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Transnational marriage in Asia

“He’s everything to me. Because when I’m with him, I’m respectable. I’m a success now (jadi orang). Before I was scum, always being taunted by people, being laughed at, being sneered at because of my work, my immoral work. That’s why I’m so grateful – truly grateful – to have my husband”.

Former Indonesian sex worker, Ani.

Former Indonesian sex worker, Ani, was 24 years old when she met her husband Ah Huat on the job in 1999. Ah Huat, a 57 year old Singaporean Chinese widower, paid S$2,000 to Ani’s Madam to release her debt with the brothel where she worked in Tanjung Balai Karimun, part of the Riau Archipelago in Indonesia. She now lives with her child from a former marriage in a house that Ah Huat bought for them in Tanjung Balai Karimun. He provides Ani with Rp. 4,000,000 housekeeping money per month, and pays for other expenses when he visits from Singapore. He used to visit once a month when he was working full-time, but now he is semi-retired and spends more time in Tanjung Balai.

Ani is one of many women in the Riau Islands married to Singaporeans. While some Indonesian women met their husbands through extended family or while working overseas in factories or as domestic workers, a significant number of women with Singaporean spouses living in the Riau Islands are former, sometimes still-practicing, sex workers. For the former sex workers, international marriages provide a means to escape the drudgery and risk of their work. But more significant than financial gain is the social standing that they obtain by virtue of being married. The social stigma attached to sex work is very strong in Indonesia and marriage provides sex workers with a means to become ‘respectable’. Although Ani married an older Chinese foreigner, her status as a married woman restored her confidence and allowed her to finally establish a comfortably-off ‘real family’ with her child.

Working class Singaporean men like Ah Huat are increasingly choosing international marriage because of the difficulties they face in finding suitable spouses at home. The tendency for women to ‘marry up’ and men to ‘marry down’ has limited marriage opportunities for two groups of Singaporeans – tertiary educated professional women, and working-class men with little education. Marriage opportunities diminish further as individuals age, or if they are previously divorced or widowed. In these circumstances, international
Building bridges to, from and with Asia

It goes without saying, networking is crucial for communication. Of course there is a business overtone and some direct motive, but there are strategic considerations too: It is good for your career, or it adds to your power and influence if you know many people in important positions - if you know the ‘right’ people. In the business world such motivations are understood by everybody and more or less accepted as necessary PR and a regular component of your work.

In academia we are catching on fast. Every year academics the world over travel to conferences in far flung places, attend receptions, participate in workshops, sit on learned committees, return home with our pockets full with new business cards and contacts. For those of us trying to cut down on our global emissions, the internet and email is making building bridges and crossing borders easier than ever.

In this issue of IIAS Newsletter, we look at the consequences of people crossing borders and making connections with our theme on Transnational Marriage in Asia. The collection of articles hopes to offer new insights into marriage and migration, the impact on communities and the difficulties of building trust and genuine relationships in a cross-cultural environment.

Building trust and genuine relationships brings us back to networking, of course. Following the recent convention in Kuala Lumpur, ICAS has proved itself to be a prime example of an Asian Studies network that is successfully building bridges across regions, disciplines and subject areas. I am also pleased to report that IIAS has become an observer to an agreement founding the European Consortium for Asian Field Studies (ECAF). You can read more about this exciting initiative from the École française d’Extreme-Orient (EFEO) in the Institutional News pages of this issue. I also suggest you read the article ‘Forging Links Between Distant Lands’ (p.41) on the new addition to the Asian Studies fold – ASÍS, The Icelandic Centre for Asian Studies. This surprising setting for the Asian Studies curriculum results from an explosion in trade, tourism and cultural exchanges between Iceland and Asian countries in recent years.

These are just a few examples of the bridges that are being built to, from and with Asia and by carrying on this trend and investing time in each other, I am convinced Asian studies will reap the rewards.

Max Sparerboon
director

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

IIAS values dynamism and versatility in its research programmes. Post-doctoral research fellows are temporarily employed by or affiliated to IIAS, either within a collaborative research programme or individually. In its aim to disseminate broad, in-depth knowledge of Asia, the institute organizes seminars, workshops and conferences, and publishes the IIAS Newsletter with a circulation of 6,000.

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

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

Mabel Lu
Guest Editor

I n today’s rapidly globalising world, marriage as a contract between two individuals based on love and commitment to each other is increasingly considered a norm. The degree of women’s control over their marital decisions and choice of mate, based on individual traits rather than the family’s socio-economic status, is seen as a measure of whether a society has embraced modernity. In reality, marriage involves many actors with complex decision-making processes and multiple considerations. In many Asian societies, being and staying married, for both men and women, is a social and family obligation and a criterion of social standing. Kin members, the state, marriage intermediaries (institutional or individual) and commercial sectors are all involved in decision-making. This is particularly the case of cross-border marriages, with the state deciding and controlling who is allowed to marry, whether spouses are allowed to enter or reside in the receiving societies, as well as their naturalisation and assimilation process.

As well as a rapidly increasing intra-Asian flow of marriage migration, there is a continued growth of Asian women marrying and migrating to the West and ‘in-between’ diaspora communities. For the most part, it is women marrying (and ‘marrying up’) and migrating to wealthier countries. The immigration policies of both governments are tied up with labour policy and class status. The husbands of cross-border women are often chosen from the wealthier families of the state. Singaporean men and Indonesian wives in the Riau Islands. Lyons and Ford make the point that the women do not wish to live in Singapore, a place they consider stressful and isolated. Lyons and Ford’s article, Shuko Takeishi’s essay on transnational marriages of Pakistani men and Japanese women shows that aside from the economic motivation (job opportunities or wealth) and cultural practice (patrilocality), there are other factors affecting the transnational families’ decisions and choices of residency. In the case of children’s education and the transmission of cultural and religious values. Takeishi studies the importance of religion in children’s education and socialisation. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) are chosen as the migration destination of Japanese wives and their children instead of the couples’ countries of origin. Pakistani men establish a transnational, kin-based business network trading used vehicles between Japan, UAE and Pakistan. Japanese women favour a home in the UAE over Pakistan because of the modern lifestyle and less control from their husband’s family, yet they can still enjoy the social support of some kin members. The transnational kinship network in these borders is formed to have benefits, social support and help maintain religious and cultural identities. Japanese women are active agents in this multiple migration process by choosing the destination, forming a support network among themselves, and developing strategies for their children to learn English and Japanese while being socialised in an Islamic environment.

Panitee Suksomboon’s article gives a nuanced picture of Thai women who marry Dutch men and live in the Netherlands. These women actively maintain social ties with their home communities, and by doing so, they create a transnational space. This transnational space is important for Thai women not only in terms of social support, but also because their class mobility only exists in their home communities and not in the host society (as Riau Islands wives in Lyons and Ford’s study). To maintain their new-found social status, Thai women transfer economic resources to their natal families either by economic remittance or via cultural practices such as gift-giving or paying for holidays for the whole family. They also disassociate their economic and emotional hardships, creating an image of a happy life in Europe. This image, together with the socio-economic disparity between families with and without women marrying foreign men, fuels the desire of more women to marry abroad, thus triggering a chain migration. Suksomboon shows the linkage between the movement of people, transnational space and its cultural practices and people in living in this transnational space. All three articles give pictures of marriage migrants as active agents in the migration process. Their choices challenge the assumption that marriage migrations move either for economic gains, citizenship and welfare or lifestyle in an affluent society. However, as Lyons and Ford warn us, their choices are limited by the existing gender ideologies and their dependency on their husbands, which is strengthened by the economic disparity between the host and sending countries.

While marriage migrations actively create a transnational space, not all of them can engage their husbands in it. While Singaporean and Pakistani men enjoy the advantages of the transnational space, Dutch men appear to have greater difficulty in appreciating the cultural practices of the wives’ community and do not enjoy the social status and respect that their wives ’ ’em’ for them. Parents in many Asian societies are heavily involved in the marital decision and mate choice of their children. This is also the case in cross-border marriages. Hieng Miao Chi’s article addresses an understood aspect of transnational marriages in the current literature - the inter-generational relations. This generation of mothers-in-law in Taiwan is ‘caught in-between’, in the sense that when they were young they were expected to fulfill the role of obedient daughters-in-law, now that they are old they are expected to do domestic work and care for young grandchildren when their Taiwanese daughters-in-law enter the job market. Previous research shows that one of the motivations for Taiwanese parents to choose a foreign wife (mainly from Southeast Asia) for their sons is that Southeast Asian women are considered to have ‘traditional virtue’ of gender roles and to be more obedient. Despite such expectations, Chi’s study shows that the Taiwanese mothers-in-law of local marriages and those of cross-border marriages may have the same experiences. Having a foreign daughter-in-law does not necessarily increase the power of the mother-in-law. On the contrary, the unfamiliarity of the language and cultural practices of their foreign daughters-in-law makes them suspicious of daughters-in-law’s intentions and creates what Chi calls ‘emotional burden’.

A large number of intra-Asia cross-border marriages are mediated either by institutions or individual matchmakers within the actors’ kin and social network. These marriages are termed ‘commodified marriages’ and at times expected to trafficking. Michel Baas’s article problematises the dichotomy between ‘love’ and ‘arranged’ marriage in the context of India’s IT industry. IT professionals in Bangalore tend to choose their marriage partners within the industry, regardless of their caste. On the one hand this is due to the fact that the transnational businesses practice of the industry is based on meritocracy - the IT companies deliberately discourage employees from following the cultural practices of the caste system. On the other hand, migration experiences, both internal and international, uproot IT professionals from their social and kin networks and place them in an isolated working environment that demands long working hours and flexibility. The IT professionals are able to break away from the practices of arranged marriage within the same caste and choose their marriage partners with the familial permission (what Baas calls ‘arranged love marriage’) due to the economic benefits and social prestige associated with the industry. However, rather than based on romantic love, their mate choice is a result of practical considerations such as maintaining the lifestyle the transnational business practice requires. Further reading

permanent residency permits for their for
obtain visitors’ passes, work permits, and
they have the financial means to support
right to permanent residence if their Sin
Singapore’s immigration regime. Under
some cases, this pattern is explained by
– the women remain in Indonesia and the
fil their desire to marry and to meet their
continued from page 1

immigration restrictions do not
always explain why husbands and wives
live separately rather than cohabiting in
one country. For example, for Ani, the Sin-
gapore state’s tight control on unskilled
migration does not figure in her decision
making. She asserts that if she wanted to
migrate to Singapore to live with Ah Huat
she would simply do so, without problem.
At this stage of her life, however, other con-
siderations have taken precedence. Ani’s
natal family has expressed strong opposi-
tion to the possibility of Ani moving to Sin-
gapore with her son. In addition, her son
could not migrate without being adopted by
Ah Huat, which is difficult since his
father (Ani’s ex-husband) is still alive. Ani
also sees her decision to remain in the Riau
Islands as a lifestyle choice. At first she
was impressed by Singapore’s orderli-
ness and beauty, and the vibrancy of the
nightlife compared with Tanjung Balai’s sleepy
provincial atmosphere. Her visits increased in frequency and length after the
wedding, but soon she tired of Singapore. She
denies the pace of life, has difficulty
communicating in English or Chinese, and
found her long days at home alone in their
flat in Singapore boring, and the cost of
living too expensive. She enjoys the extra
living space that their Tanjung Balai house
provides and the slow pace of life in the
Islands.

Ah Huat has also not considered migrat-
ing permanently to Indonesia. Under
Indonesia’s 1992 Immigration Law, for-
eign citizens who wish to live in Indonesia
must obtain a stay permit for the purposes of
work, business or tourism. Indonesian
women are not permitted to sponsor their
husbands so in most cases they must be
sponsored by an employer, which leads to
numerous problems, particularly when
husbands lose their jobs. Naturalisation is
not an option. Ah Huat would never con-
sider naturalisation in view of Indonesia’s
unstable social and economic conditions.
Singaporean citizenship provides him with
access to a range of services, including
presentation of superannuation funds and
medical care, which would not be attain-
able in Indonesia.

These cross-border marriages are the par-
ticular product of life in the Indonesia-Sin-
gaporean borderlands. Ani and Ah Huat can
travel to and from the islands is relatively
fast and cheap. Travel times vary between
40 minutes to one and a half hours depend-
ing on the destination, and return ferry
tickets cost as little as S$55. Ah Huat can
come and go as he pleases since Sin-
gaporeans are permitted to visit Indonesia
without a visa and stay for up to 30 days on a
tourist pass.

The close physical proximity of Singapore
and the Riau Islands makes it possible that the cou-
ples can see each other regularly while at
the same time taking advantage of the
economic opportunities presented by liv-
ing on opposite sides of the border. Men
like Ah Huat have much greater earning
capacity if they stay in Singapore, and
their families have a much higher stand-
lard of living if they remain in Indonesia.
For working class men and women who are
economically, (and in some cases socially), marginalised in their countries of
birth, cross-border marriages allow them to
experience a degree of upward class mobility in Indonesia.

Differential class mobility
Understanding this particular kind of
cross-border marriage as a form of class
mobility requires a shift away from con-
ventional views, which attribute the class
position of unmarried women solely to the class
position of the main male income earner,
(usually a husband or father). The strong
association between a woman’s marital
and employment status and her class posi-
tion means that women can experience
significant class mobility during the course
of their lives. Indonesian women in Riau
Islands-style cross-border marriages expe-
rience a shift in their class location so long
as they continue to reside in the Islands.
For these women, the economic benefits
of cross-border marriage are immedi-
ate: Favourable exchange rates between the
Singapore dollar and the Indonesian
rupiah, combined with the lower cost of
living in the Riau Islands, allow them to
visibly consume a lower middle class life-
style. The women (and their children) are
not only better off financially than if they
had married working class Indonesian
men, but also far better off than if they
migrated to Singapore.

Their husbands do not experience class
mobility in the same way, for the men the
economic advantages to be gained from
the differential exchange rates are usually
deprecated. While their wives and families
are economically better off; as Ani
states: “I can still make a decent living in
Singapore. These working class men, economically marginalised in their home countries, can
‘live like kings’ in the Riau Islands. They
look forward to their visits to the Islands,
and to retirement, when they will be able
to live with their families in a relatively
luxurious house, and the chance to indulge
in food, such as seafood, which is
normally quite expensive in Singapore.

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For centuries Indonesian women have
become involved in relationships with
men whose primary residence is in anoth-
er country. What is new about the kinds of
relationships women experience in the
Riau Islands is that their partners live
throughout the marriage, but the women
– and the community in which they live
are fluid enough to allow them to enter the
ranks of the lower middle class on the basis
of economic resources alone. The women
also benefit from greater levels of personal
autonomy because their husbands live
abroad. However, it would be a mistake to
think of these relationships as reflective of
a new form of women’s agency. They are
still subject to the same gendered ideolo-
gies that shape the lives of other Indone-
sian women, including expectations about
women’s roles in marriage. Their foreign
husbands also hold entrenched ideas
about sex roles, and there is some evi-
dence to suggest that men seek out women
and mistresses in the Riau Islands because
the women are regarded as more ‘tradi-
tional’ and therefore submissive towards
their husbands.

Most importantly, however, women’s life choices as cross-border wives are
shaped by gender imbalances that
reflect the economic differences between
Indonesia and Singapore. As the primary
breadwinners their husbands control the
household finances, and determine when
the couple will be together and when they
will live apart. Ultimately it is also the men
who possess the power to withdraw from
their cross-border relationships, leaving
the women with little legal recourse in rela-
tion to maintenance or division of assets,
unless the couple has purchased a house
in the wife’s name. Ani’s story and those of
other women like her demonstrate that
cross-border marriage Riau Islands-style opens up new opportunities, while at
the same time entrenching old oppressions.

Note: This research is based on in-depth
interviews conducted in the Riau Islands
during November 2004 and August
2006 with Indonesian wives and Singapo-
rean husbands. Pseudonyms are used at
the request of informants.
Since the latter half of the 1980s, a large number of Muslims have come to Japan from countries such as Pakistan, Iran and Bangladesh in order to work. In the 1990s there was an increase in the number of Muslims marrying Japanese women and forming families in Japan. The children of these families are now reaching school age and educational problems among second-generation Muslims are emerging.

Muslim Transnational Families: Pakistani husbands and Japanese wives

Shuko Takahata

I conducted a case study analysis of families comprising Pakistani husbands and Japanese wives. These families, faced with the difficulties of bringing up their children with Islamic values in Japan, chose instead to relocate the wife and children to Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Japanese schools have an atmosphere of conformity in which pupils generally eat the same lunch and wear similar clothing. Elementary schools and junior high schools provide school lunches using (processed) pork. Many Muslim mothers obtain lunch menus from the school in advance, and prepare lunches that look similar to those provided by the schools. However, some children say they don’t want to be the only ones eating a boxed lunch from home when all the other children are eating the lunch provided by the school. Equally, some parents worry about their child being isolated or bullied, so they let their child eat the lunches provided by the school, the same as the other children.

Japanese junior high school regulations do not permit girls to wear a veil, because students are required to wear a specific school uniform at both public and private schools. More than 30 mosques throughout Japan provide some classes teaching the Koran and Arabic to Muslim children in the evenings and at weekends. It remains difficult, however, for Muslim children, who are subjected to the problems of school lunches and clothing and spend most of the day at Japanese schools where it is hard to pray, to form a Muslim identity. Therefore, when the first children of ‘mixed’ marriages reach school age, we observe an increase in the number of transnational families – cases where the Japanese wife and children relocate to an Islamic country for the Islamic education of the children while the non-Japanese father remains in Japan to work.

I conducted a survey through interviews during August and September 2005, targeting 29 Japanese wives living in Sharjah. These husbands are Pakistani, related to the vehicle exporters in Japan, with offices in Sharjah and Dubai.

The majority of husbands in the study were aged 30-39, with 11 cases in each age group (47.8% each). The majority of wives were aged 30-39, with 12 cases (34.3%), followed by 40-49, with 7 cases (18.6%). The total number of children in the study was 58, with an average age of 8.8 years. The average duration of the marriage was 12.4 years, and the average length of residence in Sharjah was 3.8 years.

Relocation to Sharjah

UAE, and Sharjah in particular, is the most popular third-country location for Japanese wives and children relocating to Islamic countries. In about one third of the cases in this study, the wife said, “I wanted to come to Sharjah rather than go to Pakistan.” Among the reasons noted were: “Sharjah is safer than Pakistan”; “I’m free to go out on my own”; and “I don’t have to live with my husband’s family.” It appears, then, that the wives feel some resistance to relocating to Pakistan. Although initially, many of the husbands wanted to raise their children in Pakistan, their wives disagreed with the idea, and eventually, relocation to Sharjah came about as a compromise.

With regard to living with the husband’s kin, several wives who returned to Japan after relocating to Pakistan noted an inability to adapt to the local lifestyle. They also mentioned other factors such as the family’s refusal to respect Japanese customs when it comes to child rearing, even if it is permitted by Islam, or excessive interference from the husband’s kin. Women are expected to bear the major burden of child care, but at the same time, because of their position as a foreigner and as a woman, they receive considerable intervention from the husband’s family with regard to the way they raise their children. These women therefore experience conflicts in Pakistan as a result of being a complex culture, and especially in the issue of childrearing and ethnicity. This problem is alleviated, however, in the case of a nuclear family living in Sharjah.

The husbands in this study had established used vehicle export businesses in Japan, and relocated their brothers living in Pakistan to operate offices in Dubai or Sharjah. These offices acted as bases for their business of importing used vehicles from Japan. The husbands’ kinship networks can be seen not only as an extension of Pakistani society, where kinship ties are very strong, but also influential in terms of life strategy and business strategy. The husbands have developed life and business strategies which enable them to provide work for their brothers living in Pakistan. In turn, this allows them to leave the operation of used vehicle imports from Japan to their brothers, whom they trust. In terms of the relocation of the wife and children, the husband’s kinship network provides a place to live upon arrival, and also a valuable support system helping the family settle into their new environment. In this way, the kinship network reduces both the costs and the risks involved in relocation. Furthermore, by entrusting his wife and children to a brother, the husband is able to remain in Japan with peace of mind.

Social Networks

In Sharjah, there is a support network composed of about 30 Japanese Muslims. Homogeneous networks give individuals a feeling of security and belonging, and assist the individual in maintaining their Japanese identity as a part of a complex self-definition. This network also functions as a source of mutual support – for example, in terms of exchanging information and advice on schools and education, medical facilities, and providing assistance when problems arise – and this ties into a sense of empowerment. Because the husbands visit Sharjah an average of once every three months and the wives’ “live near by”, these Japanese Muslims use the practical and mental support obtained through this network to assist one another in their daily lives.

In the case of the children as well, and particularly when the period of residence in Sharjah is short, gathering with other children in the park or in private homes and playing while speaking in Japanese provides a release valve for the stress that even young children experience. It functions as a venue for maintaining their Japanese as a conversational language.

Semilingualism

By relocating to Sharjah, the parents fulfill their initial goal of raising their children in an Islamic environment. However, because this involves relocation of school age children the problem of language must be faced. As public schools in Sharjah are limited to children with UAE citizenship, all of the children covered in this study were attending international schools and receiving education in English. The Koran and Arabic are both required studies at these international schools, and Urdu, the official language of Pakistan, is an elective subject, so children are able to learn their father’s native tongue. After three to five years of living in Sharjah, there is a tendency for the language used among siblings to shift from Japanese to English, but in all of the families covered in this study, the mother and children communicated in Japanese. Up until the fourth year of residence in Sharjah, about half of the mothers interviewed were teaching their children to read and write Japanese. Japanese language education is not only undertaken to ensure a means of communication between the mother and children, but also as a means of maintaining the identity of being Japanese, as part of a complex self-definition.

After five years of living in Sharjah, all cases of home study in Japanese reading and writing disappeared. A number of reasons are cited: (1) As the children move into the upper grades in school, they are busier with their schoolwork, and have less time for extra studies; (2) it is difficult for mother and child to keep the relationship of teacher and student; and (3) even those who stayed in Sharjah grow older, the possibility of returning to Japan becomes less likely. As a result, the children find it difficult to maintain the academic level of Japanese they possessed on leaving Japan, although they do maintain their conversational language.

The development of proficiency in primary language can promote the development of second- or even third-language proficiency. Therefore, Japanese plays an important role as a primary language when the child acquires English as a bilingual, or yet another language as a trilingual. However, the development of this primary language is hindered by relocation and an abrupt encounter with the language of the host country before the primary language has sufficiently acquired. Moreover, it takes about five years for children to reach the level where they can study effectively using their second language. When a child growing up in a bilingual environment is unable to supplement their primary language with reading and writing skills before acquiring an academic level in a second language, the child may not achieve a level typical of his or her peers in either language. This is referred to as a “temporary semilingual phenomenon.” If relocation of the child takes place during infancy, then the overall development of language is delayed. If relocation takes place at about 10 years of age, there is a delay in the development of abstract vocabulary and the ability to think abstractly. Children suffer psychological stress and frustration, albeit temporarily, and become unstable emotionally. The end result is that as the stay in Sharjah grows longer, an increasing number of parents come to see it as acceptable for Japanese to be learned solely as a conversational language, and instead place an emphasis on the child’s ability to acquire English as an academic language.

Among the subjects in this study, there were families that wanted to live together in the near future, but had not determined when and where that would be. Muslims operating used vehicle export businesses in Japan do not necessarily have bases only in Japan; in many cases, these businessmen have extensive worldwide networks, with business activities spanning several countries. It is clear, however, that in order to maintain a family, these businessmen are more likely to relocate to a country where they can apply their transnational networks more advantageously to their educational and life strategies. The parents willingly invest in their children’s English education, seeing it as an invaluable resource – no matter where the family lives in the future. They have selected an educational strategy which they believe will assist the children in attaining a higher social position.

Children acquire the internal conditions appropriate to the society of their host country through relocation. Although it is possible to predict that they will form a Muslim identity, they may end up with the problem of being semilingual if the relocation takes place during their school years. The first priority in the educational strategies of the families in this survey is the formation of a Muslim identity, and the second is their English education. The longer a family lives in Sharjah, the more likely the parents are to acquiesce in the loss of Japanese as an academic language. More attention should be focused on the possibility that the loss of Japanese as an academic language could trigger chronic semilingualism. I intend to conduct a follow-up study to examine how living locations and the structure of the family changes for these families, and how the children’s identities are formed as a result of these changes.

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Remittances and ‘social remittances’: Their impact on cross-cultural marriage and social transformation.

Panitee Suksomboon

Last year, almost 9,500 Thai women were living in the Netherlands, many married to Dutch men. Rather than assimilating and transferring their loyalty exclusively to Dutch society these Thai women still maintain strong social linkages with their families and local communities in Thailand, in particular through material contribution.

The migrant women receive regular requests from their families with migrating women and those in Thailand. Among female villagers who have managed to explain this to their husband, while others find a solution by letting their husband pay first and then reimbursing him later.

Socio-economic disparity between those families with migrating women and those without. Moreover, they lead to economic competition and, as a result tensions among female villagers who have managed to realise cross-cultural marriage-cum-international migration to Europe.

False impressions

The women's construction of their mate

References


The National Newspaper, ‘Foreign husbands pay for Thai’, August 28, 2006

This article is a part of a paper ‘Remittances and ‘Social Remittances’. Their Impact on Localized Experiences of Thai Women in the Netherlands and Non-Migrants in Thailand’, presented at the conference on International Migration, Multi-local Livelihoods and Human Security. The Hague, the Netherlands, 30-31 August 2007.
Women’s issues have always been related to the family but the definition of gender hierarchy between men and women is insufficient to explain the issues among women themselves. This is the reason for my choice to discuss the position of Taiwanese women in the context of cross-border marriages. Most existing studies concentrate on the inferior status of foreign brides. Although most Taiwanese researchers who work in this area mention the role of the mother-in-law in the family of cross-border marriage, they do not make her a focal point. They also fail to address the interaction between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law and they make no attempt to explain these interactions in terms of wider social processes. My study, however, shows that the mothers-in-law interviewed were more or less involved in their sons’ marriage process. I have classified their involvement in four ways: (a) persuading the son to get married (b) matchmaking; (c) helping son to select a bride; and (d) providing all or part of the costs. On the surface it appears that these women exercise considerable control over their sons’ marriage, and the lives of their foreign daughters-in-law in Taiwan. Does this necessarily mean, based on traditional Chinese ideology, that they want to reinforce their authority in the family? I try not to judge who holds the dominant position, or who shares the relatively inferior status in this relationship, but rather to understand the complicated and multiple functions of patriarchy and culture operating on women’s everyday practices in the context of cross-border marriages in Taiwan.

The study undertook qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviewing with individual mothers-in-law and other interviewees who were considered foreign daughters-in-law, aged between 57 and 86, the majority of whom (11) helped with agricultural work on the foreign daughter-in-law’s farm. Three patterns emerge from the interview data: (1) Grandparenting; (2) Domestic labour; and (3) Work outside the home. These three patterns emerged from the women’s experiences of being mothers-in-law. They include a description of how they live the role of mother-in-law, as well as the language barrier, were significant factors - both physical and emotional - in the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. The study undertook a comparison of the different cultural influences, based on the women’s experiences of their sons, to help with various expenses. This included buying flight tickets so that their daughters-in-law could visit family in their own countries, paying for things for the children and school fees.

