Xiang Biao presents a series of articles looking at ideas of ‘Return’.

Ethan Mark re-visits the Hague Convention of 1907 and Japan’s role within it.

Elizabeth Horton-Sharf reveals the intricacies of Japanese pictorial animal imagery.

Silk Stories: a preview of the Rotterdam Kunsthal exhibition, Taishō Kimono 1900-1940.

Guest Editor Chris Goto-Jones guides us through CyberAsia, a brave new world offering new technologies, new knowledge and new ways of thinking about Asia.
I don’t usually write editorials for the Newsletter, I think the paper speaks for itself, but the launch of the 50th issue and the re-design are reason enough for me to break the habit.

Anna Yeadell, Editor

I AM IN THE PRIVILEGED POSITION of having inherited (two years ago) a highly successful and well-respected publication with a large and loyal readership. I am never ceased to be amazed by the steady flow of articles which come my way, the breadth of interests and the enthusiasm of authors. My guest editors are always committed and energetic and engage in their task of recruiting writers from their research networks with gusto, providing the newsletter, over the years, with provocative, lively and interesting themes.

I am a firm believer in change. Change, of course, is not always easy. I realise there may be some of you who will wonder why we have undergone a re-design, who may not like the new look, who feel it was just fine as it was. And it was. But for me change and renewal are about progress and, in this case, a clear signal of the newsletter’s vitality.

The main purpose of the redesign, though, is to make the newsletter more readable. The most obvious changes are that there’s more colour now and that the theme (now called ‘The Focus’) has moved to the middle of the paper. But you won’t have to look too far to see that while they may be called something slightly different, all the features you have come to rely on are still there.

Of course, content, rather than design, is why you subscribe to the Newsletter and also why we print it. I hope you will agree that while the look is different the integrity and quality of the Newsletter remain firmly in tact.

The Newsletter is going from strength-to-strength and that’s largely down to you, the readers. Your feedback can help us fine tune the paper and also let us know about what you want to read about in the newsletter. If you have comments then please email them to iiasnews@iias.nl

There has been the proverbial, blood, sweat and tears involved in the making of this 50th issue, but I, for one, am proud of the result. I couldn’t have done it without the support of my Director, my colleagues, my designers and others (you know who you are!) I hope you enjoy it!
The 50th issue of the IIAS Newsletter is worth a moment of reflection. *The Newsletter*, as it is now called, has a new face, a new design, a new name. The editor however is the same, Anna Yeadell, and the institute from where *the Newsletter* is issued is the same IIAS. I should like to use this occasion to update the reader on the policy and activities of this institute.

Max Sparreboom, Director

QUALITY, IN ALL ITS FORMS, is the key to all IIAS activities. As a hosting/facilitating institute it is of great importance to us that our researchers are able to work on their projects in a professional and pleasant atmosphere, furnished with all the necessary facilities and resources, including staff support. Quality is also paramount in the decisions we make when selecting IIAS research programmes and individual fellows’ projects. In this regard, attention is paid to research methods, the use of collections and informants, and output in the form of publications (both academic and those destined for a wider audience) and seminars. For the same reasons, the many fellows that visit our institute in the cadre of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) are, wherever possible, embedded in existing IIAS programmes or those of colleagues from Leiden University and other universities.

IIAS is what I like to call ‘extraverted.’ It looks to what is happening in society. Many of our current and new research programmes are focused on science/scholarship as a way of solving societal questions, such as sustainable development, good governance, civil society, social cohesion, and education. In this way, IIAS research in the coming years will give attention to the problematic of large cities in Asia, rural development in post-conflict societies, governance questions in China and India, but also to new religious movements. This does not mean that there is no room left for curiosity-driven science-driven research, research in which the unraveling of complex processes and the searching for starting points for renewal and improvement of theories are central, or the opening up of new textual or historical sources. Our ABIA (Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology) programme and the Gonda Fund financed fellowships for research on India are good examples of this. In other words, the research we facilitate is diverse and ranges from studies in the field of Asian linguistics, religions, politics, economics and literature to music/arts, media and history.

IIAS is meant for post-doctoral researchers. Most of our fellows hold a PhD in some branch of learning from the social sciences or humanities. It is especially the younger guard among them in whom we have an interest. We are planning to organise meetings with talented junior researchers - PhD students or recent PhDs – where they present their own ideas on the future of their field of research.

Alongside the hosting and undertaking of academic projects and the subsequent disseminating of the results of work in progress during seminars and conferences, IIAS is also responsible for facilitating knowledge exchange between the academic world and a wider audience. *The Newsletter* is a clear example of this. Besides this we organise lectures, debates and other events with partners such as De Rode Hoed (centre for cultural debate in Amsterdam), international festivals and museums. Much of this knowledge transfer takes place in Amsterdam in co-operation with the Asian Studies in Amsterdam (ASIA) programme from the University of Amsterdam.

In fact, almost everything that IIAS undertakes is based on co-operation. IIAS has a proven and successful track record in collaborating with partners, such as the European Alliance for Asian Studies, the Asia Europe Foundation in Singapore, the National Science Council in Taiwan and – if you call participation in grant schemes collaboration – with the Research Council NWO, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences KNAW, and several Asian and European organisations. We are constantly searching for new opportunities to join efforts with other institutes in the Netherlands, in Europe, Asia and the US. A good example is the organisation of the International Convention of Asia Scholars, ICAS. The upcoming ICAS 2009 is being organised in Daejeon in Korea in co-operation with Chungnam National University.

We pride ourselves in having a flexible and responsive way of operating. IIAS has a board and an academic committee, all consisting of committed scholars from different disciplines and universities, who each bring their expertise to the institute. Research initiatives can be handled in an unbureaucratic way, that is, we can decide how we wish to pursue initiatives, depending on the subject and the circumstances. This may be through a one-off workshop based on the work of one of our fellows, a master-class, or a full-scale international research programme with researchers paid via external funds, such as the programme on Socio-Genetic Marginalisation in Asia, which will be concluded this year.

Co-operation is also the key word within the office at IIAS, among IIAS staff members. Together we create the conditions to host our research fellows as best we can, together we deliver our ‘products’: whether it be the Newsletter, our publication series, our seminars or other initiatives.

We at IIAS – that is the board, the academic committee and IIAS staff – are constantly searching for new opportunities and seeking ways to improve the way we work, as well as applying for external funding for what we consider good and timely new research. The new look Newsletter is just one example of how IIAS continues to evolve.
Paul van der Velde is the founding father of *The Newsletter*. As editor-in-chief from 1993 to 1998 he produced 17 issues. He left IIAS at the end of 1998 to work at the University of Amsterdam until, at the beginning of 2006, he returned to IIAS as senior consultant. For this special 50th issue, we profile him and reveal what his plans in Asian studies are.

**My background is in history and sinology.** After two years of studying sinology my father died and I had to take over the running of his textile company. During that time I was still enrolled at the history department of Leiden University, and in those days it was relatively easy to combine studying with my business obligations. After my degree in history at the University of Leiden in 1983 I did an intensive Chinese course, which was supervised by the sinologist Perry Link. I spent the latter part of 1984 and 1985 in Taipei at Taida University, studying Chinese and Art history, and specifically temple sculpture. In 1986 I got an MA in modern history, minoring in Chinese language, history and art. Then I worked for a while for the Dutch multinational OCE van der Grinten, a company which produces high-end copying machines. When my proposal to start producing their machines in Taiwan was rejected, I decided that a life in the service of photocopiers was not for me!

**Between Deshima and Biography.** In 1988 I took a part-time job at the Institute for the European Expansion and Reaction (IGIER) at Leiden University. It was a stimulating environment where I met a lot of researchers from Asia. I became editor of the Deshima Diaries Source Publication Project and worked closely with its supervisory Asia historian, Leonel Blondel. The idea to make the diaries accessible to the international scholarly community involved indexing the diaries written by the Dutch heads of the VOC factories and summarising the entries in English. I worked on 80 diaries consisting of 20,000 pages of 17th century handwriting: some were almost impossible to decipher! I wrote a couple of articles based on the discoveries I made but the most significant consequence of my daily diary reading was developing a vivid interest in biography. At that time biography wasn’t taken very seriously as an historic genre in the Netherlands. For me, writing history runs through my veins, and so I started popularising this genre as history writing.

By this time I had become president of the Historisch Platform (HP, ‘Historic Platform’) an organisation for young historians in Holland, and was co-founder of its periodical ‘Historisch Nieuwsblad’ which approached history from a journalistic angle. At first it was looked upon by my colleagues with suspicion but within a couple of years it had gained in popularity, something it maintains to this day. Opinions towards HP began to change following its ground-breaking conference on biography and also with the publication of my provocative article ‘Who is Afraid of the Historical Biography’. It wasn’t long after that HP founded the Committee for the Historical Biography which, together with other initiatives, has helped biography become an accepted and popular genre among historians.

During this time I began work on two biographical projects of my own. Together with Jaap de Moor I edited the complete works of Jacob Haafner, a Dutch novelist who wrote five very readable books on his stay in South Africa, India and Sri Lanka. He was an ardent anti-colonialist and multiculturist. The biography ‘He Who Lives under Palm Trees. The Sublime World of Jacob Haafner (1754-1809)’ – was published in Dutch last year. My second project was a biography of the Dutch ethnographer, geographer and populariser of the Dutch Indies P.J. Veth. In fact, I had proposed this as a subject for a PhD, and had been offered a job by the then director of IGIER, Henk Wesseling, as a PhD student, but I declined. While I have always been drawn to history from a journalistic angle, At first it was looked upon by my colleagues with suspicion but within a couple of years it had gained in popularity, something it maintains to this day. Opinions towards HP began to change following its ground-breaking conference on biography and also with the publication of my provocative article ‘Who is Afraid of the Historical Biography’. It wasn’t long after that HP founded the Committee for the Historical Biography which, together with other initiatives, has helped biography become an accepted and popular genre among historians.

**The world of Asian Studies.** What was originally a part-time job quickly evolved into more than a full-time job, and I became responsible for the communication division of IIAS. This meant being editor-in-chief of the **IIAS Newsletter**, arranging all IIAS publications and publica-

**The Newsletter’s first editor.**
The changing order of mobility in Asia

Return is an integral part of any migration flow. Between 1870 and 1940, one quarter to one third of the transatlantic migrants returned to Europe, which translates to 10 million.

Xiang Biao

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, 14.7 million people departed from the ports of Xiamen, Shantou and Hong Kong in south China between 1869 and 1939, primarily for Southeast Asia, and 11.6 million returned through the three ports between 1872 and 1939 (Sugihara 2005: 247-50). More noteworthy than the magnitude of large-scale return are the significant social changes it is inherently related to. The return of South Asians to the subcontinent following the independence of India in 1947, Chinese in Southeast Asia to the newly founded PRC in the 1950s and 1960s, and more recently, Viet kieu to socialist Vietnam, are just a few examples. Regarded as an unquestionable right and an incontestable duty at once, ‘return’ is both enormously emotional and deeply political.

The current waves of return migration reflect certain global conditions of this particular historical juncture. A new regime of return migration is emerging worldwide. Large numbers of refugees were repatriated to their home countries after the end of the Cold War, either because of the resumed normacy, or simply because of a redefinition of political risks by the west, especially in former communist countries. The United Nations Refugee Agency declared the 1990s to be the ‘decade of repatriation’. On another front, concerned with the alleged increase in irregular migrants and ‘ bogus asylum seekers’, receiving states enforce return as a means of countering the unwanted influxes. More recently, various European countries attempt to reinvent the guest worker programme in order to mitigate labour shortage without leading to migrants’ long-term settlement. The catchword is ‘circular migration’, of which return is a defining feature. Frank Field (2008), a UK Parliament Member, called for a ‘one man in, one man out’ migration scenario. In Asia, circular migration has been the default pattern of labour mobility.

Voluntary return migrations also increase due to changes in the global economy. In most parts of Asia, return nowadays is an enterprising project, instead of an exercise due to nostalgia. Returning to China or India from the west, for example, is perceived as a ‘return to the future’ – to be ahead of global business and technology curves. Finally, return migration is also related to the politics of nationalism and identities. In South Korea and Japan, for example, ethno-nationalism both encourages and is energised by the return of ethnic Koreans and Japanese from overseas.

Despite the burgeoning literature on transnational migration in Asia, however, research on return remains scarce. The workshop Return Migration in Asia, held in July 2008 at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, brought various streams of return migration to light. Apart from examining return as an important migration phenomenon, the workshop interrogated it as a powerful social, political and ideological notion, and opened up the concept of ‘return’ as a strategic moment redefining economic, social and political relations in the region.

The following four essays were among the over 40 papers presented at the workshop. Koji Sasaki’s article traces the little known debates among Japanese migrants in Brazil about return throughout the first half of the 20th century, and demonstrates how ‘return’ served as a central drama in the migrants’ negotiation of their political positionality in the changing global geopolitical order. Wang Canbai tells us how the Chinese state turned returnees into a special policy subject in the 1950s in the process of socialist nation building. Sylvia Cowan follows the journey of former Cambodian refugees who were forced to return by the US government despite being US permanent residents. Forced return helps maintain law and order in the US from the state’s point of view, but creates disruptions and disorder for the deportees and their family. Finally, Xiang Biao’s piece about labour migration in East Asia highlights how compulsory return has become an indispensable policy tool for the authorities to manage migration. Return is enforced through complex collaborations between the state, the employer, the recruiter and other public and private institutions.

References
Frank, 2008. ‘Balance the In’s and Out’s’. The Guardian. 8 September.

Running through the four essays is the common concern with the intersection between the logic of territory upon which state sovereignty and the political order is based, and the logic of mobility which is essential for the globalising economy. The intersection manifests itself as different configurations at different historical stages and in different cases. The essays collectively demonstrate that return migration warrants serious research not only because it is important in itself, but also because it constitutes a productive lens to delineate the changing pattern of mobility and the evolving global geopolitical order in general. More conference papers in the full version will take the form of collective publications in due course.
To return or not to return, this was never a straightforward question for Japanese immigrants in Brazil. ‘Return’ is not only driven by economic considerations, but is also a moral act conditioned by migrants’ complex relations with the state, the community, and their families. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, intellectuals from the Japanese immigrant community in Brazil debated the moral meanings of their mobility and immobility. The debates were shaped by and reflective of the radically changing political conditions and the collective sense of the self.

Koji Sasaki

The desire for return as a ‘backward’ mentality Japanese migration to Brazil began in 1908 through the initiative of a private agency, the Imperial Emigration Company. During the period 1908 to 1941, more than 188,000 Japanese were shipped to Brazil, where most peasant immigrants worked in coffee plantations in the state of São Paulo. They saw their work in Brazil as temporary and expected to return to Japan after earning some money. ‘to return to the homeland dressed in brocade’ (Rokuro-in nobiki wo kazaru) as the well-known saying goes.

Such an attitude, common to many migrant populations, was criticised by various migrant elites, especially editors of immigrant newspapers and leaders of immigration organisations, in the 1920s. They held that the immigrants’ ‘sojourner mentality’ (dekasegi konjo) was detrimental to agricultural development and insisted that the Japanese in Brazil should settle permanently. At that time, new immigrant colonies, meant to facilitate long-term settlement, were being built in the hinterland of São Paulo state. The educated settlers widely propagated the motto of ‘living the soil, settling permanently’. Paradoxically, the advocacy for permanent settlement was closely related to an emerging imperial cosmopolitanism of the Taishō era (1912-1926). The immigrant newspaper editorials, for example, stressed that the immigrants should see themselves as pioneers in the mission of Japan’s overseas development, declaring that ‘there is no reason why being a Japanese requires living and dying in Japan’.

Imagined re-migration to the empire Political conditions in Japan went through a decisive shift in the 1930s. After the ‘Manchuria Incident’ in 1931, when Japan annexed a large part of northeast China, Japan was soon engulfed in a large part of northeast China, Japan was soon engulfed in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. According to Koyama, before Japan’s expansion to the Chinese continent, the Japanese immigrants were forced to engage in what he called a hybrid migration (konji iku), wherein emigrants had to assimilate themselves to the culture of the destination country. The new geopolitical condition, he argued, allowed for an ‘ethnically pure migration’ (minzoku-teki jun ijuu), in which the migrants were no longer required to assimilate and would thus remain ‘pure’ Japanese.

Koyama Shimpō published a series of editorials in 1941 advocating a ‘glorious retreat’ from Latin America to Asia under ‘the flag of Japan’.

However, as Getúlio Vargas took over the presidency of Brazil in 1937, the New State (Jo Estudo-Nevo) implemented a series of policies aimed at national unification, which imposed severe constraints on the activities of foreigners. Education and publication in the Japanese language were prohibited, and the Japanese immigrants were put in a state of great anxiety. Unsurprisingly, this triggered the immigrants’ desire to return to Japan once again. A 1938 survey of a rural region of São Paulo carried out by an immigration officer, Shangoro Wako, showed that as many as 85 per cent of the immigrants hoped to return to Japan.

This anxiety about the new state of Brazil, the resumed desire for return, and the advances of the Japanese imperialism, collectively resulted in a new notion of return. Rokuro Koyama, the editor of Seisyu Shimpo, the leading Japanese newspaper in Brazil, argued that the Japanese in Brazil should ‘re-migrate’ to the Southeast Asian region under the control of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. According to Koyama, before Japan’s expansion to the Chinese continent, the Japanese immigrants were forced to engage in what he called a hybrid migration (konji iku), wherein emigrants had to assimilate themselves to the culture of the destination country. The new geopolitical condition, he argued, allowed for an ‘ethnically pure migration’ (minzoku-teki jun ijuu), in which the migrants were no longer required to assimilate and would thus remain ‘pure’ Japanese.

Seisyu Shimpo published a series of editorials in 1941 advocating a ‘glorious retreat’ from Latin America to Asia under ‘the flag of Japan’.

The Newsletter

Moral mobility Return in the Japanese community in Brazil 1908-1955

This imperialist concept of return acquired strong currency in the immigrant community. Ando Zempati, the editor of a literary journal in the late 1930s in São Paulo, recalled that ‘this feverish desire was so influential that majority of the people expected to re-migrate to the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere even after Japan’s unconditional surrender’. Curiously, the migrants’ extreme willingness for global mobility and imperial return was hardly appreciated by their homeland government. This was indeed a paradoxical perception among the migrants who were caught up between cosmopolitan ideals, imperialist ideology and the emotional difficulties in the foreign land. The imagined collective return from Brazil to Japan’s Asian Empire was their particular ideological response to the changing political conditions.

The cult of return After its defeat in World War Two in 1945, Japan had to transform itself from an imperialist empire with an expanding territory into a state of a Shōwa-shi (Shōwa-era state). This radical change in regime would have logically required a corresponding transformation in the subjectivities of its citizens, both in Japan and overseas. However, with regard to the Japanese community in Brazil, this process was slow, marked by a series of reactionary incidents.

In the late 1940s, many Japanese immigrants in Brazil still believed that Japan had won, or was winning the war. As lines of communication were broken during the war, it took a few years for the immigrants in rural plantations to receive full information. The ‘convictionists’ who believed in Japan’s victory, gained great popularity by persistently rejecting the news of Japan’s defeat. When the members of the ‘recognitionist’ movement organised campaigns to inform the community about the defeat in the late 1940s, members of the Shindo Kinmei (League of the Ways of the Emperor’s Subjects), by far the most influential of the cosmopolitanist group, organised terrorist attacks and killed many recognitionist leaders.

It was against the same background that various rumours about return emerged in São Paulo in the early 1950s. Exploiting ordinary migrant’s lingering desire to return, the rumors went that the Japanese government would soon come to rescue them from Brazil. Numerous tricksters swindled large amounts of money from the immigrants by persuading them that if they sold their properties in a rush, to be ready for the ‘repatriation ships’ that would arrive anytime to send them back to Japan.

During this tremendous turmoil and confusion, the Sakurumi Teikai-tei (Sakura Volunteer Army), was formed as a ‘cult for return’ in 1953. Although the agenda of the group was fundamentally driven by a desperate desire to return to Japan, they presented their proposals as highly political projects. The leaders urged Japanese immigrants to participate in the ‘UN forces’ in the Korean War, but at the same time to ‘fight with communists to liberate Taiwan’. They also advocated ‘forced repatriation of all Japanese immigrants in Brazil’. They organised street demonstrations and threats of a large-scale strike, only to be scorned by the general public due to its deeply contradictory agenda. In 1955, the frustrated members attacked the Japanese Consulate in São Paulo, injuring several officials.

The Japanese migrants’ desire for return faded away by the late 1950s as they learned that their war-torn homeland could no longer welcome them. The history of the debates about mobility in the Japanese community in Brazil reveals how the migrants responded to the shifts in the larger political conditions by formulating possible strategies of settlement, return and re-migration. The discourse of return constitutes a prism through which we can delineate how migrants’ sense of ‘duty’, as overseas imperial or national subjects, their sentiment for the homeland, and their ambivalence towards the foreign soil, intersected in a complex manner.

Koji Sasaki

PM candidate in Anthropology, University of Tokyo, Japan. kojisasaki2800@gmail.com

References
4. Kawabata, Sajio. ‘Kaihō Tsurui Kokoku Insho’ [We Shall be the Glorious Retreat Migrants]. Seisyu Shimpo, 10 May 1941.

The Newsletter | No. 50 | Spring 2009
Nearly half a million Indonesian-Chinese ‘returned’ to China in the 1950s and 1960s, motivated by new Chinese nationalism and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, and by Indonesian policies aimed at marginalising ethnic Chinese. ‘Return’ meant re-embracing Chinese ethnicity, culture, and a political decision to join the new Chinese nation. However, as Wang Cangbai reveals, their journey ‘home’ was to be a painful one.

Wang Cangbai

The Newsletter | No 50 | Spring 2009

Guiqiao Returnees as a policy subject in China

© The China News Resource Foundation 2009

Fig. 2 (above left) Full of excitement in anticipation for a new life in China, a Peranakan youth visits the Tiananmen Square in 1953 for the first time. Photo courtesy of Hong Fuhun.

Fig. 3 (above right) The registration form of Zheng Tianren (originally from east Java), shown that he was enrolled in a preparatory school in Beijing in 1957. Upon arrival in China, returned overseas Chinese students were received by senior apparatus and were brought to special ‘preparatory schools’ for returned overseas Chinese student (guiqiao houxue xuesheng). Image courtesy of Zheng Tianren.

RETURN MIGRANTS ARE OFTEN DRIVEN by material considerations such as higher incomes and better career prospects at home, but for the nearly half a million Indonesian-Chinese students, petty shopkeepers, traders and labourers – who ‘returned’ to China in the 1950s and 1960s – the motivations were something else. Their decision was partially motivated by the new Chinese nationalism brought about by the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, and partly due to the Indonesian policies aimed at marginalising ethnic Chinese. Most of these returnees were born overseas, including many from Peranakan families who have lived in Indonesia for generations. To them, ‘return’ meant a re-identification with the Chinese ethnicity, re-embrace of the Chinese culture, and more importantly, a political decision of joining the new Chinese nation. Ironically and tragically, however, their journey to China turned out to be painful and traumatic. This was not so much because of ill adjustments to the Chinese society on their part, but mainly due to the Chinese state’s refusal to recognise them as ‘one of us’. They were turned into an isolated group excluded from the ‘People’ (renmin).

The invention of the Guiqiao category

Shortly after their ‘return’ to China, the Chinese government invented an official category, guiqiao, to refer to the Indonesian-Chinese and Chinese returnees from other countries. Despite the fact that earlier Chinese governments had previously been engaged with overseas Chinese and that return migration had certainly taken place before, it was the first time that the Chinese government created an official definition for returnees. In the past, returnees were lumped together with overseas Chinese and were generally referred to as huqiao or guiqiao, both simply mean ‘overseas Chinese’. The word guiqiao, as an official category, first appeared in a 1957 document (Explanations about the Statutes of Overseas Chinese, Families of Overseas Chinese, Returned Overseas Chinese and Returned Overseas Chinese Students) (Gaoyu huqiao, guiqiao, guixiao, a Korean text, translated by de Ji, issued by the State Commission of Overseas Chinese Affairs. Guiqiao was used as a rather generic term, referring to any overseas Chinese who ‘returned’ to China regardless of their nationalities, age, time of ‘return’ and whether the ‘return’ was voluntary or forced. In socialist China, the national body politic was imagined in both simply in ethnic terms, but also along class lines. The returnees’ dubious class backgrounds and connections with the capitalist world disqualified them from joining the mainstream part of the Chinese nation – the working class ‘People’. They instead had to be re-educated and constantly monitored by purposely established state apparatus and through specifically designed policies. An editorial of the flagship newspaper of the State Commission of Overseas Chinese Affairs, Qiaowu Bao (News of Overseas Chinese Affairs), declared in 1958 (no. 9) that: “Considering the fact that most guiqiao came from capitalist countries and were influenced by capitalist ideology, they must be transformed; as many guiqiao [family members of overseas Chinese or returnees] have been living on remittances, and have never participated in the Chinese working class, they must be remolded into working people who will live on their own labour; as [they] guiqiao and [have] relatives overseas, they are susceptible to capitalist thoughts. Therefore, the task of transforming guiqiao and guiqiao will be time consuming and arduous.”

In Chinese, the word gui (return) means more than a reverse movement. It also implies a reconfiguration of allegiance and renewed pledge of obedience, specifically to those who had previously deviated from the norm, but then came back to comply. For example, the words guihu (return and absorb) and guishun (return and obey) were used to describe the incorporation of ethnic minorities or rebels by the authorities. In addition, deep attachment to the home land was traditionally seen as the normal state of life and a respected virtue. For instance, the Ming and Qing Courts strictly prohibited their subjects from going abroad for most of their reign. Therefore, in Chinese tradition, the word qiao (sojourners overseas) has negative connotations, and suggests someone who is an outsider or untrustworthy. The guiqiao category was purposely created by the party-state in order to call returnees ‘loyalty to the socialist motherland, and at the same time to enable the state to monitor and control the returnees.

Historical vicissitudes

The relationship between the state and guiqiao was unstable, and has been conditioned by changes in the overall political atmosphere. Roughly three stages of development can be discerned. In the early 1950s, the Chinese government formulated a set of policies designed specifically toward guiqiao. The central principle of the policies at this stage was to ‘treat guiqiao equitably’. Other Chinese citizens with appropriate preferential arrangements (zhishengren, zhishengqiao) the original thoughts of policy makers at that time, especially Liao Chengyu (陈良) and Fang Fang (方芳) who had overseas backgrounds themselves, was to grant guiqiao certain privileges in daily life, such as additional rations to purchase luxury goods at special shops, in order to facilitate their adaptation and to motivate them to participate in socialist development. The relationship between the government and the guiqiao deteriorated at the second stage. During the Cultural Revolution, many guiqiao were accused of being ‘spies’ or ‘counter revolutionsaries’ and were imprisoned, more were attacked for subjugating themselves to foreign forces (chongyue zhengzhi). Guiqiao and even guiqiao families who were refused entry to the army, the Party, any professions that were considered vital to state security, or from taking up important positions in the state apparatus. The overseas Chinese policies, as observed by Fitzgerald, ‘had veered from left to right, and alternated between severity and leniency’. At the third stage, in the 1980s, the situation changed again. When China earnestly needed foreign investment and technologies for its economic reform, Deng Xiaoping and other Chinese leaders suddenly found that ‘overseas connection is a good thing’ which could be utilised to bridge China with the outside world. Guiqiao once again became a positive term. Underlying these dramatic turns in the guiqiao policies throughout history has been the state’s constant pursuit of ‘national interest’. The guiqiao policies thus constitute an integral part of how the Chinese state has imagined itself, its relation to the internally differentiated population, and its relation to the outside world.

Re-migration

The political categorisation of guiqiao, as a special policy subject, has created profound gaps between the returnees and the local mainlander Chinese. Whereas discussions about guiqiao in both academic and popular publications are dominated by nation-centric narratives, the real thinking of the returnees themselves is far more complicated. Dissapointed by their experiences in China, a survey of 250,000 guiqiao left for Hong Kong-Macau along with their families in the late 1970s once China loosened its control. However, even among the guiqiao who stayed in China – most of whom were beneficiaries of the preferential treatment in the 1950s and were staying in the cities after receiving university education – there is still a strong feeling of estrangement and a mentality of sojourning. A survey of Indonesian-Chinese in Beijing in 1998 revealed that, among the 359 respondents, over 11 per cent said they regretted ‘returning’ and over 29 per cent said they would stay in Indonesia if they could choose again.

Since the 1990s, China has received a new generation of returnees. Dubbed hoigui, they are mostly mainland Chinese who have studied or worked overseas for a period of time. How will they fit in with the new developments in China? It is perhaps too early to determine what their relations to the state and the larger society will be. However, the guiqiao story forcefully reminds us of the role that the party-state has played in shaping the returnees’ ‘life of in China.

Wang Cangbai

Department of Politics and International Relations
University of Westminster
wcw@westminster.ac.uk

Notes

Compulsory return is central to most programmes of transnational unskilled labour migration in East Asia. Migrants have to go home not only when their contracts expire, but also whenever they fall ill, become pregnant, or have disputes with employers. Compulsory return places migrants in a perpetually liminal, disposable and transient position, and thus renders the migration flows controllable.

