us.

A different kind of criticism comes from cultural scientists, who generally don’t have any affinity with evolutionism.

Music is not just a tool for communication, but also a way to express oneself and others. It is a means of communication, a tool for expressing oneself and others. Music can be seen as a way to connect with others, to share feelings and experiences. It is a way to express oneself, to communicate with others, and to connect with the world around us.

The psychology of sexuality

Crossing half the globe to India, we are again struck by the broad structure of music, but rarely the ‘superficial’ details of presentation. Aboriginal Australians are considered the top.

In the Indian context we can say something about this. First, the voice has to be open – a nasal sound won’t do. Second, the voice must be tuneful. Very few singers can handle these two difficult tasks. But the most important is the most difficult: conveying emotion directly with the voice. This requires an extremely subtle interplay of timing, intonation, timbre and volume control by which some singers reach out directly to the heart and soul of the listener. In India there is no doubt that ‘music without emotion is no music at all’ – singers who are able to transmit emotion in the most powerful way are considered the top.

In societies such as India there is stiff competition, differing markedly from the situation among the Soya with its 400 members. The competition is fiercer yet in popular music. As such, the phenomena of Lata Mangeshkar and Kishori Amonkar are extremely interesting in the light of evolution and music. In over half a century Lata has recorded tens of thousands of songs. She has a very high-pitched and ethereal voice that western commentators have mistakenly described as a ‘mating call’, we cannot deny the importance of music among the Amazons tribes.

The voice in western classical music has as a consequence that ‘music without emotion is no music at all’ – singers who are able to transmit emotion in the most powerful way are considered the top.

What is the evolutionary meaning of such rare ‘mutations’? That courtesans can exercise attraction on powerful men does not escape the attraction. It is some indefinable quality of the voice that western commentators have mistakenly described as a ‘mating call’, we cannot deny the importance of music among the Amazons tribes.

Music pervades all layers of society and is present in innumerable settings – work, religion, entertainment, social events. We know only the names of great singers; instrumentalists accompany anonymously. In art music, instrumentalists have conquered their own space and we all know the names of Ravi Shankar and Zakir Hussain. Even so, instrumental music in India is considered a copy of singing. This is hardly surprising as singing is the most prominent form of music in numerous cultures around the world, including western culture – and certainly in popular music, where instrumentalists play a lesser role.

The seductive voice

Charles Darwin had no doubts about the origin of music – it was a kind of mating call, a primitive language of the emotions from an early stage of evolution. While his ideas about music and evolution have often been alluded to, Darwin never really paid much attention to music. His contemporary W. S. Gilbert, who was more conversant with music, saw it differently – music had evolved from language, in particular speech laden with emotion.

One of the most interesting forms is the voice, in which all the men of the village sing at the same time in the village square. The singing, however, is completely individual, without coherence between the individual singers – every man tries to present his own song as best he can. The evolutionist would immediately interpret this as a mating call. But the remarkable thing is that the akiak style of singing is not yet to seduce lasses of the village but to please their sisters. What appeared to be a classical example of sexual selection turned out to have a completely different meaning. The reality of contemporary peoples living in tribal societies obviously cannot serve as evidence for evolutionary processes that took place in the past. They can, however, provide insights into the role that music plays in diverse cultures. And although the akiak genre is not a mating call, we cannot deny the importance of music among the Amazons tribes.

The psychology of bewitching male admirers were crucial. The psychology of sexuality by Henry Havelock Ellis, published between 1897 and 1910, considered the visual stimuli of sexual attraction more important than the auditory. Ellis gave some importance to the voice as a secondary sexual characteristic, especially the changing male voice around the time of reaching sexual maturity. Researchers have probably underestimated the importance of the voice, in particular the singing voice. From literature and mythology we are familiar with the idea that voices can seduce, sometimes with disastrous consequences, like the sirens of ancient Greece. Recent research has shown that voices tell us a lot about the speaker. Susan Hughes, for instance, demonstrated that the waist to hip ratio (WHR – a marker of femininity) and the shoulder to hip ratio (SHR – a masculinity indicator) can be deduced from the voice.

In a group of young people, the one who picks up a guitar and sings a couple of songs can exert considerable attraction on the opposite sex. This has been construed to be a demonstration of self-confidence, as insecurity resonates in the voice. Perhaps so, but a singer with a voice trembling with nervousness can also succeed. It would seem that the very idea of showing one’s emotions through the voice is what matters. Otherwise, we cannot explain why singing is so important.

Indian courtesan singing

In India there used to be a professional class of women, often intellectual and artistic partners. Such partnerships could last for years and were sometimes exclusive, in that a courtesan would be their intellectual and the texts always had something to do with love. But their greatest asset was their voice. The best singers were (and are) capable of captivating their audience with magical magnetism.

In my personal contact with some of the great women singers of India, I have been struck by how powerful the voice can be. It is enough for them to barely utter a few sounds and one cannot escape the attraction. It is some indefinable quality of the voice, openness of the sound, and an earthy sensuality. Of course this is not limited to Indian courtesans. I also have great memories of Maria Callas (whom I have never heard live – how much more powerful that might have been in Norma, but everyone may have his or her own experience of deep emotion with song. And men can do it as well as women.

For many musicologists this is almost taboo. Western musicology in the 19th century went so far as to suggest that vocal music with its powerful emotions was an inferior expression, and that ‘pure’ or ‘absolute’ music should be instrumental. The voice in western classical music has as a consequence been reduced to an instrument. It is also taboos because we are not supposed to break the magic spell. Musicologists study the broad structure of music, but rarely the ‘superficial’ details of presentation. As a general rule research is done on the phenomenon and we hardly have a notion about the qualities in a voice that make it so powerful.

The first scientific study of the psychology of sexuality by Henry Havelock Ellis, published between 1897 and 1910, considered the visual stimuli of sexual attraction more important than the auditory. Ellis gave some importance to the voice as a secondary sexual characteristic, especially the changing male voice around the time of reaching sexual maturity. Researchers have probably underestimated the importance of the voice, in particular the singing voice. From literature and mythology we are familiar with the idea that voices can seduce, sometimes with disastrous consequences, like the sirens of ancient Greece. Recent research has shown that voices tell us a lot about the speaker. Susan Hughes, for instance, demonstrated that the waist to hip ratio (WHR – a marker of femininity) and the shoulder to hip ratio (SHR – a masculinity indicator) can be deduced from the voice.

In societies such as India there is stiff competition, differing markedly from the situation among the Soya with its 400 members. The competition is stiffer yet in popular music. As such, the phenomena of Lata Mangeshkar and Kishori Amonkar are extremely interesting in the light of evolution and music. In over half a century Lata has recorded tens of thousands of songs. She has a very high-pitched and ethereal voice that western commentators have mistakenly described as ‘desexualized; her songs convey erotic meanings that the films cannot show. The expression of emotion is not just an intuitive or subconscious process; in conversation Kishori explains how every detail and subtlety is important and how full control of every movement of the voice is essential. What is this about is a stupendous musical consciousness. What is true for Kishori can also be said of Lata – that she is able to transmit emotion with extraordinary precision and stir the soul of the public.

What is the evolutionary meaning of such rare ‘mutations’? That courtesans can exercise attraction on powerful men does not in itself represent an evolutionary gain as the offspring did not inherit the father’s wealth. Nor is it clear whether pop musicians’ special status and fame would improve the gene pool of humanity. Still, an enormous communal interest is served by the phenomenon of stardom: on the one hand, it reflects and confirms the social order in which excellence and elitism are central; on the other hand, these musicians re-orient us in the world of emotional experiences that we are all a part of.
Love songs and temple festivals in northwest China

In the mountains of northwest China, crowds of people gather at remote temples every summer. The normally grim and deserted landscape becomes a backdrop for elaborate feasting, chanting and sacrificing. While the mood is festive, the meetings take place in a region which has seen centuries of violent conflict between Muslims and Buddhists. Inter-ethnic relationships remain uneasy, but during the temple festivals people from different backgrounds accept the challenge of competing with one another on a very different kind of battlefield: that of love.

Frank Kouwenhoven

The rough and high-pitched seductive chants of northwest China, known as Hua’er, are best learned by skoan (youth songs) are famous all over China. One needs to hear them only once to remember them: the piercing falsetto sounds and whirling ornaments immediately strike the ear. Many Chinese know the name of a mountain of near-mythical fame, Lianhuashan, where some 400,000 pilgrims meet to sing, pray and flirt every summer. The outdoor gatherings in southern Gan su and eastern Qinghai are usually carni- val-like, with people indulging freely in outdoor life, drinking, singing, and flirting.

In China, extramartial courtship and youthful love affairs are normally viewed as licentious, but the rural temple festivals take place under the eye of large crowds of people. Moreover, no matter how spiritual the songs may sound, the backdrop to this tradition is dark, connected to more than teasing, flirting or having children.

The areas of rural Gansu and Qinghai where Hua’er thrive are mostly barren and dry. People have lived here for hun- dreds of years to a disheartening rhythm of floods and droughts, famines and war, with death an obvious- ly common. In this context Hua’er are not only func- tion as major distractions or platforms for fervite sexual encounters, but as powerful tools in the struggle for godly favours. Hua’er tunes are sometimes sung in temples to pray for offspring, to beg for the curing of illnesses or pending death. In such cases, the applied formulae and metaphors may still derive from love songs, but the poems change direction when sung in temples: pas- sionate imploring or ‘flirting’ is now directed towards the gods, begging for life, for rain, for protection of the crop, for fertility of the women. Temples have been erected in honour of Hua’er-ming- niang, the goddess of Hua’er and fertility; some are adorned with visions of young children sprouting on mountain flanks.

While the musical flirting does not result in sexual contact for most singers, it can still be viewed as a form of sexual education. Umbrellas are carried around to provide shelter against the afternoon heat, but also, if necessary, to hide one’s embarrassment if song lyrics become too bold.

Wild atmosphere

Numerous taboos rest on the singing of Hua’er, but during festivals most restrictions are temporarily lifted under the protective care of the gods. Married women do not want their husbands to participate in the temple festivals and may attempt to stop them from going. But for many Chinese women, festivals are the only outlets they have, rare occasions to meet kindred spirits and let off steam after long periods of domestic seclusion. As a festival proceeds, the atmosphere can become quite wild. Within the tem- ple walls, women are sometimes seen to dance, to fall into trance or to behave in theatrical fashion, as we witnessed in some festivals. The singing of Hua’er outside the temples is a natural contin- uation of this process of self-relaxation and the lifting of normal social restraints.

Hua’er in China are great entertainment, but they are not a monolithic phenomenon. What makes the songs different (differently rooted) local festival and courtship traditions must have merged in the course of his- tory. Remnants of local traditions remain in many places, and need to be studied on their own terms.

Courtship in action

In one festival on a summer day in 2003, we descend a spacious valley as impressive as the Grand Canyon. From time to time, there are mine explosions on opposite mountain flanks: they are seen first, in the shape of silent puffs of white clouds, and then heard, since sounds are delayed for several seconds. A long and colourful procession of tiny figures walks down the trail leading to the temple. Many people have travelled for days to get here. Old women walk with diffi- culty, on bound feet, or ride on donkeys. Young girls are dressed colourfully, in pink, red or light blue jackets. Near the temple, the human stream splits: the explorers, the tourists. The more traditional visitors to Lianhuashan every summer to burn incense at sacred sites. Many are tourists. The more traditional visitors to the festival include singers, beggars, monks, soothsayers, mendicant Dan- ish priests, jugglers, blind musicians, ped- dlers, dancing madmen, instant come- dancers, gamblers and the occasional transvestite.

The mountain and the surrounding region were originally Tibetan (pas- toralists’ and farmers’) territory. The influx of Han-Chinese from the 17th century onwards reached new heights in the 16th century, and the Tibetans were gradually pushed out of the area. At this time the impact of Han-Chinese Buddhism altered the face of Lian- huashan. In addition to a small number of Daoist temples which Chinese wor- shippers had already built in pre-Ming times, hundreds of new temples appeared on the mountain. Not far from Lianhuashan, a wall was built to sepa- rate Tibetan from Han-Chinese com- munities. Eventually Chinese restric- tions on the mobility of Tibetans were lifted, and the wall fell to ruins.

Tibetans have maintained a strong pres- ence at Lianhuashan. The entire area is a baffling hodge-podge of different cultures, not only Tibetans. Many groups vice ‘sinicize’ Chinese. They try to speak Chinese, or have even adopted it as their first language. The Dongxiang, a Muslim people of Mongolian descent, live in one of the finest and poorest mountain landscapes of Gansu, just south of Lanzhou. Hui, Bao’an, Salar, and various Mongol groups occupy other territories, which they usually share with local Han. All these groups meet in the Hua’er arena. Their tunes and lyrics are partly similar, suggesting inter-cultural contact over a long period of time. But Hua’er are not a monolithic phenomenon. What makes the songs different (differently rooted) local festival and courtship traditions must have merged in the course of his- tory. Remnants of local traditions remain in many places, and need to be studied on their own terms.

For a few people, they are allowed to fall in love with strangers

In reality, Hua’er are sung by people of all ages, and the stakes are high for everyone who joins. Aged people may not sing for sex — although their flashy repartee often hints at sublimated pas- sion — but their performances still take place under the eye of large crowds of people.
Indian courtesans: from reality to the silver screen and back again

A

sk any Indian about courtesans and the answer is something like the picture drawn above. Dancing girls have long been a part of India; courtesans were already mentioned in Vedic times (1000 B.C.). Over the centuries there have been all sorts of prostitutes, from simple whores who provided sexual services (suya) to temple dancers who to a certain extent prostituted themselves (avadaadu) to highly-respected courtesans (majuraawil, mujara-per-

former) educated in the arts of amuse-

ment. Traditionally, a mujari was a per-

formance by a courtesan (majuraawil) before an audience, where she expressed herself through music, dance and poetry as well as painting and con-

versation. Although this tradition had its heyday about 220 years earlier, it con-
tinued to be popular until the early 20th century.

People today speak nostalgically about the golden age of courtesans, when their company was much appreciated and an accepted part of aristocratic life. Never-

theless, the current practice of this seductive art as found in today's broth-
els (kothas) is designed, while its practi-

tioners are considered outcasts operat-
ing on the margins of society. Of course there is great variety in India's red-light districts: from child prostitutes to call girls in modern city bars and women who still use the mujariawil tradition of dancing and singing as part of their seductive technique. Their daily lives and their nighttime practices place them in a twilight zone, serving a male clien-
tele without regard to caste or religion. Some artists and researchers say that traditional mujariawil no longer exist, as the artistic expressions of today's cour-
tesans are in no way comparable to those of bygone days. Still, although their techniques have changed, these women perform the arts of seduction and their customers visit them not only for their public services, but to return to an earlier time, to leave behind the cares of today and of the future.

Safedabad 2005

In Safedabad, on the outskirts of Luck-

now, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, is a group of women still referred to as mujaraawil. Safedabad is a very small vil-

lage located on the busy road connect-
ing Lucknow and Barabanki. At the main crossing is a small compound called Bagua (lit. garden) hous-
ing about 30 dancing girls, together with some family members and musicians.

Worlds meet over the body of a prostitute

Located at the busy highway, their customers vary from truck drivers, pas-
sengers, and villagers to high-ranking VIPs including government ministers and their entourage whose identities are protected by the dark and remoteness of the place.

The clients come to the Bagua to enjoy a mujari, but outside the compound the girls perform at bachelor parties, fairs and festivals, using microphones and sometimes mime-singing Bollywood tunes. Their dancing is a poor imitation of Bollywood dance style, with hip and shoulder movements being the most important dancing techniques: some perform strip tease as part of their act.

Courtesan movies and brothel scenes

The Bollywood film industry, with 900 releases annually, is among the largest in the world. Many film producers works feature both historical courtesans and their present-day representatives. The first Indian feature film, a silent reli-
gious movie entitled Baja Harischandra, was produced in 1913 by Khudiram Phulke. The introduction of sound in the 1930s gave birth to a tradition of films featuring embedded music and dance sequences. Of these, the courtesan genre includes such well-known examples as Devdas (1955), Pakeeza (1957) and Umrao Jan (1981).

Early courtesan films idealized the beauty and artistic skills of the historical mujaraawil and portrayed prostitutes restored to social respectability through marriage. The narratives were inter-

spersed with song and dance sequences similar to what we assume to have been traditional mujariawil practice. This style of performance began as a blend of the kathak dance genre and the Mujra singing style, both part of classical North Indian dance and music traditions. Ini-
tially the performer was seated while singing and, used seductive hand move-

ments and facial expressions to illustrate the poetry. Used coincidentally at first, these expressive techniques gained importance over time; the dancer later came to perform standing up. Actresses in these early films often came from the brothel culture – they were already trained in singing and dancing, and because they were public women, mat-
ters such as family honour or in-laws were unimportant.

Although these movies are about the seductive arts and lives of courtesans, the heroes are the men who save them. These films, then, are largely the prod-

uct of the male fantasies of Indian film producers. Even the choreographers and dance teachers (as was the custom in the whole of India) were mostly men, who dictated how women should behave and move to depict seductiveness. This was ‘the male gaze’, a term introduced by feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey in her 1975 article ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’. According to Mulvey, in a patriarchal society the pleasure of looking is split between the active/male and the passive/female. Nevertheless, if in the movies the male gaze determines much of the action, in real life the cour-
tesans know how to play this male gaze to get what she wants.

Another trend involves movies about call girls and forced prostitutes, such as Masti (1981) and Chandni (2003). These films portray the harsh realities of women working in the flesh trade, show-

ing how they ended up in brothels, the agonies they endure, and the insccapa-

bility of their fate. Most Bollywood movies include a bar scene. In a scene in Rusty aur Balbi (2000), we find ourselves in a very chic club, with famous film mujarawil as background music. Then, without any relation to the story, the newly-released song Kajra re is staged and the audience is treated to the sudden appearance of Bollywood beauty queen Aishwarya Rai dancing in the mujaraawil style. This combination allows choreog-

raphers to showcase their ability to com-
bine modern Bollywood dancing and old mujaraawil techniques. It also gives scriptwriters the opportunity to introduce another world into which decent people are not supposed to enter and where women are not part of the audience. In this way the anonymity of the cinema hall allows a kind of erotic voyeurism: as the adage has it, contrasting worlds meet over the body of a prostitute.

Safedabad: changing art of seduction

Times have changed for the mujaraawil of Safedabad and their arts of seduction. The traditional way of singing a mujari is nearly forgotten. The older ones, who by now usually style, sometimes mime-sing the songs, remember some of the original reper-
toire, but even they are starting to forget the words or confuse the tune (1981). Their techniques to cope with difficult rhythms is also almost gone. Dance techniques have changed as well – only the sound of the ankle bells and the pizzicato remind us of the former kathak-based style. When asked why the new old techniques have not been preserved, they answer: ‘Why should we? Times have changed. Before, our clients were married people who knew how to appre-
ciate the classical arts. But now our clients are very common men who no longer know how to enjoy those things. So what is the use?’