Memories of being a daughter-in-law

“One thing that comes to mind is that in the past, women often have to do everything on their own. They used to have to cook, clean, and do all the housework.” (Shih, aged 66)

The study undertook qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviewing with individual mothers-in-law and other interviewees who were considered foreign daughters-in-law, aged between 57 and 86, the majority of whom (11) helped with agricultural work on the foreign daughter-in-law’s farm.

Cross-cultural issues and experiences

When foreign daughter-in-law is loved

Differences in cultural practice and aspects, as well as the language barrier, were significant factors - both physical and emotional - in the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law. These perceived smooth relationships were based on the fact that they had compliant daughters-in-law. Three patterns emerge from the women’s experiences of being mothers-in-law:

1) Grandparenting

With regard to childrearing responsibilities within cross-border marriage families, the division of labour between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, to some extent, mirrors the traditional household division of labour in China (Chen, 2004). Half of the women interviewed look after their grandchildren when their foreign daughter-in-law is at work, not always willingly.

“Her work is to work, if I cannot help her look after the child who can [sigh]; I am really bothering to look after the child. My work is harder than hers, really, I have to bring up this one and also cook for the family. If she is off work, she takes her child out to have fun and I still need to cook. Every piece of my home are damaged now.” (Shih, aged 66)

2) Domestic labour

The term mother-in-law is commonly understood, in the Chinese context, as meaning having the authority to exert influence over a daughter-in-law. Mother-in-law are seen as having a particularly strong influence on the way domestic roles are viewed. Domestic work has always been considered to be a feminine role and women’s responsibilities and thus the obligation is seen to fall upon the daughter-in-law. However, most of my interviewees suggested that such expectations were rarely met, as their foreign daughters-in-law were often reluctant to accept their ‘work’ load. This meant that much of the domestic work was being left in the hands of their mothers-in-law.

“I often started to work in the early morning, she has to sleep until just before nine o’clock, then she goes to work. My am always helps her as she is the only machine, if she don’t hang the clothes up, then I have to help her.” (Shih, aged 70).

3) Work outside the home

In this context, economic circumstances were the main reason for the mothers-in-law to work on work outside the family. Half of the women questioned were working in the family fields and received a wage as an agricultural worker. In addition to expecting their earnings to help balance the family expenditure, the women also expressed the desire to appropriate money for their sons, to help with various expenses. This included buying flight tickets so that their daughters-in-law could visit family in their own countries, paying for things for the children and school fees.

Emotional burdens

Having particular expectations of how a foreign daughter-in-law should behave had considerable emotional impact on the mothers-in-law. Some of the interviewees were aware of the cultural differences between themselves and their foreign daughters-in-law, especially when they adjusted and negotiated variations in lifestyle, usual domestic practice and ritual obligations. However, when foreign daughters-in-law began to practice some elements of their own culture, these women somehow failed to understand and actually felt threatened by such practices, seeing them as undermining the family. For example, one of my interviewees acquired a red braid from the local temple for her grandchild to wear on her neck. The red braid is seen as a symbol of being blessed by God. Two weeks later she found that her Vietnamese daughter-in-law had changed the red braid to a white one. Significantly for the mother-in-law, the colour white is considered by the Chinese to represent misfortune. My interviewee misinterprets this as a malicious action and draws the misinformed conclusion that her foreign daughter-in-law is plotting against the family.

There is no describable boundary or guide-line to provide both mothers-in-law and foreign daughters-in-law with a clear picture of how to adapt to their cross-border marriage situation. Furthermore, the language barrier also adds to the emotional difficulties. As Ying said:

“She [her Vietnamese daughter-in-law] is off-hand and also Michelle, you know? I have never heard that people offered a raw chicken to the ancestors, she bought a cock and a hen, now [her emphasis] - I told her no one would do this, you should cook [the chicken], she replied that this is their custom. I asked the people from Vietnam who are working here, to see whether this is true, they said: ‘No, always cooked!’ Someone said, she seems to be practicing some black art, so she [Ying and her husband] and the young generation are afraid of her.” (Ying, aged 68)

Some mothers-in-law, especially those sharing close relationships with neighbours and the community, acquire a general suspicion of all foreign daughters-in-law. They start interpreting ordinary practices as conspiracies - suspecting that the daughter-in-law is planning to harm the mother-in-law or the family. Such suspicions are compounded by the mothers-in-law considerable worries over their sons’ future. They fear that in their absence the daughter-in-law will take advantage of their sons, particularly with regard to finances. This accentuates the idea of an ‘insecure marriage’ and as a result adds to the women’s emotional burden.

The title phrase ‘daughter-in-law for the second time’ stems from my interviewees. They used this phrase to explain how they feel about their current situation in the context of the cross-border marriage family.

“My two foreign daughters-in-law are such well-behaved women, they wait for me everyday to come home from the fields and cook for them. They are not like my neighbour’s foreign daughter-in-law who always goes off somewhere and is never at home in the morning, because I cook, you know I cook for them... no wonder people were saying that I am the daughter-in-law for the second time”.

Even though the women are aware that they cannot expect to share the same authority as their mothers-in-law’s generation, they still hope that they can maintain the dignity shown by their own mothers-in-law in the past.

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Reference


In traditional Chinese society, the older generations of women in kinship relations had more power than the younger ones. However, with the transformation of Taiwanese society and family form, contemporary mothers-in-law are often described as the generation of women ‘caught in between’, no longer commanding the privilege and authority of their mothers-in-law’s generation, but with high expectations of their own daughters-in-law.

‘Daughter-in-law for the second time’:
Taiwanese mothers-in-law in the family of cross-border marriage

“Daughter-in-law for the second time” stems from my interviewees. They used this phrase to explain how they feel about their current situation in the context of the cross-border marriage family
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Marriage, at least the way the West understands it today, is largely a product of developments that occurred during the 18th century and thereafter. As Stephanie Coontz writes, around this time the spread of the market economy and the advent of the Enlightenment wrought profound changes in record time.¹ Before the 1700s things such as personal choice or love hardly figured in the event of a European marriage. Today it is ‘love’ that defines marriage, at least in the Western world. This is most definitely not the case in India, a country associated with the system of ‘arranged’ or ‘caste’ marriages. In these cases, factors such as personal choice or love are seen much less as a solid basis for marriage. Yet, as this article will show, this traditional view is being turned on its head by IT professionals in the South Indian city of Bangalore, a place where love marriages are becoming increasingly common.²

My research shows that although many Indian IT professionals may prefer the idea of a love marriage, the fact that many of these marriages are ‘accepted’ by the rest of the family often hinges at particular ‘arrangements’ that are convenient to the situation and the interests of the family. In this sense one can argue that such love marriages actually take the form of (semi-) arranged marriages. The results of my study also show that the increasing number of love marriages is a direct result of the specific work conditions of the Indian IT industry. Transnationalism plays a central role in this as IT companies typically operate in 24-hour work environments. This demands a rather particular flexibility from employees. As a result of this, and the fact that many love marriages in India are also inter-caste marriages, it will be argued that we can speak of the establishment of a new caste which is highly upper-caste in nature and which consists of higher-educated people who work in the local IT industry.

Those IT professionals who are originally from Bangalore generally live with their families. However, the majority of workers do not originate from Bangalore and tend to live with friends met before moving into the area. The accommodation they share is sparsely decorated giving away the transient nature of the situation. In most cases they are far away from family. Consequently, the social lives of these young professionals are not what they would be, had they remained in the place where they were born and brought up. Family is not there to keep an eye on them and, perhaps more importantly, their social life is determined by the colleagues with whom they interact on a daily basis and with whom they often work long hours meeting deadlines.

As the IT offices are open 24 hours a day and the working hours are flexible, most young IT professionals spend many hours in the confines of their workplace. Their lives revolve around their work, and this is how they usually live as singles in the city. But then the time comes to get married. On the whole Indian marriages are arranged, meaning that the parents and other family members will find their daughter or son a spouse. Almost without exception this means that the person they will marry will be somebody of their own caste.

It is important to realise that, traditionally, an arranged marriage is not about whether the couple are actually in love, "in fact, in the case of Hindus, it is geared around the upbringing of the boy and the girl are strangers to each other and that it is their obligation to their parents that makes them sometimes reluctant, though consenting parties to the marriage."³

A Transnational Work Environment

IT professionals come to Bangalore from all over India. They are mostly male graduates who were recruited by an IT company while still at university, or they come to stay with friends already in the industry in the hope of using contacts to find an IT job themselves. They usually arrive in Bangalore as bachelor’s in IT or computer science and most of them become permanent residents in the city. In Bangalore, the community is simply an IT community, or at least direct family members, others with whom I would meet up more regularly. After this fieldwork I remained in close contact with some of my informants, following their lives by e-mail, and meeting up with them during later visits to Bangalore.

In India, ‘love’ and ‘arranged’ marriages appear to be at opposite ends of the spectrum, but Michel Baas argues that this ‘opposition’ is being challenged by IT professionals in the South India city of Bangalore. ‘Arranged love’ Marriage in a transnational work environment

Bangalore, Photographic by Ravish Uppady

Arranged marriage, one might think, is about parents or others arranging the marriage for you, some or all of whom are ‘in the community’. But then the time comes to get married. On the whole, IT companies in Bangalore run their business. A director at a much larger IT company confirmed this: “The IT industry is a meritocracy. Those who have shown merit will get the promotion.”¹ In a meritocracy there is no place for alternative motives to hire somebody or to give somebody a promotion. The caste system and religion are deeply embedded in the Indian society, yet IT companies have made a point of giving these factors as little room to manoeuvre as possible.

On the whole, IT companies in India are dominated by upper-caste Hindus as my own and other studies show. It is clear that their employees limit their interaction to other upper-caste Hindus with similar jobs. The result is a very specific world in which, on the one hand, it is claimed that caste does not and should not play a role; that merit is the key to getting on; on the other hand, it is a world dominated by upper-caste people with similar backgrounds and opinions, and everything happens in a specific upper-caste context.

The IT Caste?

In the past an educated, upper caste, middle class person of marriageable age would have no involvement in the process of finding and choosing a partner. Over time this has changed. The marriage stories of IT professionals in Bangalore show that this group has gone one step further: In other parts of the country it may be that the person in question is asked for his opinion or may even be allowed to take his future wife to the movies for instance. The community, or at least direct family members, would still be very much involved in this. In Bangalore, the community is simply not present. Whereas in other situations a bachelor’s life would largely revolve around family and community, in the IT industry of Bangalore this is simply not the case. Young men live with bachelor friends, spend most of their time inside IT offices, working in an environment defined by transnational business processes.

While love marriages among the IT professionals of Bangalore are quite common, the assumed difference between arranged and love marriages turns out not to be so great in this industry. Like an arranged marriage, a love marriage is a marriage within the own community – that of the IT professionals. Within that community people become friends with each other, start living together and eventually get married. It appears that love is not the only reason why people choose to make this commitment. The fact that both partners work in the IT industry and their lives, interests, working hours, and so on, fit perfectly together should not be underestimated. Often when I asked the young people in my study if they found it problematic that their wives were not from the same caste (and often not even from the same region or state), they would answer with a rather surprised “no, not right now, she’s also in IT.”

Marrying somebody within the IT industry could be called an ‘arranged love marriage’. Although the prospective partners find each other in college or on the workfloor, both families and/or communities still have to approve of the marriage. They have to convince that besides personal compatibility, there is also social compatibility in the sense that both belong to the same world. It is not a question of following your heart, but following your path: a path that leads to promotion within the IT industry and, of course, money where both families and their respective communities will profit as well. And for that reason, a new caste is born, one with its own set of rules and rituals. In this caste, the caste of the past no longer matters as the industry itself communicates both to the employees and the outside world that it has no place there. What matters is that they are IT professionals and belong to the IT community.

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Notes
2. Ibid.
3. In 2005 I conducted extensive anthropologi- cal fieldwork among Indian IT professionals in Bangalore for the duration of five months. I gathered data on a little over fifty IT profes- sionals; some whom I interviewed only once regularly. After this fieldwork I remained in close contact with some of my informants, following their lives by e-mail, and meeting up with them during later visits to Bangalore.

Until recently, the trend in development policy circles has been to focus on the question of poverty, and to suggest that inequality is interesting, but that perhaps it really does not matter. In the 2007 Wertheim Lecture, Jomo K.S. re-examined the role inequality plays in development and human welfare.

Making Poverty History? Unequal Development Today *
Defining poverty

Earlier, I suggested the significance of the definition of inequality. It is also important how we define poverty, and poverty is defined variously by different important protagonists. For example, Martin Ravallion of the World Bank defines poverty using the ‘dollar a day’ benchmark. Surjit S. Bhalla, a conservative economist in India, points out that the national income accounts are not compatible with income surveys. He claims that this incompatibility is a very recent phenomenon, and then argues that the World Bank is exaggerating the extent of poverty in the world to keep itself in business. In contrast, Amartya Sen suggests that it is not useful to use any kind of money-metric measure of poverty. Instead, he suggests that needs fulfillment is the more useful measure.

Following from this, we then have very different understandings of what constitutes pro-poor growth. Martin Ravallion from the World Bank suggests that any growth (it does not matter how much) which increases the welfare of anyone considered poor, should be considered ‘pro-poor’. Narash Kakwani, until recently at the International Poverty Centre in Brasil, set up by the UNDP, suggests that for growth to be considered ‘pro-poor’, the share of growth accruing to the poor should be at least equal to the poor’s share of income. So, if, for example, the poor get 10 per cent of total income, for growth to be considered ‘pro-poor’, over 10 per cent of growth or additional output should accrue to the poor. Woodward and Simms from the New Economics Foundation (NEF) in London have a different definition which most mainstream economists would have great difficulty with. They suggest that for growth to be considered ‘pro-poor’, the share of growth should be at least equal to the poor’s share of the population. So, if the poor in a country constitute half the population, at least half of the additional output should accrue to the poor for it to be considered ‘pro-poor’. That, of course, is very unlikely to happen.

Making poverty history?

There is a tendency for poverty to contribute to a vicious cycle. When conditions are desperate, the likelihood of civil conflict taking place increases, and there seems to be a very strong relationship between poverty and the likelihood of civil conflict occurring. In 2005, the UN summit made a strong commitment to what are called the internationally agreed development goals, including - but not only - the Millennium Development Goals. The member states of the UN felt that there was a need to re-commit to the broad range of commitments made during the 1990s and the first half of this decade. A strong commitment was made to encourage national development strategies which should involve far more national ownership and policy space, and not to simply rely on the so-called poverty reduction strategies associated with the World Bank and the IMF. This was as a result of a general recognition that the Bretton Woods institutions’ macro-economic framework is really wanting - in terms of economic development and growth as well as in terms of human welfare. More than 75 per cent of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers do not even have an employment component. It is inconceivable how one seriously expects to reduce poverty without increasing employment. Unfortunately, however, we find that the global economic agenda continues to be dominated by the powerful countries in the world and the international institutions they control. Moreover, the agenda items often emphasised in world trade negotiations include questions such as trade liberalisation, foreign investment protection, capital account liberalisation, financial liberalisation more generally, and strengthened intellectual property rights - all of which contribute to slowing down development and exacerbating inequality and poverty. Meanwhile, the issues considered important to developing countries rarely make it to the international agenda for negotiations. The Doha round is now recognised as not being, in any serious sense, the world, developmental; the Washington consensus is certainly not considered to be developmental or equitable. International economic stability is generally acknowledged as having actually worsened in the last quarter century. There has been some progress in debt relief, but it is not very meaningful. Capital flight continues to be a huge problem, and the idea that international financial liberalisation can reverse capital flight is recognised as being far from reality. It is like opening a bird cage and expecting more birds to fly in, than to fly out. Finally, we find that the agenda for international economic governance continues to be dominated by the rich.

So, if we are serious about making poverty history, we really need to study the history of development. There is a need to recognise what is developmental, as opposed to what is palliative and welfare oriented (as important as that might be from a humanitarian point of view). There is a need to recognise that one size does not fit all. There is a need to eschew the mainstream orthodoxy and to favour common sense, and to proceed with what might be termed cautious experimentation. For this, national ownership and policy space are crucial. Growth is necessary, but certainly not sufficient, and the questions of distribution and accountability are generally recognised as important. National and international activism, I would like to suggest, are crucial. Coalitions involving civil society, especially from both the North and the South, can make a huge difference in shaping things - we have seen how discussions of international economic governance have changed, especially since Seattle. I think we owe Professor Wertheim a great deal in this regard. He stood for original and independent scholarship, but also a sustained partisan engagement and advocacy to which we are all indebted; and very importantly, an element which I personally most appreciate – especially because it is so rare in academic circles - a humility and modesty, despite his greatness.
A win-win game plan?

Apart from the basketful of banana skins that comprise the methodology – or perhaps more aptly, the messology - of the MDG exercise, there is a wide array of inherent foundational and substantive weaknesses. Some of these are highlighted briefly below.

Exclusions: out of sight, out of mind

One might ask why, in such a lengthy list, no place was found for some fundamen- tal development deficits. For instance, the problems of the aged go unacknowledged; this is curious considering the inescapable rising share that the elderly form of the total population for a very large and growing number of countries. The same applies to persons with disability which are roughly estimated at one in ten globally. The invisibi- lity of these and several other vulnerable and socially excluded groups in the MDG template replicates reality faithfully. It is nononsense to presume that the wellbeing of socially excluded groups can be read from national averages. The implications of making such issues invisible can only weaken their prioritisation at the policy and resource allocation levels.

Poverty reduction through definitions

A prime example of a dubious concept, one that forms the cornerstone of the MDG edi- fice, is income poverty reckoned in terms of the World Bank’s dollar-a-day poverty line. This measure is widely acknowledged as being terminally flawed, but holds its monolithic position on account of the institutional power of the lobby that has created it. It consciously adopts and defends methodologies that make a lot of nutritional, health and educational needs invisible, thereby significantly understating the extent of poverty. While the percent- age incidence of poverty according to this measure has steadily declined and stands in the low 20s at present, independent national family health and nutrition sur- veys reveal a very different reality where one half of children are born with low birth weight and where the majority of rural women are anaemic. Similar contradictory trends are also to be found with regard to various nutritional variables. For China too, the official estimate of the incidence of poverty is laughably low and bears little connection with well-documented ground realities where a significant section of the rural households find it impossible to meet their basic needs for health and education. Is poverty a gnat lodged in the South?

Do the rich countries not have their own home-grown evergreen version of poverty? Absolute poverty, defined with respect to the historical living standards of the rich countries, is far from negligible. It hovers around the 10 per cent level in many OECD countries, and is dramatically higher for the unemployed, the aged, single-parent families. There are extensive new forms of vulnerability and insecurity engendered by globalisation that cannot be ignored even in rich countries. Since the MDG exercise calls for domestic policies to be designed explicitly with reference to their poverty reduction impact, this ghettonisation of poverty absolves the governments of the northwest from equivalent obligations with respect to their own poor citizens. Is this a globally vision deriving from shared, universal values. The poor in the north, many of whom are themselves from historically excluded populations, are ren- dered invisible and silent. Why?

Destinations without pathways

The MDG list is just that – a template of goals, targets, and indicators. There is no mention of process, of policy, of pathways or of politics involved in achieving these outcomes. This generates an uncomfor- table impression of a lack of intellectual gravity about the exercise. Take the exam- ple of the target to improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers. Leaving aside the slippery definitional loopholes with regard to defining slum dwellers and what might constitute an improvement, there is no real effort at linking the question of slums to in-migration and to the atrophy of the rural sector that creates the pressure in the first place. Nor is there any linkage to the desire of governments to model their major cit- ies to reflect their rising national aspira- tions and self-esteem, as for instance in India and China, a process in which slum dwellers do have a (relocated) place, but one that is usually far beyond the distant horizons of the city’s boundaries.

And how is the long list of health related targets to be met in the absence of the abil- ity of the poor to pay for privatized health services, and the simultaneous market-led withdrawal of health services from large parts of the rural sector. Nurses and doc- tors favour the major cities and richer countries? Will the market reverse these market-induced trends? How exactly?

Another example concerns assumptions made about how technology can help the poor. But will it? What are the lessons of history in this regard? ICTs might have a powerful impact in the enhancement of wellbeing, but their direct impact on pov- erty reduction is yet to be demonstrated on any credible, let alone global, scale. Such linkage of ICTs to the MDG agenda has been roundly criticised by specialists, who argue that this has the danger of distorting the policy agenda which have a powerful potential development impact.

Perhaps the implicit assumption which might account for the ‘policy’ silence of the MDG Frame is that we have reached the end of alternatives, that there are no serious macro choices left, and that pub- lic-private-partnerships - the disingenuous euphemism for corporate control over development - constitute the only open pathway; hence the exclusion and suppres- sion of any debates over policy ‘alterna- tives’. None exist. Any such reading, how- ever, might be a hasty one, since it must demonstrate the sustainability of such success in eliminating poverty through the private sector within the prescribed time frame. There exists no credible demonstra- tion yet that this can work on a mass scale too, tiny enclaves of profit making for such corporate pioneers out to conquer the last frontier – the poor as a market.

As we do say, not as we do

The new compact which underlies the design, and oversees the implementa- tion, of the MDG template prominently links assistance from the northwest to the policy performance of aid-receiving coun- tries in the southwest. The latter have been made primarily responsible for deliver- ing on the MDGs. Strings of implicit and explicit policy conditionalities apply for the developing economies of the southeast. But what about the developed economies of the northwest? Do they have any cul- pability in this regard? Leaving aside the emotive, historically rooted, issues of the impact and legacies of colonialism and imperialism, there are more contemporary focal points of double standards that are conveniently ignored.

The first concerns agricultural subsidies in the northwest. If these amount roughly to US $200 billion annually, or twice the esti- mated resource cost of meeting the MDGs in the entire southeast. This unethical and hypocritical position is brazenly main- tained year after year while at the same time insisting on market based rules in the poor countries, involving the withdrawal of agricultural subsidies there. A major US aid agency, CARE, recently criticised the WTO’s use of US food surpluses as ‘aid’ to Africa, and rejected $5 billion of US Government food aid on grounds that this harmed local

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the dumbing-down of development

Goals set for the Poor

Goalposts set by the Rich:

Ashwani Seith

IIAS NEWSLETTER #45 AUTUMN 2007
agricultural development and the livelihoods of African peasants. \(^6\)

The second pertains to the linkage between good governance and military expenditure. The arms trade adds up to over a trillion US dollars per year, or about ten times the total annual MDC estimated resource cost. While new developing economies have entered this game as suppliers, the vast percentage of the trade is controlled and supplied, with financial credits, by the rich countries with the full acquiescence if not connivance in questionable governance practices of their own governments.

A third major example is the environment. The northwest, with some honourable exceptions, has consistently shirked its responsibilities and looked the other way as the planet suffered. The United States, the single largest contributor to global environmental deterioration, chooses to remain outside any committed time frame to a programme of responsible environmental control. The arrival of the newly emerging countries has only complicated the search for global solutions, with the rich countries taking refuge behind the reluctance of the emerging economies to control their growth without compensation.

On inequality, a deepening silence

The MDG template of targets cares not a bit about inequality and says not a jot about social exclusion. To the contrary, the poor countries taking refuge behind the reluctance of the emerging economies to control their growth without compensation. The MDG book is rather like a sumptuous banquet with delicious appetisers of pro-poor growth, but the structural pre-conditions for more egalitarian growth. But the MDGs will have none of it. There is scarcely a mention of inequality in the entire exercise. The one indicator that is used, the income share of the bottom quintile, is a very partial one and is fraught with problems of interpretation. Much breath, though not expenditure, is expended in lip service paid to the possibilities of pro-poor growth, but the structural pre-conditions for more egalitarian and probably rather slower growth retain an uncontrollable status, rather like the dales, who might be the potential beneficiaries of such a policy paradox.

And several have argued an instrumental defence of inequality on the grounds that it leaves the wheels of commerce and creates the wealth that then might trickle down to the poor. This has been read as carte blanche, almost literally, on how far inequality should or could be allowed to go and be accepted. Last year, the annual bonus of one young manager of a top hedge fund was more than the total national income of a short list of poor countries. The rule book of the neo-liberal game tells us that controlling inequality would preempt growth; slay the goose called inequality, and there will be no more proverbial golden eggs.

Separately fiscal redistributors have argued that while the primary economic process should be allowed to work in an unrestricted fashion in free markets, even if it generated high inequalities; there could subsequently be a correction at the secondary, post-tax, stage through fiscal redistributions in favour of the poor. This is a popular position of convenience but it does demand one interesting paradox or contradiction to be overlooked: that the rich classes which were unemotional to accept egalitarian interventions at the primary stage would be ready to accept similarly motivated interventions and final outcomes at the secondary level.

The fast remains that inequalities have multiplied dramatically across the world, accompanied by new forms and rising levels of vulnerability, insecurity and exclusion. This is recognised explicitly even by an organisation such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its last research report, where it warns of the dangers of the trends towards sharply rising inequality.\(^6\) There is a substantial body of research which credibly argues that lower levels of inequality might actually be beneficial for growth; interestingly, the ADB report makes an acknowledgement of the soundness of this policy position favouring more egalitarian growth. But the MDGs will have none of it. There is scarcely a mention of inequality in the entire exercise. The one indicator that is used, the income share of the bottom quintile, is a very partial one and is fraught with problems of interpretation. Much breath, though not expenditure, is expended in lip service paid to the possibilities of pro-poor growth, but the structural pre-conditions for more egalitarian and probably rather slower growth retain an uncontrollable status, rather like the dales, who might be the potential beneficiaries of such a policy paradox.

Endgame for Poverty?

The MDG book is rather like a sumptuous pre-summer holiday brochure full of beckoning destinations. But if you examine it long or carefully enough, unseen sets in: why have so many destinations gone missing? Why can we not visit, for instance, the issue of inequality? Or, the abode of absolute poverty within rich countries? Or, the country of rights? What about mapping a route to get to flatlands of global democracy? How shall we take along the elderly, and the handicapped on the journey - or shall we surreptitiously and conveniently leave them behind? Then we are told that many desirable destinations, like universal secondary education, or better universal health care, or decent universal pension schemes, or full employment at a reasonable minimum wage, are too expensive, or that the road atlas supplied by the agency does not carry route maps for them - shall we accept such censorship without question? Is there just one travel agency in town?