**Xiang Biao**

MR TANIMURA, OWNER of a garment factory in Kobe, Japan, hires about 10 Chinese workers at any point of time since 1996. The most difficult part in managing foreign workers, he said, is sending off workers in the airport. Not that it is too sad to say goodbye; on the contrary, he has to work hard to make sure that the workers leave Japan to return home on time. In his words, it is ‘like fighting a battle’. Whenever he sends off two workers, Tanimura normally brings five colleagues or friends. In the airport, the Japanese team makes a human cage by holding hands and escorting the workers in the middle. Step by step they move, across the hall, through the crowds, towards the immigration checkpoint.

At the checkpoint, Tanimura hands each worker a neatly wrapped package. Inside are the air ticket, passport – which Tanimura (like most other employers) has kept since the worker’s arrival – and the unpaid salary accumulated over the past one or two years. It is a standard practice, not only in Japan but also in other countries such as Canada and Australia, that employers pay Chinese migrant workers between 10 and 50 percent of their monthly wage as allowances, and pay-up the rest immediately before the airplane takes off. Because of the large amount of cash they carry, the workers normally place them in pockets purposely sewn into the underwear for safety. To see the workers (all females) do so in the middle of the busy airport is awkward, Tanimura admitted. He is also genuinely concerned that the migrants’ family would lose literally everything in the case of an air crash. If so, why does he not remit the money to migrants’ families? Tanimura has obviously thought this through.

“If we remit the money after [the workers] return, they won’t agree. They are worried that we won’t remit. But if we remit the money before they go home, there will be a time gap. The worker will insist that they leave only after receiving the confirmation from their family [about the receipt of the money]. During that time, they can plan to run away and overstay.”

Such an obsession about return is not, of course, simply unfounded paranoia. In Japan, as well as in South Korea and Singapore, the employer or the recruitment agency will be fined and/or banned from importing migrant workers, if the workers go missing or overstay. It would be a nightmare if the workers absconded as a group before the airplane takes off. Because of the large amount of cash they carry, governments have done.

Compulsory return is also aimed at rupturing migrants’ social ties in the destination country. Since March 2003, for example, the South Korean government has launched periodic crackdowns in order to deport illegal migrants. In these campaigns, those who have overstayed for less than a year are given a grace period to exit without punishment, and those who overstayed longer are detained, fined and immediately deported. Thus, those who have proven themselves to be more employable and have deeper social connections in the Korean society are the target of punishment and are the priority to be returned. Until recently, both South Korea and Japan banned former migrants from re-entering the country as unskilled workers. Behind this apparently bizarre policy is, again, the well-calculated fear that workers with previous experiences in the country may have too much information and too wide networks that would complicate future compulsory return.

Compulsory return is part of a larger logic that it tames, regulates and curtails mobility. Structurally, compulsory return brings more-controllable migration flows in economic downturns to ensure the states’ central means of regulating labour migration.

**Fig. 1** (above right) Migrant workers from China have to sign a promise letter like this one, before going to Japan. Signing this document means that they ‘agree’ to be sent back by force and provide all the costs if they participate in an assembly or petition, or terminate contracts unilaterally, repeatedly sleep in different rooms rather than the one designated in their contract, or report internal disputes to other organisations or individuals, or entrust other parties to intervene.

**Fig. 2** (above left) A standard form issued by the Japanese authorities to be filled out by the sending company of labour migrant (the ‘transit’). The last section of the form asks about the arrangement with regard to the migrant’s employment status upon his/her return. The data may be used if no proper arrangement about the migrant’s return is made.

Compulsory return programmes work on the assumption that the migrants would return. In the case of Singapore, employers have to pay a SGD 5,000 security bond (USD 3,400) to the government for each foreign worker recruited. The bond will be confiscated if the worker fails to return on time. As for South Korea, the government determines the number of admissions based on the number of exits, in order to control the overall size of foreign migrants. Employers who fail to ensure the exit of their workers when their visas expire will not be given ‘replacement quotas’ and thus, will be unable to bring in new workers. This ‘no return, no new arrival’ policy was clearly designed to enforce the ‘rotating door’ principle. In Japan, before the workers’ arrival, many local employers pressure the workers to sign an ‘agreement’ that, in case of the company’s closure, the workers will return to China at their own expense and will not demand compensation.

Compulsory return is a means of migration control in East Asia.
Cambodians who came to the US as refugee children after the Khmer Rouge genocide are being sent back to the country that they barely knew. Growing up in inner city America, some of them became involved in gang activities and petty crimes; they are deported even after serving time in prison. Not allowed to return to the US, they are once again forced to separate from their families.

Sylvia R. Cowan

The Newsletter | No. 50 | Spring 2009

The Study: Return 9

Forced return

The deportation of former Cambodian refugees from the US

AFTeR GRowiNG Up iN The US, Karney, (This is a pseudonym. All the names in this article have been changed to protect the anonymity of respondents), now in his mid-thirties, is in Cambodia trying to rebuild his life and reconstitute his family. His life has been disrupted and displaced repeatedly. Fleeting Cambodia at the age of 10 after Vietnamese troops ousted the Khmer Rouge, he remained in refugee camps, where his family was separated and his brother was forced to return to Cambodia after serving his time in prison for gang activity and other, often minor, crimes.

This wave of ‘return migration’ is a direct result of the changes in US immigration policy in 1996. The anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act made deportation mandatory for all legal permanent residents who are sentenced to a year or more for ‘aggravated felonies,’ ‘moral turpitude,’ or use of controlled substances. Judges’ discretion in individual cases was removed, so that no defendant can be exempted from deportation by considering his/her prison experience, rehabilitation, attitude, behaviour, ties to family, and length of time living in the US. The US and the Cambodian governments reached an agreement in March 2002 to repatriate Cambodian refugees in exchange for resettlement of some relatives still in Cambodia. Nevertheless, the process of adjustment was long and hard. The most difficult part was the forced separation from the family:

“It’s the worst when they had a wife and kids in the States, and can’t ever go back there. That’s a punishment too harsh. They served their time...it’s too hard, to keep them from their families. It’s hard on them, hard on their families. The kids end up growing up with no dad. And they can’t support them.” (Personal communication, February 2006)

Karney has made a new life. He married a Cambodian woman, and now has three children. He’s found new meaning in life by helping others:

“I even help people that are the same as i was. I give ‘em food, a place to stay in my house. As long as they don’t mess up. Although I’m struggling with myself...it’s time for me to give back and sometimes even though I get tired and wonder, why am i doing this? I’m helping a few people myself with a lot of things. I have to do it. It’s a way of giving back to what I’ve taken from society.” (Personal communication, August, 2008)

But not everyone who went through these enormous upheavals is able to turn things around. Some have turned to drugs; a few ended up back in prison; one committed suicide; some are just getting by day-by-day. There was no system of assistance that was planned for these Cambodians, in anticipation of the first groups’ arrival. One American who is a long term resident of Phenom Penh started the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) with small donations to provide transitional housing, assistance with job searches and adjustment. Later, this project received USA funding and was formalised as the ‘Returnee Integration Support Programme’. That funding is not being renewed, and RISP may have to close down.

The deportation of the Cambodians is part of a larger programme of expulsion of the US government. Annually nearly 200,000 people are forced to return to their country of citizenship. While solving complex issues of undocumented immigrants eludes politicians, they can look tough enforcing deportation on this group. The policy is justified explicitly as a necessary means for enforcing law and order in the US territory, and implicitly by the notion of ‘return’; it is not ‘natural’ for one to ‘return’ to where he/she was born. While return is often experienced as a warm, comforting journey home, forced return entails enormous human costs. While the deportation programme may appear to maintain social order in the US, it has certainly created disorder for the returnees, their families, and many in the Cambodian society. Meanwhile their children in the US are growing up without fathers. The law must be changed to reflect justice and fairness, to provide judicial review in determining whether deportation is justifiable in individual cases.

Sylvia R. Cowan
Director of the Intercultural Relations Master’s Program and Associate Professor at Lesley University

Kansas City, Missouri, USA; April 28, 2008.

Catholic Workers Protest Deportation, Kansas City, Missouri, USA; April 28, 2008. Photographer Mona Shaw, used with permission.

REFERENCES

It has often been observed that the Hague Peace Convention of 1907 reflected the optimism and ideals of its age, however naïve. Its ideals remain a beacon for our times. Then and now, the Convention was cause for pride regarding the progress of human civilisation as a whole, and hope for a brighter and more humane future. But a look back at the Hague Convention, and Japan’s place within it, also provides a lens onto the contradictions and ambiguities of a modern world founded on the imperialist law of the jungle.

A moment of optimism
For Japan, the only non-Western imperial power, participation in the Hague Peace Convention of 1907 had a special symbolic meaning: the warships of Perry, Japan’s acceptance as an equal, autonomous, and civilised nation within the global community of nations. As such it was a one of a series of events over the decade preceding it, including the victory over Russia in 1905, that marked Japan’s arrival as one of the world’s Great Powers. Yet for the optimism, the early 20th century world was also a divided and tough to understand. In many ways the law of the jungle applied to the competing Western powers, between the West and the Rest, and between empires and colonies. In this context, the optimistic promise of the Hague Convention could not in fact be shared equally by all, and as a non-Western empire, Japan’s position was in fact always a rather tenuous and ambiguous one.

While recent history had taught the Japanese to be wary of how their nation counted among the imperial powers, there was perhaps no moment when Japanese hopes for full inclusion among them burned brighter than in the period of the Hague Convention. How far Japan appeared to have come in the 54 years since the first arrival of Perry’s warships in Edo (Tokyo) Bay in 1853. Then, Western force had compelled a weak, vulnerable Japan to open its ports, its economy, and its society to Western trade and Western ways. Forced to acknowledge that it was far behind the Western powers technologically, militarily, economically and institutionally, Japan had been subject to a humiliating series of ‘unequal treaties’ that compromised its sovereignty in areas such as international trade and legal jurisdiction.

The forced ending of Japan’s 200-year self-imposed isolation from the West and the imposition of the unequal treaties resulted in a sense of financial humiliation and severe economic instability. Combined with a number of complicated domestic factors, this in turn contributed to a period of turmoil that ultimately led to the establishment of a new political regime in 1868. The primary objective of this Meiji State was to respond to this crisis and reverse Japan’s downward spiral in a threatening world. For more than 250 years, the decentralised, feudal Tokugawa Order had proven a good system for keeping the domestic peace. But it was clearly entirely inadequate for surviving the rapidly changing and competitive international system of the 19th century. Signaling their openness to a new course, Japan’s new leaders embarked on a tour around the world in the early 1870s to observe their meaningful West so strong, and the rest of the world so weak. Along the way they not only visited the U.S. and Europe, but also journeyed through the Suez Canal and witnessed conditions in the European colonies of North Africa, India, and Southeast Asia.

What the Meiji leaders saw on their travels confirmed what they had already witnessed from afar: To compete successfully in the modern international system, you needed to have a unified and industrialised nation-state such as those that had emerged in Britain, France, the Netherlands, the US, and, more recently, Germany. Each had a powerful, respected and effective central government, an educated and motivated population, a single market, an emerging industrial elite and a strong sense of national mission. These nation-states had put such a gap between themselves and the rest of the world that they could increasingly project their power across the globe. There was no hiding from this reality any longer: Those who were not quick enough to achieve such central control, national unity, and economic growth were doomed to colonial domination. Japan had to mobilise and concentrate the human and material resources needed for industrialisation and the building of a strong military – and to do it quickly.

For the non-Western world at least the last decades of the 19th century were tough ones. Historians refer to this period as the time of ‘High Imperialism,’ or, more colloquially, the ‘carving up of the Globe.’ Western expansion continued relentlessly into many parts of Africa, Asian societies and Indochina. The scramble for imperial glory and the world’s resources intensified. Eyeing the worsening situation in neighboring China, Western powers were keen to join the scramble and carve up China, and Japan was determined to stand alongside them. Japan wanted to be included as a Great Power itself. This sentiment was immensely encouraged with the signing of a treaty of alliance with mighty Britain in 1902, and most of all with the difficult but unexpected victory over Russia in 1905.

The period in the wake of these developments, which included the year of the Hague Convention, might then be seen as a peak in Japanese optimism and pride at being included as one of the world’s Great Powers. Accepted as a military and economic equal, Japanese also hoped that in the long run at least, Japan would also receive acknowledgment as a political, cultural, and racial equal as well. This optimism coincided with, and strengthened, a shared faith in the idealism that characterised the Hague Convention.

A world of double standards
In retrospect it is not hard to see the precariousness of this optimism. Within seven years of the signing of the Convention, the European powers were engaged in the most brutal and alien encompassing war yet seen in human history. World War One laid bare the degree to which the law of the jungle still prevailed in the modern world, whatever Europe’s pretences of representing a higher and more humane civilisation. For many observers around the globe, however, the smoulder- ing inter-European rivalry just underneath the Convention’s civilised surface was not the only issue that threatened its legitimacy. In a number of ways, the aims and achievements of the Hague Convention, while noble and admirable, must also be set against the awkward reality that the Convention’s historical context was a world of double standards with regard to notions of human civilisation itself.

anti-Asian legislation was being passed in California amidst press reports of an impending ‘Yellow Peril.’ The experience of humiliation at Western hands with the imposition of the unequal treaties, along with Western racial arrogance towards non-whites, awakened in many Japanese a fierce sense of national pride and determination. Reflecting this, the removal of the unequal treaties, and the receipt thereby of a Western acknowledgement that Japan was civilised enough to run its own affairs, was perhaps the single highest political priority of late 19th century Japan.

Not surprisingly, then, early failures in negotiating an honourable ending to the unequal treaties in the 1880s resulted in an extreme popular political backlash. The state’s promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889, while important as a response to domestic pressures for greater political representation, was perhaps more important for its symbolic value in heralding Japan’s legal arrival among the community of civilised nations. In 1894, when Japan finally succeeded in gaining a British promise to end the unequal treaties in 1899, the development was greeted with an outburst of pride and patriotic sentiment. Japan’s subsequent easy victory in its first imperial war against China in 1895 brought a great financial windfall in reparations as well as Japan’s first colonial possession in the form of Taiwan. But most of all it brought a newfound sense of power and prestige. In 1900, Japan was invited by the Great Powers to contribute substantially in putting down the Boxer Rebellion in China, further signalling to Japanese that it was beginning to be included as a Great Power itself. This sentiment was immensely encouraged with the signing of a treaty of alliance with mighty Britain in 1902, and most of all with the difficult but unexpected victory over Russia in 1905.

For many observers around the globe, however, the smoulder- ing inter-European rivalry just underneath the Convention’s civilised surface was not the only issue that threatened its legitimacy. In a number of ways, the aims and achievements of the Hague Convention, while noble and admirable, must also be set against the awkward reality that the Convention’s historical context was a world of double standards with regard to notions of human civilisation itself.
As early as 1902, the famous Japanese poet and art conservator Okakura Tenshin observed:

"Do we not all alike enjoy the blessings of consular courts where murder is an accident on the part of the Western, accident an assassination on the part of the Oriental; where the systematic perjury of white witnesses overrules the evidence and testimony of all our kind? Do we not all alike rejoice in extorted concessions, and enforced tariffs, in residents who goad us to impotent rage, in financial advisors who advise us to ruin, in medical counsellors who counsel sanitation measures worse than death? Do we not all alike delight to invest in magnificent harbours where ships may come to drain away our gold; in gigantic railroads which frustrate the water-course, and bring us fever and famine; in splendid churches where they hurl anathemas against the holiest ideals, in expensive hospitals where they only are privileged to recreate, in beautiful waters where we are forbidden to walk? All these bounties we enjoy and what more? – Starvation.

Among Japanese of his day, Okakura was exceptional both in how much he mistrusted the Western imperialists, and how he identified with fellow Asians under colonialism. In the more optimistic times of the Hague Convention, most Japanese remained patient that Western recognition of Japan’s proper status would eventually come – and that in the meantime, Japan still had much to learn from the West. They saw little alternative to participation and cooperation in a global order dominated by the Western powers.

The Convention’s noble notions of universal standards of human decency, basic human rights, equality, and dignity meant to apply to friend and foe alike, were in fact drawn up at a time that most people in the world thought in terms of races and nations that were by nature different from one another in their essential character. More ominously still, at the time, most people in the world’s most powerful nations also believed that the world was divided into a hierarchy of peoples and races, whereby it was only natural that the world’s ‘weaker’ and ‘uncivilised races’ should be perpetually dominated by the stronger ones. The period was in fact one in which this sort of racial thinking had recently become stronger, not weaker. Dutch legal statutes in the Netherlands Indies of the day divided the population into three according to race, with separate provisions for whites, ‘outside Orientals’, and ‘natives.’

Reflecting this worldview, only representatives of nations acknowledged by the Great Powers as independent and sovereign were invited to attend the Convention. Secondly, the Convention conceived of war as a form of conflict between sovereign nations, with the definitions of combatants determined by the Convention’s founders. In the meantime, and from now on, Koreans who resisted the Japanese government soon forced the Korean king to declare war, and angered by the unexpected appearance of the Koreans, the Japanese delegation successfully blocked the Koreans’ attempt to make their case to the newspapers, but their attendance was devised an elaborate plan to send emissaries to the Convention. Embarrassed and angered by the unexpected appearance of the Koreans, the Japanese government soon forced the Korean king to retire. Within three years, Japan was to annex Korea as a colony.

In the Convention’s noble notions of liberty, equality, and the right of national self-determination, the official line of their governments was: no interference in Japan’s increasingly aggressive dealings with Korea, this being after all an ‘internal’ matter.

Not surprisingly unsatisfied with this situation, and eager to hold the Great Powers to the ideals of peace and justice they believed the Convention represented, the Korean government devised an elaborate plan to send emissaries to the Convention in secret. After arriving in The Hague, the emissaries managed to make their case to the newspapers, but their attendance was successfully blocked by the Japanese delegation. Embarrassed and angered by the unexpected appearance of the Koreans, the Japanese government soon forced the Korean king to retire. Within three years, Japan was to annex Korea as a colony. In the meantime, and from now on, Koreans who resisted were brutally suppressed in ways that often defied the terms of the Hague and Geneva Conventions. Yet officially, the international community never held Japan to account in this ‘domestic dispute.’

The experience of the Koreans at the Hague Convention and afterwards clearly indicates that Japan had taken its place among the world’s Great Powers. Yet in light of what might be called the racial double standards of the day, Japan’s own position at the table of world powers also remained tenuous and provisional. Illustrative in this regard is the way that Japanese were defined in the legal codes of the Netherlands Indies after 1899 as ‘Honorary Whites.’ On the one hand, this status reflected how far Japan had come in the eyes of the Western world. But it also reflected Japan’s contradictory position as a nation that sought to be recognised as a Great Power of the Western Imperial Powers and the rest of the world’s ‘coloured races.’ While the West was compelled to acknowledge Japan as an equal in terms of military, economic, and political power by the time of the Hague Convention, Westerners remained much less inclined to recognise Japan as a genuine racial and cultural equal. In the more optimistic times of the Hague Convention, most Japanese remained patient that Western recognition of Japan’s proper status would eventually come. They saw little alternative to participation and cooperation in a global order dominated by the Western powers.

As the 20th century wore on, however, the problem of global double standards continued to find Japan as both party to and victim of discriminatory racial treatment. As Japan further modernised, the Japanese grew not only increasingly conscious of their superiority over their Asian neighbours, but also of their right to equality with the West. When relations with the West worsened amidst the subsequent turmoil in the global order in the 1920s and 1930s – fostered by the Great Depression, increased imperial rivalry, and rising anti-colonial movements, particularly in China – the fact that Japan had never really felt fully accepted within the Western order made it easier for them to attempt to withdraw from it.

Japan now turned to its Asian neighbours, claiming to act as Asia’s leader and champion in a shared struggle against Western domination. The continued Japanese notion of racial and cultural superiority over its Asian neighbours not only undermined any chance of acceptance in this role, but also made possible atrocities against ‘other Asians’, and the Chinese in particular, that violated any notion of civilised conduct in warfare. The subsequent conditions of treatment of Western POWs also appears to have violated the Hague and Geneva protocols. But it is telling that the administration of POW camps, however bad their subsequent conditions, were only formally forbidden by the Japanese state after weeks following the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 – more than four years after Japan had begun a brutal war of colonial aggression in China that was to claim, according to certain estimates, some nine million Chinese lives. Here was the application of double standards of the most awful variety: As hated as the Western enemy had now become, their lives were not valued any more highly than those of the lowly Chinese.

In establishing a context to the Hague Convention, and in understanding Japan’s participation and later contravention of its precepts, it is important to reflect that the world of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was in many ways a world of double standards in which Japan occupied a particularly awkward place. It was a world in which pacifism, universal brotherhood and equality could be sincerely promoted in the name of the advancement of civilisation. At the same time, it was also a highly divided, hierarchical world dominated by the European powers, in which the possession of a superior ‘civilisation’ was also used as an excuse to dominate ‘inferior races’.

In their colonisation of Asia societies such as Korea, the Japanese proved adept at manipulating these same double standards to their benefit. Inferior, ‘dissolute’ Koreans and Chinese who resisted Japanese rule were treated with ruthless brutality that reached a crescendo in the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). At the same time, as a late arrival to the imperial scene of a ‘different race’, the Japanese often felt themselves the victims of double standards at Western hands. For all the successes of their modernisation, nation- and empire-building, the Japanese never felt accepted as full members of the imperial club. The result was a fundamental lack of mutual trust and an underlying resentment that expanded greatly in the period between the two World Wars. In part this reflected the decline in the West’s imperial power and status, prompted by such events as the Global Depression, the rise of communism, and the spread of anti-colonial movements. It was also encouraged and inflamed through the military propaganda and crisis atmosphere that penetrated all walks of Japanese life in the 1930s.

By the time of the Second World War, Japan’s longstanding sense of insult and humiliation from the Western world had made it easier for Japanese to imagine that they represented a civilisation whose job it was to save Asia from Western imperialism. Blinded to their own role as oppressive imperialists, many Japanese even viewed Chinese anti-colonial imperialism. Blinded to their own role as oppressive imperialists, many Japanese even viewed Chinese anti-colonial resistance as a Western-sponsored anti-Japanese scheme. More so than at the time of the signing Hague Convention in 1907, the Japanese of the World War Two era felt themselves at a far remove from the West racially, culturally, and morally. This is certainly no excuse for the ferocity of Japan’s wartime behaviour, but it does perhaps go some way to illuminating at least part of the story behind it.

Ethnian Mark
Leiden University
e.mark@hum.leidenuniv.nl

A version of this paper was first delivered at the public symposium on ‘The Hague Convention of 1907 Past and Present in Perspective’, 2-4 October 2008. Scheveningen, sponsored by SJF Foundation of Japanese Honourable Debts.
With the growth of environmental awareness, it is becoming common to consider harmony between human beings and the environment as a major goal of human progress. Rapid economic development can without doubt enhance people’s quality of life. The challenge, though, is to develop in a manner sympathetic to existing environments. Two cases of environmental accidents in China highlight the mismatch between these two needs and the increasing reality of environmental conflicts.

Yu Hou and Tianzhuo Zhang

Developing fears Environmental conflicts and pollution accidents in China

In developing countries, environmental conflicts flare up over issues linked to social inequalities. In rural areas, these clashes are triggered more by the seizure of natural resources (land, water or forests) or the preservation of indigenous species and the territory and chicken families living in these areas. Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) call these disputes ‘ecological and distributive’. In urban areas, these conflicts are prompted by the takeover of land and the benefits of government investments, or mitigating and offsetting the impacts of development projects. In this paper, environmental conflicts refer specifically to mass protests over environmental pollution.

In recent years, China has been keen to demonstrate its engagement in environmental protection work in various fields together with the development of civic environmental awareness, which has come about as a direct result of the fields together with the development of civic environmental engagement in environmental protection work in various

In recent years, China has been keen to demonstrate its engagement in environmental protection work in various fields together with the development of civic environmental awareness, which has come about as a direct result of the fields together with the development of civic environmental engagement in environmental protection work in various

In the past forty years, China has been keen to demonstrate its engagement in environmental protection work in various fields together with the development of civic environmental awareness, which has come about as a direct result of the fields together with the development of civic environmental engagement in environmental protection work in various fields together with the development of civic environmental awareness, which has come about as a direct result of the...
In the first incident, exposed individuals reported dizziness, chest tightness, irritating cough, skin irritations and other acute symptoms. Only two were officially diagnosed with mild chlorine poisoning following chest x-rays. In the second incident, 59 people produced a urine test positive for contami-
nants, yet no obvious correlation between the results of the 
urine test and the contaminants could be found according to 
the joint investigation by provincial and municipal public 
health and environmental protection departments.

Crop damage and fears of adverse health effects aroused 
disputes between villagers and the polluting companies in 
both cases. Pollution prevention practices were implemented 
by local government to appease angry villagers.

Comments
That there are so many factors common to both incidents is 
worth further examination. An important question is whether 
there were corresponding circumstances associated with each 
incident that could explain the similarity. An in-depth causal 
analysis of the accidents and disputes is required.

Emergency situations and how to handle them should be 
addressed in the operating instructions for facilities and, in 
particular, be dealt with training. Clearly, the strengthening 
of operators’ awareness of production safety, compliance 
with operating regulations, and the timely maintenance 
and decommissioning of old equipment will help to reduce the 
risk of pollution accidents.

Oversights in terms of environmental management and 
a lack of emergency plan probably contributed to unnecessary 
damage in both cases mentioned here. The fact that the majority 
of firms were active without the necessary environmental 
permits shows inherent weaknesses in environmental 
regulation and corporate social responsibility. As shown 
above, there is no legislation instructing companies to pass 
on information about incidents, in a timely manner, to the 
authorities. Accident information depends largely on reports 
put together some time after events have taken place, and 
often many details of incidents simply go unreported.

Significant communication problems occur and, as shown, 
the consequences can be serious conflicts. Encouraging firms 
to act in an honest and ethical way is the only way forward.

In both cases, damage to crops and personal health aroused 
disputes between villagers and the polluting companies.

According to China’s ‘Environmental Protection Law’, a citizen 
has the right to challenge a firm’s actions regarding violations 
of environmental laws and, where damage has occurred, ask 
for compensation. Yet few environmental conflicts have been 
resolved in this way. While suing a company is not the only way to resolve 
environmental disputes, we suggest there is urgent need for a legal mechanism to be put in place which maintains 
the people’s rights and interests.

Finally, we would like to emphasise that the fact that so many 
companies are operating without the necessary environmental 
permits shows major weaknesses in the environmental 
management of China. Environmental Impact Assessment 
(EDIA) is an important tool in environmental management 
used for deliberating various claims concerning proposed 
activities. The EIA requires developers to prepare a report 
regarding any development plans, demonstrating to decision 
makers the environmental soundness of the project. In fact, 
the EIA has evolved into a vital instrument for mitigating the 
consequences of any development plans. These EIAs are 
used to help define the types of activities that can or cannot 
be conducted in certain types of geographic areas; to define 
the conditions under which permitted activities may take 
place; or to define (based upon scientific findings) acceptable 
thresholds for certain activities or, for example, the acceptable 
level of certain substances in given environments. This is 
positive, but stricter observance and enforcement of EIA is 
needed in China.

References
1 Harashina, Sachiko. 1995. Environmental dispute resolution 
process and information exchange. Environmental Impact 
Assessment Review (15)
2 Guha R, and J Martinez-Alber. 1997. Varieties of 
Environmental Governance in Latin America. 
3 Celso, Simeo Bredariol and Alessandra Magnoni. 2003. 
Conflicts in developing countries: a case study from Rio de Janeiro. 
Environmental Impact Assessment Review (23)
In November 1922, British colonial authorities issued an arrest warrant for the poet Nazrul Islam, a rising star of Bengali literature, charging him with sedition for his poem ‘The Coming of Anandamoyee’. Published two months earlier in the newspaper Dhumketu, of which Nazrul himself was editor, the poem vividly depicts the subjugation of India’s population. He called the British colony a ‘butchery’ where ‘God’s children’ were whipped and hanged. The authorities reacted with vindictiveness and in January 1923 he was sentenced to one year of rigorous imprisonment.

Kazi Nazrul Islam
Bengal’s prophet of tolerance

Today, when the right to free speech has obtained a super-status in the Western world, Nazrul’s story appears rather perplexing. Yet, the story of the court case over Nazrul’s poem, and of his year in detention, contains further surprises. Not least, that the poet chose to conduct his own defence, in a statement that has come to be known as the ‘Deposition of a Political Prisoner’. Rather than repent for writing inflammatory poems and essays, Nazrul presented himself as the representative of ‘Truth’, holding the ‘sceptre of justice’. The colonial government used the charge of sedition to try and silence Nazrul, to prevent him from articulating that the Indian people were ‘enslaved’. Nazrul, apparently without embarrassment or shyness, proclaimed that his was a message from God. He could not be blamed. God was speaking through the voice of the poet.

Nazrul Islam hailing from a Muslim family. Growing up, his father had been head of a village mosque. Yet, in his court statement, the poet freely used imagery derived from Hinduism in order to highlight his own views. In the poem targeted by the colonial state he specifically called on the Goddess Durga, to play her role in countering tyranny. In his widely published and acclaimed deposition, Nazrul enthusiastically raised the spectre of Shiva, Hinduism’s ascetic God of destruction. Clearly from the very beginning of his career, Nazrul was willing to explain and illustrate his views using the religious imagery familiar to the people of Bengal. He consciously and unrestrainedly drew on the religious traditions of both Muslim and Hindu sections of the population to make himself heard.

