GK: During your career you’ve moved from ancient Sanskrit poetry through the Medieval to the brink of the colonial period. Can you describe some of the stages along this journey?

SP: Let me try to cut into this question by describing some of my recent projects, especially my new book, which concerns the history of Sanskrit itself. I think a lot of Sanskritists are interested in this question, since Sanskrit occupies a strange social location among the classical languages of the world, and many Sanskritists ask themselves early in their careers what exactly Sanskrit was for, who used it and how it differed from other Kultursprachen. In the early 1990s I became interested in precisely these questions and realized - and I think a lot of people have realized this long before I came along - that understanding the history of Sanskrit requires understanding the history of non-Sanskrit. This brought me to the study of Old Kannada.

I first began to study Kannada in Chicago, with my colleague A.K. Ramanujan, trading Kannada lessons for Sanskrit lessons, and then with scholars in Mysore, above all T.V. Venkatachala Sastry. That was a very important moment in my career, for I began to see the powerful interactions between Sanskrit and a local literary language in ways you simply cannot see if you’re looking at the history of Sanskrit divorced from the history of regional languages. Some years later my editor at the University of California Press encouraged me to develop all this into a larger book project that turned into The Language of the Gods in the World of Men.

The new book is a history of culture and power as expressed in the medium of Sanskrit, and what happened when Sanskrit was superseded in the course of the second millennium CE, a period I have called the ‘vernacular millennium’. Given my earlier training as a classicist and belief in the value of serious comparativism, I also look at the role of Latin in the Roman Empire, the very different forms empire took in India and Italy, and the displacement of Latin and Sanskrit and their imperial embodiments through vernacular poetics and vernacular polities in the medieval period. There are absolutely stunning symmetries in every sense. It is remarkable to compare the court of King Alfred at the end of the ninth century and the relationship between that developing polity and its attitude towards the Carolingian Empire with their contemporaries in southern India, the Rashtrakutas and western Calukyas, and their cultivation of a Kannada cultural-political region. Sanskrit maintained only a kind of ghostly existence in the literary domain during the latter half of this vernacular millennium. I am well aware that as a language of scholarship it has continued into the present - I studied only in Sanskrit medium with my various teachers in India, including the great P.N. Pattabhirama Sastry - but my book will show that its displacement began long ago, and that by the middle of the second millennium, Sanskrit in many places was no longer relevant in the literary and political spheres. The real creative energies were from then on located in the desha bhashas, the languages of Place.

Sheldon Pollock is a man of many interests. A Sanskritist by training, he is also concerned with history, politics and social theory, while some of his work is controversial. He spoke to Gijs Kruijitzer last December about his career, research, and the politics of writing the pre-colonial.
Asia, what Asia?

While few previously appreciated the extent of the interconnections between Europe and Asia, this all changed within hours on 26 December 2004 when a tsunami hit the shores of South and Southeast Asia, causing terrible suffering and enormous devastation. The amature video images of the tsunami and its victims, Asians and Europeans alike, imprinted on everyone’s memory the human ties binding the continents. Although the tsunami generated a worldwide charitable reflex of unprecedented proportions, the lack of effective political structures to direct relief operations reinforced negative images of Asia where “Asians” is a pejorative label - as in “Asian crisis”, “Asian values” or “Asian flu”.

Be this as it may, there is also a growing tendency to view Asia in a more positive light, due in large part to impressive economic growth in China and India, and new impulses in scientific cooperation. In my previous director’s note I reflected on how to establish Asia-Europe collaboration in research and education, and how European countries - instead of trumpeting unrealistic statements about Europe’s future as the world’s foremost knowledge-economy by 2020 - need to begin organizing a pan-European structure for scientific education and research, and to channel significant resources to secondary and tertiary education.

I do not have the illusion that my director’s note is avidly read in Brussels. Nonetheless, the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union, J. Solana, admitted in January 2005 that statements about Europe being the foremost knowledge-economy by 2020 were rhetorical and unrealistic. Instead, the EU should take on the role of catalyst. According to Solana, the EU should fuel and stimulate promising new initiatives in all realms of society, including research and education.

I sincerely hope this line of thinking on the EU’s role will blossom, as only then can bottom-up initiatives develop. This will take time, as the European mentality among European civil servants, who have been trained to implement and execute (research) programmes adhering to narrow criteria. These programmes are the result of extensive lobbying in the corridors of power: the outcome, for example, of the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development 2002-2006, in its almost exclusive fixation on the hard sciences and information technology, mirrors the interests of the ‘powers’ which have the upper hand in Brussels. The meagre amount of money ear-marked for the ‘soft’ sciences is spent on politically correct research following the latest trends, which are, in nature, short-term in outlook.

The voice of the human and social sciences needs to be heard. Before this can happen, we need a Euro-Asian proto-structure of education and research that can make a strong case for cooperation between Asia and Europe. This will be no easy task, though the rapidly growing research and development capacities of Asian countries make the creation of such a platform realistic. A promising initiative in this direction is the one by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for an Asian alliance of research institutes, which in combination with the European Alliance for Asian Studies could become the first step in the formation of such a proto-structure.

It is important to reinforce these initiatives but we need to, at the same time, keep on creating more favourable conditions for Asia-Europe cooperation to flourish. European secondary schools should be offering courses in Asian cultures and languages, thus acquainting pupils with Asia in their formative years. When they leave school in 2010, European universities should be offering an array of courses on Asia combined with disciplinary specializations. To attain the critical mass to achieve this objective, education and research on Asia should be co-ordinated at the pan-European level. But before we can start thinking about this, we need to take stock of existing Asian Studies in Europe, so that in the future we will not be tongue-tied when asked: ‘Asia, what Asia?’

Wim Stokhof
Director, IIAS
Some thoughts on how knowledge on Southeast Asia came to be

As teachers and researchers in the humanities and social sciences, we often refer to the corpus of empirical knowledge labeled ‘Southeast Asian studies’ but seldom reflect closely on the nature of this knowledge. As pointed out by Charles Macdonald in ‘What is the use of area studies?’, IJAS Newsletter 35, the utility of this knowledge is not only academic in nature, but also professional and political. In response to his important and timely comments, I wish to offer some of my own thoughts on the matter.

I propose that social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia has a clear knowledge baseline, a continuous and inter-related intellectual-cum-conceptual basis, which emerged from its own history and has, in turn, inspired the construction, organization and consumption of this knowledge. Two concepts in particular - ‘plurality’ and ‘plural society’ - have frequently been used to characterize Southeast Asia. Both are social scientific constructs that emerged from empirical studies conducted in the region.

It is not difficult to show that the production of social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia has moved along this ‘plurality-plural society’ continuum. When scholars research and write on pre-European Southeast Asia they are compelled to respond to the reality of Southeast Asian plurality during that period, when the region was a meeting place of world civilizations and cultures, where winds and currents converged bringing together people from all over the world, pursuing ‘God, gold and glory’, and where groups of indigenes moved in various regional circuits seeking their fortunes. As a result, we have had, in Java, a Hindu king with an Arabic name entertaining European traders. In Champa, we had a Malay raja ruling a predominantly Buddhist population. Even shunning orientalism, we cannot avoid writing about those of India when, in reality, they are one and the same people. It is not difficult to show that the production of social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia has been generated, produced and contextualized within the plural society framework, because ‘nation-state’ as an analytical category matters more than, say, the plurality perception of the era of Central Bureau, who, like their ancestors centuries ago, move freely between Indonesia and Malaysia to eke out a living along with other tribal groups and outside traders, ignoring the existence of the political boundaries. It is not difficult to show that anthropologists have found it convenient, for analytical, scientific and academic expedience, to separate the Indonesian Penans from those of Malaysia when, in reality, they are one and the same people.

The ‘plurality-plural society continuum’ is thus not only a ‘knowledge baseline’ but also a real-life social construct endowed with a set of ideas, vocabulary and idioms, within which people exist day-to-day in Southeast Asia. As teachers and researchers in the humanities and social sciences our primary task is to separate the reality from the social construct, thus separating, even momentarily, ‘the analytical’ from ‘the real’. It is not an easy task but try we must. Perhaps then we will be in a better position to understand how ‘Southeast Asian studies as a form of knowledge’ has been utilized beyond academia.

With the advent of the Cold War and modernization theory, analysts further narrowed their frames of reference. They began to talk of poverty and basic needs in the rural areas of a particular nation, focusing on resistance and warfare, slums in urban areas, and economic growth of smallholder farmers. The interests of particular disciplines, such as anthropology, became narrower still when it focused on particular communities in remote areas, a particular battle in a mountain area, a failed irrigation project in a delta, or gender identity of an ethnic minority in a market town. As anthropology, became narrower still when it focused on particular communities in remote areas, a particular battle in a mountain area, a failed irrigation project in a delta, or gender identity of an ethnic minority in a market town.

Southeast Asian studies, inter-nation-state relations, intra-nation-state problems, nationalism and so on. This gave rise to what could be called ‘methodological nationalism’, a way of constructing and using knowledge based mainly on the ‘territoriality’ of the nation-state and not on the notion that social life is a universal and borderless phenomenon - hence the creation of ‘Indonesian studies’, ‘Philippines Studies’, ‘Malaysian Studies’, ‘Thai Studies’ and so on.

Inevitably a substantial amount of social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia has been generated, produced and contextualized within the plural society framework, because ‘nation-state’ as an analytical category matters more than, say, the plurality perception of the era of Central Bureau, who, like their ancestors centuries ago, move freely between Indonesia and Malaysia to eke out a living along with other tribal groups and outside traders, ignoring the existence of the political boundaries. In fact, anthropologists seem to have found it convenient, for analytical, scientific and academic expedience, to separate the Indonesian Penans from those of Malaysia when, in reality, they are one and the same people.

Some diversions on the subject of globalization

Cultural diversity and exchange within globalization

Once colonial rule was established and the plural society installed in the region, followed later by the formation of nation-states, the analytical frame, too, changed. Analysts now had to address the reality of the plural society, and also subsequent developments generated by the existence of a community of plural societies in the region. We began to narrow our analytical frame to nation-state, ethnic group, inter-nation-state relations, intra-nation-state problems, nationalism and so on. This gave rise to what could be called ‘methodological nationalism’, a way of constructing and using knowledge based mainly on the ‘territoriality’ of the nation-state and not on the notion that social life is a universal and borderless phenomenon – hence the creation of ‘Indonesian studies’, ‘Philippines Studies’, ‘Malaysian Studies’, ‘Thai Studies’ and so on.

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Inevitably a substantial amount of social scientific knowledge on Southeast Asia has been generated, produced and contextualized within the plural society framework, because ‘nation-state’ as an analytical category matters more than, say, the plurality perception of the era of Central Bureau, who, like their ancestors centuries ago, move freely between Indonesia and Malaysia to eke out a living along with other tribal groups and outside traders, ignoring the existence of the political boundaries. In fact, anthropologists seem to have found it convenient, for analytical, scientific and academic expedience, to separate the Indonesian Penans from those of Malaysia when, in reality, they are one and the same people.

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Letters & comments

Cultural diversity and exchange within globalization

As an anthropologist, I remain skeptical of such approaches to cultural diversity and exchange. The notion of culture as an aspect of everyday life disappears under the weight of creative achievements or economic interests. Hence, cultural diversity is defined as that which is best as they can to subvert these cultural values. Hence, cultures are invariably in conflict and in transformation.

One of the ironies of disciplinary practice is that while the world has begun to take culture seriously, anthropologists have discarded it as a serious analytical category. The difficulties associated with its utilization beyond academia. As teachers and researchers in the humanities and social sciences our primary task is to separate the reality from the social construct, thus separating, even momentarily, ‘the analytical’ from ‘the real’. It is not an easy task but try we must. Perhaps then we will be in a better position to understand how ‘Southeast Asian studies as a form of knowledge’ has been utilized beyond academia.

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Was your desire to view literature historically in Literary Cultures in History in any way inspired by the ‘literary turn’ among researchers of colonial history?

SP: No, the literary cultures book didn’t come out of any methodological shift in Indian historiography, let alone from a Western literary-theoretical problematic, whether derived from Bakhtin or Derrida, both of which Indianists must find inadequate for their materials. It emerged out of a set of issues that poets and novelists and anybody who writes in South Asia has confronted for a very long time, the Indian version of the Question of the Lingua. I’ll give you an example. The Kannada novelist U.R. Ananthamurthy, a friend of mine since the 1950s, did his PhD in England in the early 1960s and could have stayed to become a Salman Rushdie, assaut la lettre, of the Anglo-Indian fiction world. Instead he decided not to go home but to write in Kannada. This was a huge choice – a choice that in the 1960s a lot of post-colonial intellectuals were making - to sort of recapture the desi literary aesthetic and to refuse English. There is an old and interesting essay on this by the poet R. Parthasarathy, another old friend, called ‘Whor-ing after Strange Gods’, written when he abandoned English poetry for Tamil. There is sometimes a certain indigenism or nativism in such gestures, which is not my political cup of tea, but Ananthamurthy has no nativism about him at all - his was a cultural-political decision.

SP: Not. To develop a collaborative project. I also like collaborative projects for political reasons; if we can’t have a socialist world, where we have better choices than we had in the past. And one question that motivates me is: are there resources in the non-capitalist, non-modern, non-western world, theoretical resources in particular, that are available to us to remake our world?

SP: I think you’re referring to an article on the Ramayana I wrote in 1993 (“Ramayana and Political Imaginaries in India”). I feel this piece has been woefully misinterpreted by some readers. When I was traveling in India early in 1992 and arrived in Hyderabad, there were acrities against the Mus-}

Interview

HK: There are also people who care about the past in order to make their heritage claims, most notably Hindu nationalists, and some have associated you with them....

SP: This nativism and what you’ve called the neo-orientalist view of history, how are they problematic?

GK: Twenty years later I wanted to do a project about the long his- toric of the Ananthamurthy problem, one that in Kannada began around the time of Pampa in the tenth century: poets and writers confronting the choice of how to write, of what language to write in, of which audience to address. These were always choices. In Benedict Anderson’s theory of nationalism, language diversity is a fatality: It is a sort of negative, biblical vision of language diversity as a curse. As I’ve argued, India has no tower of Babel myth, and in any case language diversi- ty is a product of culture, not a product of nature. Culture does not, in any meaningful sense of the term, ‘evolve’. Peo- ple actively develop language diversity because it serves their aesthetic, political or spiritual purposes. When and how those choices were made is an important question behind Literary Cultures in History. In a place like South Asia, where you have the longest continuous multi-lingual literary history in the world, you have a very big research project. How do you begin...
You said earlier that you wanted to discuss the problems teaches at the department for South and Central Asian Why have you chosen to compare Sanskrit knowledge systems? The knowledge system project has three components.

The project is not meant to be another exercise in Sanskrit can’t be the whole story. It is demonstrably not the case in literary history. Somehow Sanskrit had become a world enclosed on itself, which wasn’t able to communicate, literally, as effectively as the languages of Place. That may have been one of the conditions for the slow decline of Sanskrit, but I don’t know how important other elements were. Whom Lord Minto wrote his minute on native education in 1811, he describes how ‘abstract sciences’ had been abandoned in India, ‘political literature’ neglected, and so on, and he ascribed this to the erosion of patronage systems in the recent past. It is conceivable that the breakup of certain kinds of patronage structures after the collapse of the Mughal Empire was a factor in the erosion of Sanskrit knowledge, as the coming of the Mughal peace two centuries earlier was a factor in its efflorescence. But that can’t be the whole story.

SP: Why have you chosen to compare Sanskrit knowledge systems rather than Indian Persianate knowledge systems to European systems?

CK: The project is not meant to be another exercise in Sanskrit hegemony. My longer term hope is to develop an ongoing seminar and publication series on the seventeenth century and work with scholars elsewhere, for example, the Middle East and Europe to do a kind of global intellectual history of the early modern age. But yes, it is difficult to draw in the past is by confronting it

Neil Garcia was an ICOPHIL fellow and artist in residence at IIAS in 2004 The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Indological Theory and Practice Indological Theory and Practice

J. Neil C. Garcia

Poems from Amsterdam: a cycle XXXIV

I can see a fat belt slapping of hard, rhythmic spanking.

Drawn blood from a pricked nipple is irreducibly what it is.

When will it ever end—the strangeness to write about?

The apartment I stay in is next door to the Black Tulip: an exclusive guesthouse for clients into leather and chain.

In other words: bondage, and all the gory theater it entails.

I’ve had half-a-mind to go visit next-door neighbors are supposed to, but with pleasure and pain I’m already fully acquainted, and for the inflections of felt language I no longer have to pay.

At least, not in hard currency. But I can imagine how comparable they are—writing and sadomasochistic sex: they are both peak experiences that blur body and spirit, pushing one into the other’s transforming embrace.

This may be why desire’s idiom approaches the idiom of death: to be breathless, to know passion, to be utterly consumed.

Or perhaps, I’m only being analogical, wishing to see kinship from the sympathy of distance. Perhaps, it’s not as I think it is.

The metaphor of the suffering self can be stretched just so far: wheals and bruises on an exposed flank are too literal to be abstracted to a verbal device. The burning of lashed leather on a buttock or a thigh is irredubly what it is.

Drawn blood from a pricked nipple isn’t quite inspiration.

As I write this, into the courtyard outside my window waft muffled moaning and screams counterpointed by the deliberate sound of hard, rhythmic spanking. I can see a fat belt slapping against a rippled expanse of skin, frocked and progressively shading into deeper moods of red. My mouth waters at the remembered sensation of a splintered finger, a stubbed toe, the waves of dark heat cresting from the body’s midpoint to the quickening head, which reels and unhegones and throbs into a flower—a tulip blossoming on the whiteness of the page.
Theme introduction

Piracy and robbery in the Asian seas

John Kleinen and Manon Osseweijer

Maritime piracy has become a focal point of media attention. Together with governments and military experts, the media tends to link maritime piracy with international terrorism as an ongoing threat in the post-Cold War era. In particular the Strait of Malacca, the strategic sea-lane linking the oil fields of the Middle East and the production economies of East Asia and beyond, is portrayed as a future battlefield.

The media, however, has a tendency to oversate the issue on the basis of insufficient evidence - data supplied by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) and its UN counterpart, the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The absence of thorough research has led to the romanticization and misunderstanding of piracy to such an extent that, in many cases, fiction has outweighed reality. This is not to underestimate the difficulty of researching pirates. As Robert Anthony addresses the records should fall into government hands, would automatically convict them? (2002: 257)

This does not imply that social science research on robbers and pirates is impossible; maritime piracy, unlike maritime terrorism, can be regarded as one of many ‘grey-area’ phenomena. Like smuggling, gambling, prostitution, the trafficking of goods and people and petty crime on land, piracy exists in more or less organized forms in contexts of diminishing human security (Chalk 1997). Maritime Southeast Asia’s coastal zones are increasingly characterized by environmental degradation, illegal fishing, high unemployment, migrant labour, smuggling, crime and prostitution. Piracy in this context is truly an economic activity, be it a business concerned with the transport and distribution of commodities rather than their production.

Academic workshops on maritime piracy have repeatedly stressed the need to view contemporary maritime piracy within what has imaginatively been called the ‘tapestry of maritime threats’. Social scientists still need to fully understand the knots in this tapestry. While undertaking this research, academics should bear in mind that their purpose and priorities fall under the purview of scientific research, not Southeast Asian governments or private organizations. There is a need for research on the human dimensions of maritime piracy - the pirates and their socio-economic backgrounds.

The articles compiled here address different aspects of Asian maritime piracy in historical and contemporary perspectives. Three articles address piracy in the past. Robert Anthony addresses the economic and cultural significance of piracy along China’s southern coast in the early modern period, a co-habitation of rulers, peasants, fisher people and ‘foul of the sea’, as pirates were called. In Southeast Asia, many coastal zones and their hinterlands started out as frontier societies where all kinds of illicit activities took place; coastal areas were ruled for centuries by kingdoms that thrived on trade and raiding. In her article Esther Velthoen addresses the political implications of raiding for booty and slaves in Eastern Indonesia, and Dutch colonial attempts to suppress it. Ota Atsushi focuses on the role of piracy in transforming inter-regional trade patterns in the late eighteenth century, where local raiding groups competed and cooperated with the Dutch East India Company, British country traders and Chinese merchants.

