THE FOCUS PAGES 17-32

Guest Editor Kiri Paramore brings together ideas of religion, power and identity in Asia in his theme Religion and Global Empire.
## NEW 'PULL-OUT' FORMAT FOR THE FOCUS

This issue of the Newsletter features the first of our new-style ‘The Focus’ pages. This pull-out supplement, with its own front cover, features a series of themed articles presented by a Guest Editor. The new format for our popular ‘The Focus’ section makes it handy to remove from the paper and keep.

### THE REVIEW

- **33** New for Review
- **34** Bookmarked
- **35** Indian students back home and abroad
- **36** Southeast Asia and the great powers
- **37** In our third age/Inventing ourselves as Filipinos

### THE NETWORK

- **39** IIAS News
- **40** Opinion—What do Chinese negotiators think? Lessons from Copenhagen
- **41** A longitudinal treasure trove

### THE PORTRAIT

- **48** Simply a sari?

### THE REVIEW

- **20-21** Prasenjit Duara examines ‘The historical roots and character of Secularism in China’
- **22-23** Ya-pei Kuo discusses religion and the clash of civilisations in 19th century China
- **24-25** Kiri Paramore’s article ‘Religion as practice, politics as mission’ examines the role of Western models and Confucian ideas in constructing political modernity in 19th century Japan
- **26-27** Boudewijn Walraven takes the protests in Seoul in the summer of 2008 as his starting point in ‘Ultimate concerns: religion, the state and the nation in Korea’
- **28-29** Edyta Roszko reveals the Vietnamese state’s attempts to build a ‘new culture’ that would substitute religion in ‘Negotiation over religious space in Vietnam’

### Comparing frameworks

20-21 Prasenjit Duara examines ‘The historical roots and character of Secularism in China’

### Imperialist horizons

22-23 Ya-pei Kuo discusses religion and the clash of civilisations in 19th century China

### Emperor cult

24-25 Kiri Paramore’s article ‘Religion as practice, politics as mission’ examines the role of Western models and Confucian ideas in constructing political modernity in 19th century Japan

### Abrahamic tradition

26-27 Boudewijn Walraven takes the protests in Seoul in the summer of 2008 as his starting point in ‘Ultimate concerns: religion, the state and the nation in Korea’

### Civic religion

28-29 Edyta Roszko reveals the Vietnamese state’s attempts to build a ‘new culture’ that would substitute religion in ‘Negotiation over religious space in Vietnam’

### Religious spaces

30 Dermott Walsh examines influences on the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō in ‘Confucian thought in early Nishida’

### Knowledge and conduct

31 ‘In Japan, the Jews and divine election’, Alke P. Rots profiles evangelist, theologian and missionary Nakada Jūji

### Nation building

32 Jung-Shim Lee discusses the work of an ardent Korean nationalist, poet and Buddhist monk in ‘Women, Confucianism and nation-building in Han Youngun’s novel Death’
Dr Philippe Peycam
new Director of IIAS

TAKING OVER AS DIRECTOR OF IIAS, I have inherited an institute with a worldwide reputation for a wide range of activities. In the past 17 years, IIAS has offered opportunities to scholars from around the world and, I believe, created a new momentum for Asian Studies. I have my colleagues and predecessors to thank for handing over an outward looking and flexible institute with strong linkages to other institutions both at home and abroad.

Having only been in post since the beginning of April, my vision for IIAS is still taking shape, but I am convinced that the foundations are in place for IIAS to enhance its relevance by increasing its visibility and focus. Its position as an independent, flexible, small institution, built on a global network, collaborative partnerships and well-targeted quality services can earn IIAS the support of its various members, partners and stakeholders - its prime beneficiaries.

I believe we can do this through a range of well-targeted, mobilising, programmatic thematic clusters - in step with contemporary Asian currents. And we’ll reinforce our networks by actively reaching out to new partners and starting new initiatives in Asia, Europe, the US and elsewhere.

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The outbreak of mass demonstrations following the elections of June 2009 created a ‘revolutionary’ potential for confrontation within the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI). The regime responded with violence and repression, leaving no possibility for compromise. Iran’s power structures have always been characterised by factionalism but the recent developments showed that contradictions and differences between groups have reached a tipping point. As conflict and contradiction intensify, so does the regime’s instability. But what are the pros and cons for change? In the second of two articles on the current crisis in Iran, Mehdi Amineh examines the position of the oppositional forces in relation to the state.