National awakening

Nazrul lacked any formal training as a journalist or artist, and appears to have built his artistic experience through his participation in folk musical groups in his youth. After two years of high school, Nazrul joined the army of the British colonial government. Stationed in Karachi during World War One, as part of the Bengal regiment, he rose to the position of a sergeant, a havildar he had grown up in a Muslim environment and had obtained his initial formal education in a Muslim primary school, he did not by any means restrict himself to using imagery of the religion of his youth in his journalistic and literary creations. Instead, he freely transgressed the borders between Bengal’s two main faiths, Hinduism and Islam. In his essay, his essay ‘O Comet’, Nazrul explored the legacy of Bangladesh’s national poet and, in particular, his significance for the cause of religious tolerance today.

At a time when sections of the Western media and public opinion-builders are depicting Islam as a religion which is inherently intolerant, it is particularly important to stress that Nazrul Islam propagated the very opposite. Against the background of rising intolerance between religious communities in colonial India Nazrul insisted that the prophet Muhammad was a messenger of tolerance.

Firm opposition to communalism

When Nazrul Islam returned to Kolkata in 1920, he was largely unknown in the city’s literary circles. This changed dramatically within the space of a year. Indeed, Nazrul’s rise to literary prominence was extraordinarily rapid in comparison with other poets who have gathered fame in the history of Bengal. Undoubtedly his talent explains a large part of his success. In 1920, Nazrul became a performer of Tagore songs, and surprised many people with his capacity to memorise the master’s lyrics. He also became a journalist, writing essays on contemporary world events affecting India’s fate. Most significantly, he wrote poetry that stood out for its aesthetic, and unmistakably high, quality. So much so, that Tagore was moved to welcome him as a Hindu-Muslim unity’.7

Published two months earlier in the newspaper Dhumketu, Nazrul Islam himself was editor, the poem vividly depicts the subjugation of India’s population. He called the British colony a ‘butchery’ where ‘God’s children’ were whipped and hanged. The authorities reacted with vindictiveness and in January 1923 he was sentenced to one year of rigorous imprisonment.

The arrest and imprisonment of Nazrul in 1922-1923 reveal some of the most characteristic features of his personality. The speech he made in court illustrates how he uncompromisingly defended a poet’s right to free speech. It also shows that his opposition to the injustices perpetrated by the coloniser was religiously inspired. Nazrul’s relationship with religion was, to say the least, unconventional. For whereas he had grown up in a Muslim environment and had obtained his initial formal education in a Muslim primary school, he did not by any means restrict himself to using imagery of the religion of his youth in his journalistic and literary creations.

Instead, he freely transgressed the borders between Bengal’s two main faiths, Hinduism and Islam. In his essay, his essay ‘O Comet’, Nazrul explored the legacy of Bangladesh’s national poet and, in particular, his significance for the cause of religious tolerance today.

National awakening

Nazrul lacked any formal training as a journalist or artist, and appears to have built his artistic experience through his participation in folk musical groups in his youth. After two years of high school, Nazrul joined the army of the British colonial government. Stationed in Karachi during World War One, as part of the Bengal regiment, he rose to the position of a sergeant, a havildar. He had grown up in a Muslim environment and had obtained his initial formal education in a Muslim primary school, he did not by any means restrict himself to using imagery of the religion of his youth in his journalistic and literary creations. Instead, he freely transgressed the borders between Bengal’s two main faiths, Hinduism and Islam. In his essay, ‘O Comet’, Nazrul explored the legacy of Bangladesh’s national poet and, in particular, his significance for the cause of religious tolerance today.

At a time when sections of the Western media and public opinion-builders are depicting Islam as a religion which is inherently intolerant, it is particularly important to stress that Nazrul Islam propagated the very opposite. Against the background of rising intolerance between religious communities in colonial India Nazrul insisted that the prophet Muhammad was a messenger of tolerance.

Firm opposition to communalism

When Nazrul Islam returned to Kolkata in 1920, he was largely unknown in the city’s literary circles. This changed dramatically within the space of a year. Indeed, Nazrul’s rise to literary prominence was extraordinarily rapid in comparison with other poets who have gathered fame in the history of Bengal. Undoubtedly his talent explains a large part of his success. In 1920, Nazrul became a performer of Tagore songs, and surprised many people with his capacity to memorise the master’s lyrics. He also became a journalist, writing essays on contemporary world events affecting India’s fate. Most significantly, he wrote poetry that stood out for its aesthetic, and unmistakably high, quality. So much so, that Tagore was moved to welcome him as a new star in Bengali literature. In the penultimate written for the bi-weekly publication launched by Nazrul Islam, Tagore hailed Nazrul with the words: ‘O Comet, build a bridge of fire across darkness’. Nazrul Islam’s poetry and other writings reflected the spirit of his time; the spirit of nationalist awakening in colonial India. At a time of mass resistance to British colonial dominance, Nazrul Islam expressed this spirit of awakening in his writings in a way that earned him the admiration of a wide readership in Bengal. One particular example illustrates his spirit of anti-colonial nationalism. It is an essay about the events in Jallianwala Bagh. Jallianwala Bagh, in Amritsar, is the place where a British officer, General Dyer, ordered indiscriminate firing on an unarmed crowd of civilians in an enclosed space. News of the event enraged many Indians, and it also infuriated Nazrul Islam who expressed indignation at the cruelty perpetrated in the name of British rule. He went further though, and assessed the psychological significance of the massacre for the awakening of the Indian people’s sense of self-respect. In his essay entitled ‘Memorial to Dyer’, Nazrul argued that any monument to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre should not just be dedicated to the people who lost their lives, but such a statue should also recall the role of Dyer. For the murders which Dyer ordered, so Nazrul explained, served to generate consciousness among the Indian people about their own dejected state.
Nazrul described the outcome of the riots in earthy terms, using the tragedy of incidents that had already occurred as a mirror, in an effort to pre-empt further violence. He used key opportunities to speak or present his views, to warn political leaders of India's nationalist movement against the danger of a failed attempt to stem the tide of violence. One of these occasions was the annual session of the Indian National Congress, the common platform of anti-colonial struggle, held in Krishnagar. Here, Nazrul sang one of the most famous songs he ever composed, "Kandari Hushiar" ("Helmans Beware"). He sounded the alarm with the words: “In this dark night, O sentine of Motherland be alert; ‘This helpless nation is drowning – it does not know how to swim’, ‘helmsman, tell those who are drowning that they are no Hindus or Muslims, for they are drowning as human beings’. These words illustrate Nazrul’s deep felt recognition of the fact that the Indian nation would drown, if the Congress – as the political force leading the struggle for independence from colonialism – failed to stem the tide of communalism. When Nazrul wrote these sentences in 1926, the incidents of communal violence were merely local spurs. But these spurs would turn into a communal conflagration. At the time of Partition in 1947 millions of Muslims and Hindus perished. As previously stated, Nazrul Islam was simultaneously vocal against the spread of violence between Bengal’s two religious communities, and advocating the need for both Muslim and Hindu peasants and workers to stand up and defend their rights against landlords and industrial bosses. In this respect, Nazrul has been vindicated, for in the course of events that took place, and as part and parcel of the struggle for a secular nationalism, powerful movements representing the interests of the rural and urban poor were built in East Bengal. After independence in 1972, the newly-installed government of Mujibur Rahman made Nazrul Bangladesh’s first national poet. And while it is true that more recently, severe pressures towards abrogation of the principles of tolerance and secularism have built up in Bangladesh, the principles of religious tolerance and of social equality have been very evident in the country’s cultural independence. There are compelling reasons to take Nazrul Islam’s example seriously in contemporary international debates on religious tolerance.

The Study 15

Notes
3. For an English translation of Tagore’s tribute to Nazrul, see Sajed Kamal (1999)
5. For an overview of Nazrul’s participation in Muslim organisations’ events, see the life-chronology appendix in Sajed Kamal (1999)
10. 11-16. Ibid
‘Hinglish’ has become the lingua franca among urban Indians today. Listen closely and you’ll hear Hindi and Urdu peppered with English words and phrases. Likewise, English sentences are spiced with Hindi or Urdu. In fact, many words that used to be well known in Hindi and Urdu have now disappeared from the vocabulary of native speakers, who have switched over to English equivalents. Ruth Vanita uncovers some of the roots of this mixed language phenomenon in the hybridised poetry of rekhti.

Ruth Vanita

However, many rekhti poems do not contain either proverbs or exclamatory addresses. They are merely written in less Persanised Urdu than is mainstream rekhta poetry. Conversely, some rekhta poems, such as those of jura’, do contain these exclamations.

What then was ‘women’s language’? Was it a code spoken by women that men did not understand? Clearly not. Most rekhti was written by men and not just by a few men privy to a secret language of women but at the height of its popularity, by numerous poets. It was recited at mushara (poet’s gatherings) and understood by both women and men. One analogy could be classical Sanskrit drama, where elite male characters speak Sanskrit while women characters and male servants speak Prakrit, but the male characters do understand Prakrit while the women characters understand Sanskrit.

Educated people in North India were conversant with Persian, the language of royal courts and high culture, but most educated people were multilingual and used more than one script to write Urdu and Persian just as people did with Sanskrit; this tradition continued throughout the 19th century. Many Urdu poets wrote in other languages too; for example, the last king of Awadh, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, wrote in Awadhiki, Brij, Marwari, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi and Persian. Major Indira Ali Khan, who wrote under the name ‘Irshad’ (Elegantly Stylish), 1756-1817, was a polyglot who wrote in several languages, including Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Hindi and Punjabi, and composed both rekhta and rekhti poems.

Rekhti poets’ use of a female persona is closely integrated with their use of a relatively non-Persanised Urdu. Women of upper class Muslim families, especially in the urban centres, were likely to be able to speak some refined or Persanised Urdu, but they would also speak to servants, neighbours and relatives from middle class backgrounds in local languages. Fluency in local languages was required to converse with Hindu women, whether vendors, servants or friends.

Under the Islamicate, it was more common for Muslim men to marry Hindu women than for Hindu men to marry Muslim women. Muslim kings, nobles and gentry often married Hindu women. For example, the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, an accomplished poet in Urdu, Persian, Brajbhasha and Punjabi, had a Hindu mother. Many Muslims, both men and women, were recent converts and maintained links with their Hindu kin.

For both Muslim and Hindu elite men who spoke the language of high culture in public, ‘women’s speech’ was the language of their private lives, of emotions and of significant imaginative domains. It was the language of the women servants, both Hindu and Muslim, who raised these men in the women’s quarters before they reached puberty; it was the language of many of their mothers and sisters, family friends and neighbours, cousins, aunts, and wives. It was the language of domesticity and the marketplace, and was often close to the mother tongues of the cortesans and male youths with whom these men might develop liaisons.

While many cortesans were accomplished women, who spoke Persanised Urdu in public, they spoke ‘women’s speech’ in private. Permitted, even expected, to speak more freely of erotic matters, they could spice up literary Urdu with jokes and obscenities that respectably married women might use among themselves but would not be expected to use in men’s presence. The mixed clientele of the kothas (homes and workplaces of cortesans) also encouraged the use of mixed speech. Rekhti poet Sa’adat Yar Khan, pen-name ‘Rangin’ (Colourful), 1775-1835, claimed he learnt the language of rekhti from khangas, married women who discreetly engaged in prostitution, and thus represented the overlap between normative households and cortesans households.

‘Women’s speech’ was closely related to the languages of villages and small towns, which were also heard in the streets of Delhi and Lucknow. Used in devotional songs, both Hindu and Muslim, in romances, it was employed to different degrees in the standard Urdu ghazal (love poem).
A selection of popular Hinglish expressions based on Hindi words:

**badmash** adjective  naughty. Also used as a noun (plural badmarshes) to refer to a hooligan, an aggressive or violent person.

**changa** adjective  fine, great.

**desi (also deshi)** adjective  authentic, relating to the idea of national or local as opposed to foreign, e.g. desi food would refer to rice, curry, chapati, etc. Desi pastimes include watching Bollywood movies, listening to Hindi music, going to the temple/mosque etc.

**filmi** adjective  dramatic, characteristic of Bollywood movies.

**haramzada** noun  a despicable, obnoxious male. Haramzadi is a female form. Both terms can be used to refer to a man/woman born of unmarried parents.

**jungli** adjective  unruly, wild in behaviour.

**yaar** noun  friend, used as a familiar or affectionate form of address.

Most of the idioms employed in rekhti and identified by Urdu critics as ‘women’s idioms’ are not at all specific to rekhti. Examples include blessings like ‘bathe in milk and be fruitful of sons’ and curses like ‘go toog logey’ (burn up) or ‘bhaad mein jaye’ (go into the stove). These are also among the idioms that late 19th century Muslim male reformers considered to be unislamic.² These idioms are still widely used today.

**Eloquent parrots**

Because Persian was the language of high culture, most Urdu poets composed in Persian as well, and literary Urdu tended to be highly Persianised. Some major poets and many minor ones wrote rekhti as well, which, arguably, had the effect of helping make colloquial Urdu more acceptable in poetry.

Rekhti poets, drawing attention to the elegance of their language, emphasised both its non-Persian ambience and its Indic urbancy. As opposed to later critics who characterise rekhti as trivial pornographic entertainment for men, rekhti poet Mir Yar Ali ‘Jan Saheb’ (1817-1896), posits it as the symbol of Lucknow’s high culture. He laments the British massacre of Lucknow’s citizens after the 1857 rebellion, and their destruction of its sophisticated culture:

Jan! You are reading rekhti in Lucknow
The nightingale is singing in a ruined garden.

In another poem, Jan Saheb characterises his language as emblematic of Indic (Hindustani) creativity:

Foreign aunt! You are a nightingale of Shiraz [in Persia] I am a parrot of Hindustan and my tongue is eloquent... The wretched native hill crows cry ‘caw, caw’ I will hide my face if they can ever speak my language.⁴

If the nightingale (bulbul) here stands for Persian poetry, the crow represents the supposedly rustic dialects of semi-educated Indians. Invoking the Indic symbol of the parrot, which has a long ancestry in Indian literatures as a figure of creativity, not mere imitation, this Urdu poet proudly claims that his language is sophisticated as well as specific to his native land.

Jan Saheb writes almost entirely in rekhti. Although he always writes in the female voice, he does not confine himself to conventionally female themes. He addresses a variety of topics, including politics, poetic convention and poetic rivalries.

As nationalist social and religious reform movements developed on the subcontinent in the later 19th century, the lines between Hindus and Muslims hardened. The unfortunate identification of Urdu with Muslims and Hindi with Hindus became institutionalised when, in 1947, India became independent, with Hindi as its national language, and Pakistan was formed as a Muslim state, with Urdu as its national language. While Hindi became increasingly Sanskritised and purged of Persian-based words, Urdu became increasingly Persianised and purged of Sanskrit-based words. Partly as a result of this, rekhti poetry of the early 19th century, with its unashamed hybridity, came to be derided and excised from the canon of Urdu poetry.

Despite the efforts of purists, however, hybrid colloquial modern Urdu/Hindi, or what used to be called Hindustani, with its infusion of words from many other languages, continued to flourish in non-academic and non-governmental domains. Bombay cinema played a central role in disseminating and developing it, as did Hindi popular fiction. The emergence of Hinglish is not, therefore, indicative of a new process but the continuation of an old one – the hybridising of language in urban milieu. It represents the fusion of father tongue and mother tongue, the language of public thought with the language of private emotions and intimacy.

Ruth Vanita
University of Montana
 ruth.vanita@umontana.edu

Notes

1. In his history of Urdu, Darya-e Latafat, poet Insha recounts an anecdote told by a poet to a courtesan, about a famous rekhti verse that men and women in Lucknow and Delhi used to recite. Quoted in Azad, Muhammad Husain. 2001. Ab-e Hayat, translated and edited Frances Pritchett. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.


In the popular imagination of many in the so-called West, Asia enjoys a romantic and intimate relationship with high technology. Visionary representations of the future, such as those elaborated in films like *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) or novels like *Neuromancer* (William Gibson, 1984), often lend the global future an Asian flavour, either as a sign of the world’s possible cosmopolitan destiny or more simply as an indication of the way that digital technology and East Asia appear to be closely interwoven. This associative weave is particularly strong in the cyberpunk world of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, networked communications, and explorations of cyberspace as the new final frontier. CyberAsia wedds Asia to the politics of futurities in complicated and diverse ways.

Chris Goto-Jones

**Allegations, imaginations and analyses**

This special issue of *The Newsletter* offers a variety of lenses on the question of cyberAsia. This expansive neologism contains: allegations of Asia’s technological superiority; imaginations of Asia’s utopian relationship with digital technology; and finally analyses of the concrete ways in which high technologies have transformed social and cultural practices in the region (and permitted the region to ripple around the world). Hence, the term cyberAsia is a confounded one, generating myriad possible meanings and implications, both empirically and theoretically.

In his contribution to this edition of *The Newsletter*, Tom Lamarre offers some thoughts on the various ways in which cyberAsia might function in discourses of today’s politics of knowledge.

The political relationship between technologised visions of Asia and a more classical sense of Orientalist mystique is noted with increasing frequency in the literature of Asian Studies. Scholars such as Ueno Toshio and (more recently) Wendy Hui Kyong Chun have argued that the re-representation of Asia as a technological icon amounts to a kind of ‘techno-Orientalism.’ Indeed, in some ways, it seems that the domain of cyberspace itself might function as a space of Orientalism within the so-called West: it is a virtual (and largely textual) man-made geography created as an often fantastical ‘other’ place, or heterotopia. In this sense, the association of Asia with cyberspace begins to look like another strategy of epistemic distancing and domination. It is along these lines that my own provocation in this issue of *The Newsletter* seeks to argue that Asian Studies might share a frontier with the enterprise of Science Fiction. At stake here is the status of Western knowledge of (cyber)Asia.

**Transforming modernity**

Of course, even if we were willing to accept that a kind of Orientalism is at work within the concept of cyberAsia, it is not the case that the connection between Asia and digital technology has been invented only by observers in Europe or the US. In this issue, for instance, Fabian Schäfer draws on the well-known work of Japanese critic Azuma Hiroki to explore the ways in which internet-use within the increasingly inclusive otaku (geek) subculture functions to transform modern subjectivity.

Elsewhere, Azuma himself has argued that this otaku subculture is effectively the vanguard of a new, postmodern society that has abandoned its modernist attachments to coherence and narrative logic in favour of a kind of ‘database’ model of engagement with the world. Cyberspace is a key technology in this process of overcoming modernity, but Azuma also ties it to other allied media forms, such as anime and manga. For Azuma, the landmark moment in the ‘animalisation’ of postmodern Japan was the broadcast of Anno Hideaki’s epic anime series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Gainax, 1995-6). Other commentators have pointed to classic anime such as Osamu Tezuka’s breakthrough, *Ghost in the Shell* (Production IG, 1995) as signalling a kind of self-Orientalism in the anime industry, fuelling a global perception of an intimate connection between Japan and the technological future. In his contribution to this issue, however, Cobus van Staden takes a different approach to the relationship between Japan and anime, focusing instead on the ways in which anime representations of Europe have helped the medium (and hence Japan) to reach global audiences. Van Staden suggests that a deep-seated Europhilia in Japanese serves to exoticise anime for the Japanese themselves whilst providing one of the conditions for the possibility of Japan’s cultural globalisation at the same time.

Like Van Staden, Jeroen de Kloet is interested in the ways in which the media associated with cyberAsia are actually used by the people themselves (in the present). Focusing on the practice of hackers and bloggers, De Kloet discusses the ways in which these cyberactivities have (or have failed to) transform the public sphere in China. Drawing on a wealth of empirical evidence about actual internet usage in China (including Taiwan and Hong Kong), Jens Damm provides an insight into the extent to which this vital player in the future of Asia is saturated by cyberspace, mapping some of the ways in which the virtual realm of the PRC spreads a net around the world.

**An unknown but projected future**

As the case of China shows clearly, the whole project of cyberAsia is overshadowed by the political menace of the unknown but projected future; the emphasis on technology constantly raises questions about power and wealth disparities within societies, highlighting the unevenness of access to cyberspace and other digital technologies as well as the possible development of these disparities in the future. However, as Bart Barendregt shows in his essay, the issue of technological development also functions as a problematic between nations or regions. With particular attention to the newly developing Muslim majority nations in Southeast Asia, Malaysia and Indonesia, Barendregt explores the creative collusion of religion with technological advancement, elaborating the ways in which these particular instantiations of cyberAsia provide models of aspiration for the future of the Islamic world that differ from the predominant visions of the so-called West as well as those of some radical Islamic groups. In the words of Richard Barbrook, Barendregt considers some of the ways in which the present serves as a ‘beta version of a science fiction dream,’ and he demonstrates the importance of understanding the dimensions and diversity of these dreams in Asia and elsewhere.
Asia can be, and has been, imagined as a region in terms of geography, geopolitical configurations, language, culture, society, economy, or some combination of these. In disciplinary terms, there are many different 'Asias' that do not necessarily coincide. Is the notion of 'cyberAsia' intended to construct a different imaginary of Asia, or offer a critique or a new critical angle on received ways of thinking about the East Asian? Or, is the neologism cyberAsia supposed to reflect some new condition that has arisen in Asia?

Thomas Lamarre

SUCH QUESTIONS ARE RELEVANT because the term Asia, like the term Orient, frequently connotes forth a sense of fantastic unity, contrasted with the West while shoring up Western identity. Critics of Orientalism have exposed and challenged the self-other dialectics implicit in the Western construct of the 'Orient,' and consequently scholars have largely dropped the term, favouring instead the term 'Asia.' Yet this substitution does not necessarily change the self-other dialectics of Orientalism.

In the early 1990s, David Morley and Kevin Robins used the term ‘techno-orientalism’ to illustrate how images of the technological and technological superiority of Japan served as a focal point for American panic over the economic success of Japan and the potential threat to American hegemony. In keeping Edward Said’s reminder that Orientalism is not simply a matter of negative stereotypes but also of positive stereotypes that posit a putative unity in the interest of stabilising an object of knowledge, Uneo Toshiya used techno-orientalism to describe the reception of Japanese anime and pop culture outside Japan, especially in the United States. Such critiques force a blunt question: how does cyberAsia differ from techno-Orientalism? Does the term cyber, with its aura of technological novelty and futurity, posit the imaginary unity of Asia in order to impart the illusion of neutrality and objectivity to collecting and accumulating of knowledge, cultures, technologies, commodities and peoples?

‘Other Asias’

Gayatri Spivak’s recent evocation of ‘other Asias’ might provide a good point of departure for thinking about the implications of the term cyberAsia. While she explicitly challenges the imposition of a fantastic unity called Asia abundantly evident in Orientalism and pan-Asiанизm, she speaks of a pluralised Asia in which difference would no longer be articulated between, say, the West and Asia but within Asia itself. Rather than surrender the idea of Asia, she seeks a pragmatic localised deconstruction of this disciplinary construct which, like Said’s Orient, is after all not an any fantasy early blanketed by Spivak’s account invites us to ask how the concept cyberAsia might deal with internal difference, with other Asias. Here it is not simply a matter of speaking in the plural, of cyberAsias. Pluralising the term only makes a difference if that multiplicity presents a critical and analytical challenge to some set of received orientations or dispositions, be they perpetuated in the academy, the media, the cultural industry, or some other discourse, institution or habitus.

Given that the cyberAsia project foregrounds cultural production associated with Japan (anime, manga, video games), questions arise about the relation between Japan and Asia in particular. Two received sets of dispositions become particularly important in that context. First, there is the geopolitical imaginary in which East Asia, and specifically Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Korea), comes to stand in for Asia in general. To some extent, this might be thought to be postwar North America’s Orient or Asia, in contrast to Western Europe’s Orient (the Middle East), which present different condensations or formations of Western modernity. How can looking at Asia from the angle of cyber present a challenge to this imaginary and address the internal difference of Asia, of the West and of modernity? Second, in the context of Japan, there is the history of pan-Asian thought that posits the fantastic unity of Asia only to hierarchise relations between Japan and its colonies. This is a bad way of conceptualising the internal difference of Asia, which serves as another reminder that plurality is not merely a matter of adding an ‘s’ onto words. Nor is internal difference a matter of juxtaposing nations or cultures. If the cyberAsia project wishes to challenge rather than reinforce the fantastic unity of Asia, it must think about how the term cyber might spur or hinder our imagination of other Asias. It must directly address how thinking ‘cyber’ can have an impact on the imagination and articulation of difference within Asia. In other words, critical attention should fall on the implications of the rather elusive term cyber.

Technologies of control

The prefix cyber- has become common, even overly used, in referring to almost anything related to computing or electronics, and as the Wikipedia entry notes, there is a great deal of overlap with the prefix e-. Nonetheless, the two have very different connotations. Partly due to the literal meaning of cyber- as control (as in cybernetics) and partly due to its association with highly technological dystopian worlds (as with cyberpunk and cybergoth), cyber- implies a distinctive technological condition, linked to new information and communication technologies. And the prevalence of dystopian valences denotes some manner of critical response to this technological condition, a ‘cyberised’ or cybernetic world that suggests extensive technologies of control in which telecommunications are associated with telecommand, in which cyber-entities grapple with or struggle against their cyber-condition. Yet, as Félix Guattari points out, this manner of thinking technology can be very structural and mechanistic – and thus highly determinist. There is a post-Romantic fascination with technological determinism and its discontents, which results in a struggle to break the grip of technologies of control.

Such a manner of thinking technology strives to locate moments of indeterminacy within the mechanism, moments and sites where life emerges (so-called artificial life) from the inorganic, or where thought emerges from brute matter or mechanism (so-called artificial intelligence). In effect, the term cyber frequently entails a search for internal difference, a quest for indeterminacy under conditions in which new technologies imply structural determinism. Of course, there is always the danger that this way of thinking information and communication technologies, because of its presuppositions of determinism, serves to mystify rather than enlighten. This is precisely why caution is needed. Because the discovery of emergent life or intelligence is commonly taken as the harbinger of a new era or new world, care is required in thinking about the conditions for and status of new. In addition to the simple question of whether this is fiction, the question arises about whether this newness repeats ideologies of an overcoming of the modern or postmodern technological condition, thus completing, fulfilling and entrenching that condition rather than critiquing it.

This is especially important when the term cyber becomes a prefix for Asia. If cyber is to sustain its theoretical and critical force, it must be posed as a question of technology, not a fact of technologicalisation or (post)modernisation, or as a fact of novelty. Just as Spivak’s pluralisation of Asia demands an internal differentiation of received ideas about Asia, so the idea of cyberAsia must open and sustain specific questions about technology and techno-cultures associated with the term cyber, and at the same time, address how technologies serve to integrate or differentiate the fantastic unity of Asia, whether it is posited and sedimented linguistically, culturally, socially, economically or geopolitically. In other words, the cyberAsia project must give precedence to the question begged by its neologism: ‘what is a techno-region?’ A number of questions follow from this one. If we take cyber as an index for a particular mode of technological or techno-cultural integration/differentiation, we might, for instance, think about how this mode of techno-integration/differentiation interacts with the determinantising and reterritorialising forces of capitalism (perhaps in the context of the emergence of newly integrated economic zones in East Asia). Questions also arise about how this techno-integration/differentiation affects the articulations of national culture and social identity. In light of theories that see a graphic integration/differentiation in East Asia based on legacies of writing and drawing associated with Chinese characters, the question of the relation between techno-integration/differentiation and histories of writing is equally urgent.

To pose the question of cyberAsia in this manner means giving up on the fiction that novelty – specifically, the novelty of attaching the prefix cyber to Asia – is a guarantee of difference or otherwise and thus of critical engagement. Rather it is imperative to acknowledge that ‘cyberspace’ Asia does not necessarily amount to pluralising Asia and articulating other Asias. This also means giving up on the fascination with new objects and the collusion with the logic of markets that currently mars the study of popular culture and especially Japanese popular culture, for instance. Rather than fuss over the next big thing, the goal would be to pose questions about the relation between technologies, knowledge production, cultural production, circulation, distribution and regionalisation, in the interest of questioning rather than grounding the technological condition, and in the interest of pluralising rather than unifying Asia.

Thomas Lamarre, McGill University

thomas.lamarre@mcgill.ca
Digital and virtual forms of culture are intensely choice-based. In the absence of meta-narrative, we are constantly being solicited as an agent of choice, between alternatives, to follow links. To examine this most modern of issues Fabian Schäfer turns to the mature traditions of philosophy. Distinguishing Japanese cultural critic Azuma Hiroki’s concept of human and animal action, and the influential German philosopher Martin Heidegger’s authentic and fallen selves, in terms of the notions of choice and reversibility, he poses the question of whether the subject of virtual choice is best understood in one context or the other.

Fabian Schäfer

IN THEIR AUGUST 2008 ISSUES, the German news magazine Der Spiegel and the American journal The Atlantic cover stories on the dangers of internet-based communication and knowledge. Both magazines posed the question, “Is Google or, more generally, the Internet making us stupid?” The discourse splits into two camps of critics and enthusiasts. On the one hand, it is emphasised that the Internet is leading to the occurrence of new simultaneous modes of perception, a democratisation of knowledge, and unprecedented creativity by its users; on the other hand, the loss of critical reason or the capacity for remembering, rising attention deficit, the loss of a common culture existing through the reading of books, and the intellectual passivity of internet users is harshly criticised. Moreover, the critical camp often psychopathologises the effects of the use of the Internet. Proponents of this faction agree that spending five to six hours on the Internet per day, searching through a cornucopia of texts, videos or music or writing emails and instant messages, can cause social behavioural disorders such as an anti-social attitude or an unwillingness to communicate.