The MDGs constitute a fundamental intervention in development discourse and practice. Disguised as these might be, the MDG phenomenon is hardly devoid of a latent rationality and potent agenda. Who, in their right minds, would not welcome the achievement of the goals listed? And yet, it is an intervention that dumbs down development discourse through colonising the space for critical vision and and challenge; it disempowers by straitjacketing the development rights and options of the poor and the disenfranchised. It lobotomises the intellectual and political imagination and replaces alternative pathways to egalitarian democratic development by pushing, through mass advertising campaigns, a universal-care-all formula. neo-liberal globalisation + MDGs = development. The MDG phenomenon is intensifying, if not creating, powerful tendencies towards the technocratic, bureaucratisation, de-politicisation, and the sanitisation and securitisation of the development process within an emerging and rapidly integrating hierarchy of decision-making, controls and responsibilities. As such, it represents the end of development understood loosely as a process of conflictual contestation between elites and excluded classes over the nature of the process of societal change both vying for control over resources, institutions and power. However, in this project, it is unlikely to succeed whether at the level of discourse or direct intervention. This new propaganda of neo-liberal development might be effective in hiding the larger issues for a while for a few, but it cannot make the foundational structural and political fissures disappear in their entirety or for long, or for the majority. Reality has an ineradicable habit of striking back at illusion.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) Eurobarometer, Attitudes towards Development Aid, Special Eurobarometer 222, EU, February 2005.


\(^6\) Of course, geographically deep southeast locations, Australia and New Zealand, remain prime northwest club members in politico-economic terms.

\(^4\) Story from BBC NEWS: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia/6503886.stm Published: 2007/08/17 10:00:39 GMT


Curating controversy: exhibiting the Second World War in Japan and the United States since 1995

Laura Hein

Until the public battle over the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum’s 1995 exhibit on the Enola Gay airplane and a series of conservative attacks on Japanese peace museums that began in 1996, curators had faced little criticism over exhibits related to the Second World War in either the United States or Japan. Both countries have many museums that unabashedly celebrate military actions. Usually founded by military units or veterans groups, they emphasize military strategy, the heroism of commanders and soldiers, and the ingenuity and sheer force of military technology. Other museums reject the legitimacy of war altogether. The oldest and best-attended of these is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. While there is nothing on the scale of the Hiroshima Museum in the United States, the Peace Museum in Chicago proclaims a very similar message.

The Japanese municipal museum with one of the most profoundly self-critical analyses of the Asia-Pacific War is the National Peace Center, or Peace Osaka, which opened in the Osaka Castle Park in 1995. (The Okinawa Peace Memorial Museum is similarly critical.) The museum evolved out of efforts by local citizens groups to remember the impact of the war on Osaka, particularly the approximately fifty American air-raid attacks. In order to explain why the city was attacked so many times, the planners agreed on an exhibit that portrayed Japan as not only the victim but also the aggressor in Asia. The exhibit also explained that Osaka Castle Park was used as a munitions factory during the war. While this information was absolutely true, it was not the only information the city chose to present. The museum’s curators and staff understood the public’s need for a narrative that would make sense of the events. The result was a narrative that depicted Japan as not only a victim of American aggression, but also the aggressor in Asia. The exhibit itself attempts to assert only one point of view.

In 1996, conservative groups began attacking Peace Osaka. While the museum had opened with wide support within Japan, the museum currently makes little effort to mobilize this substantial political constitu-ency, and instead tries to avoid controversy at any cost. For example, Peace Osaka has prohibited their own oral history narrators from talking about subjects other than their personal experiences. It has also withdrawn educational workshops for school children after receiving criticisms that they contained “propaganda.” Osaka University has decided on a defensive posture to maintain the status quo.

Curators and their audiences

Other museums have handled the problem of criticism in a variety of ways. One is to limit war-related exhibits to uncontroversial aspects of any given subject. This often means focusing on the experience of civilians and emphasizing daily life on the home front or front lines rather than battle strategy. A second common strategy in both countries has been to present a pastiche of individual experiences rather than one overarching narrative—collecting memories rather than constructing them. This strategy has been particularly useful for acknowledging the sensitive history of race relations in the United States. Curators can no longer choose one white soldier to stand in for everyone; the simple act of organizing an exhibit as a collection of varied stories immediately highlights the specificity of American narrations. American museums exhibit the Second World War now routinely discuss what the D-Day Museum in New Orleans calls the “American Memory of WWII,” that the armed forces were racially segregated throughout the war. Similarly, “A More Perfect Union” at the National Museum of American History, which opened in 1987, treated wartime internment of Japanese Americans as a violation of civil rights that diminished constitutional protections for all Americans. 1

In the United States, the controversy over the Enola Gay exhibit spread museum professionals to negotiate more with the public. Many of them have concluded that curators must give up on the idea that there is a single correct interpretation of an event as major and complex as the Second World War. As Lorraine Burch, now Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, explained, “Museums must not look to educate visitors to a singular point of view. Rather the goal is to create an informed public.”

This attitude is less prevalent in Japan, in part because most peace museum staff members are not professional museologists, especially those at public museums. Rather, they are career civil servants, who just happened to be appointed to the curatorial division of a peace museum as part of their regular rotation through local government, doing such jobs as issuing vehicle licenses and managing national health insurance. They knew little about operating a museum or the history of the war, making it difficult for them to defend their institutions. While many Japanese museums provide personal testimony for visitors personal narratives as illustrations of a typical experience rather than using a set of them to sketch out the full range of differing individual experiences. The Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum is a significant exception, in that it has incorporated the oral narratives of forced labourers from Korea.

Confronting irreconcilable differences

Yet, while essential, reshaping the museum-audience relationship into a more collaborative endeavor will never be enough. The real challenge is to negotiate between irreconcilable groups within the public. In both nations, the oldest fights have occurred when the audience in question is young people. Rather than allowing them to reach their own conclusions about the war, both American curators of the Enola Gay exhibit and Japanese ones of Peace Osaka wanted sole interpretive authority. American curators who opposed the original Enola Gay exhibit resisted deploying Japanese civilians in a sympathetic manner—people who indisputably had been harmed by American state action—because they feared that viewing it would turn young Americans against their own government. Tom Crouch, one of the Enola Gay curators, recalls that one of the key moments in the negotiation process with the American Legion occurred over precisely this point. A Vietnam War veteran told Crouch that he had given the first script of the exhibit to his 13-year-old daughter to read and she had been horrified by American use of the bomb on civilians. The veteran then told Crouch “I can’t let you mount an exhibit that does that.” 2

In Japan, too, most controversies about war memory focus on shaping the attitudes of young people. Initially Second World War museums were peripheral to this issue, because so many of them were originally conceived of as a religious memorial or to console survivors. Yet an increasingly large share of Japanese history museum-goers are school children. Echoing the anxieties of their American counterparts, Japanese critics of peace museums fear young Japanese will accept what they think of as a “Tokyo Trials view of history.” In both cases, the critics argued that the state has the right to present its own actions in the best possible light to its own citizens, even by withholding information that has been common knowledge for decades. More fundamentally, in both nations these celebrating the state power deprive young people of the opportunity to engage exhibits through their own ethical and historical questions, leaving them ill-equipped to face a morally ambiguous world.

Museums exhibit the Second World War have another largely neglected audience—international visitors. Japanese museums try to accommodate foreign visitors than do American ones, for example with bilingual or multilingual signage. The Hiroshima Museum demonstrates its concern for international visitors by offering no opinion on whether the United States committed a war crime. The museum’s silence is almost certainly out of sensitivity to American attitudes. Because, in contrast to the United States, the nation-universal opinion in Japan is that the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were clearly war crimes. Under the definitions incorporated into law at the Nuremberg and Tokyo War Crimes Trials.

By contrast, American Second World War exhibits have not included foreign visitors in the same way that they have come to include the perspectives of non-white Americans. Yet the simple act of shifting one’s imaginative focus to individuals rather than nation-sized protagonists makes the nationality of those individuals seem far less important. The National D-Day Museum in New Orleans collects reminiscences of the war from all participants— including Japanese, Filipino, and Chinese—not just American, and acknowledges that racism played a large role in intensifying the violence on both sides in the Asia-Pacific theatre. Moreover, attention to the human identity of Japanese-Americans automatically calls attention to Japanese nationals, since immigrants were not permitted to become U.S. citizens because they were not white.

Further, simply documenting the troubling history of global genocide, war crimes, state terrorism, and systemic cruelty itself encourages comparative thinking. The International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, a “world-wide network of organisations and individuals dedicated to teaching and learning how historic sites and museums can inspire social consciousness and action,” explicitly presents the subjects of state terrorism, human trafficking, and racism, among others, as equivalent across national borders. This website links thirteen museums, including the Terezin Memorial in the Czech Republic, the District Six Museum in South Africa, and the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. While each museum focuses on a specific history of persecution, the international coalition effectively uses the global technology of the world wide web to pose the question of comparability of experience across national borders. 3

Notes

1 Akiko Takanaka interview with Lutski Kazuo, February 3, 2005

2 See website of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans at http://www.ddaymuseum.org

3 http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/index.html


6 http://www.sitesofconscience.org

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This is a much abridged version of “Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States since 1945,” Laura Hein and Akiko Takanaka, Pacific Historical Review 70, (February 2001): 61-94.

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1 Akiko Takanaka interview with Lutski Kazuo, February 5, 2005

2 See website of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans at http://www.ddaymuseum.org

3 http://americanhistory.si.edu/perfectunion/index.html


6 http://www.sitesofconscience.org

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The ‘Great Game’ continued: Central Eurasia and Caspian Region fossil fuels

Xueting Guo and Mehdi P. Amineh

Post-Cold War geopolitics has been dominated by a multipolar world where regional powers (America) and global economic players (China, India, Russia) enjoy a variety of political positions – from cooperation to confrontation, if not confrontation, with America. For example, China in particular must tap into its principal energy source, energy reserves and 10% of its oil reserves. This has increased its offered incentives that secure energy supplies. Thus today’s major power politics revolve around access to natural resources. Thanks to the war in Iraq, American military and geopolitical power now extend from southern Europe to the Middle East. But for a particularly resource-rich region that American strategy aims to cut off from Russia, Europe and China: the Caspian Region. A long-term American military presence could open it to American business and non-governmental organisations, which might empower America to shape the region’s politics and control access to its oil and gas. This would give the lone superpower indirect control over the economic and technological development of regional contenders such as China, India, Russia and the United States. Whether or not it succeeds, the American effort is already inducing responses from both near and far.

The object of the game

The Caspian Region (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Russia) is home to 45% of the world’s known gas reserves and 10% of its oil reserves. This vast yet concentrated wealth has transformed Caspian Region and the whole of Central Eurasia into an intersection of interstate rivalry, enterprise competition, and intervention by regional state and non-state actors.

Aside from Russia and Iran, the region is not in the territorial sphere of the security institutions of any of the major powers, hence there is no ‘agreed upon’, and thus ‘stable’, zone of influence. Extra-regional state and non-state actors compete to exercise power and influence over the politics and societies of their hosts by searching for allies among local actors. Given this complex matrix of social forces, competition and cooperation are ad hoc, complex and even ambiguous. Uncertainty and unpredictability are the rules of the game. As all major powers are involved and regime legitimacy is at stake, competition here has the potential to destabilise the entire world system.

For example, China in particular must tap these resources to secure an adequate energy supply, which brings it into competition, if not confrontation, with America. In recent decades, the Chinese economy has been growing at a rate substantially above that of the world and is becoming more dependent on imports, especially fossil fuels. America’s oil production, meanwhile, peaked way back in 1970-71; it has no spare capacity for its European and East Asian allies. Both powers want into a fossil-fuel-rich region that is essentially Russia’s backyard.

Pipeline politics

American’s main obstacle to expanding its role in the Caspian Region is its influence, particularly over the main transport routes of oil and gas to the European Union. In the late 1990s, the Americans became involved in determining the location of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline. Backed by the Clinton Administration and constructed in 2002 by an international consortium in which British and American oil companies played the leading role, the BTC is an important part of the East-West energy corridor. It circumvents Iran and Russia in order to minimise both countries’ influence, and is the first major oil export route connecting Caspian oil to European consumers. Oil from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and the rehabilitation of both countries’ industries and the BTC in May 2005 to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, located near the massive American military base at Incirlik.

As though in response, Russia concluded deals for gas pipelines into its territory at the May 2007 Ashgabat gas pipeline summit. This follows the construction of the Caspian Littoral Gas Pipeline from eastern Turkmenistan and a parallel pipeline from Kazakhstan, and the rehabilitation and perhaps expansion of the Central Asia Centre Pipeline from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These pipeline agreements are part of China’s regional political influence by increasing its control over energy exports and transporting rival routes to the West.

China, too, is contending for influence on pipeline location and construction, motivated by its overdependence on Middle Eastern oil and its own perception that it lacks control over market and strategic factors in times of emergency. China currently imports 60 percent of its oil from the Middle East, and the region’s political instability coupled with the possibility of military confrontation with America over Taiwan makes China nervous, as it lacks the military capability to protect oil ships over its long-distance marine route, especially at the chokepoints of the Hormuz and Malacca Straits. In other words, China fears an American blockade of its Middle Eastern oil imports in the event of irreconcilable conflict. Diversifying supplies by seeking overland oil transportation to Central Eurasia and the Caspian Region is an attractive alternative. Thus in late 2006, China and Kazakhstan agreed to build the second section of the Atasu-Alashankou oil pipeline, and gas-rich Turkmenistan agreed to a gas pipeline to China through the Kazakh territory.

Rising China

China’s recent engagements with Central Eurasian and Caspian countries, namely Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, have unsettled the Americans. The region’s political turbulence, and the geopolitical energy rivalry instigated by the Americans, have propelled Russia and China to build regional stratified partnerships, the most important of which is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Led by China and Russia, its members include Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and four observer states, Mongolia, Iran, Pakistan and India. Under the SCO framework, bilateral and multilateral energy cooperation will play a significant role in countering American ambitions. Meanwhile, America’s plans to deploy a missile defence system in Europe and Asian countries and Japan may spur closer military cooperation between Russia and China within the SCO.

A politico-economically and relatively developing Central Eurasia and Caspian Region is China’s interest, as it shares a 5,300 km border with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan and a 4,500 km border with Russia. China once had disputed borders with all four countries, which could have fuelled a separatist movement in China’s Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and damaged China’s national security interests. By signing the Agreement on Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions in 1996, the first multilateral security agreement between them, and bilateral and multilateral border agreements later that decade, the disputes have been resolved. Moreover, since establishing diplomatic ties in the 1990s, China’s trade relationship with the region’s countries has been growing sharply. From 1992 to 2005, total bilateral trade between China and the five Central Asian countries has increased 150 percent from a mere $255 million to $37 billion.

Meanwhile, mutual energy cooperation has been active since the 2006 SCO summit meeting in Shanghai, where Russian President Vladimir Putin spurred the creation of an energy club to expand transportation and communication cooperation. Whether bilaterally or multilaterally, China’s energy involvement in Central Eurasia and the Caspian Region is deepening, and this deeply concerns Washington.

An oil lovers’ triangle: Russia and the future of Sino-American relations

Russia’s strategic demand for supply security and its active energy engagement policy alarm Washington. Four factors will fundamentally determine the future of Sino-American partnership with respect to Central Eurasia and the Caspian Region.

(1) China’s role in SCO over the next ten years. China owes its deepening relations in the region to the increased military, political and economic cooperation among SCO members. Whether SCO exists as regional balancer or an oil club, China will be a great power to be reckoned with in the region, but the uncertainty of SCO cohesion in the face of American challenges could undermine China’s geopolitical influence.

(2) China’s energy cooperation with Central Eurasian and Caspian states. If China’s bilateral and multilateral energy cooperation moves forward too rapidly, an already wary America might respond more aggressively.

(3) How Russia defends its backyard against penetration by other great powers, particularly America and China. Russia’s current defence policy in the region, like the Soviet Union’s during the Cold War, uses China as a balancing power to counter the strate- gic offensive of America’s war on terror. The uncertainty of such triangular relations not only affects the long-term strategic partnership between China, Russia and the United States, but also future geopolitics between China and America.

(4) The American regional military presence and its ongoing geopolitical consequences. While unilateral American military penetration has resulted in turbulence and instability, China bilateral- ly and multilaterally seeks to promote multi-polarisation and to balance power by working with SCO countries. So far, American power projection has induced geopolitical backlashes from Russia, China and the region, such as calling for the withdrawal of American troops and closer military cooperation within SCO.

A new Cold War?

Oil and gas are sources of energy, and thus sources of wealth and power, including the capacity to project military power into the world’s energy-rich areas. Emerging resource interests are decreasing rapidly while newly discovered ones disappoint. Major oil consumers will have to implement more active policies in order to satisfy their oil needs and intervene militarily to safeguard oil production. Export will become more intense. This will have enormous implications for global peace and security.

In this new ‘Great Game’, each of the main powers – America, Russia and China – is backing a different pipeline project and seeking to draw the region’s governments into its respective orbit. Many fear a new Cold War, as it is not yet clear whether the main powers will see each other as rivals, allies or as combinations of the two. America could use political, economic and perhaps military pressure to expand its influence and remove any obstacles to the safe flow of oil. Unable to compete with the Americans militarily, China will try to avoid confronting Washington head-on and ally with local powers to defend its regional interests. Russia, meanwhile, might continue to work with China politically and militarily to defend its backyard from American geopolitical challenges. Each main power’s nightmare is finding itself alone against an alliance of the other two. The world’s nightmare is direct confrontation among any of them.
Asian New Religious Movements (NRMs) present holistic social systems of beliefs and values, rituals for coping with crisis and uncertainty, daily routines, codes for dress, diet, and relationships, ways of speaking, greeting, annual festivals and rituals for birth, marriage (where appropriate) and death, to convert across the globe. Joining such organisations radically changes a convert’s cultural perspective on life. But even more important is the fact that many NRMs have made this impact across a global sweep of cultures with little perceivable variation in the way converts from different national origins accept the new system. This phenomenon is especially striking when the NRMs are from Asia and introduce radically different ritual and daily life practices from those found in the West.

My aim is to compare the NRMs with multinational corporations (MNCs) in terms of their global presence: the scale of their operations, membership numbers, property holdings and human resource management (HRM) practices, and their impact on the cultures of daily life. MNCs too have had the power to override traditional cultural values and practices through their globalised systems of production and consumption. For instance, young Muslim factory women in Malaysia leave their families and go unescorted into the night to work the third shift for multinational semiconductor corporations, transcending strict Islamic values about the supervision of unmarried women by the local community. Working class Malaysian families take their children for a ‘stauts’ outing to a KFC outlet, even though the deep fried chicken drumsticks sold at roadside stalls may be tastier and cost one third of the price. But these are still piecemeal responses to global culture. It is only at the level of middle class affluence that the global values of consumer culture are imposed as a total lifestyle, as people cut traditional ties and consolidate their efforts to achieve prosperity for the nuclear family as the main unit of consumption.

The power of multinational economic organisations to transcend local traditions and cultures where older lifestyles is well documented, but I wish to focus attention on the similar role of multinational or ‘global’ NRMs in having equal, if not greater, power to transform the behaviour, values, material cultures and patterns of social relationships of people in both traditional and modern cultures with a uniformity and universality which is striking. Their effect is even more powerful than the piecemeal power of the MNCs because active membership frequently involves a total transformation of one’s daily lifestyle and relationships. In this way the NRMs present a comprehensive cultural package to their followers. What is described above as a comprehensive cultural package will be taken up equally by followers all over the world, and from every socio-economic stratum, often when it is quite different or even antithetical to their original cultural background.

These global NRMs frequently originate from Asia, in which case their beliefs and rituals are grounded in the Asian culture of origin, often in its pre-modern form. This makes for quite an extreme form of cultural dissonance with followers from the West, Africa and Latin America. Yet converts accept the total package of doctrine and lifestyle and modify their persona, personal values, daily routines, kin and voluntary relationships, not to mention diet, speech patterns and dress, in order to embrace their new spiritual path. And this happens to the same degree among all the members within one NRM, uniformly, across a global sweep of cultures both east and west. Because the NRMs are ‘new’, hybridity of practices and beliefs have not had to develop, as is the case in the established religions.

NRMs as MNCs

Organisationally, it is also significant that these NRMs can be compared to MNCs on many levels. Firstly, in terms of their global reach, many of them have branch centres in the capital cities and other major regional cities of countries in all continents. Moreover, some of them were constituted to have this global focus from the outset and their very names reflect this. For instance, a neo-Hindu movement based in Mumbai, India, is called the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) and a Shinto NRM based in Japan, is called the Church of World Messianity (Seikai Kyoushi Kyo).

The global focus is more than in name only. Many movements have pilgrimage places which attract members from all over the world, and it is a thought-provoking sight at a time when globalisation has become a cliché, to see members from widely disparate geographic and cultural regions mingling together, totally unified by their common adherence to the faith. In this sense, the ‘corporate culture’ of the spiritual organisation acts strongly to dominate national or ethnic cultures of origin. (Smith 2000). The services are conducted with simultaneous translation in many languages. But the global mindset of the organisation is not just a matter of making the doctrine available in foreign languages. It stems from a philosophy that all humanity is one, albeit with Japanese or Indian culture as the original culture. Often NRMs frame themselves as supra-religious movements, which, they assert, transcend the established religions and avoid their narrow and limiting conceptualisations. This philosophy is built into the name of another Japanese Shintositstic NRM, Sukyo Mahikari (Supra Religion of True Light).

A striking example of a NRM with a global approach from the outset is Tenrikyo, with two million followers, 500,000 outside Japan, served by 200 overseas churches. Tenrikyo is Japan’s earliest major new religion, founded before the Meiji Restoration by Miki Nakayama, a 41 year old woman from a peasant family, after she received Divine revelations in 1883. It established its own library, university and ethnological museum in the 19th century, in order to aid the missionary activity of its early adherents. The Tenri University displayed the daily artefacts of the countries where missions would be sent so that they would be familiar with the cultures they would have to interact with. The Tenri University was set up as an institution for teaching foreign languages to missionaries, and so strong is the movement’s outward gaze that its religious tests were published in 16 foreign languages from the early days. All these institutions are located in Tenri City, established 1881, which is a pilgrimage place for members from all over the world.

As MNC style organisations, NRMs also have extensive property holdings. They usually have a headquarters complex which includes sacred spaces, often able to seat very large gatherings of tens of thousands of people, administrative offices and accommodation for pilgrims. Often the organisations include philanthropic institutions such as hospitals and environmental projects such as ecologically sensitive farms – Sukyo Mahikari’s ‘Yoko agriculture’, or beautiful parks such as Seikai Kyoushi Kyo’s gardens in Japan, (see www.mw-int.org/jp/english/shinsenkyo/ shin.htm).

In line with their extensive property, the magnitude of the NRMs’ financial revenue, with the turnover of capital in the form of donations and events management – the BKWSU regularly feeds 10,000 pilgrims attending its ceremonies, for instance - demonstrating organisational expertise which rivals that of very large scale business enterprises. Like MNCs they have the challenge of recruiting, training and retaining good administrative staff, many of whom qualify primarily in terms of their spiritual stature and have to be trained thereafter to run an organisation or centre in a secular context. However, the nature of the belief system makes staff posted to foreign centres more easily able to transcend the cross-cultural issues which bedevil corporate managers on overseas postings - as the NRMs ‘corporate culture’ which is shared by everyone, becomes the culture of interaction. Indeed the NRMs have policies to actively post their spiritual leaders and administrators to countries foreign to their own. For instance in the BKWSU, which has 800,000 members worldwide, served by over 5,000 centres in 128 countries, the country coordinator in Greece is Australian, in Italy is British and in Japan is Indian.

NRMs as agents of truly global forms of culture

It is the ability of these global NRMs to provide a total cultural system to their members which distinguishes them from NRMs and gives them a higher level of global status. Conversion often involves members changing their daily lifestyles and even leaving long term relationships. Conversion to the religion is on an individual basis, taking the individual away from established community patterns of worship and belief. Often other family members may follow although this is not always the case and it can impose hardship if the dramatically altered lifestyles and values cannot be accepted or adopted by relatives or friends of the convert. Brahma Kumari in the inner, committed circle, are vegetarian, celibate, and rise early at 6.40am to practise raja yoga meditation. This lifestyle gives expression to the Indian spiritual traditions of bhramswaana (celibacy) and the satics (pure) diet. Married converts have often had to forgo their marriage partnerships. Strict adherence requires that they only eat food cooked by themselves or other Brahma Kumaris in order to benefit from the pure vibrations of the person cooking the food. This has meant that some members do not eat food cooked by their mothers or other relatives who are not in the movement, thus challenging one of the most basic social activities which fosters social relationships, eating together.

Brahma Kumari’s attend their local centre for meditation, the reading of a revealed text and class discussion from 5.30 until 7.00am. In earlier times, Brahma Kumari’s around the world dressed in white, a colour of spiritual practice in India and other Asian cultures, even during secular activities, but this has now been modified outside India. Yet the benefits of such a lifestyle include enhanced soul consciousnes and a sense of peace which those from outside the movement notice and comment upon. At the same time, members are encouraged to participate fully in secular society and many hold full-time professional, clerical or manual jobs and remain incognito as far as possible.

Sukyo Mahikari does not impose dietary or marriage restrictions, but members are encouraged to come to the centre each day and engage in the practice of meiharki no waza, the transference of Pure Light or divine energy. The centres are very Japanese in style: members must wash their hands, as one does when visiting a Shinto shrine, and remove their shoes before entering, kneel on the floor and bow to the shrine and to each other, as in Japan, in many social and ritual contexts. Behaviour and attitude are very formal and emphasis is on thoughtfulness to others. The prayer which precedes the giving of Light, Amatoo Ninagote, is recited in archaic Japanese in a loud voice and all members have memorised it. I have observed centres in Japan, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and everywhere, the atmosphere and practices are the same, despite the
fact that some of these practices are very alien to the members’ native cultures. It is also significant to observe, for instance, young women giving Light to elderly gentlemen, Indians to Chinese, in other words, not only ethnic boundaries but also gender and age differences are transcended to an unusual degree in an Asian cultural context. Moreover, at home, members are encouraged to maintain an ancestral altar and offer food to the ancestors several times a day, a practice which has overtones of Japanese Buddhist observances in traditional households. In Sakyō Mahākāri, these practices which focus on purification, are associated with the occurrence of miracles in the healing of many illnesses, and other aspects of members’ lives regularly turn for the better, (Tebecis, 1983), but the relationships and social activities of the members gradually drift away from pre-conversion patterns and come to revolve around the centre and other members.

Speech patterns are also modified through membership of NRMs. Braham Kumaris refer to other people as ‘souls’, and male and female members as ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’. Mahākāri members speak with reference to their gratitude for everything and preface accounts of their own doings with “I was permitted to…” thus showing respect for the divine plan of Su God. In order to speak within the community of members, one must make a mental adjustment to the rules of discourse of the movement. This is of course easier if one is only interacting with other members but if one is mixing in and out of secular society, it is a reminder of the layers of culture within which one exists.

These outward speech patterns are a manifestation of an inner transformation which one exists. Speech patterns are also modified through training and preface accounts of their own doings with “I was permitted to…” thus showing respect for the divine plan of Su God. In order to speak within the community of members, one must make a mental adjustment to the rules of discourse of the movement. This is of course easier if one is only interacting with other members but if one is mixing in and out of secular society, it is a reminder of the layers of culture within which one exists.