Many of the songs performed today origi-
nate from courtesan movies; the repertoire includes ghazals, mujaraawil, and general film songs. The young girls dream of being discovered and becom-

ing Bollywood stars; they take their inspiration from Bollywood movies and enjoy imitating Bollywood hip and shoulder movements. The incorporation of these movements into their repertoire creates a circle where representation becomes source for the original.

So what are these seductive techniques? When the women dance they move only certain parts of their bodies, as if a cam-

era is zooming in on the belly or the bosom, disregarding the movements of the rest of the body. The convergence of mood – as relayed through the audience’s performance or the dancer’s complete involvement – is absent. The mujaraawil sublimates to the customers’ gaze, as if she herself is no longer part of the interac-
tion. Her eyes are empty and no roman-
tic or sensual looks are exchanged – a defense mechanism, perhaps, by which the women are able to mentally detach themselves from the actual scene.

What is left is the typical way of per-
forming a mujari seated, in a one-to-one setting, physically very close to the cus-
tomer. The mujaraawil still give one the feeling that they are singing and mov-
ing their body just for you. No matter what she looks like or whatever the sound of her voice, at that moment you feel transported to centuries past and that is the true art of seduction.

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pendent dance scholar. She and her students perform in both bhutaam nayam as well as kathak style. At present she is working on a dissertation on the mujaraawil of Safedabad. jolanda@badharat.nl
is hard to tell. As they interact, the camera slowly pulls back, bringing imported liquor bottles into view and then gradually, the glittering interior of the host club – gold-colored chandeliers, red carpet, green leather sofas, and countless other luxurious materials, mirrored space. The video cuts to a group of hosts horsegiving glasses of Dom Perignon and quickly downing them. As they cheer, the camera closes in on a wad of Japanese yen that a female client has pulled out of her brown Louis Vuitton purse to pay for her evening’s entertainment. The narration begins, undramatically: ‘Alcohol, money, and the game of romance are intermingled in host clubs...’ For NTV, it’s yet another prime-time show in the can about host clubs. But for Japanese viewers, the seemingly endless fascination with handsome hosts and their free-spending clients knows no bottom.

Not long ago, host clubs were virtually unheard of in Japan, and far less known about than geisha culture. Concentrated media exposure in the last decade, however, has cleared the air of the mystery that surrounded the business since the first host club opened in Tokyo in 1966. Host clubs are now flourishing despite Japan’s overall weak economy. To find out how and why women spend tens of thousands – in some cases millions – of yen a night, I recently spent a year researching host clubs in Tokyo.

Fantasy and everyday life

The host club Fantasy, where I conducted most of my fieldwork, is located in Tokyo’s Kabukicho, the biggest sex district in Japan. Female clients, students, housewives, office workers and business owners visit the club in the relatively early hours, while lovelostes and sex workers stop by late at night after work. Most of them go to the club to escape from daily stress and have fun. They also share a vision of intimacy fostered through the game of romance, which I term ‘commodified romance’. Once they fall in love with hosts for fun or for real, they come back to the club repeatedly and spend money on their hosts. Ryu, a 46-year-old housewife of a company owner and mother of three who visited the club for a year, says, ‘I guess women visit host clubs to enjoy the kind of romantic excitement (kôsoku) that rarely happens in everyday life. In the club, they can meet the self who is in love with young attractive hosts who are beautifully radiant.’

On the other hand, their male host counterparts, who typically have minimal education and working-class job experience, make every effort to satisfy these women in order to receive tangible return – money. According to hosts, the host club affords guarantee and bodily movements. They wear expensive brand suits and tanned skin, and perfectly set medium-long hair. Attention to detail extends to their fingertips. Ryu applies a nail topcoat every two weeks and on occasion goes to a nail salon. He does so because, he says, ‘Hands are one of the few body parts exposed and women like clean and beautiful (kôsoku) ones.’ Hosts’ smooth hands aestheticize their body movements and by extension the whole scene. When a female client reaches for a cigarette, for instance, a host smoothly lifts open her lighter and provides a light before she has time to put it in her mouth. When she is about to stand up, he swiftly scoops his hand up to give symbolic support. These unrealistic performances not only draw women’s attention to his hands, but also render the entire scene phantasmic. The hosts’ seductive performance is effectively played out in subtle yet highly calculated ways.

Let me now invite the reader to a host club scene. Amid the alcohol-fueled revelry, the dim and lively atmosphere in the host club shortens the distance between a 25-year-old host, Koji, and his client, a 21-year-old mother and part-time worker. Megumi. Koji and Megumi, who have known each other for three months, are trying to have a conversation and alternatively whisper in each other’s ear to cut through the noise of the club. Every whisper causes a burst of laughter between them. Their intimate interaction excludes all other people, including ‘helper’ hosts at the table, and creates their own intimate world. The moment, however, is ephemeral, and Koji leaves the table once the brief conversation is over. Megumi waits for Koji to return, and in the long and awful wait, Koji’s seductiveness is greatly amplified. Megumi unconsciously looks around, even though other hosts try to entertain her. Seeing Koji, she abruptly asks, ‘Why doesn’t he come back? A helper host replies, ‘Well, the woman over there opened a new bottle.’ Megumi says, ‘Why don’t we order champagne?’ She knows that ordering a more expensive bottle will bring back her host, and gives her almost excessive attention. He cheerfully says, ‘So, you feel like drinking tonight, don’t you? Let’s enjoy ourselves!’ Megumi maintains a glum silence and gives a sulky look. Koji looks at her and says innocently, ‘Oh no! The sulky look ruins your beautiful face!’ He gently grabs her cheeks and pulls them outward. ‘See, this is my favorite smiling face of Megumi,’ he says to everyone at the table. ‘Isn’t she pretty? You didn’t have to come back!’ Megumi says and then seriously adds, ‘You are so much younger and prettier! Look at these juicy thighs!’ Megumi finally makes a bullish smile when Koji says, ‘To drink with Megumi is after all the best (ichijôshû)’. Megumi’s seemingly self-contradictory attitude – attempting to draw Koji’s attention but not quite accepting it – has the effect of intensifying Koji’s attention. The performed ambivalence that implies her mixed feelings of jealousy, sulk, and gladness maximizes what she wants. Her tactic, however, is not completely autonomous. In my interview with Koji, he explained that he carefully calculates how to move from one table to another in order to give the impression he is very popular. Popularity, according to Koji, compels women to compete with each other for his attention. In this way, I can kill two birds with one stone: satisfying both my own and my clients’ desires, he says. Indeed, on that night, Megumi paid over 110,000 yen (roughly 1,000 US dollars) and left the club satisfied.

Presenting the seductive self

Koji contends that Megumi is manipulated to spend more money on him because of his skill at seduction. To an extent this is true, but his view of himself as an aggregator – the masculine narrative of the active seducer and capable individual – is only part of the story. Koji diminishes the fact that he also has been seduced by Megumi’s economic capital, which in her case is performative, enough to insist in himself in her. Even so, several women I have interviewed have emphasized that it is their personalities rather than their economic power that enables a ‘noncommercial’ relationship with their hosts. Sachiko, a 46-year-old widow, for example, visited the club once a week for two years to see her host and described their relationship with him. ‘Our relationship is not based on money, but trust. He trusts me and opens his mind to me.’

Like Koji and Sachiko, hosts and their clients attempt to present themselves as capable and/or attractive selves worthy of receiving money and noncommercial attention respectively. For its part, seduction is a dialectical process, in which one’s desire evolves. Desire to attain money and attention, as Koji and Sachiko exemplify, metonymically orients itself to the creation of the ‘capable’ and/or ‘attractive’ self in a very gendered way. The dialectical process enables two individuals who have different social backgrounds and desires to collaborate and fulfill each other as long as mutual satisfaction – even if it is asymmetric – is maintained.

Thus, seduction in the host club is not just about seducing the other but also about the presentation of the seductive and therefore valuable self. Such ambivalence is rooted in the mirror image that seduction reflects: one simultaneously seduces, and is also seduced by the other. This reflex allows both host and client to use seduction to feel good about the self and at the same time enjoy the intoxication of being seduced. The ambivalence is, I argue, the beauty of seduction that paradoxically evokes sensuous, affective, and visceral pleasure, while leaving room for multiple interpretations, all with a pleasant after-taste.

Note:

All names, including that of the host club, are pseudonyms.

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Akiko Tokuyama

IIAS Newsletter | #40 | Spring 2006
The art of no-seduction: Muslim boy-band music in Southeast Asia and the fear of the female voice

Religion, more often than not, equates the arts of seduction – whether in traditional performances or popular music – with immoral behaviour. The status of music and dance in the Islamic world, especially the fear of its sensuous powers, has been heatedly discussed in religious treatises; with its clean-cut performers and moral messages, nasyid, the Islamic boy-band music of Southeast Asia, seems to epitomize the art of no-seduction. Reality, however, is more complex, as Muslim pop music struggles to combine two competing powers – the eroticism of pop music and the persuasive power of religion. And especially when the female voice comes into play.

One of the most significant developments in present-day Southeast Asia is the rise of an Indonesian-Malay-Muslim middle class. With its own social aspirations, this group feels what might be termed Islamic chic – a cosmopolitan lifestyle characterised by new media and consumerism. Muslim fashion labels, popular "tele-evangelists" such as AA Gym, and a range of lifestyle magazines that affirm that it is hip and modern to be a Muslim.

Nasyid is the musical component of this emergent civil Islam (see also Barendregt 2006). The term nasyid comes from the Arabic word nasihah which means 'singer of a religious song'. In Southeast Asia today it stands for an a-cappella song genre that mainly uses vocal harmonies and is predominantly performed by male vocalists. Not surprisingly, performers of nasyid trace the genre to the Middle East, especially to the verse Hawa’al-haddad ul’ussihs (finally the moon has arisen amidst us), which many Muslims think was sung when the Prophet Muhammad first arrived in Medina.

Malaysian students studying in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan were probably the first to bring home nasyid cassettes, and by the late 1980s the genre had become popular in Malaysia. From there it spread to neighbouring countries with Muslim populations: Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, and especially Indonesia. Practitioners of nasyid are found in religious schools (pesantren) and mosques, secondary schools and universities, where it is used to propagate 'Campus Islam', an often radical mix of student activism, youth culture and religion. Many trace nasyid's popularity to its accessibility: sung in Malay rather than Arabic, nasyid touches on not just religious issues, but social ones as well.

Between the persuasive power of religion and the eroticism of pop

Inspired by the international boy-band craze of the late 1990s, nasyid is a perfect showcase for the issues that confront today's younger Muslim generation. Groups like Indonesia's N'unda or Malaysia's Raisan and Rabban have gained superstar status, performing regularly on radio, television and MTV. Today nasyid is one of the best-selling genres of the local recording industry and one of the few that could potentially go international – some groups already having performed for Muslim audiences in the West and the Middle East. Nasyid's very success as inspired which in many respects follows western manifestations of popular culture. Many regard nasyid's success as inspired by the eroticism of pop music.

Some nasyid artists have recently begun to experiment with crossovers such as hip-hop, R&B and break beat, and to collaborate with non-Muslim rock artists. Others like Izzatul Islam refuse to experiment with newer forms of nasyid and insist that the religious message must be primary; they therefore do not use musical instruments other than the hand-held frame-drums or Malay kompang. As Muslim musicians and music lovers grapple with two competing powers – the eroticism of pop music and the persuasive power of religion – the crucial question remains: At what point does religion end and the eroticism of pop take over?

Artists and fans recognise the religious restrictions on the uses of the performing arts by Muslims, and among them there is lively discussion about the form that nasyid should ideally take. Indeed, there is a long-standing discourse in Islamic law about the permissibility of music and singing, which has recently been summarised by Van Nieuwkerk (1998). Islamic law classifies music into three categories: the commendable recitation of the Koran; the singing of work or wedding songs, which is neither discouraged nor encouraged (makroh); and 'sensuous music that is performed in association with prohibited activities, or that is thought to incite such prohibited practices as consumption of drugs and alcohol, lust, prostitution etc.' (Al-Faruqi 1985: 1-13 as quoted by Van Nieuwkerk). This discourse includes many varied positions and has been more or less stringent in different times and places; discussion on what 'pure' or authentic Islamic music should sound like continues unabated.

Meanwhile, a new style of Islamic popular culture is developing in which many respects follows western manifestations of popular culture. Many regard nasyid's success as inspired by the eroticism of pop music: 'Young men and women dance and sing, defining what she does as world music' (see also Barendregt 2006). The term nasyid is preferred to muzik dunia with Asian and Middle Eastern influences.

Why are the powers of the female voice so feared? A summary of the discourse can be found in Van Nieuwkerk's work (1998), which explains why female performances are so controversial. Women are often seen as the weaker sex in need of protection from male desire; this power balance could be reversed were women to seduce men. As Hirschkind (2004) has recently argued, Muslim scholars have been relatively uninterested in elaborating a theory of vocal persuasion and agency; any positive or negative effect is largely attributed to the listener. As the 19th-century mystic al-Darani said: 'Music does not provoke in the heart that which is not there. That is, the female voice itself does not have the persuasive power to incite a person to commit evil deeds; this can only happen if the evil already reigns in the listener's heart. Besides, if the origin of female nasyid, as its proponents claim, truly is the shahabat haddiy sung by those who hailed Muhammad's arrival in Medina, and if claims that it was women who did the singing are true, a woman's singing voice might one day resound more as a blessing than as a bane. For now, the debate continues.
Dance-floor politics in easternmost Java

**Gandrung** is a beloved entertainment for ritual celebrations in rural Banyuwangi in easternmost Java. In this genre – a variety of one dancer as the official master – the table is important, but what merges with 'maju' segments are dances responsively, some performance is participatory. The participants jointly construct what it would characterize as a diegesis. (This notion, which hails from film theory, where it refers to the world depicted in a film, is rarely applied to genres like gandrung though it helps to understand what is happening. See Arps 1996:66.)

A performance consists of two types of alternating segments roughly equal in length (20-30 minutes) but very different in diegesis. One is called *maju*, literally 'coming forward', which involves four men entering the arena and dancing in turn with a gandrung, while the other gandrung sits at the side and sings. The other segment is called repinan, 'singing', during which the gandrungs converse among guests, and sing songs by request.

In the maju segments the diegesis is sensual and may verge on the erotic. It is highly corporeal, involving choreographed movements and postures. The male dancer projects bravado and the gandrung dances responsively, sometimes defensively, but may also tease and even ridicule him if he does not dance well. The danced interaction stands central, maju also involves singing, which contributes to the diegesis; the dance pieces are usually classically composed whose lyrics express a woman's infatuation with a man. They are suggestive rather than explicit:

> **My mum doesn't like you** not does my dad but I won't give you up

> **You've gone home, leaving me behind** if I knew the way, I'd come after you

The singing segments are also interactive and the physical presence of the gandrung at the table is important, but here the diegesis is primarily a matter of language. Two kinds of song are prominent. In one, the gandrung sings lyrics given to her by a guest on a piece of paper, commenting critically and humorously on fellow villagers; the other is drawn from local popular music whose lyrics are about male-female relations or the region of Banyuwangi.

In the diegesis of gandrung performance, the type 'gandrung' merges with the type 'woman'. There may be other women on the dance floor and at the table, but they belong to the type 'maju'. Their dance style is not like the gandrung's but like that of her male dance partners. (These women are usually wives or girlfriends of male guests, and sometimes prostitutes.)

**Patriotism**
The subject matter of the songs is quite broad. When the lyrics invoke themes that are not otherwise perceptible in the performance and its immediate surroundings, those themes are thereby absorbed into the diegesis. This is one reason why the diegesis of gandrung performance may bear relevance to affairs outside the performance itself. The other reason is that elements of the diegesis may have parallels in the world at large. An example is the analogy of the relation gandrung-guest dancer with that of woman-man.

As the performance draws people into it physically, or at least psychologically, it impresses its diegesis upon its participants and spectators. It thus comes as no surprise that gandrung has been embraced by various institutions for the promotion of political ends. This is especially evident in the context of patriotism. Most songs in the repinan segments are taken from local pop music, a genre of which focuses on the beauty of Banyuwangi’s nature, the heroism of its people and history – songs written under the tutelage of the regional government.

Gandrung outside performance
Gandrung is also used for promotional causes outside performance. The music can be heard on audio cassettes, video CDs, and radio. Stage dances based on gandrung but performed by school girls are a fixed component of official events in Banyuwangi, especially for the welcoming of visiting dignitaries. Statures and other images of gandrung dancers are usually associated with the government as well. This is not just a matter of gandrung functioning as an emblem of regional identity; the statues often flank notices of government programmes.

Only certain parts of gandrung diegesis are recreated in these mediated forms. The statues and other images always portray the gandrung in a dance pose, never as a singer, let alone with the microphone she wields in actual performances. The precarious, sensuously charged danced interaction with men is usually lacking as well. The gandrung that accompanies promotional activities is not just a decontextualized but a sanitized gandrung.

**The politics of attraction**
A critical question concerning language in the world is how it is combined with other forms of representation to win people over. The importance of this issue is not matched by the extent of its study. The discipline of rhetoric is important, but focuses on specific kinds of (mostly western) speech and writing – on convincing – and not other kinds of winning over. If we want to understand this use of language and its frequent failing, other approaches are needed and other forms of discourse must be studied within their contexts. Among them should be genres like gandrung. The seductive potential of its music and dance is a source of enjoyment, irritation and indignation; the genre is alluring. As it attracts spectators to the performance space it creates a choreographic and discursive arena for thematizing cultural concerns that affect life beyond the performance. What is being pulled into the gandrung is ‘experiencing persons’. What is subsequently ejected into the world and into other diegeses is persons who have now experienced that diegesis and may bring their experience to bear on those other diegeses. This possibility of influencing the outside world is why gandrung is employed for political causes.

Yet some aspects of the diegesis of performance are barred from the promotional use of gandrung. The Banyuwangi government uses gandrung as an emblem or mascot based on the realization that it has allure. The government that the government has in mind, however, is the sanitized kind. Gandrung as entertainment at a ritual celebration may superficially look and sound the same but it is much more complex, and in some respects radically different. It invites people jointly to create a diegesis, but the diegesis is not harmonious. Rather, it is characterized by tension, especially between men and woman. This is also clear in the lyrics, which do not present a single vantage point on love; many lyrics address gender injustice, and some explicitly threaten conflict while the media market helps to produce and spread such signs of antagonism and dissent. In Banyuwangi, then, the sensuous charm of a singer-dancer lies at the heart of an extensive and complex field of political forces.