Philosophical aspects of databases, the Internet and hypertext

It is the effects of the Internet on our cognitive abilities and reading capability that particularly unsettles the critics. In his editorial for The Atlantic, American writer Nicholas Carr complains that persistent Internet use is influencing his capacity for concentration and contemplation. According to Carr, he was ‘once (…) a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now [he] zip[ps] along the surface like a guy on a jet Ski.’ The reason for this effect upon our cognition is based on the most important feature of the Internet or electronic databases – the fact that they are based on interactivity or HTML (HyperText Markup Language) in particular.

However, how the interactivity of hypertext affects its users, and in how far they are capable of handling the simultaneous existence and accessibility of documents or websites, remains questionable. Specifically, it is the inner restlessness that one feels when faced with the decision between two or more possibilities which complicates the absorption of knowledge by means of interactive media. Links can be compared to junctions or options, or, as Martin Heidegger once put it, to possibilities on which Dasein (‘existence’) can project itself onto. In this sense, the networked structure of the Internet or a database might be described as a miniature of the possibilities-for-being (Sokolovskij) of Dasein. As in real life, deciding in favour of one possibility (namely a link) necessarily means to negate others.

‘Distraction’, ‘squirrelling’ and ‘fallen’ uses of the Internet

How it is only meant to ‘Heidegger’ called the ‘authentic’ (Eigentlichkeit) mode of Being ([Zum Wesen]) that Desire can ‘choose’ (wählen) itself and thereby ‘be’ (Sein) itself (Selbstsein, Being-one’s-self) through an existential projection in the choice of ‘its ownmost possibilities.’ Most times, Heidegger admits, the Desire is determined by the possibilities given by the Man and is therefore not situated in the mode of authenticity (Eigentlichkeit) but in one of fallenness (Verfallenheit). Speaking in the words of Heidegger, the possibility of ‘falling’ seems to be relatively high in the case of the interlinked structure of the Internet or databases if compared to the reading of a linear-structured book.

‘Surfing’ the Internet or browsing through databases can be described as what Walter Benjamin termed ‘reception in a state of distraction’. (Rezeption in der Zerstreuung). This mode of perception, according to Benjamin, is based on the ‘tactile quality’ (tactile Qualit"{a}t) of the object of perception – in Benjamin’s case, movies and photographs. This tactility of visual media Benjamin describes is even emphasised by the interactivity of the Internet or databases. As Nicholas Carr’s editorial in The Atlantic rightly asserts, hyperlinks, ‘[u]nlike footnotes,’ ‘don’t merely point to related works; they propel you toward them.’ The perception of the Internet is, in Benjamin’s terms, one of ‘tactile appropriation’ that is based on ‘habitatualisation’ rather than on ‘attention’. To Heidegger, who used the term ‘Zerstreuung’ (distraction) in a comparable way, distraction is based on ‘curiosity’ (Neugier), a mode of fallenness. Other than Verstehen (understanding) as the self-projection of the being on its ownmost possibilities, curiosity is merely based on ‘sewing’ (Sehen). In this mode of being, ‘Desire seeks what is far away simply in order to bring it close to itself in the way it looks. Desire lets itself to be taken along (mitnehmen) solely by the looks of the world.’

The dangers of ‘fallen’ or ‘distraction’ Internet use are substantiated by the findings of a recent study of online research habits, conducted by scholars from University College London (UCL). As part of a five-year programme, researchers analysed the behaviour of visitors to two popular research sites, one operated by the British Library and one by a UK educational consortium, that provides access to journal articles, e-books, and other sources of written information. The results showed that people using the sites exhibited a form of skimming activity, ‘hopping from one source to another and rarely returning to any source they had already visited. They typically read one or two pages of an article or book before jumping to another site. Sometimes they saved a long article, but there’s no evidence that they ever went back and actually read it. Apparently, many Internet users seem to be ‘squirrelling’ in the flood of information provided by the Internet with an individual ‘dataabstractionism’ of information retrieved from larger databases – a behaviour that the scholars of UCL called “squirrelling.”

Internet, databases and animalisation

In a series of lectures held in 1929-30, Heidegger distinguished between animal and man by describing the animal’s mode of being as one of ‘poverty in world’ (Weltbildung) and that of man as ‘world-forming’ (weltbildend). Accordingly, one might argue that the Weltformet of the animal (i.e. its ‘captivation’ (Benommenheit) and ‘absorption’ (Eingenommenheit) by its environment) bears parallels to the curiosity and fallenness of Desire that is, as already mentioned, taken along (mitnehmen) solely by the looks of the world.

With regard to the ‘animalisation’ or ‘fallenness’ of Desire to a tactile and habitualised information seeking behaviour in the digital age, it is valuable to take into account the contemporary philosophical discourse on the phenomenon of otaku culture in Japan, since much of the public debate on the positive and negative sides of the Internet parallels the discourse on otaku culture in Japan. Otaku is a Japanese term that refers to people with obsessive interests in various Japanese subcultures, particularly manga, anime, science fiction, or computer games. The otaku are often psychopathologised as being anti-social, uncommunicative, and self-absorbed. Cultural critic Azuma Hiroki, however, saw value in analysing the otaku from the perspective of their pioneering role in the ‘information society’. In his book Dōitsu no sekiō: Japanese Society as Seen from the Perspective of Otaku, Azuma considers the otaku phenomenon not as particularly Japanese, but as an infection ‘of the global trend of postmodernisation’. With regard to French philosopher Alexandre Kojève’s neo-Hegelian distinction between two forms of ‘post-historical existence’ – the ‘animalisation’ of American society based on consumerism and the highly formalised and aestheticised ‘objects’ of the Japanese –, Azuma asserts that otaku culture consists of a ‘two-tiered mode of consumption’ that reflects the two-layered structure of the postmodern itself (see figs. 3 & 4). Other than the two layers of the modern world-image – the ‘depth’ of ‘grand narratives’ (namely ideah, ideology) and a ‘surface’ of many ‘small narratives’ – Azuma claims that, with reference to Loyd’s notion of the end of grand narratives, the latter were replaced by a ‘grand database’ in the postmodern world-image (seltsam).
Azuma claims that one can identify two ways in which the otaku deal with this new world image. He calls one the ‘animalesque’ (diluteblyt) side of database consumption; that is the solitude and associative consumption of the many small narratives of computer games, anime, or manga that are merely based on ‘combinations’ (kumonewy) of self-referential elements from the grand database. Database consumption also has a second, active or ‘humanesque’ side, because otaku actively intervene in received commodities by breaking down the narratives into their components (for computer games these are screenplay, character, background or for manga it is the single ‘sensitive’ elements (moe yōso) that characters are composed of), and thereby get access to the database that lies in the ‘depth’ behind the small narratives and ‘recreate’ (niji-sukia) from it in their own narrations or pictures.12  

This ‘double structure’ (niit kity) of deconstruction and reconstruction prompts Azuma to interpret otaku culture as a deconstructivist and, thus, subversive form of cultural reception that brings it close to a deconstructivist method in contemporary literary theory.13 Azuma bases this assertion also on the fact that to the otaku it doesn’t matter any longer if the ‘author’ of the small narratives they consume is a professional · ‘authorized’ by one of the big manga or anime publishers – or an amateur who publishes his self-made anime or manga in one of the many fanzines (dōjinshi) or on the Internet.

Internet, databases and pedagogy

What can we conclude from Azuma’s positive remarks on the new media literacy of the otaku with regard to what I have defined rather negatively as the ‘fakeness’ of the Internet? In any case, the suggestive question posed by The Atlantic or Der Spiegel, about whether Google, the Internet, databases, or the new flood of information in general, is making us stupid per se, seems to be pointing in the wrong direction. Even Heidegger’s or Benjamin’s perspective on distracted or habitualised perception is not as pessimistic as I have described it here. In fact, they agree that curiosity or tactile appropriation aren’t necessarily something that should be condemned from the outset. According to Heidegger, curiosity, which is non-anticipatory (namely non-self-projecting) and thus merely ‘awaiting’ (gewartigend), ‘has its natural justification [...] and belongs to the everyday kind of being of Da-Sean and to the understanding of being totally prevalent.’14 Similarly, Benjamin reminds us that perception in a state of distraction is important, since ‘the tasks which face the human apparatus of perception at the turning points of history cannot be solved by optical means, that is, by contemplation, alone. They are mastered gradually by habit, under the guidance of habituated perception.’

Accordingly, they are to a lesser extent two different modes of dealing with electronic and interlinked texts. First, the ‘authentic’ and ‘auratic’ as in the case of a link that is the solitude and passive consumption of the many small narratives of computer games, anime, or manga that are merely based on ‘combinations’ (kumonewy) of self-referential elements from the grand database. Database consumption also has a second, active or ‘humanesque’ side, because otaku actively intervene in received commodities by breaking down the narratives into their components (for computer games these are screenplay, character, background or for manga it is the single ‘sensitive’ elements (moe yōso) that characters are composed of), and thereby get access to the database that lies in the ‘depth’ behind the small narratives and ‘recreate’ (niji-sukia) from it in their own narrations or pictures.12 This ‘double structure’ (niit kity) of deconstruction and reconstruction prompts Azuma to interpret otaku culture as a deconstructivist and, thus, subversive form of cultural reception that brings it close to a deconstructivist method in contemporary literary theory.13 Azuma bases this assertion also on the fact that to the otaku it doesn’t matter any longer if the ‘author’ of the small narratives they consume is a professional · ‘authorized’ by one of the big manga or anime publishers – or an amateur who publishes his self-made anime or manga in one of the many fanzines (dōjinshi) or on the Internet. 

References

4. Ibid.  
5. For instance, the facility of hyperlinks is particularly obvious if a phrase of a text appears as a hyperlink (i.e. blue font colour) but does not have the respective function. Only through the Unzuhendheit (un-readiness-to-hand) of a link or a link do we become aware of the haptic interactivity of hypertext described by Benjamin as ‘tactile appropriation’.  
8. Ibid.  
10. Ibid.  
11. Ibid.  
12. Moshiné (‘machine cinema’), the art of using a computer game to create a movie, is a new form of ‘recreation’ by computer users. Cf. http://www.moshiné.com  
13. Hypertext theorist Jay D. Bolter emphasized the relationship between Derridian poststructuralism and hypertext as well. According to Bolter, based on the rhizomatic structure of the Internet, databases, electronic texts don’t have a centre or margins because of their ‘deconstructive reading’.

“The reader can follow paths through the space in any direction, limited only by constraints established by the author. No path through the space need be stigmatized as marginal.” Cf. Bolter, Jay-D. 1991. Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing. Hillsdale NJ: Eribaum  
The term cyberAsia is both an observation of the technological progress exhibited in Asian societies, and a provocation concerning the status of Asia in the epistemic frameworks of ‘the West’. Chris Goto-Jones contends that under certain conditions Asia serves as place-marker for a field of speculation that we might term science fictional Asia. Where ‘cyber’ contains intimations of futurities and technologisation, cyberAsia and science fictional Asia converge.

Chris Goto-Jones

THE MEANING OF ‘SCIENCE FICTIONAL ASIA’ stretches from moments of representational techno-Orientalism in Euro-American literature at one end — where Japan, Hong Kong, or India become the fantastical site of a projected technological future — to an epistemic framework that privileges the disorientation of the West at the other. It is this final frontier that intrigues me. In particular, the status and purpose of the knowledge created or discovered during explorations of this frontier of knowledge, as well as in the authority of the author in each case. My central provocation is that there is a frontier at which the epistemic structures and objectives of science fiction (SF) and of Asian Studies (AS) meet, and that we might usefully see family ties as a discrete socio-historic group of places and people, anywhere literally everywhere the West is not. This observation teeters on the other. In terms of cognition, he claims to be relying on a Germanic sense of science as Wissenschaft (i.e. one that encompasses the human and mental sciences as well as the material ones). This enables him to tie SF to the foundations of the real and to argue that estrangements that abandon (rather than creatively develop) the scientific conditions or conventions of the ‘reality’ should not be considered SF, but rather myth, fairytale or simply fantasy. For Suvin, SF is a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment.

Missing from this description is a sense of function and purpose: what should be the impact of cognitive estrangement? What is the force of SF, if indeed it has any at all? Suvin, like most of the other leading SF theorists, most recently and powerfully Fredrick Jameson, is clear that the purpose of estrangement in this context is critique. In the most obvious terms, this means SF is frequently (albeit not necessarily) satirical. Rather, SF might be envisioned as playing a deliberate and deliberative role in the politics of knowledge: the purpose of cognitive estrangement is reflexive. That is, the author seeks to displace the reader from the everydayness of his/her context and challenge them to test their reality against the difference presented. The cognitive nature of the estrangement should make the alterity of SF thinkable (even realistic) and thus both effective and affective.

To some extent, this frontier serves as both a caricature and a critique of the Area Studies enterprise as a whole, with AS the most striking mark, striking out the dangerous and nebulous border between fictional representations and representations of fictions. Of course, as a caricature, this presentation makes no claims to being comprehensive or nuanced about all the varieties of SF or Area Studies (or even AS) — rather it focuses on the dimensions of a particular frontier at which particular aspects of those fields meet.

Clarifying the known: 1. Science Fiction

SF is already a difficult terrain, and its dimensions are continuously contested. It exists in a condition of peril within broader realms of literature. There have been various attempts to define it, but there is neither the space nor the need to elaborate them all here. Let us suffice with a series of thematic commonalities: SF is about technology and mechanisation and particularly about speculations regarding their social and interpersonal effects in the future — it is a product of modernity and of the industrial revolution. The other central, thematic concern of sci-fi is often considered to be the encounter with (or exploration of) difference, and occasionally with the mystification or the demonisation of difference. This has often been seen to tie SF to (post)colonialism. Because, like the past, the future is a different country where they do things differently, these two characteristics (temporal and spatial explorations) converge around a single concern for the encounter with the Other, often figured in SF as a literal encounter with the alien. I still find Darko Suvin’s 1979 characterization of SF as ‘the literature of cognitive estrangement’ apt. I understand this provocative phrase to contain both a methodological marker — cognitive — and an intentional or purposive marker — estrangement. It characterizes SF as a literature that accomplishes estrangement (whatever that might mean) via a process of cognition (whatever that might mean). This implies, of course, that other literatures seek objectives other than estrangement and employ means other than cognition (or at least that none combine the two).
on the brink of being facile, but it begins to become interesting in the company of SF, as we boldly go where no-one has gone before. The subject matter of Area Studies in the West, in the least politically correct form, is the alien, be that terrestrial or extra-terrestrial. Alien Studies, Area Studies and Asian Studies share a theoretical frontier: AS.

Let us put it (or perhaps anticipate) in 2025 intelligent life is discerned on the moon of Io, an exoplanet of star system... Sinus. The study of that society and its culture will be the perdecessor of AS, since it will certainly be a non-Western civilization.

A key question at this point, just as it was in the case of SF, is: why should we be interested in a category of knowledge that is explicitly defined as being about ‘something other than us’? (no matter who we are?) This is an incredibly difficult and also intimate question.

For Szontan there are two basic answers. The first is the ‘intrinsically valuable’ and interest of difference – we might simply call this curiosity. This is a banal response and not in anyway exclusive to AS. The second, which is far more powerful and purposeful, and which dominates much of the literature, is the way that the alien acts reflexively to ‘de-naturalise’ the formulations and the categories of knowledge (‘the marginal disciplines,’ which are themselves Euro-American products).

In other words, the core purpose of AS is to combat Eurocentrism in the academy on the basis that ‘seriously seeking the diverse and alternative knowledges and experiences of other cultures and societies can be deeply challenging… and even threatening.’

The fundamental role of Area Studies is, in Szontan’s provocative terms, to ‘de-parochialise and denaturalise the other visions of the world that dominate the social sciences and humanities. The quest is not only for new knowledge or empirical data, but also for new kinds of knowledge.’

This position represents a constructive variation on (or perhaps a reflexive reappraisal of) Said’s critique of Orientalism, in which the ‘Oriental Other’ is engaged as a kind of mirror through which we might see ourselves. While SF makes no explicit claims to be exploring the ‘real world,’ it is a means rather than as an end is an absolute evil. Hence, if we seek, say, to de-parochialise Western SF, wouldn’t it be more morally superior to use Swift’s Japan in Gulliver’s Travels or Gibson’s Japan in Neuromancer?

The frontiers are more a hazy and expansive zone than a crisp and unambiguous border. One possible answer is that we are simply more likely to be moved to serious reflexive, de-naturalisation or estrangement (even alienation). That is, the effects of SF can be more effective and affective than reality when it comes to cognitive estrangement.

I’m willing to take this seriously, but I’m not yet willing to believe it. Even though it’s a rather soft claim, it also seems fragile. It is not necessarily true: experience tells us that fiction can be more effective and affective than reality when it comes to cognitive estrangement.

Let us turn to an example: it seems that a version of imperialism.

The point is that, in practice, the border between West and non-West may be experienced as more altering than the border between reality and fiction. For some, a Buddhist model of selfhood cannot transform ‘our’ thinking about the self, although the scientific figure of an alien from Swift can help to persuade us of the truth of this. Certain Euro-American philosophies are alienated from Tibetan thinkers, but only estranged from envoys from Sinus. SF is less alien than AS. In other words, when it comes to cognitive estrangement, reality may be the border (that is, the enlightening or de-naturalising example), while fiction has a critical function.

Narrating and imagining the alien

The flip side of this concern is the matter of authoritative authorship and the meaning of textual reality. At its most basic: can we really separate the representation from the representation with mediated expressions by authors with varying authorities?

There is a wide and sophisticated literature on this question and there is no need to rehearse it here. But let me reiterate: I am not interested in making the philosophical claim that all texts are essentially fictions and hence that there is no epistemological difference between representations of Sinus, Laputa, Glubbdubdrib and Japan. I am interested, rather, in exploring the frontier where SF and AS appear to meet and what sets them apart if they really share some kind of purposive kinship. A possible answer involves two core questions: what is the author doing (‘seeking to know, analyse and interpret’)? and what devices are employed to accomplish this?

In terms of the first question, we have already seen that the provisional and expansive answer for both AS and SF is the dubious category of ‘non-Western’ cultures. However, we need to ask whether authors are trying to represent or analyse real cultures or imaginary ones. In the case of SF, we must assume that authors seek to represent real cultures as directly and transparently as possible (accepting that absolutely direct and transparent representations are impossible). In the case of SF as cognitive estrangement, we also assume that authors seek to represent real(is)cultures, albeit creatively or indirectly with varying degrees of fidelity to the real. Recall that representa-

ions of the entire imaginary are fantasy, myth or fairy tale, not SF. In other words, the question of the nature of the writer’s subject erects only a hazy frontier between SF and AS.

The real difficulty when defining the frontier between AS and SF, however, concerns the question of method. While it is clear that SF employs a form of imagining (with varying degrees of scientific research in order to satisfy the ‘cognitive’ require-

ments), AS is not able to differentiate itself through recourse to a rigorous disciplinary methodology. Indeed, AS often voices an explicit commitment to inter-, multi- or extra-disciplinary techniques and new forms of knowledge creation. Its method is non-exclusively defined – could it include imagining? There is a perceiveable haze around the frontier, and hence writers may slide from one territory into the other. There is a no-man’s land of Alien Studies.

Conclusions

It would obviously be ridiculous to argue that AS, even the study of cyberAsia, is a variety of science fiction. But it does not seem quite as ridiculous to claim that there is a science fiction frontier to AS, at which it interloches with some of the conventions, practices and goals of SF. At some point, both seek to document the existence, internal logic, and theoretical implications of the distinctive social and cultural, expressive, structural, and dynamics that shape societies in the non-West. And both aim to use these documents to denaturalise the West.

It is interesting that both AS and SF appear to have pushed out into this shared frontier as part of aggressive processes of self-representation within larger realms that constantly assault their credibil-

ity. This generates a number of implications. In terms of method, AS moves most strongly away from its science fictional frontier when it embraces rigorous disciplinary methods (mainly on Asia). However, this also underlines the radical agenda of AS to de-parochialise the conventional disciplines themselves – in the extreme this is a capitulation to this parochialism. At the other extreme, AS may seek to expand its horizons more directly, perhaps by being more explicit about the new forms of knowledge to endan-

ger the status quo, developing new theories and methods, boldly going where no SF has gone before. In other words, the direction risks transforming AS into a literary genre.

Finally, I wonder about the ethical status of knowledge at this frontier. In particular, since the knowledge generated there is explicitly instrumental in purpose (it is to be used to de-naturalise the West), I wonder whether SF could be seen as the moral conscience of AS. Following Kant, treating another as a means rather than as an end is an absolute evil. Hence, if we seek, say, to de-parochialise Western disciplines, wouldn’t it be more morally superior to use Swift’s Japan in Gulliver’s Travels or Gibson’s Japan in Neuromancer?

A version of this paper was originally presented on the ‘Frontiers of the Middle East’ panel at the Modern Languages Association, San Francisco, 30th December 2008

References


2. Suvin, Darko. ‘Traveling to the East: The Focus: CyberAsia 23’


4. Ibid. p.32

5. Ibid. p.27

6. Ibid. p.25


8. Sontag, op. cit. p2

9. Ibid. p.2

10. This argument is developed in Goto-Jones, Chris. 2005. ‘If the past is a different country are different countries in the past,’ in Philosophy, 80:311


The Focus: CyberAsia 23

The Newsletter | No 50 | Spring 2009
Examining mechanisms through which anime narrative became naturalised in non-Asian countries teaches us much about how non-Hollywood, non-Western cultural globalisation happened. Before anime became cool, it had braved knee-jerk dismissal and it frequently did so by entering the international marketplace via traditionally gendered genres such as children’s television, with stories set in Europe or adaptations of European children’s books. However, as Cobus van Staden explains, this strategy was also prefurred by a long tradition of Europhilism in Japan, which significantly complicated the reception of anime both in Japan and abroad.

**Cobus van Staden**

_What do anime dreams of Europe mean for non-Europeans?_

While the popularity with which European settings occur in anime would indicate that Europe retains an emotional power in Japan, two important differences emerge between Mon Paris and Heidi. Firstly, in Mon Paris, Europe represents bourgeois modernity and Asia sleepy timelessness (with Japan symbolically making the passage from one to the other). However, in Heidi and the vast majority of anime series with European settings, the site of timelessness is Europe, not Asia. There are very few anime depictions of contemporary Europe. Mostly, Europe is treated as a changeless Ruritania, not Asia. There are very few depictions of Europe in earlier Japanese anime series such as Takarazuka’s *Mon Paris*, and Japanese pop culture in its depiction in contemporary anime.

In 1927, and again in 1947 and 1957, respectively, the all-female Takarazuka theatre troupe put on a revue called *Mon Paris*. A travelling show with scenes depicting exotic locales from Tokyo to Paris, the show epitomised what Jennifer Ellen Robertson characterises as European orientalism. Most of the scenes were set against exotic backdrops such as Ceylon and Egypt, portrayed less as societies and more as a series of static espaces (the Egypt section, for example, featured Egyptian-like queens). When the travellers reach Paris, they find bustling crowds, the dynamic modernism contrasted with sleeping Asia. They decide to take in a revue, only to find that Mon Paris is also on in Paris – the French have imported Takarazuka. One of the travellers remarks that Paris and the whole of France is like Takarazuka – ‘an imagined country, a country of dreams smothering since childhood.’

How did Heidi’s portrayal of Europe and its cultural specificity relate to its popularity? When I put this question to those I interviewed, I received diametrically opposed answers. On the one hand several respondents felt the power of the Afrikaans dub made people feel that the series was their own. Marinda Swartepoel, who was involved in the acquisition of children’s programming, said the series gave one the feeling that it had originally been made in Afrikaans. That was certainly what I thought as a five-year-old in South Africa. On the other hand, several respondents also suggested that the European setting was a crucial contributing factor to its popularity. Kobus Geldenhuys, who translated the script, felt that the setting appealed to Afrikaans’ cultural roots. Rina Nienaber suggested that Afrikaners of the era didn’t really feel that they were living in Africa at all. Due to the overwhelming Eurocentric of apartheid education, Africa never felt much less exotic than South Africa’s neighbouring states.

It seems to me that Heidi’s success is related to Afrikaners’ conflicted relationship with Europe. At the exact moment when Western Europe was leading the campaign to isolate and the apartheid regime to dissociate itself from its colonial creation, Afrikaners were using dubbing to insert themselves into a 19th century European landscape. The theme tune, which fused Afrikaans lyrics with mock-western yodeling became a symbol of apartheid’s attempts to proclaim itself as simultaneously Europe’s heir and peer – much to the distress of actual Europeans. The irony of course is that this was facilitated by Japanese animation. An additional irony is that several of the people I interviewed didn’t feel that the series was actually German.

**Anime dreams of Europe**

How is it possible for one anime series to evoke such wildly divergent meanings? I think the non-European audience’s encounter with this onscreen Europe is less related to their knowledge of actual Europe than with their perception of this setting as ‘beautifully past’. This is a version of what Arjun Appadurai has called ‘nostalgia without memory’. The power of Europe in this series lies not on the level of intelligibility but on the level of appeal. It functions by building atmosphere and providing background. Appadurai has argued that this nostalgia – not driven by actual experience but rather by its lack – is fundamental to contemporary marketing: “Rather than expecting the consumer to supply memories while the merchant supplies the lubricant of nostalgia, now the viewer need only bring the faculty of nostalgia to an image that will supply the memory of a loss he or she has never suffered. This relationship might be called armchair nostalgia, nostalgia without lived experience or collective historical memory.”

I believe that the power of Europe in anime should not simply be understood as the continuing power of Europe through the lens of its historical image of the world. It is worth asking whether fictional Europe’s power as ‘everyone’s beautiful, enchanted country’ might not point to the power of capitalism to create the illusion of memory out of the absence of memory. In that case, contemporary Europeans might be alienated from – and yet strangely connected to – these images as the rest of us.

**Notes**

4. This point was first brought to my attention by the Swiss scholar Alain Bhr and Howard multrencis encountered in *Hunt, P. et al* (eds.) 1996. *International Companion Encyclopaedia of Children’s Literature*, London: Taylor & Francis
King Kong in China
The first of these narratives regards stories related to online protest, which at times triggers offline protests. For example, the protest in the summer of 2007 against the building of a chemical factory in Xuanwu was generally perceived as a consequence of protest postings by blogger Zuola. The second is stories related to issues of censorship and digital rights. For example, the 2009 petition for removal of the word ‘dissident’ will be the most popular, if not worn out, metaphor mobilised to point to the assumed omnipotence of the government.

Lokman Tsui has rightly observed that such a metaphor builds on a cold war rhetoric in which China is positioned as the constitutive outside of ‘the free, open and democratic West’. His observation resonates with what literary critic Rey Chow refers to as the King Kong syndrome, ‘producing China’ as a spectacular primitive monster whose despotism necessitates the salvation of its people by outsiders. Indeed, the motif running through the two interlocking narratives concerning Internet in China is precisely the urgent need to expose, discipline and punish this monster, to tame it, hopefully, to the world of ‘liberal’ and ‘democratic’ societies. Not surprisingly, what is being played out in the Chinese cyberspace is more messy, and thus more ambiguous than such narratives want us to believe. Rather than taking a clear position, I want to explore this messy digital domain called ‘the Chinese Internet’, drawing on my research – online and offline – among bloggers (in 2008) and hackers (in 2004), before returning to deliberate on the destiny of our giant monster.

Citizen voices?
When I met Wang Xiaofeng in 1997, he was a rock journalist; 10 years later, he has become one of the most popular bloggers of the mainland. As many fellow bloggers, he combines his job as a journalist with his blogging, while the latter has become a commercial enterprise in China: the more readers you have, the more advertisements and money you can attract. Wang’s style is ironic and cynical, poking fun at everything around him. To him, blogging offers a way to play with language, to experiment online with words and phrases that would not easily pass censorship. During the wave of pro-Tibet protests and corresponding pro-Beijing nationalism surrounding the Olympic torch relay in April 2008, Wang ridiculed the popular ‘Love China’ T-shirts as well as the ‘I Love China’ sign used by millions of MSN users in their name tag. His response to the outspoken blog by Michael Anti, for instance, was removed by Microsoft after he voiced his critique on the dismissal of the blog by Zuola. For example, blogger Zuola went with a number of activists to one of the ‘black prisons’ in Beijing, where political activists were illegally detained. This group of activists, through their mobile devices, immediately uploaded their story to Twitter and their blogs, complete with pictures and sound recording of the harassment that took place when policemen started to fight with two of the visiting activists. In this case, new technologies did open up immediacy to citizen politics as we know it.

Again, I must hasten to add: such examples are not only rare, but also risk reducing ‘China’ to the conventional understanding and expectation of politics. The definition one gives of China’s bloggers is likely to be very much informed by a specific political agenda – if one likes to see politics, one can also find precisely that. The examples I have cited point to the impossibility of speaking of the Chinese blogosphere – there are many spheres, which are as complex as the prefix ‘Chinese’ is problematic in its privileging of the nation-state above other possible cartographies either more localised or more globalised.