Mehdi Parviz Amineh

The POST-REVOLUTIONARY Iranian civil society organisations and institutions developed gradually during the presidential terms of Rafsanjani and Khatami. These two periods transformed Iran from a fragile and fragmented society into one with more modern structures and civil society institutions. In the aftermath of the 2009 elections, the gap between society and the state began to increase rapidly, bringing millions of people onto the street. Unfortunately, the structures and civil traditions in Iranian civil society are weak and lack the capacity to continue the movement and resist the violent suppression by the regime. Political transformation depends on strong leadership. Rather, it can be considered as a democratic movement. The ideologies of protest movements can be offensive or defensive. A revolutionary movement usually has an offensive nature and strives to change the political system and socio-economic structures. A defensive ideology usually manifests the demands of unsatisfied peoples against the functioning of the system and its leaders. This type of movement is characterised by revolt rather than revolution, like the revolt of peasants, the revolt against taxes or the revolt against ethnic-religious discrimination. The Green Movement in Iran is defensive in character and can be defined as a revolt against electoral fraud. To some extent, the current movement in Iran can be characterised as a movement for the protection of the existing constitution and a protest against a minority ruling elite protected by the military forces and in control of key economic institutions. The Green Movement is not yet revolutionary, in the sense that it has no clear aim to overthrow the current regime. The current revolt can be compared with the revolt of June 1963 under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini.1 There is a possibility of turning this movement into a revolutionary movement but to do so the Green Movement would need to distance itself from the therapeutic principle of the existing constitution of the IRI. Unfortunately, the current leaders—former presidential candidates Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karoubi (arguably the only leader in the Green Movement with radical ideas) and their ally, former president Mohammad Khatami—appear to have no desire to end the current system.

 Mobilisation and apathy

In the current atmosphere of brutal repression in Iran, the leaders of the Green Movement have no opportunity to create an offensive movement. The past months have seen weak civil society institutions and structures repressed further and their activities substantially curtailed. In the momentum of repression, the possibilities of mobilisation are diminished. Mobilisation of the people demands high political expenses and risks. In the case of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1978/9 the leader(s) in exile (and therefore without immediate threat to their lives) were able to criticise the regime and mobilise people against it. The current oppositional leaders are within the country and, it seems, are reluctant to take any risks under the current terror of the ruling elite.

Management

In most revolutionary movements, the leader of the movement plays a decisive role in two cases in the ‘contexts of action’: (1) When the repressive apparatuses of the regime are unable to function. (2) When the rulers or regimes hesitate to repress the people (as was the case during the revolutionary process in 1978 under the regime of the Shah).3 It is difficult for a regime to survive when it faces a deep-power crisis accompanied with an incompetence to control the situation. Therefore, a strong leader with a coherent ideology and ability to apply different political activities, mobilise people and, with this force, able to confront the repressing forces and weaken the rulers. In the current situation a number of dissident political and religious figures (before his death, Grand Ayatollah Montazeri was seen as the main opposition leader) can play a crucial role in managing political mobilisation and changing the power balance between the ruling elite and the oppositional forces.

Prospects for democratisation in Iran

The Islamic regime in Iran has continued—at least to some extent—the processes of state-led authoritarian modernisation and therefore reproduced the same contradiction as pre-revolutionary Iran. The main causes of the current social revolt in Iran are indeed similar to the classical ones, namely the breakdown of a modernising autocracy torn by internal contradictions between various processes of socio-economic modernisation. This gave rise to many new modernised eco-nomic and professional classes, but denied them any political autonomy, or any autonomous access to the political centre.4 To replace an authoritarian regime with democracy, two key interconnected factors need to occur: (1) The rise of a strong and independent middle class (2) the emergence of an autonomous private sector.
Both groups ‘serve the process in two distinct ways: subjectively (middle classes) and objectively (private sector). Subjectively the middle classes spread ideals of self-determination, responsibility, activism and empowerment. They provide the crucial determinants for civil society to arise, yet they must have a certain level of autonomy and the organisational and financial means to invest in civil society organisations. Objectively, the private sector, amasses “formidable economic muscle and organizational and financial strength of its own” to defect from an allegiance with the autocratic regime. According to Kamrava (2007) “much, then, depends on the bargain struck between authoritarian state leaders and key social actors whose financial or organizational resources the state needs to co-opt for its own purposes”. If executed well, the authoritarian bargain with the private sector, civil society organisations and the middle classes can help to guarantee a relatively smooth transition towards democracy.