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The Indonesian conundrum: entrenched corruption and failing reform

Experts and most Indonesians agree that since the fall of Suharto in 1998, Reformasi and Demokratisasi have failed to check corruption, commonly referred to as KKN: Korupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotisme. The new government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has made the fight against KKN its chief priority, but the results so far have been disappointing.

Why is the struggle against corruption in Indonesia so difficult? What are the main mechanisms for its intensifying proliferation? Who are the principal beneficiaries and cost bearers? What role can Indonesian civil society play in overcoming the growing threat of KKN? Can Indonesia escape the KKN trap, which threatens to create a future of poverty and turmoil?

Corruption is central to understanding the failure of Indonesia's new rulers to deliver meaningful reform, well-founded prosperity or a measure of social justice. In the late Suharto period the country was widely thought of as a kleptocracy, with one extended family figuring as kleptocrats-in-chief. Since Suharto's fall (which has been much exaggerated) and the advent of a Reformasi (which has been fully qualified by a series of inveterate comedians), we have a democratised – or at least oligopolised – and decentralised version of Suharto-era KKN.

The cronies conglomerates, both Chinese and pribumi (indigenous Indonesian), and their ‘in-house’ money men survived the crash of the currency, the crash of the banks, the crash of export-led growth and the rise of poverty. Persisting, pervasive corruption has permitted most of them to weather default, bankruptcy, bank restructuring and asset sell-offs. They have preserved their business empires in the face of complete financial and economic disaster for the state and the people. And they have resorted once again to the tried and trusted mechanisms and networks of KKN to spectacular effect.

How did things go so wrong so quickly? Or we might ask: How did it all go so right for the cronies and their threatened business empires? As Robison and Hadzic have shown, the refinancing of the bankrupt banks following the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98 was long on carrot but short on stick. Almost all of the International Monetary Fund’s $14 billion, distributed through the Bank Indonesia liquidity support fund (BLBI) to rescue and refloat Indonesia’s private banks, was promptly embezzled by the corporate cronies who controlled them.5 The banks lent the money ‘in-house’ whence it disappeared, mainly into offshore investments and debt repayment.

The court actions intended to recover this money were another sorry illustration of the failings of the Indonesian legal system in the reform process. Case after case collapsed under the influence of flawed judicial reasoning and action. The IMF, the bountiful source of this new instant debt mountain that was supposed to rescue the economy, watched astonished (though why should it have been?) and conscious – but ultimately powerless – from the sidelines.

Seven years on from the IMF ‘rescue’ Indonesia is essentially still prostrate and now doubly crucified by the gnomes of Washington and Wall Street. In the Suharto years the World Bank’s toleration of a steady haemorrhage of 30% or so of its own development loan funding to KKN left a $10 billion public debt submerged in the rush to money politics under Suharto’s successor and political crony. President Jusuf Habibie. Habibie pioneered his way on the back of the Golkar Party’s attempted looting of Bank Bali and by bilking the poverty alleviation fund of Bupati (Badan Urusan Logistik, the national logistics agency) to assure funding for the 1999 election.

The Suharto-era cronies were joined in resuming the plunder of the Indonesian interior (to borrow a phrase from Marx) by a widening circle of senior bureaucrats, state industry sector executives, judges, prosecutors, court officials, police and military generals (many retired) and politicians and party officials. Then, as decentralisation reforms took hold from 2001, officials in the provinces and regencies, both bureaucratic and elected, joined the KKN club, colluding with local business and operating even without the centralised restrictions of Suharto’s dictatorship. This has gravely sabotaged the potential of special and regional (ordinary) autonomy to deliver long-delayed economic justice or a sense of effective local participation in the aggrieved provinces of Aceh and Papua and elsewhere.

To protect and swindle

Thus money politics in parliament was complemented by money justice, kleptocratic state administration and TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, or armed forces) capitalism, corruption and extortion. New government-established institutions to combat corruption have proliferated since 1998 – most notably an Anti-Corruption Commission (KPK, Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi) and Court – while anti-corruption NGOs from Transparency International to TNI Watch are active and articulate. But despite backing from mass print media, notably the Tempo group, Indonesian civil society remains embattled, struggling for real empowerment in the anti-corruption campaign.

A principal reason for this is the impunity of the military and military-dominated sectors of the government in dealing with civil society opponents who seek to expose and undermine the military business empire, which includes illegal logging and log export,6 and fuel smuggling and theft on a vast scale in collusion with corrupt officials at the state oil and gas company, Pertamina (Pertambangan Minyak dan Gas Bumi Nasional).7 TNI and the police also routinely extend protection to big business associates who themselves employ violence and intimidation in defence of corrupt empires.

TNI remains a prime guarantor of Suharto family wealth, which became clear when Tommy Suharto spent a year on the run in Jakarta under military protection after procuring the murder of the judge who sentenced him to prison on corruption charges in 2002.8 Meanwhile, retired military generals at BIN (Badan Intelijen Negara, the State Intelligence Agency) were plainly involved in the poisoning-murder of the founder of Kontras (Komisi Untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan, Commission for Disappearance and Victims of Violence) and leading the scourge of the TNI, Munir, in 2004. Only the BIN field operative Garuda pilot, Pollycarpus, has been brought to trial for the killing.9

In Indonesia corruption thrives under the influence of a large and still growing business, political administrative and military elite who are prepared to unperturb unwieldy state authority and state violence – as well as private violence under state or military protection – to defend their interests. Tackling KKN effectively depends on far-reaching reforms that must go well beyond the window-dressing of Reformasi. Bitter political struggles over corruption undoubtedly lie ahead.

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Corruption, collusion and nepotism after Suharto: Indonesia’s past or future?

Richard Robison

I

When the Asian economic crisis struck Indonesia in 1997 it was generally thought to signal the end of a system of power defined by the corrupt and collusive relationships of KKN (Korupsi, Kelusai dan Nepotisme). Surely the days of the cronies were over, and their corporate empires would be taken over by large international investors.

Are we witnessing in Indonesia a period of `savage capitalism' as private interests are released to do battle in an unaccommodated marketplace? After all, stock exchanges, corporations, parliaments and financial systems in the early years of market capitalism in Britain and the US were characterised by corruption and collusion of the grossest kind before being progressively, but not wholly (as the resurgance of cronies in Bush's America illustrates), subordinated to a systematic rule of law.

Will the new economic and political entrepreneurs of Indonesia now be forced to address the costs ofcrony capitalisms by creating the institutions to resolve their growing collective action dilemmas – including the provision of effective courts and an honest judiciary? Will new democratic institutions open the door to reformers? Or are we seeing the survival of neo-patrimonial capitalist society as oligarchy collides with neo-liberal globalisation in the early 21st century? Other similar neo-patrimonial market hybrids have shown amazing resilience. The Phillipines, for example, has been mired in oligarchic politics for more than five decades despite deep immersion in global markets.

Since the crisis and the fall of Suharto optimism has waned. Even the World Bank has admitted the loneliness of reformist technocrats operating in an indifferent and hostile environment. The failures of two presidents to drive reform suggest that defeat and humiliation in the case of Wahid or co-option and complicity in the case of Megawati strengthened the evidence suggests that they are prepared to engage with former defaulters where new opportunities seem to outweigh risks, especially in well-subscribed deals on the Jakarta Stock Exchange.

But we must also rethink the nature of those global markets that determine the flow of investment and finance into Indonesia and to extent to which they are now dominated by pools of finance located overseas by the very conglomerates that funded the rupiah in 1997, often with funds they had plundered from their own unscrupulousanks, and for whom KKN was a normal and, indeed, necessary condition for commercial success. We must also assess whether the rise of China as a new market and source of investment for Indonesia implies rules of the market-...

Must we therefore conclude that the Asian political and institutional reforms and upheavals have provided no new effective avenues through which reformist forces might impinge their interests? This apparently depressing reality has driven the search for reform and reformers into three different areas. For neo-liberals, the path to reform is in the relentless impact of global markets, institutional reforms and the glacial grinding away of reformist politicians and technocrats from above. On the other hand, many reformers outside the neo-liberal camp look outside the parliamentary arena to seek signs of real reform among NGOs and grass roots movements. Others argue that the grip of predatory alliances upon electoral and party politics may be exaggerated and that these new systems do offer opportunities to throw out or prosecute corrupt or unpopular politicians and for aspirings politicians unconnected to the main parties or the military to gain entry into the world of politics in a way not possible before.

Indonesia provides a laboratory where we can observe the collision of markets with highly iligal, populist and preda-atory systems of power. It poses the ques-

...
The price of uncertainty: kampung land politics in post-Suharto Bandung

Most Indonesian urban poor live in ramshackle settlements called *kampungs* and occupy land according to tenure arrangements unconsciously identified with the formal land law regime. Reform since the 1998 fall of Suharto has led to some recognition of these ‘semi-formal’ arrangements. This complicates the ambitious development agenda of a city like Bandung, pitting two sides with seemingly conflicting interests against each other: the urban poor and the municipal government. Both are dissatisfied with Bandung’s land reforms.

Gustaf Reerink

In less than a century, Bandung developed from a drowsy town of some 10,000 inhabitants into a metropolitan city of over 2.5 million. Located in the mountainous West-Javanese Federation, Bandung was a rubber and tea plantation retreat for well-to-do Europeans. After independence, between 1945 and 1965, it was Indonesia’s fastest-growing city, as refugees fled West-Javanese countyside that had become a battleground between the Republican Army and the Daulah Islam movement for the establishment of an Islamic state. Most people moved to relatively safe cities and hundreds of thousands found refuge in Bandung. In later years more migrants came to take advantage of the increased demand for labour. To this day the city attracts new-comers from all over Indonesia.

These vast migration flows, paired with government inaction, spawned many urban kampungs. In the colonial period, the city was literally engulfed near villages. The colonial municipality kept these villages autonomous as legal enclaves that applied their own adat law instead of the system of land rights created by the Dutch Civil Code. After independence many rural migrants moved into these villages, which soon lost their rural character and developed into urban kampungs. Other migrants formed new kampungs by squatting land, mostly along railways, railway tracks and on graveyards. Because Indonesia did not formalise a housing policy until the 1970s, and because that policy has largely failed to meet the needs of the urban poor, migrants still have no choice but to settle in these kampungs.

Treating the poor like the poor

To this day, urban kampung dwellers do not expect much from the government. During the first decades after independence, they remained more or less autonomous. From the 1970s, when the New Order’s economic policy began to yield a profit, the government started programs to improve kampung living conditions, but land tenure and land use were not addressed. So despite physical, social and economic improvements, most kampungs are not in accordance with the formal land law regime. The 1960 Basic Agrarian Law (BAL) was an attempt to abolish the colonial dualist system of land rights. Unregistered (former) adat land was to be integrated into the system of statutory land rights created by the BAL. In order to accelerate this process, the Indonesian government initiated land registration projects beginning in the 1980s, providing land titles to the poor at low cost, but the projects themselves were costly and had limited reach. Most important, the government pursued an ambitious policy toward providing the poor with documentation reflecting legal entitlement to their land. With the New Order developmentalist approach gaining prominence, the government wanted free reign to develop any land however it wished. By not acknowledging land tenure arrangements existing outside systems of statutory land rights and traditional adat law, it could do so.

The municipality has seldom been strict in enforcing regulations on land tenure and land use, not even after the Indonesian parliament passed a spatial planning law in 1994. This was not only the result of a lack of administrative capacity; the political and socio-economic costs may also have been too high for strict enforcement. But if the government or an investor needed the land, they could indeed arbitrarily evict kampung dwellers without proper compensation, especially during the New Order (1966-1998). In Bandung, evicted settlers sometimes received some form of compensation, even if they possessed no evidence of rights to the land.

The lack of land registration contributed to the emergence of legal pluralism in Indonesia’s land sector. Many forms of land tenure found in kampungs still cannot be classified under the legally acknowledged system of statutory land rights, but neither under traditional adat law. Generally, kampung dwellers apply ‘semi-formal’ tenure arrangements, which are non-traditional and use notions of the formal system of land law and other formal legislation that do not even recognise them. However, the local (urban sub-district and district) administration does recognise and accept these arrangements (see also: Fitzpatrick 1997, 1999), not on any legal basis, but on the basis of the political power the parties have over the municipality’s constit- tution: in principle, these laws not only transferred tasks and authorities but also decision-making power and, to a lesser extent, financial means from Jakarta to districts and munici- palities. So, according to the laws, the National Land Agency (NLA), one of the country’s most corrupt state institutions, would have to transfer its powers to these local governments. In the last few years, however, the NLA’s reputation, see: Bachradi, Bachrioktora and Safitri 2004). Spatial planning would no longer be executed according to a top-down approach. Free elections on the dis- trict and municipal level would allow people to push for the reform of regional and local regulations necessary to clear the way for innovative approaches to land administration and management. And because the laws also allowed districts and municipalities to generate their own local revenues (PAD). But in practice, they would actually have the means to implement innovations.

Soon, however, a number of presidential decisions diluted the effect of the new laws on regional autonomy. Land issues over which districts and cities have authority are now limited to seven, such as spatial planning and the resolution of conflicts over the unauthorized occupation of land. But districts and cities already had authority over most of these issues, and others, such as the authority to define adat rights, are highly relevant for a city like Bandung. So far, the clear jurisdiction guarantees, not much changed in the urban land sector. Nevertheless, the laws do have an impact on the legal position of Bandung kampung dwellers, though in a different manner than expected: there is an increased risk of eviction for kampung dwellers from ‘their’ land but an increase in the amount of compensation they receive.

Fiscal decentralisation has resulted in what some Indonesians call ‘local revenue obsessor’ (obesii PAD). Bandung’s municipal government goes out of its way to attract new investors. It wants the city to become a centre of the services industry, which in practice means shopping malls and factory outlets. To achieve this, the municipality must redevelop land, especially if well-positioned, to meet economic or strategic goals. Kampung land is attractive for this purpose: it can be acquired at low cost and redeveloped it eliminates urban eyesores while upgrading Bandung to a modern metropolitan city.

Kampung power

It is questionable whether the general public supports Ban- dung’s ambitious urban development agenda. Municipal offi- cials and council members have repeatedly demonstrated that they do not represent the people but also business interests. Local NGOs and academia criticised the latest spatial plan for the lack of transparency in the decision-making process and for its content (see: Zulkaidi and Kumala Sari 2004). In that respect, regional autonomy has not met expecta- tions. But kampung dwellers no longer accept land acquisition at any price. Negotiations over compensation last long and are can- tankers. A recent example was the acquisition of land for the Pasupati byover, in north-central Bandung, which lasted over six years and led to vigorous protests by settlement dwellers affected by the project. In the end most dwellers wel- comed the outcome. Their daring to reject the municipal gov- ernment’s initial offer and organise protests won them rela- tion to a new settlement in the city’s outskirts, or compensation for their buildings and land, even in the case of some squatters.

These are not just power games. Local officials and politicians now acknowledge that kampung dwellers have a right to com- pensation. Still, the outcome of any acquisition of kampung land is uncertain, not only for the urban poor, but as a result of the new socio-political balance, for any government institu- tion or investor wishing to acquire urban land. Recent expe- riences have led the Indonesian government to pass a new reg- ulation that should facilitate efficient land acquisition. However, it applies only to land registered according to the BAL, and otherwise leaves matters of eviction and compensa- tion to the discretion of the municipal government. As long as there is uncertainty about the legal position of kampung dwellers, the once useful flexibility in the system of land law will harm any forms of urban development. In terms of time and money, and given its development ambitions, the Bandung municipality is paying a high price for this uncertainty.

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Land and authority: the state and the village in Pasir, East Kalimantan

Laurens Bakker

P asir is the southernmost district of the province of East Kalimantan, comprised of a flat coastal plain and a mountainous hinterland with Gunung Lumut. Most inhabitants are ethnic Orang Pasir who have recently shifted their cultural focus from nearby Central Kalimantan’s Dayak communities to the ethnically diverse coastal area, Islam and Malay identity.

Without its natural resources, Pasir would have been an inconspicuous peripheral district within Indonesia. Oil palm plantations and mining dominate the coastal area and provide work for migrants from throughout Indonesia. In the mountains, where communities of subsistence farmers live in villages comprised of a small number of extended families, legal (and illegal) logging and lading slash-and-burn farming are the main economic activities. Local customs and both agreements between communities, rather than national law or government policies, regulate access to land.

Pasir’s district government, based in the city of Tanah Grogot, is far away from the mountains. Because communication and administrative control are lacking, government policies and regulations frequently hold no sway in mountain villages. Moreover, mountain communities saw the New Order’s unilateral management of logging and mining projects in Gunung Lumut as dictatorial and unjust, leaving them suspicious of all government initiatives and national law. As a result, official regulations are implemented along the coast, but lessen in influence and even disappear in the mountains. However, some communities continue to issue land or forest management, whether communal lands are (re)claimed exist within their district. The Pasir government enlisted a team of researchers from Universitas Hasanuddin in Makassar to conduct four days of field research in 2002, mainly in the mountain plain where some large numbers of migrants live. Although part of the team worked along Gunung Lumut’s periphery, no research was done in the mountainous region itself. Results showed clear differences among the areas studied, but final conclusions were presented in terms of a percentage of the whole population living in a particular area, making existing claims appear insignificant. Thus, in 2003, the district government drafted a regulation stating that communal land claims are effectively no longer existed in Pasir.

You’re not the state, we are

This, to many, did not reflect ‘local ways’. Three local NGOs, claiming to represent Pasir’s adult communities, immediately challenged the district government. The first was LAP (Lembaga Adat Pasir, or Foundation for Adat in Pasir), whose mission is to improve religious, medical and education facilities for all of Pasir’s population. The second, PEMa (Persatuan Masyarakat Adat Pasir, or Association of Adat Communities in Pasir), is a small Gunung Lumut organisation that puts its considerable knowledge of local circumstances to work on just about anything it finds relevant. The third, PBA-PDB (Persatuan Benuaq Adat – Paser Dayak), is a small Gunung Lumut organisation that puts its considerable knowledge of local circumstances to work on just about anything it finds relevant. The government’s decision to address the NGOs’ protests is not mere opportunism. Most government officials are of migrant origin and identify little with Pasir society beyond Tanah Grogot. They co-operate with organisations that appear to best represent it – a pragmatic approach that endows government officials with popular support, but leaves them wary of opportunism and power plays from other popular elements including the very NGOs they co-operate with.

State? What state?