Three articles address contemporary maritime piracy. Eric Priéon defends the necessity of studying everyday piracy out of the limelight of sensation and romanticism, and takes us on a journey to some of the pirates living in the vicinity of Singapore operating in the Strait of Malacca. Adam Young explores the strategic sea-lanes, and brings the reader back to the timeless issue of poverty. Finally, Stefan Eklöf argues that piracy continues to exist precisely because it remains insignificant for the shipping industry - and for that matter, Indonesia - and concludes with a call for a broader research agenda on human insecurity in coastal areas.

The guest editors hope the issue of maritime piracy will remain on the international research agenda after the immi- nent link with terrorism and cataclysm has faded away.

References


Manon Osseweijer is coordinator of academic affairs at IIAS, and of the IIAS-MARE programme ‘Piracy and Robbery in the Asian Sea’.

For more information, please visit: www.iias.nl/hiro

John Kleinen is senior lecturer at the University of Amsterdam, and affiliated to the Centre for Maritime Research (MARE). His current research focuses on marine and maritime developments in Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam.

< Maritime piracy

IIAS and the Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) at the University of Amsterdam are hosts of the programme ‘Piracy and Robbery in the Asian Sea’, an initiative to facilitate research, workshops and publications on piracy in Asia. Two workshops have been held to date. ‘International Piracy and Robbery at Sea’ at the 1st MARE conference in Amsterdam in 2005, and ‘Maritime Security, Maritime Terrorism and Piracy in Asia’, co-organized by IIAS and ISEAS, in Singapore in 2006. Papers from these workshops will be published in edited volumes within the ISEAS-ISEAS Series: Maritime Issues and Policy in Asia. The 3rd MARE conference in Amsterdam, 7-9 July 2005, will feature a panel on maritime risks including piracy - ‘Ports, Pirates and Hinterlands in East and Southeast Asia’, co-organized with the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, will take place in Shanghai, 10-12 November 2005.

For more information, please visit www.iias.nl/piracy
Piracy in early modern China

Over the centuries, piracy has captured the imagination of writers and readers alike. Described as daring adventurers, heroic rebels, or bloodthirsty villains, pirates in fact and fiction continue to fascinate people of all ages. But why should we study pirates? Are they important? Can they tell us anything about society, culture, and history?

Pirates are not only interesting but significant for what they can tell us about Chinese history. Between 1520 and 1810, China witnessed an upsurge in piracy all along the southern coast from Zhejiang province to Hainan Island. This was China’s golden age of piracy. During that time there were three great periods of piracy: the first, the siege of the pirates of the mid-Ming dynasty from 1520 to 1575; second, the rebel-pirates of the Ming-Qing transition between 1620 and 1648; and third, the commoner-pirates of the mid-Qing dynasty from 1780 to 1810. For no less than half of the pirates of the mid-Qing dynasty from 1780 to 1810, their families were fishermen, sailors and petty entrepreneurs who engaged in both licit and illicit activities. The study of pirates is important for maritime history from the early modern period. It was significant because it allowed marginalized people to participate in the wider commercial economy. The extortion system was highly institutionalised with registration certificates, account books, full-time bookkeepers, and collection bureaux.

Clandestine economy

When piracy flourished, so did too the clandestine activities of thousands of additional jobs to coastal residents. Like the pirates themselves, most of the individuals who traded with them were not professional pirates. They were poor and discriminated. They engaged in both licit and illicit enterprises for survival. In many instances extra money gained from clandestine activities provided an important, even major, part of their overall income. Because tens of thousands of people on both sea and shore made a living from piracy directly or indirectly for their livelihoods, it became a self-sustaining enterprise and a significant feature of early modern China. It was important because it allowed marginalized fishermen, sailors, and petty entrepreneurs, who had otherwise been excluded, to participate in the wider commercial economy. While piracy dettracted from legitimate trade and profits, it nonetheless had important positive economic consequences. As the growth of legitimate commerce promoted the development of new ports, so too did pirates’ illicit trade. Numerous ports and black markets sprung up along China’s coast and on Taiwan to handle the trade in stolen goods and to service pirate ships and crews. Black markets operated as a shadow economy alongside and in competition with the legitimate trade centres. Furthermore, this illegitimate trade tended to perpetuate piracy. Once pirates generated enough profits to sustain prices, legitimate markets that arose to handle the trade in stolen goods. Large amounts of money and goods flowed in and out of black markets, all of which were outside the control of the state and normal trading networks. The establishment of markets to specifically handle stolen merchandise was a clear indication of weakness in the structure of normal, legal markets. Pirates therefore made important contributions to the growth of trade and the reallocation of local capital. At the height of their power huge pirate fleets gained firm hold over many coastal villagess and port towns, as well as shipping and fishing enterprises, through the systematic use of terror, bribery, and extortion. During such times all ships operating along China’s coast were liable to pirate attack unless they bought safe-conduct passes. To avoid attack, merchant and fishing junko paid protection fees to the pirates, who in turn issued passports guaranteeing impunity to the purchaser. In the early nineteenth century pirates had virtual control over the state-monopolized salt trade, and even Western merchants had to pay ‘tribute’ to the pirates to protect their ships. From the perspective of the Chinese empire had a great impact on the economic development of early modern China.

The role of women

Among Chinese pirates, there were also significant numbers of women. Because many women made their homes aboard ship and worked alongside their men-folk, it was not unusual to find females among pirates. Many women had mar- ried into the pirate profession and willingly lived and died as outlaws. Several female pirates even became powerful chieftains, such as Zheng Yi Sao and Cai Qian Ma, both of whom commanded formidable pirate fleets. These and other female pirates were able to survive in a man’s world by proving themselves as capable as men in battle and in their duties as sailors. Women were not merely tolerated by their male shipmates but were actually able to exercise leadership roles aboard ships. Female pirates represented the most radical departure from dominant society and customs, defying accepted notions of womanhood, breaking with established codes of female propriety, virtue, and passivity. Unlike their counter- parts on Western ships, Chinese women pirates did not have to disguise themselves as men. They lived and worked openly as women aboard ship. From the perspective of the Chinese state, such women who behaved like men permitted the social order and normal gender relationships, turning Confucian orthodoxy on its head. Indeed, they challenged the patriarchal hierar- chy upon which both the state and soci- ety rested. For seafaring women, piracy presented opportunities to escape from poverty and the rigid restraints placed on women. They gave them the chance for adventure and freedom unheard of for most women on land.

To conclude, reading about pirates is simply interesting: the stories can actually inform us about popular ideas and attitudes towards crime and violence. The very scale of piracy during its gold- en age - both in number and scope as well as length of time - made it a signific- ant factor in modern China’s histori- cal development. There were not only tens of thousands of sailors and fisher- men who became pirates, but at least as many or even more people on shore who aided and supported pirates, thus affect- ing a large portion of the coastal popu- lation. Both directly and indirectly, pira- cy had a great impact on the economic development of South China in the early modern period. Pirates helped open up new trading ports and markets in areas that had previously been little touched by the prevailing marketing system, thereby boosting the local economies with goods and money.

Large-scale piracy acted as a state with- in the state. Pirates established their own regime of military power, tax bureaus, and bureaucracy, which existed side-by-side with, but independently of, the Chinese imperial state and local elites. Pirates and seafarers created their own underworld culture of violence, crime, and vice. It was a survival culture significant because it was distinguish- able from that of the dominant Confu- cian culture. For men and especially for women, piracy offered an important alternative way of life.

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Small Pirate Junk with Sail and Oars. Source: Cijin taive jiching (1884) - Murray, Dian. 1987.


Piracy and raiding in Southeast Asian waters has a long pedigree that time has done little to diminish. As late as 1994, memories of nineteen-tenth Tobelo raiders were used to frighten children into obedience in parts of central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The Tobelo, portrayed as merciless predators, were active in the nineteenth century, were one of many groups for whom piracy was an important source of livelihood in eastern Indonesia’s ‘geography of coast’. This article examines how such groups functioned as part of the political system in eastern Indonesia and how this came to a temporary end with the maritime expansion of the colonial state in the nineteenth century.

State-condoned raiding
Wandering groups of armed men were a common sight in the eastern archipelago in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were active not only during periods of regional warfare but in relatively peaceful times. Raidiers were one part of a mobile population engaged in a combination of raiding, political pursuits, trading and fishing. Such groups were often associated with larger regional centres and were especially active in the peripheries where they often formed alliances with local elites and settled for longer periods.

Raiding was not a sporadic, random activity but was closely related to the formation and functioning of regional spheres of influence and politics.

The two main political centres in eastern Indonesia were Ternate and Bone. Their spheres of influence were based on alliances with tributaries and on distant, ideologically related aristocrats, fishermen and farmers. In contrast to the Dutch East India Company’s (VOC) ideal of a centrally managed system of political relations where peace-keeping and mediation were instrumental, this tributary system resembled a series of separately negotiated non-aggression pacts between a centre and its tributaries. Centres were unable to control the movements and actions of their subjects but were able to mount military campaigns to revenge affronts or discipline wayward tributaries, campaigns in which both raiding groups and tributaries participated. The presence of ‘pirates’ was one of the main justifications cited for the maritime expansion of the colonial state that occurred in eastern Indonesia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The connection between the present resurgence to question whether there is any connection between the present resurgence of piracy and the weakening of the centralised state with the fall of Suharto and, more to the point, if the reassertion of historical patterns requires the state to abandon its ever-constant on strong-arm tactics to negotiate anew with regional power holders?}

| Surrendering to the colonial power and enjoyed the necessary direct violence that was permitted their own subjects who had taken up a roaming existence during the Nuku War were to settle on a permanent basis. Lack of food and supplies of continuous contact with active raiding chiefs brought the expedition to an abrupt end.

Two similar projects on a smaller scale were undertaken by the colonial government to subdue the Tobelo around Flores, also descendants of Nuku’s followers. The first was carried out by Daeng Magassing, an aristocrat from Bone, a small island to the north of Sulawesi with longstanding connections to maritime raiders. He used his ‘local’ knowledge and status to form alliances with raiding groups and resettle them on Tanah Jemphe. This tiny island to the south of Selayar had become depopulated due to frequent attacks. Here the resettled raiders were to engage in agriculture and live in peace under the protection of the Dutch. In 1836, fifteen Tobelo chiefs signed a peace treaty, reinforced by oath, with Daeng Magassing. Only three years later, however, it was evident to the colonial authorities that the project had failed and that Daeng Magassing himself was engaged in acts of piracy with the supplies the Dutch had subsidised.

A second attempt to ‘tame’ the Tobelo was undertaken by a Dutch adventurer, Jan Nicholas Vosmaer, who opened a trading post on Sulawesi’s east coast in the 1830s. He was supported by the colonial government and enjoyed the patronage of a powerful chief, Tusama, against themselves, and that tributaries and raiding chiefs did not form alliances against the centre. For this reason, it was necessary to direct violence outwards towards the periphery, by allowing tributaries and aristocrats with their armed followers to conduct their activities away from the centre. Eastern Sulawesi with its three small maritime polities of Buton, Tobungku and Bangagi was situated between Bone and Ternate’s spheres; it consequently felt the effects of raiding/trading groups from both centres and had to look to them for protection - with fluctuating success.

In 1743, a treaty was negotiated by Ternate to resolve a conflict between the two tributaries Bangagi and Tobungku, so both could participate in a punitive expedition, led by Ternate. The final clause of this treaty, stipulating that the Sultan receive a share of any booty acquired, is clear evidence that he condoned such random activity but was closely related to the formation and functioning of regional spheres of influence and politics.

For regional centres, it was essential to ‘manage’ affairs in ways that ensured potential violence would not be directed towards the centre. Diplomats in both cases were instrumental in the expansion of their spheres. In the case of Ternate, aristocrats settled in eastern Sulawesi to represent the Sultan and to keep a close eye on local elites. In the case of Bone, the expansive diaspora of aristocrats and traders was not as closely linked to the main centre of power, and was accompanied by a disbursement of the Bugis language and customs beyond the area of Bone’s political influence.

Sailing in dangerous waters: piracy and raiding in historical context
Esther Velthuis

Fortresses used in defence against the Tobelo were once again re-occupied, while island populations in particular became vulnerable to tribute demands by rebel forces. The Indonesian state, just as the colonial state had done half a century earlier, established control anew over the seas through an adroit use of force and negotiation with rebel leaders. Given this history, it may be appropriate to question whether there is any connection between the present resurgence of piracy and the weakening of the centralised state with the fall of Suharto and, more to the point, if the reassertion of historical patterns requires the state to abandon its ever-constant on strong-arm tactics to negotiate anew with regional power holders?
From ‘piracy’ to inter-regional trade, the Sunda Straits zone, c. 1750-1800

Incipient ‘piracy’ in the Sunda Straits Zone in the second half of the eighteenth century was tied to the expanding Canton trade. Bugis, Ibanun, Malay, Chinese and English traders were directly or indirectly involved in the plunder of pepper, a profitable commodity to exchange for tea in Canton. Their activities accelerated the demise of the already malfunctioning Dutch East India Company trading system and the emergence of a new order in Southeast Asian trade.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the emergence of the Canton trade began to seriously affect the Dutch trading system. As tea was becoming more and more profitable in Europe, Europeans - the English East India Company (EIC), English country traders, and the VOC, as the others - enthusiastically promoted their trade in Canton, the only port in Qing China open to foreign traders.

To facilitate their trade in tea, European traders needed Southeast Asian products, which were in great demand in China. Tin, pepper and edible maritime products were, in this order, the most valuable commodities in terms of trade value; the VOC, English country and Chinese traders sought after these products in independent ports outside the Dutch trading system. In response, Riau, the capital of the kingdom of Johor, emerged as a new trade centre. Southeast Asian products were transported by local and Bugis traders to Riau in exchange for Chinese and Indian commodities, and carried by Chinese and English country traders to Canton. In contrast to the ineffective VOC monopoly system, Riau prospered by attracting traders from various regions in Asia.

Ota Atsushi
The declining Dutch trading system
Since their arrival in Java towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Dutch attempted to establish an exclusive trading system in the Indonesian Archipelago. They concluded treaties with local rulers, often in return for military assistance, stipulating that the Dutch East India Company (VOC) would retain the right of monopoly on important export products and prohibiting all but authorized Dutch, indigenous, and Chinese merchants from their trade. Although the system was not always effective, it contributed to the VOC’s collection of Southeast Asian products for the European market.

In Riau, the growing Canton trade and its demand for Southeast Asian products transformed the maritime trade in the Archipelago. The risky business of raiding would not have been possible without a network that exchanged the booty for money and access to opium from Bengal gave the English an upper hand in competition with the Dutch.

Although the Dutch continuously attempted to prevent raiding, their efforts proved ineffective. Dutch ships could not catch up with those of the raiders, as the latter could move faster with their more sophisticated sailing and rowing techniques. It was also difficult to find the raiders hidden in small inlets and on the many islands in the area.

A new pattern in inter-regional trade
The risky business of raiding would not have been possible without a network that exchanged the booty for money and access to opium from Bengal.

Ota Atsushi is a research fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and a PhD candidate at CNWS, Leiden University. His previous publications include ‘“Traditional” versus “Modern” Administrative Concepts: Dutch Intervention and its Results in Rural Banten, 1670-1790,’ Itinerario 37:2, and ‘Banten Rebellion, 1593-1794: Factors behind the Mass Participation,’ Modern Asian Studies 37:3 (2003).

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1. My discussion is based on Dutch and English primary sources from the National Archives in The Hague and Jakarta, and in the British Library. Source references will be given in my forthcoming PhD dissertation.
2. Although Chinese-owned plantations in Trengganu and Brunei produced considerable amounts of pepper, it was directly brought to China by Chinese traders. Aceh’s extraordinary increase of pepper production occurred only after 1800.

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Pepper was one of the most important trade items in Riau. cinnamon and cloves, bought from China and English traders, reports some 5,000 to 10,000 pikul (one pikul = 61.75 kg) of pepper were traded in Riau in the 1780s. This meant that English country traders collected the greater part of their pepper in Riau. Nevertheless, important pepper-growing regions, such as Lampung, Palembang, Jambi, and Banjarmasin had already been incorporated into the Dutch trading system. This is why a certain proportion of the pepper had to be collected by way of ‘piracy’ and ‘smuggling’.

Raiding
The Chinese demand for pepper made Lampung one of the most important raiding targets from the 1770s. Lampung was the largest pepper-producing region in Southeast Asia in the eighteenth century, providing about forty to eighty percent of the pepper the VOC annually collected in Batavia. Nevertheless, the region was vulnerable as neither its sovereign, the sultan of Banten, nor his overlords, the VOC, could effectively control the region due to their chronic financial and administrative problems.

Raiding intensified from the late 1780s; in twenty-one months, or some 3,400 pikul per year, equaled thirty-five to seventy percent of the amount previously traded in Riau. It also amounted to about twenty percent of all the pepper the VOC gained from Lampung. Thus, raiding became an important channel for collecting pepper and, to a considerable extent, at the expense of VOC trade.

Although the Dutch report above mentions a relatively small number, manpower was also an important plundering target for raiders. Raiders conducted kidnappings every year, and in the largest such case, 150 people were captured in one raid. Sultan Mahmud of Johor was said to have assisted in the recapture of Riau settlers in Retho on the east coast of Sumatra where they joined their relations from Sulu in raiding expeditions to Lampung. Stimulated by these activities, other necessary and profitable commodities. In the 1770s, the increase in raiding around the Sunda Straits coincided with the development of an organized trade pattern, in which raiders’ booty was exchanged for money and foreign commodities. The English were the most important buyers; a group of English traders staying in Silebu, raiders’ meeting point, bartered ammunition for pepper from the raiders. They even arranged a ship for the raiders to rob pepper from cargo ships passing near Pulau Laut. Many islands in the area by the Chinese, the English and the Dutch.

The Chinese traders maintained regular contact with the English in Bengkulen, and exchanged their pepper for opium. Chinese intermediaries further promoted inter-regional trade: in defiance of the Dutch monopoly, they collected pepper, elephants’ tusks and birds’ nests along the Lampung coast, in exchange for English opium and textiles. They also brought a part of the English opium to the eastern part of Banten, where the sugar industry - mostly in the hands of Chinese sugar entrepreneurs - had developed since the early eighteenth century. In spite of their obligation to purchase opium from the VOC, sugar mill owners looked for cheaper opium from Bengal or Banten.

This trade pattern benefited not only foreign traders, but local elites. Baden Tintan in Kialanda, for example, sold pepper to the English, thereby demonstrating his disloyalty to the sultan of Banten and the Dutch. The English bought pepper at higher prices than the sultan of Banten had set, and brought textiles and opium for local people.

Thus the English presence in Silebu and Bengkulen led to their obtaining a large inter-regional trade. This exchange formed a new trade pattern in the Sunda Straits Zone, and subsequently undermined the old Dutch trading system.

The risky business of raiding would not have been possible without a network that exchanged the booty for money and access to opium from Bengal and English country traders were able to bring large amounts of pepper to Canton: fifty to ninety percent of all the pepper transported by European traders.

The growing Canton trade and its demand for Southeast Asian products transformed the maritime trade in the Archipelago in the second half of the eighteenth century. Demand for products ‘banned’ by the VOC fuelled ‘piracy’ and ‘smuggling’ in many places, among them the Sunda Straits Zone. From the raider’s booty the English obtained, among others, pepper, in exchange for opium and ammunition. This exchange formed a new trade pattern in the Sunda Straits Zone, and subsequently undermined the old Dutch trading system.

Although raiding and inter-regional trade existed in this area since older times, the trade pattern in this period was distinguished by two new factors: the role of the English in inter-regional trade and the role of Bengali opium. Since opium was further distributed in the area by the Chinese, the English and the Chinese emerged as partners. These factors became precursors to the South-East Asian trade that the British presided over after the establishment of Singapour in 1819. Raiding and the new trade patterns in the Sunda Straits Zone in the late eighteenth century were an embryo of the new order in nineteenth-century Southeast Asia.

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Piracy in the Malacca Straits: notes from the field

Eric Frécon

Although the number of incidents worldwide has diminished, pirates are attacking more and more vessels in the South China Sea and in the Singapore Straits. According to the latest reports, the pirates - who can be violent and unscrupulous - focus on small, local vessels: tugs, supply ships and fishing trawlers. But who are the pirates? Why do they take such risks? And where do they come from? In order to answer these questions, one has to meet the pirates, their families, their neighbours and friends.