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Since the colonial era, Chinese businesses in Malaysia have adapted to economic and political changes by evolving from tin-mining and rubber cultivation to commodity production, banking and finance, construction and property development, and industrial and advanced technology manufacturing. Simultaneously, intra-ethnic and Chinese family businesses have evolved into inter-ethnic and plural enterprises in order to adapt to government policies that favour indigenous people. With the onslaught of globalisation, Chinese entrepreneurs have transformed anew, proving once again that Chinese entrepreneurship is not static but dynamic.

**From tin to Ali Baba’s gold: the evolution of Chinese entrepreneurship in Malaysia**

To men, rubber men, middle men: Malaysia’s economic rule. The Chinese dominated tin-mining in Malaysia before Europeans introduced dredging technology in the early 20th century. Subsequently, Chinese mining companies lost out to European joint-stock companies with more sophisticated technology and capital. Moreover, colonial government’s macro-economic and intervention favoured European companies over Chinese firms (Jomo 1988).

In the early 1900s Chinese entrepreneurs incorporated rubber-production into their established gambier and pepper economic networks. In the 1920s, following the development of rubber plantations and trading and the inter-war expansion of manufacturing, they established banks to address the financial needs of Chinese businessmen (Tan 1915, Tan 1982). All early Chinese banks were clan- and ethnic-based and possessed only limited amounts of capital.

Most Chinese manufacturing during the inter-war years consisted of raw material-processing that required simple technology to produce rubber sheets, foodstuffs such as breads, biscuits, sweets and beverages, building materials and metal goods, and to process tin ore (Huff 1994). Chinese also monopolised rice mills in northern Malaya (Tan 2006). By 1950, over 80 per cent of the two minor sectors of manufacturing and construction (Wheelwright 1956).

Manufacturing activity, however, was small-scale owing to the British policy of imitating most manufactured goods and to Britain’s reluctance to promote large-scale industry alone. After the war between 1947 and 1957, most Chinese manufacturing remained in agriculture and commodity-processing such as rubber-milling, rice-processing, pineapple-canning, tin-smelting, and coconut oil-and palm oil-refining. The Chinese also controlled the export-based timber industry (Puthehcu 1979) and played the important role of ‘go-between’, linking European importers to the rural and urban populations. Nonetheless, the British owned or controlled the economy’s major sectors.

From miniscule to ‘manufactury’: independence and Chinese business expansion

With independence, the new government adopted a laissez-faire economic system that aimed to encourage foreign direct investment (FDI). This helped create relatively small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). The government’s greater national orientation in its development programmes, and the Malaysian Chinese Association’s (MCA) role in preventing excessive bureaucratic interference in large manufacturing plants, such as Malaysia’s first and largest sugar refinery, Malay Malasian Sugar, mainly through partnership with foreign companies and the government. Loy Hoon Heong, who accumulated his capital from speculating in rubber estates, ventured into manufacturing by acquiring a fledging carbide company, an adhesive tape and rubber band company and an aluminium foil lamination company (Jesusdada 1978). The Hong Leong Group, originally from Singapore, also exerted a strong presence in the manufacturing of construction materials (Tan 1984). In 1968 the late Loh Boon Siew, the sole distributor of Honda motorcycles and vehicles, established the first-ever fully Malaysian ‘manufactury’ and launched production well before the country’s first industrialisation. The Company, which was controlled by the Tan Chong Group, the franchise-holder for Nissan vehicles in Malaysia and Singapore since 1958, and the Chua family, who controlled the Cycle & Carriage Company, became aggressively involved in the auto-mobile industry (Tee 1991).

These large-scale Chinese manufactur- ers acquired knowledge and technology in related businesses by partnering with foreign companies, while the majority of Chinese entrepreneurs were small, family-based, possessed minimal capital and had limited access to sophisticated technology. That said, overall Chinese involvement in the economy clearly showed a notable shift from primary production to manufacturing.

**Malaysian policy, Chinese response: the making of the Ali-Baba alliance**

Following the racial riots of 13 May 1969, which presented the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1970-1990) to reduce and eventually eliminate the identifi- cation of race with economic function. Its ultimate goals were: the emergence of a ‘fledgling Malay entrepreneurial commu- nity within one generation’ and increasing Bumiputera ownership of the corporate sector’s 50% by 1990. In accordance with this, affirmative action policy, ethnic quotas were introduced. Consequently, Bumiputers were favoured in the awarding of government contracts, tenders, loans and credit. One of the controversial NEP regulations was the ‘30-30-40 rule’ (ICA). Firms with more than RM100,000 in shareholder funds and more than 25 employees were required to employ a workforce that was 30% Malay and to reserve 30% of their equity for Malay interests. The ICA had its greatest effect on SME family-based businesses, but large companies were spared. The Chinese business community responded in five different ways.

First, they shifted investment from the manu- facturing sector to commerce, finance, construction, property development and other sectors that could generate quick returns and were not subject to the ICA (Jesusdada 1979). In the mid-1970s, one of the key strategies that Chinese entrepreneurs adopted to circumvent the ICA was to pursue joint ventures (JVs), establishing the first joint-venture company in Malaysia (Cameo 1993, Searle 1993). Second, large companies relocated their headquarters and shifted most of their capi- tal abroad, resulting in ‘capital flight’. Third, those who stayed in Malaysia changed their business strategy to accommodate NEP requirements by incorporating influential Bumiputera and integrating Bumiputera capital into their family-owned businesses (Cameo 1993, Searle 1993). Fourth, scores of companies maintained their paid-up capital just below the limit that required a company to offer 50% of its equity to Bumi- putera shareholders.

Finally, Chinese businessmen maintained their economic position by forming ‘Ali- Baba’ alliances. ‘Ali’, or the Malay partner, was simultaneously responsible for contributing his political influence and connections ‘Baba’, or the Chinese partner, was the more active half of the alliance, contributing his capital, skills and technical know-how. This kind of partnership gave Chinese access to licenses and lucrative government contracts reserved for Bumi- putera, especially in the construction and transportation sectors (Nomin 1983). In the wholesale and retail sector, Chinese entrepreneurs demonstrated their business network power and control by boycotting Bumiputera attempts (with government support) to cut off Chinese wholesalers and retail access to the food market (Kuo 1991).

**Equal partnership: new wealth and the indispensable Bumiputra ‘technoprenuer’**

Thus we can identify three types of Chi- nese wealth. ‘Old wealth’ includes busi- nesses that developed into conglomerates before the NEP. ‘New wealth’ emerged in the 1990s after businesses successfully conformed to the NEP. Declining wealth refers to those businesses that lacked entrepreneurial drive when the second or third generations took over and did not try, failed, or decided, to adapt successively to the NEP, and as a result either stagnated or declined (Heng and Siew 2000).

At the corporate level, the new NEP-Malay capitalist class is closely integrated with Chinese ‘new wealth’ in various joint ven- tures. Consequently, in the 1990s, the con- cept of interdependence and the practice of complementing each other developed at the elite level. These inter-ethnic corporate relationships mark an important structural shift from Chinese family-based organisations to Sino-Bumiputera alliances (Cameo 2003, Searle 1993, Heng and Siew 2000, Wair 2000).

When the NEP officially came to an end in 1990, the National Development Plan (NDP, 1991-2000) was implemented to pursue the NEP’s ‘unachieved objectives’, one of which was to advance the forma- tion of the ‘Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial Community’ (BCIC), a Malay or Bumiputera entrepreneurial class. The NDP aimed to transfer entrepreneurial skills to Bumiputera at the micro-level by encouraging joint ventures between them and non-Bumiputera or foreign investors. Bumiputera ‘technopreneurs’ would then become active in technology-based indus- tries (Malaysia 2000). Scores of formal Sino-Bumiputera partnerships materialised in the late 1990s. These new ‘strategic’ partnerships were created as a result of an ‘inflation’ in Sino-Bumiputera partnerships, occurring in industries such as tin-mining (Badrol 1995), food-catering and shop-mall manufactur- ing (Rugayah 1994) and combine rice-har- vesting (Ruten 2000). Partnerships shifted from construction to manufacturing and resulted in significant Bumiputera acquisi- tion of technology, knowledge and skills. Knowledgeable and capable Bumiputera created more value for their companies in technology-based industries, showing that government policies influenced both Chinese and Bumiputera business culture (Chin 2004, 2006).

Following the emergence of a capitalist and new Malay middle class (Abdul Rah- man 2002), Chinese entrepreneurs began to see Bumiputera participation as crucial to enhancing business development, espe- cially to placing the company on the fast track to public listing (Simon and Teh 5-5 November 1995). The changes within these two ethnic societies, and high economic growth, gave birth to the Sino-Bumiputera ‘equil’ partnership. As a result, Chinese entrepreneurship has become more plural in the post-NEP and post-NDP era. Even though individual or intra-ethnic practices persist, Chinese business culture in Malay- sia is gradually breaking away from intra-ethnic partnerships.

Adapting to new challenges in the global economy

The economic liberalisation that began in 1986 signifies a gradual lifting of ICA regu- lations. Since 1990, SMEs are no longer subject to the ICA stipulation of Bumi- putera equity participation. This change indirectly encouraged Chinese-dominant SMEs to expand in terms of production scale and revenue. Thus, Chinese entre- preneurs not only adjusted to Malaysia’s changing environment but also to global capitalism, weathering the 1997 financial crisis, which left China as Asia’s most stable economy. As a result, Chinese-Sino entrepreneurs have continued to draw on their own resources – cultural values, acquired knowledge, accumulated experiences, skills and social networks – to remain globally competitive. Their success has varied, but their adaptation, like the change that makes it necessary, has been constant for a century.

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Complete list of references available online at www.iasl.nl.
Mauritius was completely uninhabited when the British captured it in 1810. However, when the British decided in 1852 to abolish slavery, the exclaves were transformed, thereby leaving slavery's plantations, leaving plantation-owners and former slaves without labour. The elite quickly turned to the business community and, by 1860, the newly freed left the colony. The British plantation owners who remained on the island were left to their own devices.

After the Second World War, Hindu leaders began to compete for dominance with the Franco-Mauritian elites. In the late 1970s, Franco-Mauritian leaders became hostile to the Hindu-dominated pro-independence Hindu authority over the island. Nevertheless, the statute of d'Epinay still stands.

Mauritius During much of the colonial period Franco-Mauritians had the advantage of a qualitative education because they could afford to send their children to schools. In the early 18th century, other ethnic groups began to compete for dominance with the Franco-Mauritian community. In the 1960s, Franco-Mauritian pupils. But the state gained control over these schools, so competition for enrolment increased. Moreover, Franco-Mauritians were forced to compete for admittance with all Mauritians on merit alone. Yet again, every ethnic group has its own preferences for where it is remembered and which is often discussed in the press and a democratic Mauritius the elite of this privileged position, culture and language through the island and considered the well-established Franco-Mauritian elite a valuable asset, they allowed them to stay almost entirely on their own terms: they kept their land, elite position, culture and language throughout the whole of Mauritius,

In the centre of Port Louis, the capital of the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius, stands a statue of Adrien d'Epinay, the man of group identity and corresponded largely to the benefit of a shared culture and an identity that distinguishes Franco-Mauritians from the rest of the population. Marriage is at the core of any minority's survival as a community. By marrying 'white' you keep your stake in the island's richest economic network and increase your chances for a prosperous life.

Because love does not always conform to economic reasoning, marrying outside the community is not completely unheard of. Furthermore, Franco-Mauritians are more conscious today of the racial connotations of their marriages patterns, but in practice, it is still an anomaly, not only because of the economic value. Love simply does not easily find its way outside the Franco-Mauritian community. Social life is strictly organised. For example, the community maintains several white-only sport and social clubs, like the Dodo Club. The national rugby team is virtually all-white, as the only islands playing the sport are members of Franco-Mauritians. A night club catering to Franco-Mauritian youngsters tends to refuse entrance to anyone else. In these ways, the 'irrational' facet of partner choice is eliminated by the limits of social life: the elite tend to date the elite. This guarantees ethnic separation and intensifies the high visibility of whiteness in an overwhelmingly non-white society, which creates other problems.

Persist or perish The inseparable difference of skin colour that distinguishes Franco-Mauritians often self-defined as 'blancs,' 'whites' combined with colonial history and income inequality is a recurring issue. Franco-Mauritians are the living vestiges of colonial injustice, and many islanders perceive them as the agents of its maintenance. During celebratory abolition commemorations every February, politicians do not limit themselves to calling for the dismantling of d'Epinay's statue, they also directly and frequently, target Franco-Mauritian wealth, its historic origin and its owners unwillingness to share it. They lament the advanced position of d'Epinay's descendants and campaign for financial compensation for the disadvantaged position of slave descendants.

D'Epinay and his statue are easy targets, but his descendants arefallacious ones: while they may be symbolic of the injustice of slavery, there is in fact hardly any uninter-rupted line of wealth among Franco-Mauritian families and most of their present-day businesses cannot be blamed for slavery. Nor is slavery the sole reason why many slave descendants are disadvantaged. It seems that politicians are sometimes more interested in scapegoating for their own electoral profit than in truly redistributing the island's unequal share of wealth, which only reinforces the sense among the elite that they have to stick together.

It is obvious that many factors influence the maintenance of elite positions in general, and Franco-Mauritian elitism in particular. First, economic privilege is crucial, but the outcome is not always a starting point; perpetuating privilege is the key, and the Franco-Mauritians drive to stick together culturally and socially achieves a degree of exclusion that is highly effective in maintaining economic privileges. In fact, not excluding themselves from other communities would lead to the ultimate disintegration of their own, at least as they have known it. For this elite – for this 1% – it is either persist or perish.

Notes 1 Figures are approximate. They are based on the last official ethnic census, in 1972, which was abolished thereafter because, according to the government, ethnic classifications reinforced a sense of ethnic belonging, which was no longer seen as desirable in a 'new' Mauritius. Furthermore, the four census categories were a simplification of the actual ethnic groups. For instance, the ethnic category General Population referred to those Mauritians who had first arrived in Mauritius, of whom many were Catholics and whose members did not belong to the three, more clearly defined ethnic categories. Thus the General Population consisted of Creoles, considered the descendants of slaves, and Franco-Mauritians, considered the descendents of slave masters.

2 Actually, endogamy is a common Mauritius practice, but its financial consequences differ accordingly from group to group.

3 Other ethnic groups also maintain clubs restricted to their ethnicities. In all cases it is not officially sanctioned but rather the consequence of unmet, yet commonly known and accepted, membership policies.

Tijo Salverda

Still standing: the maintenance of a white elite in Mauritius

Tijo Salverda

Colonial plantation-owners home, now serving as a museum. Courtesy Tijo Salverda

Statue of Adrien d’Epinay with protest board saying ‘gently, condemned by history’, Port Louis, Mauritius. Courtesy Tijo Salverda

Review

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There are more than 40,000 first generation Chinese migrants from the People’s Republic and Hong Kong in the Netherlands. Of these, about 18,000 are 60 years or older, and 10,000 of them are 70 plus (CBS Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics). The numbers are relatively small compared to elderly Surinamese (more than 60,000 aged 50 years and older) or Turkish migrants of a similar age, (about 40,000). Nevertheless, it remains a significant group of people if we consider that they migrated to the Netherlands a generation ago with the idea of returning to their homeland in old age. Now this generation has reached old age however, it appears that rather than returning to China, they are choosing to stay in the Netherlands or divide their time between the two countries, in effect having two homes. So what happened to make them change their minds?

There has been little research carried out into migration, both return migration and circular migration. According to Cassarino, in an attempt to revisit the conceptual approach to this subject, ‘we still need to know who returns when, and why’ (Cas- sarino 2004, 254; Engelhard 2004, 2006).

Circularity or circular migration is seen as the migration strategy of having a home in two or more places. Up to now, circular migration has been neglected in migration studies. Undoubtedly so, because circular migration is popular among migrants. For example, many Turkish and also Chinese migrants spend part of the year in their country of origin, and part of the year in the country of migration (Yerden 2000; Schellingerhout 2004).

Notions of home

The idea of circularity or ‘commuting’ between two countries is very personal, as each migrant may have his own idea about ‘home’. I interviewed a married couple in their sixties, who have been living in the Netherlands for decades. They have four children, three of which now own their own restaurants. For some years the couple have been spending six months of every year in China. The man feels like he is on holiday when he’s in China; when he flies back to Holland, he feels like he’s coming home. For the woman, though, it is just the opposite: flying to China is going home, and she equates staying in the Netherlands as being abroad.

We know that approximately one quarter of all elderly migrants in the Netherlands think about returning to their homeland. (Van den Tillaard 2000). Approximately one third of a sample of Chinese ‘heads of family’ expressed a desire to return to China, and about two thirds of them actually have plans to do so. Almost half of all ‘heads of family’ do not foresee a return to their country of origin, and the remainder are indecisive (Vogel et al 1999). Little is known about the numbers of Chinese living in the Netherlands planning to adopt a circular migration strategy, how often and how long they would return to their homeland and the interconnection with health and health care issues of elderly Chinese.

As part of my PhD research I questioned about 350 elderly Chinese in the Netherlands. I prepared a bilingual questionnaire and gave it to about 350 elderly Chinese, attending a National day for the Chinese elderly in Rotterdam on September 15, 2006. A little over a thousand Chinese attended the day, which gave a response rate of approximately 32 percent. We carried out an additional follow-up interview with 10 of the respondents. Our short questionnaire included three aspects of return and circular migration: (1) desire to return to homeland permanently; (2) frequency of circulation; (3) duration of circulation. There was a separate question dealing with the problems experienced when travelling. In addition, the questionnaire included one validated item on self-reported health (SF-12 questionnaire). Health can be evaluated in many different ways, for example by carrying out blood tests. Alternatively, health can be evaluated by simply asking someone how they feel. This is called self-reported health and it has proved to be a very reliable evaluation tool.

Of the respondents, one third is male; 23 percent comes from the People’s Republic of China, 62 percent from Hong Kong, and the remaining come from a variety of countries, such as Suriname or Indonesia. The mean age is 61 years, and on average the respondents have already lived in the Netherlands for 30 years. (Hong Kong Chinese slightly longer than migrants from the PRC, which reflects the migration history of both groups in the 1970s.) Almost all of those questioned have family living in the Netherlands, and many also have relatives in the country of origin. ‘But now we are still in good health, so we can commute. When our health falls back, we of course will stay permanently in China.’

Is migration bad for your health?

So what about their health? An old man living in the centre of Amsterdam, showed me huge bags full of Chinese medicine. These herbs ‘had prevented a surgery and killed the pain’. On the small Chinese altar in the middle of the room – laid many boxes with Western medicines.

More than half of the respondents (54 percent) indicate experiencing less than good health (poor or bad). By way of comparison: only 35 percent of the native Dutch population older than 55 years report poor or bad health, whereas for Dutch-Moroc- cans it is 81 percent and Dutch-Antillans 44 percent (Schellinghout 2004). So the self-reported health of elderly Chinese in the Netherlands is quite bad, but not worse than that of other migrant groups.

Age as such has no significant effect on self-reported health, but it appears that age at time of migration does. Our survey showed that the younger a person was at the time of arrival in the Netherlands, the better the self reported health; or in other words: migration at a mature age (after the age of 50 or 60), negatively affects the self reported health at old age. At the same time, the conclusions of the self-reported health survey suggest the longer one lives in the Netherlands, the better.

With regards to the desire to return, one third of the older Chinese migrants think about a permanent return to their country of origin (either Hong Kong or the Main- land). Less than half of the people (40 percent) travel once or more per year to their country of origin, and slightly more than a quarter (38 percent) stays for more than two months in China or Hong Kong.

We can summarise the results as follows: ‘younger’ elderly Chinese – in terms of both the current age and the age at the time of the initial migration – still think about a future return to the homeland. These plans are abolished the older they get. At this stage they start commuting. And ‘older’ elderly Chinese make longer visits to China than their younger counterparts. Migrants with a good self reported health consider returning permanently more often and commute more frequently.

The only gender difference is in the duration of stay, not in the desire to return and frequency of circulation. This is remarkable, since it is often assumed that men and women will think differently about return, as variables like family attachment and social status at old age are likely to be differently balanced. Also remarkable is the non-significant effect of the duration of stay in the Netherlands. Assimilation theory would predict that the longer people stay in the country of migration, the less inclined they are to return. Yet a study on Mexican migrants in the USA concludes

No place like home?

Return and circular migration among elderly Chinese in the Netherlands

David Engelhard

Research into a group of 350 elderly Chinese migrants in the Netherlands examines who amongst them expect to return to the homeland, who will regularly commute between China and the Netherlands and who will, most likely, never leave their adopted country. A look at self-reported health within this group sheds light on the question, ‘is migration bad for your health?’

Variable | Desire for permanent return | Circulation: frequency | Circulation: duration
--- | --- | --- | ---
Sex | ns | ns | men stay longer than women
Current age | younger migrants think more about permanent return than those who migrated when older | ns | older migrants stay much longer than younger migrants
Country of origin | Migrants from HK think more about return than those from PRC (ns) | ns | ns
Age at time of migration | Those who migrated at a younger age think more about return than those who migrated when older | 25-35 age group less often than both < 25 and > 35 age group (as) | ns
Duration of stay in the Netherlands | ns | ns | Those resident longest in NL make longer visits to the homeland.
Self-reported health | Migrants with good health think more about return than those with bad health (as) | Migrants in good health return more often than those with bad health | ns
Family | Migrants without children in NL think more of return than those with (as); and those with siblings in NL more than without | Migrants without family in CoO return less often than those with | ns

ns = not significant (at 95% level); as = almost significant (at 95% level); NL = The Netherlands; CoO = Country of origin; HK = Hong Kong; PRC = People’s Republic of China.

A more statistical version, including the odds ratios, is available from the author.
that duration of stay in the USA has no sig-
nificant influence on the decision (Berna-
bé-Aguilera 2004) – this concurs with the
outcomes of this study. One would assume
that having your family in the Netherlands
is an incentive to stay, rather than return.
Therefore it is remarkable that migrants
with siblings in the Netherlands more
often consider a permanent return than
those migrants without. My guess is that
migrants with large families in the country
of migration can afford more easily to risk
the hazardous venture of return migration.
If things don’t work out, there is still family
in the Netherlands to fall back on. Further
qualitative research will shed more light on
this matter.

The questionnaire included a short list
with possible problems that migrants may
encounter during their commute or holi-
day in the country of origin. These prob-
lems were marked as follows: Travelling is expensive (46 percent); no health insurance in the country of origin (35 percent); no suitable place to stay in the country of origin (33 percent); travel-
ing is tiring (19 percent); no (good medi-
cal doctor in the country of origin (18 per-
cent); the journey is difficult to organise
(12 percent); other problems (5 percent); no problems at all (18 percent).

For elderly people, the availability of a
medical doctor is of course even more
important than for younger generations.
While elderly Chinese may have a general
trust in the Dutch medical system, includ-
ing the medical staff, they find it difficult to
talk to doctors. Many elderly Chinese can-
not speak Dutch well enough to visit the
doctor without help. As a rule, the doctor
should arrange an interpreter, but in prac-
tice the patients bring their children. That
is quite a burden for both the children and
the parents.

Travel expenses – including medical care
– are one of the main problems of com-
muting, as well as having a place to stay
(especially for Hong Kongese) and the
tiring aspect of all the travelling. More
profound questions we have to deal with
include the organisation of elderly care in
transnational families. Both at the stage
when the older generation can still travel
back and forth, and at the stage when
health problems obstruct further com-
muting, migrants and their children have
to deal with a difficult decision making
process.

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‘When we get older, we all want to go back.
Even after death!’

man (70), originally from Wenchang, Zhejiang Province, China
Chinese medical practice in East Africa is mediated through the World Health Organisation (WHO). There are suggestions that the way socialist China dealt with its indigenous medical traditions and the WHO, (although to my knowledge no one has, yet, extensively researched this issue), and the modernised traditional Chinese approach, rather than the European one, appears to have been implemented in several WHO traditional medicine programmes. Thus, African medicinal plants were recorded and researched according to the criteria of the modern Chinese materia medica, sometimes under the guidance of Chinese experts.

The fourth field of Chinese medical activities in Tanzania arises from Chinese-Tanzanian government collaborations to provide stipends for medical students to train in the PRC. Medical education was based on the Maosist vision of combining Western and Chinese medicine, and during six years in China (nine year of language learning and five years of medical training), students were obliged to attend a course on acupuncture for at least one semester. In China, as in the rest of the world, all students had to attend compulsory courses on traditional medicine. As a result, some returnees to Tanzania with an entirely different attitude towards traditional medicine: it need not be backward and superstitious. In fact, some considered it more ‘advanced’ than biomedical, an attitude which may have reflected political and cultural convictions that socialism is more advanced than capitalism. Perhaps, such an anti-Imperialist attitude, combined with a certain pragmatism, ignited the collaboration of the Chinese and Tanzanian Ministries of Health, which in 1983 led to the establishment of the traditional Chinese Medicine research programme on HIV/AIDS at Muhimbili Hospital in Dar es Salaam. To date, no results have been published in English. An earlier public statement of renowned senior Chinese medical research group on Chinese medicine in Tanzania does not claim to publish their results in English. As doctor and patient embark on a long journey, the patient needs to urinate more frequently, and/or smell of the urine or faeces change. If the doctor predicts this will happen, and it does, an initial bridge of trust between the Chinese doctor and the patient is built. After a few days, the client may return. The doctor now prescribes a different medicine. It may look different and have another taste, and it may be meant to evoke different bodily effects: increased sleep, feelings of relaxation, deeper breathing. As doctor and patient embark on a journey of several stages, the effect of the Chinese medical treatment, which the doctor often assesses primarily in terms of qi - which means breath, vapour, energy etc. - can easily be mapped onto the patient’s subjective self-assessments of treatment. I noted that the locals are very much aware of the effects of their bodies and have a remarkably fine perception of its changes. The site within which the interplay of patients, practitioners and their paraphernalia is experienced is the body.

There is no doubt that history and culture, politics and socio-economics, as well as the ritual induced, body transformative effects within the patient, are key to understanding the phenomenon of Chinese medicine in East Africa. It is a phenomenon that transcends Western biomedical science, and Chinese medicine in East Africa is made to a valuable contribution to health care in the future, the ways in which it is regulated must account for the multiple layers of its effects.
Taking traditional knowledge to the market

Nowadays Ayurvedic medicines are marketed as natural remedies against common discomforts such as indigestion, cough, muscle pain, headache, pimples and rashes, menstrual irregularities, whist discharge, post partum and menopausal ailments. Increasingly, Ayurvedic medicines are purchased by urban middle class consumers for the treatment of ‘modern’ ailments like diabetes, arthritis, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease, heart conditions, obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and a variety of toxins, to ‘boost the immune sys-
tem’, is another important class of Ayurvedic medical products.