For the Orang Pasir of the Gunung Lumut mountains, the debate on communal adat lands was as irrelevant as every government official who ever passed through to confirm the existence of such lands. However, as in government-NGO relations, Gunung Lumut communities treat messages from the ‘other party’ pragmatically. When decentralisation began, village governments swiftly adopted the view that national law recognised their authority over land and forest in their adat territories. Although authority over forests has since been mostly recentralised to the districts’ Department of Forestry offices, some communities continue to issue their own logging permits. Similarly, the borders of a national forest reserve designated by the Ministry of Forestry overlap adat lands; some communities recognize its protected status while others hold their customary rights higher, depending on their ideas about preservation or exploitation.

A second example of this pragmatism is the size of territories claimed. Pasir’s National Land Agency, in accordance with national law, limited the amount of land that can be registered per family head to 20 hectares. But Gunung Lumut communities claim much larger communal adat territories; with the smallest compound at around 50 ha per family, no community has yet agreed to register it. However, many have mapped their territories and borders and some are attempting, with varying success, to persuade government officials to sign these maps as an expression of alternative registration. Most communities express a keen interest in formal registration, but on a communal basis and for all of the territory.

Reconcilable differences?

Negotiationselective enforcement are common ways of dealing with land issues in Pasir’s mountains. Mountain communities consider the district government as only one of many sources of authority, while the government’s administrative decisions show disregard for the existence of local traditional systems of land management. The two meet only through a chain of NGOs with varied local expertise and influence, but with a solid position in local politics. Although the district has lately gained a place in district politics, its relation to ‘local ways’ is not necessarily clear or direct. The physical and procedural distance between mountain communities and the district government allows for the communities’ locality to be politicized by outsiders, such as the LAP and rival PBA-PDB.

On the upside, district politics are certainly more influenced by local circumstances than they were before decentralisation. ‘Local ways’ can be a platform for local politics and are regarded as such by local governments. However, in spite of what some politicians and intellectuals see as the potential of becoming subversive to local politics. The political experimenting currently taking place in districts throughout Indonesia has not yet led to stable results. Local people may gain influence in district politics, or a local political and economic elite may seize control after the New Order’s example. Pasir’s politics appear to be evolving towards the former, but it is too early to conclude that a new style of district government has been established.

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Indonesian-Netherlands Studies of Decentralisation of the Indonesian ‘Persekutuan’ and its impact on ‘Agraria’ is a Dutch-Indonesian socio-legal research project focusing on impacts of the new democratic administrative structure on the rule of law and local levels in Indonesia. The project studies how ‘guardian institutions’ such as courts and chambermen overstepping the legality of the acts of newly empowered lawmakers and executives; and how the new system influences ‘rhetorical legal certainty’ of common people, an in-depth analysis in the context of the implementation of Indonesia’s ‘Schemes’ programme ‘Indonesia in Transition’. Participating universities include Universitas Andalas, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Universitas Airlangga, Universitas Paramadina, Leiden University and Radboud University Nijmegen. A more detailed account can be found at: www.indes.indonesia.edu
Processed that led to the rough 50:50 partition of Timor to modern history. The annual records of the VOC post in Timor formed a comprehensive body of material from the 1625 to the 1760s. The Portuguese material is less well-preserved but includes a substantial number of partly-published clerical and secular sources of the 16th century and later. Timorese oral traditions, recorded after the 16th century, can be used from a posthumous perspective to clarify how events or processes were perceived by indigenous groups.

Colonial seeds of division

From these materials a few points can be made, which may be elaborated by future research. First, the localisation of the Portuguese group clearly explains much of their resilience. This is by no means unique to the Timorese situation. Malyn Newitt (2005) has recently stressed the role of localised populations in the preservation of various Portuguese domains in Africa and Asia. It has also been pointed out that such communities were in themselves important prerequisites to engaging with local populations in trade and diplomacy. The Topasses, or Black Portuguese, a mestizo community, established a martial and self-confident culture in Laranjata (East Flores) and Timor in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. They were so firmly attached to Dominican fathers that they resisted efforts to integrate them into the region. In letters, Topass leaders consistently appear as good Catholic subjects of the King of Portugal, though it is clear that they at the same time developed their own ways and adopted (or rather inherited) many local customs.

By the late 17th century the Topasses dominated most of Timor, save for an enclave around Kupang where the Dutch led a precarious existence. Topass leaders were able to profit from the trade of sandalwood and other commodities, such as beeswax and slaves, capitalising on the 1610 Dutch Portuguese peace treaty. Portuguese Macau was the main economic channel to the outside world. The Topass elite consolidated the many minor Timorese principalities by way of matrimonial alliances, the establishment of minor ‘colonies’, and outright threats. The Dutch adversaries were far from weak themselves. The Portuguese and Catholic symbols of authority possessed over the local Timorese aristocracy, given the rather superficial distinction between Dutch and local elites, sources hint that the locals incorporated such symbols in their own universe of concepts. The concept of hegemony might be applicable to the situation of Portuguese Timor to a certain extent – a system where opposition and difference are not overtly repressed but rather co-opted in a social order.

Until a century ago colonial ‘rule’ on Timor was a matter of indirect governance. The number of whites in the Portuguese trading port of Lifau, in West Timor, was no more than 50 in 1689, and the number of Dutchburgers in Kupang was likewise limited. For the Portuguese and Dutch alike it was essential to bind local aristocracies to their interests through institutionalised exchange of gifts or goods. Over the three centuries of colonial intrusion, the resources and organisational structure of Timorese principalities, far from remaining in a pristine, changeless state, were transformed by the dissemination of firearms and the changing fortunes of the sandalwood trade.

East and west and why

This localised order constructed during the 17th century was disrupted by the persistent attempts of the Portuguese Estado da India (Indian administration) to integrate Timor in its own hierarchy beginning in 1722. For long periods in the 18th century a bitter struggle raged between Topass leaders and centrally-appointed administrators, in which local principalities became entangled. Finally, in 1765, the official governor had to leave Lifau, the traditional Portuguese stronghold in West Timor, and establish a new residence in Dili in the north. Only in the 1780s did a reconciliation between the Topasses and the governor take place. By then, however, trade with Macau had begun to decline due to insecure conditions on the island. A campaign to shift the trade ways and adopted (or rather inherited) many local customs.

By the late 17th century the Topasses dominated most of Timor, save for an enclave around Kupang where the Dutch led a precarious existence. Topass leaders were able to profit from the trade of sandalwood and other commodities, such as beeswax and slaves, capitalising on the 1610 Dutch Portuguese peace treaty. Portuguese Macau was the main economic channel to the outside world. The Topass elite consolidated the many minor Timorese principalities by way of matrimonial alliances, the establishment of minor ‘colonies’, and outright threats. The Dutch adversaries were far from weak themselves. The Portuguese and Catholic symbols of authority possessed over the local Timorese aristocracy, given the rather superficial distinction between Dutch and local elites, sources hint that the locals incorporated such symbols in their own universe of concepts. The concept of hegemony might be applicable to the situation of Portuguese Timor to a certain extent – a system where opposition and difference are not overtly repressed but rather co-opted in a social order.

Until a century ago colonial ‘rule’ on Timor was a matter of indirect governance. The number of whites in the Portuguese trading port of Lifau, in West Timor, was no more than 50 in 1689, and the number of Dutchburgers in Kupang was likewise limited. For the Portuguese and Dutch alike it was essential to bind local aristocracies to their interests through institutionalised exchange of gifts or goods. Over the three centuries of colonial intrusion, the resources and organisational structure of Timorese principalities, far from remaining in a pristine, changeless state, were transformed by the dissemination of firearms and the changing fortunes of the sandalwood trade.

This localised order constructed during the 17th century was disrupted by the persistent attempts of the Portuguese Estado da India (Indian administration) to integrate Timor in its own hierarchy beginning in 1722. For long periods in the 18th century a bitter struggle raged between Topass leaders and centrally-appointed administrators, in which local principalities became entangled. Finally, in 1765, the official governor had to leave Lifau, the traditional Portuguese stronghold in West Timor, and establish a new residence in Dili in the north. Only in the 1780s did a reconcili-
In Indian villages, every family or household living together under one roof has the right to a government ration card, good for acquiring wheat flour, rice, sugar and cooking oil from nearby depots at cheaper rates. When families migrated from their villages to the Devipur Camp, they were allotted tents on the basis of these ration cards: one tent per card. But the tents were too small to accommodate all those listed on a single card. To obtain more tents, families succeeded in acquiring new ration cards listing only husband, wife and their unmarried children, fragmenting the extended village household among multiple tents. Examples in Devipur Camp include a father and mother living in one tent with different children; a husband and wife living in entirely different locations or without their children; and widowed grandmothers living with their grandchildren.

Over the years new families formed within the camp as men and women of different families met, married and had children. Such families moved out of their previous tent(s) and were allotted new tents of their own. Thus, within the camp, each new marriage created a new household. This differed from household creation in the village, which took considerably longer.

Changing family and gender relations

The system of test distribution, and the nature of the tent itself, has led to changes in household structure and relationships. Privacy and security are limited because tents cannot be closed properly or locked; life remains exposed, open and vulnerable to external intrusions. People worry that traditional restrictions and taboos, especially regarding the young, cannot be maintained as they were in the village. People fear youths might choose their spouses irrespective of caste and kinship rules or indulge in sex unhindered by village tradition. This fear is exacerbated because marital alliances are difficult to achieve. Now that village customs are evolving and sexual mores loosening, people are afraid of character assassination, such as when a daughter is perceived as shaming a family when accused of having engaged in pre-marital sex. This has made camp life tough and finding spouses even tougher.

Take Ram Singh, a retired army man with two sons. He and his wife live in one tent and his younger son and his family live in another one nearby. While his son is at work outside of camp, Ram Singh stays with his son’s family to watch over them. Meanwhile, Ram Singh’s wife stays with their elder son and his family in a settled colony 20 km away, where the son serves at an army post and his children require their grandmother’s presence. According to Ram Singh, back in the village he did not have to worry about his family members’ security and his wife did not have to leave her home to be with the elder son’s family because they all lived under the same roof. His case shows that while his household has fragmented, his family ties are as strong as before.

Thus the camp has changed the role of the father or family patriarch and the family’s division of labour. In the village, each family member had a certain status and performed tasks based on gender and age. The joint family also understood that certain areas of the house were the domain of the couple or for women only. Because the authority of the patriarch or male elders is not exercised directly within the tent, gender relations within the family have loosened and, as a result, women and adult children have more say in family matters. Young women in particular reign over matters related to education and the marriage of children.

Increased freedom has also made women more vulnerable, because it has eroded gender boundaries and overall security traditionally provided by the structure inherent to the joint-family household. This may be one reason behind female solidarity in the camps. New women’s social activities have transcended traditional boundaries, as the 2002 formation of Mahila Mandals (Women’s Groups) demonstrated. Three such groups exist in Devipur; women share views and problems, discuss family health, hygiene and children’s education issues, and organize recreational activities that unite women irrespective of caste or village origin and foster ties based largely on gender.

In the villages, family was an identity expressed through sharing, cooperation and communality that transcended the barrier of kinship extended. The camp, however, is characterized by inter-village ties that grew into a single tent consciousness and identities that often divided the village and family identity. For example, migrants formed the New Migrant Association comprised of camp representatives who lobby the government for additional settlement facilities. A camp culture akin to a large extended family has developed in Devipur: relationships are bound as much by the ties of marriage and blood as by the primacy given to the overall well-being and problems of camp dwellers.}

Changing marriage and kinship rules

The diverse backgrounds of the Devipur population have influenced gender relations between families. Traditionally, rules of kinship and marriage govern social life; village engamy is not the rule and marriages are arranged between individuals both within and beyond the village. Religion and caste endogamy and gata (clan) engamy are maintained. In the camp, a Brahmin, a Rajput, a Jat (peasant), and the Scheduled Castes all traditionally follow caste endogamy. The difference of status between wife-giver and wife-taker families – the family giving her is customarily considered to be of higher status than the family giving her – is not very significant in the camp. Exchange marriage – the marriage of a man to his sister’s husband’s sister – was once common in the village: if a brother or sister was not present, then the marriage was arranged through cousins. While exchange marriages have not disappeared, they have declined drastically.

Some women, given the greater context of crisis and conflict and the uncertainty that goes with increased freedom, still feel more secure pursuing marriage through kinship relations but more often today people prefer to reach beyond kinship circles. War has increased the number of widows, yet the number of widows who remarried has decreased. Marriage of a young widow is welcomed, but not of an elderly woman who has adult children. The pressure on the wife of the deceased to remain an unwedded widow has increased owing to a widow’s entitlement to a pension, employment and the glorification of her spouse’s death as a martyr. In the village widows lived in their in-laws’ household, but in the camp most widows remain single and live alone or with one or two relatives with whom they feel most comfortable.

A girl’s father might be willing to give his daughter to a prospective groom living in the camp if the latter has a good government job, as he might one day be able to leave the camp and settle in a better place. But the reality for most in the camps is grim. Agricultural activity has been reduced because fields and crops are unemployable; some suffer from alcoholism and succumb to gambling. Girls, though engaged in household chores, have ample time on their hands. The recent government decision to shift schooling back to the border villages further increased the already high drop-out rate of 50%. This has reinforced the belief that the camp is home only to the poor, the elderly and the widowed – those who cannot find better alternatives. When the village is sanctified by its traditional methods, rules and social controls, the camp’s perception as a place where unmarried boys and girls are doomed to stay makes outsiders reluctant to arrange marriage with anyone living there. The average marriage age has risen because satisfying traditional caste and kinship rules and overcoming disadvantages of camp life have combined to make matchmaking exceedingly difficult.

Escaping the camp through marriage has therefore become an elusive ideal: to arrange marriage with someone outside the camp (‘migrants’ to ‘settled’ residents). If the latter is not possible, then another area is chosen. This has revived the mafia, a gathering where members worship the clan deity, eat together and discuss intra-clan problems, issues and marriage alliances. Every clan has its mafia; the frequency of such gatherings and the number of people who attend them have increased. The feasts provide opportunities to gain new information, necessary to find a suitable bride or groom.

Microcosm of social change?

The traditional extended family has morphed into a new kind of ‘household’ in Devipur Camp: it can be a married couple with their unmarried children; a single person (a widow, a dyad (widowed mother and daughter) or a triad (grandfather, daughter-in-law and the grand-daughter); a mother staying with her daughters and her daughters’ children. Many family members and kin no longer live together and have formed new neighbourhoods of people related through little more than war and happenstance. Family activities now involve a much wider network, increasing openness and diminishing traditional hierarchy. Women exercise more decision-making power within the family and enjoy more freedom outside it, though some sense uncertainty and anxiety as well; increased female mobility and their newfound collective identity have proven female identity can be bolstered by more than blood alone. And so, too, the notions of family and kinship.}

Abha Chauhan

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Contemporary Taiwanese women's arts: curating a movement into art

Ming-Hui Chen

The post-1987 liberalisation of society and blossoming of feminist movements in Taiwan opened space for female artists, who spearheaded the reinterpretation of gender, class and ethnicity in a patriarchal society. Amid the ambivalence and heterogeneity induced in Taiwanese culture by its colonial history, women began to express their cultural ‘in-betweenness’ and modernity in curated exhibitions.

Speaking subalterns

In 1988, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak coined the term ‘subal-
terns’ to refer to the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society, whether expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender or in any other way (Guba 1988: 35). His ‘Can the Sub-
altern Speak?’ asserted that ‘in the context of colonial pro-
duction, the subaltern had no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow’ (Ashcroft 1995: 28).

When discussing artistic development, I intend ‘speak’ to mean ‘having an opportunity to show one’s work in public and being noticed’. Taiwanese women artists, as doubly subordi-
nated subalterns, are in a better position to ‘speak’ today than those who were working before the late 1990s. Although they have had the chance to ‘talk’ (to show their works even though they may not be noticed by the public or press) since the early 1990s, only recently, in the exhibitions mentioned above, have they learned ‘how to speak’ and ‘what to speak’. In 1998, for example, the exhibitions ‘Women Go!’ (shown at three differ-
egent galleries in northern, central and southern Taiwan) and ‘Mind and Spirit’ (shown at the FAMT) established a geneal-
gy of Taiwanese women’s art history. It was the first time that women artists from different generations showed their works together, creating a narrative art history. Since then, Taiwanese women artists have been able to ‘speak’ loudly.

A new century

Since 2000, Taiwanese women’s exhibitions have addressed pluralism and globalisation. The exhibition ‘Journey of the Spirit’, shown at the Kaohsiung Fine Arts Museum (KFAM) in 2003, showcased indigenous women artists’ traditional handicrafts were considered on the same plane as so-called ‘fine arts’. ‘Sweet and Sour Breast’ (shown in Taipei’s Hu-Shan Arts District and Kaohsiung’s Ria-A-Than Art Villagemy empha-
sised women artists’ involvement in alternative art spaces. The 2005 shows ‘BulkolFu’ (at Stock 20 in Taichung) and ‘Big Quilt Project’ (at the KFAM) displayed appreciation for the beauty of women’s fabric arts, marking the first time in Taiwanese art history that the line between high art and low art was decon-
structed by curators’ strategies and artists’ efforts. Also in 2003, the First International Women’s Art Festival at the KFAM vividly demonstrated how technology has affected our lives and how women have responded to it artistically.

The focus of Taiwanese women artists has shifted from fight-
ing for equality to confidently celebrating their talent: now the art itself, instead of the artist’s freedom to show it, commands attention. Finding their place in the art world and breaking away from the gender-based constrictions of previous colonis-
ers have become their primary aims, and with more women emerging as administrators in the arts, women are offered more chances to show and curate their work. They are no longer silent.

References
- Ming-Hui Chen, a PhD candidate in the School of Art and Design at Loughborough University in the UK. Her research interests centre on the rapidly developing contemporary women’s art scene in Tai-
wan, post-colonialism and feminism. She also remains a committed fine artist and has regularly shown her works internationally.

Silent duct at bitemet.com
The way of the world

Simon Wickham-Smith

A the age of just 53, in 1856, the 5th Noyon Khutughtu, Danzanravjaa, lay dying at the monastery of Boyiniyin ger. His biographer, Simon Wickham-Smith, took 120 performers several weeks to stage. The manner of his death is uncertain. There is a strong possibility that he poisoned himself, so profusely was he at odds with the establishment and with the world at large. Nor can murder be discounted. His awkward relationship with the Manchus, primarily due to their opposition to his desire to rule Mongolia, might well have been one reason for his murder. Other suspects included the widow of a local ruler, whom Danzanravjaa is supposed to have insulted. But whether he committed suicide, was murdered or whether he simply succumbed to illness, we will never know. That he was only 53 when he died, however, shows the great loss which Mongolian culture suffered and how much more he could have achieved.

His attendant Balshinchoijoo lived on and took care of Khamar monastery. Before he died, he established a family tradition, called nakhiil, by which his descendents would preserve the history and achievements of Danzanravjaa and this tradition has survived, through the Communist decades, to the present day.