The pirate story in brief

In the 1980s and 90s, pirates came from many places to the Riau Archipelago, especially the city of Palembang on Sumatra. Syaful Rozy was a famous chief, a Robin Hood of the sea, who distributed the booty from plundered vessels. Thanks to him, the imam could finance the building of the mosque. From their kampung in the archipelago, pirates travelled to other islands in the Malacca Straits or the South China Sea. In the late 1990s and at the beginning of the millennium, the gang of Wirawan settled near Jemaju, in the Anambas Archipelago. There the pirates lived among local fishermen for a few months, surveying and attacking vessels. They then came back to the Riau Archipelago before joining their families in Sumatra.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Chinese traveller Chao Jou-koua described in an explanatory note for Sin-fu-chi, the Chinese name for the Sumatran maritime power of Sriwijaya, how the local authority controlled navigation in the region: ‘if a merchant ship passes through without putting into port, boats go out to attack it in accordance to a planned manoeuvre; people are ready to die (to carry out this enterprise).’ Later, Muslim sultanates developed along the maritime routes - until the nineteenth century, entire communities lived by pirate raids, and were armed by local authorities (see also the article by Ota Atsushi). They contributed to the development of strategic commercial warehouses in Malacca, Johor and the Riau Archipelago in the heart of the Malay Straits. Maritime guerrillas regulated regional relations, as did Barbarese in the Mediterranean.

Guided tour into a pirate den

Before arriving, one has to stop at Batam Island, where one is confronted by the economic crisis. In this free trade zone, the sidelined masses of the Asian boom inhabit 40,000 illegal residences. Idle people look for jobs; the atmosphere is heavy. Batam is close to exploding; the population has grown from 18,000 in 1970 to some 500,000 today. The island where the pirates live is very close to the coast of Batam. Here, as elsewhere in Indonesia, the market road is colourful and stalls bustle with life. Following the imam’s call, merchants fry their rice in stalls for the pilots of the taxi boats and the rickshaw drivers. Apart from its gaming rooms, which remain open during the day, it looks just like any other village on piles. After the post office, at the end of the market road, we turn left and enter the den in Kampung Tanjung. The hideaway is ideal: an island amidst many others, only six kilometers from Singapore. The first house is the police station, a crude cabin overlooking the port with a view of the Straits. Local police are no doubt aware of the criminal activities - to get to the Straits, pirates pass under their windows. People say that a few years ago, police used to collect a tax from boats sailing around the island. Two one-engine sampans are the police’s only patrol boats; the pirates have two or three-engined speedboats. Glad in sarrungs, the policemen prefer to take fresh air in front of the station or to visit the prostitutes on Pulau Babi - Pig Island - close by.

Modern Malay piracy has no romantic, anarchist, utopian or religious roots… If Joseph Conrad came back in the Malay world, he would draw his inspiration from terrorists, not idle pirates

Pirates gather on Pulau Babi before attacking vessels in the Straits. They drink and take morphine, probably to forget the danger. Boarding incidents at night are delicate, as they can count on neither a Global Positioning System nor spotlights. The backwash of the ships’ propellers make climbing onto the boats perilous. This is done with the help of grapnels or large gaffs with a sickle on the end, more suitable for collecting coconuts than for boarding ships moving at 25 knots.

At two o’clock in the morning, the pirates get back to their den at the far end of the bay. Their houses on piles, in the middle of a maze of rickety footbridges, are accessible only from the sea. Their neighbours are either smugglers or fishermen with families. During the day, pirates work as taxi-boat drivers and can move freely. Inhabitants never talk of their nocturnal activities. Crouched on his boat docked at the jetty, a sailor sporting Ray-Ban glasses draws: ‘Pirates, they existed an eternity ago… But what does “eternity” mean in the jau karat - or elastic time - country? This is a kind of omen, the oath of secrecy that rules triads. Pirates exist but nobody dares to talk about them. Even the village chief opts for a laissez-faire policy - so long as the unemployed do not rebel and heavy weapons from Aceh aren’t involved. This is the price of the social peace.

Pirate gangs in the maritime suburbs of Singapore

The village chief continues to survey everybody; he asserts that there are seven hands of five to six men, like the Buton gang which his former son-in-law manages. The oldest, occupying beautiful hillside buildings, train the younger generations who play speak takraw - a spectacular mix of football, volleyball and badminton - everyday until the midday, the fourth prayer after sunset. Some of them like Arif can’t wait to get money and wear jerseys and shoes ’made in West’. Young idle people and poor unmarried taxi-boat drivers collaborate with external recruiters. Indeed, the old chief adds: ‘recently, a group came from Palembang (south of Sumatra) to be trained on the job’. All these sea-pirates obey more experienced and charismatic pirates. Their gangs are far from the triads of Hong Kong who make off with boats, then repaint and rename them. The attack on the waters off the den arise from petty robbery, and their weapons are worn. In the Sulis Sea, the gangs possess M-16s and bazookas; in the Riau Archipelago, one has to be content with panang, long Malayans knives and pistols.

The main actors of this shady play are two powerful brothers. One of them adds political shrewdness to the courage of his warrior brother. Both control the entire island - the main village, the market and the den along the bay. They act like lords in front of the inhabitants, their serfs, whom they strike when angry. They are as warlords vis-a-vis the government in Jakarta, the central power far away. The two brothers know all and enjoy political connections; pirates have to give them accounts of their activities.

The visitor won’t meet long or black beards in the den but sea-boologists and the desperate poor. Modern Malay piracy has no romantic, anarchist, utopian or religious roots. After the demise of the pirate myth, people seem to be transferring their fears and fantasies to fundamentalist terrorists. If Joseph Conrad came back in the Malay world, he would draw his inspiration from the terrorists, not the idle pirates.

Notes
2. Two trips were necessary in 2002 and 2003 to localize the den, made possible by the stories of an old missionary and a retired pirate who now organizes boxing matches in Batam. Then, the challenge consisted in entering the kampung where the pirates live. Fortunately, a young Indonesian, who grew up in this village on piles hidden in a bay, between mangroves and small islands, kindly acted as my guide. I met him in a school near Batam. In the den, he introduced me to pirates, fishermen and procurers. Above all, he warned me about attempts to rob or attack me.

Eric Frécon is based at the Institut des hautes études de défense nationale and the Center for International Studies and Research, Paris, and the Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia, Bangkok. His research focuses on maritime security in East Asia. eric.frecon@sciences-po.org.
Indian Ocean piracy has moved over the last fifteen years from the remote back waters to newspaper front pages, even to international dialogues on regional security. The spotlight has focused on multi-lateral approaches to deal with the transnational nature of maritime piracy and terrorism. This international effort to address the problem has proven difficult and controversial. In an interesting twist, one of the region's worst natural disasters may point a way forward.

Adam Young

Strategic watersways

Piracy is a problem for everyone with economic and/or strategic interests in the region, except of course the pirates. These local thugs are practicing a mod- ernized variant of an ancient socio-econo-mic practice, of which they are the beneficiaries, and which they tend to view as a ‘lawless’ criminal practice, a product of the envi- ronments in which they thrive. The earthquake and tsunamis has highlighted a direction of research on contemporary Southeast Asia, and implications for regional security policy. In an interesting twist, one of the region’s worst natural disasters may point a way forward. The tsunami and tsunami waves...
T he casual observer of contemporary piracy, both qualitative and quantitative, is the Kuala lumpur-based Piracy Reporting Centre operated by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), a unit of the International Chamber of Commerce. The Centre, first founded in 1992, has the task – in addition to assisting victims of pirate attacks and investigating authorities – of collecting, analysing and disseminating information about piratical activity. In doing so, the IMB has succeeded, both in raising awareness among ship owners of the problem, and in drawing international attention. The IMB’s annual piracy report, published each January for the preceding year, usually attracts a great deal of interest from the media and generates a string of articles in newspapers around the world. The thrust of the IMB’s reports, and thus of most of the media reporting, is that piracy is a serious threat to international shipping, that the problem is increasing in numbers as well as in the incidence of violence, and that the authorities of the littoral states of the most affected regions, particularly Southeast Asia, are not doing enough to suppress it.

A closer look at the IMB’s figures, however, shows that the problem might not be all that alarming after all – at least not in economic terms. In 2004, the Bureau reported 160 cases of actual and attempted attacks on ships in Southeast Asia (IMB - International Maritime Bureau 2005: 4). Many of these, however, were little more than cases of petty theft against ships in harbour, with the perpetrators typically sneaking onboard to steal some cans of paint, ropes, engine spare parts or other supplies. Excluding hijackings of commercial ships – none of which have been reported over the past two years – and thefts and barges, the IMB estimates that the average haul of an attack is around US $5,000 (Gottschalk & Flanagan 2000: 90), making the economic cost of most piratical attacks virtually negligible for the shipping industry as a whole.

For an individual ship, moreover, there is very little risk of being attacked while transiting Southeast Asia, even if the IMB’s reported figures are doubled to take account of the 40-60 per cent of all attacks which the Bureau estimates go unreported. For example, in the heavily trafficked Straits of Malacca – frequently referred to as one of the most ‘pirate-infested’ seas of the world – the risk of a transiting ship being attacked was less than 0.1 per cent in 2003.\(^1\) The combination of low risk and economic insignificance for the victims – the shipping industry and insurance companies – is an important but often unacknowledged reason why piratical activity persists.

| The combination of low risk and economic insignificance for the victims - the shipping industry and insurance companies - is an important but often unacknowledged reason why piratical activity persists. | The combination of low risk and economic insignificance for the victims - the shipping industry and insurance companies - is an important but often unacknowledged reason why piratical activity persists. |

Representatives of the shipping industry have often accused the authorities of Southeast Asian countries – particularly Indonesia – of not taking the problem of piracy seriously. Well-founded as such allegations may seem, they need to be accompanied by a further question: why should they? With a coastline twice as long as the circumference of the earth, and with no more than a few dozen operating vessels to patrol its territorial waters, there are a range of more important problems for the Indonesian navy and maritime police to tackle. Many of these, including the smuggling of people and goods, illegal fishing and deregulation of the environment, have grown to alarming proportions in recent decades. The Indonesian government, for example, has estimated that the country loses US $4 billion each year due to illegal fishing alone (Sahra Pembuaran, 31 October 2002) – several times more than the estimated cost of all pirate attacks worldwide. The problem of poaching, moreover, is not only economic, but contributes to the rapid depletion of fish stocks in the region, pressing traditional small-scale fishermen to turn to small-scale fishing, thereby destroying large tracts of coral reef. For Indonesia, such problems obviously pose a much greater threat to the maritime environment, human security and long-term economic development than the few hundred petty piratical attacks which each year befall international vessels in or around the country’s territorial waters.

In times of scarce funding for the social sciences, academics need to carefully consider which issues to study. Piracy is certainly an interesting phenomenon worthy of academic attention, but as far as contemporary relevance goes, it is difficult to see why it should be given priority from publicly funded sources. Eliminating piracy is above all the task of various maritime law enforcement agencies, and in conducting their task they need to be assisted, not by social scientists, but by the victims of the pirate activity, including first and foremost, the shipping industry. If, on the other hand, contemporary piracy in Southeast Asia is to be an object of study for the social sciences, it should be part of a broader research agenda, focusing not only on piracy, but on human security and non-traditional security threats to maritime regions. Such an agenda would take its point of departure from the problems facing maritime regions and their inhabitants, addressing the impacts of states and international maritime borders on economic and social activities and the interplay between human activity and the maritime environment. In that context, however, piracy may turn out to be little more than a footnote.

\(1\) Note: In 2004, the IMB (IBO 2005: 5-6) recorded 16 actual and 34 attempted attacks against shipping in the Malacca Straits. The calculation assumes that the real numbers are twice the reported, giving total of 72 attacks, and that of average of 200 ships transited the Straits each day. This figure excludes intra Straits traffic. See Ahmad (1997: 7).

References

Opium: building block of empire

When Sidney Mintz, in his now-classic *Sweetness and Power*, began to tug at the multiple meanings, purposes, and uses of sugar in Caribbean, European and American societies, he found it to be the essential ingredient in the creation of particular regimes of power, labour, taste, and consumption. Although sugar was also a major product in parts of Southeast Asia, the product which stood at the centre of government, social, cultural and colonial relations was opium.

L
ike sugar, opium initially had purposes mainly medicinal, but came to enjoy wider consumption. As consumption grew, opium did much to shape the nature and purpose of government in the colonies as well as trading practices and resource finance the infrastructure necessary for profit from other colonial ventures, and create and reinforce social, racial and gender hierarchies which underlay the ideology of empire. By the end of the nineteenth century, opium began to be contested in ways which both foreshadowed and reflected the ways in which empire itself would be resisted.

From medicine to drug

Opium is not native to Southeast Asia; foreigners brought it with them for both their own consumption and for trade. As with the early history of opium worldwide, the initial years are shrouded in myth, but certainly by the nineteenth century both Chinese and Europeans brought opium to Southeast Asia. It functioned in much the same way that it did in China: as a product among the very few considered desirable by Southeast Asians, for treatment of their physical ailments, which Europeans found irresistible (Trocki 1999). In these early decades of European sojournings in Southeast Asia, however, opium had limited appeal, primarily as a medicine. Like attempts at European rule, opium was accepted by Southeast Asians on their own terms, only partially, and in ways not compatible with the power we associate in later decades with the narcotic - or the colonial state, for that matter.

Indeed, in many ways the power of both drug and colonial state grew up together. Singapore provides the most dramatic example. A near-empty island before the British decided to make it a hub port, Singapore lacked the ready supply of inexpensive workers for the docks and the heavy work of loading and unloading ships. Imported Chinese labourers could meet the need, but opium, as Carl Trocki so persuasively argued, meant that those workers could be induced to work long hours at physically demanding jobs, in medically challenging environments, and for low pay (Trocki 1990).

Ethnic Chinese were sometimes even paid in opium, literally smoking away their chances of saving up for a better future. While Singapore relied more than other colonies on opium to tie workers to undesirable jobs, European enterprise in all the colonies faced the same labour shortage, and many turned to the same solution. Europeans facilitated provision of opium to ethnic Chinese and indigenous Southeast Asians, usually in modest quantities. These workers became addicted, but only marginally so. When they did not have work, they went into forced withdrawal. This periodic abstention meant that many workers developed tolerance only slowly, and therefore limited their craving for ever-greater amounts of the drug.

Empires built upon opium

If opium was as necessary as forced cultivation and high taxes to draw Southeast Asians into production for export, opium also provided revenue crucial for the functioning and growth of the colonial state and its infrastructure. Singapore, as a free port with no reliable tax base, relied most heavily on the opium farms for revenue. These opium farms, or government-granted monopolies over the retail sale of opium in a certain geographical area, brought in approximately half of Singapore’s revenue from the mid-nineteenth century until the first decade of the twentieth century. The other colonies earned less from their opium farms but all, with the exception of the United States in the Philippines, implemented the farm system.

With at least ten percent of revenues coming from opium, the colonial projects of modernity - whether roads, schools, irrigation canals, or public health clinics - depended on addiction.

Gender, resistance and the problem of opium

The economic and political implications of opium’s role in the building of the colonial state have received attention from scholars such as Carl Trocki, James Rush, Chantal Descoeur-Gatin, and Alfred McCoy. Opium also served as a marker of gendered, racial, and social hierarchies in the creation of colonial empire. Scholars, however, have typically ignored opium in the increasingly sophisticated discussions of gender and race in the construction of the ideology of empire. The anti-opium movements which grew during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide the most telling examples. The heart of their anti-opium message was that there was an incongruence between the increasing emphasis on a mission civilisatrice (or ethico-religious) solution to the problem of race and gender which provided the ideological underpinning of empire. Not surprisingly, then, Southeast Asian nationalism - as revealed by the 1920s - came to believe that part of their struggle to gain independence was to also end legal sales of opium, no matter how profitable those sales might be to the government. The relative success of newly independent Southeast Asian nations in prohibiting opium during the early years, through most of the region, reveals the extent which colonial rule and opium consumption were seen as intertwined by Southeast Asians.

Administrative offices of the opium factory, Weltevreden, Batavia, 1899. The building which housed the Opium Regie appears solid, respectable, and permanent, and gives the impression that Dutch rule can transform even opium consumption into a tool for modernization.

The literature on opium policies in Southeast Asia from 1850 to 1950. As part of that movement, she will be a visiting fellow at IIAS beginning in January 2002.

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Anne L. Foster is assistant professor of History at Indiana State Uni-
versity. Her manuscript *Projections of Power: The U.S. in Colonial Southeast Asia, 1915-1941* is forthcoming from Duke University Press. She is currently exploring the construction and contestation of opium policies in Southeast Asia from 1850 to 1950. As part of that project, she will be a visiting fellow at IIAS beginning in January 2002.

With the least ten percent of revenues coming from opium, the colonial projects of modernity - whether roads, schools, irrigation canals, or public health clinics - depended on addiction.

Certainly the observation was sensible, but the rhetoric then used to argue against opium consumption reveals the myopic and ideological constructions at the heart of the colonial state. Some of the most frustrating, as well as the most extreme, denunciations of the opium dens, which in this literature were not merely local places for opium smokers to stop and consume their purchase, but dens of iniquity posing grave danger to, in approximately this order, children, women, young men and women, mostly indigenous, who might begin by entering the den merely to smoke but whose addiction and poverty might lead them into illicit relationships; and then young white men who might enter a den on a lark but he quickly drawn into a spiral of addiction. These men were in danger because they had sufficient funds to consume addictive quantities of opium, and their potential addiction would lead them into behaviours which would undermine the prestige, even the authority of Europeans over ethnic Chinese and Southeast Asians. Photos of opium dens, so standard across colonies as to be nearly generic, always show languid, often femined men, disorder and dirt, and poverty. The horror stories about degraded women are rarely reflected in the composition of photos (usually women appear only in lithographs), since in fact women rarely smoked in dens.

Only sometimes did this literature mention those who actually went to these dens in large numbers - indigenous men and, by far the largest group to go, ethnic Chinese men. Clearly, government-granted monopolies over the retail sale of opium brought in approximately half of Singapore’s revenue from the mid-nineteenth century until the first decade of the twentieth century, their habit was seen as nearly inevitable and possibly less problematic. At one level, such critiques of opium seem to mirror the paternalistic understandings colonial reformers had of the task before them. It might still be possible to ‘save’ the children through education and removing them from their ‘natural’ environment; it was important to ‘protect’ young women so they could bear and nurture the next generation of children; the men would be divided into two groups: those already beyond the government’s reach (radical nationalists and addicts, for example) and those who would follow the government’s dictates.

The imperial system in Southeast Asia rested on opium. Colonial labour markets and state budgets would not have functioned without it. Customary or accepted use of opium re-}

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 Malay Opium Smokers, Nineteenth Century

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T he parents call him Gogol at home. When he enters kindergarten the parents give him another name: Nikhil. It means ‘he who is entire,’ while the name Gogol seems undignified and unfit for public life. But the child refuses to be named Nikhil. He thinks his name is Gogol and he does not understand the change. In a funny scene with the schoolteacher, who claims that the child does not respond to Nikhil, the parents argue with her and explain that according to their custom, Gogol is only a name used at home and that Nikhil is a ‘good name’.

- ‘What do you mean,’ asks the schoolteacher, ‘a good name?’ You mean a middle name? A nickname?
- ‘No, no,’ protest the parents, ‘a good name, a school name!’

The name Gogol prevails and the boy ends up being so named at school.

As the boy grows older he becomes dissatisfied and embarrassed by his name. The name means nothing. It is the surname of a Russian author, neither Bengali nor American. It is not a ‘good name’, but a ‘pet name-turned-good name’. It is also a surname-turned-first name. It sounds awkward, ridiculous. He is afraid girls will make fun of him.

The boy is now a freshman at Yale. He goes to the courthouse to change his name from Gogol to Nikhil, the good Indian name that his parents chose for him in the first place. But he does not feel like Nikhil. The new name does not seem right. He was Gogol for eighteen years, Nikhil is new. People who knew him as Gogol now call him Nikhil, and this makes him feel ill at ease, like an impostor. Switching names also seems incorrect, awkward, like using English with his parents and not Bengali.

In the last section of the story the father explains to the boy why he called him four names: nickname, first name, middle name and surname. These name types do not match from Bengali to English and vice-versa, except for the Bengali pet name and the American nickname, which are roughly equivalent. If we look at the properties of the Bengali good name, we see the differences with the English first or middle name.