The description of the centenary of the Ayurvedic manufacturer comes from my forthcoming book Taking Tradition Knowledge to the Market: The Modern Image of the Ayurvedic and Unani traditions (Fabricated Orient Langman 2008), which is based upon ethnographic research among large Ayurvedic and Unani manufacturers in India during the period 1996-2002. In this book I look at two Indian medical traditions, Ayurveda and Unani Tikk, through the lens of the Indian indigenous medical industries and their products, and highlight Indian medicines as a commercial activity. As far as I am aware, Taking Tradition Knowledge to the Market is the first book that highlights Indian medicine as a commercial activity and applies the insights of pharmaceutical anthropology to analyse the modernisation and commodification of traditional medicine.

Notes:
1 The Arya Vaidya Sala is one of approximately 7,500 Ayurvedic manufacturers with a total turnover in 2002 of about US$ 500 million.

References:
Agarwood is the infected wood of the Aquilaria tree. Called ‘the wood of the Gods’, its uses range from incense for religious ceremonies, perfume for the Arabic world, medicinal wine in Korea and ornamental functions in China. As a healthy tree the Aquilaria is worth next to nothing, but wounded its defence mechanisms produce agarwood and the tree becomes a valuable commodity. Gerard Persoon goes in search of the natural and social life of a wounded tree.

Agarwood: the life of a wounded tree

Gerard A. Persoon

Buddhist monks, Arabic perfumers, Papuan collectors were just some of the cast of the 2nd International Agarwood Conference (March 2007, Bangkok). Participants came from more than thirty countries. The ‘world of science’ was represented by wood pathologists, anthropologists, foresters, economists and laboratory analysts each with their specific research interests. Alongside the scientists were entrepreneurs from Australia, Malaysia and the United States, potential investors in the opportunities that Aquilaria plantations offer. Finally there were nature conservationists concerned with the survival of the tree species. In total more than 120 people, (covering the full agarwood spectrum from production to consumption), came together to discuss the future life of the infected wood of a wounded tree.

Agarwood: its history and use

Agarwood is the heartwood produced by a number of Aquilaria species in Southeast Asia, with Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Papua New Guinea as the main producing countries and Singapore being the main trade centre. The resin-impregnated heartwood is fragrant and, as a result, highly valuable. This resin is produced as a result of pathological or wounding processes. It is also thought that resin production is a response to fungal infection. Interestingly however, not all Aquilaria trees produce resin and it is extremely difficult (if even impossible) to judge from the outside of a tree whether or not it is infected. Cutting the tree is the only way to find out whether the tree contains the resin.

Use of agarwood has been reported in many ancient cultures, even though the history of agarwood use is still to be written. The Egyptians are believed to have used agarwood incense as part of their death rituals more than 3,000 years ago. It is also suggested that incense trade was in fact the first international trade route that existed in history. In Japan, agarwood is said to have arrived with Buddhism. In Vietnam ancient texts also refer to the use of agarwood in relation to travelling Buddhist monks.

Today the range of agarwood products and their uses is seemingly endless. Solid pieces of agarwood are highly appreciated as ‘natural art’ in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Craftsmen carve raw pieces of agarwood into beautiful wooden sculptures. Agarwood is also turned into beads and bracelets. Most of the wood, however, is processed and either turned into oil which is used in perfumes and other cosmetic products, or the agarwood chips are ground into powder which is used as the raw material for incense making (and sometimes also for special cigarettes).

The oil is also used in the production of traditional Chinese and Korean medicine, in the preparation of (medicinal) wine and various other products.

The oil is mainly used in the Arab world where it is in high demand. It is by far the most precious essential oil with prices reaching as much as ten times that of sandalwood oil. The largest market for top class incense is Japan with its long tradition in incense making. Both the Arab countries and Japan are interested in high quality agarwood and manufacturers in these countries prefer to process the raw material themselves. This also avoids the mixing of high grade agarwood with wood of lower quality.

The oil is extracted from the agarwood through distillation. This delicate process determines both the amount and quality of oil produced. With the exception of large solid pieces of agarwood which are traded as individual pieces, most of the wood is ground into very small pieces or powder, which are immersed in water and left to ferment over time. Then the material is transferred to distillation kettles and steammed. After heating, the condensed water and oil are captured in a container where the oil floats on top of the water. The water is removed and the oil is tapped. The price of high quality oil can be as much as US$50,000 to US$80,000 per litre. This process can be repeated once or twice depending on the quality of the water and the costs of the distillation process. The powder which remains after distillation can be used for low grade incense making. It is estimated that for the production of one litre of oil 100 to 150 kilos of agarwood is necessary.

Wild and cultivated agarwood

In the past most agarwood has been harvested from the wild. Because it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to see whether a tree contains agarwood or not most of the Aquilaria trees are chopped down indiscriminately. High quality agarwood can fetch as much as US$100 per kilo. Throughout history there has been an ever-moving frontier of agarwood exploitation across Asia as traders, continuously search for untouched forests containing Aquilaria trees (Barden et al. 2000). The trees were fetching high prices and as a result, the news about agarwood harvesting spread like ‘gold fever’. Large sums of money and all kinds of luxury items were offered to the forest dwelling communities, the traditional producers of agarwood. Usually this ‘fever’ was temporary. Once the largest trees were cut, new harvesting expeditions became less successful and just as in the case of gold, the collecting of small quantities of agarwood became a less rewarding activity.

The high prices for agarwood and the local depletion of resources in the wild have led to a variety of efforts to stimulate the growth of agarwood. The most common is the deliberate wounding of trees with large knives or the hammering of nails into tree trunks. In general such efforts do not yield very productive results. The agarwood produced is of inferior quality and can only be used for home consumption. Moreover, high quality agarwood takes many years to develop. It is only during the last few decades that a more scientific approach has been adopted to cultivation. Experiments were set up in several countries including China, Thailand and Indonesia. However, one of the most successful efforts to date has been a project initiated in Vietnam. In addition to laboratory analysis, field experiments were developed by a non-governmental organisation based in Ho Chi Minh City. The project, called The Rainforest Project (TRP), is in the Seven Mountains area of South Vietnam close to the border with Cambodia. The experiments were undertaken with local farmers and Buddhist monks who had gained considerable experience in the cultivation of Aquilaria trees. Building on their knowledge, experimental plots were developed to stimulate the production of agarwood. The process and experiments were supervised by a wood pathologist from the University of Minnesota, Prof. Robert Blanchette and the Director of TRP, Henry Huyveling van Beek. The main principle of the process was the drilling of holes in the tree trunk and keeping the wound open by putting a small piece of plastic pipe in the hole. A chemical treatment was added to the wound to encourage the trees defence mechanism which stimulates the production of the resin. After years of experimenting with the numbers of holes, the age of the tree, the amount of chemicals and other variables, the first trees were recently harvesting and the production of incense made from the cultivated agarwood has begun. The success of the experiment implies that it will not be long before the method spreads to other areas where Aquilaria trees are being grown. TRP is also the leading organisation behind the two international agarwood conferences that have been held so far.

In Thailand a similar process of agarwood cultivation was started by a private company. In the past Thailand has been a traditional producer and consumer of relatively large amounts of agarwood. Over the years trade in a wide variety of agarwood products has developed in Bangkok. Large amounts of agarwood products, not only from the country itself but also from neighbouring Cambodia and Laos, are channelled through the city to markets in East Asia and the Arab world.

The declining supply has led Thai scientists, in partnership with the private sector, to set up relatively large scale plantations. One of these plantations is run by a company called Krisana Panasin in Chantaburi, Southeast Thailand. Over the years it has established a substantial plantation of several hundred hectares, including nurseries, processing and distillation units. The research department of the company has been experimenting with all sorts of techniques to obtain the optimal quality. Moreover, it provides seedlings to interested farmers who can produce agarwood trees on their own farms. The technology to wound the trees in order to start agarwood production is also provided to the small holders by the company. The mature trees are eventually being sold for processing to the company as the farmers usually lack the connections and skills to organise the transport to other buyers. Aside from the cultivation of agarwood, Krisana Panasin also produces a wide range of end products. The company established an extensive public relations department to market its products and reach wholesale traders in consumer countries directly. In this way it tries to bypass the intermediate traders, at least within Thailand but also in places like Singapore and Hong Kong, which mainly serve as import and re-export sites.

A much smaller project to cultivate agarwood is being undertaken by the Catholic Church in Marauke, Papua (Indonesia). Here too harvesting from the wild came to an end within a relatively short period after the agarwood frontier reached the area in 1956. People still try to dig up roots of Aquilaria trees that might contain some agarwood, but it is clear that the big harvest is over. The project currently being implemented aims to integrate agarwood trees into the local agroforestry system. This is based on the idea that in the future agarwood may become an additional source of income for the farmers. Methods that are being used are largely based on local trial and error efforts in wounding and treating agarwood trees, including inoculation. Processing units are still absent and the farmers are fully dependent on outside traders for market opportunities. As yet the farmers and the church organisation lack the capacity to process the agarwood to add value to national agarwood conferences that have been held so far.

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the raw material. But, based on the high prices of agarwood earned in the past the hopes for the future are high.

**New areas**

The high value of agarwood has attracted the attention of potential investors from a number of countries. Inspired by the success of the plantations that are already established in Vietnam, Thailand and India, new investors are willing to take up this challenge. New on the scene are the business people from Australia, Hawaii and Malaysia. Having gained substantial experience in the production of sandalwood in Western Australia, some companies are now ready to turn their efforts to *Aquilaria* plantations which could yield even higher prices per production unit. In the meantime, and as is the case with many other expensive products, there is an influx of fake agarwood products onto the market. These products go by the name of Black Magic Wood (BMW), and in fact are made from non-infected *Aquilaria* wood which has been impregnated with cheap oil. It requires a trained eye and nose to differentiate real agarwood from these fake products.

There are of course a number of questions to be asked in relation to the large scale domesticated production of agarwood: can the high prices currently commanded by agarwood be sustained if production is substantially increased? What will the quality of the cultivated product be? There are also concerns about the consequences of large-scale cultivation for the traditional producers of agarwood, the collectors inside the forested areas. It is generally assumed that the natural top quality agarwood will become rare but remain in demand, particularly in Japan. This ‘top end’ of the market cannot easily be replaced by cultivated agarwood. At the lower end of the supply quality, it is predicted that there will be an increase in supply from both the traditional producers as well as the new ones. A gradual reduction in price is expected as a result of this increased cultivation. Finally it is assumed that the production, and therefore the value, will gradually move from the original rainforest areas to plantations located in other areas. Similar developments have also taken place in the case of other non-timber forest products such as orchids, rattran and crocodile skins.

**Protection**

A number of measures to protect the *Aquilaria* trees from excessive logging, and thus ensure the survival of the species, are under discussion. However, some representatives of conservation organisations point to an apparent lexical confusion as one of the main obstacles in this area. For some years the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has listed all *Aquilaria* species in its Appendix II. This implies the need to monitor the trade (both import and export). However, because agarwood is known across the world by many different names (such as eaglwood, aloeswood, jinko, gaharu, and oudh), and because it is used or even disguised in so many different products (such as oil, perfumes, incense, wine, wood dust and chips), tracking agarwood products requires highly sophisticated detection procedures which are not yet in place. This is one of the reasons why the illegal trade in agarwood cannot easily be stopped. One of the challenges ahead will be the differentiation between wild and cultivated agarwood. Without doubt some of these issues will be discussed during the next agarwood conference which will take place in a few years time.

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**References**


The unbearable absence of parasols: the formidable weight of a colonial Java status symbol

The government hoped especially boys in Batavia (present-day Jakarta) the School for the Education of Indigenous Doctors and midwives in colonial Java. How to gain the respect of local people, but most Indonesians either preferred to consult the dukun, were too poor to pay the dokter djawa, or, given the very few dokter djawa relative to the archipelago's 44 million inhabitants, had no one to turn to but the dukun.

Thus, from the very beginning, the dokter djawa faced an uphill battle when it came to having his authority recognised in villages, other than those he himself and in the eyes of others. Because of his education many a dokter djawa felt part of the Western world; he was fluent in Dutch and wanted his children to receive a Western education. His salary, however, was not Western: for the same work, he earned far less than his European colleagues. Meanwhile, he belonged to a class which temporary status; previously, they were treated as necessary to pay tribute to them. They have no claim to a status; previously, they were treated as

...to a symbol that increases 'faith in their skill and competence' The payung debate fell silent for several years, until 1882, when the dokter djawa Mas Prawiro Atmodjo stirred it up again by requesting the privilege from his superior, the Governor General. This request was denied, and thus perhaps thought

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The government hoped especially boys from decent families, that is, from indigenous society's higher classes, where the use of a payung was common – would enrol. Thus it might seem logical that a dokter djawa would have the right to carry a payung. So thought Dr Willem Bosch, the school founder and head of the Military Health Service, who had served as a health officer in Java for more than 25 years. Knowing how important symbols like the payung were to colonial society, Bosch wanted every graduate to receive one, not only because he hoped to enrol boys from decent families but also because he wanted the dokter djawa to hold high status in indigenous society. His government, however, paid no attention and, of course, had the final say. Thus, graduates were sent paying less back to their villages, ostensibly to replace the dukuns. In reality most became vaccinators and some worked as assistants to a European doctor.

Life without a payung Dokters djawa weren't the only ones who were denied a payung. So were indigenous teachers, whom the colonial government also began to educate in 1858. These were the first ever such vocational trainings for Indonesians, and perhaps the colonial government wanted to wait and see what became of their investment before empowering them with the symbols of their indigenous authority, as in those days, the payung indicated that the person carried it was a medical doctor. Most of the latter, as vaccinators, served vaccinator supervisors – bosses – and as bosses they already had the right to carry a payung.

In 1863, Bosch's successor as head of the Military Health Service, Dr G. Wassink, wanted to improve the curriculum of the School for the Education of Indigenous Doctors, mainly by lengthening the program of study from two to three years, and to enhance graduate status by awarding each a salary and the right to carry the coveted payung. Until then dokters djawa only received an allowance. The government agreed to all of these proposals but one, and this time it did provide an explanation: it feared that a payung-carrying dokter djawa would elevate the population.

The government's argument of alienation is quite strange. One wonders why it was valid only for dokters djawa and not for teachers. More odd, the government's actions didn't reflect its argument, as it simultaneously empowered dukun doctors in other ways. For example, class divisions, extended throughout society, determining where passengers sat on trains and boats and how patients were treated in hospitals: In 1866, the government decided that dukun doctors students who fall ill should be treated as second-class patients because that was more in line with their status; previously, they were treated as fourth-class. That same year the government began issuing each graduate a box of medicines with which to treat patients; prior to that, they were issued nothing and were forced to ask European doctors for medicines. This shape the government was well aware of the students' status and was investing in them; issuing medicines, in particular, was a government expression of trust when many Europeans still feared that dokters djawa could not handle responsibility. Although these medicines were costly materially, they might also have been perceived as socially frugal: the government still viewed dokters djawa as mere vaccinators – which in reality 30% of them were – and thus perhaps thought they were simply unworthy of the payung.

Yet the payung continued to be withheld, the consequences of which one former dokter djawa school teacher, Dr. J. Alken, made clear: "When graduates are sent back to their villages to work as a vaccinator they lack any status symbol, such as the payung, and therefore they are equal to a simple village. They see their equals placed in positions as supervisors or assistant district heads or even higher positions. When they arrive in the villages, they are not like these others who are received with music, because it is not necessary to pay tribute to them. They have no claim to a payung'.

From a symbol of 'ostentatious pomp and personal vanity'... In 1868 two dokters djawa officially applied to carry the same status symbol that vaccinators supervisors carried. Refusing their request, Governor General Mr. Pieter Mijer explained he saw no reason 'to give the dokter djawa esteem in indigenous society by artificial means. Through useful activities they should themselves strive for an honourable position. Ostentatious pomp and personal vanity were not in keeping with the duties of their stay at the school in Batavia they surely must have learned that being truly magnanimous did not depend on payung but on true knowledge and diligent devotion to duty'.

That the Governor General considered the payung a manifestation of vanity is ironic, given the government preference for recruiting students for the dokter djawa school from among the payung-carrying class, whose members were among the few literate Indonesians, and literacy was a prerequisite to enrolment. Quite often a dokter djawa's father, brother or nephew held a position with a right to a payung while the dokter djawa was denied one, which could not only arouse envy within a family but make the dokter djawa's position in indigenous society unclear: according to the Dutch world; he was fluent in Dutch and wanted his children to receive a Western education.

His salary, however, was not Western: for the same work, he earned far less than his European colleagues. Meanwhile, he belonged to a class which temporary status; previously, they were treated as necessary to pay tribute to them. They have no claim to a status; previously, they were treated as...
Uncovering hidden treasures: establishing the discipline of Indian manuscriptology

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A recent IIAS workshop brought together esteemed scholars to look at the production, distribution and collection of Sanskrit manuscripts in Ancient South India.

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A recent IAS workshop brought together esteemed scholars to look at the production, distribution and collection of Sanskrit manuscripts in Ancient South India. (Organiser and Convenor: Dr Saraju Rath) took place in Leiden, from 20-21 April, 2007. The organisation of the workshop was made possible by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden), J. Gonda foundation (KNARE, Amsterdam), the Leiden Universiteitsfonds (CLF, Leiden), the School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS, Leiden).

The IIAS workshop “Production, distribution and collection of Sanskrit manuscripts in Ancient South India” (Organiser and Convenor: Dr Saraju Rath) took place in Leiden, from 20-21 April, 2007. The organisation of the workshop was made possible by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden), J. Gonda foundation (KNARE, Amsterdam), the Leiden Universiteitsfonds (CLF, Leiden), the School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS, Leiden).

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The dizzying pace of change in urban China is nowhere more evident than in Beijing. No city on earth is reinventing itself more rapidly than the next Olympic city. Half the world’s production of steel and a third of its concrete is feeding the voracious appetite for construction. New apartments, hotels, offices, stations and roads are transforming the landscape of the capital. Old sites are torn down, making way for new ones, in the relentless pursuit of modernisation.

But there are still a few corners of the city that have managed to avoid the bulldozers. MuXiYuan, in the south of Beijing, is one of them. Jikky Lam’s photographs offer us a snapshot of the daily lives of the people living in the neighbourhood: doing groceries, running errands, cooking, chatting with acquaintances. A glimpse of mundanity in the face of frenetic change.

MuXiYuan’s small streets and narrow lanes are hemmed in by new high rise apartments on one side, and a huge overpass on the other. There are no plans as yet for rebuilding MuXiYuan, but surely it is only a matter of time before the ‘city that ate the world’ swallows up the final traces of its 19th century self.

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**Energy Programme Asia (EPA)**

**The New EPA-Joint Research Programme**

Domestic and Geopolitical Challenges to Energy Security for, China and the European Union

A Joint Research Programme between Energy programme Asia (EPA)-IIAS and the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWAAS)-Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in cooperation with the Institute of Industrial Economy-CASS.

The objectives of this comparative research project are to analyse (a) the geopolitical and (b) domestic aspects of energy security challenges for the European Union (EU) and China and their impact on energy security policy strategies. The geopolitical aspects involve analysing the effects of competition for access to oil and gas resources and the security of energy supply among the main global consumer countries of the EU and China. The domestic aspects involve analysing domestic energy demand and supply, energy efficiency policies, and the deployment of renewable energy resources.

The research program is funded by the KNAW for a duration of three years: September 1 2007 - September 1 2010.

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**Activities:**


**Forthcoming events:**

The First research-oriented meeting, the Institute of West Asia and African Studies-CASS, December 14-15, 2007, Beijing-China

The second research-oriented meeting in the Netherlands, October, 19-20, International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands

**For More Information:**

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Few world cities have a record as long, as fascinating, or as well-documented as Beijing's. A capital almost continuously for more than a thousand years, the city has been Khubilai Khan's Mongol headquarters, home to emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the main stage for Communist-era achievements and upheavals. Beijing is the first book in English to trace this vibrant city's history from its earliest days to the present. It highlights recent changes in the city as its more than fifteen million people live through record-level economic growth and intensive preparations for the 2008 Olympics. Focusing on the lives of ordinary residents and rulers alike, the authors examine the controversial destruction of historic districts as well as the construction of new residential and business districts and Olympic venues. Extensive photographs and paintings, many not previously published, offer a window onto Beijing not only in major phases of its past, but also in its startlingly different present. Compelling and revealing, Beijing arrives just in time for the city's turn in the Olympic spotlight.

A Zen Life in Nature: Musō Soseki in his Gardens

Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan. 2007. ISBN 978 1 903280 21 4

A Zen Life in Nature examines the design style and aesthetic of the medieval Japanese Zen monk Musō Soseki (1275–1355), who built gardens as places to meditate and to escape his busy public life. The book begins with a discussion of Soseki's rural upbringing and the spiritual background to it, his quest for enlightenment as a Zen monk, and his role as mediator in the turbulent times that surrounded the Kemmu Restoration and the establishment of the Ashikaga shogunate. Other chapters look in detail at the spiritual and cultural influences that are crucial to understanding Soseki's artistic and design sense and the development of his garden building. Finally, the book provides a detailed look at the beautiful Upper Garden at Saihōji, built by Soseki in 1339. A Zen Life in Nature will appeal to a broad audience, including students of medieval Japanese history and religion, those interested in Zen Buddhism and Zen gardens, and people with a general interest in garden design.

DVD

Angry Monk: reflections on Tibet

A film by Luc Schadeler
Switzerland 2005
97 minutes
DVD cover

Tibet: the mystical roof of the world, peopled with enlightened monks? Only one of them wouldn't see the line. Gendun Choephel, the errant monk who left the monastic life in 1354 in search of a new challenge. A free spirit and multifaceted individual, he was far ahead of his time and has since become a seminal figure, a symbol of hope for a free Tibet. A rebel and voluble critic of the establishment, Gendun Choephel kindled the anger of the Tibetan authorities. The cinematic journey through time portrays the life of this unorthodox monk, whose individual, he was far ahead of his time and has since become a seminal figure, a symbol of hope for a free Tibet. A rebel and voluble critic of the establishment, Gendun Choephel kindled the anger of the Tibetan authorities.

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Thomas Voorter
New Asia Books
Encapsulate everything, grasp nothing:
Russian imperialist discourse in Uzbekistan

From the ideas of Alain Baudez and Slavoj Žižek (2006; 2011), MacFadyen develops the theme of absence and nothingness, hence the ‘nowhere’ of his title. From the unknown of Islam against which Russia defines itself, through the Russian and Soviet imperial projects, to the loss of Russians from post-Soviet Uzbekistan, he leads us through discursive rhetoric that attempts to encapsulate everything but gives nothing. As Žižek summaries, ‘When I simply see you I simply see you – but it is only by naming you that I indicate the abyss in you beyond what I see’ (pp 24, 115). Emptiness in Russian discourse on the other arises from the effort to narrate a future for that other that will converge with and legitimate Russian rationality. MacFadyen thus investigates the productive and prospective logic of imperialist discourse.

Instead of Russian experience, MacFadyen analyses state and imperial projects (American, Russian, Uzbek), terrorism, Soviet discourses about Uzbek and Russian culture in Uzbekistan. Those who seek the latter in this volume will be somewhat disappointed, because in the author’s attention to tests he loses the sense of experience. He only briefly evokes Russian life in Uzbekistan over the past 15 years, at one point calling it a ‘mess’ (pp 7-10). Because his argument revolves around distortion and loss, he grounds his analyses in the socialist and nationalist texts that most distort lived reality, which leaves the book largely devoid of representations of experience.

Music and dance had to be resemanticalised with socialist and patriotic content (pp 49-57). This recalls other discussions of the projected emptiness and uniformity of empire-making, such as that found in the essay by Cuyr Imt.

An overarching narrative
Because he does not mark his voice clearly, some readers may miss his critiques of discourses. Believers in the moral benefits of European elite culture will not see Soviet Russian chauvinism hiding in talk of European music as the most universal, developed and thus fertile for the cultivation of an authentically creative national musical tradition (pp 61-2). Likewise, some may agree that Pushkin, Lemontov, Nekrasov, Gogol and Chekhov embody the romanticism and realism that Uzbek writers need to reform their literature (pp 66-7).

The sweeping narrative that MacFadyen tells can be difficult to grasp. Over a two-page span, for example: ‘colonialist literacy discourses must deal with the newness of truth that is always supplemental to their presumably stable norms’; despite seeking ‘the indescribable and risky’, the Soviets ‘installed huge institutions to attain ‘literary control’; particularly over religious expression; when the Soviet period ended, there is a new openness to literary possibilities and ‘run of the mill notions of time and space are being jettisoned’, which leads to a ‘radical step from real geography to tangible events’ that pushes the operation of culture into the virtual world (pp 39-42). Out of context, I would have read this final line as a description of the unreal operations of culture in the Soviet period as well. MacFadyen’s writing promiscuously and often delivers, but it also demands an attentive and forgiving reader who can switch easily among stories and interpretations.

Notes
2. Nathan Light PhD Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Halle, Germany
Not just nuns and oracles: contemporary Tibetan women

Sara Shneiderman

With its concise yet broadly sweep

ing title, Janet Gyatso and Hanna Havnevik’s edited volume Women in Tibet is a definitive contribution to the literature on women’s experiences in Tibetan cul

ture. The volume’s composition reflects the breadth of contemporary Tibetan Studi

es, with chapters written by historians, philologists, comparative religion scholars and anthropologists, all of whom apply their own methodological approaches to a range of chronologically and geographically disparate subjects. This diversity makes for an uneven read: some chapters are in themselves lengthy mini-monographs that present important new ethnographic research (Diemberger, Henriot-Dourcy and Barnett), others are tightly argued pieces clearly situated within the author’s own discipline (Schaeffer and Makley), while the remaining chapters list notable women within certain domains of Tibetan life (Uebach, Martin and Tsering).

Although Gyatso and Havnevik’s well crafted introduction tries hard to provide a coherent framework by raising overarching theoretical questions about cultural relativ

ism in gender studies and the methodological challenges of accessing women’s experiences, the book as a whole does not live up to its promising title as a compre

hensive survey of Tibetan women. Instead, as Gyatso and Havnevik themselves admit, the volume ‘only provides fragments of the history and diversity of women in Tibet’ (p14).

A healthy corrective

In general, studies of the Tibetan world have often emphasised religion, and the litera

ture on Tibetan women is no exception. In particular, Western Buddhist women (Klein, Shau, Gross, Simmer-Brown) have written a plethora of books and articles about the feminine principle in Tibetan Buddhism but relatively little about the lives of actual women in Tibetan contexts. This book is a healthy corrective to that tendency, with chapters about women in medicine, the performing arts and politics in addition to the more predictable contributions on nuns, yoginis and oracles. The volume also enters new territory by including the work of several scholars conducting ground

breaking research within the contemporary Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), rather than relying solely on historical sources or field research conducted in Himalayan areas outside of political Tibet.