Despite his love of alcohol, Danzanravjaa continued to make a distinction between mindless and mindful behavior. We should give him the final word:

Strong out on booze and tobacco,
The world is drunk, it takes no notice.
I’ll go my own way –
Will you join with me?

Note

1. Whereas we know for sure that Danzanravjaa was the author of the works ascribed to him, we cannot in any way be certain which, if any, of those ascribed to the 6th Dalai Lama, are indeed his.

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Islamic banking in Southeast Asia

Muhammed Hassanali

One needs to have a firm grasp of both the current banking environment and the interpretation of Islamic commercial law to fully appreciate the challenges faced and the opportunities offered by Islamic banks today. Both aspects are riddled with intricacies and neither is uniform across national or cultural boundaries. Islamic Banking & Finance in South-East Asia attempts to provide an overview of the banking environment and interpretation of Islamic commercial law in Southeast Asia.

To understand contemporary Islamic banking, one must know its past. Venardos presents an overview of Islamic history, the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia and lingering colonial legacies. He provides a synopsis of Islamic law as it relates to commercial activity, explores the most common financial instruments traded by Islamic banks and outlines salient challenges confronting Islamic banks from both doctrinal and regulatory perspectives. He then describes the environment and operation of Islamic banks in various Southeast Asian countries.

The Koran and Sunna (ways of the Prophet) form the basis of Islamic law. Both contain guiding ethical principles from which legal doctrine must be extrapolated and developed; this process is a kind of ‘discovering’ of law that typically takes into account prevailing laws and customs. For example, Islamic law prohibits riba (usury). Most Muslim jurists take a literalist stand against usury, proclaiming that any interest charged is not permitted, but they allow the making of reasonable profits on goods and services. Hence, as Venardos correctly points out, contemporary Islamic banks must trade in real assets rather than charge interest. This limits the bank’s ability to trade in other financial instruments (such as futures) and restricts its revenue streams.

Islamic law also prohibits gharar (gambling or excessive risk); thus Islamic banks avoid futures and options as they are seen as excessively risky. In this vein, Venardos narrowly portrays hedging as an instrument ‘to monopolize some exchange rate risk.’ He does not consider hedging from a micro-economic perspective that allows small and medium-sized businesses to effectively compete in the global marketplace while mitigating exchange rate risk.

The prohibition of charging interest forces Islamic banks to either ‘sell’ tangible goods or take equity positions in the businesses they finance. Hence they assume more risk than do conventional banks. Venardos emphasizes, to a fault, how Islamic banks provide conventional banking services, yet he does not delve into some of the services they provide that are similar to those provided by conventional mutual funds. A substantial part of Islamic banking involves partnerships formed in the course of financing that are more reminiscent of developing a portfolio of equity positions like those of mutual funds.

Since the 1970s, Islam has been experiencing a revival of sorts; Muslims are asserting their religious identity and are trying to lead lives as worthy Muslims. This has partially fueled the demand for Islamic banking, as Venardos alludes to in his discussion of Islamic banking in Indonesia. However, the rise of increasingly extreme interpretations of Islam threatens advances made by Islamic banking in two main ways: the first is a growing suspicion of anything Islamic in non-Muslim countries, especially in post-9/11 Western Europe and North America; another is the rise of literalist interpretations of Islamic law, which stifle the creativity necessary to interpret commercial law that could be used to conceive novel financial instruments. Venardos should have mentioned these threats.

Islamic banks face several more challenges, including assessing and regulating appropriate risk levels, establishing appropriate accounting practices and providing mechanisms that create liquidity for assets held by Islamic banks. Venardos describes regulatory hurdles in Southeast Asia and what banks have done to overcome them. He also addresses the difficulties of providing useful banking services while staying within Islamic commercial law subject to a plurality of interpretations. But he focuses neither on agency risk and its impact on regulation nor on consumer perceptions of Islamic banks.

An overview of Islamic banking should explore how an ideal Islamic bank provides its customers the services they need while dealing with today’s commercial banking challenges. Venardos adequately describes the underlying basis for Islamic banks, but he does not draw on the rich historical legacy of Muslim commercial activity. For example, during medieval times, the Muslim empire circulated bimetallic coinage. One gold dinar was generally worth ten silver dirhams, but the exchange rate varied widely. What did traders do to mitigate risk? How did they achieve liquidity? More importantly, what can today’s Islamic banks learn from this history?

The book’s other shortcomings include footnotes that refer to sources such as Usmani, Bradell, Harvey and Partadereja, curiously unlisted in the bibliography. Conversely, the bibliography lists works that are not referenced in the text and have little (if any) bearing on Islamic banking (such as The Khoja Case or Sufis/’s Many Paths). Moreover, the bibliography is difficult to search as some references are out of alphabetical order. The text is not without typographical errors and cases of poor sentence structure. In chapters eight and nine, entire paragraphs are repeated verbatim.

Venardos hints that Islamic banking has the potential to offer more, both in terms of interpreting Islamic law and providing financial services and instruments. But his book leaves the impression that Islamic banks are just like conventional banks except in the different words either uses for ‘interest’. They provide similar financial instruments and operate in the same way – or so the reader is left to believe.
The Kyoto School, American empire and the post-white world


Kevin Nakake Steffensen

Two previous monographs established David Williams as the dominant terrorist of Western political philosophy. With their trademark iconoclasm and elegant prose, they provoke critical reflection on the ethnocentrism and political biases of dominant western views on intellectual and political history.

Kyoto School as political philosophy

The book is organized into five parts in 12 chapters and an appendix with the author’s translation of two texts by Tanabe Hajime, whom he considers the dominant figure of the Kyoto School’s middle phase from 1928 to 1946. The term ‘Kyoto School’ was coined by Tosaka Jun to designate the group around Nishida Kitarō at Kyoto Imperial University. It dominated Japanese philosophy from the 1920s, with its major thinkers belonging to or defining themselves against it. The first phase of the school is considered comparatively apolitical and metaphysical in orientation. Challenged by Kawayama Hajime’s Marxism, the focal concern of the middle phase of the Kyoto School was political philosophy (p.76).

Williams focuses on four works by Tanabe and four colleagues: ‘The Standpoint of World History and Japan’ by Kōyama, Suzuki, Nakano and Nishitani and Tanabe’s ‘response to Heidegger’s controversial recto-turn of 1933’, which Williams argues was part of Tanabe’s intellectual alliance with the Imperial Navy to resist Tojo’s policies, and Tanabe’s ‘Magnus Opus, the Logic of the Species’, that appeared in 13 parts between 1934 and 1946 (p.18). The book, however, goes far beyond mere excerpt and commentary on these four texts.

The emphasis is on Tanabe and, to a lesser extent, Nishitani. Little is said about Kōyama, Suzuki and Kōsaka. In chapters 8-11, Williams reads the attacks on the Kyoto School for its alleged complicity with ultra-nationalism in the context of the debate on Heidegger’s relationship with the Nazi regime, and enumerates both Heidegger and Tanabe. Rather than acting for the military government, Tanabe and associates were aligned with parts of the army in a ‘struggle against Tojo’ (Chapter 3). The concluding ‘manifesto on the fate of Japanese studies’ argues that ‘Japanology must begin all over again’ by returning to Max Weber and reading the Kyoto School liberated from the ‘Allied galleon’. Their writings should be read ‘not as some absent-minded lapse from Zen Buddhism but as political thought in the classic sense’ because these ‘Japanese philosophers fashioned a vessel for Japanology to renew itself, to begin all over again’ (p.76).

Pacific War revisionism versus the Allied gazed

Williams confronts the ‘Allied orthodoxy’ intellectual history of 1930s and their research on political institutions see the Kyoto School ‘as thinkers complicit with wartime nationalism’. There has also been a parallel current in comparative philosophy and religious studies, which ‘for decades presented Nishida, Tanabe and Nishitani as essentially apolitical religious thinkers’ (p.99), resulting in a lack of ‘recognition that the Kyoto School also produced a profound meditation on the nature of politics, history and society in a world dominated by the West’ (p.79).

If the Kyoto School has been ‘attacked by both the Allies and the Left’ since the 1930s, Williams’ defence defies easy categorisation. Where Graham Parkes held that ‘To criticize the critics, however, is not to concede the political writings of the Kyoto School’ (p.79), Williams goes a step further by both criticising ‘the black legend’ of the Kyoto School (Chapter 7) and defending it as ‘liberal nationalist’ in character (p.172). In doing so, he departs more radically from even the relatively sympathetic assessments of Tanabe in other recent studies, e.g. Goto-Jones’ inaugural volume in the Leiden Series in Modern East Asian Politics and History.

The main targets for his sometimes scathing criticism are the ‘so-called progressive intellectual historians who serve under the neo-Marxist banner’ (p.47) and ‘some of the most influential Western students of modern Japanese religious thought’ (p.54). He finds both groups guilty of misrepresenting the Kyoto School’s positions before and during the Pacific War, but James Heisig and other religious studies scholars are seen in a more favourable light than historians Peter Dale and Harry Harootunian.

Unlike their neo-Marxist colleagues, these Western scholars did not abandon proper standards of research or their hard-earned understanding of Kyoto thought. But there was an implicit endorsement of the reasoning behind the victor’s justice meted out by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. The implied moral simplicities – Allied virtue versus Japanese evil – are so morally satisfying precisely because they exploit the least fair and most self-flattering comparison possible: our high ideals against their base conduct (p.34).

The weakness of ‘the religious paradigm’, according to Williams, is that ‘for such critics, “politics” means neither research on political institutions nor the study of political philosophy but something much narrower and less scientific: the ethical criticism of wartime Japan from an Allied perspective’ (p.154).

Global power imbalance

The context in which Williams reads Tanabe and associates is today’s ‘global imbalance of power’ (p.99), which he finds unacceptable because ‘unconquered power is unacceptable, no matter how wisely or generously the holders of that power may exercise it’ (p.79). He considers the book a contribution to ‘liberal opposition to the neo-con agenda’ (p.9) and to how ‘the rest of the world might be able to compel America, peacefully, to ease the fetters of its global domination’ (p.8). Like Chalmers Johnson and the Kyoto philosophers, he sees himself as a ‘loyal critic’ of his country’s foreign policy. Williams links his concerns over contemporary developments in the US with the wartime Kyoto School because he believes it holds resources necessary for the ‘post-White world’ that he is confident is dawning.

Among all non-white thinkers who have dwelt on the nature and consequences of the planetary hegemony of the White West, Japanese philosophers have a unique place. They even proffer a cure for Western hegemony. Their insights are as unforgiving as they are indispensable at this decisive hour in the destiny of the American Republic (p.4).

He elaborates ‘a post-nationalist vision of America’s post-White destiny with the aid of Kyoto philosophy’ (p.xvii). For Williams, the relevance of the Kyoto School and the purpose of his analysis of its political philosophy is to help ‘the achievement by non-Americans of mature subjectivity’ (p.11). A conspicuous silence is the relationship of Kyoto philosophy to other bodies of thought, especially those broadly labelled ‘postcolonial theory’. Yet many of its preoccupations overlap both with those of Williams and the Kyoto School. Postcolonial critique aims to theoretically and politically empower ‘subalterns’ subjects in a similar way to Williams’ proposal with ‘post-white subjectivity’ and his purpose of ‘nurturing, ex nihilo, of agency itself’ (p.100), but he does not explore the possible linkages.

Scholarship and propaganda

While he ‘aims to stamp firmly on the propaganda that pretends to be a scholar’ (p.15), he sees the Kyoto School’s political philosophy as having been a contribution to ‘liberal opposition to the neo-con agenda’ (p.9), and to how ‘the rest of the world might be able to compel America, peacefully, to ease the fetters of its global domination’ (p.8). He elaborates ‘a post-nationalist vision of America’s post-White destiny with the aid of Kyoto philosophy’ (p.xvii). For Williams, the relevance of the Kyoto School and the purpose of his analysis of its political philosophy is to help ‘the achievement by non-Americans of mature subjectivity’ (p.11). A conspicuous silence is the relationship of Kyoto philosophy to other bodies of thought, especially those broadly labelled ‘postcolonial theory’. Yet many of its preoccupations overlap both with those of Williams and the Kyoto School. Postcolonial critique aims to theoretically and politically empower ‘subalterns’ subjects in a similar way to Williams’ proposal with ‘post-white subjectivity’ and his purpose of ‘nurturing, ex nihilo, of agency itself’ (p.100), but he does not explore the possible linkages.

Notes
1. The two Tanabe texts are ‘The Philosophy of Crisis or a Crisis in Philosophy: Reflections on Heidegger’s Rectoral Address’ (1933) and the secret lecture ‘On the Logic of Co-prosperity Spheres: Towards a Philosophy of Regional Blocs’ (1943).
5. Arakawa 1956, op. cit.

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In pursuit of inclusive democracy for a multi-ethnic state: Nepal at the crossroads

Alpo Ratia

Nepal’s Maoist insurgency has already claimed 15,000 lives; the country is in danger of becoming a failed state but the fluid political situation could also open the way to democracy. Towards a Democratic Nepal sketches the socio-cultural factors and political dynamics which have led to today’s crisis. Author Mahendra Lawoti thereby assesses the alternatives, and makes recommendations for reforming Nepal’s institutions and political culture.

Embedded in the Himalayas between India and China (Tibet), Nepal’s difficult topography has helped create a remarkable ethnic and cultural mosaic. Nepal’s population of over 22m officially includes 59 ethnic groups, tribes and castes; their members speak some 100 different Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman languages, and practise a dozen different religions. Since the Gurkha conquest and unification of Nepal in 1769, upper-caste, Khas-Nepali speaking Hindu males have secured dominance in most spheres of society. Despite attempts at parliamentary democracy since 1951, Nepali society continues to suffer from political and economic underdevelopment. The lack of democratic consolidation has serious consequences for Nepal’s people.

Political exclusion of the majority, the resulting instability, and possible solutions have been frequent objects of study for Nepal’s journalists and social scientists since the 1990s. Some of the most promising writing has come from Krishna Bhattacharjan and Mahendra Lawoti. The latter’s 1999 doctoral dissertation Democratic Domination was a critical study of Nepal’s constitution of 1990 and its impact on the country’s population.

Aiming to advance democracy, Lawoti subsequently studied three topics: the composition of Nepali society and its congruence with the state structure; people’s satisfaction with the state and its policies; and conflict management, democratisation and inclusive political institutions. For this he spent 19 months in the field collecting data and interviewing ethnic and political activists. The resulting publication, Towards a Democratic Nepal reviewed here, is essentially a bipartite monograph. The first part (pp.19-153) sketches the post-1990 political developments and socio-cultural and legal factors leading to today’s impasse, while the second part (pp.154-321) is more prescriptive. It assesses different methods to further dialogue and democratisation, and suggests what kind of constitution and political institutions might best serve the needs of Nepal’s multiethnic population.

Exclusion and majoritarian institutions

Drawing on Arend Lijphart’s worldwide comparisons (1990s) of democracies and conflict management, Lawoti notes ‘Exclusion is not desirable in a multiethnic state. It constitutes inequality and injustice and threatens to unleash large-scale ethnic violence’ (p.21). The restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 allowed dispossessed ethnic groups and castes to voice their grievances and aspirations. They were, however, excluded from participation in governance. The new constitution’s establishment of majoritarian institutions (a non-proportional electoral system and unitary state structure under a strong executive) and its discriminatory articles (via-avis language, religion, culture and gender) together ensured continued dominance by the majority of the ‘Newar-Hindu Elite Male’ minority, ie, the ‘Hill Brahmins and Kshatriyas’ (Parbhat Bahuas and Chhetris) from western Nepal.

Lawoti’s Integrated National Index of Governance, 1999 (pp.104-105) reveals the incidence of socio-cultural groups in Nepal’s population and in positions of influence (judiciary, parliament, civil services and security forces elite, party central committees, etc). The CHHE constituted 31% of the population, but CHHE males held 67% of influential posts. In contrast the Dalit (untouchable) Hindus, 9% of the population held 0%, the Madhesis (southern Tarai Hindus and Muslims, 31%) held 7%, while the Nepalees (from the Kathman- du Valley, 6%) held 17%, and the other Tibeto-Burman speakers (Adhikari Janata, 2.2%) held only 7% of influential posts.

The exclusion of the majority from gov- ernance, discrimination in resource allo- cation and services, and mounting dis- satisfaction led to the radicalization of part of Nepal’s communist movement and the rise in 1996 of a Maoist insur- gency. The number of deaths directly attributed to the low-intensity civil war may be modest, but Lawoti’s Prelimi- nary Cost and Benefit Analysis of the Maoist Insurgency (p.61) shows that the human cost, infrastructure destruction, and political and economic strain for this developing country have indeed been high. Violence by otherwise disaffec- ted ethnic/caste/regional groups has so far been limited, but Lawoti’s analy- sis suggests worse to come. The time frame studied by the author ends with the dissolution of parliament and reservation of direct rule by the palace in May 2002. Now we see that the gov- ernment’s effective jurisdiction has shrunk to urban centres and the field of operations of its army, while much of the countryside is under the sway of the Maoists. A new development is the het- erogeneous dialogue between government, political parties, ethnic groupings, and the Maoists.

Democratic deliberation, inclusive governance

In view of Nepal’s flawed state structure, civil war and failed public policy, Lawoti declares ‘It has become impera- tive that major political institutional reforms be carried out in Nepal to bring the Maoists into mainstream politics, if not for other reasons’ (p.104). The Maoists have repeatedly demanded a constituent assembly to draft a new con- stitution. Lawoti favours this also, pro- viding the transition process is demo- cratic in line with Robert Dahl’s (1998) five crucial requirements: inclusion of socio-cultural groups, their effective par- ticipation, equality in voting, etc. Lawoti adds to this a conflation of Krish- na Bhattacharjan’s four-step process (2005), now in three enabling steps: pre- liminary round table conferences, a con- stituent assembly, and popular initia- tives. If the Kathmandu-centric elite doesn’t have the courage to listen to the grievances of marginalized groups, then its opposition to major reforms risks being overwhelmed by ethnic mobilization – or by losses on the battlefield.

Part IV (pp.127-303) proposes to be a significant stimulus to political disc- ourse in Nepal. Here Lawoti compares the functioning of federal institutions and practices worldwide in multicultural societies (Switzerland, India, etc) and then advocates ethnic federalism for Nepal. This would entail a multilevel, asymmetrical federalism with mecha- nisms such as a bicameral parliament including ethnic and regional parlia- ments, plus territorial and non-territor- ial units, sub-autonomy within autono- my, and self-determination for regions. Autonomy would be granted primarily on the basis of ethnicity/caste, second- arily on that of language. Whether groups are concentrated or not within a region would determine whether they can form a territorial unit. Territorial units are recommended tentatively for 16 socio-cultural groups (Limbus, Magars, Maithili, etc), non-territorial units for ten groups (Dalits, women, etc.), and sub-autonomy with special privileges for eight groups (Rastri, Madhup, etc). Fur- ther measures to protect small minori- ties would include proportional electoral methods plus affirmative action and reservation policies, and anchoring minority rights protection in the consti- tution and reforming the Constitu- tional Court to better reflect Nepal’s multi- ethnic society. The book ends with plea that during these exceptional times, the opportunities for accommodation and power sharing must be seized.