Bengali ‘good name’

American ‘first name’ or ‘middle name’

for public use only

autonym

chosen by maternal great-grandmother

usually given several years after birth

belongs to a list of words in common use (is ‘motivated,’ in linguistic terms)

name is not inherited, but sometimes shared

for public and private use

part of the autonym

chosen by parents

born at given birth

belongs to a special list of words used for names only (‘not motivated’)

Not only do name types differ in content and definition, they function differently. In English a nickname can be added to the first name (as in ‘Sugar Ray’) but a Bengali pet name substitutes the good name entirely, and the two are never used together. Whereas the English first name (or given) name is always used together with the surname to form the complete name, the Bengali good name is self-contained and a fully autonomous label. In other words, names belong to systems, or relations between name types. Name types can differ enough to prevent exact translation, but what deepens cultural misunderstanding is the systematic way name types function together. As in kinship terminologies, personal names are organized according to pre-determined cultural and linguistic combinations. Their use and meaning is subject to cognitive rules that bear on the definition of each name type, their number, and most importantly, their combination in each utterance and context. Once this is recognized, an anthropological study of personal names can begin.

But at this literary example illustrates, our insightful writer makes the reader privy to the mental and emotional consequences of naming. The main character struggles with his name because the mental and cognitive Bengali map does not fit the American English one. The name Gogol does not fit either - it does not even resemble a first name in English. In the story, the name of Gogol’s sister is given as an example of a perfect fit. Not only is she named Sonali right away (a ‘good name’ that means ‘she who is gold’) but at home she is called Sonu, Sona, and Sonia. Sonia sticks because it sounds American.

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Sisterhood in saffron: women of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti

In the politics of the Indian subcontinent, the principle of Hindu majoritarianism has roots in the early twentieth century. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, or National Volunteer Corps), founded in 1925, is now the leading disseminator of the most virulent and exclusionist version of the Hindutva doctrine; its strategy of establishing affiliated groups has ensured the spread of its political message to all areas of civil society. To investigate how the movement reaches out to women, I focus on the Rashtra Sevika Samiti—all-women’s affiliate, its institutional structure and discourse of the feminine which enables women to identify with and support the Hindutva agenda.

While traditional literature has focused on women as victims and targets of patriarchal control and violence, the marginal attention has been paid to the complexity of women in perpetuating the Hindutva vision and its politics. However, the involvement of women in right-wing organisations has had a long unbroken history, and challenges long-standing assumptions about women’s low levels of politicisation and traditional pacifism. In particular, the quiet and enduring work of the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti (‘Samiti’), formed in 1936 and the oldest RSS affiliate, has eluded academic attention.

In the service of Hindutva

The politics behind the Samiti’s inception is telling of RSS gender ideology. The group’s founder Keshav Kelkar first approached RSS founder K.B. Hedgewar seeking the possibility for women to join the RSS, but was turned down. Instead, she was encouraged to start a separate organisation composed exclusively of women, and by parallel to the all-male RSS to organise and train Hindu women. Significantly, the most enduring aspect of the RSS was the creation of the ‘brotherhood’—a band of dedicated and disciplined workers engaged in paramilitary training who pledged to safeguard the nation and its borders. The only feminine form allowed to intrude in the shakha (local RSS branches) was the Bharat Mata (Mother India). Given that women have traditionally been seen to have acted even when they entered the public sphere, a separate organisation appeared to conform to the notion of separate yet complementary (gendered) domains of concerns and activities for men and women.

Additionally, links with the RSS are minimised in the Samiti’s own account of its founding. It is said that the founder herself was inspired most by the need to train women in self-defence and self-protection. This again seems remarkable as traditional upper-caste Hindus (the core group of which the RSS draws its members) do not celebrate women’s entry into the public sphere. The protection of the ‘sexual honour’ of the nation’s territory and women being an integral to the nationalist project, this assertion of agency can be read as a challenge to Hindu males and their masculinity. Moreover, the fact remains that women decided to step out of ‘their domain’ in order to serve the RSS, even if they work only with other women. The private domain thus extended to include the shakha as well, clearly subverting the theoretical and spatial division between women’s and men’s worlds. Hindutva ideology perceives no contradictions even when the Samiti women transgressed the world of the home by performing physical exercises in open spaces, as long as the overall project remained the sangathan (organisation) of Hindu women. However, it is clear that women themselves took the initiative to organise Hindu women in the service of the Hindu nation. To an outsider, the RSS and the Samiti appear the same—in their salutations of the bhagwa dhwaj (the saffron flag regarded as the guru), their physical exercises and ideological training. Indeed, the Samiti replicates the hierarchical structure of the RSS: all power is vested in the Pramukh Sanshaksha (chief director), who is appointed and holds the post for life, while a band of celibate paramaksha (paramilitary workers) are responsible for the organisation’s expansion. Samiti shakhas and training camps are modelled on those of the RSS, and its public face remains that of the RSS’ women’s wing. However, the fact that the organisation is exclusively comprised of women and its chief ideologues are women ensures that there is no straightforward emulation. The Samiti has its own prayer and festivals, plans its own programmes, and its publication wing disseminates its own view of history and glorifies its own ideals and heroines.

Originating in Wardha in the state of Maharashtra, the Samiti has spread throughout India and claims a membership of one million women. The constituency remains the traditional maharashtrian Brahmin, while shakha also exist in Brahmin-dominated localities. Although there have been efforts to reach out to other upwardly mobile caste groups, the social base has largely remained the same since its inception. Most women were initiated into the Samiti by their mothers, and were also married into families sympathetic to the RSS. In some cases, women enter into marriage with the condition that they be allowed to maintain their association with the Samiti after marriage. Thus Samiti membership is usually a lifelong commitment. Recruitment and participation in Samiti activities involves association with welfare schemes operated by the Samiti—girls’ hostels, volunteer work in remote areas, teaching in schools, informal teaching centres and so on. The combination of social service with organisational work is the most enduring feature of their activity, and the key to the organisation’s strength: flexibility and the ability to move into different fields of activity, as well as into affiliates of the parent RSS, enabling the group to retain members from many backgrounds.

Crafting the feminine

Hindutva discourse conceptualises all women as mothers, or matrikshi (mother power); biological motherhood—producing sons and imbuing them with Hindu ideology—is seen as Hindu women’s primary function. Nevertheless, while remaining within the boundaries of the RSS worldview, Samiti women have tweaked and twisted its gender ideology to enable their own participation. Their task has been to craft an ideal of womanhood for the Hindu nation, and its departure from the parent ideology is clear to the discerning eye. Here, the feminine is eternally empowered and the discourse celebrates active womanhood. This is reflected best in the ideals of valiant womanhood that the Samiti highlights: Hindu Kshatriya queens and their idol and goddessAshthabhuj Devi (literally, ‘the devi with eight hands’), said to embody qualities of strength, intellect and wealth as well as war-like qualities, her eight hands symbolising women’s infinite capacities. Key here is the attempt to put women at the centre of the worldview and to affirm the feminine. An entire array of women from history and mythology—Vedic scholars, heroines from epics, Rajput princesses, women ascetics, brave rulers, dutiful wives and heroic mothers—are all eulogised and held up as models worthy of emulation. More importantly, however, motherhood itself has been powerfully redefined. Even in their traditional roles, women as mothers are invested with immense potential for change. Mothers have a privileged position in fashioning the history of the Hindu Rashtra, and women as mothers, in the Samiti’s discourse, seek to become true actors and agents. For instance, in the representation of the story of Shiviya (especially venerated by the RSS), it is Jijabai—Shivaji’s mother, the Samiti ideal of ‘enlightened motherhood’—who is credited with imbuing in Shivaji the zeal to fight Muslim rulers and found a Hindu Kingdom. While women have traditionally been accepted as the transmitters of culture, the challenge in this construction lies in the central role accorded to the mother. In this sense, traditional accounts are subverted and Jijabai becomes a larger-than-life hero even than Shivaji. Indeed, mothering features prominently in Samiti ideology as the creators of a glorious nation. The Samiti prayer sends out a similar message: women praying for strength to inspire men, but, more importantly, to act directly to transform the Hindutva vision into reality. Hence women’s role is not confined to motherhood and ‘homonemaking’ since the greater ‘family’ is ultimately the nation. Women’s participation in the Samiti then becomes a practical means of turning femininity into empowered motherhood in the service of the Hindu nation.

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Creating identities invariably involves a dialectic of exclusions and inclusions. Creating an ‘ideal’ identity also papers over a variety of fractures, and homogenises cross-class and caste differences. It is well known that the threat of the ‘other’ is a constituent element of Hindutva, and in Hindutva discourse the feminine is constructed to include all Hindu women but exclude all others. By privileging their communal identity, this group of women transform into self-proclaimed soldiers committed to the Hindutva cause.

Namathe Rechichandra Ganneri is a doctoral candidate at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her thesis examines the politics of Hindu right-wing organisations in Western India. Namataganneri@hotmail.com

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Social stratification in contemporary China

One of the most significant changes in post-reform China has been the emergence of social inequality and differentiation. In many ways, the problem is relatively new to China as the last fifty years of Communist rule enforced a strict egalitarianism both in ideological and material terms. However, if the analysis of inequality is broadened to consider other forms of capital, i.e. cultural and social, the main differentiation existed between the members of the communist party and others. As Stockman points out, virtually the entire population was brought within the compass of two intertwined organizational systems, those of the State and the Communist Party (p. 189). Administrative hierarchy was established to control work organization and co-ordinate economic activities while the downs (urban work unit) was the basic organization looking after the material well being of its members. Salaries were paid according to a work point system.

However, if one were to look at only the officially recognized categories, there are more than 100 million people found in these bad categories. There is an attempt to identify the different social categories emerging in China due to large scale rural-urban migration. This is also seen to consistently lose their status under the reforms. Increasing stratification within the group has been identified amongst technical workers, private sector workers and those who still remain within the state sector.

Migrant labour in urban China

Chinese scholars themselves have been quick to identify these emerging social inequalities, as is demonstrated by the excellent issue on the subject bought out by the Academy of Social Sciences. Li Peilin says in his introduction to the special issue: ‘Very profound economic and social changes have taken place in China in the 20 years since the reform... it is imperative to solve the social issues of the gap between the rich and the poor, environmental pollution, corruption and poverty during the economic growth and it is of utmost importance to establish a consensus concept of social justice under a market economy’ (p. 45).

The issue further goes on to specify the different status groups emerging in China today. These groups are still not classified as classes and rightfully so, as the social stratification of the past twenty years is still fluid and the administrative control exercised by the Communist Party still sacrosanct. And of course, it still includes the working classes. Six different interesting groups were identified by the authors of the special issue. These are:

1. Workers: defined as the group that has lost both economic and social status under the reforms. Increasing stratification within the group has been identified amongst technical workers, private sector workers and those who still remain within the state sector.

2. Peasants: this group is also marked by increasing stratification within their ranks and here income difermentiation is enormous. While remaining registered as peasants, some have gone into small scale manufacturing enterprises and commodity trade.

3. Cadres: identified as an upwardly mobile group, with a lower mean age, more education and higher technical skills.

4. Intellectuals: stratification within this group is defined as largely ideological, part from gender, examined inequalities emerging within China due to large scale rural-urban migration. This has also been an area that has been identified by Ma and Day. All have testified to the fundamental structural changes occurring in Chinese society after, as Parth says, a socialist contract society was turned into a marketing contract society.

Research on changes in post-communist European societies also sheds light on the social changes that can result from reforms. Kornai’s work is exemplary here. It stressed the way people’s daily interactions changed due to the prevalence of what he calls ‘vertical dependency’, where rather than depend on the self, one relied on the state and its representatives to meet one’s material needs. Notions of the self and the individual were replaced by collectivized identities. This leads us to an understanding of social difference in all its complexity, and here I want to come back to Bourdieu’s work. Bourdieu has extended the notion of capital to include aspects of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital. His intention was not to add to the corpus on class theory but to assess, as it were, a set of practices that structure social differentiation and ways in which social differentiation is expressed. China today presents an excellent example of the complexity of social differentiation that occurs when a society undergoes economic and structural change. Social stratification is an area that deserves to be watched closely, and not just by the state for the ramifications it creates for political stability and social unrest, but also for scholars interested in social change.

References

Research > China

Understanding social stratification today

China has not only opened its econom ic doors, a breath of fresh air has swept through its academic disciplines. After years of no serious academic research, intellectuals were the ninth stacking category during the cultural revolution. Some excellent research is being carried out by Chinese and foreign scholars. Work on the issue of social stratification is one such subject. The direct result of China’s economic reforms, these inequalities are both regional, within regions and are now clearly visible in the large urban metropolises. These differences are here to stay for the near future, and will impact both internal policy making and the future of China’s polity. Deng legitimized this emerging inequality when he pronounced ‘that some will get rich more quickly’, thus tacitly accepting the idea of a trickle down effect. Today, after twenty years, this social differentiation has stabilized — understanding this emerging social stratification in China will be intrinsic to an understanding of China as it develops.

Further, differentiation amongst groups such as high income groups and a new impoverished strata are also identified. While the former includes senior cadres and private entrepreneurs, the latter consists of laid-off workers, potentially unemployed workers, retired personnel, and poor rural residents drifting in cities and towns. This is the migrant labour of urban China today. Estimates show that there are more than 100 million people in this stratum, making up 8 per cent of the total population. Another significant source of material by Chinese scholars can be found in the new series of Blue books that have been recently published on society, politics, etc. The Blue Book of Sociology, 2002, for example, identifies the emergence of social differentiation as one of the major challenges of the reform process. It identifies ten different groups.

Kinship and Social Status

Another perspective that has regained importance in understanding growing social stratification in China today is presented by sociologists such as Fei Xiaotong. They argue for the need to understand the huge role played by family and kinship ties in traditional China. Several researchers (e.g. Bian and Ruan) have pointed out the re-emergence of kinship ties in business networks, as well as their role in preventing the safety net that is being progressively withdrawn by the state. Family and kinship is an important criteria of upward social mobility and seems to encompass all the groups identified by the academy. Here, more informed and anthropological studies dealing with guanxi - a term particular to China meaning at once connections, kinship, access, and the older gift economy - also help uncover the complexity of social stratification.

Thus China today no longer represents the egalitarian and strictly structured, totalitarian social system that it once did. Even if one were to look only at the different groups being identified by Chinese sociologists, a deeper understanding of the social relations existing within these groups is crucial. Naturally, the topic has drawn the interest of many western scholars as well. Unger, Patterson-Piek, Crull, Davin and Davis, to name but a few, have all attempted to understand this emerging social differ entiation in China. While Crull has focused on increasing inequalities faced by women, Peke and Parth have focused on urban inequality. Davin has, apart from gender, examined inequalities emerging within China due to large scale rural-urban migration. This is also an area that has been identified by Ma and Day. All have testified to the fundamental structural changes occurring in Chinese society after, as Parth says, a socialist contract society was turned into a marketing contract society.

This article originates from the India China Companie. State and Society workshop held in Leiden, the Netherlands, 27-28 May 2004, organized and funded by the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), the Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches Internationales (CERI) in Paris and IAS. Please see page 35 for an announcement of the second workshop in this series.
International supply chains and labour standards in China

Companies in China that export directly to Western markets or supply foreign-owned firms operating inside the country are under increasing pressure to adapt their working conditions to UN-sponsored international standards. While the impact on businesses practices is still slight, it is potentially a major development within China’s labour system.

China has become a major manufacturing base in the global economy. Many companies in the EU, North America and Australia - where the media, consumers, investors, NGOs and governments are putting increasing pressure on businesses to operate in a ‘socially responsible’ manner - have supply chains originating in China. Although China has stringent labour laws, many are only weakly enforced. As a result, working conditions often include long working hours, low wages, and limited health and safety measures. Various systems of labour standards are currently in use by international companies; many of these are based - implicitly or explicitly - on the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). One of the labour standard systems that has received considerable attention in China is Social Accountability 8000 (SA8000).

Social accountability

In the first half of 2004, the Chinese media featured a large number of reports on SA8000. Chinese firms and government officials warned that Western governments were planning to ban Chinese imports that did not originate from SA8000-certified factories. This would force all Chinese export-oriented producers to adapt the system, impacting on costs and China’s competitiveness as a manufacturing and export economy. As it turned out, no Western government closed its country to non-SA8000-compliant goods. However, China’s export-oriented firms are facing increased pressure to adopt labour standards (even though SA8000 requirements are too extensive).

Western pressure

Since it is still too early to draw conclusions, we need to look at factors that will most likely impact on the system in the future. Pressure from Western export markets, which originally led to the establishment of supply chain labour standards in Western countries, is a major impetus for improving working conditions in China. At its core is the desire for Western firms to protect their corporate and brand image. Large companies with strong brands usually have their own supplier monitoring programs; for smaller firms that cannot afford their own monitoring systems, buying SA8000-certified goods may be an attractive option.

Introducing higher labour standards often means higher costs. Companies whose brands are relatively unknown are less vulnerable to attacks in the media, and it may not be cost efficient for them to invest in reputation insurance by joining an SA8000 supply chain. For most Western companies trading in Chinese-made goods, there thus appears to be no immediate cause for action. This leaves promoting SA8000 up to specific groups, including firms that promote better working conditions, and those that are themselves under pressure from customers.

Such companies are not necessarily interested in Chinese labour issues. They are interested in public concern in the West, and in responses that can deliver visible signs of short-term improvement. Child and forced labour, and injuries and fatalities from unsafe working conditions feature prominently. Even though the SA8000 system has a broader scope, the system’s success in China depends on these high-profile issues being successfully addressed.

Another factor influencing SA8000’s impact in China is the population’s perception of it. Competition may drive Chinese firms to adopt the certificate or to purchase only from certified factories, but for medium and small companies the costs involved may outweigh any competitive advantages. Only if demand is strong enough will these enterprises become part of SA8000-supply chains. Unless the majority of their foreign counterparts switch to SA8000, this is likely to happen only where pressure from Western markets influence the entire sector, such as medium-size firms in clothing, shoes and similar import chains. However, manufacturers of cheap consumer goods tend to work with minimal profit margins; foreign pressure on Chinese suppliers to bear the cost of introducing SA8000 without raising prices will incur resistance.

SA8000 does seem to be affecting working conditions in China. In facilities that have adopted SA8000, observers have reported not so much formal improvements, but workers becoming aware of their rights. This is not easy to measure, nor does it remove immediate concerns in Western markets; it does, however, create a basis for more fundamental long-term change. This may especially be so if SA8000 focuses on issues considered most relevant by workers themselves, and is communicated in a way that is understood in the Chinese context. For Chinese companies that are not certified, SA8000 may provide a model for managing the introduction of labour standards, as in the case of ILO conventions among Chinese export-oriented firms, systems such as SA8000 based on them may become more relevant.

There are also signs that local government agencies are studying the potential of SA8000 to increase competitiveness in areas under their authority. The attitude of government authorities is key, given the close relationship between the government and economy. Beijing might more readily adopt an SA8000-like system were it backed by an international organization or group of governments, as in the case of ILO’s International Labour Organisation (ILO) system which is widely supported by Chinese government agencies.

Finally, the role played by auditing firms is relevant. Currently, they are the most important promoters of SA8000 in China. Their activities, aimed primarily at monitoring Chinese firms on behalf of Western clients, would enable the introduction of SA8000 to more Chinese firms. Depending on the future growth of auditing firms’ activities in China and their willingness to promote SA8000, their importance in implementing certification may grow.

The long road ahead

To date, the main impact of SA8000 in China does not seem to be direct improvement in working conditions in individual factories. Though in some cases, it may have raised awareness of labour issues among workers, the main impact may lie in the longer term. SA8000 helps put labour issues on the agenda of government authorities, companies, industry organisations and auditing firms, while providing a model for Chinese companies based on ILO norms.

Although the number of SA8000 certified factories is increasing, there has been no breakthrough, either in China or elsewhere. In theory, the impact of SA8000 and similar certification systems could be great. It remains important to study developments in specific contexts to give realistic assessments of the system’s potential impact.

Note


Gemma Crijns and Frans Paul van der Putten are based at the Institute for Integrity, Corporate Social Responsibility and Socially Responsible Investment (ERB), Nyenrode Business University, the Netherlands.

g.crijns@nyenrode.nl

f.vdputten@nyenrode.nl

www.nyenrode.nl/erbe/

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Asian Folklore Studies
Indonesian independence was achieved between 1945 and 1949, but the decisive step towards economic decolonization was only taken in 1957/58, when the Indonesian government ousted the remaining Dutch and nationalized Dutch corporate assets.

The manager of a Dutch trading firm in Jakarta, December 1957. The graffiti states: ‘You must be swept from West Irian’.