Techno nationalism?
If we move from the blogosphere towards hacker cultures in China, we enter a grey zone that often borders on the illegal. Yet, this zone is equally complex, making, once again, simple generalisations impossible, if at all desirable. In the West, most media attention has been given to the nationalistic hackers of China, who, allegedly spend their holidays breaking into Taiwanese, Japanese or American sites, to add a PRC flag, or insert political slogans. Sharpwinner is such a ‘red hacker’, who, Belgians have a strong sense of politics.’ On his involvement in the attacks on the website of the American White House, he explains: ‘Those .gov and .mil sites are always our targets. For the White House site, we have spent most of our time to find the loopholes.’ The attention they get is much to the dismay of hackers like Goodwell, a Beijing-based hacker who looks down upon ‘scriptkiddies’ like Sharpwinner who simply copy codes to hack other sites. I think [the hacking war between China and Japan and the US] is just awkward and boring. The real hackers have no sense of boundaries, they have nothing to do with politics, politics should never infect technology.” To Goodwell and his friends, the spirit of hacking revolves around curiosity: ‘As a hacker, I think you should never give up, you should always study on, whether you fail or succeed, so as to develop new technologies.” While relentless curiosity should be a driving force that fuels hacking cultures, China, in the view of Goodwell, is a bad place for hackers: ‘In America, hackers may have their own culture and ideology, in China people have no sense of hacking culture and ideology. In China, you first need to secure your income. (…) Chinese have no sense of cooperation, no team spirit, if they developed a certain program or system, they may share it. Following Sharpwinner and Goodwell, it seems that the grey hazing zone in China is criss-crossed with fault lines of (j)apological longings as well as (un)willingness to share and cooperate. The lack of shared cultural practices makes it, indeed, difficult to speak of a hacker culture in China, a stark contrast to my research experience in New York among the hacker communities there, where sharing (manifest, among others, in their meeting places, conferences and gatherings) was largely the norm.

King Kong reconsidered
What, then, can we learn from these observations on bloggers and hackers? Let me return to the King Kong syndrome, which considers a monster to be tamed and brought to the civilized world. What we eventually witness, at least in King Kong films, is buildings crumbling, windows smashed to pieces, and the order of the day radically disrupted before the primitive monster ends up being killed by modern weaponry. I will therefore make two appeals from this brief account of Internet in China. First, such chaos and fragmentation that King Kong brings with it is precisely what we need to acknowledge and accept when we try to make sense of China and its Internet. Too often, accounts on Chinese Internet communities are driven by an agenda that is drenched in a cold war rhetoric that will not bring us very far. Second, the death of King Kong should force us to rethink narratives of civilisation, and the hegemonic mantra of ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’ and ‘human rights’. The problem is the lack of reflection upon the production of knowledge over China and its intricate relation to power and ideology. The basic Foucauldian (and Said-ian) question of why we produce what tropes of knowledge is all too often ignored.

References
Chow, Rey. ‘King Kong in Hong Kong: Watching the “Handover,”’ from the USA.’ Social Text 35 (Summer 1998)
On the black prison story, see: http://globalvoicesonline.org/2008/01/17/china-co-operation-20-on-beijing’s-black-jails/
Thinking of the future is hardly possible without reference being made to the role of digital information technologies or the growing impact of knowledge industries. But how relevant are these concepts outside the Northern Hemisphere? Said to be on its way by 2020, Islamic Information Society posits an alternative future. Western ideas on the Global Village, as well as the hijacking of Islamic futures by radical conservatives, Bart Barendregt examines how majority Muslim countries in Southeast Asia have increasingly become role models in Islam’s quest for a digital future.

Bart Barendregt

In HIS IMAGINARY FUTURES (2007), Richard Barbrook points out how the novelty of technologies lies not so much in what they can do in the here and now, but in what more advanced models may do one day in the imaginary future. Contemporary reality, he argues, is the ‘beta version of a science fiction dream’. Some of our most dominant science fiction discourses have been remarkably stable and continue to haunt us today.

For over four decades the idea of Information Society has been a battleground for ideologues, a struggle whose origins can be traced to the early Cold War era. Although in those days the US outgunned the Soviets on most terrains, including economics, the USIR could always resort to the powerful rhetoric of tomorrow’s communist proletariat. Hence a much needed counter future was needed, which was eventually to be found in McLuhan’s bestselling Understanding Media (1964). While the Soviet intelligentsia propagated a future cybernetic communism by means of developing a ‘unified information network’, American think-tanks appropriated McLuhan’s technology in their drive for progress, above all his notion of the Global Village, eventually producing what we now know as the Net, one of the building blocks of today’s information society.

Today our future remains largely technologically driven, encouraging blind faith in technology, bringing in its wake not only long-term conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also the rise of a global economy in which e-commerce and e-governance are not yet standard but nevertheless are a much sought after ideal by many. Does this mean that what Barbrook refers to as ‘media and technoculture’ is somehow contradictory to the Left’s liberal society and the Right’s liberal market place, has become the dominant dictum in information society? The question we now have to consider is how our future has once more become contested with cyber (hard) eagerly making use of information communication technology (ICT) to propagate their ideas. To this assertion, we may add the assurance that Muslim politicians and intellectuals are certainly not willing to leave the future to radical conservatives and consequently have been forced to come up with viable counter scenarios, these ideas are widely commented on in developmental programmes for the Islamic world as a whole and various Muslim popular culture. The latter offers a useful starting point in this brief inventory of the contestation of information society.

Muslims in Space

Western stereotypes tend to describe Islam scathingly as a backward orientation or an absence of futurity because fate seems to lie in the hands of Allah. Indeed, writings by Muslims futurologists are still few and far between. 1 There is some Arabic science fiction, alternative histories and, not surprisingly, Islamic terrorists increasingly play a prominent role in Western sci-fi novels. This death does not impinge the future and script are which are increasing steadily. Narudin (2006) describes how science fiction is central to the ideology of various African American Islamic movements, which believe their prowess in deconstructing science fiction from outer space. Exotic though these readings of the past may be, they do offer an alternative interpretation of world history, colonialism and racism, and also teach present-day Muslims how technology will lead to a resurgence of their ancient Islamic civilization in the near future. In that sense their ideal is not too far removed from what has been in mainstream Muslim societies, in which there is a growing tendency to look at space and technology as being the next frontier. Recently, the Malaysian Astronaut and Islam Law Association discussed how to maintain the kneeling prayer posture while in a weightless condition, eating halal food and proper washing when aboard a spacecraft. Malaysian scientists are even developing software named ‘Muslims in Space’, which should enable Islamic astronauts of the future to find how to face Mecca. Here issues of religion and technology development seem to collide with questions about the future of the Islamic world.

Many, in the West at least, are of the view that Islam needs to catch up with the West. In a recent study, researchers showed that Islam has been largely left behind by the West when it comes to technology in Islamic futurist thinking. Some of the countries in Muslim Southeast Asia have become a role model not only for the region and the developing world at large, but also for Muslim coreligionists in other parts of the world. To explain this, the focus of this article will be concentrated on two newly developing Muslim majorities in Southeast Asia, Malaysia and Indonesia. Both countries have a near past of nation-building and developmental thinking in which an almost iconic role has been accorded information technology.

Techno nationalism and digital development

Observers from Anderson to Mrázek have noted how from the outset nation-building in the newly developing Southeast Asian states has been characterised by a profound obsession with things modern, especially iconic technologies. Such iconic technologies turn contradicts the view of print nationalism to national cars and lately national phones. The realisation of ICT infrastructure and innovative e-governance applications express the hopes of new modernity. Some projects include Indonesia’s successful launching of its own satellite system in 1976, creating a modern day variant of Anderson’s national audience, and boosting New Order technological-political visions (Barber 2005). However, in the 1990s when a new Internet era evolved Southeast Asian politicians began focusing on prestigious state-run campaigns to develop the needed ICT infrastructure. The best known of these projects is Malaysia’s Vision2020, which comes with the Malaysian answer to Silicon Valley, Cyberjaya, and its associated Multimedia Super Corridor. In 1991 Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad chose a year nearly three decades into the future as a target for his country’s national, political, economic, and social development. By that magic date frequently appear as ultimate target), Malaysia would be ready to participate as a regional, if not world power. Similar information technology infrastructural projects have been envisaged in other parts of Southeast Asia, albeit not all of them equally successful. These projects have all been devised to make the great leap forward, preparing Southeast Asia for the challenges of the 21st century. Lately the belief in a technologically driven future has been transformed into what is now known as information technology for development. This ICT4D discourse has resulted locally in the formulation of an ASEM group focused on the potential of both e-commerce and e-governance applications, echoing the hopes of a digital revolution in the near future, very similar to the image of futures technology in Cyberjaya and The Colbert Report.

More progressive thinkers argue that there is more to the contemporary revival of Islam than the radical views of conserva- tive Muslims. There is the success story of Islamic economics (from syariah-based micro credit, to present-day Islamic mobile banking) and the more commercial call for a truly Islamic science. They argue that classical Islamic discourse is not greatly concerned with State and politics, but concentrates entirely on the issue of a community bound by faith (ummah). Hence, some have urged for a multicultural Islam to commence a dialogue with the West and East Asia, in which Islamic ideas on economics, politics, the environment, not to mention science and technology, will become part of a global agenda.

Indian telecommunications provider Telescom recently launched its Telekom Media service, targeting Southeast Asian mobile phone users on the pilgrimage to Mecca. And in early 2007, as another even more exciting example of new postnational projects, Malay newspapers reported on a new hi-tech city being developed in Medina with Malaysian support. The Medina Knowledge Economic City (KEC), expected to be completed by 2020, is to be a landmark providing opportuni- ties to such twin programmes as Malaysia’s Multimedia Super Corridor with what will be happening in Saudi Arabia in a few years. One newspaper quoted the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister as saying that: ‘It shows how two Muslim countries can co-operate and collaborate in the interest of the ummeh (Muslim community) and can indeed transform the Muslim world’ (Habib 2007). The Deputy Prime Minister states it was no more than fitting that Medina, the holy city where the saw the beginning of the Islamic acquisition of knowledge, was chosen to transform the Muslims and bring about a true revival. It is this newly gained Islamic techodo pride which brings us back to the future and how this is currently imagined among Southeast Asian Muslim intelligentsia.

Back to the future and back to Islam!

From a Western perspective, the Islamic world has failed to modernise, secularise, and innovate. Recognising the gap between Western and Muslim civilisation at the outset of the 21st century, many Muslims blame this lack of development in Muslim societies on the experience of colonisation and subsequently the ongoing political and economic repression by the same West. It is this feeling of injustice which at present serves to unite Muslims. Scholars of Islam have argued how the same political and cultural repression has led Islam to be developed as a social philosophy comparable to socialism, communism, and capitalism. This rise of Islam as an ideological system is heralded by the overt use of new media technologies throughout the Muslim world now enabling a new Muslim middle class to discuss their religion easily without necessarily looking to classically trained authorities. As one of the basic tenets of Islam is to acquire knowledge, an interest in information technology seems to have become an end in itself among many believers, with technology and spirituality now reinforcing each other strikingly. The interest Southeast Asian Muslims take in a future determined by ICT therefore accords very well with the nationalist development ideologies mentioned above and with broader trends discernible throughout the Muslim world. One of the consequences of this new techno-savvy Islam has been the recent overt use of these technologies to foster a nationalistic ‘Golden Spaces’ which propagate the idea of the cyber Caliphate. The problem with their ‘retro futurism’ is that by means of modern ICT they resort to a seven century ‘near perfect past’, leaving the Islamic world little room for progress.

More progressive thinkers argue that there is more to the contemporary revival of Islam than the radical views of conserva- tive Muslims. There is the success story of Islamic economics (from syariah-based micro credit, to present-day Islamic mobile banking) and the more commercial call for a truly Islamic science. They argue that classical Islamic discourse is not greatly concerned with State and politics, but concentrates entirely on the issue of a community bound by faith (ummah). Hence, some have urged for a multicultural Islam to commence a dialogue with the West and East Asia, in which Islamic ideas on economics, politics, the environment, not to mention science and technology, will become part of a global agenda.
They envisage an alternative modernity based on a world governance system which is fair, just, and in sympathy with all, which stresses the existence of self-sustained, sustainable ecological communities and, not surprisingly, the use of advanced technologies to link such communities (see Inayatullah 2005). It is such a concept of tomorrow’s ummah, first referred to by people as Muslim intellectual Sardar, and also embraced by Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (1991), which can compete with the strongly spreading perception of cyber fundamentalism or, for that matter, the more Western style liberal information Society. Once again, such futures of a post-postmodern Muslim society are not all that far off.

From Malay visions to technological blessings
Malaysian Islam, however, is a leader in planning for the future, combining economic progress with cultural values (Islam, Malay, and later even Asian values), a reputation which is largely attributable to the efforts of former prime minister Mahathir and his vision for the year 2020. Nevertheless, while generally respected as a great statesman in the Muslim world, some would also have cause to blame him for Malaysia’s development in the Third world. The fi lm, claimed to be the world’s fi rst-ever Islamic fi lm, drawing crowds to the cinemas at the end of the annual fasting month, and the richly developed ‘Made in Mecca’ image of mobile Muslim evangelists, but also confronts them with unexpected outcomes of the use of information technology.

An imagined future of spiritual technology
The purpose of this contribution has been to start unrolling some of the dynamics of Muslim futurothinking in Southeast Asia, especially where these technospiritual visions find their expression in information and communication technology. While Indonesia’s 15 minute Islam or Malaysia technostan realism are locally particular, they are not unique in the Muslim world and there is plenty of proof that one of the unexpected outcomes of information and communication technology by a young generation of Muslims especially is the emergence of a more moderate forward looking Islam. Whereas today’s Information Society is being marketed as both sides in the Cold War era, it is continuing to be an ongoing ideological battle for following generations in other parts of the world. As we speak, Muslim technocrats and intellectuals are reinventing information society for tomorrow’s ummah: an imagined future of fair Islamic economics, just governance and social justice bound by information technologoy.

Bard Barendregt
Dept. of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology
Leiden University

Notes
A version of this paper was presented at the International Conference on The Role of New Technologies in Global Societies, organized by the Department of Applied Social Sciences, of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University on the 30th to 31st July 2008. Figs. 1 & 6 are from the book Indonesian Dreams: Revolution and Consumerism in the sef (Buku Obor, KITLV, jakarta, 2008), edited by Tino Djumir and reprinted here with permission of the author.

1. But see the World Futures Studies Federation, a global network of futurists of which both Inayattulah and Sardar, progressive Muslim intellectuals, are member, or Muslim Futures Network (http://www.mfn.org).

2. The IAS Tunis Declaration on Information Technology for Development in the Islamic World also calls for Muslim countries to extend free trade agreements with developing countries and open up their markets to software being developed in the Third world.


References
Hefer, H. 2007. ‘The 21st Century: A New Century for Islam, 15 minute Islam or Islam Lite as selling out or even escape controversy and conservative and Islamists groups especially have blamed it for what is now called either Market Islam. 15 minute Islam has been accused as selling out or even of being the Devil in disguise. Various Muslim groups are now battling for the Islamic future, but all in these of futures information and communication technology is playing a decisive role.

Recently, the Malaysian Astronomy and Islamic Law Association discussed how to maintain the kneeling prayer posture while in a weightless condition, eating halal food and proper washing when aboard a spacecraft.
The PRC Internet is exciting not just its middle-class users in China, but the legions of Chinese language speakers who access the Chinese Internet outside of the mainland. It’s sparking media interest not just in China but in the West too and there appears to be a common understanding that the Internet is an essential part of China’s modernisation and opening up to the world. But what exactly characterises Chinese Internet use? Jens Damm goes in search of the borders of Chinese cyberspace.

Jens Damm

ANY MENTION OF THE CHINESE INTERNET is generally a reference to the Internet of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). With the exception of the mainland, the PRC has become the ‘number one’ if comparisons are drawn with other countries and users present on the World Wide Web, although the relative newness of Internet use in the PRC (19, 11%) is still slightly below the world average (CNNIC, 7/2008).

There are, however, other reasons for the prominence of the PRC in discussions on the Chinese Internet: the great success story linked with building an impressive infrastructure (Clark & Harrew, 2006) and the rapid “informatisation” of Chinese society. Chinese users who access the Internet via broadband (84.7%) and the 73.05 million users who access the web with mobile phones. In the context of infrastructure and development, China has been very successful in implementing measures to improve the Net, for example, in building fibre networks to Tibet and other less developed regions in the country. Then there have been several ambitious projects in the big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, the Digital City Zhongguancun, and also in the coastal regions, such as Zhejiang, Guangdong and Fujian. China’s internet broadband – which reached 312,346 Mbit/s in 2007 – and the number of registered domains which now stands at 14.85 million shows that China is fast approaching its goal of becoming the number one in the global Internet.

Not surprisingly, the positive effects of the Internet and ongoing “informatisation” are frequently mentioned in the PRC’s mass media and in a growing number of academic publications on the importance of the Internet for the development of China. These positive effects include the introduction of e-government on a wide scale, which has been effective in promoting good governance and anti-corruption measures (Damm, 2006), the possibilities of industrial development and projects in the big cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, the Digital City Zhongguancun, and also in the coastal regions, such as Zhejiang, Guangdong and Fujian. China’s internet broadband – which reached 312,346 Mbit/s in 2007 – and the number of registered domains which now stands at 14.85 million shows that China is fast approaching its goal of becoming the number one in the global Internet.

Defining ‘Chinese cyberspaces’ is problematic. The term may refer to cyberspaces which are defined either by language, being other Chinese; the language of the Chinese diaspora, or by content, that is, cyberspace dealing with cultural questions of Chineseness, history, and – very broadly defined – identity. With respect to language, we encounter the problem that the Chinese world does not employ Chinese as the sole language: while Chinese characters are normally used in the PRC, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, (albeit with different spellings), in Singapore and Malaysia, where Chinese is widely taught within the Chinese community, English is normally used online. The situation within the diaspora varies considerably. There are also huge differences between the language use of the new migrants (jun yimin) and the old diaspora. New migrants tend to employ Chinese in their specific blogs and BBS (Bulletin Board System) which restricts the audience to their own group and users coming from the homeland. Websites and blogs of the older Chinese diasporas, however, tend to employ English and/or the respective language of the new homeland, thus reaching out not to a wider, more general audience in the place of settlement.

In terms of Chinese cyberspaces in the ‘homelands’, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao are – to varying degrees – fore-runners in the new information and communication technologies. Emigration destinations of the ‘new migrants’, such as North America, Australia, and the Anglo Saxon world in general are among the most wired places on earth. In the case of China, national boundaries and ‘internet boundaries’ are separate issues: within the PRC, there are de facto ‘national’ boundaries which separate the mainland from Hong Kong and Macao, but totally different structures and policies exist in the context of Internet policy. Taiwan a de facto independent nation, due to the common international one-China policy, encounters many difficulties with regard to joining international organisations. However, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) assigned domain names such as ‘hk’ to Hong Kong and ‘tw’ to Taiwan as this body officially recognises ‘countries, territories, and separate economies.’

Case 1: PRC

According to the latest bi-annual survey carried out by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), which was published in July 2008 and refers to data from 2007, several particularities can be observed. Regarding the demographic structure of PRC users, a high number of females among users has increased to 46.4% of the total, considerably narrowing the gap which has long existed between male and female users. Compared with the other ‘Chinese places,’ and also with international trends, most of the users in the PRC are young. They tend to be aged 30 and under, which amounts to 68.6% of the netizens in China, and exceeds two thirds of the total number of netizens. This age structure also influences specific behaviour patterns prevalent on the PRC Internet, reflected in, for example, the great importance of entertainment. It would therefore be well worth investigating new developments and trends to see whether these patterns remain unchanged as young people grow older and still use the Net. Regarding education, the PRC Internet is still very much dominated by better educated users, but here also the gap has become significantly smaller and, for example, less well educated migrants in the urban areas are using the Internet in contact with their families in the hinterland. Also noteworthy is the rather low number of domestic computers accessible for Internet users in China: this stands at only 84.7 million, which means that many people still either access the Internet via cyber cafes – CNNIC puts this at 40% – or that an increasing number access the Internet via mobile phones, which in turn has consequences with regard to how the Internet is used.

Case 2: Taiwan

In Taiwan, the Taiwan Network Information Center (http://www.tenic.net) provides some specific surveys which not only cover statistical data regarding users and broadband access, but which also look into user behaviour. While these surveys are undertaken on a more ad hoc basis than those of the PRC/CNNIC, they are very well documented and offer valuable insights into the methodology and the research. The last two surveys – party in Chinese, partly in English – dealt in particular with users employing either broadband or wireless access to
Secondly, there is certainly a large minority of Chinese speakers online, 37.5% played a significant, but not really outstanding role.

Conclusions

Finally, it has been shown that the Chinese Internet, however this may be defined, is much larger than the PRC Internet. Secondly, there is certainly a large minority of Chinese speakers using the Internet outside the PRC proper. Regarding the mutual possibilities of accessing the Chinese Internet especially across the Strait, a contradictory observation can be made: despite the obvious censorship and blocking measures of the PRC, the Chinese language Internet can be widely accessed in both directions, that is, the Chinese language Internet outside the PRC is accessible to users from the PRC, while the PRC Internet is open to all users from outside the PRC. However, the technical limitations and laws present obstacles to a free and borderless Internet: the PRC, in particular, hinders communication on either side of the Taiwan Strait by blocking not only all the official Taiwanese websites, but also the Taiwanese pro-communist websites engaging in cross-strait issues. Sensitive and political issues and discussions simply do not travel across the Taiwan Strait. Thirdly, cultural boundaries seem to exist: people surf the places where they feel comfortable. Empirical research carried out in Taiwan (Liu, Day, Sun, & Wang, 2002) mentions that 85% of Taiwanese users are dependent on the Internet for getting news. Only 11.76% of users read online news and blogs are also less important (5.18%). One explanation for this, of course, could be the free and uncensored media in Taiwan. E-shopping – an area in which the PRC lags behind places such as the US and the EU – is much more popular in Taiwan, while e-communities play a significantly lesser role.

Case 3: Hong Kong

Hong Kong is, as a city-state, hardly comparable to Taiwan and the PRC. An infrastructure is usually much easier to establish in areas with a high population density. Thus, the household broadband penetration rate (February 2008) was 76.7%, while the mobile phone penetration rate (February 2008) reached 154%. And, as is the case with Japan, mobile devices play a very important role in enabling Web access: a quarter of the time spent on the Internet is via mobile devices. A recent survey (2008 Digital 21 Strategy, http://www.info.gov.hk/digital21/statistics/stat.html) of Hong Kong users found that the most important features were communication with others (83.3%) and browsing/surfing web pages (excluding Government websites) (81.3%). Users also cited features such as searching for and downloading information online (excluding Government information) (60.3%) and reading magazines/newspapers online (55.5%). Lower than the global average was the use of electronic business services online (37.8%), while online digital entertainment (37.5%) played a significant but not really outstanding role.

Conclusions

In sum, the existence of a Chinese cyberspace without borders or boundaries cannot be confirmed. My analysis reveals the deficiences in existing theories, such as the once popular proclamation of the Internet as a borderless space (Cairncross, 1997; Rheingold, 2000). While in many respects the Chinese cyberspace is global and reaches out, to some extent beyond national borders, it is characterised by various constraints (Leiss, 1999), such as PRC censorship and by different patterns of usage.

Jens Damm
Freie Universität, Berlin
jens.damm@fu-berlin.de

References


New for review

General

Burghoomen Wil, Kazuki Iwanaga, Cecilia Millwitz and Qi Wang, eds. 2008 Gender Politics in Asia: Women Manoeuvring within Dominant Gender Orders

Denmark: NIAS publishing. pp. 227, ill., 978 87 7649 015 7

Ebrahimnejad, Hormoz, ed. 2009 The Development of Modern Medicine in Non-Western Countries


Graf, Arnold and Chuia Beng Huat, eds. 2009 Port Cities in Asia and Europe


Iwanaga, Kazuki, ed. 2008 Women’s Political Participation and Representation in Asia: Obstacles and Challenges

Denmark: NIAS publishing. pp. 315, tables, 978 87 7649 016 4

Lewis, Milton J. and Kerrie L. MacPherson, eds. 2008 Public Health in Asia and the Pacific: Historical and comparative perspectives

London and New York: Routledge. pp. 320, ill., 978 0 415 35962 7

Pakirwala, Rani and Patricia Uberoi, eds. 2008 Women and Migration in Asia: Marriage, Migration and Gender

Eriö Järjestö: Eriöinen ja New Delhi: Sage. pp. 359, ill., 978 0 7619 3676 6

Rajan, Irujaya S., Carla Rissew and Mytich Pereira, eds. 2008 Institutional Provision and Care for the Aged: Perspective from Asia and Europe

New Delhi, India: Anthem Press. pp. 261, 978 81 905835 6 5

Sarmiento, Clara, ed. 2008 Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The theatre of Shadows

United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. pp. 304, ill., 978 1 84718 718 5

Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, ed. 2008 The theatre of Shadows

Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The theatre of Shadows

New Delhi, India: Anthem Press. pp. 261, 978 81 905835 6 5

Stoler, Ann Laura, ed. 2009 Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense


East Asia

Hiiao, Hsin-Huan Michael, ed. 2008 Asian New Democracies: The Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan Compared

Taiwan: CAMWS & Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. pp. 304, tables, 978 886 29266 2


Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. pp. 208, ill., 978 962 209 928 9

Kirchner, Thomas Yuho, ed. 2009 The Record of Uyi

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 485, tables, 978 0 8248 3319 0

Meacham, William, 2009 The Archipelago of Hong Kong

Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. pp. 203, ill., 978 962 209 925 8

Shih, Fang-long, Stuart Thompson and Paul-Francois Tremlett, eds. 2009 Re-writing Culture: Taiwan

London and New York: Routledge. pp. 218, ill., 978 0 415 46666 0

India

Bhaskumik, Sankar Kumar, ed. 2008 Reforming Indian Agriculture Towards Employment Generation and Poverty Reduction

Los Angeles, London and New Delhi: Sage. pp. 552, ill., 978 0 7619 3645 9

Chaudhury Praven K. and Marta Vanander-Snow, eds. 2008 The United States and India: A History Through Archives

The Formative Years

Los Angeles, London and New Delhi: Sage. pp. 683, ill., 978 0 7619 3594 0

Gokulsing, K. Moti and Wimal Dissanayake, eds. 2009 Popular Culture in a Globalised India


Hancock, Mary E. ed. 2008 The Politics of Heritage from Madras to Chennai

Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 277, ill., maps & tables, 978 0 253 35223 1

Shahani, Parmes, ed. 2008 Gay Bambay: Globalisation, love and (be)longing in contemporary India

Los Angeles, London and New Delhi: Sage. pp. 349, ill., 978 0 7619 3648 0

Indonesia


Lindquist, Johan A. ed. 2009 The Awesomes of Mobility: Migration and Tourism in the Indonesian Borderland

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 193, ill., maps & tables, 978 0 8248 3315 2

Means, David, ed. 2008 Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the Local and the National

Australia: Charles Darwin University Press. pp. 249, ill., 978 0 880457 8 3 4

Japan

Brandon, James, R. ed. 2009 Kubuki’s Forgotten War 1931-1945

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 465, ill., 978 0 8248 3200 1

Craig, Albert, M. ed. 2009 Civilization and Enlightenment: the Early Thought of Fukuwara Yukiichi

Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press. pp. 200, ill., 978 0 674 03108 1

Esselstrom, Erik, ed. 2009 Crossing Empire’s Edge: Foreign Ministry Police and Japanese Expansionism in Northeast Asia

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 323, ill., maps & tables, 978 0 8248 3231 5

Furui Yoshikichi, ed. 2008 White-Haired Melody

Ann Arbor: United States: The University of Michigan, pp. 275, ill., 978 1 922280 48 9

Kiddor, Edward J., Jr. ed. 2007 Himiko and Japan’s Divine Chieftain of Yamato: Archaeology, History, and Mythology

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 401, ill., 978 0 8248 3033 5

Kimbrough, R. keller, ed. 2008 Printshops, Poets, Writing in the Modern: Iiomi Shukui and the Buddhist Literature of Medieval Japan

Ann Arbor, United States: The University of Michigan. pp. 374, ill., 978 1 922800 47 6

Lewis, Michael, ed. 2009 A Life Advoy: Seeds-Azumbo, Popular Song, and Modern Mass Culture in Japan

London and New York: Routledge. pp. 286, ill., 978 0 7103 1337 9

McCallum, Donald F. ed. 2009 The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 328, ill., 978 0 8248 3114 1

McQueen Tokita, Alison and David W. Hughes, eds. 2008 The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music

United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited. pp. 446, ill., 978 0 7546 5699 7

Ooms, Herman, ed. 2009 Imperial Politics and Symbols in Ancient Japan: The Tennmu Dynasty, 650-850

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 353, ill., maps & tables, 978 0 8248 3235 3

Tamanosi, Mariko Asano, ed. 2009 Memory Maps: The State and Manchuria in Postwar Japan

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 211, ill., 978 0 8248 3267 4

Weiner, Michael, ed. 2009 Japan’s Moonlight: The Illusion of Homogeneity

London and New York: Routledge. pp. 254, ill., 978 0 415 77264 8
**Korea**

Finch, Michael, ed. 2008
Min Yonghwan: The Selected Writings of a Late Chosun Diplomat
Berkeley, United States: University of California pp. 316, ill., 978 1 55729 091 5

Kim, Hihoon, ed. 2009
Minjung and Process: Minjung Theology in a Dialogue with Process Thought
Beijing, Berlin and Brussels: Peter Lang pp. 185, ill., 978 3 03911 735 2

Vermeersch, Sem, ed. 2008
The Power of the Buddha: The Politics of Buddhism During the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392)
United States: Harvard University Press pp. 485, ill., 978 0 674 03188 3

**South Asia**

Dutta, Krishna and Andrew Robinson, eds. 2009
Rakhmadnath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man
London and New York: Tsaiun Parke Paperbacks pp. 493, ill., 978 1 84511 804 4