The book is divided into two parts, with Part I focusing on ‘Women in Traditional Tibet’ and Part II on ‘Women in Tibet, Past and Present’. Dan Martin’s article begins by considering the methodological challenges of identifying religious women in the biographical literature of the 11th and 12th centuries. He then lists all those he has identified, placing them in the categories of Best-Known Women, Prophets, Disciples, Lineage Holders, Leaders of Popular Religious Movements, Teachers and Nuns. Finally, he argues that the male teacher Phadmapa Sangye and his followers ‘advocated a particular kind and degree of women’s liberation with strongly Buddhist characteristics’ (p.80), which we might even go so far as to call ‘feminism’. Picking up on such analytical themes, Kurtis Schaeffer suggests that the ‘earliest datable Tibetan woman’s autobiography’ – that of the Dolpo hermitess Orgyan Choky, who lived from 1673 to 1703 – has a uniquely gendered ‘rhetoric of the body’ when it comes to the cycle of rebirth and suffering (p.84). In addition, Schaeffer’s nuanced presentation of Choky’s life story provides a fascinating window on the cultural his

tory of 17th century women and men in the western Himalayas.

Real women, right now

Part II addresses ‘Modern Tibetan Women’, with all five articles focusing on women’s experiences within the contemporary TAR (although several of them also incorpo

rate material from exile communities): Hildegard Diemberger’s in-depth article on female oracles will certainly become the definitive work on the subject, with discus

sions of both ‘old’ and ‘new’ oracles based on oral histories and extensive fieldwork. Although not all oracles are female, Diem

berger justifies the ability to solve personal life-crisis and to deal with social limi

tarily by means of spirit possession seems to be connected to a female experience of life in a privileged and specific way’ (p.157), Diemberger describes the experiences and practices of this powerful group of women and explores their relationship to contem

porary religious and social movements. Turning to a different but equally powerful role that several women have played within contemporary Tibetan society, Tashi Tien

ing focuses on the contributions of women doctors to Tibetan medicine. With biogra

phies of Kynthia Tando, Lobzang Dolma Khangkar and Tsawang Dolkar Khangkar, this chapter is translated from the origi

nal Tibetan and its rhetorical style echoes a traditional Tibetan religious biography. We learn about the key events that defined these three illustrous women’s lives, and come to understand them as key figures in maintaining Tibetan medical traditions both in pre-1959 Tibet and in exile.

With a somewhat similar organisational structure, Isabelle Henriot-Dourcy’s artic

les profiles six contemporary female singe

rs. The details of their life stories are skillfully contextualised in a broader dis

cussion of the role of performing arts in asserting Tibetan identities, both within the TAR and in exile. Henriot-Dourcy con

cludes that for the female performers in question, ‘ethnicity issues have appeared to have precedence over gender issues’ (p198). This serves as a crucial reminder that even in studies of women, gender may not be the most appropriate single ana

tytical framework; rather, gender identities must always be understood in relation to other identities. For the female Tibetan per

formers who Henriot-Dourcy describes, ethnic and national identity issues have often been so highly charged that they have eclipsed gender as defining categories. By contrast, the nuns of Labrang, Amdo, who are the subject of Charlene Makley’s theoretically sophisticated article, are defined and often limited by their female bodies. Makley argues that the seemingly androgynous, but ultimately feminine bodies of these celibate women came to symbol

ise the ‘larger patterns of changing gender practices which locals experienced as baf

fling and multifarious’ (p184). In so doing, they were perceived as a dangerous affront to existing gender ideologies.

A wealth of data, but none from Tibetan women scholars

Robbie Barnett makes a similar argument about the politicisation of women’s bodies, in his extremely detailed review of women in contemporary TAR politics, claiming that ultimately their bodies serve as ‘sym

bols of their cultural distinctiveness and of their identity as a group or nation’ (p196). Owing to restrictions on expression, wom

en’s bodies have become a primary site for the performance of political ritual, the one location that cannot be policed. Bar

nett argues that this situation is no different for females: Communist Party members and anti-state protesters, and shows how women across a broad spectrum of political roles and affiliations have engaged in politics in an embodied manner. Both theoretically com

plex and ethnographically rich, Barnett’s chapter provides a powerful conclusion to the volume.

On the whole, Women in Tibet offers a wealth of data about Tibetan women across time and space. One category that regrettably remains unrepresented is that of contemporary Tibetan women scholars: despite several mentions of the well known U.S. scholar Tsewan Changgrampa, there is not a single contribution from one of the several women of Tibetan origin producing fine scholarship in China, India and the rest of the world. Nonetheless, no single book can be all things to all people, and the excel

lent individual articles presented in this vol

ume will pave the way for more integrated studies of women’s experiences in Tibetan contexts, by scholars both Tibetan and Western, female and male.

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THE SOCIOLOGY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
Transformations in a Developing Region
by Victor T. King, University of Leeds

This essential work fills a glaring gap in the social science of Southeast Asia with its comprehensive and integrated treatment of the important sociological and political economy writings on the region. Using case studies from across the region, King examines processes of change in relation to theories of moderni

zation, underdevelopment and globalization. He covers a wide range of themes

including class, ethnicity and gender, and locates local issues and processes in the context of more general political, economic and cultural transforma


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Victor King has produced a lucid, comprehensive and challenging analysis of the state-of-the-art of Southeast Asian sociology. The book is not only an excellent test book for courses on Southeast Asia or development sociology, but also ‘required reading’ for all social scientists embarking on research on the area. I am certain that it will become a long-lasting addition to the standard literature on Asia.

Hans-Dieter Evers

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Chinese voices on abortion

Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner

Behind the Silence is a timely work about the historical, cultural, social and political aspects of induced abortion in China, where it is used as a means of controlling population growth. Jing-Bao Nie is familiar with the history of induced abortion (see his Medical Ethics in China) and here includes a wealth of data on foetal life, the embryo’s moral status, birth control policies and eugenic policy-making. Based on years of fieldwork directed at giving a voice to ‘ordinary’ people in the countryside and in urban areas, whose views on induced abortion we otherwise would not hear, his work raises issues of gender, ethnicity and religion in a meticulous, nuanced and accessible manner, making the reader doubt whether people’s experiences of induced abortion really conform to the stereotypes about which we so often hear.

Nie asks why there is no public debate in China on induced abortion and what this lack of debate means. Public silence, in fact, is a theme that runs throughout this unique work: through descriptions and discussions on the official positions and dominant discourse regarding induced abortion; historical controversies in Buddhism and Confucianism about the moral status of the foetus and the ethics of coerced abortion; surveys conducted among various layers of society, using variables such as the medical profession, gender, place of residence, religious background, membership in the Communist Party, narratives of women and doctors involved in induced abortion based on surveys and interviews; and a critical discussion on the socio-cultural and ethical issues surrounding coerced abortion and the birth control programme. The book concludes with a call for cross-cultural discussion and a plea for taking seriously China’s greatly underestimated internal cultural diversity, with its contesting views on conception, the value of the embryo and induced abortion.

The role of induced abortion in the state’s birth control policy

In China, family-planning policy is, in many regions, based on local quotas of permitted newborns and determines how many children a family can have and when it can have them. According to state policies, induced abortion is not part of the state’s birth control programme but a remedial measure to correct a violation of family-planning policy, e.g., the consequence of not taking adequate contraception. Meanwhile, coerced abortion, gender selection and infanticide are regarded as feudal remnants or local deviations from official policy. At the same time the state defends its official policies by denying the moral significance of foetal life.

According to official reports, coercion is not part of the birth-control programme but rather an unintended consequence of failing to implement that programme. Thus ‘coercion’ in this context refers to practices unauthorised by the state, such as physical force, social pressure, the threat of dismissal and social ostracism. The dominant discourse in Chinese bio-medical textbooks, meanwhile, does not recognise induced abortion as an appropriate way to stem population growth and does not recommend abortion at a late stage, as such abortions could endanger the mother’s life. However, official discourse dominates dissenting voices and has stifled debate. For this reason it is not easy to find out how people think about and experience abortion.

Voices unheard — until now

Nie tries to find out nonetheless. ‘How representative of the views and experiences of ordinary Chinese is the current official discourse?’ he asks (page 64). The voices he captures debunk stereotypical views of Chinese people as not having any feelings about induced abortion or as not attaching any moral value to foetal life. True, decades of propaganda have influenced the Chinese population, for the vast majority of Nie’s respondents show a nearly unconditional socio-cultural acceptance of abortion, owing mainly to official birth and population policies. But Nie’s subjects also express questions, concerns, and feelings about abortion that reflect both abortion’s widespread traumatic impact on women and a pervasive respect for the life of the unborn child (nearly 50% of respondents believe that life begins at conception). Women’s narratives associate induced abortion with problems such as diminished reproductive capacity, a poor relationship with their partner and guilt over having aborted a child rather than an embryo; they also associate it with coercive birth control policies and poorly trained medical personnel. For instance, Qianqian, who had taken medicine that could damage her foetus, felt that she had to abort it, because she did not want to risk having a disabled child under a policy that requires most couples to have no more than one child. Qianqian described her abortion (which was performed without anaesthesia) as follows:

‘Since I work in this medical school, the doctor was very friendly to me. But I complained to her when it turned out that the dilatation and curettage was not performed successfully. The embryonic tissue was not sucked out completely. Consequently, I had to have a second one to clear it up...When the abortion was nearly done, it was so painful that I was almost in shock. The doctor let me see the bloody tissue. I watched the aborted foetus. It looked like a lock of fine hair. I could only sigh, “Oh, my poor son. How miserable you are!”’

Medical doctors in general regard performances as part of their professional routine; they have no scruples about it. Medical ethics in China is largely influenced by a dominant state discourse that emphasises the welfare of state and country over that of the individual. This, Nie argues, is a historical aberration, as for many centuries major Chinese medical ethics traditions rooted in Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism held that the primary duty of healers was looking after the individual patient. Thus the ‘liberal’ view — state-influenced bioethics — of approving abortion as a blanket procedure, according to Nie, is also a historical aberration: it cannot be justified by the major trends in Confucian and Buddhist traditional ethics (though perhaps it can be justified in ‘legalistic’ terms), but is a consequence of the political environment over the past several decades. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that medical textbooks on ethics express diverging reasoning and views on issues such as abortion, euthanasia and cloning are gradually beginning to appear in China. These textbooks also include discussions on the moral status of the embryo and foetus, which many believe to be influenced by Western views. As Nie implies, it is not helpful to interpret Chinese opposition to coerced abortions as an expression of a Western human rights perspective (page 219), as all too often in China women who express the wish not to be pressured into abortion are regarded as tainted by Western individualism, a view that is both politically and socially destructive. Thus Nie regards the issue of coerced abortion as a matter not of cultural opinion but of universal human rights.

Instilling induced abortion as moral justice

As Nie argues, coerced abortion to curb population growth is an example of ‘justifying the means by the ends’. Although the government denies coerced abortion is official policy, the birth control programme in practice restricts the population with a sense of moral justice — state welfare is more important than individual welfare — that drive it to commit acts whose ends are justified in spite of its illegality; and on the social consequences of gender selection and its resulting skewed sex ratio in the countryside. More researchers must have the patience and the heart to listen to China’s many different voices on these issues.

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Getting beyond image to reality in Burma (Myanmar)

Donald M. Seikins


In light of the perhaps well-intentioned but counter-productive policy of sanctions pursued by the Clinton and Bush administrations, particularly the 2001 ‘Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act’, which banned imports from Burma and caused the lay-off of tens of thousands of Burmese textile workers, this is a question that needs to be answered. Unfortunately, James’s arguments for greater humanitarian and economic engagement with Burma are undermined by eye-glaazing jargon, political correctness and glaring omissions that compromise the book’s value as a study of the contemporary political crisis in this troubled land.

Orwellian doublethink

Its seven chapters are at times difficult reading because of the author’s fondness for the kind of language that is popular in air-conditioned seminar rooms, such as ‘sustainability’ and ‘realist and liberal paradigms’, and sentences like ‘the “we-feel” at the societal level is already present, nascent, perhaps subdued, but ready to present a more overt community presence both internationally and in the domestic sphere’ (p.9). She has a penchant for quoting at length a bewildering array of experts whose prose is also less than crystal clear (e.g., ‘Deutschian and constructivist formulations’, p.49). This gives the book a fuzzy, abstract feel that doesn’t so much deny but rather obscures the grim realities of life under military rule in Burma.

The first chapter introduces the key concept of ‘prophetic solidarity’. The development and application of public policy which privileges human well-being within the context of state resilience, yet acknowledges the attempts of the international community to ‘socialise’ a respect for human rights, human security, high standards of living and a vibrant civil society as its South-East and East Asian neighbours have done over the past two or three decades.

In the book’s second chapter, James argues, that sanctions, especially those imposed by the United States government on trade and investment, are the product of amphetamine type stimulants, known as yaba in Thailand, which are a cash cow for the USWA’s top commanders and are causing havoc in Burma’s eastern neighbour and reaching other South-East Asian countries, as well as Australia, Japan, Europe and the United States. According to the Thailand-based NGO Altsean-Burma, the made-in-Burma yabaebad trade in that country alone is worth US$1.8 billion annually. The Australian Federal Police Commissioner is quoted by Altsean-Burma as saying that amphetamine type stimulants are the ‘biggest emerging drug threat in the region’ and that ‘in Burma now, the production of amphetamines is just huge’ (p.135).

James concludes with the credible point that American and British Burma policies have been better planned. Washington and London might still retain a measure of influence inside the country (p.138)

The book picks up speed in the final three chapters, which deal extensively with Western sanctions. It is true, as James argues, that sanctions, especially those imposed by the United States government on trade and investment, are the product of political ideologies (lobbying by interested groups, especially Burmese emigres, and their connection with powerful members of Congress such as Senator Mitch McConnell) rather than an objective study of their probable impact on the target country, that they constitute a zero-sum game that stirs up nationalism and xenophobia inside Burma (or at least with-in SPDC circles), and that their economic impact is either inconsequential (because of economic support of the SPDC by China, India and ASEAN) or damaging to ordinary people (the consequences of the 2003 sanctions law, mentioned above).

However, she neglects to mention another, more crucial point: it is not Western sanctions but poor or non-existent economic policymaking by the SPDC junta that is causing deteriorating human security for the majority of Burmese people, who are subjected to patron-client-based corruption; multiple, politically-motivated kyat-dollar exchange rates; rampant inflation caused by a printing-press monetary policy and a poor system of distribution of necessities such as rice, state imposition of low prices for crops that depresses the living standards of farmers; forced cultivation of certain crops (especially jatropha, the plant that yields ‘bio-diesel’, a current SPDC obsession); reprehensible underinvestment in health and education while hundreds of millions of dollars are spent acquiring advanced weapon systems from abroad, forced labour and forced relocation; lack of the rule of law in business and other areas of life; and dilapidated infrastructure, especially in Rangoon. Burma’s industrial centre, including chronic and worsening electricity blackouts. The motivation for the Senior General’s decision to move the capital from Rangoon to Naypyidaw in 2005 is to create an ultra-secure environment for himself and his fellow generals at a safe distance from large urban centres, whose populations have become increasingly desperate economically, just as they were in the months leading up to the massive Democracy Summer protests of 1988.

In conclusion, one can agree with James that sanctions are ineffective or even harmful. But Burma isn’t a “normal” developing country transitioning from socialism (p.178). Unlike Vietnam, whose communist regime initiated genuine liberalisation in 1986, the Burmese military elite has not loosened controls over the society or economy or opened up space for the emergence of genuine civil society. The SPDC is a close collaborator, if not ally, of China, which provides it with economic and other forms of support with no concern for political or economic reform. With Beijing’s backing, the SPDC can to a large extent ignore the attempts of the international community to ‘socialise’ a respect for human rights or security. Given the ruthlessly pragmatic geopolitics of China as a rising power, this is a grim situation indeed for Burma’s people.  

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Notes
3 The People’s Republic of China has become the principal supporter of other so-called 535 pariah regimes: North Korea and Pakistan and, more recently, like Burma, the two African nations are rich in natural resources.
O
ver the past two decades, countless pens have been put to paper by the idea of a self-organising civil society as a check on state power and, from a Tocquevillian perspective, an indispensable condition for democracy. While the idea has merit, too often it leads to a mechanistic opposition of civil society and state. In the case of the Philippines, state-society dynamics have been obfuscated, even as many analysts have attempted to get to the roots of what is at first glance a strikingly mismanaged state unable to provide basic services (education, health, justice, security, infrastructure). How, many analysts asked, could such an apparently ‘weak’ state maintain itself?

By asking the right question, namely how bourgeois minority rule is possible under conditions of liberal democracy (in which everybody has a vote), Hedman seems to have found a way that will inspire many to break with the hackneyed schoolbook wisdom that makes much of the study of Philippine politics so depressing. Inspired by Antonio Gramsci’s careful observation and critical analysis of Italian state dynamics between 1870 and 1901, her study results in a powerful, historically grounded theory to elucidate the vicissitudes of democracy in the Philippines.

The dominant bloc and its appendages

Following Hedman’s introduction to Gramsci’s theorising of civil society and her subsequent analysis, we learn that ‘the ensemble of organisms – civic, religious, professional – called “private”’ helps to maintain the hegemony of the bourgeois capitalist state by facilitating rule through ‘appendages’ – school, church, civic associations, even parliamentary opposition – as an adjunct to the power of a dominant bloc of social forces whose acceptance hinges on active participation in ritual performances such as Roman Catholic Mass, elections, and particularly important in this book – election watch movements and People Power demonstrations.

Seen in this way, popular protest is far less spontaneous than the demonstrators think it is, as the participants, whatever the ideology, are painstakingly described. The author has accumulated a plethora of diverse data and effectively uses it to illustrate her theoretical points. We see how action was born, the obstacles it had to surmount, and its structure in terms of the main players, the outreach of mobilisation and the role of international support.

Despite the addition of chapter two, on ‘transformation, crises of authority, and the dominant bloc’, the study really only gets started. It is not only evident from the 44 pages of end notes and 21-page bibliography, but also from the steady repetition of the theoretical argument and reminders – up to eight per page – that the study is about the Philippines. This can be tedious, but the reader is ultimately rewarded with a sophisticated and plausible interpretation of how bourgeois minority rule maintains itself, and with a simultaneously dumfounding of the idea of civil society as a purposeful watchdog. Because of these qualities, the book might be most useful in presenting final year undergraduate or graduate students with an enthusiastic, theory-inspired introduction to the study of civil society. It offers anyone interested in the Philippines and all those who argue about civil society a refreshing and sobering exposition.

One of four moments of mobilisation: 2001 demonstrations against President Estrada’s gross abuses of his office.

Niels Mulder

is a retired independent researcher of Filipino, Japanese and Thai culture, and is currently working on his field biography, which includes Doing Java, an anthropological detective story (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), and Doing Thai, the anthropologist as a young dog in Bangkok in the 1960s, soon to be published by White Lotus, Bangkok.

References


Two new publications on Japanese prints and picture books highlight formerly underappreciated aspects of these traditions.

The sophisticated aesthetics of Ehon and Ukiyo-e of a Meiji period master

The great appreciation for Japanese woodblock prints of the Ukiyo-e tradition by collectors and artists in the West is evident in their profusion in Western language publications about Japanese art beginning in the 19th century. Yet only during the past twenty five years have Western (and for that matter, Japanese) scholars and collectors begun to appreciate Ukiyo-e prints created by artists other than those included in the core group of canonical masters (Hiroshige, Hokusai, Sharaku, Katsushika Hokusai, and Andō Hiroshige being the most well known) active in the city of Edo (Tokyo) between the late 17th and mid-19th centuries. These newly appreciated artists, most active during the late Edo (circa 1800-1868) and Meiji (1868-1912) periods, had been formerly denigrated or simply ignored. Concurrently, scholars and collectors have also turned their attention to the related field of Japanese ehon (alternately translated as ‘art’ or ‘picture’ book) production, both woodblock printed and hand-painted manuscripts, only some of which were designed by Ukiyo-e artists.

Two books under review reflect these growing interests. While Bruce Coats aims to promote appreciation of Chikanobu’s art, his book’s essays and plate commentary reveal his broader intent: to use this artist’s prints, created over a thirty year period, as a window through which to view the culture of the artist’s day. Coats remarks that “Chikanobu’s prints document a significant shift from advocating modernization to nostalgic nationalist sentiments and organisation. Coats remarks that “Chikanobu’s prints document a significant shift from advocating modernization to nostalgic nationalism” (p. 6).

Following his introduction, a long essay – ‘Chikanobu, An Overview of his Life and Works’ – Coats guides readers towards deeper understanding of this enigmatic, little-studied, and prolific artist who was a member of the samurai class loyal to the Tokugawa shoguns. Coats’ essay surveys the types of prints that comprise his oeuvre: contemporary military conflicts, warrior heroes, beautiful women, children, geisha, women’s life in the old Tokugawa Castle complex, famous sites of Japan, and Kabuki actors – and their sophisticated, restrained aesthetic sensibility. He informs readers about the state of the printmaking business in the Meiji era and argues convincingly for positive reappraisal of Chikanobu in relation to his more well known peers, Tsuboi Kokuho and Kabayashi Kyôcho. Coats points out that many of Chikanobu’s prints contain lengthy texts, which appealed to well-educated viewers, and that his subject matter “helped create a sense of nationhood, a shared past that could consolidate the community of Japanese citizens at a time when nationalism was proliferating worldwide and Asian cultures were being threatened by European colonial imperialism” (p. 6). Following this essay are sumptuous illustrations of Chikanobu’s early prints, accompanied by extensive explanatory captions (as are most of the illustrations in this volume).

Four shorter essays, on Chikanobu’s most representative subjects placed within a historical context, round out the volume. Each section is accompanied by illustrations. The first, by Joshua S. Mostow, “Setougakke: Snow, Moon, and Flowers,” (FIG. 1) explores the historical and cultural meaning of this phrase, which Chikanobu took as the name of several large series of his prints of beautiful women (paired with snow, moon, or flower imagery). One such series, comprising fifty sheets, is considered among his finest works and is illustrated in its entirety. The next essay, by Allen Hockley, “New Age Warriors: Redeploying the Imperial Ethos in the Late Meiji Period,” delves into the history of warrior prints within the Ukiyo-e tradition and Chikanobu’s reinterpretation of it. Hockley remarks that in Chikanobu’s day, these images carried a new meaning, in which “the past, especially one associated with Japan’s warrior traditions, emerged as a potent ideological force with far reaching implications” (p. 109). Kyoko Kurita’s essay, “Picturing Women’s Spirit: Chikanobu’s Prints and Meiji Literature,” follows. She explores Chikanobu’s portrayal of women from a literary perspective. Some of Chikanobu’s prints of women (for example his “Magic Lantern Comparisons” series) evoke a new phenomenon seen in Meiji literature, a portrayal of “intimité” in which the artist attempts to capture both women’s appearance and inner thoughts. Unfortunately, some of the author’s points are obscured by a lack of illustrations or prints or book illustration discussions. The book’s last essay, again by Coats, “Chiyoda Inner and Outer Palace Scenes,” describes Chikanobu’s sympathetic portrayal of “the elegance and quiet sophistication of the shogun’s private world” (p. 171) with his complementary images of the inside of the women’s quarters (the Inner Palace) and the activities of the samurai elite outside the castle walls (the Outer Palace Scenes).

While the content of this book is exemplary, editorial and design decisions somewhat mar its use as a scholarly reference. The essays contain both plates (prints by Chikanobu included in the exhibition) and figures (comparative material by other artists), making individual essays easy to read but difficult to navigate, since authors of multiple essays refer to the same materials, which are referenced only by number and not page location. Further, details from the prints, used as frontispieces to each chapter, are nowhere identified; some of the plate numbers within the essays are erroneous; and, overall, the book includes a surprising number of typographical errors. Given Bruce Coats’ extensive research on this artist, an appendix listing all of Chikanobu’s known print series and illustrated books would have made an invaluable resource for future studies. Instead, only a list of images from Chikanobu print sets illustrated in the catalogue appear in the first part of the index. The second section, an overly abbreviated ‘subject index’, lacks citations to most of the general historical and cultural information found in the essays and catalogue entries but includes references to other artists whose works are mentioned and illustrated in the volume. I also found the select bibliography, which includes mainly references to English language publications on print artists, Kabuki theatre, and Meiji culture, too condensed. Providing Japanese characters for titles and names would also have made the book more useful as a reference.

Still, the book’s many merits surpass its production shortcomings. The exquisite photographs reproduce many of Chikanobu’s prints together for the first time and many captions for illustrations contain test summaries and thoughtful remarks about the subjects, their historical context, and the prints’ aesthetics. This commentary skillfully connects the personal viewpoint of the artist to the culture of his time and his place within it, first as a disenfranchised samurai, later in his life as a mos...
talig nationalist. Bruce Coats ably argues for better appreciation both of this artist and of Ukiyo-e print production during the 17th century, which is usually associated with the production of fine quality traditional-style prints.

Ehon: microscopical works in convergence
In contrast to Coats’ emphasis on exploring Chikanobu’s art within its historical framework, Roger Keys eloquently implores his readers to better appreciate the aesthetics of the books themselves, as well as the artistic sensibility of its makers. The remarkable collection about which he writes, containing three hundred manuscripts and fifteen hundred printed books, has long been known by scholars, but this publication marks its first broad introduction to the general public, through a selection of seventy works. Books and manuscripts in the NYP’s catalogue span the entire history of book production in Japan, from the 8th century to the present. Keys approaches his topic as a historical survey, and therefore chooses to include in his catalogue two rare books not owned by the NYP. cat. 22, Yoshitaki Courtesans, illustrated by Kita Masanobu, and cat. 46, by Sato Sukeji. The last five books included, from the post World War II era, reveal the modernisation and globalisation of this living tradition, featuring two books by Japanese artists, who used Western printing processes and created books in non-traditional formats, and three by Western artists influenced by Japanese print and bookmaking traditions. Keys describes The Map (cat. 65), as “a profound, heartbreakingly powerful meditation on nuclear destruction...the most brilliantly designed Japanese book of its century” (p.25).

Keys’ lengthy introductory essays convey the special characteristics of ehon. He notes that the books “spring to life for their readers because their artists carefully create rituals of engagement to attract, absorb, and hold their readers’ attention” (p.15), and that they are “sensuous, beautiful, and intelligent. Different as they are among themselves to look at, they share many qualities: stillness, space, wonder, love, delight, play” (p.16). A separate essay explains the components of books: paper, ink, colours, binding, book covers, contents, language, calligraphy, and pictures.