There was no overwhelming Indonesian opposition to the restoration of Dutch business interests. Most Indonesian politicians grudgingly conceded that Indonesia still badly needed Dutch capital and expertise for its economic survival (Bauer 1959:624-8). There was, however, widespread feeling in Indonesia that the achievement of political sovereignty should be followed by the realization of economic independence. The continued supremacy of the Dutch and the attendant inferiority of the Indonesians in their own economy were considered an intolerable relic of Dutch imperialism. Sooner rather than later, the ‘colonial economy’ needed to be replaced by a ‘national economy’ in which Indonesians would own and control the country’s productive assets and take up key economic positions.

A ‘national economy’

In the early 1950s, successive Indonesian cabinets tried to give meaning to the ideal of a ‘national economy’ within the boundaries set by the Dutch agreements. Policies aimed at cooperation with Dutch capital, and limited socialization to maximize prosperity for the Indonesian people. This worked mainly in sectors where the Indonesian government exerted direct influence over business operations, such as banking, mining and transportation.

The nationalization in 1951 of Indonesia's circulation bank, the Javasche Bank (later renamed Bank Indonesia), proceeded without major difficulties and by 1953 the remaining Dutch bank, the Nederlandsche Bank voor het Nabije Oosten, had less detrimental effects on the Indonesian economy. State trusts were set up to receive import licenses. The program 'national importers' had to meet certain criteria 'national importers' had to meet.

The 1949 Finec agreement obliged Dutch firms to 'as quickly as possible bring skilled Indonesians into executive (including top managerial) and staff positions' (Finec: article 12c). However, no time schedule was given, nor did the agreement specify the percentage of positions to be promoted to leading positions.

Indonesianization

The replacement of Dutch expatriates by locally recruited personnel was known as "Indonesianization". In the nationalized firms, the government had usually already placed Indonesians in top positions while the expatriate Dutch retained their privileged positions. The break-down of the Bentina program convinced the government that the commanding heights of the economy were the only viable alternative.

The final stage of the economic decolonization of Indonesia began on 3 December 1957 when members of a local labour union occupied the headquarters of the Dutch shipping company KPM in Jakarta. The activists declared that they had taken over the firm and that Indonesians would at once replace the Dutch managers. Similar takeovers of Dutch companies occurred in the following days. These dramatic events found their roots in the dispute that seemingly was to do with Dutch enterprise in Indonesia in general, or KPM in particular. Throughout the 1950s, Indonesia had challenged Dutch sovereignty to promote Western interests. The Indonesian government declared that they had taken over the company and that Indonesians would own and control it. The氮ous Indonesian front men controlled the enterprise met with limited success. The final stage of the economic decolonization in the case of Internation was 1950-1956. The Indonesian government threatened to use all methods 'short of war' to achieve its goal. The authorities deliberately encouraged anti-Dutch sentiment as aggression turned against Dutch citizens and property. In this context, the KPM shipping company became a scapegoat for Indonesian frustrations over New Guinea and the unfulfilled promise of a national economy.

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Jasper van de Kerkhof is a research fellow at the Center of Asian Studies of the University of Leiden. He has written for Dutch national newspapers.

The research project ‘Indonesianisatie en nationale onafhankelijkheid van de economie en de wereld en de industrie en commercie’ is part of the Indonesian-across ocean programme at the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (HiO) in Amsterdam. Participants are Thomas Lindblad, the author, and a group of Indonesian historians. A monograph on the economic decolonization of Indonesia is forthcoming.
Decolonization and urban labour history in Indonesia, 1930-1965

T he early 1940s to the early 1960s was a period of political unrest and protests by urban workers were commonplace. Focusing on urban labour in Indonesian cities on Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi reveals how national-level politics was reformulated at the local level, and how government policies to control or deploy labour were related to debates on the creation and maintenance of a social and moral order.

Two factors in particular resulted in differing local urban experiences: their geographical location and the occupational sectors of the labouring groups. Urban areas with regular labour shortages and limited inter-regional transport networks unquestionably differed from areas with a labour surplus, close to ports and closely connected to their hinterlands. Workers therefore found themselves in locations in an area, such as the Dj/TII, Permuta, or whether an area was part of the Dutch-created East Indonesia Republic. In the latter, there were not only local political dynamics, but also political orientations towards the Indonesian national state.

Policy makers, whether colonial or national, treated economic sectors differently. Workers in the harbours and railways, for instance, had greater strategic significance than textile and cigarette workers. Access to social networks, and economic means of survival and struggle varied. In Jakarta, Semarang, Majalaya and Surabaya, Japanese rule was mainly associated with the romusha (forced labour) and with economic decline to below subsistence levels. Dockworkers in Semarang, however, felt they were more privileged than their fellow villagers. They were given clothing (albeit from gunny sacks), and food three times a day. In Balikpapan, the Japanese Army, wanting to retain oil supplies, moved the local labouring population to safer areas away from the oil refineries during Allied bombing sorties. Indicative, locally, local groups provided contributions to the Japanese army so they could buy fighter planes.

Revolution and nasionalisasi Unions were politically active in the new Republic. In Tanjung Priok, hundreds of workers were involved in placing stickers with slogans of ‘Milik RI’ (RI property) on equipment owned by Dutch companies. Unions also actively participated in dismantling Japanese military installations in Tanjung Priok and Semarang, and helped to take over institutions and companies which the Japanese had created during their occupation.

However, the revolution occurred simultaneously with the re-establishment of state control by the national government. In the late 1940s, with the nationalization of foreign enterprises, the army swiftly took control of different economic sectors. Workers made redundant as a result of the departure of foreign management were referred to the new collective bargaining procedures established by the Indonesian government during nationalization. When strikes protesting against these procedures occurred, the union leaders in Tanjung Priok harbour were arrested by the local military. The mayor of Semarang placed restrictions on the Dockworkers Union, which had staged a number of strikes in 1949. In Balikpapan tensions among the unions reflected tensions between the Islamic, Nationalist and Communist political parties.

Also in Balikpapan, attacks against the Dutch expatriate community drove Shell to send Dutch personnel and their families back to the Netherlands. They were replaced by British, Americans, French and Italians, the main language used by expatriates shifted from Dutch to English.

Nationalist rhetoric also became the rhetoric of the trade unions. Graffiti on walls, cars and Shell oil tanks included slogans such as ‘the British are bandits’, and ‘Tengku Abdul Rahman is a puppet of the Imperialists’. As in other areas, the nationalization of foreign companies in Balikpapan was backed by the military, unlike the other areas, however, the military was not prepared to clamp down on workers’ political activism since the head of the military command was also head of the workers’ National Front.

‘History from below’ versus ‘history from above’
This focus on workers’ politics and their place in local histories leads us to ask how we should approach the question of a ‘history from below’. Without an understanding of ‘history from above’, one cannot have a sense of what influences local responses. At the same time, a history from below is beset with a number of problems. Reports of local uprisings are usually conducted by government officials and thus subject to bias. We have to critically examine colonial and post-colonial regimes’ attitudes to local populations.

We also need to look more critically at how different political figures claim to represent ‘the masses’. Government officials have tended to look more at political organizations and labour unions than the lives of ‘ordinary people’ at the margins of these organizations. Organized workers have been considered to be more threatening, particularly within the decolonization process. Because of the imbalance in the nature of written sources, researchers have paid more attention to labour unions than unorganized workers. We need to look for alternative sources to study local histories. Moving away from organized labour to look at those who work in fragmented settings is still not an easy task; researchers need to address these issues sensitively and critically.
The Vedas form one of the oldest elaborate corpuses of texts in an Indo-European language, connected to a ritual system still in use. In 2003, UNESCO declared the tradition of the Vedic chant, alive in present-day India, a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Vedic Studies: Texts, Language and Ritual

The modern study of the Vedas has a long history in nineteenth-century scholarship, when it stimulated developing disciplines such as linguistics, comparative religious studies and cultural anthropology. The field of Vedic studies has known periods of exciting developments, consolidation and dustiness; today important developments inside and outside Vedic studies are opening the way to new achievements.

The localization debate

A fourth development consists of advances in identifying when and where the people to whom we owe the Vedas lived. The contributions by Michael Witzel, Harry Falk and Wilhelm Rau in the proceedings of the First International Vedic Workshop (Witzel 1997) are a good introduction to the subject. The debate on the localization and the possible displacements of the Vedic people dates back to the early days of Indology and is of continuing interest to both scholars and a wider audience.

Developments from outside Indology have changed the terms of the debate: the work of modern geneticists may shed light on the waves of immigration into the Indian subcontinent. Geneticists suggest these started from the west, via the ocean, and later came from the north. Because the Vedas constitute such an old and elaborate corpus of texts, in a language that is ‘Indo-European’ but which has important remains of substratum or adstratum languages, the scientific relevance for investigation into the contacts between various waves of early African emigrants meeting on the Indian subcontinent can be expected to increase.

Recently another breakthrough occurred in a different area, which in time may have an impact on Indology and Vedic studies. In 2003, for the first time, India became a creditor to the International Monetary Fund. Indian economic growth will hopefully also bring new government policies to stimulate solid scholarship in the field of Vedic and other Indological studies.

The availability of high-quality filming technology enables the recording of rituals whose basic patterns go back to the first millennium B.C.E. on the Indian subcontinent. The performances usually structurally correspond to the traditional Indological meaning ‘knowledge’, here it primarily refers to a group of orally transmitted texts that became canonical in the first millennium B.C.E. on the Indian subcontinent. The ‘knowledge’ is concerned with an intricate ritual system that is regarded to have definite implications for man and the cosmos. These canonical texts became embedded in a tradition that regards them as having indisputable authority. Justification for this authority is usually derived from either, for logicians, the divine nature of the author(s), or, for Vedic exegetes, from the absence of any author, human or divine. Traditional texts directly dealing with the canonical core texts, for instance the ritual texts devoted to the revealed ‘sruti texts and hence called ‘srutis’, are still the subject of Vedic studies.

However, a modern work such as by Sri Bharti Krishna Tirtha (1884-1960) on ‘Vedic mathematics’ (cf. edition by V.S. Agrawala, Bhatari Krishna Tirtha Tiurtha 1965), whatever its intrinsic value as a set of easily learnt and applicable algorithms, is beyond the scope of Vedic studies as intended here, even though it informs us of the algorithmic and pedagogic skills of the author and his convictions regarding the nature of the Veda as a still valid source of direct revelation.

Listening to texts

As much as methods of personal revelation and intuition, with all their limitations and strengths and limitations, are basic to the work of Bharti Krishna Tirtha, the philological method underlies the studies presented in Texts, Language and Ritual. Philology may be described as the art of ‘listening’ to a text; Witzel defined it as ‘the study of a civilization based on its texts’ (1997: vii). Philology has a solid background in the Western tradition of textual scholarship, and also in a more dispersed way in India (Katre 1954; Colas 2003). It is perhaps the only discipline in which the West and India are close to accepting overlapping basic principles - an important topic for future comparative research.

The researchers in this book agree on the importance of the philological method, where possible supplemented by ‘Vedic fieldwork’, the study of Vedic rituals in South Asia who continue the ritual tradition into which they were born. In addition, the study of the linguistic and ritual aspects of the Vedas requires the necessary apparatus ranging from linguistics to the social sciences.

In a recent overview of research on the oldest of the four Vedas, the Rgveda, Oberlies (1998, 1999 and 2001) raised crucial issues in Religionswissenschaft. Oberlies’ work has given rise to a long discussion on the theories and methods underlying Vedic research. Even if the value of Oberlies’ approach is undeniable, Vedic studies should be explored by different disciplines, which should cooperate without being conflated.

The combination of different disciplines (by scholars who are well-grounded in at least one of them) is an important tool in overcoming limitations of the philological method. This limitation has led to criticism of its status as a scientific discipline: reliance on the personal judgement of a critical mind, though form it gives rise to a long process of training and research, makes subjectivity inevitable. This problem exists for any one who tries to reconstruct a past reality on the basis of limited available textual or other remains. In the words of Cavalli-Sforza (2000: VIII): ‘To some, history (including evolution) is not a science, because its results cannot be replicated and thus cannot be tested by the experimental method. But studying the same phenomenon from different angles, from many disciplines, each of which supplies independent facts, has the value of largely independent repetition. This makes the multidisciplinary approach indispensable.’

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J.E.M. Houben in Directeur d’Études for ‘Sources et Histoire de la Tradition Sambaa’ at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, le Sorbonne, Paris. He has published several books and articles on Vedic ritual and ancient Indian philosophy of grammar.

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J.E.M. Houben has a long experience in Indology and the study of the Vedas. He has published several books and articles on Vedic ritual and ancient Indian philosophy of grammar.
Dravidian studies in the Netherlands part 2 (1860s-1970s):
Classical India redefined

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Aryan Letters at universities
In 1921, Aryan Letters, alias Indian philology, was introduced at Leiden University. Its aim was the study of Sanskrit and related subjects, including Indian archaeology, and the study of the Indian cultural impact on India - the country where pragmatic interest of the Nederlandse Indische Raad (with the 'Indology') until the 1950s meant research relating to Dutch colonial pos-
sessions in Indonesia. Despite their late
rediscovery of Indian cultural heritage, the Dutch distinguished themselves
during the twentieth century as Europe's top researchers in the field. Among them was F.B.J. Kuiper, appoint-
ed at Leiden University in 1939, who studied the influence of non-Aryan (Dravidian) languages of ancient India on Sanskrit and attempted to identify the meaning of myths and other aspects of the Vedic religion. Kuiper's later research on innovations in spoken Tamil was among the first to be published by K. de Vrede of Amsterdam University. After specializing in Sanskrit philology, De Vrede was given a new course to launch modern Indian languages - the first time the term 'modern' was used in reference to Orientalism.

Zvelebil's Dravidology

As education and research grew in
importance in the post-war period, uni-
versities received increasingly large gov-
ernment subsidies which they could use
for an omnipresent God - combining empirical science with ven-
teration for India. It provided an impetus for
the study of Dravidian languages and
cultures part and parcel of Indolog-
ical research - had been achieved. He
said: 'When I coined the term "Dravi-
dology", proposing to establish a legiti-
nate field of study on a par with the field
of religious studies, I perceived a
new intellectual trend. Some even began
to ridicule to hostility. (...) I am happy to
say that nowadays it has become fully acceptable to speak of Dravidianists and Dravidology' (Zvelebil 1991:5).

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r in Europa (eischedondere, 01.11.02). Lei-
den: Universiteit Leiden.

Dutch fascination to a more scientific approach. In the Netherlands, 'there was absolutely
nothing'. (2002:11)

The Smiling of Muru-
zoebkova@hotmail.com

Luba Zubkova

Luba Zubkova

Luba Zubkova

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Shamanism in contemporary Siberian music

Allusions to Khakas traditional culture resonate in the music of many composers from this southern Siberian region. Other musical works, such as the musical sketches for piano that Tatiana Shalginova has been composing since 1995, draw inspiration from Khakas animism and its view of man’s place in the world.

Larissa Burnakova and Liesbet Nyssen

In the 1980s, Georgiy Chelborakov, Nina Kataeva, and Pavel Burgasykov, alongside this mainstream style, the national school since the 1980s has been developing a composition style that more substantially incorporates elements of Khakas culture, including its traditional instruments, folk songs and epics, as well as religious notions and practices.1

Until the 1980s, most compositions at the school were consistent with the main vocal Khakas musical tradition - the easiest way to influence them with a 'national flavour'. Over the last decade, however, Khakas composers such as Yurii Kishteev, Anatoliy Tokmashov, and Tatiana Shalginova have concentrated on composing instrumental, though still Khakas, music. Particularly interesting are their piano miniatures in which they adopt musical elements from Khakas epic tradition.2 Features such as rhythm and elasticity in Kishteev’s sketches, and instrumental recitation over a long, sustained tone in Shalginova’s pieces recall the nomadic past for Khakas audiences.

Shamanic inspiration

In addition to conveying her love for the land and history, Shalginova, herself a descendant of shamans, incorporates shamanic practices and the animistic worldview in her music. According to the Khakas, everything in the world is infused with spirits. This is expressed through symbols representing the spirits, and ritual practices like prayers, offerings, and shamanic sessions. In such a shamanic ritual, word, sound, and body movement fuse into a whole, its sound component incorporating drum beating, sound imitation, recitation, incantation, singing, whispering and a range of throaty sounds.

A shamanic performance reflects the shaman’s journey between the visible and invisible worlds. The shaman first calls helping spirits by beating a drum and imitating the voices of birds and wild animals. Next, in the longest and most important phase, she or he transforms into a supernatural being to travel to these other realms. Here the shaman beats the drum, dances, and utters sounds from whispers and mumbles to deep aspirations and shouts. Finally, the shaman returns to ‘reality’, and reeds with a chant.

While chanting, the shaman alternates from mumbling to chant, recitation, and throat singing with exclamations. There is no strict repetition but improvisation on basic themes. As in the performance as a whole, rhythms play a major role - with a steady beat that pulses continuously. Repeated monotonously, together with a melody based on several pitches and small intervals, it induces the trance state the shaman needs to travel and heal. A dense sound texture is formed when alternating throaty vocal techniques are added.

Shalginova uses these religious practices and notions in her music in three ways. She incorporates the entire shamanic ritual and makes the compositions unfold as condensed shamanic sessions, a concept also explored by other composers. She also uses musical elements of the shaman’s song. Finally, she refers to the underlying animistic worldview through the ideas she represents in her music. Her cycle for piano ‘Sun Symbol’ expresses such animistic notions, besides using musical elements from epic and shamanic practices: she includes a sustained fifth stemming from the instrumental accompaniment of storytelling, and uses the hypnotic rhythms and melodic repetition of a few tones to create the mesmerising beat of a shamanic ritual. The animistic notions Shalginova expresses in this cycle are the spirits of fire, water, and wind. She depicts them by imitating the sounds of the corresponding natural elements with modern composing techniques: crackling fire, running water and whooshing wind.

Musical, miniature storytelling

Shalginova’s compositions are infused with ideas bound in Shalginova’s music and shape her compositions. According to Khakas tradition, the world consists of three layers: a lower layer of demonic power, a middle one with humans and animals with warm breath, and the divine world. When a shaman performs an incantation, she or he can sing themes from this middle world, as well as those on behalf of upper and underworld beings. The voices from the different realms are also musically differentiated, with beings from the middle and upper world singing in a natural style while those of the underworld sing in a non-human voice (reciting monotonously in a lower register, with shifts in voice and unexpected leaps). In her piano compositions, Shalginova transforms this tripartite worldview into a temporal one. Consistent with the shaman’s choice of voice, a composition may start melodically (evoking the human world), followed by speech-like intonation (the underworld) and ending with a celestial hymn (the upper world). In other miniatures such as the ‘Sun Chatkhan’ and ‘Lullaby of the Goddess Umay’, the composition creates an emotional, impressionist narrative that reflects on present reality (the middle world). This is gradually subsumed to evoke benevolent spirits and natural elements such as water and mountains. Finally, the last tones sound and fade in harmony with clear chords.

By adapting the musical features of shaman’s songs and representing spirits and other notions about the world in her instrumental work, Shalginova challenges the idea of music as an autonomous aesthetic piece of art. Whether her music indeed evokes spirits and forces from the upper and underworld is left for the listener to decide. 

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1. In Russian, the term ‘national’ (национальнй) refers to an ethnic group, not to a nation in the sense of nation-state.
2. For instance in Tokmashov’s ‘Shaman’, Shalginova’s ‘Shaman’s dream’ and Tunov composer Khuresh-Oid’s ‘Shaman’s way’.

Notes


By adapting the musical features of shaman’s songs and representing spirits and other notions about the world in her instrumental work, Shalginova challenges the idea of music as an autonomous aesthetic piece of art. Whether her music indeed evokes spirits and forces from the upper and underworld is left for the listener to decide. 

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Notes

Srib Leb Rgad Po

Translated by Simon Wickham-Smith

Once in Tibet there were many demons. Among them was a big demon named Srib-leb Rgad-po, who stole other people’s children. He took them to his cave for food. Naturally, because he was a powerful demon, everyone was frightened of him. At that time, in the center of a mountain valley there lived an old woman and her child. In the late morning, the old woman would go out to dig for sweet potatoes, saying to her daughter, “Child, stay here with the door closed. Open it only in case your mother returns - else Srib-leb Rgad-po will take you away.” The child did as her mother had said. Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. “Who is it?” said the child. “I am not to open the door to anyone but my mother.” The demon said, “I am your mother.” The child said, “Well, if it is your mother, show me your hand.” The demon said, “My hand is smooth and pudgy; yours is all hairy.” Then the demon said to the child, “Then, you mustn’t open the door.” Please do not go out of your room.” And the child gave him fire and some oil.