Lahiri-Dutt, Kuntala and Robert J. Wasson, eds. 2008
Water First: Issues and Challenges for Nations and Communities in South Asia
Los Angeles, London and New Delhi: Sage pp. 435, tables, 978 0 7619 3625 1

**Southeast Asia**

Bar, Michael D. and Zlatko Skrebis, eds. 2008
Constructing Singapore: Elitism, Ethnicity and the Nation-Building Project
Denmark: NIAS publishing pp. 384, tables, 978 87 7694 029 4

Beng, Oei Kew, Johan Saravanamuttu & Lee Hock Guan, eds. 2008
March 8 Eclipsing May 13
Singapore: SEAS, pp. 131, ill., maps & tables, 978 981 230 896 2

Chanoff, David & Doan van Toai, eds. 2009
‘Vietnam’ A portrait of its people at war
Singapore: SEAS, pp. 215, ill., 978 981 230 896 2

Firth, Gregory, ed. 2008
Images of the Wildman in Southeast Asia: An anthropological perspective
London and New York: Routledge pp. 343, ill., 978 0 703 1354 6

Göransson, Kristina, ed. 2009
The binding tie: Chinese Intergenerational Relations in Modern Singapore
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press pp. 191, ill., 978 8 2848 3259 9

Hefner, Robert W. ed. 2009
Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press pp. 246, ill., 978 8 2848 3316 9

Ivarsson, Soren, ed. 2008
Creating Loss: The Making of a Laos space between Indochina and Siam, 1860-1945
Denmark: NIAS publishing pp. 238, ill., maps & tables, 978 87 7694 022 5

Jacobson, Trudy, ed. 327
Lost Goddesses: The Deval of Female Power in Cambodian History
Denmark: NIAS Press pp. 327, ill., maps & tables, 978 87 7694 001 0

Le Roux, Pierre and Bernard Sellato, eds. 2004
Prad et Mesures en Asie du Sud-Est: Systems metricologiques et sociéites Wrights and Measures in Southeast Asia

Ulla, Mona, ed. 2008
Power, Resistance and Women Politicians in Cambodia: Discourses of emancipation
Denmark: NIAS Press pp. 214, ill., 978 87 9114 717 7

Smith, R.B. ed. 2009
Communist Indochina
London and New York: Routledge pp. 222, ill., 978 0 415 46804 6

Taylor, Robert, H. ed. 2009
The State in Myanmar
London: Hurst & Company pp. 555, ill., maps & tables, 978 1 85063 009 9

**Asian Studies Association of Australia Book Series**

**Women in Asia Series Published by Routledge**

Series Editor: Louise Edwards (Louise.Edwards@uts.edu.au)

2008
- Jane Werner, Gender, Household and State in Post-Revolutionary Vietnam
- Chi Ho Bullock, Sex, Love and Feminism in the Asia Pacific: A Cross-Cultural Study of Young People’s Attitudes
- Kate O’Dougherty, Gender, State and Social Power in Contemporary Indonesia: Divorce and Marriage Law
- Kathryn Robinson, Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia
- Michele Fenn and Lyn Parker (eds), Women and Work in Indonesia
- Naja Nuurmi, Women, Islam and Everyday Life: Negotiating Polygamy in Indonesia
- Laura Daller, Feminist Movements in Contemporary Japan
- Ruth Barsugli and Atiya Faisal (eds), Gender and Labour in Korea and Japan: Seeing Cities
- Karen H Chivers, Young Women in Japan: Transition to Adulthood
- Sharon Graham Davies, Gender Diversity in Indonesia

**Southeast Asia Series Published by Singapore University Press / The University of Hawaii Press and NIAS/KITLV**


Bar, Michael D. and Zlatko Skrebis, eds. 2008
Constructing Singapore: Elitism, Ethnicity and the Nation-Building Project
Denmark: NIAS publishing pp. 384, tables, 978 87 7694 029 4

Beng, Oei Kew, Johan Saravanamuttu & Lee Hock Guan, eds. 2008
March 8 Eclipsing May 13
Singapore: SEAS, pp. 131, ill., maps & tables, 978 981 230 896 2

Chanoff, David & Doan van Toai, eds. 2009
‘Vietnam’ A portrait of its people at war
Singapore: SEAS, pp. 215, ill., 978 981 230 896 2

Firth, Gregory, ed. 2008
Images of the Wildman in Southeast Asia: An anthropological perspective
London and New York: Routledge pp. 343, ill., 978 0 703 1354 6

Göransson, Kristina, ed. 2009
The binding tie: Chinese Intergenerational Relations in Modern Singapore
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press pp. 191, ill., 978 8 2848 3259 9

Hefner, Robert W. ed. 2009
Making Modern Muslims: The Politics of Islamic Education in Southeast Asia
Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press pp. 246, ill., 978 8 2848 3316 9

Ivarsson, Soren, ed. 2008
Creating Loss: The Making of a Laos space between Indochina and Siam, 1860-1945
Denmark: NIAS publishing pp. 238, ill., maps & tables, 978 87 7694 022 5

Jacobson, Trudy, ed. 327
Lost Goddesses: The Deval of Female Power in Cambodian History
Denmark: NIAS Press pp. 327, ill., maps & tables, 978 87 7694 001 0

Le Roux, Pierre and Bernard Sellato, eds. 2004
Prad et Mesures en Asie du Sud-Est: Systems metricologiques et sociéites Wrights and Measures in Southeast Asia

Ulla, Mona, ed. 2008
Power, Resistance and Women Politicians in Cambodia: Discourses of emancipation
Denmark: NIAS Press pp. 214, ill., 978 87 9114 717 7

Smith, R.B. ed. 2009
Communist Indochina
London and New York: Routledge pp. 222, ill., 978 0 415 46804 6

Taylor, Robert, H. ed. 2009
The State in Myanmar
London: Hurst & Company pp. 555, ill., maps & tables, 978 1 85063 009 9

**New and Forthcoming books**

Women in Asia Series Published by Singapore University Press / The University of Hawaii Press and NIAS/KITLV

Series Editor: Louise Edwards (Louise.Edwards@uts.edu.au)

2008
- Jane Werner, Gender, Household and State in Post-Revolutionary Vietnam
- Chi Ho Bullock, Sex, Love and Feminism in the Asia Pacific: A Cross-Cultural Study of Young People’s Attitudes
- Kate O’Dougherty, Gender, State and Social Power in Contemporary Indonesia: Divorce and Marriage Law
- Kathryn Robinson, Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia
- Michele Fenn and Lyn Parker (eds), Women and Work in Indonesia
- Naja Nuurmi, Women, Islam and Everyday Life: Negotiating Polygamy in Indonesia
- Laura Daller, Feminist Movements in Contemporary Japan
- Ruth Barsugli and Atiya Faisal (eds), Gender and Labour in Korea and Japan: Seeing Cities
- Karen H Chivers, Young Women in Japan: Transition to Adulthood
- Sharon Graham Davies, Gender Diversity in Indonesia

Southeast Asia Series Published by Singapore University Press / The University of Hawaii Press and NIAS/KITLV

Series Editors Morris Low (mlow@uq.edu.au) and Tessa Morris-Suzuki

2009
- Ross King, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya: Negotiating Urban Space in Malaysia
- Javanese Performances on an Indonesian Stage: Celebrating Culture, Embracing Change
- Barbara Hatley, Kampung, Islam and State in Urban Java
- Kathryn Robinson, Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia
- Michelle Fenn and Lyn Parker (eds), Women and Work in Indonesia

East Asia Series Published by Routledge

Series Editors Morris Low (mlow@uq.edu.au) and Tessa Morris-Suzuki

2009
- David G. Winn, Technology and the Culture of Progress in Meiji Japan
- For more information about the ASAA please visit our website at: www.asaa.asn.au
Creating the ‘New Man’. From Enlightenment to Socialism
Yingchong Cheng
University of Hawai‘i Press. 2009. ISBN 978 0 8248 3074 8

THE IDEA OF ELIMINATING undesirable traits from the human temperament to found a ‘new man’ has been part of moral and political thinking worldwide for millennia. During the Enlightenment, European philosophers sought to construct an ideological framework for reshaping human nature. But it was only across the post-communist regimes of the 20th century that such ideas were actually put into practice on a nationwide scale. In this book Yingchong Cheng examines three culturally diverse sociopolitical experiments – the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin, China under Mao, and Cuba under Castro – in an attempt to better understand the origins and development of the ‘new man’.

This book’s fundamental concerns are how these communist revolutions strove to create a new, morally and psychologically superior, human being and how this task paralleled efforts to create a superior society. To these ends, it addresses a number of questions: What are the intellectual roots of the new-man concept? How was this idealistic and utopian goal linked to specific political and economic programmes? How do the policies of these particular regimes, based as they are on universal communist ideology, reflect national and cultural traditions? Cheng begins by exploring the origins of the idea of human perfectibility during the Enlightenment. His discussion moves to other European intellectual movements, and then to the creation of the Soviet man, the first communist new man in world history. Subsequent chapters examine China’s experiment with human nature, starting with the nationalist debate about a new national character at the turn of the 20th century, and Cuban perceptions of the new man and his role in propelling the revolution from a nationalist, to a socialist, and finally a communist movement.

The last chapter concerns the global influence of the Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban experiments. Creating the ‘New Man’ contributes greatly to our understanding of how these very different countries and their leaders carried out problematic and controversial visions and programmes. It will be of special interest to students and scholars of world history and intellectual, social, and revolutionary history, and also development studies and philosophy.

IDEOLOGY AND CHRISTIANITY in Japan
Kiri Paramore
Routledge/Linden Series in Modern East Asian Politics and History. 2009
ISBN 978 0 415 44562 6

IN THIS UNPRECEDENTED guide to the Vedas, Frits Staal, the celebrated author of Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar and Universals: Studies in Indian Logic and Linguistics, examines almost every aspect of these ancient sources of Indic civilization.

Staal extracts concrete information from the Oral Tradition and Archaeology, about Vedic people and their language, what they thought and did, and where they went and when. He provides essential information about the Vedas and includes selections and translations. He sheds lights on mantras and rituals that contributed to what came to be known as Hinduism. Significant is a modern analysis of how we can learn from the Vedas today; the original forms of the Vedic sciences, as well as the collective wisdom of the composers of the Vedas. The author puts Vedic civilization in a global perspective through a wide-ranging comparison with other Indic philosophies and religions, primarily Buddhism.

For Staal, originally a logician, the voyage of discovering the Vedas is like unpeeling an onion but without the certainty of reaching an end. Even so, his book shows that the Vedas have a logic all of their own. Accessible, finely argued, and with a wealth of information and insight, Discovering the Vedas is for both the scholar and the interested lay reader.

Discovering the Vedas. Origins, Monstros, Rituals, Insights Frits Staal

A key feature of the New Asia Books site is the profile page. Once registered (free of charge) visitors and publishers can add and manage all kinds of personalised attributes, tailoring the site to their needs and making it an even more valuable research tool. Click on the [Create new account] link on the left-hand side of the home page and you arrive at the user account page where you will be asked for a username and a working email address. At this stage you have an option to add some personal information about yourself, such as your field of interest, work experience, contact information, and a link to a personal website. This information is visible to other users. After logging in, you can start to make changes and manage your account settings – accessible in the [My account] menu on the left – under the [Edit] tab. See figure 1.

In future we hope to expand the personal information settings options in order hook you up immediately with publications within your specific research areas and also with visitors in your field. For now we hope that the current site functionalities described below will prove to be useful in your searches.

Bookmarks
On every product page there is a ‘Bookmark this’ button, which allows you to add or remove a publication of interest to your bookmarks list. You can access this list via the [Bookmarks] tab on your profile page.

This bookmark service helps you keep track of all the publications you found during your browsing sessions. See figure 2.

Subscriptions
This is the column we use to introduce new features and useful research tools on New Asia Books. The latest addition is a flexible email service, which alerts you as soon as new books are published and reviews are submitted to the site. You can completely customise this subscription service to tailor it to your needs. Once you’ve been on a product page (next to the bookmark link) you will find a subscription button.
The poets of mainland China have been far busier writing and wrangling over their work during the past 20 or so years than scholars from beyond China have been in analysing it. While research on this body of poetry has begun to fill out in recent years, no single piece of scholarship makes a contribution equal to that of Maghiel van Crevel’s Chinese Poetry in Times of Mind, Mayhem and Money. This is an ambitious book. Its 13 chapters move from an extensive introduction on through a dozen ‘case studies’ that cover, roughly chronologically, the work of about 11 important poets. Where the individual chapters provide focused, meticulously detailed considerations of poetry and discourse on poetry, the book as a whole presents a timely overview of the development of Chinese avant-garde poetry since the mid-1980s.

**Distinctly individual voices**

Mind does many things. Perhaps its most important goal is to explain reductive understandings of contemporary mainland Chinese avant-garde poetry. Too much is missed, van Crevel argues in his extensive first chapter, when critics and even poets themselves superimpose sociopolitical context, linear development narratives, biographism, or catch-all labelling of trends and camps on top of the inherent complexity of poetic texts. Instead, he invites readers to take this poetry on its own terms through the practice of close reading. Only careful attention to questions of poetic form and content, van Crevel insists, can bring forth the distinctly individual voices within the clutter of buffy and polemic that many of these poets tend to discharge so effusively.

Except for the chapter on Yu Jian, which hews to a focused and perceptive explication of Yu’s poetry, chapters two through eight affirm the distinctiveness of the individual poetic voice against certain biases of accepted critical wisdom. The bleak beauty of Han Dong’s poetry, for instance, is, as the book suggests, many-sided. The literary sociophysics of Xi Chuan is something more than the grandeur of pure poetry in the age of economic reform. And, contra his commentators, Sun Wenbo’s poetry owes as much to formal poetic qualities as to ‘narrativistic’ content. Other chapters compare quite different poets under a shared theme. Chapter Four gathers the poetries of Yang Lian, Wang Jiaxin, and Bei Dao together under the problematic of exile, while Chapter Six speculates on the evasive nature of prose-poetry while comparing Yu Jian, standard-bearer of the ‘popular’ (meijin) camp, and Xi Chuan, recognised as the consummate ‘intellectual’ (xuesheng) poet. The back five chapters of the book move from poetry itself into more meta-poetic concerns. Chapter nine examines a self-conscious poetic movement: the in-your-face Lower Body (xiaobanshen) poetry that emerged around 2000 and its two best-known practitioners, Yin Lichuan and Shen Haobo. Chapters ten and eleven speculate on constructions of poethood by taking on the meta-poetic writings of first Xi Chuan and then the pairings of Yu Jian and Han Dong. The book’s final two chapters offer, in turn, a meticulous reconstruction and analysis of the raucous popular-intellectual poematic that raged for several years after 1998, and a relatively brief coda whose introduction of Beijing-based poet-musician-critic Yan Jun opens the way toward exploring interfaces between poetry, music, and other artistic forms.

**‘The Elevated and the Earthly’**

Singly and in concert, all these chapters highlight the rich and vibrant texture of poetry, personalities, and disputation that constitute the Chinese poetic avant-garde. But while giving the poets their due, Mind also allows certain conceptual frameworks to grow out of its detailed analyses. The most prominent—but in fact least important—of these frameworks is the literary-historical narrative suggested by the book’s title, Chinese Poetry in Times of Mind, Mayhem and Money. Mind refers to the cultural-intellectual fever of the 1980s, mayhem to the far-reaching disruption of June 4, 1989, and money, of course, to the ascendance of the economic imperative in the 1990s and beyond. However, given van Crevel’s refusal to reduce poetic development to any neat linear sequence, such periodisation ends up tangential to other unifying schemes, making the title something of a red herring. The book’s true contribution lies in its sifting out of conceptual categories immanent to the avant-garde poetic field itself. The first of these is the aesthetic dichotomy of the Elevated and the Earthly, which according to van Crevel describes not fixed, reified oppositions, but ‘coordinates in a multidimensional body of texts.’ What this means is that China’s poets and critics tend to comprehend themselves in terms of pairings such as heroic vs. quotidian, sacred vs. profane, Westernised vs. indigenous, and intellectual vs. popular. While these categories function synchronically at any particular moment, there is also a narrative here: over the past several decades, van Crevel notes, avant-garde poetry has gravitated toward the Earthly end of this scale.

**‘Poethood’**

The other major conceptual category, which van Crevel calls ‘poethood,’ in fact unifies the poetic avant-garde across the manufactured splits between the Elevated and the Earthly. Poethood refers to all these poets’ intense and persistent concern that who they are and what they do ought to be regarded as an essential, unique, and authoritative element of culture and society. The idea of poethood, van Crevel insists, has drawn many guises, but cuts across the historical lineage of the post-Mao avant-garde all the way from the canonical sententiousness of some Misty poets, to the acrimonious debates at the turn of the last century, to the foul-mouthed insurgency of the Lower Body’s angry youth.

If Mind’s discoveries add much to current scholarship on China’s contemporary avant-garde poetry, its shortcomings may be taken as points of departure for renewed critical perspectives. For instance, the book directs much of its critique at apparent deficiencies in Chinese critical discourse on contemporary poetry. In addition to overreliance on biographism, content bias, and the imposition of ready-made categories, van Crevel also points to a general shortage of reader-oriented critical discourse, and even an apparent dearth of what he calls ‘close writing’—that is, poems able to support sustained, sophisticated interpretation. Chinese poets and critics are certainly not the only ones guilty of such malfeasances. But what if, instead of the implied prescriptive approach undertaken in Mind, these tendencies, too, were understood as inherent to the values and dynamics of the local literary field? Such a shift in perspective would build naturally upon the immanent categories van Crevel uncovers in the book and might carry further his observations on topics like these poets’ constant and intense interest in constructing the field of contemporary avant-garde poetry. It might also force revision of the book’s rather traditional close readings of poetry—an area where uneven rigor and a sometimes stiff division between ‘content’ and ‘form’ frustrates expectations as often as it satisfies them. That said, the book’s concluding chapter on Yan Jun, with its promise to explore the interfaces of poetry and performance media, seems to suggest just such a change in course, from focusing inward on the poetic text itself toward poetry’s opening outward into the world. Given the prolific inventiveness van Crevel demonstrates in Mind, we may not have long to wait before seeing the results of just such a project.
The rise of China: Balancing influence and engagement

A welcome addition to the burgeoning literature surrounding China’s international rise, the immediate thing noticeable about the book China’s Rise is its subtle ‘balance of influence in Asia’. Whilst there are a plethora of books dealing with the balance of ‘power’ in Asia, there are few dealing with the wider and softer concept of ‘influence’.

David Scott


THIS BOOK ‘analyses the Asia-wide implications of China’s rapid and largely unanticipated emergence as an economic, political, and military power’ (p. 5). Economics and China’s peaceful rise is prominent, ‘the central theme of this book is to examine the hypothesis that Beijing’s vision of China’s peaceful rise represents a practical and realistic path for the protracted and intricate global ballet to which China’s vast and prolonged economic boom provides a remarkable overture’ (p. 4). The book also has particular American resonances, ‘an animating concern of this book is apparent US disengagement from Asia at a time when China is recapturing its historical role as a great power, and positioning itself as a leading state in global affairs’ (p. 5). Its methodology is eclectic, ‘it employs a comprehensive, multidisciplinary analysis of the changing balance of influence in Asia’ (p. 5).

Overlapping economic interests

Part 1 reveals the economic dimensions of China’s rise. Some of the material is well trodden, namely the chapters by Loren Brandt dealing with The International Dimensions of China’s Long Boom, and by Joseph Fewsmith on The Politics of Economic Liberalization. Brandt does a good job of making short-term friction over trade balances and currency valuations, we see substantial overlap between China’s economic interests and those of the United States’ (p. 44). She goes on to say that ‘China is emerging as an intransigent trade for open flows of commodities and direct foreign investment, objectives long espoused by the United States. As a big importer of natural resources, China, like the United States, will benefit from and may actively seek to promote stability in the Middle East and other resource-rich regions’ (p. 44). The counter-argument is that China’s increasing appearance in the Middle East, Iran and Central Asia for energy resources is spurring competition and something of a new Great Game between China and US companies-strategic planners. Brandt argues two interesting wider points: Firstly, that international engagement is a ‘driver of domestic reform’ (p. 41) in the political as well as economic arena within China. Secondly is her caution that China’s goals encompass ‘pragmatic and national honor as well as economic growth’ (pp. 45-46).

Fewsmith emphasises resistance to political reform, with the PRC experimenting with economic reform but ‘representing the emergence of opposition forces’ and ‘violently asserting the ruling position of the party/state’ (p. 94). The implications of this prognosis within the democracy + peace international relations (IR) oxymorons perhaps deserve more explicit evaluation in the book. Other chapters deal with less well known areas of China economic rise, namely Ellen Frost’s China’s Commercial Diplomacy in Asia, and William Keller and Louis Pauly’s Building a Technocracy: Security, Science and Technology. Keller and Pauly’s chapter is interesting for its focus on what they term tech-strat-nationalism. They posit that ‘what remains extremely difficult to imagine, however, is conscious acquiescence on the part of the American government, and American society more generally, to a secondary position in key industrial sectors like microelectronics’ (p. 72). They also ask, perhaps less reassuringly, ‘is China not inherently too big, too complex, and potentially too powerful to be steered by other countries?’ (p. 72).

Influence rather than power

Part 2 deals with ‘influence’. This is subtly distinct from just dealing with ‘power’, but a subtler analysis of China’s soft power credibility by Joshua Kuralt in and others would have been merited. Ross’ contribution on Balance of Power Politics and the Rise of China deals with responses by others in East Asia, through the prism of accommodation and balancing by other secondary states, in the light of Chinese and US positions. Ross brings in economic factors, but argues that traditional balance of power theory remain an appropriate mechanism for understanding regional dynamics in East Asia. Ultimately Ross sees continuing balance between China’s growing land superiority on the Asian mainland and US maritime superiority in the Pacific Watters off Asia, if the United States remains committed to maintaining its forward presence in East Asia’ (p. 145). That ‘if’ is perhaps the biggest policy implication. Economics is to the fore in Segal’s study of Chinese Economic Statecraft and the Political economy of Asian security. Conceptually, he reveals the ‘overlap between security and economic concerns’ (p. 147), with economic levers used vis-à-vis Taiwan (relatively unsuccessfully he argues). ASEAN and Korea. Segal makes an interesting point that ‘the trick for Beijing (and in some parts Tokyo) is to balance nationalist public sentiment – feelings that are often nurtured by government propaganda – with the need to maintain stable economic relations’ (p. 156).

Ravell’s chapter on China’s Peaceful Development and Southeast Asia is telling subtitled ‘a positive sum game’. A rather technical contribution, perhaps not suited to the general lay reader, Ravelli sees China’s economic rise, and attractiveness in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), as complementary to ASEAN countries, rather than zero-sum competition. It is perhaps fitting that he argues that China’s proposal to ASEAN for an early free trade agreement (FTA) ‘was a diplomatic masterstroke both for its effects in assuaging ASEAN concerns about China’s peaceful rise and in putting Tokyo on the defensive’ (p. 192). This points to the final contribution, Keller and Rawski’s treatment of China’s Peaceful Rise, subtitled ‘Road Map or Fantasy?’. They stress long term trends on the growth and internationalisation of China’s economy. Ultimately a positive enough consensus is pointed to, that ‘China shows no signs of initiating an arms race with the United States’ (p. 198) and that ‘China’s future economic security will rest more on international cooperation and commercial diplomacy than on military strength or force projection capabilities’ (p. 199).

With the US in mind?

Ultimately the book and its conclusions have a policy direction for the US. Three competing worldviews are suggested by the editors, ‘America as hyperpower (neoconservatism) a return to Cold War realness (ideological confrontation), and economic interdependence (liberalism)’ (p. 202). The thrust of the book is towards the third, reflected in the recurring presence of economic patterns and its ultimate prognosis that the US should remain engaged with the PRC. The book cover’s pointer, that the writers have a ‘shared goal of converting the image of China in the minds of the American policymakers to that of a mature, stable, constructive leader in the international economy of Asia and the entire world’ is true enough in terms of direction of argument of the book. However, one might also consider how certain is China’s internal socio-economic stability in the future, given the scenarios painted by people like Gordon Chang in The Collapse of China (2002). China may play a constructive role in the international economy, but does this apply to non-economic areas of security, and will it be applicable in the longer-term?

A question still remains. The logic of Peaceful Rise remains persuasive for China, and indeed for others, during the first half of the 21st century. However, as people like Avery Goldstein argue, Peaceful Rise is ultimately a strategy of transition that says little about what China will, or is likely to do, once she has risen. There could have been more treatment of China’s Grand Strategy (and strategic culture) and longer-term post-rise dynamics. Certainly the book leaves open the question of what a post-rise China would be like. The book makes the case for pursuing engagement, yet as the only policy for US policy makers this remains incomplete, and not the whole story. In contrast, deliberate strategic hedging seems to be where others in Asia like Japan and India, as well as the US seem to be heading. The US is already following a mix of engagement (advocated by the book), internal balancing through building up own military forces at Guam, and soft balancing through strengthening bilateral alliances with countries like Japan and established flexible strategic understandings with countries like India. This three-fold hedging is likely to be the ongoing response towards China, by the new American administration.

China’s Rise is a structural yet also perceptual term. China’s use of the term Peaceful Rise is intended as a reassuring term. One of the ironies, not really dealt with in this book, is the way in which Peaceful Rise was rolled out as a priority term in 2005 by the influential foreign policy adviser Zheng Bijian, and was adopted by the Chinese leadership during that year. Yet within a year, it had encountered criticism from within China over precluding force vis-à-vis Taiwan, and from the outside world concerned with the implications of any China ‘rise’ inherently meaning others’ ‘fall’. As a term, Peaceful Rise is itself a reflection of the interest, and challenges, surrounding China’s growing presence in the international system.

Overall this book contains a good and interesting collection of essays. They are worth reading for bringing out the varied economic, and sometimes overlooked, aspects of China’s rise more into light. The style is clear and coherent, suitable, in the main, for the intelligent layperson, as well as for the academic arena.

David Scott
Dept. of Politics and History
Brunel University
London, UK
david.scott@brunel.ac.uk

and economic interdependence (liberalism)’ (p. 202). The thrust of the book is towards the third, reflected in the recurring presence of economic patterns and its ultimate prognosis that the US should remain engaged with the PRC. The book cover’s pointer, that the writers have a ‘shared goal of converting the image of China in the minds of the American policymakers to that of a mature, stable, constructive leader in the international economy of Asia and the entire world’ is true enough in terms of direction of argument of the book. However, one might also consider how certain is China’s internal socio-economic stability in the future, given the scenarios painted by people like Gordon Chang in The Collapse of China (2002). China may play a constructive role in the international economy, but does this apply to non-economic areas of security, and will it be applicable in the longer-term?

A question still remains. The logic of Peaceful Rise remains persuasive for China, and indeed for others, during the first half of the 21st century. However, as people like Avery Goldstein argue, Peaceful Rise is ultimately a strategy of transition that says little about what China will, or is likely to do, once she has risen. There could have been more treatment of China’s Grand Strategy (and strategic culture) and longer-term post-rise dynamics. Certainly the book leaves open the question of what a post-rise China would be like. The book makes the case for pursuing engagement, yet as the only policy for US policy makers this remains incomplete, and not the whole story. In contrast, deliberate strategic hedging seems to be where others in Asia like Japan and India, as well as the US seem to be heading. The US is already following a mix of engagement (advocated by the book), internal balancing through building up own military forces at Guam, and soft balancing through strengthening bilateral alliances with countries like Japan and established flexible strategic understandings with countries like India. This three-fold hedging is likely to be the ongoing response towards China, by the new American administration.

China’s Rise is a structural yet also perceptual term. China’s use of the term Peaceful Rise is intended as a reassuring term. One of the ironies, not really dealt with in this book, is the way in which Peaceful Rise was rolled out as a priority term in 2005 by the influential foreign policy adviser Zheng Bijian, and was adopted by the Chinese leadership during that year. Yet within a year, it had encountered criticism from within China over precluding force vis-à-vis Taiwan, and from the outside world concerned with the implications of any China ‘rise’ inherently meaning others’ ‘fall’. As a term, Peaceful Rise is itself a reflection of the interest, and challenges, surrounding China’s growing presence in the international system.

Overall this book contains a good and interesting collection of essays. They are worth reading for bringing out the varied economic, and sometimes overlooked, aspects of China’s rise more into light. The style is clear and coherent, suitable, in the main, for the intelligent layperson, as well as for the academic arena.

David Scott
Dept. of Politics and History
Brunel University
London, UK
david.scott@brunel.ac.uk

The Newsletter | No.50 | Spring 2009
The cartography of self-assertion

Travel is about time and space, faith and ideology, constructs and concepts, about who we are and how we see the world. It is, as Laura Nenzi states in the introduction to her book on recreational travel in early-modern Japan, ‘an activity through which life itself could be defined’ (p.1). In this fine study Nenzi amply demonstrates that the investigation of mobility and movement is indeed an excellent way to explore the structures and evolution of a society.