In conclusion

Towards a Democratic Nepal is an impor- tant book which should be of interest to those working on Nepalese politics in the Himalayan, South Asian and development studies; second, develop- ment agencies and friends of Nepal, but most of all Nepal’s own civil society, pro- gressive politicians, policy makers, and journalists. The monograph is well-writ- ten and carefully reasoned. Printing errors are few. Researchers will appre- ciate the extensive up-to-date bibliogra- phy (pp.322-356), even though the index is useful only for authors and political institutions. The author’s expertise is apparent in his informative analysis of Nepal’s Maoist movement (pp.18-64), of Nepal’s socio-cultural chatties (pp.87-102), and in his trench- antly critical (pp.103-138) of the coun- try’s constitution.

Lawoti’s book presents a wealth of con- stitutional and institutional reform pro- posals to stimulate research, thinking, and action. The author draws upon many political scientists’ theories of democracy and institutional models, some of which he seeks to creatively adapt. Moreover, he makes use of cross- cultural empirical studies, because ‘The aim is to provide a cross-cultural perspective of the experience of other societies and refine the public policies to suit the loca- lities’ (p.284). Recognising that situa- tion’s fluidity, the author takes a meas- ured and flexible approach. He makes clear which reforms he prefers and why, but other alternatives are acknowledged, and their sequence, relative advantages and viability are discussed against the backdrop of Nepal’s realpolitik.

Certain omissions should stimulate fur- ther exploration. Because Nepal is one of the world’s poorest countries, the problem of capital accumulation prob- ably needs to be solved before the cre- ation and operation of a complex net- work of federal institutions becomes feasible. The promotion of tolerance, development of a democratic culture, training of qualified administrators, and standardisation of regional lan- guages all take time. This may also be a prerequisite to the efficient function- ing of federalism in a diverse multicultur- al state. Hopefully Lawoti will address these issues in his future writings. The stakes are high, and the degree of inclu- sive democracy achieved will depend upon the level of understanding of Nepal’s leaders and the evolving balance of political forces. <

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Subscription rates for two issues/year: Institutions US $40.00, Individuals US $22.00
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Khmer identity: a religious perspective

Caroline Ivanescu

Although Cambodia is conventionally described as a Theravada Buddhist country, scholars trying to define the boundaries of its religious life more accurately see it as a syncretism of animism, Brahmanism and Buddhism. History, Buddhism and New Religious Movements in Cambodia offers an overview of the country’s religious life, using a wide range of perspectives to address the question: ‘What is particularly Cambodian about Cambodian religion?’

Chapters explore national identity, the present religiousness of the Cambodian diaspora, 19th century architecture and individual contemporary religious identities. The thematic variety and the authors’ knowledge make this book an important asset to Khmer studies, religious studies and the study of contemporary Buddhism; it is a valuable contribution to the anthropological study of religious phenomena within the larger context of human interaction and the division of social prestige.

Most of the studies compiled in this volume address the multiple ways in which Cambodian religious ideas and practices relate to concepts and institutions that have given and give shape to Cambodia as a social and political body. The editors assume that Buddhism is not only a part of the multiple ways in which Cambodian religious ideas and practices are melded together.

The chapter ‘Making a religion of the nation and its language: the French protectorate (1866-1954) and the Dhammayak’ by Penny Edwards evaluates French colonial influence over Cambodian institutions and religion’s role in the gradual creation of a nation from the 1900s to the 1990s. The object of pure belief became the Khmer nation and its symbol, the Khmer language. The process of shaping Khmer identity around a distinct language, ethos, culture, nation and a ‘distinctive way of being a Buddhist’ (p.41) was, Edwards concludes, a product of 19th century cultural politics.

While Khmer language became the nation’s symbol in the discourse of cultural and political spheres of influence, the statue of the Leper King became, symbolically, the nation’s body (see Ashley Thompson). Just like the Buddha’s body corresponds to the samsaric world, the king’s body stands metonymically for the physical territory of his kingdom. National and social identity, in material form, can be worshipped, taken care of, forgotten and then remembered, displaced, mutilated. Symbols work most effectively – fulfill their meaning – in rituals, and rituals bond individual members of the community, giving shape and common experience to their group identity.

Once national identity is formed, its expression can be found in the religious rituals of the spirit cult of Khleang Moeung, described by Teri Yamada from her encounter in Long Beach, California. The reconstruction of traditional culture is vital to diaspora, which they achieve by practicing, through their religious and public cultural events, the traditional rituals that serve as culturally unifying symbolic systems. Satisfying the individual’s need to know and actualise his own roots satisfies the nation’s need for a stable foundation on which its own identity can be constructed.

Personal identity, social belonging and national pride all mingle with religious symbols and rituals to convey stable layers of meaning. In order to build new structures the old ones must first be transformed, whether in their outer material expression or in their inner layers of meaning. A stable balance between the old tradition and the need for change can serve as a base on which to build national or personal identity. Continuity, being in touch with one’s own cultural roots and a sense of belonging to a community are human needs met through cultural and social interaction and in the layered symbolism of rituals. Religion, such as Buddhism in Cambodia, plays an important role in preserving the fragility of continuity between the past and the present’s need for change.

Caroline Ivanescu studied cultural anthropology at ELTE University in Budapest. Her interests include religion, the relationship between myth and symbol, the anthology of tourism and pilgrimages and cultural utopias. She is currently preparing a PhD thesis on transcultural religious identities.

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Social Inequality in Vietnam and the Challenges to Reform

Phuong An Nguyen

After nearly two decades of reform, Vietnam today enjoys relatively fast and steady economic growth. Increasingly liberal social, cultural, and economic environments are conducive to integration into the world economy, encourage foreign direct investment, and allow citizens to move both within and beyond national boundaries. All induce further economic growth and improvement in the Vietnamese standard of living. However, an apparent, less-desired effect of the market economy in Vietnam has been social inequality, which is visibly on the rise but is an apparent, less-desired effect of the market economy in Viet-
improvement in the Vietnamese standard of living. However, Philip Taylor’s edited volume
serves as background reading for what follows, while David
reform process. Vo Tri Thanh and Pham Hoang Ha’s chapter
an excellent overview of social inequalities, the first two chap-
tal institutions and international agencies whose work focus-
classes. Many of these issues have been discussed before, but only incompletely and from the perspectives of governmen-
tial institutions and international agencies whose work focus-
en development”

Following Philip Taylor’s introductory chapter, which provides an excellent overview of social inequalities, the first two chapters address the political and economic aspects of Vietnam’s reform process. Vu Tri Thanh and Pham Hoang Ha’s chapter serves as background reading for what follows, while David Koh’s analysis of Vietnam’s recent political developments presents considered thought on the future of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) gives its position as the sole political party. It is not a new discovery that political dynamics affect social inequality and, conversely, that social inequality can challenge and even topple political systems. But Koh demonstrates how an awareness of this dynamic has been driving the VCP leadership to improve the efficiency and accountability of the party and its top-ranking personnel in order to satisfy popular demands for good governance and consolidate the regime’s legitimacy. At the same time, as governance is increasingly merritocratised, political capital will gradually lose its value, especially in enabling people to attain elite jobs, tap into limited resources and accumulate power and wealth. However, as Jee Young Kim indicates later in her chapter, under the current conditions of the market economy in Vietnam, it is not yet clear whether social, political or human capital will be the most important in enabling people to gain opportunities. In a chapter focusing on a small ethnic Muong village, Tran Thi Thù Trang asserts that those who possess social and political power continue to excel economically, widening the economic gap among villagers.

Other chapters collectively proffer a multifaceted depiction of issues and realities of social differentiation and disparities among social groups and across regions and locales. Stefanie Scott and Truong Thi Kim Chuyen demonstrate that despite recent poverty reduction programmes, the disparities between rural and urban, lowland and upland areas, between ethnic groups, and between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors have all increased. Nonetheless, while socio-economic differentiation can potentially cause conflict between regions and between ethnic groups, it opens up opportunities for increased inter-regional interactions (for example, through migration) and development initiatives.

Vu Quoc Ng and Philip Taylor draw attention to institutional interventions and local people’s actions to redress specific aspects of inequality. Be it the improvement of living conditions, educational attainment, or access to lands and infrastructure, state policies and development agencies do not always bring the intended results. Often, local people’s actions and initiatives are more effective. Underlying this is the problem of assumption: state and development agencies assume a loose definition of ‘poverty’ and impose poverty reduction policies that do not always suit local circumstances. A lack of connection to a locality in formulating and implementing policies, exacerbated by poor performance and corruption on the part of local officials, might result in a lack of support, discontent and even violent protests from local residents, as Nguyen Van Suu demonstrates in his chapter. Even in contemporary literature, the gap between agents of development and their ideals on the one hand and realities of peasant life on the other are clearly evident. Mônica Rato argues that the reason for this gap is that writers are often urban-based, middle-class and detached from the peasant way of life.

Another form of social inequality in present-day market-oriented Vietnam is unequal access to consumption and recreation, which express aspirations for higher social status and confirm its attainment. The two chapters by Nghiem Lien Huong and Catherine Earl, respectively, demonstrate that whether it is rural young women drawn to Hanoi to work in garment factories or educated migrant women in Ho Chi Minh City, they all have in common a liking for fashionable clothes, cosmetics, and a desire for leisurely urban lifestyles. Created by the popular media, the image of the urban woman who can afford recreation and travel is both attractive and impressive; hence many women and/or their families are prepared to put their resources into attaining and showing it off.

Although the uneven and inconsistent use of section headings throughout this volume gives it the appearance of a rather rushed compilation of presentations straight from the 2003 Vietnam Update conference, this collection of papers makes for a useful and stimulating read for researchers and anyone interested in present-day Vietnam. Significantly, it also calls attention to the need for further, more coherent and comprehensive research on the dynamics of social inequality and consequent social phenomena, such as class formation, in a globalising Vietnam.

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Piracy in Southeast Asia

Over the past decade piracy has re-emerged as a security concern for international shipping, particularly in Southeast Asia. With around 45% of the world’s reported attacks, the region is frequently referred to as ‘pirate-infested’, and last year the Joint War Committee of Lloyd’s of London declared the Malacca Straits a high-risk area, a term usually reserved for war zones. In recent years the scourge of piracy in Southeast Asia has attracted considerable attention, not only from government and security officials, but from scholars around the world. Piracy in Southeast Asia: Status, Issues, and Responses is the first publication in the IIAS/ISEAS Series on Maritime Issues and Piracy in Asia. Bringing together eight rather eclectic papers on piracy in contemporary Southeast Asia, and written by prominent scholars in the field – several of whom readers of IIAS Newsletter will recognise from the theme on maritime piracy in no. 36 last year – the book aims to identify the main pillars of a future agenda for research on modern piracy in Asian waters.

Adam Young first addresses the longer historical and cultural background to the recent surge in Southeast Asian piracy, as well as the problem of applying an essentially European concept such as ‘piracy’ to Southeast Asia. This is followed by Captain P. Mukundan of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB)’s discussion of the IMB’s role in the fight against piracy, especially in relation to, on the one hand, the commercial interests his bureau represents and, on the other, the region’s governments – many of which are less than happy about the international attention piracy has gained due to information published by the IMB’s Piracy Reporting Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

The geopolitics of piracy?

Gerard Graham Ong and Mark Valencia then discuss the possible nexus between piracy and terrorism, how to separate the two issues. A second chapter by Valencia describes regional and international efforts taken to combat piracy, and obstacles to their efficient implementation. In chapter six, Gerg Chakin tries to understand the past decades’ surge in piracy against the background of developments in maritime security and international maritime law, including the effects of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the extension of maritime sovereignty and jurisdiction by littoral states. Chakin also discusses Japan’s role in fostering regional co-operation to combat piratical activity. Chapter seven by Indonesia’s former ambassador-at-large for maritime affairs, Hasjim Djalal, describes regional and international efforts to combat piracy, and as valuable as it relates piracy to the many other challenges facing Indonesia’s under-equipped naval forces, including illegal fishing, the threat of maritime terrorism and illicit traffic in drugs, arms and migrants. In the conclusion the editors bring the issues together and lay out a path for future research, pointing to the ‘geopolitics of piracy’ and its criminalology, as well as the possible link between piracy and maritime terrorism.

Most of the chapters were originally written for the first workshop on piracy in Asia organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies and the Centre for Maritime Research of the University of Amsterdam, held in Amsterdam in 2003. They thus reflect an early, to some extent even preparatory stage in the process of developing more substantial research on the issue. Today, research on contemporary Asian piracy has made significant headway, and we are already beginning to anticipate the answers to several of the questions posed by the editors in the conclusion of Piracy in Southeast Asia.

Lloyd’s of London has declared the Malacca Straits a high-risk area, a term usually reserved for war zones.

example, thanks to the work of Eric Fréon and Caroline Liss, we now know a good deal about the criminality of piracy – the who, where, how and why of the perpetrators. It is, by and large, a sadly familiar and not very romantic story of socially and economically disadvantaged young men making the most of criminal opportunities in fast-changing and socially unstable regions, such as Indonesia’s Riau Archipelago or the Southern Philippines, characterised by great disparities and weak law enforcement.

The possible nexus between piracy and terrorism has been widely studied and discussed in recent years by both academics and security officials, and is the subject of the second volume in the IIAS/ISEAS Series on Maritime Issues and Piracy, edited by Gerard Ong, due out in early 2006. The general consensus, however, seems to be that although the threat of a maritime terrorist attack – whether against cargo or passenger vessels or land-based targets using ships as floating bombs – should not be disregarded, it is not imminent and may have been exaggerated in the wake of 11 September 2001 and the October 2002 suicide attack on the French super tanker Limburg off Yemen.

Conflicting priorities

What, then, about research on the ‘geopolitics of piracy’? Perhaps this is the area of most relevance today, not only for Southeast Asia but for the international maritime community as a whole. However, several questions identified by Johnson and Valencia regarding short-term responses, long-term strategies, and the role of different countries in combating piracy are rather narrowly policy-oriented, and lacking in theoretical sophistication, seem less satisfying from an academic perspective. Focusing on the ‘geo-politics of piracy’ also risks taking attention away from the pressing concerns in maritime security and international relations. Largely thanks to the work of the IMB, and especially since the Piracy Reporting Centre was launched in 1992, piracy and the armed robbery of commercial vessels has been in the limelight – at international forums, among academics, and in the media. However, from the point of view of the two largest littoral states in Southeast Asia, Indonesia and the Philippines, piracy remains a minor maritime security issue – if a security issue at all – compared to problems such as unsettled maritime borders, illegal migration, smuggling, illegal fishing and environmental degradation.

Although neighbouring countries and interested parties such as the international shipping industry may recognise the legitimacy of Indonesian and Philippine concerns, their priorities reflect fundamentally different views of the high seas and of the rights and obligations of governments and maritime law enforcement authorities. Essentially, the conflict boils down to the 400-year-old discussion of Mare Liberum vs. Mare Claustrum – the principle of freedom for all on the high seas vs. the right of governments to exercise jurisdiction over outlawing oceans and exploit its natural resources. Political, social and economic developments since 1945 – including decolonization, the expansion of maritime sovereignty by coastal states, increasing competition over maritime resources, the growth of maritime traffic and the rise of non-traditional security threats including trafficking in goods and people and international terrorism – have made the controversy more pressing than ever since the turn of the 18th century.

Against this background, a comprehensive research agenda for the future should comprise not only the ‘geo-politics of piracy’ but the ‘geopolitics of maritime security’ as a whole. What are the main challenges to maritime security from the perspective of different actors and why are they seen as important? How do larger – national, regional as well as global – processes of economic, social and political change affect maritime security? Who are the main actors that strive to close or limit the freedom of the oceans and what are their motives? What are the advantages and risks of maintaining the principle of freedom of navigation on the seas? What effect will the different moves to close the seas have on global security, trade and the environment? To develop such a research agenda, involving both perspectives from Southeast Asia and the rest of the world, is the real challenge for the future.

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Review

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Established migration theories have long asserted international migration to be a venture of the young and healthy. The workshop ‘Pensioners on the Move’, however, focused on another group exhibiting quite different migratory behaviour: they do not move from low-income to high-income countries but vice-versa; they don’t move to work, but to not work. This mobility is neither tourism nor migration, but shares elements of both.

Pensioners on the move: social security and trans-border retirement migration in Asia and Europe

Mike Toyota, Anita Böcker and Elspeth Guild

O ut as it may seem, the movement of pensioners across international borders is on the rise in both Asia and Europe. While there is a growing literature on this topic in Europe, particularly on intra-EU movement, the trend in Asia has only just begun to receive academic attention. The workshop brought together scholars from East and Southeast Asia and Europe, to review experiences in Europe, explore developments in Asia, and deepen our general understanding of the new migration trend through comparison. Seventeen papers were presented, covering pensioners who migrated as a result of reunification policies (Russian Jews to Germany); retired labour migrants who moved back to their home countries (Turkish and Moroccan elderly from Europe); and most significantly, pensioners from wealthy countries seeking a better retirement life (Japanese to Southeast Asia, Singaporeans to Australia, Europeans to southern Europe).

It’s not just about ageing

The workshop opened with presentations by demographers who identified the root cause of pensioners’ mobility. In countries like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, the pace of ageing is even faster than it has been in most European countries. In Japan, for example, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over is projected to rise from 15% in 2005 to 28% in 2025. While more people are getting older, fewer elderly live with their children. This trend began in Europe, but wealthier Asian countries are quickly catching up. In Japan, the percentage of persons aged 65 and over living with children fell from 77% to 52% between 1970 and 1997; in South Korea, from over 80% in 1982 to 43% in 2000. There are many reasons for this: pensioners today have fewer children, fewer daughters-in-law see it as an obligation to look after the elderly, and national pension schemes – though far from generous – make it possible for the elderly to live independent of all, which of created more potentially mobile pensioners. With the baby boomer generation approaching retirement age, the number of migrant pensioners is likely to increase in the coming years.