The demon went away. He burnt the hairs from his hands and smeared them with grease. He knocked again at the door and cried out, “Daughter, your mother has come home. Open the door and cried out, “Daughter, your mother has come home. Open the door.” And the child said, “You don’t sound like my mother. Show me your hand.” Right away, he showed his hand to her, saying that they were smooth and pudgy, she opened the door a crack. But the child quickly realised that it was the demon and she fled and hid amongst the beams. The demon looked for her but couldn’t find her. He said, “The child must be here. She can’t fly into the sky, she can’t burrow into the earth.” As he said this, he farted - and the plaiting was done. Little by little twisted the edge of the braid and the demon was killed. From then on all the people of that land lived in peace.
Resilience and a capacity for making the best of difficult circumstances are striking characteristics of many communities in the developing world. This ability to adjust is often tested by lack of opportunity and other obstacles that are beyond the control of society’s weakest members.

When the Asian economic crisis hit Indonesia in 1997-98, it threatened the slow yet steady gains that had been achieved in health, education, reduced infant mortality and poverty reduction. As banks failed, businesses and factories closed, the rupiah declined in value and food prices soared, it seemed that livelihoods and the emerging social welfare programs might be critically undermined. However, statistics from the Indonesian Family Life Surveys, collected before the crisis and again in the latter half of 2000, do not show long-term negative impacts on individual, family or community welfare.

Many survey respondents experienced dramatic downturns from 1997, but for most this trend had either slowed or reversed by 2000. Although not all survey respondents had regained pre-crisis living standards, some had exceeded their previous levels.

The Central Bureau of Statistics conducted the Family Life Surveys, in which interviews sought information, quantitative focus, the accompanying explanatory notes and brief analysis. The figures and tables, accompanied by explanatory notes and brief analysis. The figures present a macro-image of overall employment, household expenditure and health. Data sets with particular relevance to the economic crisis are those showing social welfare programs might be critically undermined. However, statistics from the Indonesian Family Life Surveys, collected before the crisis and again in the latter half of 2000, do not show long-term negative impacts on individual, family or community welfare. Many survey respondents experienced dramatic downturns from 1997, but for most this trend had either slowed or reversed by 2000. Although not all survey respondents had regained pre-crisis living standards, some had exceeded their previous levels.

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Thailand’s rice bowl: perspectives on agricultural and social change in the Chao Phraya Delta

The tsunami of December 2004 reminded us that most people in monsoon Asia still live as they have for generations. Despite the changes and economic developments of the globalisation era, many remain dependent on fishing and agriculture. Understanding changes within these sectors and their relationship to processes such as urbanisation are essential to a balanced understanding of contemporary Southeast Asia.

Graeme MacRae

The basin of the Chao Praya river system in central Thailand has long been known as one of the great ‘rice bowls’ of monsoon Asia. In the mid-eigh- teenth century, visitors were amazed by the scale of production there, much of it for export. Over the past fifty years, how- ever, rice cultivation has been transformed by new seed varieties, increased mechanisation and larger labour requirements. At the same time emigration from the main rice-growing areas, urbanisation and diversification of agriculture have led to very different patterns in the Thai rural landscape, economy and society.

The book’s fifteen chapters contain literature reviews, overviews and detailed case studies, and cover topics such as ethnog- raphy, ethnicity and local government studies, and cover topics such as ethnography, ethnicity and local government studies.

The book’s focus is neither on Thai agriculture in general, nor on local communities, but on those that play a role in the natural/ecological unit of the water- shed—appropriate given the historical and increasingly critical role of water supply and management in the region’s econom- y. The watershed also contains Bangkok, a huge concentration of people, and industrial and commercial development that puts massive pressure on resources, giving rise to a ‘critical competition between agriculture, industries and urban domestic consumption’ (p. 203).

Persistence and change

Two chapters on land tenure and labour in the agricultural economy form the core of the book. Both show mixed patterns of persistence and change. The first, by the editors, critically evaluates the assumption that land has been progressively con- centrated into larger units and that ten- nancy rates have increased. They find instead a complex pattern of demo- graphic change, migration and changing tenancy arrangements, all related to wider economic processes. The second, by Ivi- lanadam and Hossain, completes this pic- ture with an analysis of the dynamics of technological change and labour, based on comparative case studies of three vil- lages with different water-supply charac- teristics. The village study by a Japanese research team addresses similar issues on a smaller scale.

Other chapters focus on a single sub-dis- trict where agriculture is increasingly the mainstay of the economy and exam- ine aspects of agricultural diversifica- tion, paying attention to both the vul- nerability of small economies and the environmental risks involved in large- scale production. Looking at the rural- urban frontier on the northern fringe of ever-expanding Bangkok, Marc Ashew argues that local communities are not passive victims, but active agents in processes which blur the boundaries between rural and urban environments.

The local level

Srisuk and Kammeier, looking at agri- cultural diversification in the context of the interaction between government pol- icy and farmers’ decision-making, stress the need for flexible approaches that are sensitive to local conditions. To address the relationship between local social and administra- tive structures and develop- ment, Shin’ichi Shigetomi (missing from the list of contributors) constructs a three-tiered model of kinship/community organisation, local administrative structures and ‘development organisations’. Michael Nelson focuses on the current decentralisation of government functions and asks whether this has a real democratising effect.

The book, the product of joint research between Kasetsart University, Thailand and Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France, emerges from a conference held in 2000. The contribu- tions, from diverse disciplines and nationalities, include development prac- titioners as well as academics. Thailand’s Rice Bowl accomplishes the traditional task of agrarian studies: detailed docu- mentation of the various dimensions of agrarian systems in a defined, if large, area. However, any attempt to cover such a large field is bound to have gaps and weaknesses. The book could have benefited from a more thematic organ- isation—perhaps by grouping chapters in terms of scale of focus and/or by pay- ing attention to purely agricultural and economic sub-systems linked by a common water supply, this could have provided a stronger and more interesting framework for the book. There is perhaps a case for a companion volume based on water and environmental issues.

Graeme MacRae is an anthropologist cur- rently working on alternative forms of agri- cultural development in Bali and Java. He teaches anthropology at Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand.

G.S.Macrae@massey.ac.nz

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Guns of February: ordinary Japanese soldiers’ views of the Malayan campaign and the fall of Singapore

Chandar S. Sundaram

Sixty years after its end, the Second World War still continues to fascinate the general public as well as scholarly academics. In recent years, the latter have veered away from treating this most terrible and significant of all wars purely as a military contest, towards an approach that privileges its social and cultural contexts. A component of this trend has been the effort to bring to light the experiences of the ordinary soldiers who daily put themselves ‘in harm’s way’.

We now have works like Fritz’s Frontsoldaten, and Linderman’s The World Within War, which look at the Japanese army...as human beings...as human beings engaging and groundbreaking.

The picture that emerges is both fascinating and groundbraking.

Frei, who died before completing the book, ‘...wanted the world to understand the Japanese army...as human beings...as human beings engaging and groundbreaking.

Fascinating vignettes like this are peppered throughout the book, as are some thought provoking facts. For instance, the men of Ichikawa detachment, which included Ochii, and which had been constantly on the move, had lost on average ten kilograms during the campaign. Ochii himself had gone down from 71 to 55 kilos, a daily weight loss of 340 grams.

Complete with vast battle descriptions (pp. 85-97) and photographs - the one of a tanker getting a haircut amidst palm fronds with his tank in the background is particularly apt - this is a first rate book, and should be essential reading for anyone interested in the Second World War in Southeast Asia. There could have been a few more maps, and some rigorous fact-checking – the Zero was a fighter, not a bomber (p. 57) – but these are minor quibbles, and do not detract from the overall excellence of the book.

Chandar S. Sundaram is Assistant Professor in the History Department at Lingnan University, Hong Kong.
Strange parallels: Southeast Asia in global context, c. 800-1830

Victor Lieberman's Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830, which won the prestigious 2004 World History Association Book Prize, connects a millennium of Southeast Asian history with long-term administrative, cultural, economic, demographic, even climatic developments and cycles on the Eurasian continent. This remarkable book will become one of the seminal studies on the history of pre-modern mainland Southeast Asia.

In the introductory chapter of Strange Parallels, Lieberman criticizes Reid's concept of a '17th century crisis' - perceptible in a deteriorating climate, falling profit margins, and competitive disadvantage due to advances by European and Chinese traders. Lieberman argues that a seventeenth century crisis may have some explanatory strength for developments in Insular Southeast Asia, but does not hold true for the mainland, which enjoyed a period of sustained territorial consolidation and economic growth throughout the seventeenth century.

Refuting the dichotomous distinction between the ‘West’ and the ‘Rest’ of the Eurasian landmass (i.e. Europe and Asia respectively), Lieberman reveals parallels long-term trends in large parts of Europe, Japan and mainland Southeast Asia. He argues that the combination of accelerated political integration, firearms-based warfare, broader literacy, religious textuality, vernacular literatures, wider money use, and more complex international linkages marked the period between the mid-fifteenth to early nineteenth centuries as a more or less coherent period in each region of this ‘Eurasian periphery’ (p. 79). Island Southeast Asia, on the other hand, though sharing similar ‘early modern features’, had more in common with the Eurasian ‘heartland’, namely China, the Middle East and India. These zones, all ruled by conquest elites at the turn of the seventeenth century – Manchu, Turkish, Persian, Dutch and Iberian – did not experience growing cultural unity between elites and masses, and entered the nineteenth century politically fragmented (p. 80).

For the millennium spanning the period 800-1830, Lieberman identifies four roughly synchronised cycles of political consolidation in mainland Southeast Asia, as well as in France and Russia. It is indeed striking in that all these disparate regions a period of rapid demographic growth and commercial expansion began in the thirteenth and thirteenth centuries, followed by a general political and social crisis extending from the early thirteenth to the late fourteenth centuries. The causes of crisis were, however, quite different. In Southeast Asia, the ‘charts perities’ of Pagan (Burma) and Angkor (Cambodia) succumbed to a combination of foreign invasions, shifting trade relations and ecological strains to core areas (p. 243). The collapse of the Khmer empire was used to conquer by the Mongols, while the crisis in France, it can be argued, resulted from the Black Death and military conquests by England in the Hundred Years’ War.

The reader may also be stunned by the coincidence of short-lived political crises in the second half of the eighteenth century, followed by a long period of intensified administrative and cultural integration. Lieberman includes ‘Whereas Europe as a whole in 1500 had some 500 political units, by the late nineteenth century the number was down to some 30. Between 1340 and 1830 some 23 independent Southeast Asian kingdoms collapsed into three. Each nineteenth century survivor was more effectively centralised than any local predecessor’ (p. 2). This last quotion shows Lieberman sometimes oversimplifies attempts to draw parallels between incompatible phenomena. The vast majority of the more than 500 political units identified by Lieberman in mid-fifteenth century Europe were German kingdoms, duchies, counties, and imperial free cities (Reichsfrei Städte). The German Empire at the time still possessed powerful imperial institutions that tied together its member states, the autonomy of which were probably less than that of several nineteenth century Siamese and Burmese vassal states.

As to the ‘strange parallels’ that link Vietnamese and Japanese history, Lieberman does not provide concrete details but leaves the reader’s anxiety to the second volume of his oeuvre, to be published separately under the title Mainland Mirrors: Russia, France, Japan, and the Islands. One is tempted to speculate that such an analogy seems obvious due to the political, cultural and demographic expansion of Vietnam and Japan along an axis running from North to South and from South to North respectively. Whether such a comparison is the only and most suitable choice for putting pre-modern Vietnamese history into a wider Eurasian perspective remains to be substantiated.

For Southeast Asia specialists the first volume nevertheless offers many insights into interconnected histories of the three parts of the mainland: the western mainland (mostly Burma), the central mainland (Siames, Laos, and Cambodia) and the eastern mainland (Vietnam). The book discusses historical developments in these three distinctive regions, characterised by agriculturally productive rice farming in a north-south direction and separated from one another by mountain chains, in three chapters of roughly equal length. At the beginning of each chapter, Lieberman explains which regions are included in the respective ‘mainlands’. Then he discusses in detail how the three parts of the mainland developed politically, economically, and culturally over a period of one millennium. The rise, consolidation or collapse of political entities are discussed chronologically and in relation to their modes of economy and trade relations; Lieberman frequently neglects ecological and climatic factors. The reader also gains a state-of-the-art overview of changes in the cultural landscape, ranging from religious dynamics to linguistic and ethnic changes.

Lieberman is a highly reputed and prolific writer of Burmese history, and it is not surprising that the chapter on Burma is by far the most convincing. It relies on decades of original research, and will serve as a standard work on pre-modern Burmese history. The sections on Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, on the other hand, rely on the work of recognised authorities such as David Wyatt and Dhiyarat na Pompeea (on Thailand); David Chandler and Charles Higham (on Cambodia) and Keith Tay- lor and Li Tana (on Vietnam). Lieber- man thus succeeds to write balanced and highly informative chapters on the central and eastern ‘mainlands’ as well. In each chapter, results of the preceding ones are used to highlight political, eco- nomic, and cultural interactions among the different parts of the mainland.

While Strange Parallels is an extraordin- ary book of superb scholarship, it has its lop-sidedness. In Lieberman’s dis- cussion about the Tai polities of Lan Na (Northern Thailand) and Lan Sang (Lao), for example, he has not made use of the most recent scholarship. Although important studies of South- east Asian history written in German are quite rare, some of them should not be ignored. To give one example, for the economic history of Pagan, Lieberman relies almost entirely on Michael Aung- Thwin’s work, the leading authority in this field. If he had consulted Tilman Frasch’s PhD thesis Pagan: Staat und Staat (Stuttgart 1994) he probably would have qualified Aung-Thwin’s theory that the decline of Pagan was spurred by excessive donations of royal land to reli- gious institutions.

Such reservations, however, are of minor importance. Lieberman has written an impressive work of great impor- tance in the field of Southeast Asian his- tory. It is certain that this book will stimulate further debate among histori- ans specialised in the region and, prob- ably, also in world history. His work has opened a new window of approaches to Southeast Asian history, and deserves to be highly recommended.


Volker Grabowsky, Professor of Southeast Asian History at the Westfälische Wilhelms- Universität Münster, Germany. He works on the history and literary traditions of the Tai peoples in northern mainland Southeast Asia.
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Asian and European perspectives on old-age vulnerability

Asian and European perspectives on old-age vulnerability. Population ageing and old-age support are topics of growing importance to Europe and Asia. Currently one in five Europeans is 60 and over; by 2050, it will be more than one in three. Compared to Europe, most Asian populations, with the exception of Japan, are still young. However, the speed at which age-structural changes are taking place, the huge absolute size of some of Asia’s elderly populations, and the comparatively low levels of aggregate social and formal provisions are cause for concern and have spawned a large body of research on older people in Asia. This has led to good, oftentimes comparable data on elderly support in European and Asian countries - yet few attempts have been made to draw parallels or learn from the different experiences.

In response to the common challenge of understanding the impact of ageing on societies, families and individuals, an international workshop entitled Old-Age Vulnerabilities: Asian and European Perspectives was organized by Brawijaya University (Malang, Indonesia), in cooperation with the Universities of Oxford and Amsterdam. The aim was to initiate intellectual exchange on ageing within a theoretical framework of vulnerability by focusing specifically on disadvantaged subgroups of elderly. The reasons for this focus were threefold: vulnerable older people are of obvious humanitarian concern; by studying vulnerability, we are interested in processes of relative inclusion or exclusion, thus absolute differences in socio-economic or policy context can be set aside; and a vulnerability framework encourages debates about realistic, targeted interventions.

In studying vulnerability we seek to understand why some individuals are at heightened risk from bad outcomes, whilst others are apparently secure. The concept is, of course, not new. Vulnerability has a long history in studies of natural disasters, epidemiology, and famine, but has rarely been applied to the study of ageing in a systematic way. Doing so entails distinguishing the domains of exposure (or ‘risk factors’), threats, coping capacities and outcomes, and examining their inter-relationships over time.

Research on vulnerability needs to clarify first what outcomes people are seeking to avoid. In other words: what is it that older people feel vulnerable to? This may be an unimpressive or degrading death, lack of care or social support, exclusion and poverty, dependence, institutionalisation, or loneliness. Old age can be a period of marked discontinuities, and it is often specific threats or crises, like the loss of a spouse, cessation of work, or illness episodes, which have the potential to precipitate dramatic declines in well-being. Compensatory mechanisms (like social networks or income) are in place. Understanding vulnerability therefore requires attention to the ways in which exposure to threats is shaped over the life course. For example, childlessness, affecting as many as one in four or five older people in certain Asian and European populations, may mean a lack of care and support in old age; divorce - which is common in Europe and Islamic Southeast Asia - may leave older men with small social networks and make them particularly vulnerable should illness strike. Similary, life-time poverty or exclusion from the labour market may prevent the accumulation of assets, savings or pension entitlements on which to rely in old age.

But of course not all childless, divorced or poor older people are vulnerable. They are embedded in societies, communities and kin networks, and therefore ultimately affected by the resources and limitations of these wider structures. For this reason the study of vulnerability always necessitates the study of people’s munities and society. Thus, one of the key points in discussions was the importance of formal, legally enshrined protection for vulnerable subgroups. Until now, many Asian countries have tended to provide state support to those groups who are already relatively privileged, such as civil servants or members of the formal labour market. The notion of universal benefits, widely accepted (if increasingly under threat) in Europe, is only gradually gaining currency in Asia. Indonesia, for example, recently passed a new Social Security Law seeking to expand the gradual expansion of protection to more vulnerable groups, including informal sector workers.

The potential of poverty to heighten exposure to threats and reduce resilience in the event of a crisis should not blind us to the importance of other sources of vulnerability in old age. Social and psychological threats to well-being in later life, like loss of autonomy, loneliness or disempowerment, loom large in older people’s narratives. Thus, in urban North Sulawesi and the Netherlands alike, people fear outright dependence on others, especially where this entails reliance on distant kin or non-kin or on already over-burdened caregivers. Consequently older people work hard to ‘manage’ their dependence, for instance, by maintaining a degree of independence through continued work or a switch to lighter work, by under-stating physical or emotional complaints, by engaging in small-scale reciprocal exchanges or by relying on age peers for some of their support.

The workshop closed with a discussion of policy suggestions on how to target vulnerable groups and prevent both the increase in the number of vulnerable older people, and the progression from vulnerability to serious harm. Participants emphasised the importance of targeting material protection, paying more attention to health and long-term care without ‘medicalising’ old age, rethinking legal aspects of protection and policy enforcement, and maintaining and strengthening family and community support. Whilst these points were certainly not new for those interested in vulnerability and well-being in later life, their communication by researchers (who tend to emphasise complexities) to policy makers (whose attention is not easy to win and hold) is often still far from perfect. By involving the media and organisations like HelpAge International able to lobby policy makers directly, it was hoped that small but lasting contributions towards reducing vulnerability in old age may have been made.

Elisabeth Schröder-Butterfill is British Academy Post-doctoral Research Fellow at St Antony’s College, Oxford. Ruly Marianti is Senior Researcher at the SMERU Research Institute in Jakarta. The authors would like to thank the Asia-Europe Foundation and the European Alliance for Asian Studies for their generous funding for the workshop in Malang, and SSAPs for invaluable help with its organisation. The full report for this workshop can be accessed at: www.asia-europe.org. Electronic copies of the papers can be received by emailing: elisabeth.schroeder-butterfill@ sant.ox.ac.uk. The journal Ageing and Society will be publishing a special issue arising from the workshop on the themes of Old-Age Vulnerabilities later this year.