The bulk of the volume is devoted to discussion of each ehon in chronological order, in discrete catalogue entries of several pages in length, most accompanied by two or three illustrations. This order, by the way, does not follow that of the exhibition, which was thematic. But it makes for a well organised reference and aids in appreciating the collection of books themselves, which as Keys notes, were “conceived, designed, published, manufactured, and distributed by representatives of many different trades and professions working in collaboration,” each of which offer a glimpse into “microcosms of individual, social and occupa- tional worlds in convergence” (p.12). As he describes each book, Keys engages the reader with evocative introductory sentences, then points out their distinctive qualities, including visual differences among editions. We learn, for example, that some artists intentionally linked pictures on adjacent pages, making use of the book paper’s semi-transparency (cat. 27, by Chô Gessho and 30, by Yamaguchi Soken (FIG. 2) or visual content (cat. 53, by Ōnish Chinnen), that rare early editions capture particular qualities lacking in more hastily produced later ones (cat. 18, after Hanabusa Itchô, fig. 32, by Nakamura Rōhôchi, and that the NYP possesses some existing copies of printed books (cat. 10, by Hishikawa Moronobu), rare first editions (cat. 16, The Mustard Seed Garden Painting Manual), or exemplary and rare examples of second editions of celebrated printed books (cat. 26, Kgiatan Ucmato’s Gift of the Ebb Tide, illustrated on the volume’s cover and in its entirety in the book). He also includes summaries of textual sections and translations of selected poems to illuminate the content of each ehon’s production.

The volume concludes with extensive, invaluable reference material. A long section, “Bibliographic Descriptions and References”, reflects Keys’ years of research on each ehon in the catalogue, providing publication references, detailed descriptions of their contents, known editions and their locations, citations to reproductions in modern editions, provenance, and, occasionally, their purchase price. The next section is an alphabetically indexed inventory of all the NYP’s printed books. A comprehensive bibliography and detailed index conclude the volume. Invaluable to scholars, all sections (except for the index) contain characters adjacent to names and book titles. While very different in scope and intended for different groups of readers (Coats’ book will be a boon to educators, students, and collectors, and Keys’ book will be useful for those groups as well as scholars), unquestionably these two books will help advance Western readers’ interest in underrepresented areas of Japanese prints and picture books. Fittingly, they are both intellectually stimulating and beautiful examples of the art of modern bookmaking themselves.

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The return of Dr Strangelove or: should we really stop worrying and learn to love India’s bomb?

I’ve had a brief announcement to make. Today at 1545 hours (1035 GMT), India conducted three underground nuclear tests in the Pokhran range. The tests conducted today were with a fission device, a low-yield device and a thermonuclear device. The measured yields are in line with expected values. Measurements have confirmed that there was no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere. These were contained explosions like in the experiment conducted in May 1974. I warmly congratulate the scientists and engineers who have carried out these successful tests.

So announced Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 11 May 1998. Brief, indeed, but with far-reaching consequences, it is this announcement that most vividly recalls Vajpayee’s 1998-2004 premiership. In Ashok Kapur’s book the nuclear tests that shocked the world and boosted India’s position as a regional and international power seem to be nothing less than the telos of postcolonial Indian polity. Throughout the book’s fourteen chapters, the bomb, or rather the accomplished feat of India’s present strategic, scientific and military power that it represents, serves as the sole measuring stick of India’s post-1974 diplomatic and foreign policy.

Following the neo-realist school of thought in international relations, Kapur makes no effort to dissemble his wholehearted support for the ‘coercive diplomacy’ behind India’s 1998 nuclear tests. Nor does he conceal his admiration for the ideological and political agenda driving that strategy when he concludes, “Significantly, ‘soft fundamentalists’ with political and military power, not secularists who have slo- gans and no constituents, have emerged as negotiating partners in Indian foreign affairs” (p.204).

A relentless critique of Nehru’s foreign policy record
In his introductory chapter, the author analyses Nehru’s foreign policy at three levels of contemporary strategic activity: the international level, where India has significantly increased its presence in the economic and strategic mainstream; on the Asian continent, which in Kapur’s words represents ‘the centre of gravity of countervailing impulses in the modern world’; and India’s ‘immediate neighbour- hood’, that is, the SAARC countries plus Myanmar, Afghanistan and China.

What really follows in the six subsequent chapters is first and foremost a relentless critique of the ‘Nehruvian record’ of diplomatic and foreign policy, which Kapur later subscribes to as ‘Nehru’s folly’. The pole ‘innovation’ for which he lauds Nehru is the pursuit of India’s nuclear option, which in the late 1980s became the main symbol of India’s scientific power. While publicly emphasizing peaceful uses of nuclear energy, Nehru and his advisers managed to establish links with Canada that led to a transfer of critical bomb-making technologies under a ‘peaceful guise’ (p.116).

Kapur presents Nehru above all as a product of foreign intellectual traditions and ideas (communism, the Soviet model of economic planning, British Fabian ideas and the world peace movement), as a prime minister under whose reigns the ‘new Indian state disconnected Indian national- ism from traditional Indian philosophy’ (p 18), and as the ‘shadowy British and Soviet collaborator’ (p.37). To a certain extent, this characterisation serves to externalise Nehru from India’s traditions and history, and to disassociate India’s colonial and post-colonial past and present situation in which India had not yet been ‘emancipated’ from foreign domination.

Post-independence India - passive victim of the America-Pakistan-China triangle?
In an equally reductive perspective on India’s foreign policy, Kapur explicitly dissociates from ‘hardcore Hindutva’, a turning point; they were a true liberation of India and were not in dispute as a result of Partition’ (p.91). While remaining silent on the inter- nior causes of civil conflicts and separatist tendencies in the 1990s, Kapur portrays not only the escalations in Kashmir but also in Punjab and the north-eastern areas as ‘Pakistan-sponsored insolvency’ tolerated by the ‘UK-US-China’ coalition.

‘Of course, the whole point of a Doomsday Machine is lost if you keep it a secret!’ In sum, Kapur argues that “India” or “Hindu India” had been the object or victim of strategic triangles (p.203). In his view the 1958 nuclear tests were not only a turning point, they were a true liberation from the stalemated situation, creating completely new conditions for Indo-Paki- stan, Indo-American and Indo-Chinese relations and helped to finally overcome Nehruvian paradigms of postcolonial Indian policy. What Kapur calls a ‘soft type of Hindutva’, which he further questiona- bly dissociates from ‘Hindu/Indian nationalism that finally enabled India to overcome the continued reactive passivity of the Nehruvian era.

But why doesn’t Kapur illuminate the whole spectrum of historical causes that brought Hindu nationalism into existence and reinforced it in the 1980s and 1990s? He insistently reproduces the growth of Hindu nationalism to a mere ‘reaction’ to the spread of ‘Islamic terror’ and ‘Nehru’s policies’. Through his account’s incompre- hensible selectivity, Kapur reinforces the “reactive character of Indian diplomatic and military strategy. And in its eyes this was exactly this ‘authentic’ Hindu/Indian nationalism that finally ena- bled India to overcome the continued reactive passivity of the Nehruvian era.

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Han is a colossoal category of identity which encompasses ninety-four percent of the population of mainland China, making it the largest ethnic group on earth. Like other ethnic groups, Han may be seen as a category, or national, racial, ethnic, or otherwise, Han is not best by a host of linguistic, cultural, political, and historical inconsist-encies that call into question its status as a coherent community. Despite this, how- ever, Han has managed to fly below the radar of Critical Race Theory and largely above that of History, Ethnic Studies, and Anthropology.

The first-ever Critical Han Studies Sym- posium & Workshop seeks to bridge this expansive divide, and to fasci- nate an area of research to the attention of a broader, international, and interdisci- plinary cadre of scholars. Participants will help conceptualize an agenda for the nascent subdiscipline of Critical Han Stud- ies and develop materials to be published in two pathbreaking volumes: Critical Han Studies, an edited volume, and the Critical Han Studies Reader, a collection of primary source materials in translation for which the conference organizers have already secured a provisional contract. The conference is made possible thanks to the generous support of Stanford’s Center for East Asian Studies, the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, and the Dean’s Fund.

Keynote and Featured Speakers. Mark Elli- ott, Dru Clady, Xu jiehun (Founding Direc- tor, Han Research Center, Guangxi Institute for Nationalities), Emma Tong, Frank Dikötter, Udval E. Bulg, C. Patter- son Giersch, and Nicholas Tapp, among others. (Final itinerary subject to change.)

Conference Topics. The conference is organised with attention to (but not lim- ited to) the following topical areas:

1. Historical and/or transnational perspective? How does the category of Han in China relate to, for instance, the category of Hoa in Vietnam or the Jia in Laos? Can the cat- egy of Han be applied to the broader Chi- nese diaspora, or is it limited to specific national contexts?
2. How have modern academic disciplines (ethnology, linguistics, archaeology, etc.) configured the form, structure and bound- aries of Han?
3. How does the category of Han relate to the category of Chinese? In the contemporary world, are they treated synonymously? His- torically, was it influenced by those colos- soal categories of identity which foreign observers used to describe the peoples of China (“Chinaman” in turn-of-the-century English language writings, “Shinnin” in Japanese discourse, the “Yellow Race” in Social Darwinian discourse, etc.)?
4. What insights can a potential Critical Han Studies draw from Critical Race Theory? What insights can it offer in return?
5. Are there meaningful connections to be made between Haness and Whiteness?

Abstracts, panel papers, paper proposals and panel presentations are invited for consideration at the conference. Manuscripts will be due by March 14, 2008. Full papers of accepted present- ations are requested by April 1, 2008. Final manuscripts should be submitted electronically to Conference Chair Dr. Ramnarayan S. Rawat, Department of History, University of Pennsylvania, 420 Williams Hall, 255 South 36th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2550 (USA).

Email: rawat@ias.upenn.edu

East Asian Calligraphy Conference
June 29 - July 1, 2008
Taiichung University, Taiwan

Call for Papers
The 6th International Conference on East Asian Calligraphy Education, co-spon- sored by Calligraphy Education Group (CEG) USA, National Taichung University, Mingdao University, and other participa- tory institutions in Taiwan, will be held at National Taichung University, Taiichung, Taiwan, June 29 - July 1, 2008. Its main theme: the globalisation and diversifica- tion of East Asian calligraphy education, including the education of East Asian calligraphy culture. Calligraphy educa- tors, researchers, artists, practitioners, and connoisseurs from all countries and regions are invited to present their papers and/or creative works.

Suggested Topics of Presentation:
1. Globalisation of East Asian Calligraphy Education
2. East Asian Calligraphy Education in the 21st Century: Prospects and Challenges
3. Calligraphy in Contemporary South Asia
4. Calligraphy in Europe
5. Calligraphy in the Americas
6. Calligraphy in Africa
7. Calligraphy in Oceania
8. Calligraphy in the Islamic World
9. Calligraphy in the Korean Peninsula
10. Calligraphy in the Japanese Archipelago
11. Calligraphy in Taiwan
12. Calligraphy in Southeast Asia
13. Calligraphy in Australia
14. Calligraphy in New Zealand
15. Calligraphy in Oceania
16. Calligraphy in South Asia
17. Calligraphy in North Asia
18. Calligraphy in Mongolia
19. Calligraphy in China
20. Calligraphy in Hong Kong
21. Calligraphy in Macau
22. Calligraphy in Taiwan
23. Calligraphy in Singapore
24. Calligraphy in Malaysia
25. Calligraphy in Indonesia
26. Calligraphy in Thailand
27. Calligraphy in the Philippines
28. Calligraphy in Vietnam
29. Calligraphy in Laos
30. Calligraphy in Cambodia
31. Calligraphy in Myanmar
32. Calligraphy in Nepal
33. Calligraphy in Bhutan
34. Calligraphy in Sri Lanka
35. Calligraphy in India
36. Calligraphy in Pakistan
37. Calligraphy in Bangladesh
38. Calligraphy in Nepal
39. Calligraphy in Central Asia
40. Calligraphy in East Asia
41. Calligraphy in North America
42. Calligraphy in South America
43. Calligraphy in Africa
44. Calligraphy in Oceania
45. Calligraphy in Europe
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99. Calligraphy in Africa
100. Calligraphy in Oceania
101. Calligraphy in Europe


Application for display of calligraphy works deadline: February 29, 2008.

Calligraphy website: http://www.2008eastasiacalligraphy.com

http://www.2008eastasiacalligraphy.com
New Cultures of Intimacy and Togetherness in Asia Conference
9–10 May 2008
New Delhi, India,
This conference seeks to bring together scholars working across areas such as sociology, gender studies, film/media studies, anthropology, popular culture, and urban studies in order to explore emerging cultures of intimacy and friendship in contemporary non-Western contexts. We are particularly interested in perspectives that relate the topic to the making of social selves at a time where economic and cultural change in many Asian societies. Socially, ‘non-Western’ has often been considered synonymous with traditional, conservative, static and iliberal, particularly in contexts of intimate/personal relationships that are expected to conform to certain values, norms and expectations of ‘heritage’. However, following modernity and long traditions of change such as economic liberalisation, globalisation and the worldwide web, there is, increasingly, a perception (if not a belief) that social structures and networks have been affected, and new ‘cultures of intimacy and togetherness are emergent (if not already established). There is a decided conviction that such new structures and networks are visible in day-to-day contexts at work, home and leisure, and that they reflect political, cultural, emotional and intellectual transitions and upheavals. At this conference, we would like to explore this notion of emergent cultures of ‘new’ intimacies and togetherness in the contemporary non-Western world, in so as varied a social and cultural register as possible.
Some Possible Themes:
• Televisual/Cinematic Intimacies
• New/Changing Spaces of Intimacy
• New Cultures of Marriage
• Intimacy, Togetherness and Class
• Non-heterosexual Cultures of Intimacy
• Intimacies and Consumer Cultures
• Intimacy, Togetherness and Modernity
• Some Possible Themes:

Spaces of Dialogue
The 22nd Pakistan Workshop
9-11 May 2008
Roak How, Lake District, UK

Call for Papers
The 22nd Pakistan workshop will take place at Roak How in the Lake District from 9th to 11th May 2008. Each year a theme is chosen for the workshop. The theme is meant as a guide to help participants select aspects of their research for presentation but has never been intended to exclude people whose primary interest may not happen to be that year’s theme. This year’s theme is Spaces of Dialogue and it is hoped that papers will deal with various forms of dialogue amongst Pakistanis, between Pakistanis and other groups, and dialogue about Pakistanis, both in the past and in the present, at home and abroad, and the global and local contexts in which these dialogues take place.

This workshop was founded to bring together anthropologists and sociologists whose research involved Pakistan, Pakistani diaspora and South Asian Islam. However, this workshop has also attracted scholars and researchers from a broad range of disciplines including historians, political scientists, economists, and applied social scientists. In recent years, the themes have also included Gender studies, Health studies, History, Literature, Religious studies and Management studies.

We particularly welcome postgraduates from UK and abroad who are working in similar subject areas and wish to receive a friendly feedback from our group of academics and participants. This workshop has also emerged as a joint platform for both ‘new’ postgraduates and established scholars. It provides them the opportunity to get acquainted with each other in most of the time in order to motivate and inspire people working in common fields of interest. This workshop is therefore normally kept small and intimate with a group of 25 or less people.

The venue, Roak How, is one of the oldest Quaker Meeting Houses in Britain and is an important location in the Quaker world. The Roak How offers dormitory style sleeping arrangements which are comfortable and affordable. For those who prefer B&B accommodation, there are several nice places around the area which can only be accessed if they have their own car. The total cost of the workshop will be £65-70 approximately for those staying at the Roak How (this includes Workshop registration, reception, breakfasts, Pakistani lunches, teas and coffees).

You can register by emailing the convenors at pakistanworkshop@gmail.com. Due to limited places, we highly recommend an early registration.

A registration fee £30 for the Pakistan Workshop 2008 should be paid either by cheque (payable to ‘The Pakistan Workshop’) posted to: Stephen Lyon, Department of Anthropology, Durham University, 43 Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HN or through Paypal. These details are also available at the Pakistan Workshop 2008 website: https://anthropology.dur.ac.uk/anthroworkshop2008/
Asian studies is not usually the first thing that comes to mind when considering Iceland. In fact, in the second half of the 20th century Iceland was too pre-occupied with its own European-American identity problem to be able to pay serious attention to a distant region such as Asia. But as Geir Sigurdsson, director of the recently opened Icelandic Centre for Asian Studies explains, the situation has changed rapidly during the last two decades.

Forging links between distant lands
ASÍS - The Icelandic Centre for Asian Studies

Due to the relative geographic isolation of Ultima Thule, the impact of globalisation has arguably been more tangible in Iceland than in most other European countries. Since the early 1990’s, there has been an explosion in trade, tourism and cultural exchanges between Iceland and Asian countries that only 50 years ago seemed almost unimaginable. This applies in particular to East Asia, i.e. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and not least the PRC, but also India and parts of Southeast Asia. Iceland’s membership of EFTA brought a free-trade agreement with South Korea in 2006, and its non-membership of the EU enabled it to negotiate a bilateral agreement with the PRC, likely to take effect next year. This will be China’s first free-trade agreement with a European nation, and without a doubt it will open up opportunities for Icelandic enterprises.

New and distant partners
Trade calls for exposure and communication and throughout history it has often been the vehicle for closer cultural and personal ties between remote areas. The case of Iceland and Asia is no exception. After Icelandic embassies opened in Beijing in 1995 and Tokyo in 2001 a growing need was felt to facilitate the future generations’ increased understanding of the new and distant partners. The breakthrough was made in 2003, when a programme in Japanese language and society was established at the University of Iceland with the support of the Japan Foundation.

In December 2005, the two major Icelandic state universities, University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri, jointly established the Icelandic Centre for Asian Studies (Asíuver Íslands – ASÍS). One of the main objectives of ASÍS is to create an environment - through lectures, conferences, exhibitions and other events - conducive to fostering interest in Asian studies and understanding of Asia-related issues among both academics and the general public in Iceland. Besides a series of local events, ASÍS has co-organised two international conferences, the first on the Mao Zedong era in China in collaboration with the Chinese Icelandic Culture Society (KiM), and the second on Asia-related gender studies in collaboration with the Scandinavian-based Gendering Asia Network. It is anticipated that the biennial conference of the Nordic Association of Chinese Studies will be held in Iceland under the Centre’s auspices in 2009. Several renowned scholars and researchers have also visited and delivered lectures for ASÍS, including Gørn Helgesen (Nordic Institute of Asian Studies), Elaine Jeffreys (University of Technology, Sydney), Miia Juntunen (Nordic Centre in India) and Chung-ying Cheng (University of Hawaii). Expected visitors during the current academic year include Yuki Ishimatsu (UC Berkeley), Henry Rosemont Jr. (St. Mary’s College of Maryland), Göran Malmqvist (Swedish Academy of Sciences) and Mark Elvin (Australian National University).

Expanding the Asian Studies curriculum
ASÍS is also working towards an expansion of the Asian Studies curriculum at the two state universities. Shortly after its establishment, the first Chinese studies courses were offered at the University of Akureyri, where the Centre’s main office was located in its initial phase. As of August 1st 2007, the office was moved to the University of Iceland in the capital, Reykjavík, though ASÍS still remains jointly operated by both universities. The first fully-fledged Chinese studies programme was then launched at the University of Iceland in September 2007 with the support of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban). A certain combination of Chinese studies with the consistently growing Japanese language and society programme makes up a major in East Asian studies. Through the close partnership with Ningbo University and the anticipated establishment of the Northern Light Confucius Institute in Iceland in 2008, Chinese studies is proving to be a fast growing field of academic study and research in Iceland.

However, the Centre is also turning its attention towards South Asia and aiming to establish a course in South Asian studies in the near future at the University of Iceland. This decision has been made with regard to the growing importance of the South Asian region in world trade, politics and culture. An Icelandic embassy was opened in New Delhi in 2006 and in early 2007 the University of Iceland became a member of the Nordic Centre in India.

Since its foundation, ASÍS has been looking in particular towards the Nordic region for cooperation in Asian studies. The two state universities became members of the Nordic NIAS Council (NNC) in 2006, a consortium that provides direct access to the Nordic Institute of Asian studies and facilitates contact with the most important Scandinavian educational institutions with a focus on Asia. ASÍS, however, is also working with other European institutes, such as the Centre of Oriental Studies at Vilnius University, Lithuania, and the Irish Institute of Chinese Studies at University College Cork, Ireland, and is eager to construct further networks.

In the future, ASÍS is expected to serve as a networking resource for education and information on the Asian region, and an all-inclusive communication centre for Icelandic-Asian interactions. The importance of the mission of ASÍS is acknowledged by some private enterprises in Iceland, e.g. Glitnir Bank and Avion Group, both of which support its operations.

The current chair of ASÍS is Dr. Ingjaldur Hannibáls Ólafsson (ingjaldur@hi.is) and director is Dr. Geir Sigurdsson (geirs@hi.is).
Leading European institutions launch a consortium for Asian Field Studies

On 3 September 2007, representatives of leading institutions in Asian studies from the European Union and Asia met at the École française d’Étèrême-Orient (EFEO), Paris, to sign an agreement founding the European Consortium for Asian Field Studies (ECAF). An initiative of the EFEO, the Consortium Agreement will create a unique network out of twenty-one existing research centres across Asia, from Pakistan to Korea. Seventeen of the centres are operated by the EFEO, two by the Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO), one by the Asia-Africa-Institute (AAI) and one by the Asia Research Institute (ARI). The signing ceremony, attended by representatives of several Asian embassies in Paris, was followed by a reception hosted by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres under the auspices of its Permanent Secretary, Professor Jean Leclant.

For the 3 founding members, which include academies, universities, foundations, museums, and research institutes in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, the principal objective of the Consortium is to increase the capacity of European institutions to conduct Asian field studies through the sharing of resources and the development of joint research programmes.

According to Professor Verellen, Director of the EFEO, “In an international context where the most effective actors in the domain of Asian studies are developing and innovating at a rapid pace thanks to substantial investments and advanced levels of professional and institutional organisation, it is indispensable for European institutions to build alliances in order to maintain their competitiveness and meet new challenges in producing and disseminating knowledge about Asian societies and civilisations”.

Moreover, as Professor Leclant stated in his inaugural speech, “Field work constitutes a vital dimension of the study of Asian societies and civilisations, and federating existing centres in Asia is the most effective way of providing specialists with the necessary facilities and opportunities for conducting in-depth research and training.” The Consortium aims to provide field access and research facilities for its members’ academic and technical staff, as well as fellowship holders and students, and to encourage the development of joint interdisciplinary research programmes in the humanities and social sciences. It also plans to share documentary resources from centres in Asia, and to pool funding to acquire new digital archives. More generally, it will promote Euro-Asian partnerships and dialogue among scholars and academic communities from both continents. The disciplinary fields range from archaeology, anthropology, and linguistics, to sociology and religious studies.

This initiative is conceived in the spirit of the EU policy to develop an integrated space for research and higher education among member states. As Professor Verellen pointed out, the success of ECAF will be largely about people, their ability to bridge cultural differences, solve logistical problems, meet the challenges of working together and sharing facilities.

Jean-François Jarige, President, Musée Guimet

"Only an organisation of research at the European scale can do justice to the weight of Asia today.... The participation of this Guimet Museum offers the prospect of extending the coverage of our joint interests to the civilisations of Central Asia."

Norbert Kroo, Vice President, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

"At the representative of the European Research Council at this ceremony, I feel privileged to express the Council's welcome to this initiative."

Roel Sterckx, Professor and Chair, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Cambridge

"The new association emphasises the primacy of fieldwork and person-to-person contact in an age too easily reduced by distance and the impersonality of computers." 

Silvio Vita, Professor of Japanese Studies, IsIAO

"IsIAO already cooperates closely with the EFEO in Kyoto, including common activities and the joint operation of facilities, and together they outreach to Japanese institutions – such fruitful relations can both strengthen and be strengthened by this new consortium."

Harunaga Isaacson, Professor of Indian Studies, Asian-Africa-Institute, Hamburg

"This agreement places an existing and most fruitful interaction between the Asian-Africa-Institute and the EFEO on a firmer and more permanent basis – a child that will far outlive all of us here today!"

John Kienen, Professor of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam

"Notwithstanding the fact that the French and the Dutch both voted against the European constitution, the Universities of Amsterdam and Leiden and the International Institute of Asian Studies are keen to join this enterprise."

João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, Director, Centro de História de Além-Mar

"Although new on the scene of Asian studies, Portugal preserves the sources on exploration and imperial expansion. Many of these records remain to be opened by translation to Western and Asian scholars alike."

Jan Kužera, Professor, Nuclear Physics Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

"In addition to the Orientale Institute with its long history of study of Asia, the ASCR Physics Institute welcomes the Consortium as a means to disseminate and refine the use of its nuclear technology in the field of archaeology, already under way at Angkor."

**Founding Members and Observers**

**France**
Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, Paris
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Observer)
École des Hautes Études en sciences sociales, Paris
École française d’Étèrême-Orient, Paris
École pratique des Hautes Études, Paris
Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, Paris
Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris
Société asiatique, Paris

**Germany**
Asian-Africa-Institut, Hamburg
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Observer)
Max-Plank-Institut für ethnologische Forschung, Halle/Saale

**Hungary**
Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest
Ferenc Hopp Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art, Budapest

**Italy**
Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, Rome
Fondazione Ing. Carlo Maurilio Lerici, Rome

**Portugal**
Centro de História de Além-Mar, Lisbon

**The Czech Republic**
Centrum cílů ramu Red, Rez
Nuclear Physics Institute, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Rez
Oriental Studies Institute, ASCR, Prague

**The Netherlands**
European League of Non-Western Studies, Leiden
International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden (Observer)
University of Amsterdam
University of Leiden

**United-Kingdom**
British Academy, London
Needham Research Institute, Cambridge
Royal Asiatic Society, London
School of Oriental and African Studies, London
The White Rose East Asia Centre, Leeds and Sheffield
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
University of Oxford

**European Union**
Asia-Europe Foundation, Singapore (Observer)
European science foundation, Strasbourg (Observer)

**Founding Associate Members**
Académie Sinica, Taipei
Asia Research Institute, Singapore
Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing
Chinese University of Hongkong
Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg
Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Centre for Anthropology, Bangkok
Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansadhan/National Foundation of Sanskrit Culture, New Delhi
Tōyō Bunka/ Oriental Library, Tokyo
University of Korea, Seoul
Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi
ICAS Book Prizes: 2007 Citations

The Reading Committee ICAS Book Prizes
Kuala Lumpur 2 August 2007

For the second time the ICAS Book Prizes were awarded. Established in 2004, this global competition aims to create an international focus for publications on Asia while at the same time increasing the visibility for Asia studies worldwide. All scientific books pertaining to Asia and published in 2005 and 2006 were eligible. Four prizes were awarded: Best study in the field of the humanities; best study in the field of social sciences; best dissertation in the field of Asia studies and the Colleagues Choice Award.

The Reading Committee reviewed 80 books and 10 dissertations. The members of the Reading Committee were: Anand Yang (Chair, director Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies and past president Association for Asian Studies); Jennifer Holdaway (Program Director Social Science Research Council); Christopher Reed (Associate Professor, Department of History of The Ohio State University and winner of the IBP Humanities 2004), Coulson Yang (Associate Professor, Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Barnard College, Columbia University) and Paul van de Velde (Secretary, Senior Consultant IIAS and Secretary ICAS).