Researchers from other disciplines provided more nuanced analysis. One of the workshop’s insights was that pensioners’ mobility in both Asia and Europe must be understood in relation to state policies and the commodification of elderly care. Legal experts from Europe reviewed how the mobility of pensioners and EU social security regulations have interacted over recent decades: increasingly unified EU laws facilitated mobility, which resulted in new cases demanding further changes in regulations. This process is not over: though pensioners can move freely between member states, considerable legal and policy gaps still remain. By comparison, national borders in Asia are much less permeable, though both sending and receiving countries have been active in promoting the movement of pensioners. In 1986, the Japanese government proposed the Silver Columbia Plan to build towns and villages for Japanese pensioners in Australia (though the programme never materialised because of opposition in Australia), while the Japanese Long Stay Foundation was set up in 1992 to facilitate ‘long-stay’ tourism abroad. On the receiving side, many Asian countries see the coming of foreign pensioners as an opportunity to restore local economies after the Asian economic crisis, and have launched programmes to promote it. In Malaysia, under the ‘Malaysia My Second Home’ programme, foreign retirees receive five-year multiple entry visas once they deposit a minimum of RM 100,000 (about $23,000) in a Malaysian bank account, or if their monthly income exceeds RM 7,000 (€1,530). The Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia have also launched similar schemes by creating special visa categories for retirees.

The commodification of care is likewise crucial in facilitating pensioners’ migration in both Asia and Europe. In Europe, private insurance companies have been encouraging pensioners to move, while viewing pensioners as customers of care services has become a principle underlying the unification of EU social security policies. In Asia, the lack of a common legal framework and the larger disparity in income levels between countries makes commoditisation of care an even more potent driving force behind mobility. The ‘Malaysia My Second Home’ programme was driven largely by the over-capacity of private hospitals resulting from the privatisation of medical care and the middle class’s sudden loss of buying power after the financial crisis. The Thai government, aiming to position Thailand as Southeast Asia’s health tourism capital, has reached out to work with the private health care sector. The differences and similarities between Asia and Europe in the institutional contexts of pensioner movement clearly show social security to be a key issue, a major policy concern worldwide.

Manipulators or victims?

It is clear that pensioners migrate because of differences in income levels and purchasing power between their own and other countries. But how exactly do the elderly make the decision to migrate (sometimes to a place where they have never lived)? What does it mean to them to migrate to a new country where they cannot, at such a late stage of life, communicate in their own language? The picture becomes complex when we look at individual stories; seeing migrant pensioners as either manipulators of state policies or victims of insufficient social security in the home country can be simplistic. For some, migration is an escape from hardship; for others the fulfillment of a lifelong dream; some suffer from isolation in the new country, others paradoxically improve their family relations as a result of moving away; some prefer short stays, others are ready to die in the new place. The movement of pensioners is also a gendered phenomenon, though the gender bias seems to be more salient in Asia than in Europe. For example, a high percentage of single males is found among Thailand’s Japanese elderly.

A number of papers also pointed to the importance of class divisions. In both Europe and Asia, pensioners’ migration was initially an option for high-income groups, though this has changed recently. Different groups appear to have different incentives and behaviour. Among the Japanese retirees, for example, the affluent chose the best place to live after traveling to various countries, while low-income earners moved directly to Southeast Asia out of economic need. In Europe, affluent British or German pensioners move to places such as Tuscany, while the less well-off go to Spain and, increasingly, to countries outside the EU. Different income groups also relate differently to the destination community. Affluent migrants seem to be better integrated, both because they are more likely to speak foreign languages and because they tend to live in individual houses dispersed across communities, rather than living in congregated residences (for example, gated communities) that are more popular with middle-income groups.

One thing countries and continents appear to have in common is the pendulum pattern of pensioner mobility. To enjoy the best weather, to stretch their pensions or to keep in touch with their families, many pensioners move back and forth between their native and adopted countries. This was just one way the workshop showcased the elderly to be anything but passive. The elderly are active agents: navigating existing institutions, pushing for change, generating new life styles and creating new transnational communities.

Social implications

What does the increasing mobility of pensioners mean to the receiving communities? The coming of pensioners certainly brings in new income, which may improve national health services and in turn spread services to the larger population. Unlike tourists, migrant pensioners remain in a community and fuel the local economy instead of spending on foreign-owned hotels and tour operators. But there is also evidence that the migration of pensioners siphons off medical resources in the receiving community and has negative impacts on health equity, particularly for lower classes and rural populations. The loss of skilled health professionals from the public medical sector can be significant. In Europe, too, as pensioners tend to migrate to certain regions, they may strain already limited resources. Other social implications include the globalisation of the health care work force and the emergence of a transnational care industry. At the local level, some migrant pensioners work as volunteers in the host society, which not only keeps them healthy but helps integrate their ethnic communities (including non-pensioners) into mainstream society. Some workshop participants were critical of the commoditised residential pattern common to migrant pensioners in Europe and Asia, believing it reflects and reinforces unequal international relations.

The three-day workshop concluded with a field trip to Penang, Malaysia, where participants observed retirement communities first-hand. Throughout the workshop, lively comparative discussions revealed that the subject has still greater theoretical potential. Though we all enjoyed the meeting, we departed quite humbled by the holes in our knowledge. Our pendulum was swinging: we were migrating back home to more work.

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International Convention of Asia Scholars 5

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www.icas5kl.com

ICAS Book Prizes

ICAS Book Prizes, established in 2004, were awarded last year to Elizabeth C. Economy (social sciences), Christopher Reed (humanities) and Samuel Khew-Fu Wong (best PhD). We now invite all Asian Studies books published in 2005 and 2006 to compete for the 2007 prizes. Three prizes will be awarded: 1. best study in the humanities; 2. best study in the social sciences; 3. best PhD in Asian Studies. Prize money consists of euro 2,500 in 2007 prizes. Three prizes will be awarded: 1. best study in the humanities; 2. best study in the social sciences; 3. best PhD in Asian Studies. Prize money consists of euro 2,500 for categories 1 and 2. The best PhD thesis will be published. Publishers and PhD students are welcome to enter their books by sending six copies to the ICAS Secretariat in Leiden, the Netherlands, before 31 December 2006.

Financial support

Financial support for travel and lodging will be made available to PhD students and young academics. For details see the website.

Exhibition space

There will be an exhibition of Asian Studies books. Interested publishers should contact Marie Lenstrup at marie.lenstrup@asianstudiesbooks.com

ICAS Book Series

The ICAS Book Series is a new feature of ICAS. The first volumes will be published in 2006. The series welcomes edited volumes, monographs which are the outcome of panels at ICAS. For more information please contact the ICAS Secretariat.

www.icassecretariat.org
### IIAS fellows

IIAS hosts several categories of post doctoral researchers (fellows) in Asian Studies. Sponsorship of these fellows contributes to the institute’s aim of enhancing the visibility of Asian Studies at IIAS and broadening the institute’s contacts with the international research community in the region. Fellows are employed at IIAS in one of the following categories:

- *Affiliated Fellow*: A fellow with a specific research project, who is sponsored by an external organization.
- *Senior Fellow*: A fellow with a specific research project, who is sponsored by an external organization.
- *Research Fellow*: A fellow with a specific research project, who is sponsored by an external organization.
- *Senior Research Fellow*: A fellow with a specific research project, who is sponsored by an external organization.
- *Regular Fellow*: A fellow with a specific research project, who is not sponsored by an external organization.
- *Research Fellow & IIAS representative*: A fellow with a specific research project, who is sponsored by an external organization and acts as the institute’s representative in the region.

#### Affiliated Fellows

**Dr Irfan Ahmad**
- Affiliated fellow within the ASSR/IIAS/NWO programme: *Comparative intellectual histories of early modern Asia*
- 1890-1939: *Socio-genetic marginalisation and vulnerable ethnic groups in Southwest China*
- 1 February 2005 - 1 February 2009

**Dr Vina Lanzona**
- Affiliated fellow: *Ideology of Rgvedic tradition: A study in Rgvedic perspectival philosophy*
- 1 July 2002 - 31 July 2006

**Dr Thomas Lin**
- Affiliated fellow: *Labour migration from the Netherlands East Indies to South-East Asia, 1860s-1930s*
- 1 May 2003 - 30 April 2006

**Dr WANG Chunguang**
- Affiliated fellow: *Migration and reorientation of the economy and the world of industry and commerce in Cantonese syntax*
- 1 September 2005 - 1 December 2006

**Dr Irina Morozova**
- Affiliated fellow: *Cross-cultural comparative study of genetic markers in indigenous groups and colonial interests in the Van Gulik Collection*, a contribution to the large project *Homoeroticism in Imperial China: Key documents and images of “wildman” in Southeast Asia*
- 20 July 2005 - 20 July 2006

**Dr Hans Hägerdal**
- Affiliated fellow, sponsored by the Swedish Vetenskapsrådet: *Current and past military leaders in Central Asia*

**Dr Yurii Il’Ich Sheikin**
- Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Gonda Foundation: *A critical edition of the first chapter of the Aṣṭādhyāyī: *Prakritīgaṇita* or *tanjalayoga*
- 1-30 April 2006

**Dr Prasanna Kumar Patra**
- Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Van den Berch van Heemstede Foundation: *The history of Tibet and the Indian Himalayas: An ecological and social analysis of the Indian Himalayan process*
- 10 January 2005 - 10 March 2007

**Dr Katia Chirkova**
- Affiliated fellow: *Images of ‘wildman’ in Southeast Asia*
- 15 August - 30 September 2006

**Dr Dwi Noverini Djenar**
- Affiliated fellow: *Social networks and the integration of Chinese in the Netherlands society*
- 1 September 2005 - 1 May 2006

**Dr I Wayan Arka**
- Affiliated fellow: *The new world of Indian satellite television: Transnational networks and society*
- 1 October 2004 - 1 October 2008

**Dr Rizal Yusof, MA**
- Affiliated fellow: *Database development of Malay World Studies: Database construction and content development of an Encyclopedia of Malay World Studies*
- 16 January - 15 April 2006

**Dr Katia Chirkova**
- Affiliated fellow: *Images of ‘wildman’ in Southeast Asia*
- 1 March - 30 June 2006

**Dr Prasanna Kumar Patra**
- Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Van den Berch van Heemstede Foundation: *The history of Tibet and the Indian Himalayas: An ecological and social analysis of the Indian Himalayan process*
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- 10 January 2005 - 10 March 2007
Comparative Intellectual Histories of Early Modern Asia

IIAS Masterclass
30 May - 2 June 2006
Leiden, the Netherlands

Led by:
Sheldon Pollock (William B. Randolf Professor of Sanskrit and South Asian Studies, Columbia University, New York, USA)

How to understand the logic of an intellectual order founded upon ideologies of continuity and preservation, rather than ideologies of improvement and obsolescence? A comparative intellectual history of the early modern world (1500-1800) can address this question more effectively and develop a more historically powerful theory than can any one scholarly tradition investigated in isolation. This masterclass will bring together experts in the field of Sinology, Indology and Middle Eastern studies to consider shared issues not only in the historiography of early modern knowledge, but also in the theoretical challenges we must confront in writing the intellectual history of the non-West, where even the terms of the theme ‘intellectual’ and ‘history’ do not go without saying. The focus will be put on three forms of knowledge: aesthetics, political thought, and moral philosophy.

Also presenting:
Michael Cook (Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University, USA)
Benjamin Elman (Professor of East Asian History, Princeton University, USA)
Quentin Skinner (Professor of History, Cambridge University, UK)

Deadline for registration:
15 April 2006

Registration and information:
International Institute for Asian Studies
Marion Osseweijer
PO Box 9515
2300 RA Leiden
T +31 (0)71 527 2237
F +31 (0)71 527 416
m.osseweijer@let.leidenuniv.nl
www.iias.nl
**ASiA**

Asian Studies in Amsterdam

**ASiA** is a joint endeavour of the University of Amsterdam and the International Institute for Asian Studies, promotes the study of Asia through research and outreach in the Amsterdam region. We aim to increase Amsterdam’s contact with Asia, as well as to introduce contemporary Asian expressions, developments and experiences to the wider public. All individuals and institutions, academic and non-academic, interested in co-operating with **ASiA** are cordially invited to contact project manager Sikko Visscher at s.visscher@fmg.uva.nl.

**ASiA** facilitates research within the theme ‘Making a Living in a Transnational World: Asian Perspectives on Globalisation’, based on two research projects at the University of Amsterdam: ‘Asia and Europe Compared’, headed by Mario Rutten, comparatively assesses social inequality, views and behaviour of the middle classes, labour relations and informalization in Europe and Asia, and aims to provide a fairer assessment of Asia today. ‘Illegal but Licit: Transnational identities and the exchange of commodities’, led by Willem van Schendel and Li Minghuan, consists of four projects analysing current migration in its legal and social contexts. For more information on this project please see http://www.nwo.nl/nwawhome.nsf/pages/NWOV_6F_G828.Eng. The 19th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies (23-30 June 2006, Leiden) will include a round table on borders, border crossing, and associated legal and social regimes. Van Schendel is also the guest editor of a forthcoming special issue of the **IASS Newsletter** on this topic.

**ASiA** is proud to co-host the annual Wertheim lecture by David Ludden (University of Pennsylvania) on 12 May 2006 in Amsterdam. For upcoming activities, starting with our agenda for March and April 2006, surf to www.iias.nl/asia.

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**The musical folklore of the peoples of northern Asia**

**IASS workshop 20 April 2006 Amsterdam**

This workshop by Yuri Shekint and Tatjana Ignatieva, Arctic State Institute of Culture and Arts in Yakutsk, Republic of Sakha, will be held at the IASS Amsterdam branch office (location to be announced on www.iias.nl) for students, teachers and researchers of ethnomusicology, folklore, anthropology, linguistics and phonetics. Shekint will present the culture of the endangered northern peoples: Chukchee, Udgré, Evenki, Forest Nenets and the Khanty, while Ignatieva will present on the musical culture of the endangered Yakut people. After an introduction on the musical folklore of these peoples, a demonstration of musical examples from shamanism, epic literature, sung improvisations, sound imitations, music of Bear Festivals and round dances will be presented live on traditional musical instruments and on CD (available for participants), with an explanation of the making of these instruments. Participants will have the opportunity to try instruments and to learn the specific art of singing.

Information:

Cecilia Oól, IIAAS c.oól@let.leidenuniv.nl

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**Culture and commerce in the Indian Ocean**

25 - 27 September 2006

Leiden

The burgeoning economies of East and South Asia challenge Indian Ocean scholarship to face new political, cultural and commercial developments, as well as new identities mapped onto complex cultural exchanges between the global, the diasporic and the local.

The conference will analyse the historical roots of commerce as well as the new markets of the new post-colonial yet globalised era from spices to Bollywood. The conference will be framed by a cultural and historical studies paradigm, which welcomes historical, social, and cultural analysis and interdisciplinary methods. The conference would like to close with a better idea of why we should value the cultures of the Indian Ocean, old and new, and how the exchange of commodities interacts with cultural value.

Panels will feature 3 papers of 20 minutes each with 10 minutes for discussion after each paper. Parallel sessions may be run. Plenary speeches will be an hour including time for questions.

Organisers:

Henk Niemeijer, Michael Pearson, Peter Reeves, Stephen Muecke, Devileena Ghosh, Chris Nierstrasz, Lala Sharon Davidson

Email: Indian.Ocean@uts.edu.au

www.IIndian.OceanProject.net

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**Savifa / South Asia library in Heidelberg**

From 1 January 2005, Heidelberg University Library is responsible for the Special Subject Collection ‘South Asia’ fund-ed by the German Research Council (DFG). The collection, previously in Tübingen, is now housed in the Library of the South Asia Institute in Heidelberg. In addition, the new virtual South Asia Library Savifa will serve as a gateway to print and electronic media from and about South Asia.

The collection covers India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Tibet (up to 1950) – academic literature from and about these countries with a focus on literature, language, history, politics, anthropology, art history, religion and philosophy. The library holds more than 265,000 volumes and 500 periodicals with an annual increase of approximately 5,000 volumes.

Work on Savifa began in January 2005. The aim is to create a gateway for scholars and students to information – in both printed and electronic form – from and about South Asia. The newly published Savifa Guide is a database for South-Asia-relat-ed Internet resources, catalogued according to the bibliographic standards of the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative. Other components will be a metasearch engine, allowing users to simultaneously search online catalogues of South Asia Studies libraries as well as bibliographic databases and the current contents of 200 topical periodicals.

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**Public Lectures**

Sharia and national law in the Muslim world

‘Sharia and national law in the Muslim world’ is the title of a lecture by prominent international scholars who will discuss the role and position of Sharia (Islamic law) in national legal systems across the Muslim world. The lecture will include historical, legal and sociological aspects. The selected countries are Pakistan, Morocco, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Iran and Nigeria.

**Public Lectures ‘Sharia and national law in the Muslim world’**

Thursday from 9 March till 22 June 2006

11.15 – 12.15 h.

Leiden University, Faculty of Law

Steenstraat 25, room A144

Public Lectures ‘Sharia and national law in the Muslim world’

The lecture series by prominent international scholars will discuss the role and position of Sharia (Islamic law) in national legal systems across the Muslim world. The lecture – from spices to Bollywood – will be framed by a cultural and historical studies paradigm, which welcomes historical, social, and cultural analysis and interdisciplinary methods. The conference would like to close with a better idea of why we should value the cultures of the Indian Ocean, old and new, and how the exchange of commodities interacts with cultural value.

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**Leiden Traditional and Modern**

One of the wonderful things about studying at Leiden University is the combination of a long tradition and venerable reputation with a youthful spirit that is completely modern. The student population has a strong voice and is carefully listened to at Leiden University.

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**IIAS Newsletter | #40 | Spring 2006**
Among the services currently offered:

- Access to HEIDI, the online catalogue of the University Library
- Monthly acquisition lists with alerting services, which can be subscribed to by sending an email to effinger@ub.uni-heidelberg.de
- Electronic Document Delivery Service which ensures articles from journals and collective works are made available within 24-48 hours and delivered as PDF files: http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/sxs/gl
come offering access to tables of contents of 200 journals on culture, politics and languages of South Asia http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/fachinfo/www/suedasien/olc.htm
- Full text server of the University Library http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/fachinfo/www/suedasien/olc.htm

For further information please visit our interdepartmental website at http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/helios/helios.k.hsx.html or contact one of the three academic librarians:

- Eleonore Schmitt  
  Eleonore.Schmitt@uni-heidelberg.de
- Sonja Stark-Wild  
  Sonja.Stark-Wild@uni-heidelberg.de
- Nicole Merkel  
  Merkel@uni-heidelberg.de

International symposium on Asia-Pacific studies
17-19 November 2006
Havana City, Cuba

The Center for Studies on Asia and Oceania (CEAO) invites you to the International Symposium on Asia Pacific Studies to be held at our center. Our first convention will address contemporary economic developments and political and security trends in the Asia-Pacific region.