Asian Alliance
The European Alliance for Asian Studies is a cooperative framework of European institutes specializing in Asian Studies. Its partners are:

NIAS/Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
Director: Dr. Jorgen Delman
Leibligade 35 DK 2500 Copenhagen S, Denmark
T +45-35-31 9500
F +45-35-31 9549
sec@nias.dk
www.nias.dk

IFA
Director: Dr. Werner Draguhn
Rothenbaumchaussee 32, D-10117, Hamburg, Germany
T +49-40-428 8740
F +49-40-410 7945
ifad@uni-hamburg.de
www.due.de/ifa

EIAS
Director: Dr. Willem van der Gaast
35 Rue des Deux Eglises
1000 Brussels, Belgium
T +32-2-230 8122
F +32-2-230 8123
eias@eias.org
www.eias.org

CERI
Director: Prof. Christine Jefflet-Follain
Contact person: Dr. David Cameron
Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques
56 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris, France
T +33-1-5871 7900
F +33-1-5871 7909
info@ceri-sciencespo.org
www.ceri-sciencespo.com

CEAO
Director: Prof. Taciana Fisac
Centro de Estudios de Asia Oriental / Autonomous University of Madrid
Edificio Rectorado
5ª planta Campus de Cantoblanco
28049 Madrid, Spain
T +34-91-597 4295
F +34-91-597 5278
ceao@uam.es
www.uam.es/ceao

SOAS
Director: Prof. Colin Bundy
School of Oriental and African Studies University of London
Thornhaugh Street / Russell Square London, WC1H 0XG, United Kingdom
T +44-20-7915 3386
F +44-20-7915 3384
study@soas.ac.uk
www.soa.ac.uk

SSAAPS
Director: Thommy Svensson
The Swedish School of Advanced Asia Studies
Stiftelsen STINT
Skeppargatan 8, 114 52 Stockholm
T +46-70-551560
F +46-70-551569
thommy.svensson@ssaps.stint.se
www.ssaps.stint.se

IIAS (secretariat Asia Alliance)
More information:
www.asia-alliance.org

Elisabeth Schröder-Butterfill and Ruly Marianti
China’s need for soft power

There is no doubt that China is strong in economic and military terms. It is, however, better to get what one wants through the perceived legitimacy of one’s culture, ideals and policies than through force or payment. Such ‘soft power’ is one of the most effective ways for China to gain international acceptance, especially from Western industrialised countries.

D oes China lack soft power? While this may have been so in the past, it is not today. In May 2004, Time magazine’s foreign editor Joshua Cooper Ramo coined the term ‘Beijing Consensus’ to describe China’s reform and development model, the most widely-used term in international relations last year. He argued that China is offering hope to developing countries by providing a more equitable development paradigm.

A quick search on the internet shows that the ‘Beijing Consensus’ has captured the excitement of a country where change, novelty and innovation feature regularly in journal articles, dinner table conversations and policy debates.

The Beijing Consensus is one example of China’s soft power. Some of China’s Southeast Asian neighbours seem to sense this strength. China was the first major power visited by President Arroyo of the Philippines, Premier Hun Sen of Cambodia and Premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia when they began new terms in office. In 2001, President Arroyo and President Koizumi at Deng Xiaoping’s experience could help her lead the Philippines to become a ‘strong republic’. On the multilateral level, all ASEAN members, as well as Japan and Korea, agreed with China’s policy on regional cooperation.

Does this mean China has enough soft power? No, it does not. Aside from its economy and military, there are serious concerns on issues such as democracy and the Communist Party’s (CPP) anti-corruption campaign. These two issues are central to China’s image abroad, are key components of soft power. A better image would make it easier for China to develop peacefully, while a bad image makes cooperation with other countries more difficult. America and Europe say democracy can lead to cooperation and peace; a democratic China or ‘clean China’ may be preferable to a ‘strong China’. Democracy and transparency could also enhance the Communist Party’s future legitimacy as a ruling party, though this may sound strange to Westerners. As General Secretary Hu Jintao recently said, the CCP is transforming from a revolutionary into a ruling party, and today the Chinese people look to the party with different demands. In the past they needed survival and development, now they need more rights and freedoms. The party must recognize these changes and adjust its strategy accordingly.

Towards democracy Few countries believe China to be democratic. The American media often use the phrase ‘Communist China’ to describe the country apart from western countries. They also criticize the Communist Party for refusing to grant more freedoms. Right-wing, light artists and politicians are aware of how the former president of the Philippines was overthrown by the second ‘People Power’ revolution, how Indonesia and the Sabaha family collapsed during the Asian financial crisis, and how difficult it is for Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to fight corruption in Malaysia.

Clean hands and coffins The CCP is also making great efforts to address corruption, which is not only a threat to the regime but a challenge to the party’s legitimacy. Top party leaders are aware of how the former president of the Philippines was overthrown by the second ‘People Power’ revolution, how Indonesia and the Sabaha family collapsed during the Asian financial crisis, and how difficult it is for Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to fight corruption in Malaysia.

In CCTV (Chinese national state television’s) recent poll of the top ten people of the year in the field of economics, first place went to the head of the country’s National Audit Office, who launched the anti-corruption campaign. As anti-corruption becomes an ever more popular theme, CCTV is airing more prime-time series on the subject. Ordinary people are watching shows like Jiaolai The Judge, about a righteous judge in ancient China who kills corrupt ministers, or the more contemporary Black Hole and Absolute Power.

The Party has declared it has taken measures to fight corruption - former Premier Zhu Rongji reportedly said in a speech: ‘I prepared 100 coffins, 99 for corrupt officials, 1 for myself ‘to express his determination. But this is not enough. The Party is leading China’s rise, and a deeply corrupt Party is sure to lose the authority to lead. Yet supervising the Communist Party and the government must be like being both player and referee in a soccer match. China should reinforce the rights of the National People’s Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), especially the rights of the mass media to monitor the CCP.

What will China be like in twenty years? Will world leaders regard China as a democratic and clean power? For the Chinese government and the CCP, there is a long road ahead to translate its hard into soft power.

Shifting Paradigms in Asia-Europe Relations: Translating Common Challenges into Opportunities

The 8th Asia-Europe Young Leaders Symposium (AEYLS 8) was held in Scheveningen, the Netherlands from 23 November to 3 December 2004. Organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the International Institute for Asian Studies, hosting the event in the Netherlands was particularly timely as it was the holder of the EU Presidency and had co-hosted the Fifth ASEM Summit in Hanoi, October 2004.

The theme, ‘Shifting Paradigms in Asia-Europe Relations; Translating Common Challenges into Common Opportunities’ underlined the importance of current developments within the ASEM process. The main goal set for the young leaders was to gain new perspectives on Asia-Europe relations and put forward recommendations based on the plenary lectures and separate working groups.

The symposium approached the complex academic, social and cultural relationships between the two regions in an interdisciplinary manner, bringing together the diversity of local histories, ideas, and agencies in both Europe and Asia. The symposium also aimed to map beyond disciplinary divides and more practical knowledge on areas such as social welfare, financial architecture, elections and interfaith discourse. As we all know, dialogue is the basic principle of soft power. Sometimes, however, the process itself is discussed more than what the process should deliver. Hence the young leaders were invited not only to debate issues of importance to Asia and Europe, but to pinpoint crucial elements within the themes to enable future symposia to produce concrete steps towards a closer Asian-European partnership.

In total some 90 academics, politicians, journalists, businessmen and artists from 26 countries, including the new member states Cambodia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic, took part in the event, comprised of plenary discussion and working group sessions. The keynote speakers were Satrio Handayana Wiryono (Fellow of the Center for strategic and International Relations in Indonesia), Frank Majoor (Secretary General of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Wim van Gelder (Commissioner to the Queen of the Province of Zeeland).

For more information on AEYLS please see www.aef.nl and www.iias.nl

Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe: The Barcelona Report

The recently published Barcelona Report is the result of an informal consultation among civil society groups on Asia-Europe relations. It is the fruit of the ‘Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe - An Informal Consultation’ conference held in Barcelona, 16-18 June 2004, jointly organised by the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), Casa Asia, IIAS and the Japan Center for International Exchange (JICE).

Featuring an introductory message from J.E. Salarich, General Director of Foreign Policy for Asia and the Pacific (Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and keynote speeches by S. Pitsuwan, former Foreign Minister of Thailand and J.P. Dirsko, Director General of the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Barcelona Report consists of concrete recommendations formulated by more than 180 representatives of leading civil society organisations from Asia and Europe over three days of intense debate and brainstorming.

The issues of mutual concern include human rights and governance, environment and urbanisation, labour and social issues, regionalisation and security issues, trade and development co-operation, migration, education, cultural and interfaith dialogue.

The Barcelona Report was sent to all ASEM heads of states and governments prior to the 9th ASEM Summit in Hanoi in October 2004. It is downloadable at www.civildialogue.asef.org

To order this book, please contact IIAS.

Zhai Kun

Zhai Kun is Director of the Southeast Asian Studies department of China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

[advertorial]
IIAS research programmes & new initiatives

> Programmes

**Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia**
The development and application of new biomedical and genet-ic technologies have important socio-political implications. This NWO/ASSR/IIAS research programme aims to gain insight into the ways in which the use of and monopoly over genetic information shape and influence population policies, environmental ethics and biomedical and agricultural practices in various Asian religious and secular cultures and across national bound-aries.

Coordinator: Dr Margaret Slieboom
www.iias.nl/iias/research/genomics

**The Syntax of the Languages of Southern China**
This project aims to achieve a detailed description and in depth analysis of a limited number of syntactic phenomena in six lan-guages, both Sinitic and non-Sinitic, spoken in the area south of the Yangtze River. The project will systematically compare these descriptions and analyses to contribute to the develop-ment of the theory of language and human language capacity, through the study of non-Western languages.

Coordinator: Dr Rint Sybesma
www.iias.nl/iias/research/syntax

**Islam in Indonesia: The Dissemination of Religious Authority in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries**
Forms and transformations of religious authority among the Indonesian Muslim community are the focus of this research programme. The term authority relates both to persons and books as well as various other forms of written and non-written references. Special attention is paid to the production, repro-duction, and dissemination of religious authority in the fields of four sub-programmes: ulama (religious scholars) and fatwas; tarekat (mystical orders); dakwah (propagation of the faith); and education.

Coordinator: Dr Nino Kaptijn
www.iias.nl/iias/research/dakwah

**Indonesianisasi and Nationalization**
From the 1930s to the early 1960s, the Indonesian economy transformed from a ‘colonial’ economy, dominated by the Dutch, to a ‘natural’ one in which indigenous business assumed control. Shifts in command and management of the economy are closely related to economic structure and politi-cal alignment. This NIOD project explores this transformation, studying the late-colonial era as well as the Japanese occupa-tion, the Revolution and the Sukarno period. Two issues are given special attention: Indonesianisasi (increased opportuni-ties for indigenous Indonesians in the economy) and nationaliz-ation, in particular the expropriation of Dutch corporate assets in Indonesia in 1957-58.

Coordinator: Prof. J. Thomas Lindblad
www.iias.nl/iias/research/dilisemination

**Changing Labour Relations in Asia (CLARA)**
Labour relations in different parts of Asia are undergoing diverse historical processes and experiences in terms of their national economies, their links with international markets and the nature of state intervention. This network aims to under-standing these changes comparatively and historically, focusing on five overlapping themes: the labour process, labour mobil-ity, labour consciousness, gendered labour and labour laws and labour movements.

Coordinator: Dr Ratu Saptaeri
www.iias.nl/iias/research/clara

**Transnational Society, Media, and Citizenship**
This multidisciplinary network studies the complex nature of contemporary cultural identities and the impact of the global-ization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the (re)construction of these identities. Although the pro-gramme is based in the Netherlands, the projects are carried out at numerous fieldwork sites.

Coordinator: Prof. Peter van der Veer
www.iias.nl/iias/research/transnational

**Care of the Aged: Gender, Institutional Provisions and Social Security in India, Netherlands and Sri Lanka**
This IDPAD/IIAS research project addresses the implications of population aging for the social security and health care of elderly people. As the experience of aging is highly gendered and can vary according to class, caste, and religion, the project seeks to capture the dimensions, characteristics and trends related to aging among different social and economic groups, with an emphasis on women. This comparative study of the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, and India draws on diverse experiences of development to contextualize the aging process.

www.iias.nl/iias/research/care

> New initiatives

**The Development of Space Technology in Asia**
The space age has dramatically impacted on all nations. In Asia, the ‘space-faring nations’ – India, China and Japan – have achieved considerable success in building up indigenous space technologies and applications. Other Asian nations have read-ily adopted these applications, including satellites for telecom-munications, for gathering data on the weather, and environ-mental and earth resources. IIAS has launched this new research initiative and has initiated a series of workshops on the topic.

www.iias.nl/iias/research/space

**Piracy and Robbery on the Asian Seas**
Acts of piracy then particularly large in Asian waters, with the bulk of all officially reported incidents of maritime piracy occur-ring in Southeast Asia during the 1990s. This is of serious con-cern to international shipping, as the sea-lanes between East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe pass through Southeast Asia. IIAS and the Centre for Maritime Research (MAR) are currently identifying issues and concerns, and are delineating core ele-ments of an interdisciplinary research programme on piracy and robbery at sea in Asia.

www.iias.nl/iias/research/piracy

**Energy Programme Asia (EPA)**
This programme focuses on the impact of East and South East Asian Energy Supply strategies on the Caspian region (Azer-baijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, and Russia) and the Persian Gulf. The objective is to study the effects of the global geopolitics of energy security supply on the main energy con-suming countries of East and Southeast Asia, China, India, Japan, and South Korea, and their national strategies of securing supply from the Caspian region and the Persian Gulf. The programme is institutionally supported by IIAS and the Clingendael International Energy Programme (CIEP), Den Haag.

Coordinator: Dr Mohd Parvoo Aminah
www.iias.nl/iias/research/energy

Heart of Borneo
Sustainable Development and Nature Conservation

WWF-CML-IIAS- Conference
25-28 April 2005
Institute of Environmental Sciences (CML)
Einsteinweg 2, Leiden

Convener: Dr Gerard Persoon (CML)

In 2005 WWF will launch the Heart of Borneo Program to co-ordinate and stimu-late conservation efforts related to Borneo. A wide variety of activities will take place throughout the year, not only in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, but also in several countries with WWF branch offices.

Within the framework of this Heart of Borneo Program, the International Insti-tute of Asian Studies (IIAS) and the Institute of Environmental Sciences (CML) at Leiden University, in collaboration with partners in Borneo, are organizing an academic conference to discuss the present state of knowledge and expert-ise related to the exploitation of the island’s natural wealth and resources and the efforts to conserve its biodiversity. The aim is to bring together scholars from various disciplines and to focus on (1) present trends in resource use; (2) policy contexts; (3) people and the environment; (4) land use planning; (5) inter-national trade and transnational issues in resource use; and (6) needs for action.

Organisers:
WWF
CML
IIAS
Leiden University

Deadline for registration: 15 April 2005
Registration and information:
Manon Osseweijer
PO Box 8155
2300 RA Leiden
T +31 71 527 2227
F +31 71 527 4162
m.osseweijer@let.leidenuniv.nl
www.iias.nl
The future of Asia. 

ICAS will have as its theme ‘The Future of Asia’. While previous meetings of ICAS lacked such a theme, it is clear why the organizers of ICAS 4 decided it: their back- yard, Shanghai, is the future of Asia. The rise of this city over the past decade has been a story of superlatives. The skyline of the city has been transformed, now boasting some of the world’s tallest buildings and longest bridges. Shanghai’s unique appeal rests in its double role as a harbinger of China’s future and a testing ground for the world at large. It draws inspiration from the co-habitation of Asian and Western cultures. Scenic and modern, traditional and creative forces these engender. The landmark Shanghai Exhibition Center on Yanan Road will be the venue of ICAS 4. Thiscommissarissign that, which opened its doors in 1955, is a culturally significant structure in Shanghai’s historical mosaic. Initially called the China-Soviet Friendship Mansion (Zhongyouyou dadao), its name was changed to Exhibition Center in 1968. Its famous vaulted hall has been reserved for the exhibitors, supporters and visitors of ICAS 4.

ICAS Book Prizes

The ICAS Book Prizes aim to create an international focus for publications on Asia while increasing worldwide visibility. All scientific books published in 2005 and 2004 on Asian topics were eligible. Three prizes were awarded: (1) best study in the humanities; (2) best study in the social sciences; and (3) best PhD dissertation or studies. The prize was to be split between the best book in each of the three fields while the best PhD dissertations will be published in all, the ICAS secretariat received forty books on a broad range of topics from 17 publishers (for more information see www.icassecretariat.org, the back page of this newsletter lists the titles). A reading committee of six members is now judging the books. On 16 June short lists will be announced on the ICAS Secretariat website. The awarding of the ICAS Book Prizes will be during the opening ceremony of ICAS 4 in Shanghai on the 20th of August, at which hope you will all be present.

ICAS 4

Head, Supervising Committee: Wang Ronghua, President, SASS Head, Organizing Committee: Ren Xun, acting Vice President, SASS Organizer: Li Yihai

ICAS Secretariat

P.O. Box 9515
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
Tel: +31-71-7222270
Fax: +31-71-7217653
nderzoeksgroepiias@fmg.uva.nl
www.icassecretariat.org

Regional network for indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia

The Dutch government recently granted €1.26 million for a project to build a regional network among Southeast Asian indigenous peoples (NGOs). The project will be implemented through the Institute of Environmental Sciences at Leiden University, and its research station at IITF. The project will be executed in collaboration with ICAS, in particular through its research activities in the field of cultural minorities.

The aim of the project is to support, safeguard, and restore national natural and traditional resources, and to promote awareness about the situation of indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. This will be pursued through the development and strengthening of a regional network of organizations working with indigenous peoples. Action research will be an important component of the project, which will work with local, national and international organizations, and indigenous peoples and the creative forces these engender. The landmark Shanghai Exhibition Center on Yanan Road will be the venue of ICAS 4. This prominent building icon, which opened its doors in 1955, is a culturally significant structure in Shanghai’s historical mosaic. Initially called the China-Soviet Friendship Mansion (Zhongyouyou dadao), its name was changed to Exhibition Center in 1968. Its famous vaulted hall has been reserved for the exhibitors, supporters and visitors of ICAS 4.

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ICAS Secretariat

P.O. Box 9515
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
Tel: +31-71-7222270
Fax: +31-71-7217653
nderzoeksgroepiias@fmg.uva.nl
www.icassecretariat.org

Muslim authorities in twentieth century Indonesia

The IIAS project Islam in Indonesia: the dissemination of religious authority in the 20th century is now in its final year. This four-year co-operative research project, involving four Indonesian universities, the Netherlands, Egypt, Australia, Canada and elsewhere, aims to study and document important changes in religious, especially Muslim, authority in Indonesia over the past century which have contributed to the shaping of contemporary nationhood. As the twentieth century has been a period of rapid social change – the result of, among other factors, spectacular rises in literacy, urbanization, economic growth and the visibility and influence of the state – the dissemination of religious authority has acquired highly dynamic and complex characteristics.

The project includes four advanced research programmes which address the most important areas of religious dissemination in Indonesia over the twentieth century: (1) ‘Islam and Fatwa: the Structures of Traditional Religious Authority’, (2) ‘Tarekat: Mystical Associations’, (3) ‘Dakwah Organisations and Activists in Urban Communities’ and (4) ‘Education and the Dissemination and Reproduction of Religious Authority’.

As a spin-off activity to the joint research efforts, a comprehensive list of religious personalities in twentieth century Indonesian Islam, including well-known but also less important or not so well-known persons, is being compiled. The initial plan was to make a collection of short biographies based on secondary biographical materials already available, it was decided to create a database with bibliographical references to already existing data.

The aim is to collect source materials from all over the world: monographs, articles or chapters in monographs, journal articles, pamphlets, editorials, papers for congresses, forums and seminars, translations of non-Indonesian materials and so on. In due course, our intention is to collect other source items, including visual and audio material. In this phase of the project the work for the database is carried out in Leiden, home to the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) with its famous Indonesian collections.

At present the database is still in its formative stage. Hence, we very much welcome suggestions and submissions from your side. Disclosure on the web of the database is planned in the summer of 2005, shortly before the end of the project of September 2005. A joint publication of the bibliography is also being considered.

Michael Wille
Documentalist, IIAS
m.wille@email.leidenuniv.nl
raiwial@hotmail.com

Consumerism and the emerging middle class: comparative perspectives from India and China

ICASS/JCSS/GERI/CERI Workshop Series, Number 2

India - Southeast Asia Centre, New Delhi
7-9 November 2005

China and India - the world's two fastest growing economies accounting for a third of the world's population - have been going through comparable processes of liberalization and globalization in the past decades. In terms of scale and historical depth, they are obvious cases for com-
South Asian Diasporas: the creation of unfinished identities in the modern world

IUS/ Erasmus University Rotterdam
workshop 22-26 June 2005
Rotterdam

It is well known that ‘twice migrant’ Indi- ans and migrants in the Caribbean and East Africa share little with each other, seem- ingly fragmented by their migration expe- riences. Outsiders (scholars, or the Indi- an Government) may define them as one, but they do not speak the same lan- guage, visit the same temples or mosques, and hardly intermarry. In fact, the labels ‘East African Asian’ and ‘Caribbean Asian’ suggest these are new constructions of identity.