Anna Beerens


A travel industry

The true breakthrough of what Nenzi has masterfully termed the ‘cartography of self-assertion’ (p.2) took place in the second half of the Tokugawa period, which was characterised by a booming print industry and a rise in literacy rates. Elegance and self-cultivation were no longer the prerogatives of courtiers, warriors and scholars. Commoners too acquired knowledge about famous places and their literary or historical associations. Nenzi states: ‘Those who learned to connect the past and present of certain sites could, like members of the role of the pilgrim enabled the traveller to (temporarily) detached from her designated social niche... was interpreted as a threat to stability’ (p.48), both government policy and general ideology were directed at keeping women immobile, often, however, to no avail. Nenzi shows how temples and shrines, driven on the one hand by ‘the laws of compassion’ and on the other by economic considerations (‘donations, after all, knew no gender’), allowed visitors of both sexes into their precincts and thus helped to topple barriers set up by officialdom (p.66). To women of high status, however, travel rarely offered an alternative to the invisibility their lifestyle required. Whether on the road in the context of the system of alternate attendance in the shogunal capital of Edo (yamakita), for religious reasons, or going to hot springs for their health, they invariably travelled in closed palanquins that kept them inside while being outside (p.80). Female travellers of commoner status would be less restricted; peasant women and women from fishing villages travelling to city markets, for instance, were a perfectly acceptable phenomenon (p.75). Transferring one’s authority within the household and becoming a mother-in-law would likewise enable the commoner woman ‘to leave the house more often and for longer periods of time’ (p.85). In general, Nenzi argues, marginality meant freedom; those who had ‘lost all strategic value as a pillar of order and producer of a family line’ (p.84), like elderly women, widows, nuns, or such rootless figures as itinerant performers and prostitutes, would be allowed to take to the road without much interference.

Maps and guidebooks

Nenzi uses a wide variety of sources ranging from diaries, poetry and official directories to guidebooks for red-light districts and board games. Her book’s illustrations are very much part of the narrative; indeed, the introduction of visual representations of space is indispensable for a proper discussion of ‘the manifold ways in which spaces were interpreted, assigned specific meanings, re-presented, and, ultimately, exploited’ (p.8). Nenzi focuses on the visual representation of Mount Fuji, and her discussion of the various ways in which the depiction of this most Japanese of landmarks reveals discourses and their agendas is particularly enlightening.

The book has a slight tendency to be repetitive, but one could contend that a regular re-expounding of the main elements of the argument was a necessity in view of the complexity of the subject. This complexity is very real, even for a book that has no ambition to be ‘a comprehensive social and cultural history of travel’, but seeks to present ‘a selection of themes in the hope of generating debate and stimulating further inquiries’ (p.6). It was her intention, Nenzi states, to depart from Constantine Vaporis’ Breaking Barriers: Travel and the State in Early Modern Japan of 1994 leaves off (p.6). Vaporis’ work is mainly on the institutional side of travel but in his concluding chapter he makes a first move to draw the attention to the leisurely traveller and the fact that the Tokugawa authorities consistently failed to recognise his existence. Nenzi set out to explore the motives and experiences of this type of traveller and the (far-reaching) repercussions of his movements. In doing so she has produced a truly inspiring book.

Anna Beerens
a.m.j.beerens@hum.leidenuniv.nl
of birds of prey, tigers and other fierce animals. Middle-class painters serving the warrior elite favoured energetic portrayals and domesticated horses – are allowed as subjects. Likewise, for courtly patrons ‘only select animals of elegant appearance social classes in Japan had specific preferences. For example, it is not surprising to find patrons themselves to see which animals have been chosen for courtly patrons by their masterpieces. McKee guides readers to the Japanese ‘discussions of the word shizen (nature) in modern times that the Japanese painting.'
websites); a few works illustrated with their mountings would highlight the age and context of the material and better incorporate the final technical essay on the Japanese hanging scroll (Andrew Thompson), easily avoidable typographical errors often disrupted my enjoyment of the book; two essays give no citations; Japanese sources, although evidently consulted, are rarely included in the notes or bibliography.

As for larger concerns, I was uncomfortable with the overlap between the van Gulik and Herwig-Kempers essays, where variant accounts of the same story of a given zodiac animal make the reader do the work of consolidating the information. More unfortunate, McKee’s sensitive and in-depth account stops short of delving into the Maruyama-Shijō tradition and its legacy. The informative catalogue entries return the reader to our knowledge of later painting circles via artistic lineage biographies and other insights specific to individual works (Robert Schaap). Yet little beyond these entries and a few paragraphs in the McKee and Herwig essays guide the reader in his or her appreciation of the central styles and social contexts of the paintings in the volume.

Not quite ideal

_is_A Brush with Animals_the ideal book of Japanese animal imagery on silk and paper? Not quite. It is not intended to be. We must remember that this is a compendium of imagery from later times, imagery now in foreign collections, and so, although standard works such as the 12th century Chōjū giga (known as the ‘Scroll of Frolicking Animals’) are mentioned, the intent is not to feature celebrated, monumental masterpieces of Japanese animal painting. Is it a true Japanese bestiary? Not so. Deer are featured in McKee’s discussion but never illustrated, for example. Again, deer were emblematic of the ancient Japanese court and not as important a subject in later times. Is it a handy reference – a good jumping-off point for Westerners who want to delve more deeply into the subject? Yes. Is it a beautifully crafted volume that rewards repeated opening? Absolutely. High-quality colour reproductions accompany the 74 catalogue entries and five essays, including some beautiful details. 85 reference works, also reproduced in colour and amply sized, are appended. The design of the book is superb, the selection of images admirable, and the whole – from the cover image to the choice of fonts – sensitively conceived. The essays provide a wealth of material essential to understanding the meaning and function of the later Japanese animal depictions featured in the book. And the final, technical essay on the traditional Japanese hanging scroll reminds us that the interval under review – 1700 to 1950 – was one still strongly tied to the time-honoured vertical format of the East Asian hanging scroll.

Elizabeth Horton Sharf
University of California, Berkeley
esharf@berkeley.edu
Cambodia’s religions, in ashes and in ink

The image on the cover of Ian Harris’s new history of religion is both familiar and unexpected: in place of the towering stone shrines that adorn so many Cambodian guidebooks, we see instead the fragility of a modern Buddha statue, cast in concrete. It was smashed to pieces and later re-assembled, with its steel structure now exposed, as bones laid bare.

Eisel Mazard


Sweeping away errors of old

The monumentality of Cambodia’s ancient history and the bewildering brutality of its more recent past have inspired many Western scholars to be highly inductive and imaginative in spinning narratives out of the evidence available to us. Almost any new work in the field can thus earn a degree of praise for sweeping away the errors of the old.

In this new work from Ian Harris, gone are the wild socio-logical speculations based on the types of hats worn in various Angkorian stelae, gone are the imaginary revolutions of an ancient, ‘Buddhist Bolshevism’. There is, in short, much to be praised in what this new volume omits from earlier attempts at writing history.

The volume opens by explaining, with explicit humility, that a large part of the material constitutes a re-statement (in English) of findings that are already available in French. I would add that it also presents some major new English-language research that (as yet) languishes in the semipublished state of the PhD thesis; the works of Penny Edwards and Anne Hansen deserve special mention in this respect.

Unfortunately, the subject matter does not lend itself easily to a survey of secondary sources without access to the primary texts. The errors of fact and judgement found throughout the volume left me with deep misgivings as to the viability of ‘Buddhist Studies’ in the absence of the strictures that define the disciplines of philology, history, and religious studies.

Gender-bending errors

As an example, there is a gender-bending cluster of errors on p. 68, made more troubling by a misleading citation. We are told a story of a layman who regards a monk (namely, Kacciyana) with ‘... a desire to make the monk his wife, upon which the monk turned into a woman.’ Anyone acquainted with medieval Sinhalese karma-theory would know immedi-ately that this can’t be right at all: in fact, the layman’s desire results in his own transformation into a woman (as a ‘karmic punishment’ of sorts). Even without recourse to better sources, it could not make sense within the logic of the story for the monk to change gender instead of the prurient layman. The author could have found this folklore readily available in English translation, even on the internet; conversely, if he was misled by a particular source (without checking against others) he does not cite it.

While it seems impossible to believe that this error could have come from the study of primary sources, Harris directly cites the original Pali with the abbreviation ‘DK’ (no translation is mentioned on p. 68, nor on p. 239); moreover, we are told that the story is from ‘Pali canonical sources.’ Even for an amateur, it should be self-evident that this is quite wrong: the citation in question indicates that the source is not canonical, but commentarial. This distortion entails a difference of a thousand years and the opposite side of a small ocean. While sloppiness of this kind is common in Buddhist Studies, this is not a trivial error; would anyone reviewing the book, no attempt whatsoever was made to transliterate any of the Asian languages by any logical scheme. This is excused in the preface (p. xiv) as consistently reflecting the inconsistencies of his various forebears in the field,... in order to avoid confusing readers who may wish to consult these important sources’ (p. xi). The ensuing mess of diacritics does much to make us doubt the author’s credibility.

We are told that the Cambodian word Byon is from the Pali ‘bhojan’ (p. 245, n. 70) but if we were to seek the latter in a lexicon it would instead be found under upayanta. I dare say that a few specialists would know to find it there (as Harris or his editors should have done) but for the vast majority of readers this ‘approximate spelling’ is an insuperable obstacle. Would this be acceptable for Greek, Latin, or Hebrew sources? If not, it is unacceptable here for the same reasons.

Even more disappointing than the indifferent mix of Pali and Sanskrit, the Cambodian names and titles of works are given phonetic nor following any transliteration scheme) making it even more difficult to pursue such sources further. The reader’s sole recourse would be to stand before a librarian in Phnom Penh, attempting to give the pronunciation (to peals of laughter; I must suppose) or else writing out all of the possible vowel combinations in Khmer script before striking on the correct one (to the librarian’s exasperation). We are thus left at a scholarly dead-end, and one that was entirely electable; the ever increasing ease of typing in modern Khmer depletes us of the excuse of bygone generations.

Fine cracks

Such fine cracks along the surface of the work, though they may be small, are many, and may indicate a deeper problem. The fable of Chō Ji Nyūn is reported as historical fact (p. 25), and an array of traditional Cambodian chronicles are employed with few indications as to just how unreliable these have been proven to be, over several decades of outstanding philology by Michael Vickery. Puzzled by this, I studied the bibliography, finding some crucial omissions. While there are various works listed by Vickery, Olivier de Bernon, and Peter Skilling, many of these authors’ most salient arguments seem to have been ignored in the construction of this history. The timeline of Cambodian Buddhism could have been improved (or perhaps challenged) by the archaeological findings discussed by Skilling (1997 & 2002), whereas Harris’s theory that ‘Vandalism during the Khmer Rouge period as a cause for the disappearance of ancient texts may… be quite as significant as once thought’ (p. 84) would seem to be directly refuted by the hard facts set down by de Bernon (2004), specifying that ‘As a result of the devastation of the pretracted war… an estimated 98 percent of the manuscripts, have been completely destroyed.’ (op. cit. p. 310). Curiously, both Skilling and de Bernon are thanked for their personal ‘criticism and wise counsel’ in Harris’s preface (p. xix).

The failure to consider some of Vickery’s most important contributions to Cambodian history seems equally inexplicable (e.g. Vickery, 1979 & 2004 – many more could be listed); his work has changed many fundamental assumptions of earlier historians (such as the timeline of Thai invasions in the 14th-15th centuries).

While I am tempted to offer criticisms of Harris’s approach to more recent history, too, it could be said (reasonably enough) that the book cannot rise to the standards of political science, nor, perhaps, of social anthropology. The question must be asked: what standards apply? What is ‘Buddhist Studies’ if it is not based on the study of primary source texts (viz., Pali or vernacular Cambodian) nor adheres to the standards of the other disciplines mentioned? These disciplines exist to prevent precisely such errors as arise from an uncritical survey of secondary sources.

Eisel Mazard
Independent Scholar (Theravada Asia)
www.pali.pratyeka.org
eisel.mazard@gmail.com

References
Skilling, Peter. 1997. ‘New Pāli Inscriptions from Southeast Asia’, JPTS XXIII.
Skilling, Peter. 2002. ‘Some Citation Inscriptions from South-East Asia’, JPTS XXVII, p. 160 et seq.
Don’t forget to remember me

No matter how many books one reads about a country and its inhabitants, or how many photographs one has seen, there is no better way of experiencing a far-off land than by watching a film. Movies, dramas, documentaries, and even tourist propaganda pictures offer a much more deeply felt insight into another people than any amount of print is able to provide. Documentaries usually have a specific aim in mind and are geared to a clearly delineated audience and are therefore edited in such a way that the message comes across as clearly and mono-dimensional as possible. Despite all the audio-visual means we have at our disposal at present, the written word is still the most employed vehicle for the dissemination of thoughts and ideas.

Dick van der Meij

The materials shown in the DVD were recorded between 2003 and 2006 and show snapshots of daily life in Jakarta, Kawai (Bintan Island), Payakumbuh (West Sumatra), Delanggu (Central Java), Sintang (West Kalimantan), Bitung (North Sulawesi), Tanjung (Riau), and Surabaya (East Java). Unfortunately, no information is provided on when the filming of individual scenes in these various places took place and so at times it is not easy to understand where we actually are. Some scenes seem to link up to the previous one and would have us believe we are still at the same place, but sometimes we appear not to be there anymore. No information about the reason why we are looking at what we see and not at other things is given and this is a pity because it may lead to a distorted picture of what daily life in Indonesia really is.

Of course, daily life in a country as big as Indonesia is a fluid and fragmented notion. What do we want to show?: Deciding what daily life entails for a big metropolis such as Jakarta is of course much more difficult than for a small place in Central Sulawesi, although the daily reality of the people there is also extremely difficult to understand. The host of anthropological materials on many Indonesian sites sufficiently attests to that.

Hard realities

For me the film shows expertly how hard daily life in Indonesia is for many people, how incredibly hard the people labour to make ends meet; and how small the scale of life for many is. We need only reflect on the life of the smith who was filming his fifth trip with his family reveals the deep religious feelings of Indonesian Muslims. The large photograph in his restaurant made in Malaysia of the Nabawi Mosque in Medina which can be made to show the mosque at various times of the day and which has a device to sound Quranic verses also attests to his deep religious sentiments. The small children learning to recite the Quran on the second floor of a mosque and the way this instruction is provided is also very interesting.

Dick van der Meij, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta dickvdm2005@yahoo.com

DVD. 2008. Production Henk Schulte Nordholt and Frinus Steijlen

Don’t forget to remember me. A day in the life of Indonesia

Based on the Audiovisual Archive Recording the Future.


Novel outlook

The KITLV is known, of course, for its enormous output of just that: printed letters on paper. Some CDs with music have been added to earlier publications but they were in support of the written word and not intended to stand on their own. That is to say, this was the situation up until 2008. The DVD under discussion is therefore a lucky exception and proves the institute’s novel outlook.

The expression “we tend to forget the importance of every-day life but once it’s forgotten, it’s gone forever” means to remember me.

The Review 39

The Newsletter | No 50 | Spring 2009

Don’t forget to remember me. A day in the life of Indonesia

Based on the Audiovisual Archive Recording the Future.


Novel outlook

The KITLV is known, of course, for its enormous output of just that: printed letters on paper. Some CDs with music have been added to earlier publications but they were in support of the written word and not intended to stand on their own. That is to say, this was the situation up until 2008. The DVD under discussion is therefore a lucky exception and proves the institute’s novel outlook.

The materials shown in the DVD were recorded between 2003 and 2006 and show snapshots of daily life in Jakarta, Kawai (Bintan Island), Payakumbuh (West Sumatra), Delanggu (Central Java), Sintang (West Kalimantan), Bittuang (Central Sulawesi), Ternate (Northern Moluccas), and Surabaya (East Java). Unfortunately, no information is provided on when the filming of individual scenes in these various places took place and so at times it is not easy to understand where we actually are. Some scenes seem to link up to the previous one and would have us believe we are still at the same place, but sometimes we appear not to be there anymore. No information about the reason why we are looking at what we see and not at other things is given and this is a pity because it may lead to a distorted picture of what daily life in Indonesia really is.

Of course, daily life in a country as big as Indonesia is a fluid and fragmented notion. What do we want to show?: Deciding what daily life entails for a big metropolis such as Jakarta is of course much more difficult than for a small place in Central Sulawesi, although the daily reality of the people there is also extremely difficult to understand. The host of anthropological materials on many Indonesian sites sufficiently attests to that.

Hard realities

For me the film shows expertly how hard daily life in Indonesia is for many people, how incredibly hard the people labour to make ends meet; and how small the scale of life for many is. We need only reflect on the life of the smith who was filming his fifth trip with his family reveals the deep religious feelings of Indonesian Muslims. The large photograph in his restaurant made in Malaysia of the Nabawi Mosque in Medina which can be made to show the mosque at various times of the day and which has a device to sound Quranic verses also attests to his deep religious sentiments. The small children learning to recite the Quran on the second floor of a mosque and the way this instruction is provided is also very interesting.

Dick van der Meij, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta dickvdm2005@yahoo.com

DVD. 2008. Production Henk Schulte Nordholt and Frinus Steijlen

Don’t forget to remember me. A day in the life of Indonesia

Based on the Audiovisual Archive Recording the Future.


Novel outlook

The KITLV is known, of course, for its enormous output of just that: printed letters on paper. Some CDs with music have been added to earlier publications but they were in support of the written word and not intended to stand on their own. That is to say, this was the situation up until 2008. The DVD under discussion is therefore a lucky exception and proves the institute’s novel outlook.

The materials shown in the DVD were recorded between 2003 and 2006 and show snapshots of daily life in Jakarta, Kawai (Bintan Island), Payakumbuh (West Sumatra), Delanggu (Central Java), Sintang (West Kalimantan), Bittuang (Central Sulawesi), Ternate (Northern Moluccas), and Surabaya (East Java). Unfortunately, no information is provided on when the filming of individual scenes in these various places took place and so at times it is not easy to understand where we actually are. Some scenes seem to link up to the previous one and would have us believe we are still at the same place, but sometimes we appear not to be there anymore. No information about the reason why we are looking at what we see and not at other things is given and this is a pity because it may lead to a distorted picture of what daily life in Indonesia really is.

Of course, daily life in a country as big as Indonesia is a fluid and fragmented notion. What do we want to show?: Deciding what daily life entails for a big metropolis such as Jakarta is of course much more difficult than for a small place in Central Sulawesi, although the daily reality of the people there is also extremely difficult to understand. The host of anthropological materials on many Indonesian sites sufficiently attests to that.

Hard realities

For me the film shows expertly how hard daily life in Indonesia is for many people, how incredibly hard the people labour to make ends meet; and how small the scale of life for many people is. We need only reflect on the life of the smith who makes the tools for tilling the rice fields. He works on his metal tools from six in the morning until six in the evening, day in day out. And what about the people who process the ice needed to preserve fish, who have to deal with heavy, cold material and yet again day in day out, we cannot but marvel at the dexterity of these men. The film reveals the importance of motorbikes and other means of transport and gives us the daily reality of the becak drivers who literally live in and with their becak taxi. The film also shows us the importance of small-scale industry and the role of street side restaurants in sustaining life. It reveals the variability of daily life in the various places but also the similarities over the vast area of Indonesia.

It is interesting to look at places other than those where most tourists tend to go. Not looking at beautiful Bali but rather at the harsh conditions in the ice factory is an important contribution to our perception of the country. Fun in daily life is also clearly shown and the short interview with the man whose photograph adorns the case of the DVD clearly shows that no matter what, Indonesians are able to enjoy life under the hardest of circumstances. The sparkling eyes of this person will be remembered long after many other scenes will have sunk into the dark recesses of our memory.

Islamic life

The part on Islam is also quite interesting. The restaurant owner who has already been to Mecca four times and who is planning his fifth trip with his family reveals the deep religious feelings of Indonesian Muslims. The large photograph in his restaurant made in Malaysia of the Nabawi Mosque in Medina which can be made to show the mosque at various times of the day and which has a device to sound Quranic verses also attests to his deep religious sentiments. The small children learning to recite the Quran on the second floor of a mosque and the way this instruction is provided is also very interesting.

Dick van der Meij, Center for the Study of Religion and Culture, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta dickvdm2005@yahoo.com
Europe-Asia Policy Forum

IIAS received a grant from the European Commission to establish the Europe-Asia Policy Forum. The project will contribute to engagement between Europe and Asia for effective bi-regional co-operation in addressing policy issues of common concern, in particular those related to the Millennium Development Goals. From 2009 through 2011, the project will implement activities in four priority areas:

1. An internet platform on academic research and exchanges on Asian issues for an enhanced communication and dissemination of European expertise, this will include EirForAsia Brussels briefings on contemporary Asian issues;
2. A multi-stakeholder dialogue on sustainable development issues;
3. A think-tank dialogue on regional integration processes; and
4. An expert policy dialogue on Europe-Asia cooperation on governance and conflict management.

Partners in this project are: the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in Singapore; the Institute for International Affairs (SIIA) in Brussels, and the Singapore Europe Foundation (SEF) in Singapore.

Visiting scholarships

The project ‘Domestic and Geopolitical Challenges to Energy Security for China and the European Union’, led by Dr Mehdi Amineh, has been extended for another year with financial input from the KNAW China Exchange Programme. The counterparts for this IAS project are the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (WIAS), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in cooperation with the Institute of Industrial Economy-CASS.

Fritz Thyssen Foundation

IIAS fellow and former Rubicon researcher Dr Birgit Abels received a grant from the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for her project ‘Of Islam, Ancestors and Translocality in Borderlands: Identity negotiation and the performing arts among the Sama Dilaut of Southeast Asia’. Dr Abels is also guest researcher at the music department of the University of Amsterdam.

Energy Programme Asia

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) has granted three researchers a scholarship to stay at IAS:

- Dr Laura Nozlopy
  Royal Holloway, University of London for a visit of six weeks to the Amsterdam Branch Office to work on the biography of John Coast and the project ‘Indonesian performance in transnational and post-colonial contexts’, together with the Department of Drama and Theatre (University of Amsterdam).
- Dr Oscar Amarasingho
  Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Ruhana, Sri Lanka for a period of three months to work on his research ‘Cooperation in the context of a crisis: Public-private partnerships in the management of small-scale fisheries in South Asia’. Dr Amarasingho collaborates closely with Dr Maarten Bavinck of MARE (Centre for Maritime Research, University of Amsterdam).
- Dr Ya-pei Kuo
  Department of History, Tufts University for a period of 11 months to work on her research ‘Culture, Identity, and History: The Critical Review and Conservation in Modern China, 1922-1933’.

National MA Thesis Prize

IIAS seeks to honour the best of Asian Studies by offering an award to the Best MA Thesis in the field of Asian Studies, written at a Dutch university.

The award consists of:
- The honorary title of Best MA Thesis in Asian Studies
- A max. 3 month stipend (€1500 per month) to come to IAS to write a PhD project proposal or a research article.

Criteria:
- The MA thesis should be in the broad field of Asian Studies; both humanities and social science topics are eligible.
- Only MA theses which have been marked with 8 or above are eligible.
- The evaluation of the thesis should have taken place between 1 August 2008 and 1 August 2009.
- Both students and their supervisors can apply.
- Deadline: 1 September 2009.
- Submissions should be sent to The Secretariat, IAS, PO Box 9515, 2380 RA Leiden.

A history of ‘miscommunication’

The fallout from the statement by nominee for Secretary of the Treasury Tom Geitner during his confirmation hearings that China was ‘manipulating its currency’ is only a taste of what might lie ahead. China protested, and Obama had to take office having spent some time in Asia. His years in Indonesia while he was growing up and his links there mean he comes to his current job with some genuine experience of a region that is almost certain to take up a great deal of his time. While offering no stark immediate choices like the Middle East, dealing with the diverse, and in some cases troubled and troubling, countries in Asia will offer plenty of challenges in the short to mid term. Beyond that timescale, in this unpredictable part of the world, it is impossible to venture.

Kerry Brown
Chatham House,
Kerry Brown is senior fellow at the

he will need every second of his experience as a young man
and Asia a great service. Whatever he does end up doing,

poorest people in the US, as well as impacting on the economic

instance, will mean the drying up of cheap imported goods,

in facing a US electorate who feel that the Bush years have

involved with issues beyond US borders will not help him

problems in the US economy compound this. Getting over-

involved in international issues. For Obama, the terrible

promises to fix domestic issues, and then become increasingly

Most US Presidents come into office on the back of their

well expect a bit more from the relationship now than the

of occasions. But now it looks like North Korea is demanding

is still under 30. Christopher Hill did heroic work as Assistant

to Beijing that he is out of the picture. The second eldest son

fore he gets too comfortable in his new job. Already the North

appoints as the link person with China over the next few weeks

Now in its fourth year, a range of electronic services are

active on Savifa:

1. SavifaDoc – open access digital repository
SavifaDoc, the open access digital repository of the virtual library South Asia, offers the possibility to publish papers, dissertations, books or even recorded talks easily

on SavifaDoc, the open access digital repository of the virtual library South Asia, offers the possibility to publish papers, dissertations, books or even recorded talks easily

SavifaDoc guarantees long-term availability and visibility of the documents in library catalogues and search engines by using standardised addresses and metadata.

Furthermore, scholars are also invited to publish on SavifaDoc, either as editors or as authors. So far there are eleven series available on SavifaDoc, including:

- Subodhsvamihische Arbeiten aus dem Bestande der Prof. Peter Rahul Das, University of Halle-Wittenberg
- South Asian Visual Culture Series under the editorship of Prof. PD Christiane Brosius, University of Heidelberg, and in cooperation with Tasveer Ghar, the digital archive of Dr. Gabriele Alex (Dept. of Anthropology/South Asia Institute, Heidelberg) this thematic portal offers access to online resources, a publication and lecture series as well as information to a master degree in ‘Health and Society in South Asia’.

Scholars are invited to contribute to already existing thematic portals or to become partners with full editorial responsibility for new ones.

4. Online Contents SSG-South Asia
The database currently offers access to table of contents of 286 journals relevant to studies and research on culture, politics and languages of South Asia. The journals are generally indexed back to the year 1993. Thus, the database contains c. 150,000 records of journal articles and reviews. The database is a subject oriented selection of bibliographic data from the Swets Database Online Contents. It is regularly enlarged by table of contents data from additional periodicals from the special collections of the Library of the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg University.

5. SavifaGuide – collection of internet resources
The subject collection is a hand-picked assemblage of websites and resources, that meet certain quality standards and are selected by subject specialists and categorized under browsable hierarchies by subject, region and language, allowing users to explore the collection by clicking from the more general to the more specific. Again, browsing options are also available to choose between simple and advanced searches for more specific queries. Up to now c. 3,000 resources have been catalogued and indexed in SavifaGuide, mostly in English, but also in many Indian languages. (There are c. 145 Urdu resources, 142 Bengali websites, 145 Hindi and 95 Tamil websites).

6. Directory of South Asia Scholars
The Directory of South Asia Scholars promotes the communication and exchange of information among the scientific community. It contains information on scholars as well as research projects. Various search and browsing options allow for a specific search for persons and research topics. At the moment, the database contains c. 240 entries. Every scholar is welcome to contribute to the database by uploading a research profile through our web form.

7. Digital Collections
Among the 265,000 volumes held by the Library of the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg are some rare and valuable titles from the 18th to the early 20th century. The Library offers access to digital full text versions of selected works of these historical publications and makes them available on the Internet. So far there are the works of several leading indologists available, including Otto von Böhtlingk and Richard von Garbe, as well as travel accounts from the 17th to the 19th century and historical literature on Indian religion and philosophy. The digitisation department of the University Library of Heidelberg is in possession of newest digitisation technology and has gained considerable expertise through various projects in handling fragile material.

To find out more about using the Savifa services please visit: www.savifa.de

Nicole Merkel
Library, South Asia Institute
University of Heidelberg
merkel@sai.uni-heidelberg.de

The Newsletter | No 50 | Spring 2009

Now in its fourth year, a range of electronic services are active on Savifa:

1. SavifaDoc – open access digital repository
SavifaDoc, the open access digital repository of the virtual library South Asia, offers the possibility to publish papers, dissertations, books or even recorded talks easily and for free. SavifaDoc guarantees long-term availability and visibility of the documents in library catalogues and search engines by using standardised addresses and metadata.

Furthermore, scholars are also invited to publish on SavifaDoc, either as editors or as authors. So far there are eleven series available on SavifaDoc, including:

- Subodhsvamihische Arbeiten aus dem Bestande der Prof. Peter Rahul Das, University of Halle-Wittenberg
- South Asian Visual Culture Series under the editorship of Prof. PD Christiane Brosius, University of Heidelberg, and in cooperation with Tasveer Ghar, the digital archive of
- South Asian Visual Culture
- Kleine Schriften by Prof. Michael Witzel, Harvard University
- Lectures on South Asian History under the editorship of Prof. Gitata Jhamail-Frask, University of Heidelberg
- 20th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies (ECMSAS) – Conference Papers

2. E-ToAlert service
The free E-ToAlert service regularly informs users about new content from 83 selected academic journals with a focus on South Asia. With the publication of a new issue, subscribers receive an e-mail containing table of contents as well as information on access and library holdings within Germany. Scholars interested in this service may subscribe to E-ToAlert via the subscription form on the Savifa site.

3. Thematic Portals
As interactive scholarly places, the thematic portals highlight clearly defined areas of research and provide more detailed information on these subjects. Thematic portals could include the following sub-items: a collection of links to thematic websites, online publication series, digitised literature, image databases or multimedia documents. At present there are two thematic portals on Savifa available:

- Veneroni Displayed tries to bundle the manifold (insights) of this vibrant city on the river Ganges with a photo gallery presenting various aspects of this rich, digitised historical literature, a selection of freely accessible internet resource as well as a selected filmography.
- Health and Healing in South Asia deals with questions such as ‘How do people in South Asia deal with health and illness?’ or ‘What are the theories behind the indigenous health systems of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani?’