Summaries should be sent in digital format through e-mail as TXT or DOC files and should not exceed one sheet. The deadline is 15 October 2006. For further information please contact Ana Delta Soltura / Head of Public Relations Center for Studies on Asia and Oceania (CEAO) 20 Street and 7ma. avenue Miramar, Playa Havana City, Cuba P. C. 11 300 Phone 262 615 / 262 8590-34 ext 102 Fax (537) 202 60 38

e-mail: anadelia@ceao.co.cu
isael@ceao.co.cu

Christianity and cultures: Japan and China in comparison (1543-1644)
30 November - 2 December 2006
Macau

This symposium aims to bring together leading Sinologists and Japanologists researching the history of Christianity in Japan and China. It takes as its point of departure the 400th anniversary of the death of Alessandro Valignano, S.J. (1553-1606), one of the first Europeans to articulate a clear policy of religious and cultural engagement with China.

The symposium aims to foster comparison and interdisciplinary inquiry. Its format of short formal presentations and interactive panel discussions will allow scholars to present their own research and explore jointly with other specialists similarities and differences between new expressions of Christian culture in the two countries. Themes include early Christian texts in translation, works of art, the development of new forms of Christian ritual and local community organization in late Ming China and Warring States / early Tokugawa Japan.

Scholars will also explore the unique role played by Macau, the port-city that was at the diplomatic, economic, and religious crossroads between East Asia and Europe and that facilitated these encounters between faith and culture. The event is co-sponsored by the Macau Ricci Institute, China, and the Ricci Institute at the University of San Francisco Center for the Pacific Rim, U.S.A. The official languages of the symposium will be English, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese. Simultaneous translation will be provided.

For detailed information and updates, please visit: http://www.usfca.edu/ricci and http://www.ricciocam.org

Sex, power and slavery in the Indian Ocean world

Call for papers
The international conference Sex, Power and Slavery: The Dynamics of Camal Relations under Enslavement in the Indian Ocean World (Africa from the Cape to Cairo divide eastwards, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, Australasia and the Far East) will be held at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, 19-21 April 2007.

Abstracts by 1 August 2006
Phone notice by 1 October 2006
Paper submission by 1 February 2007

Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Our Institute has the opportunity to fill the following positions in the context of the Project Group Legal Pluralism:

- researchers (TVöD – formerly BAT-4)
- PhD Grants
- Postdoctoral Grants

The Project Group focuses on law, authority and social behaviour in plural legal settings under conditions of increasing globalization. Particular attention is given to the transnationalization and diversification of law, and to the role of religious authorities and traditional and state institutions of conflict management.

The Project Group starts two new projects:


The project will look at the role of religious leaders and institutions - different religious backgrounds - in dispute management and conflict prevention, e.g. in business relations, land issues and ethnic conflicts. A focus will be on Indonesia, but applications for other regions are welcome, too.

2. "Law against the state", headed by Julia Eckert

The project deals with local adaptations of international right discourses. It will study the global circulation of legal knowledge and norms of governance by looking how law is used by individuals and groups in conflicts with states. The focus is on states with majority Muslim populations, e.g. Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, but also others depending on the applicant's preferences.

The TVöD positions are for three years (with the possibility of a two-year extension). This position is open to citizens who have completed their doctorate within the last ten years.

The PhD Grants are generally awarded for 2 years, with the possibility of two six-month extensions. We expect our PhD students to complete a year-long period of fieldwork as part of their studies.

The Postdoctoral Grants are for two years (or one-year extension is possible for Foreigners). Postdoctoral Grants cannot be received by students who have received their doctorate within the last ten years. The grants are not taxable and are free from social security stipulations.

The Max Planck Society is committed to training the proportion of women in under-represented fields; we therefore explicitly encourage applications by women. Individuals with disabilities will be given priority, assuming equal qualifications.

To apply, please submit the following documents:

- names of 2-3 referees, whom we may contact
- photocopies of university degrees
- a project resume (two to five pages; two alternative ideas may also be considered)
- photographs of university degrees
- names of 2-3 references, whom we may contact

Applications should include the standard documentation and a project resume.

I) Standard documentation includes:

(a) Complete CV including a list of publications
(b) Research interests (two to five pages; two alternative ideas may also be considered)
(c) Photocopies of university degrees
(d) Names of 2-3 references, whom we may contact

II) There is no application form to be filled out.

Applications should include the standard documentation and a project resume.

Please log onto our website for all further information about the call for applications.

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Please log onto our website for all further information about the call for applications.
**Art Agenda**

**Arts Agenda**

**Australia**
- **Moorooduc Art Gallery**
  10 Greenmeadows Rd
  Ringwood, Victoria
  T +61 3 9788 3456
tania.mclaren@moorooduc.vc.gov.au

**India**
- **Fung Yat-fung**
  Shows piles of toggles.
- **Xing Danwen**, a contemporary photographer, photographed toy parts as they are assembled in factories. In the duplicated dolls, she sees pressure to conform to aesthetic and social standards.

**Italy**
- **Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea**, Turin: "Duplication / Disconnexion 2006 - 2007". This exhibition explores the cultural contacts between Tokyo and Berlin during the post-war decades.

**Japan**
- **Museum of East Asian Art**
  Berlin-Dahlem
  T +49 30 8301 382
  www.smb.spk-berlin.de/oak/e/s.html

- **National Museum of Asian Art - Guimet**
  6 Place d’Iéna
  6-10-1 Roppongi, Minato-ku
  Tokyo 106-6150
  T +81 3 5777 8600
  www.mori.art.museum

- **Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art**
  #747-18, Hannam-dong
  Yongsan-gu
  Seoul
  T +82 2 2014 6900
  www.leeum.org/

- **Hong Kong Museum of Art**
  10 Salisbury Road
  Tsim Sha Tsui
  Kowloon
  T +852 2191 0100
  www.hkcula.org.hk

**South Korea**
- **National Museum of Fine Arts**
  Palais de Tokyo
  13 Avenue du President Wilson
  75015 Paris
  T +33 1 42 86 10 00
  www.palaisdeparis.fr/en/itinerary.html

- **Hina Matsuri and Japanese Dolls**
  Museum celebrates Hina Matsuri, the Doll Festival - also popularly known as Girls’ Day - with its annual exhibit of dolls and hina doll sets.

**Malaysia**
- **International arts agenda**
  2006 International Art Festival of Kuala Lumpur: With the coming of spring, the Kyoto National Museum celebrates Hina Matsuri, the Doll Festival - also popularly known as Girls’ Day - with its annual exhibit of dolls and hina doll sets.

**Sweden**
- **Kröller-Müller Museum**
  Otterlo, The Netherlands
  T +31 38 443 1234
  info@km.nl

**United States**
- **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**
  1000 5th Avenue
  New York, NY 10028
  T +1 212 535 7710
  www.metmuseum.org

**United Kingdom**
- **National Portrait Gallery**
  London
  T +44 20 7328 5454
  www.npg.org.uk
Illustrated love poems from India are accompanied by an installation by the contemporary artist Yves Netzhammer. In the 18th century, an East Indian painter of the Chippa (NCAA) created masterpieces that were influenced by the texts and erotic images on narrow palm leaves. The poet Amaru composed the poems in Sanskrit during the 7th century.

The Artes Mundi Prize, first awarded in March 2004, was established to celebrate visual culture from across the globe. This year it features eight contemporary artists from the Chris Hall collection. The exhibition presents the history of the collection and distribution of Indonesian heritage. Over 160 masterpieces from the National Museum of Indonesia in Jakarta, including six large sculptures from the Singaraja period (13th century), important gold finds and palace treasures from Sula, Kromak and Bali, as well as the Woodward gold treasure. The exhibit features ethnographic material from west and east Indonesia, including New Guinea.

The Dalai Lamas and one statue of each of the 14 Dalai Lamas. Also on display will be written documents (including large silk scrolls with imprints and seals), scrolls depicting the protective deities of the Dalai Lamas, representations of Potala Palace (the Dalai Lamas’ winter residence), gifts given and received by the Dalai Lamas, rare letters, and old photographs.

The exhibition features at least one painting and one statue of each of the 14 Dalai Lamas. Also on display will be written documents (including large silk scrolls with imprints and seals), scrolls depicting the protective deities of the Dalai Lamas, representations of Potala Palace (the Dalai Lamas’ winter residence), gifts given and received by the Dalai Lamas, rare letters, and old photographs.

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International conference agenda

1. First EACL Springschool in Chinese Linguistics
   - Convenors: Jan Rath, Jeroen Doomernik and Zhuang Guotu
   - Organized by University of Amsterdam and Xiamen University
   - Sponsored by IIAS
   - Contact: Leo Douw
     Email: m.douw@uva.nl

2. The Unraveling of Civil Society
   - Eurasia: A Seminar in Memory of David Pingree
   - Conference
   - 18-20 April 2006
   - Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
   - Organized by Asia Research Institute
   - Contact: Manjit Kaur
     Email: rim.kaur@nus.edu.sg

3. Ancient India in Asia
   - Lecture in the Series Emerging Digital Cultures in Asia
   - Organized by Waag Society, Leiden University, ASiA and IIAS
   - Contact: Jeroen de Kloet
     Email: iias@let.leidenuniv.nl

4. Science and Politics
   - Seminar
   - 6 April 2006
   - Thessaloniki, Greece
   - Organized by NIOD and KITLV
   - Contact: Freek Colombijn
     Email: f.colombijn@fsw.vu.nl

5. XRNGT (Cross Regional Network on Village Governance)
   - Workshop
   - 27-29 March 2006
   - Leiden, Netherlands
   - Organized by EU-China Training Programme
   - Contact: Alan Shan
     Email: sheralan@gmail.com

6. Digital Approaches to Cartographic Heritage
   - Workshop
   - 27-30 April 2006
   - Rotterdam, Netherlands
   - Organized by International Cartographic Association
   - Contact: Evangelos Livieratos
     Email: livier@maplibrary.gr

7. A Heritage of Religious Image in an Islamic and Western Setting
   - Seminar
   - 24-26 April 2006
   - Amsterdam, Netherlands
   - Organized by United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs
   - Contact: David Stevens
     Email: david.stevens@unvienna.org

8. From Concept to Action
   - Symposium
   - 10-11 April 2006
   - Singapore
   - Organized by Research school CNWS
   - Contact: Alex de Voogt
     Email: a.j.de.voogt@let.leidenuniv.nl

9. 第5次世界药材海洋学年会
   - Seminar
   - 27-29 March 2006
   - Leiden, Netherlands
   - Organized by International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicines
   - Website: www.iastam.org/coferences.htm

10. *Teaching增速 in China*:
    - Conference
    - 29 March 2006
    - Leiden, Netherlands
    - Organized by Waag Society, Leiden University, ASiA and IAS
    - Contact: Lien Dong
      Email: m.douw@uva.nl

11. Digital Approaches to Cartographic Heritage
    - Workshop
    - 27-30 April 2006
    - Rotterdam, Netherlands
    - Organized by International Cartographic Association
    - Contact: Evangelos Livieratos
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    - Contact: Alex de Voogt
      Email: a.j.de.voogt@let.leidenuniv.nl
13-22 June 2006
Bangkok, Thailand
Grader Issues in Asia Conference
Organized by WARI
coures@yzu-yahoo.com
15-6 June 2006
London, United Kingdom
Moderating, Modernity and the Media in China Conference
Organized by China Media Centre
Contact: Yik Chan Chin
chiny@wmin.ac.uk
24-31 June 2006
Beijing, China
Global Co-operation Towards Energy Efficiency: Barriers and Opportunities Conference
Convenor(s): Melodi Armin & Shi Dan
Organized by IAS/Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Contact: Marloes Rozing
m.rozing@leidenuniv.nl
www.iias.nl/iias/show/idd=55001
25-27 June 2006
Singapore
Chinese Nation, Chinese State, 1850-present Biannual Conference of the Historical Society for the Twentieth Century China
Organized by Asia Research Institute
Contact: Thomas Dubois
hst06@nus.edu.sg
25-26 June 2006
Wollongong, Australia
Asia Reconstructed: From Crises of Development to Postelectoral Studies Conference
Convenor(s): Adrian Vidler
Organized by 16th Biannual Conference of the ASA
asasa@uwq.edu.au
http://iai06.mbs.anu.edu.au/ASAConference
27-30 June 2006
Leiden, Netherlands
19th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies Conference
Convenor(s): Birgitta Zeitler
Organized by IAS
Contact: Marloes Rozing
coures@yzu-yahoo.com
29 June to 1 July 2006
Münster, Germany
The Ritual Attribution of Cultural Identity and Sociopolitical Order in Indonesia Conference
Convenor(s): Jos Platenkamp
Organized by Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Institute for Ethnology
Contact: Jos Platenkamp
platenk@uni-muenster.de
29-June to 2 July 2006
Depok, Indonesia
Law, Power and Culture: Territorial, National and Local Perspectives in the Context of Legal Pluralism Congress
Organized by Commission on Folk Law and Legal Pluralism
Contact: Subyantoro Y. Sanputu
subconj@institutperiksa.ac.id
www.upi.c.jc
July 2006
10-14 July 2006
Edinburgh, United Kingdom
15th World Sanskrit Conference Conference
Organized by International Association of Sanskritists
Organized by John Brockett J.: L. Brockett
www.sans.edu.ac.uk/sanskritconferences/15wsc:
13-17 July 2006
Singapore
Communities of Interpretation: Burma Studies Conference Organized by Asia Research Institute
Contact: Akyun Rossell
bcs06@nus.edu.sg
www.an.u.edu.sg/conf06/bcs06conf.htm
13-17 July 2006
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Second International Summer School in Central Asia Organized by Kyrgyz-Turkmen National University
Contact: Svntara Tauldiala
summerschool@manusakgs
www.summerschool-manusakgs
15-16 July 2006
East-Okajima, Japan
Emerging Shape of East Asian Economic Community Conference Organized by Japan Academy for Asian Market Economies
Contact: Takehito Onishi
onishi@ecs.kindai.ac.jp
www.kindai.ac.jp
16-30 July 2006
Essen, Germany
Islam and the Repatriation of Religion Summer academy
Convenor(s): Georg Staudt and Armando Salvatore
Organized by Institute of Advanced Studies Conference
Organized by Institute of Advanced Studies
Contact: Armin Flender
arfleander@uni-wu-berlin.de
19-22 July 2006
Bangkok, Thailand
Redefining World Literatures Seminar
Organized by Department of Literature, Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia
Contact: Melani Budiantasusatra_fibui@yahoo.com
21-25 July 2006
Bandung, Indonesia
Arte-polis: Creative Culture and the Making Place Seminar and workshop on urban culture Organized by Institute of Technology Bandung
psud@melisa.net.id
www.ar-rib.ac.id/artepolis
28-30 July 2006
Palembang, Indonesia
Local Cultures and its Manifestations in Nusantara Manuscripts 10th International Symposium of the Nusantara Manuscript Organized by MANASSA
Contact: Tity Pudjiastuti
simposiummanassa2006@yahoo.com
August 2006
3-4 August 2006
Singapore
Rationalising China’s Place in Asia, 1870 to 2005 Conference
Convenor(s): Zheng Yangwen & Liu Hong
Organized by Asia Research Institute
Contact: Aykon Rossell
bcs06@nus.edu.sg
www.an.u.edu.sg/conf06/bcs06conf.htm
10-14 August 2006
Singapore
Rationalising China’s Place in Asia, 1870 to 2005 Conference
Convenor(s): Zheng Yangwen & Liu Hong
Organized by Asia Research Institute
Contact: Aykon Rossell
bcs06@nus.edu.sg
www.an.u.edu.sg/conf06/bcs06conf.htm
19-23 August 2006
Beijing, China
Tourism and the New Asia; Implications for Community Development to Postdoctoral Studies Workshop Organized by IAS
Contact: Marloes Rozing
m.rozing@leidenuniv.nl
www.easas.org
25-27 August 2006
Canberra, Australia
Asia-Pacific Missions: At Home and Abroad Second biannual ANU missionary history conference
Convenor(s): Australian National University Organized by NIAP
ian.welsh@anu.edu.au
28 September to 1 October 2006
Ann Arbor, United States
CESS Annual Conference Conference
Organized by CESS
conf@fas.harvard.edu
http://fss.fas.harvard.edu/cess/
Conference html
October 2006
24-26 October 2006
Jakarta, Indonesia
Youth and the Global South: Religions, Politics, and the Making of Youths in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East Conference
Convenor(s): The Steering Committee Organized by ASC/CEDERAS/ISIJ/IJAS
Contact: Marloes Rozing
m.rozing@leidenuniv.nl
www.iias.nl/iias
13-15 July 2006
Leiden, Netherlands
China Summer School: "The Spread of PTH" Conference (s): Marinus van der Broek and Vincent Van Heuven
Organized by LUC/IAS/IW
Contact: Marloes Rozing
m.rozing@leidenuniv.nl
www.iias.nl/iias
November 2006
15-17 November 2006
Havana, Cuba
International Symposium on Asia-Pacific Studies Symposium
Organized by Center for Studies on Asia and Oceania
Contact: Ana Dolores Sultana
ana_dolores@ceao.co.cu
20-22 November 2006
Porto, Portugal
Female Slavery, Orphanage and Poverty in the Portuguese Empire (XVI to XX Centuries) Conference
Organized by Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administracao
Contact: Elisa Sarmento
cla.sarmento@nct.pt
www.isc.up.pt/congresso2006
22-23 November 2006
Quezon, Philippines
Christianity and Cultures: Japan and China in Comparison (1543-1644) Symposium
Organized by Center for Studies on Asia and Oceania
Contact: Ana Dolores Sultana
ana_dolores@ceao.co.cu
December 2006
1 December 2006
Taipei, Taiwan EU Relations with Taiwan and China Conference
Organized by Academia Sinica
Contact: Der-Chin Horng
chong@sinica.edu.tw
July 2001
9-11 July 2007
Leiden, Netherlands
18th Urban Language Survey Seminar Conference (s): Marinus van der Broek and Vincent Van Heuven
Organized by LUC/IAS/IW
Contact: Marloes Rozing
m.rozing@leidenuniv.nl
www.iias.nl/iias
August 2003
5 August 2007
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
ICA 5 Conference
Organized by University Kebangsaan Malaysia/ATMAI/KION
Contact: Institute of Malay World and Civilisation (ATMAI)
cia@ukm.my
www.atma.iuml.ukm.my/icay5.htm
September 2007
12-15 September 2007
Naples, Italy
EuroSEAS Conference Conference (s): EuroSEAS Organized by EUROSEAS
Contact: Pietro Masina
rifolt@iol.uio.no
http://iias.leidenuniv.nl/institutes/kivi/euroseas.html
You can increase public awareness of your conference in this newsletter and in the online Agenda Asia by submitting your conference details to www.iias.nl/portal/conference.html