The main aim of the workshop is to bring together senior scholars in the field of Indian diaspora studies to discuss the potential and limits of the ‘diaspora’ concept and different migration experiences, migrants’ reception in host countries, and length of time abroad explain differences in identi- ty formation among Indian diasporas. This approach goes against the general ‘Asians in diaspora’ literature, which tends to unify and homogenize migrants in terms of culture, religion, language and homeland, speaking of the Indian diaspora. The general literature uses broad ‘checklists’ of factors to define diasporic development, dispersal to two or more loca- tions: dispersal to two or more loca- tions; choose what (and what not) to re- connect; what (and what not) to re- connect to. In some cases they may choose not to re-connect at all, or re-connect to the ‘Indian’. This occurred among Indian groups in East Asia, who initially strengthened their economic and cultur- al ties with India through trade relations and taking brides from the homeland. However, many Indian businessmen in East Asia today show little economic interest in India, despite the initiatives of the Indian government. On the contrary, the overall image of Indians in India among Gujratis in East Asia, transformed from ‘reliable family or community members’ to ‘one of unreli- able, corrupt and, untrustworthy others’.

These issues raise questions related to the concept of diaspora as well as to migra- tion and relocation issues. How was the ‘Indiaanness’ of South Asian migrants embedded in their host countries? Though many overseas Indians haven’t visited India for three generations or more, they created myths, stories and opinions about it. Others visited India fre- quently (or just once) and shared their stories with friends and family members. What is the influence of their image of India in their local identity creation? How do local Indian communities respond to the growing importance of mass media and any change? How can the Indian Government to strengthen their ties with India? These questions are all related to the main question of this con- ference: how does the migration experi- ence create new identities and alter old ones in the local and global process of assimilation and integration in the dias- pora?

Most scholars are aware that ‘South Asian identity’ is neither unchanging and primordial, nor infinitely flexible, which one may paint, fill in, or use depending on circumstances. South Asian identity is constantly negotiated in changing con- texts. This assumption holds as much in the study of South Asian diasporas. A historical and comparative approach may help us to understand some of these dynamics. What is the use of the diaspora concept if it tends to unify the ‘diaspora’? Is the diaspora ‘checklist’ helpful in understanding migration expe- riences or does it close our eyes to vari- ables of difference? In other words, is the diaspora concept useful in our empirical research or not?

Organizers: G. Oonk, Erasmus University Rotterdam H. Schulte Nordholt, Erasmus University Rotterdam / Amsterdam of Asian Studies Contact: Oonk@fk.rku.nl

Chinese Cultures Abroad Directory

The Chinese Cultures Abroad Directory is now available online to all researchers and, if you wish, your evaluation of websites in any language by or about Overseas Chinese (however defined). Visit www.hawaii.edu/pollard/ for further investigation and research. The Direc- tory is part of the China WWW Virtual Library and the Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library. Vincent K. Pollard pollard@hawaii.edu is the editor.

Invitation to join the Nagani Project

The Nagani (Red Dragon) Book Club was founded in 1937 in Rangoon, by a van- der Leeuw, the conference independence fighters who tried to transmit international knowl- edge and literature into Burma. Modelled on Victor Gollancz’ Left Book Club, its members included Thakin Nu, who later became the first Prime Minister of inde- pendent Burma. The purpose of the Club was to print books in Burmese language containing the essence of the contempo- rary international literature, history, eco- nomics, politics and science at a low price. Up to 1941, the club published more than 70 books, issued its newsletter and was popularised by a still popular song that was sung by a film star. The current Nagani Project intends to study various aspects of Burmese/Myan- mar’s intellectual and literary history. It aims to encourage and establish joint research by Burmese (and non-Burmese) individuals living both inside and outside Burma, and to establish a network of people concerned about Burma/Myan- mar’s past as well as future intellectual life and literature.

The current project, as a first step, aims to provide an overview of the Nagani Book Club’s publications. Towards this end, we are looking to publish ‘book-reports’ on Nagani publications in English. 8,000- 10,000 words. After about 40 reports are submitted, a seminar will be held to dis- cuss the results and decide on the list for publication. The Singapore conference on Burma in July 2006 will provide a first opportunity for this discussion.

For more information, please contact: Hans-Bernd Zaelzler University of Hamburg / Asian Studies Institute hbazett@t-online.de
Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics
23-24 May 2005
Amsterdam

The next Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE) will be held in Amsterdam 23-24 May 2005. This year’s conference will focus on “Securing Development in an Unstable World” and will be jointly organized by the World Bank, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Development Cooperation and the Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands.

Each year, the ABCDE brings prominent researchers and policymakers from around the world together with the senior leadership of the World Bank and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, to discuss major development challenges. It is usually attended by a broad audience of 500 academics and development experts.

Contact: Nina Maqami
nmqa@worldbank.org
www.worldbank.org/abcde-europe

Naming in Asia: Local Identities and Global Change
23-24 Feb 2006
Asia Research Institute
Singapore

The cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary study of personal names is one of the most promising endeavours in the fields of history, social anthropology, sociology and linguistics. It holds the key to a number of important issues, including the definition of personal identities, the position of the individual in society, religious and cosmological representations, social change, gender and history. In Asia, a great variety of personal naming systems are present. Each bears on the way society defines personal and social identity. The colonial period and subsequent pressures of globalization are reflected in various systems of naming, typically intended to combine some links with indigenous practice (tenuous in some colonial cases), ethnic identification, legibility to government, and utility within a globalising system.

Papers are encouraged either to explore the dynamics of a particular naming system, or to pursue various thematic issues more broadly across several societies. The following topics are among those encouraged:

- Comparative study of personal names – typology of naming systems
- The politics of naming: naming and the state
- What is in a name: worldviews, cosmologies, representations
- Names and religious identities
- Name-changing and religious conversion
- Names and inheritance. Do patrilineal systems exist in the world today?
- Structural role of naming in different societies
- Regional naming systems: global and local
- Islamic naming in Asian societies
- Names in daily use, the politics of conversation
- The linguistic structure of naming systems

This workshop is intended to open space for such comparative studies. By examining the aims, modes, mechanisms and processes of polity expansion in Asia, some generic conclusions about the nature of such expansion may well be forthcoming. Was polity expansion always accompanied by military venturing? How important was bureaucratic support for expansion? What role did environmental play as an inducer of or obstacle to expansion? Were incorporation of surrounding areas into an economic network central in the expanding polity a frequent precursor to, or perhaps a common effect, of political expansion? Was cultural affiliation a useful or desirable condition for the absorption of surrounding peoples or polities? How much active acculturation of occupied peoples did expanding polities engage in? Was control over people or territory the key concern of the rulers of historical Asian polities? How have such concerns changed? It is hoped that papers will address both specific examples of polity expansion as well as address possible patterns which might be shared with or differ from other examples of Asian expansions.

The issues involved in such an exploration are, admittedly, enormous and a workshop of this scale will only be a preliminary step in beginning to address some of the connections and commonalities between diverse historical processes. It is hoped, however, that by bringing attention to the need to study the history of polity expansion in Asia, new ways of understanding historical and contemporary Asia will emerge.

For enquiries, please contact:
Cheryl Donald, CNRS, FR, France
c.mcdonald@wanadoo.fr
Zheng Yangwen, ARI, Singapore, arizyw@nus.edu.sg
Anthony Reid, Director, ARI, aridir@nus.edu.sg
www.ari.nus.edu.sg/conf2006/naming.htm

Asian Expansions: the historical processes of polity expansion in Asia
12-13 May 2006
Asia Research Institute
Singapore

Many of the nation states of Asia are products of territorial expansion over time. Others, although smaller today than their largest historical scales, are also products or vestiges of territorial expansion. The expansions by which Asian polities grew, however, were diverse in nature, varied in mode and of differing lengths in process.

While historical expansion by European states and European empires has been a subject of intense research in recent decades, Asian expansions is a field which remains largely understudied. The processes of decolonization and nation-building in Asia over the last half century have produced much national history positional on a long-term ‘natural’ historical genealogy of contemporary polities. The mechanisms by which Asian polities have developed and expanded over time have thus generally been understudied and, in some areas, entirely ignored. Yet it is crucial to an understanding of the modern world that the evolution of Asian polities be explored not only in terms of political systems (the Northeast Asian bureaucratic forms versus the Southeast Asian ‘charisma’ mandaras, for example), but also in terms of expanding territories. In looking at the emergence of modern states, the autonomous Asian processes of bureaucratization and accretion need to be compared to those of Europe. These are very major issues in terms of how the world we know has come to be, and how the world we live in is shaped by the national processes that have come to be created.

Victor Lieberman has recently drawn attention to processes of expansion and integration which show ‘strange parallels’ across Eurasia, yet the Asian end of the equation remains understudied. While scholars such as Lattimore, Di Cosmo, Elvin and Purdue have investigated frontiers and expansions of the polities of China and Central Asia, comparative studies of Asian expansions are still lacking.

Paper proposals including a 400-word abstract and a short biography of the proposer should be sent to Valerie Yeo at arizyw@nus.edu.sg by 6 April 2005. Those selected to participate will be advised within two weeks of this date and will be required to submit completed papers by April 2006.

For enquiries, please contact:
Conor Wade (arizyw@nus.edu.sg)
Zheng Yangwen (arizyw@nus.edu.sg)
Bruce Lochhart (biscal@nus.edu.sg)
Anthony Reid
Secretariat
Valerie Yeo (arizyw@nus.edu.sg)

Etudes mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines

The journal Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines (EMSCAT). The editorial policy remains open, as before, to individual essays, monographs, and a single theme essay to be guest-edited. All suggestions or proposals of themes are welcome and should be sent to the editor:
Kata Bufferrile
Centre d’études mongoles et sibériennes
katia.bufferrile@ephe.sorbonne.fr

Sikascakr: peer-reviewed journal of the Center for Khmer Studies

Sikascakr welcomes articles related to Khmer and Southeast Asian Studies. Articles must be either in Khmer, English or French. Accepted articles are published in their original language and translated into Khmer. The deadline for No. 8 (Spring 2006) is 21 December 2005.

A new on-line version for shorter articles comes out every six months. The deadline for the first, June 2005 issue is 10 April 2005.

Contact: Michel Rethy Antelme, Editor-in-Chief
Manuscript to: sikascakr@khmerstudies.org

Social Science Research on Southeast Asia
Recherche en sciences humaines sur l’Asie du Sud-Est

ARTICLES
Adrian B. Lapitan
Laut Sulakessing: From Centre to Periphery

Grenail Feillard
Adapting to Reformasi: Democracy and Civil Society in the Indonesian Islamist Discourse

Eric Boudonnet
Culturalisme et historiographie du Cambodge ancien: à propos de la hiérarchisation des sources de l’histoire khmère

Olli Ruohto
Encounters in Borderlands: Social and Economic Transformations in Ratanakiri, Northeastern Cambodia

NOTES
Didier Bertaud
Le combat contre la drogued RDP Laos: une analyse à travers la presse, 1998-2003

Jean Baffre, Andrée Feillard, & Gilles de Ganis
Armées d’Asie du Sud-Est: un livre, deux pays, trois commentaires

REVIEWS
Conferences - Books - Music

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MOUSSONS, à l’ISBEA, MAISON ASIE PACIFIQUE
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Phone: (+33) (0)4 91 06 11 14 - Fax: (+33) (0)4 91 06 61 65 - E-mail: moussons@newsp.ap.univ-mrs.fr

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IIAS Newsletter | #9 | March 2005
### International Conference Agenda

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<td>3-5 June</td>
<td>Leiden, the Netherlands</td>
<td>The 19th World Congress of the International Association for Asian Studies 2005, organized by IIAS and the Department of Chinese Studies, Leiden University. Contact: Amis Boersma, <a href="mailto:a.boersma@let.leidenuniv.nl">a.boersma@let.leidenuniv.nl</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 March</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam</td>
<td>Lecture Series: Human Rights; Conflict and Peace, speaker: J. van der Made.</td>
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<td>14-16 March</td>
<td>DeKalb, USA</td>
<td>Seventh Annual Buddhist Studies Graduate Student Conference. Coordinators: Arun Swamy and Jefferson Fox. Contact: Carolyn Eguchi, <a href="mailto:EguchiC@EastWestCenter.org">EguchiC@EastWestCenter.org</a></td>
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<td>26-30 April</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>ASEF-Alliance Workshop on the First International Conference on Lao Studies. Convenors: Reimund Roetter (Wageningen University) and Wang Guanghuo (Zhejiang University). Contact: <a href="mailto:iias@let.leidenuniv.nl">iias@let.leidenuniv.nl</a></td>
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<td>2-4 May</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>Nordic Gender Asia Workshop, organized by the Network for Research on Gender in Asia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-27 May</td>
<td>Leiden, the Netherlands</td>
<td>Discovery and Data Mining, International Conference on Knowledge and Data Integration in the Public Sector. Convenor: Rint Sybesma (Leiden University). Contact: <a href="mailto:c.l.remijsen@let.leidenuniv.nl">c.l.remijsen@let.leidenuniv.nl</a></td>
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<td>3-5 June</td>
<td>Leiden, the Netherlands</td>
<td>International conference on the role of NGOs in international relations. Convenor: Bent Ramberg. Contact: Bent Ramberg or Marlene Renting, <a href="mailto:b.renting@uva.nl">b.renting@uva.nl</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>9-11 June</td>
<td>Leiden, the Netherlands</td>
<td>21st Biennial Conference of the International Association for the History of Religion (IAHR), organized by the Department of Religion Studies at the University of Leiden. Contact: Rint Sybesma, <a href="mailto:r.s.y.b.sybesma@let.leidenuniv.nl">r.s.y.b.sybesma@let.leidenuniv.nl</a></td>
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<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>Stockholm, the Netherlands Workshop, on Critical Theory in Annales History. Contact: Zbigniew Gomulka, <a href="mailto:zgomulka@isss.edu">zgomulka@isss.edu</a></td>
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<td>Princeton, USA</td>
<td>Workshop on Environmental Studies in Asia and Europe, ASEAN Meeting on Education Hub for Environmental Studies, organizers: IIAS, IREWOC, Plan, Red Cross, UNICEF. Contact: Roald Maliangkay, <a href="mailto:r.h.maliangkay@uva.nl">r.h.maliangkay@uva.nl</a></td>
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<td>9-10 July 2005</td>
<td><strong>Southeast Asia: The Interplay of Indigenous Cultures and Outside Influences</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bendigo, Australia</strong></td>
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<td>9-8 July 2005</td>
<td><strong>Remembering Pearl Harbor: History, Memory, and Memorial</strong></td>
<td><strong>Honolulu, USA</strong></td>
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<td>31 August - 3 September 2005</td>
<td><strong>Asian Finance Conference 2005</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leiden, the Netherlands</strong></td>
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<td>27-30 June 2006</td>
<td><strong>International Conference 'Transborder Issues in Southeast Asia'</strong></td>
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<td>29 September - 2 October 2005</td>
<td><strong>Indonesia in the Changing Global Context: Building Cooperation and Partnership?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Malaysia</strong></td>
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<td>20-30 August 2005</td>
<td><strong>Conference on Social Capital in the History and the Modern Class</strong></td>
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<td>2-14 December 2005</td>
<td><strong>Workshop in Honour of Sadik al-Azm</strong></td>
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<td>23-24 February 2006</td>
<td><strong>Ports, Pirates and Hinterlands in East and Europe Asia</strong></td>
<td><strong>Marseilles, France</strong></td>
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<td>14-15 July 2005</td>
<td><strong>The 11th International Conference of the Euro-</strong></td>
<td><strong>Amsterdam, the Netherlands</strong></td>
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<td>6-8 July 2005</td>
<td><strong>Center for Pluralism in Postwar Singapore</strong></td>
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**IIAS Newsletter | #16 | March 2005**
The Visual Dynamic - Hong Kong International Photography from China

Touched by Indigo: Chinese Blue and White Textiles and Embroidery

Enquiry: France Morin
One Fifth Avenue, Suite 10A
New York, NY 10003
T +212-505 1353
fmorin5627@aol.com
www.gonefishing.com.sg

Peng-Ean Khoo’s work will bring the viewer into the world of traditional Chinese textile art and explore the function and aesthetics of blue and white textiles of China. Drawn from the ROM’s permanent collection, it includes cloth, clothing, home furnishings, tools, and paintings from the 19th century to the present. The role and visual representation of textile art is explored through a selection of traditional Chinese artifacts and contemporary works from Chinese and Asian artists. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Touched by Indigo: Chinese Blue and White Textiles and Embroidery

The Elegance of Silence

Collection of 60 bronze and stone sculptures from India, Nepal, Tibet, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, China, and Korea dating from the 11th to 19th centuries. The sculptures are displayed in a traditional setting and reflect the themes of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shintoism. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Ecstasy: The Visible and Invisible Exhibition

This exhibition was chiefly designed for the benefit of the public and aimed at promoting the arts and culture of Asia. The exhibition features over 100 objects from the museum’s collection, including paintings, sculptures, and textiles. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.

Rajput: Sons of Kings

This exhibition, as part of the season called “the summers of modernity,” is a retrospective of Rabindranath Tagore’s (1861-1941) paintings. Tagore was an Indian poet who wrote over a thousand poems, novels, plays, and songs that were a great influence on modern Indian literature.

Enquiry: France Morin
One Fifth Avenue, Suite 10A
New York, NY 10003
T +212-505 1353
fmorin5627@aol.com
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Elegance of Silence

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Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst

Trade: Silk, Spices and Ceramics

This exhibition explores the role of silk, spices, and ceramics in trade between Asia and Europe. The exhibition features over 100 objects from the museum’s collection, including ceramics, textiles, and paintings. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue.
excavated from a harbour in Southeast China and a video presentation of photographs of the Marsh Arabs of southern Iraq, whose rich culture was virtually destroyed by Saddam Hussein complement the exhibition.

Hiroshi Sugimoto, ideas of texture and process with notions of ceremonial objects from a temple crypt sealed in 1424, a full-sized temple pediment, a 12-foot-tall preaching throne, and sections of royally commissioned temple doors with inlaid mother of pearl.

The most important, engaged and emotionally charged South Asian artists working in the United States. The exhibition ... American artists of South Asian descent. Featured artists include Shahzia Sikander, Rina Banerjee, and Prima Murthy.

This exhibition offers a selection of works that encompass a variety of cultural traditions, spanning the conventional division of urban and rural, fine art and craft, high culture and popular culture. It presents 80 works by 36 artists whose works range from “high-tech” site-specific installations to handcrafted “folk” practices. The exhibition also includes several collaborative and site-specific works that address contemporary political, social, and environmental realities in India today. Also on view at the Queen Elizabeth II Center for the Arts.

This exhibition highlights the diverse tastes of different social groups—the imperial ruling class, scholars, warriors, and common people—and features a separate section devoted to religious art.

Beyond the Bags: Textiles as Containers

This exhibition highlights the work of four generations of the Yoshirha family of Japanese artists. This exhibition will follow the Yoshirha family lineage working with one of the five original traditions of sawing making in Japan, and will demonstrate that the tradition of samurai sword making in Japan is not merely a ruthless weapon but an object of great spiritual and artistic value.

This exhibition features 150 works by South Asian artists and reflects the enthusiasm of adoption of media art by younger Chinese artists.

This exhibition offers a look at the innovative approach and video production since the mid-1990s in China. The exhibition features 150 works by South Asian artists and reflects the enthusiasm of adoption of media art by younger Chinese artists.

This exhibition is a collection of posters from the People’s Republic of China in the 1960s and 1970s on loan from University of Westminster.

This exhibition offers a selection of works that encompass a variety of cultural traditions, spanning the conventional division of urban and rural, fine art and craft, high culture and popular culture. It presents 80 works by 36 artists whose works range from “high-tech” site-specific installations to handcrafted “folk” practices. The exhibition also includes several collaborative and site-specific works that address contemporary political, social, and environmental realities in India today. Also on view at the Queen Elizabeth II Center for the Arts.

This exhibition includes some of the most exciting contemporary Chinese artists, this exhibition aims to replace old assumptions concerning China’s contemporary art with a fresh...
ICAS 4, Shanghai, 20-24 August 2005

Longlist:

PhD theses:

ICAS Bookprizes
ICAS 4, Shanghai, 20-24 August 2005

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