The prizes were awarded on the 2nd August 2007 by Deputy Prime Minister Dato’/seri Najib Tun Razak, during the ICAS dinner at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

Citations

Humanities

Madeline Zelin,
The Merchants of Zigong (Columbia University Press 2006)

This pathbreaking study of industrial enterprise in 19th and early 20th century China is based on extensive archival research. It focuses on private entrepreneurs in Zigong, the largest industrial town in its time in northern China. Zelin convincingly shows that lineage-based clan groups provided the basis for effective business organisation, capital investment, industrial management, and business innovation. This finding challenges longstanding claims about state monopoly of the salt industry in late imperial China, and it demonstrates the capacity of entrepreneurs to pool financial resources through lineage-based trusts to organise and manage their own enterprises in Zigong, the largest industrial town in its time in northern China. Her accomplishment took the Reading’s Committee breath away.

Dissertation

Karen Laura Thomber,
Negotiating and Reconfiguring Japan and Japanese Literature in Polytintextual East Asian Contact Zones: Japan, Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan (PhD Harvard University)

Drawing on dozens, even hundreds of works of literature and biography written in Japanese, Chinese and Korean, as well as a vast secondary literature in multiple languages, Thomber ties together loose cultural, literary, and biographical strands held in memory with many sources she has discovered herself. The result is a polytextual East Asian hybridity, competition, and exchange. Never before has the Reading Committee read a dissertation so clearly destined to become an influential book (or two, since it is nearly a thousand pages long). Starting from the stance that literature travelled widely and was frequently contested and rewritten, Thomber has composed a highly empirical account that shows Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese writers reading, borrowing from, and recasting literary vernaculars in the (semi)colonial context of the 1850-1945 years. Her accomplishment took the Reading’s Committee breath away.

Social Sciences

Nordin Hussin,

Without doubt Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka is a truly pioneering study of urban history and breaks new ground in the context of Malay- sian studies. It is a fine-grained social history, one that we rarely see in Southeast Asia. This study compares Melaka and Penang in the context of overall trends, namely, policy, geographical position, nature and direction of trade, morphology and society, and how these factors were influenced by trade as well as policies. The study is exhaustively researched and the arguments presented are supported by a close study of archival documents that will make new material available to other scholars. By documenting the impact of imperialist ambitions on the economy and society of two major trading centres, this book will provide a point of reference for all future research concerning the period.

Colleagues Choice Award

Karen Laura Thomber,
Negotiating and Reconfiguring Japan and Japanese Literature in Polytintextual East Asian Contact Zones: Japan, Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan (PhD Harvard University)

Without doubt Trade and Society in the Straits of Melaka is a truly pioneering study of urban history and breaks new ground in the context of Malaysian studies. It is a fine-grained social history, one that we rarely see in Southeast Asia. This study compares Melaka and Penang in the context of overall trends, namely, policy, geographical position, nature and direction of trade, morphology and society, and how these factors were influenced by trade as well as policies. The study is exhaustively researched and the arguments presented are supported by a close study of archival documents that will make new material available to other scholars. By documenting the impact of imperialist ambitions on the economy and society of two major trading centres, this book will provide a point of reference for all future research concerning the period.

Sharing a future in Asia

ICAS 2007 was the first time such a large scale event on the humanities and social sciences has taken place in Malaysia. “Yet the humanities and social sciences are critical areas of study especially to a multi-ethnic country like Malaysia”, says host Datuk Prof. Shamsul AB. “They are the pivot of Malaysia’s wellbeing - no amount of computers can help us stay together.” He added that “it is high time that the social sciences are championed” (New Straits Times, 8 August 2007). This is just one of the reasons why the ICAS Secretariat believes that it is imperative for ICAS to remain a travelling conference in Asia, drawing special attention to local dynamics of the country where the convention is held.

Triumphalism

“Asia is often proclaimed as the fastest growing region in the world today, in spite of the fact that nearly a billion of its population is still living in poverty. Some social scientists feel that the rapid growth in Asia has perpetuated Asian “triumphalism” which denotes an overwhelming sense of optimism and bullishness in the region” [NST, 8 August 2007]. In his keynote address entitled Towards a Shared Future in Asia: Illusion or Emerging Reality?, Datuk Dr Abdul Rahman Embong (President of the Malaysian Social Sciences Association), was critical of this notion of Asian “triumphalism”. “If we want to share a future in Asia, we have to remove its problems too,” says Abdul Rahman. “Before Asia can begin to blow its own trumpet, it must address critical issues taking place in its own backyard.” Shamsul took this argument a step further by stating that Malaysia has “been disadvantaged by Asian “triumphalism”. We have ‘made it’ in some aspects. But in the process of ‘making it’, we have (prematurely) proclaimed that we are a developed country”.

In his opening address Deputy Prime Minister Dato’/seri Najib Tun Razak approached this topic pragmatically by stating that “This will require leadership and looking at Asia today. I don’t doubt for a minute that leadership can be brought forth. What is needed is a serious and collective effort of Asian countries towards this end. Whether Asia will succeed in doing so, or whether we will continue to remain a continent united on a map, but not quite in reality, remains to be seen. Of course only time will tell. But all of you, scholars of Asia, can contribute towards the outcome of this question”, he said [NST online 6 September 2007].

Olympics of Asia studies

The debate about many other discussions took place in more than 300 different panels in 22 concurrent sessions convened during ICAS 7 which was dubbed by its local host Shamsul AB as the ‘Olympics of Asian studies’. The majority of the nearly 1500 participants were from the social sciences and humanities - scholars, researchers, graduate students and representatives of civil society at large - originating from over 50 countries. Interestingly, the interdisciplinary and interregional nature of the convention has drawn an increasing number of natural scientists from medical and health studies, environmentalists, and engineers whose research specialisations are in Asia. This is an important development for ICAS, as we can only start working towards solutions for global problems by transcending borders and widening our focus.

We hope this trend will be strengthened at ICAS 6. The next torch-bearer is Chungnam National University and its Centre for Asian Regional Studies (CARS) in Daejeon Metropolitan City in South Korea. Daejeon boasts more than one hundred institutes focussing on a wide variety of applied sciences. Daejeon is the capital of science in the heart of the Korean peninsula. It is a major communication and transportation hub with a one-hour bullet train link to the international airport near Seoul. Daejeon merges its long history of culture and tradition with leading research in science and technology. The intriguing intersection of technology and human sciences has been a decisive factor in why Daejeon was chosen above two other cities in Korea to be the next venue of ICAS. For the ICAS Secretariat Daejeon is the embodiment of a trend which was already sensed at ICAS 5 in Kuala Lumpur: the increasing awareness of the interconnectedness of all sciences.
Programmes

Catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts
In 1929, two crates of 17th and 18th century Sanskrit manuscripts arrived at the Kern Institute, University of Leiden. This Conda/IASS project is preparing a scientific catalogue of the roughly 500 South Indian Sanskrit manuscripts written on palm leaves in ancient Indian scripts such as Grantha, Telugu, Malayalam, Nagari and Nannda-gari.
Coordinator: Sanju Rath
s.rath@let.leidenuniv.nl

Cross-border marriages in East and Southeast Asia
The past decade has seen a rapid increase in the intra-Asia flow of brides, particularly between Southeast and East Asia. While in Europe intermarried marriages continue to be seen as a form of the commodification of women, recent scholarship in intra-Asia cross-border marriages challenges this dominant view.
Coordinator: Melody Lu
m.lu@let.leidenuniv.nl

Illegal but licit: transnational flows and permissive politics in Asia
This research programme analyses forms of globalisation-from below, transnational practices considered acceptable (licit) by participants but which are often illegal in a formal sense. It explores limitations of ‘seeing like a state’, and instead privileges the perspectives of participants in these illegal but licit transnational flows.
Coordinator: Willem van Schendel
h.w.vanschendel@uva.nl

Socio-genetic marginalisation in Asia
The development and application of new biomedical and genetic technologies have important socio-political implications. This NWO/ASSH/IASS 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 boundaries.
Coordinator: Margaret Sleebboom-Faulkner
m.sleebboom-faulkner@sussex.ac.uk

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 languages, 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 development of the theory of language and human language capacity.
Coordinator: Rint Sybesma
r.p.e.sybesma@let.leidenuniv.nl

Trans-Himalayan database development:
China and the subcontinent
The project’s main goal is to combine the database of cognate

Networks

ABIA South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology index
The Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology is an annotated bibliographic database for publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. The project was launched by IASS in 1993 and is currently coordinated by the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology of the University of Kelaniya, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The database is freely accessible at www.abia.net. Extracts from the database are also available as bibliographies, published in a series by Brill. The project receives scientific support from UNESCO.
Coordinator: Ellen Raven and Cerda Theuns-de Boer
e.m.raven@let.leidenuniv.nl
www.abia.net

Islam in Indonesia: the dissemination of religious authority in the 20th and early 21st centuries
Forms and transformations of religious authority among the Indonesian Muslim community are the focus of this research programme. The term authority relates to persons and books as well as various other forms of written and non-written references. Special attention is paid to the production, reproduction and dissemination of religious authority in the fields of four sub-programmes: ulama (religious scholars) and fatwas; tantrik (mystical orders); da’wah (propagation of the faith); and education.
Coordinator: Nico Kaptein
n.j.g.kaptein@let.leidenuniv.nl

Initiatives

Earth monitoring and the social sciences
The space age has dramatically impacted all nations. In Asia, the ‘space-faring nations’ of India, China and Japan have successfully developed space technologies and applications. Other Asian nations have readily adopted these applications, including satellites for telecommunications, for gathering data on the weather, and environmental and earth resources. IASS has initiated a series of workshops on the topic.
Coordinator: David Soo
d.n.soo@let.leidenuniv.nl

Piracy and robbery on the Asian seas
Acts of piracy loom large in Asian waters, with the bulk of all officially reported incidents of maritime piracy occurring in Southeast Asia during the 1990s. It is of serious concern to international shipping, as the sea-lanes between East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe pass through Southeast Asia. IASS and the Centre for Maritime Research at the University of Amsterdam are currently identifying issues and concerns, and are delineating core elements of an interdisciplinary research programme on piracy and robbery at sea in Asia.
Coordinator: John Kleinen
kleinen@uva.nl

For more information on IASS research: www.iass.nl

IIAS Fellow Symposium
To highlight the broad spectrum of research undertaken at the International Institute for Asian Studies, we are organising a symposium during which six researchers will present their work in progress to their professional colleagues in the Netherlands. Each presentation will be critiqued by a discussant.

The symposium is open to all:
MA and PhD students, researchers and lecturers.

Organised by IIAS
Convenors
Dr Gerard Persoon (Chair Academic Committee IIAS)
Dr Manon Osseweijer (Coordinator of Academic Affairs IIAS)

Date and venue
29 November 2007
9.00 – 17.00 hrs
Leiden University
Spectrumzaal, Plexus Student Centre, Kaisersstraat 25
2311 GN Leiden

For further information
Ms. Saskia Jans
IIAS, Nonnensteeg 1-3, Leiden,
071-527 2227;
5.jans@let.leidenuniv.nl

PROGRAMME: SEE WWW.IASS.NL

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Dr Katia Chirkova (Russia)  
Programme coordinator, within the programme  
Asiatica/Mark Twain Database: Development China and the Subcontinent, sponsored by CASS and KNW  
1 September 2005 – 4 April 2008

Melody Liu, MA (Taiwan)  
Affiliated fellow  
Medical and 21st-century border marriages in East and Southeast Asia  
1 February 2006 – 1 September 2008

Dr Prasanna Kumar Patra (India)  
Research fellow, within the ASiA/IAS/NIWO programme ‘Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia’ (SMAP)  
Cross-cultural Comparative Study of Genetic Research in India and Japan  

Dr Ellen Raven (the Netherlands)  
Project coordinator, within the network ‘South and Southeast Asia Art and Archaeology Index’ (ASSR/IIAS), sponsored by Gonda Foundation  
1 June 2006 – 1 June 2008

Zhang Ying Ping, MA (China)  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by CSC  
Strengthening Asia-Pacific Multilateral Security Cooperation: European Experience  
1 January – 31 December 2007

Dr Malhi Parvinder Amin (the Netherlands)  
Stationed at Leiden and the Branch Office Amsterdam  
Project coordinator, within the EPA-IAS and IASCA-CASS research programme  
Domestic and Geopolitical Energy Security for China and the EU  
1 September 2007 – 1 September 2010

CENTRAL ASIA

Dr Alex McKay (New Zealand)  
Affiliated fellow  
The History of Tibet and the Indian Himalayas  
1 October 2000 – 1 May 2008

Dr Irina Morozova (Russia)  
Stationed at Leiden and the Branch Office Amsterdam  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung  
Conflict, Security and Development in the Post-Soviet Era: Toward Regional Economic Coherence in the Central Asian Region  
1 June 2007 – 1 June 2008

SOUTH ASIA

Dr Sakhra Bandhopadyay  
Victoria University of Wellington  
Affiliated fellow  
Meanings of Freedom: Decolonisation and Politics of Transition in West Bengal, 1947-1952  
1 October – 31 December 2007

Dr Maarten Bode (the Netherlands)  
Stationed at the Branch Office Amsterdam  
1 February – 1 November 2007

Dr Jostana Agnhotri Gupta (the Netherlands)  
Research fellow, within the ASiA/IAS/NIWO programme ‘Socio-Genetic Marginalisation in Asia’  
Reproductive Genetics and Counselling in India: Decision-making Regarding Genetic Screening and Prenatal Diagnosis  
1 September 2004 – 31 August 2007

Dr Dipika Mulherjee (India)  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by USIP  
Islam, Education, Secular Education and Civil Society in South Thailand  
1 March 2007 – 1 September 2008

Dr Saraaju Rith (India)  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Gonda Foundation  
Catalogue Collection Sambet Texts  
1 January 2004 – 1 January 2005

Dr Markus Schlichter (Germany)  
Affiliated fellow  
Localised Statehood: Social and Cultural Practices of a ‘Tribal’ Development Project in India  
1 April 2008 – 30 September 2008

Dr Alessandro Cattedri  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Gonda Medieval Bakti  
1 November 2007 – 1 March 2008

Dr Silvia D’Inenno  
Collège de France, Institute d’Extreme Orients  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Gonda  
The Skanda-avamihkhaga on Rig Veda: A Critical Study  
1 March 2008 – 1 August 2008

Dr Igor Katin  
Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by Gonda  
Samans (Hinduism) and non-Indian Indians in the Netherlands  
1 November 2007 – 15 January 2008

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Birgit Abels (Germany)  
Rubicon fellow, sponsored by NWO  
Souls of (Be)longing. Islam, Place and Music in the Philippine Sulu Archipelago: The Bajau  
1 September 2007 – 31 August 2007

Dr Greg Bankoff (UK)  
Affiliated fellow  
Cultures of Being: Community and Natural Hazard in the Philippines  
1 September 2004 – 31 August 2008

Dr Hans Hagedorn (Sweden)  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by the Swedish Research Council  
Early modern Timer: The Meeting between Indianising Groups and Colonial Interests  
1 September – 31 October 2007

Dr Emi Helmstätter (Indonesia)  
Affiliated fellow  
Analytical Study of Intellectual Genealogy and Islamic Thought in the Nineteenth Century

Malay Riau  
4 August – 4 November 2007

Wouter Hugenholtz (the Netherlands)  
Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS)  
Affiliated fellow  
Land Rent Tax in Java 1812-1942  
15 August – 15 November 2007

Marianne Hubusch (Australia)  
University of Sydney  
Affiliated fellow  
Pointy Shoes and Pitik Helmets: Dress and Identity Construction in Ambon from 1831 to 1942  
16 July – 15 November 2007

Dr Edwin Jurriëns (Australia)  
University of New South Wales at ADFA  
Affiliated fellow  
Radio Active: Broadcast Journalism and the Dialogueal Public Sphere in Indonesian Reflections on the Screen: Televisual Metaliscousse in Australia  
1 January – 31 March 2008

Prof. Mashudi Kader (Malaysia)  
IAAS Professor, holder of the European Chair ‘Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia’  
The Morphology and the Movements of Constituents in the Syntax of Classical Malay  
1 October 2006 – 1 September 2008

Dr Nico Kaptijn (the Netherlands)  
Senior fellow and project coordinator within the programme ‘Islam in Indonesia’  
Islam and State in the Netherlands East Indies. The Life and Work of Sayyid `Uthmân (1822 – 1914)  
1 May 2006 – 1 May 2009

Dr Ritoku Kikusawa (Japan)  
National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by NWO  
An Examination of the Genetic Affiliation of the Malayap language: their internal and External relationship in the Austroasiatic Language family  
1 December 2006 – 30 November 2007

Dr Jennifer Lindsay (Australia)  
KITU/IAS affiliated fellow  
Australian National University, sponsored by NWO & KITU  
Performance and Politics in Indonesia  
1 September – 30 November 2007

Prof. Lawrence Andrew Reid (USA)  
University of Hawai’i  
Affiliated fellow  
Reconstruction of Southern Colombian “Pilcomay”  
1 December 2006 – 30 November 2006

Prof. Hain Steinhauser (the Netherlands)  
IAS Professor  
Special Chair ‘Ethno linguistics of East Indonesia’ at the Radboud University Nijmegen  
1 September 1998 – 1 September 2008

Dr Xiaoming Huang (New Zealand)  
Affiliated fellow  
The invisible hand: Modern Studies of International Relations in Japan, China and Korea  
1 December 2007 – 1 July 2008

Dr Myungshin Kim (Korea)  
Yonsei University, Seoul  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by AKS  
The Correlation of Aesthetics and Politics; North Korean literature  

Dr Kato Masae (Japan)  
Research fellow within the ASR/IAS/NIWO programme ‘Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia’  
A Comparative Study on Socio-Genetic Marginalisation in Japan in Relation to the “West” at a Reference Group  
1 April 2005 – 1 April 2008

Dr Ko Chyong-Fang (Taiwan)  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by NSC  
Bring Family Back? The Impact of Cross-border Marriages on Host Societies.  
20 August – 20 November 2007

Dr Jan-Eerk Leppänen (Finland)  
PhD student within the ASR/IAS/NIWO programme ‘Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia’  
Socio-genetic Marginalisation and Vulnerable Ethnic Groups in Southwest China  
1 February 2007 – 1 February 2009

Prof. Sakamoto Hiroko (Japan)  
Hitotsubashi University, Graduate School of Social Sciences  
Affiliated fellow, Amsterdam Branch Office Research on ‘Intellectual History and Culture of Cartoons in Modern China: From the Points of View of Multi-cultural Linkage, Media and Comdr’  
1 August 2007 – 31 January 2008

Dr Wang Yi (China)  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by CASS  
Female Buxi in Chinese Newels, 15th-18th Century

Dr Karina Kromhout (the Netherlands)  
Affiliated fellow  
University of Amsterdam and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden. ASiA’s  
Institutional Information  
20 April 2007 – 20 October 2007

Zheng Ying Ping, MA (China)  
Institute of International Information  
20 August – 20 November 2007

Prof. Yu Yake (China)  
Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences  
Affiliated fellow, sponsored by CSC  
Theory and Practice of Regional Integration: A Comparative Study on the Cenex of EU and ASEAN  
1 August 2007 – 31 January 2008

The Amsterdam School for Social science Research (ASSR) and Asian Studies in Amsterdam (ASiA) are proud to announce the launch of the Wertheim lecture website at http://www.iias.nl/asia/wertheim/. All previous Wertheim lectures will be available in pdf format for public reference and class use.

The Wertheim lecture was initiated by the ASR in 1990 in recognition of W.F. Wertheim’s major contributions to the European tradition of historical-sociological research on modern Asia. Starting 2006, the annual Wertheim lecture is jointly organised by the ASSR and ASiA. The ASSR and ASiA, and a research institute of the University of Amsterdam where social scientists cooperate in multi-disciplinary research. ASiA is an initiative of the Board of the University of Amsterdam and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden. ASiA’s goal is to stimulate, facilitate and broaden research activities on Asia in Amsterdam, and to make the outcomes and insights of research accessible to a wider audience.
Indian Mass Media and the Politics of Change
London, UK
cess2007@u.washington.edu
contact: Allison Dvaladze

organised by Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS)

Annual Conference
Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) 8th
Seattle, United States
18 - 21 October 2007

Politics in Asia
4th International Conference on Women and
Ottawa, Canada
4 – 6 October 2007

Annual Conference
The Conference on the Study of Religions of
Albion, Michigan, USA
13 – 16 November 2007

conference
The Conference on the Study of Religions of
Albion, Michigan, USA
13 – 16 November 2007

organised by Centre for Chinese Studies,
Zhongshan University
organised by Centre for Chinese Studies,
Zhongshan University

convenor: Ellison Center for Russian, East

European and Central Asian Studies

convenors: Ellison Center for Russian, East

European and Central Asian Studies

convenors: Ellison Center for Russian, East

European and Central Asian Studies

Convenors: Political Culture in South Asia

Organised by: Leiden University, the Neth-

erlands / the Ministry of Religious Affairs,

Organised by: Leiden University, the Neth-

erlands / the Ministry of Religious Affairs,

organised by ICWE

organised by Zhongshan University, Guang-

dong, Cultural Institute of Macao and Con-

sulate General NL, Guangzhou
contact: Evert Groenendijk
evert.groenendijk@mibuz.nl

6 – 8 December 2007

Oslo, Norway
Approaching Elections in South Asia: Performances, Principles and Perceptions
workshop
convenor: Political Culture in South Asia
research project, Humanities Faculty, Univer-
sity of Oslo
contact: Pamela G. Price or Ard Engelsen Raud
g.p.price@uio.uio.no or a.e.ruud@iakh.
uio.no

www.hf.uio.no/forskning/forskning

www.hf.uio.no/forskning/forskning

sprokklet/southasia/index.html

1 – 15 December 2007

Kolkata, India
Annual winter course on Forced Migration
Orientation Course
Organised by: The Calcutta Research Group
in cooperation with the Government of Fin-
land, UNHCR and the Brookings Institution
contact: forcedmigrationdesk@mrcg.ac.in
mrcg@mrcg.ac.in

www.mrcg.ac.in

January 2008

9 - 11 January 2008

Bangkok, Thailand
The 10th International Conference on Thai Studies
conference
organised by Thai Khai Research Institute,
Thammasat University
contact: Anucha Thaksinrattan
thaiconference@gmail.com
www.thaiconference.tu.ac.th

The Sociology of Southeast Asia
Transformations in a Developing Region
Victor T. King

✓ First sole-authored introductory sociological text on Southeast Asia that focuses on change and development in the region.
✓ Covers a wide range of themes including class, ethnicity, underdevelopment and gender.
✓ Uses case studies from across the region.

One of the main problems faced by teachers and students who have a scholarly interest in Southeast Asia is the lack of general, user-friendly texts in the social sciences. The absence of an introduction to the sociology of Southeast Asia is especially unfortunate. It is the aim of this volume to meet these needs. Aimed primarily at undergraduates up to the final year, it will also be useful as a reference work for postgraduates and researchers who lack such a general work.

Victor King has produced a lucid, comprehensive and challenging analysis of the state-of-the-art of Southeast Asian sociology. The book is not only an excellent text book for courses on Southeast Asia or development sociology, but also “required reading” for all social scientists embarking on research in the area. I am certain that it will become a long-lasting addition to the standard literature on Asia.

– Hans-Dieter Evers

NIAS Press, October 2007, 352 pp., illus.
Hbk: * 978-87-91114-59-5 * £50
Pbk: * 978-87-91114-60-1 * £16.99
(Simultaneously published in North America by the University of Hawaii Press)

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Call for Contributors

The Encyclopedia of Asian American Folklore is scheduled to be published by Greenwood Press in 2010. Asian American Folklore shares a close tie with Asian Folklore, and is growing increasingly important to all Americans. Never before has there been such a broad and deep tie with Asian Folklore, and is growing increasingly important to all Americans. Never before has there been such a broad and deep tie with Asian Folklore, and is growing increasingly important to all Americans. Never before has there been such a broad and deep tie with Asian Folklore, and is growing increasingly important to all Americans. Never before has there been such a broad and deep

Principles for establishing entries: to cover as broad as possible the Asian American folklore practice, in particular those that have regional or national basis. When an Asian American culture or community is introduced, its folklore may contain, but not limited to, these aspects:

- Folk literature; narrative; tale; legend; histories; personal experience narratives; myth; poetry; epic; ballad; song; verse; speech; proverb; riddle
- Names; graffiti; language; dance; music; musical instruments
- Belief systems; medicine; magic; religion; churches and temples
- Behavior; drama; games and play; children games; ritual; foodways; festival
- Material culture; art; products; technology
- Settlement patterns (houses/cultural architecture; interior and exterior designs and decorations)
- Further reading: book and journal publications; film; record and audiotope; websites; ethnography; monographs

Sample list of (working and expandable) table of contents in alphabetical order will be provided to interested contributors.

A letter of intent should be submitted by March 1, 2008. Prospective candidates will receive an assignment, contributor’s guidelines, and sample entries by email or postal mail; followed by release form to be sent by postal mail from the publisher to be signed and returned. Complete entries are due by the end of 2008, and are subject to normal editing process required for quality publications and are accepted for publication at the discretion of the editors, advisory board, and publisher. Contributors will receive a free set of this two volume reference book and/or a modest honorarium once it is published.

If you are interested in submitting one or more entries please send a short biographical sketch describing your background and interests in Asian American Folklore and your preferred e-mail and postal address to: Encyclopedia Editor, Kathleen Nadeau, knadeau@csub.edu or Department of Anthropology California State University 5500 University Pkwy, San Bernardino, Ca 92417 Office (909) 537-5503

European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists (EURASEAA)

12th International Conference
Leiden, the Netherlands, 1-5 September 2008

Call for Papers

We invite papers on all aspects of Southeast Asian archaeology, including but not limited to history, epigraphy, and numismatics. Papers on China and India that closely relate to Southeast Asian themes may also be presented by agreement and if time permits.

Deadline to send in abstracts: 1 February 2008.

Abstracts should not be longer than 200 words and accompanied by a short résumé/CV (max. 2 pages).

The registration fee will be:
- 110 euro if paid before 1 July 2008
- 130 euro if paid before 1 September 2008
- 150 euro if paid at the conference

Included
- A dinner and an excursion. For students, including PhD students, the fee will be 60 euro.

We will apply for grants from various Dutch funding organizations, specifically for travel grants. As there is an overwhelming demand for support, the organizing committee has decided to support mainly young (below 40) and promising scholars from Southeast Asia and eastern Europe. The grant may include: registration fee, (partial) travel costs, and shared hotel accommodation during the conference.

To qualify for a grant
- Please submit an abstract of your intended paper, your CV, and a short letter of motivation.

For further information
- Website: www.ias.nl/euraseaa12
- Email: euraseaa12@let.leidenuniv.nl

The organizing committee
- Marijke Klokkie, Leiden University
- Martina van den Haak, International Institute for Asian Studies