With academic support from Prof. William Sax and Dr. Gabriele Alex (Dept. of Anthropology/South Asia Institute, Heidelberg) this thematic portal offers access to online resources, a publication and lecture series as well as information to a master degree in ‘Health and Society in South Asia’.

One big mistake Bush made was a failure to designate a key member of his administration as the leading point person on China for the first five years. China now regards itself as a major power, and in economic terms, it certainly is. It has even been provoked by the recent piracy in Somalia into, for the first time ever, sending ships there to protect its interests. That the Chinese government had no one specifically to speak to in the US, to show ownership over policy towards them, was a problem. Condoleezza Rice was largely busy with the Middle East. Her deputies Christopher Hill and Thomas Christansen focussed on the DPRK and Taiwan respectively. Vice President Dick Cheney only did domestic US policy. Only with the arrival of Hank Paulson as head of the Special Economic Dialogue in 2006, did the Chinese feel that they had someone to channel all their key messages through back to the US. This special treatment went down well, even though it was clear that, for the US at least, the main objective of the dialogue was largely to bring about a devaluation of the renminbi. Who Obama appoints as the link person with China over the next few weeks will matter, as will how he chooses to continue the dialogue.

Nasty surprises ahead?
The DPRK will almost certainly start to raise its own issues before he gets too comfortable in his new job. Already the North Korean government have warned of an uprising in the South Koreans. Rumours that Kim Jong Il had a stroke at the end of last year have caused the usual speculation about who will succeed him when he goes. His first son, disgraced a few years back when he was discovered visiting DisneyLand Tokyo on a non-DPRK passport, has declared during a recent visit to Beijing that he is out of the picture. The second eldest son is still under 30. Christopher Hill did hench work as Assistant Secretary of State, patiently working on the Six Party Talks with the DPRK, resurrecting them from almost nothing on a number of occasions. But now it looks like North Korea is demanding more time and attention, and may well live up to its reputation for being one of the most maverick nations in the world, able to deal out nasty surprises. There will be no honeymoon with the new President here.

Japan too will be expecting attention. Suffering from a further bout of recession, this time derived from external influences, it is also in the midst of internal political problems, with the era of weak, short lived prime ministers returning after the years of relative stability under Koizumi. Japan will remain the US’s key strategic partner in the Asia Pacific region, and may well expect a bit more from the relationship now than the ability to host US troops.

Domestic vs. International
Most US Presidents come into office on the back of their promises to fix domestic issues, and then become increasingly involved in international issues. For Obama, the terrible problems in the US economy compound this. Getting involved with issues beyond US borders will not help him in facing a US electorate who feel that the Bush years have destroyed the US economy. Even so, Obama and the key people around him can hardly separate domestic and international issues. Protectionism aimed at the Chinese, for instance, will mean the drying up of cheap imported goods, and that will have an adverse knock on effect on some of the poorest people in the US, as well as impacting on the economic well being of many workers in China. Bush never managed to explain why US jobs had disappeared not because of Asian factories and manufacturing prowess, but simply because of a change in the patterns of global trade, and the creation of a higher value economic model in the US. Obama has proved he is a great communicator. If he can get this message across, and stop trade barriers falling, then he will be doing the US and world a service. Whatever he does end up doing, he will need every second of his experience as a young man growing up in Asia to fall back on.

Kerry Brown is senior fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, London.

bkerry@chinal AOL.com
ICAS Book Prize 2009

On 30 January the longlists for the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) 2009 for the Humanities and Social Sciences were uploaded to www.icassecretariat.org. The members of the IBP Reading Committee were split in two groups to review the 89 books entered for the prize. The first group dealt with the 42 submissions to the Humanities category, and the second group reviewed the 47 Social Sciences entries.

Paul van der Velde

Of the 24 publishers who submitted books, the names of 14 appear on the longlists. Two publishers, Duke University Press and the University of Washington Press, have three entries on the lists, while the University of California Press and Princeton University Press managed to have two of their two books selected. The ten other publishers are represented with one book.

Reading Committee criteria

Often we hear the question ‘What criteria are used to draw up the longlists and shortlists?’ There are several criteria which determine what is a good book: originality in the treatment of the topic; the depth of the research; opening up a new field of research; providing a definitive study on a certain topic; being well written or making clear arguments. The 20 books on the longlists reflect one or more of these criteria and all are possible prize winners. Inclusion on the list is a significant achievement and means that the author belongs in the top tier of Asia scholars. The six books eventually selected for the shortlists all possess a significant number of the criteria mentioned, and the prize winners clearly have that little extra something which ultimately convinces the whole Reading Committee that their books should win the prizes. The shortlists of the IBP, including the one for the best PhD, will be uploaded onto the ICAS website on 15 April. The prizes will be awarded during the opening ceremony of ICAS 6 on 6 August 2009.

Voting Positioning System

For the 2009 Colleagues Choice Award we have set up an online voting positioning system to facilitate the voting process and point you in the direction of books you might want to vote for. Simply ticking buttons on topics, themes and regions leads you to the books you are interested in. The virtual polling booth will be accessible from 26 March, the first day of the Annual Meeting of the AAS in Chicago, and will be open till 15 July 2009. Cast your vote by selecting a book from the full list of 89 titles submitted.

Everyone can follow the voting process at www.icassecretariat.org. We hope that authors will mobilise their networks to gain votes for their books. The Colleagues Choice Award is all about involving as many Asia scholars as possible in the voting process. The winner of this prize will be someone who knows how to interest other people in his or her writings: a quality indispensable for any scholar in the increasingly competitive globalised field of Asia Studies.

Education About Asia

Published three times each year since 1996, this unique magazine features articles on all areas of Asia, as well as a comprehensive guide to Asian studies resources—dictionaries, videos, books, curriculum guides, websites, and software. Thematic issues on topics of particular interest include: “Natural Disasters in Asia: Geography and Environment,” “Reconsidering Hiroshima and Nagasaki after Sixty Years,” and “Teaching About Asia through Youth Culture.”

Subscription information and special offers on back issues are available at www.aasianst.org
## Longlist Social Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia</td>
<td>Anne E. Booth</td>
<td>University of Hawai`i Press</td>
<td>978-0-8248-3161-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing Japan</td>
<td>Richard J. Samuels</td>
<td>Cornell University Press</td>
<td>978-0-8014-7490-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India</td>
<td>Sanjay Seth</td>
<td>Duke University Press</td>
<td>978-0-8223-4105-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East</td>
<td>Etel Solingen</td>
<td>Princeton University Press</td>
<td>978-0-691-13147-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Globalization: Nation, Culture and Identity in Singapore</td>
<td>Selvaraj Velayutham</td>
<td>Institute of Southeast Asian Studies</td>
<td>978-981-230-421-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsocialism and Cultural Politics: China in the Lost Decade of the Twentieth Century</td>
<td>Xudong Zhang</td>
<td>Duke University Press</td>
<td>978-0-8223-4230-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Longlist Humanities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artisans in Early Imperial China</td>
<td>Anthony Barbieri-Low</td>
<td>University of Washington Press</td>
<td>978-0-295-98713-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition over Content: Negotiating Standards for the Civil Service Examinations in Imperial China (1127-1279)</td>
<td>Hilde De Weerdt</td>
<td>Harvard University Press</td>
<td>978-0-674-02588-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands Indies and the Great War, 1914-1918</td>
<td>Kees van Dijk</td>
<td>KITLV Press</td>
<td>978-90-6718-308-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture</td>
<td>Michael S. Dodson</td>
<td>Palgrave Macmillan</td>
<td>978-1-40398-6450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tears from Iron: Cultural Responses to Famine in Nineteenth-Century China</td>
<td>Kathryn Edgerton-Tarpley</td>
<td>University of California Press</td>
<td>978-0-520-25302-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Precious Raft of History: The Past, the West, and the Woman Question in China</td>
<td>Joan Judge</td>
<td>Stanford University Press</td>
<td>978-0-8047-5589-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rethinking Humanities in the Age of the ‘Visual’
International Conference on Humanities in 21st Century. C PRACSI. Thissur, Kerala, India.

Call for Papers
Rethinking Humanities’ interrogates how the future of humanities can be traced and interpreted from various academic and philosophical perspectives and the ways in which interdisciplinary endeavours in humanities, social sciences and sciences respond to this problem: Visual culture, one of the major paradigms which re-organized almost all disciplines including social sciences in the last century, has been crucial in designing the theme of this conference. It is important to examine how the paradigm of the ‘visual’ has interrogated and destabilized the methodological and canonical framework of traditional Humanites.

The age of the ‘visual’ with its alteration of the priorities of modernity and the privileging of the spectacle signals that the Humanities are to be revised in relation to the specific contexts of cultural practices of 21st century. The search for new methodologies to redefine humanities must conspicuously be characterized by a spirit of interdisciplinary inquiries.

Keynote address: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. For a list of themes to be discussed at the conference and more information visit: www.cpracsis.org/ Humanities.htm

C PRACSI invites papers for presentation in the proposed conference on the topics related to the themes listed on the website.

Deadline for abstracts: 20 April 2009
Send to director@cpracsis.org or csbijusc@gmail.com

The First Conference of Jogjakarta Wayang Tradition.
Gadjah Mada University, Jogjakarta, Indonesia.

The theme of this conference is ‘Wayang: Origin and Transformations in South- and Southeast Asia’. The conference is conceived in collaboration with The Kraton of Jogjakarta, the Public Radio of Indonesia. This event will include the Javanese Rowlong (Excommunicate) and the Wayang Kulit Performance will present of Indonesia. This event will include the

Wayang Kulit Performance will present in collaboration with The Gadjah Mada University, Tradition.

Call for Papers
Send to: director@cpracsis.org or csbijusc@gmail.com
Deadline for abstracts: 20 April 2009

25th ASEAKU conference
Swanse University, United Kingdom.

Call for Papers from the panels:
Environment, sustainability and livelihoods
Chris J. Barrow Swanse University c.j.barrows@swanse.ac.uk
Becky Elmhirst Brighton University R.J.elmhirst@bton.ac.uk
Creating resilient tourism in Southeast Asia
Janet Cochran Leeds Met J.Cochran@leedsmet.ac.uk
Theravada Buddhism and culture of the Tai of the Shan States and south-west China
Susan Conway SOAS susan.conway@hotmail.com, s68@soas.ac.uk
Creativity and gender in Southeast Asia F. Hughes-Freeland Swanse University f.hughes-freeland@swanse.ac.uk
Malay/indonesian manuscripts
Annabel Gallop British Library annabel@gallop.org.uk
Postcolonial Ottoman/Turkish-South East Asia findings (British Academy funded project: ASEUK and the British Institute in Ankara)
Michael Hitchcock Chichester m.hitchcock@chic.ac.uk
Emerging scholars panel
Fiona Kergorg Hsinmin Monum rkergorg@hsm.unm.edu
Migration and security
Alan Collins Swanse University A.Collins@swanse.ac.uk
Nicola Piper Swanse University N.Piper@swanse.ac.uk
New insights into human-environment histories in Southeast Asia
Dr Monica Janowski Sussex University M.janowski@uss.essex.ac.uk
Dr Chris Hunt Queens University Belfast c.hunt@qub.ac.uk
Contesting the state: violence, identity and sovereign practices in Southeast Asia
Dr Lee Wilson Cambridge University lw243@cam.ac.uk
Dr Laurens Bakker Radboud University l.bakker@ru.nl
Health, knowledge and power: providers, seekers and places of health in Southeast Asia
Dr Claudia Merk Durham University claudia.merk@durham.ac.uk

For more details about the panels and the conference:
http://asaseku.co.uk/?page_id=27
Please send abstracts (200-500 words) to the panel convenors or contact them directly if you have any enquiries about your proposed paper.

Deadline: 1st April 2009. Conference organiser: Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland f.hughes-freeland@swanse.ac.uk

Local Modernities? Articulating transnational ideas in South Asia
German Anthropological Association (GAA) Conference 2009, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

Call for Papers
Scientists and ‘local’ actors tend to perceive transnational ideas at work in South Asia as forming dichotomies with local conceptions. In this conference, instead of opposing the ‘local’ to the transnational, we wish to reverse the focus and, by juxtaposing ethno graphic examples, ask which interdependences and connections between differing ‘local’ or transnational ideas help constitute and uphold these apparently hybrid settings.

We invite proposals for papers based on anthropological case studies in urban as well as rural settings, concentrating on the articulation of transnational ideas. We will focus on (but are not restricted to) transnational ideas of past and present such as ‘liberty’, ‘love marriage’, ‘citizens’ rights’, and ‘terrorism’. We will analyse the enactment of these imaginations through concepts of cultural appropriations by including a focus on hybridities of differing values, foregrounding the connectivities of transnational ideas with persisting and newly introduced ‘local’ values as a crucial part of their ongoing and vivid expression.

Deadline for abstracts: 31st May 2009

30 September – 3 October 2009

Chinese and East Asian music: The future of the past
14th International CHIME Conference. Brussels.

Call for Papers
Musical Instruments Museum (MIM), Brussels
What are the prospects for numerous musical genres (and instruments and stylists) from China and East Asia’s past? This theme will be explored at the 14th international conference of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research (CHIME). This scholarly meeting is open to anyone interested in Chinese and East Asian music. We invite 20-minute papers and 90-minute panels on a broad range of issues such as:
- Development, preservation and reconstruction of musical instruments
- Preservation and creation of traditional and ‘folk’ music
- Resistance or re-emergence of historical genres
- Continuation of elements from the past in reinvented traditions and new music
- Conservation and use of recordings, fieldwork materials and collected objects

Send abstracts (max. 300 words) for individual papers and panels (detail the focus of the paper and add individual abstracts for each contribution) by email to michael@uw.ac.nl. Deadline 15 April 2009.

For all practical questions please contact Claire Chaillout, claire.chaillout@mim.fgov.be

Musical Instruments Museum (MIM) 1 rue Villa Hermosa B-1000 Brussels Belgium

Folk music in Southern Jiangsu, China
**Programmes**

**Science and History in Asia**

The complex links between science and history in Asia can be studied on at least two levels. First, one can focus on the ways in which the actors have perceived, explained or reused knowledge in the past; and, on the other hand, how they have constructed the history of those disciplines, giving them cultural legitimacy. Secondly, one can reflect on the historical issues related to the sciences. How can the sciences be incorporated into historical narratives of Asian civilisations? This question is crucial, given the dominant 19th and 20th century view that science is a European invention, and that it has somehow failed to develop endogenously in Asia, where ‘traditional science’ is usually taken as opposed to ‘Western’ or ‘modern science’. This project will address various approaches to the issue by organising five international workshops in Cambridge, Leiden and Paris.

Sponsored by: NWO Humanities, Needham Research Institute, Research Experiences and Histories on Sciences and the Institutions Sciences (REVHIS), and IWS.

Coordinators: Christopher Cullen (Needham Research Institute) c.cullen@iwm.org.uk Hans Goossaert (Scaliger Institute, Leiden University) h.beukers@hum.leidenuniv.nl

**Asia Design**

This programme consists of a number of individual projects related to graphic design – from classical graphics in art and communication to the rapidly emerging fields of cyberculture (New Media, video-games, etc.) and animanga (anime and manga) in East Asia – and architectural design in Asian megacities. The projects address both the physical and social aspects of design.

Institutes involved: IAS, Modern East Asia Research Centre (MEARC), Delft School of Design (DSS). Sponsored by: IWS and Asia-Europe Foundation.

Coordinators: Chris Goto-Jones (MEARC) c.goto-jones@leidenuniv.nl Greg Bracken (DSS) gregory@corntaylor.com

**Illegal but licit: transnational flows and permissible polities in Asia (IBL)**

This research programme analyses forms of globalisation-from-below, transnational practices considered acceptable (ibl) by participants but which are often illegal in a formal sense. It explores limitations of ‘secrecy’ and ‘acceptable transgression’ from a cross-cultural viewpoint and the perspectives of participants in these illegal but licit transnational flows.

Sponsored by: MWO and ASIA.

Coordinator: Willem van Schendel h.vanschendel@uva.nl

**Energy programme Asia (EPA)**

Established in September 2007, this programme addresses the domestic and geopolitical aspects of energy security for China and the European Union. 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. Within this programme scholars from the Netherlands and China will visit each other’s institutions and will jointly publish their research outcomes.

Institutes involved: Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IIAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Sponsored by: KNW, China Exchange Programme and IAS.

Coordinator: Mehdi Parviz Ali Aminah m.p.ali@uva.nl

**Searching for sustainability in Eastern Indonesian waters**

The threat of biodiversity depletion calls for the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), especially in rich natural environments like the maritime space of eastern Indonesia. Most approaches to the establishment of MPAs, however, do not consider the interconnected developments demand a constructive analysis of the societal impacts of a predominantly technical and science oriented approach to the establishment of MPAs around the world. This new programme focuses on MPAs in eastern Indonesia (Wakatobi, Komodo, Derawan, Raja Ampat) and will facilitate the establishment of MPAs, involving both Dutch and German researchers. The aims of the programme are to (1) engage in a methodological training workshop for the three Indonesian partners plus six of their colleagues/staff members and (2) collectively write a research proposal (2009-2013) on the social-economic and governance conditions of Marine Protected Area development.

Sponsored by: KNW, IAS, Wageningen University, Australian Research Council, Centre for Tropical Marine Ecology Breman (ZMT), Germany.

Partner institutes: Wageningen University, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), Nature Conservancy, Murdoch University (Perth, Australia), ZMT (Bremen, Germany).

Coordinator: Leonette Visser (WUR/IAS) leonette.visser@wur.nl

**Gender, migration and family in East and Southeast Asia**

Developed from an earlier research project on ‘Cross-border Marriages’, this project is a comparative study on intra-regional flows of migration in East and Southeast Asia with a focus on gender and family. It aims at studying the linkage between international migration regimes, transnational families and migrants’ experiences.

The first component of the project looks at the development of the immigration regimes of the newly industrialised countries in East and Southeast Asia. The second component looks at the experiences of female migrants in the context of the first component. To investigate these issues, this project will bring together scholars who have already been working on related topics. A three-year research project is developed with an empirical focus on Taiwan and South Korea as the receiving countries, and Vietnam and the PRC as the sending countries.

Coordinators: Melody Li (IIAS) m.li@tiia.nl Wang Hongzheng (Graduate School of Sociology, National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan)

**Socio-genetic marginalization in Asia (SMAP)**

The development and application of new biomedical and genetic technologies have important socio-political implications. This MWO/IIAS research programme aims to gain insight into the ways in which the use of and monopoly over genetic information shape and influence population policies, environmental ethics and biomedical and agricultural practices in various Asian religious and secular cultures and across national boundaries.

Sponsored by: MWO, IAS, ASIA.

Coordinator: Margaret Sleesboom-Faukner m.sleesboom-faukner@vassar.ac.uk

**ABIA South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology index**

The Annual Bibliography of Indonesian Archaeology is an annotated bibliographic database for publications covering South and Southeast Asian art and archaeology. The project was launched by IAS in 1997 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.aba.net. Excerpts from the database are also available as bibliographies, published in a series by Brill. The project receives scientific support from UNESCO.

Coordinators: Ellen Raven and Gerda Theuns-de Boer e.m.raven@sussex.ac.uk

**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, tarskat (mystical orders), dakwah (propagation of the faith), and education.

Coordinator: Nico Kappel n.j.g.kappel@hum.leidenuniv.nl

**Asia-Europe Workshop Series 2010**

The European Alliance for Asian Studies and the Asia-Europe Foundation welcome proposals for workshops to take place in 2010

Deadline: 1 July 2009

For detailed information visit www.iae.ac or contact iae@iias.nl

**The News Letter**

No. 50 | Spring 2009

IIAS research programmes and networks

The sixth EuroSEAS Conference 26-28 August 2010 Gothenburg, Sweden

The venue of the conference is the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University —

All scholars with an interest in Southeast Asia are cordially invited to propose panels for the conference. In line with previous EuroSEAS conferences, the meeting in Gothenburg will cover a wide range of topics in all fields of social sciences and humanities. There are no limits concerning topics with Southeast Asia as a focus.

Dead line for panel proposals: 1 June 2009

For practical information, please have a look at our website www.globalstudies.gu.se

Send your proposals to: jorgen.hellman@globalstudies.gu.se
**International conference Agenda**

**March 2009**

**The First World War and the End of Neutrality Conference**
Amsterdam, Netherlands.
Organized by Netherlands Institute for War Documentation & UvA.
6 March 2009
contact: S.K. Kuisinga
s.kkuisinga@uva.nl

**2009 AAS Annual Meeting**
Sheraton Chicago, United States.
Conference organized by The Association for Asian Studies.
26-29 March 2009
contact: www.asianstudies.org

**April 2009**

**Indonesia’s cultural history, 1950-1965**
Leiden, Netherlands.
Workshop organized by Kitlv.
7-9 April 2009
www.kitlv.nl

**The Cultural Politics of the Life Sciences in Asia: Opportunities, risks and the changing body**
Leiden, Netherlands.
Conference convenor(s): Dr Margaret Sleeboom-Faulkner. Organized by IHS.
16-17 April 2009
Contact: Martina van den Haak
m.van.den.haak@kias.nl
www.kias.nl

**‘Achieving Global Goals Through Innovation’**
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, United States.
6th Annual Global Health & Development Conference.
18–19 April 2009
www.uniteforsight.org/conference

**May 2009**

**Fourth Annual Tamil Studies Conference**
Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
Organized by University of Toronto.
21–23 May 2009
tamilstudiesconference@gmail.com
www.tamilstudiesconference.ca

**Confucianism and Modern Society workshop**
Leiden, Netherlands.
Convenor(s): Prof. Huin-chuan Ho and Prof. Axel Schneider. Organized by IHS.
28-29 May 2009
contact: Martina van den Haak
m.van.den.haak@kias.nl
www.kias.nl

**3rd Gender Asia Network Conference Gender, Mobility and Citizenship**
Helsinki, Finland.
Conference convenor(s): Institute of Asian and African Studies organized by University of Helsinki.
28-30 May 2009
contact: Mikako Iesakka, Ph.D.
www.gendergasa2009.niasconferences.net

**June 2009**

**Conflict Prevention in the Multimedia Age**
Bonn, Germany.
Conference organized by DW - Media Services GmbH.
3-5 June 2009
contact: conference secretary
gmt@dw-world.de
www.dw-world.de/globalmediaforum

**Texts and Practices of South Asian Art**
Vilnius, Lithuania.
Conference organized by Centre of Oriental Studies, Vilnius University.
4-6 June 2009
contact: Vladas Jakunus
vladas.jakunus@ncc.vu.lt

**24th ASEK Conference**
Leiden, Netherlands.
Conference convenor(s): Dr Koen de Ceuster. Organized by Centre for Korean Studies, Leiden University/IKAS.
18–20 June 2009
www.iias.nl

**National and Transnational Crises and Conflicts in South-East Asia**
Vienna, Austria.
Conference organized by University of Vienna.
19–20 June 2009
contact: Mag. Christian Wawrnet
christian.wawrnet@univie.ac.at
www.ears.at

**Rethinking Humanities**
Kerala, India.
Conference organized by C PRACRIS, THRISSUR.
27–28 June 2009
contact: director@pracris.org
www.pracris.org

**September 2009**

**25th ASEASUK Conference 2009**
University of Swansea, Wales, UK.
Conference convenor: Association of Southeast Asian Studies, UK.
11–13 September 2009
Contact: Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland
Email: f.hughes-freeland@swansea.ac.uk

**Women and Politics in Asia: a Springboard for Democracy?**
Hildegem, Germany.
Conference convenor(s): Institute of Social Sciences. Organized by University of Hildesheim.
30 September–2 October 2009
contact: Prof. Claudia Derichs
derichs@uni-hildesheim.de
www.uni-hildesheim.de

**Local Modernities? Articulating Transnational Ideas in South Asia**
Frankfurt, Germany.
Conference convenor(s): Barbara Höger, Institut für Ethnologie, Frankfurt am Main & IAS. Organized by German Anthropological Association (GAA).
30 September–3 October 2009
mailto:bhoeger.de or muchim90@yahoo.com

**November 2009**

**Chinese and East Asian Music: The Music of the Past**
Brussels, Belgium.
14th International OHME Conference.
18–22 November 2009
chime@wvu.edu

---

**Colophon**

**Staff**
Max Sparreboom (Director)
Michiel Bax (Coordinator, Amsterdam)
Berry Bock (Administrator)
Ingrid Grant-Seedorf (Secretary)
Marina van den Haak (Seminars & Publications)
Manuel Haneveld (IT Manager)
Iren Hoogenboom (Project Manager, Asia)
Sandor van der Horst (Fellowship Programme)
Heleen van der Mine (Project coordinator, Amsterdam)
Manon Osewijer (Academic Affairs)
Paul van der Velde (Senior Consultant)
Amparo de Vogel (Secretary)
Thomas Voorter (WWW)
Anna Yeadeel (Editor)

**Board**
Henk Schulte Nordholt – Chairman (KITLV, Leiden)
Maghild van Creveld (Leiden University)
Thomas Blom Hansen (University of Amsterdam)
Janny de Jong (Groningen University)
Mavis Rutton (University of Amsterdam)
Oscar Salenmink (Free University, Amsterdam)
Ivo Smits (Leiden University)
Patricia Sayer (Leiden University)

**Academic Committee**
Christopher Goto-Jones – Chairman (Leiden University)
Touraj Atakabi (RSIC/University of Amsterdam)
Ellen Bal (Free University, Amsterdam)
Adriaan Bedner (Leiden University)
Harm Bouwers (Leiden University)
Koen de Ceuster (Leiden University) Jeroen de Kloet (University of Amsterdam)

**IIAS Branch Office Amsterdam**
Spinhuis Oudezijds Achterburgwal 185
1012 DK Amsterdam
The Netherlands
T +31-20-5273021
F +31-20-5273023
iias@iaas.nl

**IIAS Newsletter 50 Spring 2009 ISSN 0929-8738**
Editor: Anna Yeadeel
Guest Editor: Christopher Goto-Jones
Design: Artmiks, Amsterdam
Printing: Wegener Graphische Groep, Apeldoorn
Distribution: 26,000

**Advertisements**
Submit by: 1 May 2009
Responsibility for copyrights and for facts and opinions expressed in this publication rests exclusively with authors. Their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the institute or its supporters.

www.iias.nl
48 The Portrait

Silk Stories Taishō Kimono 1900-1940

Within the scope of the 400 year jubilee of Japanese-Dutch trading relations (1609-2009) the Kunsthall Rotterdam presents the exhibition Silk Stories, focusing on the various fabrics, hand made decorations and new techniques associated with the development of the kimono.

THE WORD KIMONO is a collective term for a variety of traditional pieces of clothing and can be translated as 'thing to wear'. For the first time ever in the Netherlands, over 120 kimono, several haori (short jackets) and obi (broad brocade waist bands) provide an overview of Japanese fashion from the period 1900-1940, and the Taishō period in particular. Attention is paid to the specific role of the kimono within every day Japanese life. Central to the exhibition are the fascinating stories that are often portrayed on the inside of the luxurious silk.

Taishō Culture
As a result of increasing prosperity in the Taishō period – the reigning period of Emperor Yoshihito (1912-1926) – more and more people could afford an expensive kimono. Artists were hired by department stores to design artistic patterns, resulting in an incredibly rich and high-quality supply. Characteristic of Taishō culture are the traditional representations of flowers, cranes, samurai and geishas, coupled with a keen and vivid interest in Western patterns. After the devastating earthquake of 1923 the production of kimonos experienced a boom. The destroyed cities of Tokyo and Yokohama were rebuilt as new metropolises, where big department stores dictated what was fashionable. The ‘meisen’ kimono, a ready-made and seasonal kimono, became immensely popular because it was cheaper than the very expensive traditional kimono. As a consequence production increased enormously, and with it the development of patterns and decorations. Geometrical designs based on Art Deco were introduced to the world of kimono fashion.

Stories in Silk
A kimono consists of ten to twelve metres of silk fabric. Putting on a kimono is serious business, and the choice of extra pieces of clothing such as an under-kimono, a short jacket or brocade waist band is also of major importance. Men’s kimonos are made of plain silk; only the under-kimono and the linings of the jackets were completed with decorations that were therefore hardly ever visible. The representations often have some story-like character. Representations of tea ceremonies, horse races, base ball or the upcoming war show the personal interests and beliefs of the kimono wearer. Women’s kimonos often show more poetic designs. Thus, the jacket ‘Parting at Dawn’ represents a romantic rendezvous on the outside, while on the inside it is a cock crowing as a sign of the parting that is to come. New trends were mostly introduced by geisha, for whom the kimono is an important aspect of her mysterious appeal. All pieces in the exhibition belong to the collection of Jan Dees, expert in Japan and Japanese Culture.

Kunsthall Rotterdam. www.kunsthall.nl
Opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday and public holidays 11am-5pm
Telephone +31 (0)10 440 03 01

All kimonos pictured are from the Jan Dees collection.

Fig. 1 Three Friends, 1910-1920. Woman’s furisode, black crepe silk, embroidery, gold foil, hand-painted, yūzen technique.

Fig. 2 Spinning Tops, 1920-1940. Girl’s kimono, blue crepe silk, stencil-printed.

Fig. 3 Wild carnations, 1920-1940. Girl’s kimono, violet gauze crepe silk, hand-painted.

Fig. 4 Abstract pattern, 1960-1980. Woman’s haori, fine crepe silk.

Fig. 5 Parting at Dawn, 1920-1940. Woman’s haori, black fine crepe silk, embroidery, hand-painted.