Thus, a successful capitalist modernisation is a pre-condition for development of civil society with corresponding forces. In such a situation, the upcoming modern social forces require the creation of a political system in which authoritarian rule is transformed through formal legal guarantees that permit the different social classes and groups to legitimately express their interests. This system should also place the struggle between contending political forces in a legal and constitutional framework made visible to all and guaranteeing public control over important decisions. This means that in order for modernisation from above to be successful, it must allow the civil society forces, created by modernisation, to act independently of the state. In bargaining with these social forces the state becomes less repressive and arbitrary in its actions and more rule-oriented and responsive to society’s needs.

Two problems come to the fore in terms of the above-mentioned factors for change: In Iran, a large part of the middle class remains employed in the public sector or in state-owned companies. Because the oil and gas sector does not provide enough jobs, unemployment is skyrocketing.6 State-owned companies. Because the oil and gas sector does not provide enough jobs, unemployment is skyrocketing.6 State-owned companies. Because the oil and gas sector does not provide enough jobs, unemployment is skyrocketing.6

6. The foundations are estimated to account for 35 percent of Iran’s total gross national product. They control over 40 percent of the non-oil sector of the Iranian economy (Sandi 2004). The foundations have been a great financial burden to the Iranian economy and one of the main obstacles to economic reform in Iran. The foundations have been involved in propagating the ideology of the IRI and the social security programs. The foundations mobilize tens of thousands of people, from urban and rural lower classes, for demonstrations that support the Islamic regime. They have supported: the establishment of schools, universities, and research centers; the publications of books and journals; the production of films; the organization of art and book festivals; as well as the establishment of ideological museums. They, therewith, contribute to the indoctrination of a great number of young intellectuals into the Islamic political ideology, as it was developed by Ayatollah Khomenei. The foundations have become pivotal actors in the power struggle among different factions of the Iranian political elite, not only in terms of mass mobilization, ideological indoctrination and repression, but also as financial resources to the fundamentalist faction. This makes them not only economically important but also significant actors in forming the domestic policies in Iran. According to some estimation the bonyads to account for 35 percent of Iran’s total gross national product. See E.P. Rakel (2007), “Conglomerates in Iran: The political economy of Islamic Foundations”, in Jilberto, A.E.F. and Hogenboom, B. (eds.), Big Business and Economic Development: Conglomerates and Economic Groups in Developing Countries and Transition Economies under Globalisation. (Routledge, London and New York): 109-32.

4. See Amineh, Ibid. ch. 13.

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1. Interesting Radio Farda interview with Iranian scholar Hassan Bashiriyeh concerning the recent political development in Iran, September 5, 2009 at 12:59pm.
4. See Amineh, Ibid. ch. 13.
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A successful capitalist modernisation is a pre-condition for development of civil society with corresponding forces.

To conclude, a revolutionary change in Iran is not probable as the current protest movement is defensive by nature and with no prospects of transforming into an offensive movement any time soon. Civil society structures and institutions are still immature and, as such, are not strong enough to continue the current movement and to realise a meaningful political transformation. Additionally, the current movement lacks strong leadership with a clear ideology and a strong organisation for mobilising the masses. At the same time, the regime and its main pillars, the coercive apparatus and the financial revenue (based on the income from oil and gas), enable the regime to survive. That said, the current system is not sustainable as result of its fundamental contradiction, the lack of elite cohesion, and the nationwide social protests.

It seems there scenarios, (which first introduced in 1999 during the student revolt) are still relevant despite the fact that the situation has totally changed.

- The first scenario envisages that social unrest continues to exist, protest re-emerges and is violently suppressed by the current regime. In this scenario, the militarisation of the regime intensifies.

- In the second scenario, reforms are incrementally implemented by the regime in the form of a ‘velvet revolution’. This scenario can only succeed if the constitution is altered in such a way that the principle of velayet-e faqih (governance of the jurist) is discarded.

- The third scenario is a change from below; a new social revolution. This is only possible if the current mass movement can create an alternative appealing ideology and an organisation with strong leadership able to challenge the current regime.

This last scenario is least likely for the reasons mentioned above. However, a new revolt or revolution for democracy in Iran in the future is not unimaginable, as Iranian history is full of examples of revolt and revolutions. A serious reform of the political system in the form of a ‘velvet revolution’ seems equally unlikely given that neither the Green Movement’s leaders nor the conservative forces are prepared to abandon the principle of velayet-e faqih. It seems then, taking into account the latest developments, that Iran’s immediate future will be one of continued suppression of the opposition and militarisation of the regime.

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The World Heritage Committee (‘the Committee’) has recently decided to remove Germany’s Dresden Elbe Valley from the Unesco World Heritage List ‘due to the building of a four-lane bridge in the heart of the cultural landscape which meant that the property failed to keep its outstanding universal value as inscribed’. According to the Committee, the construction of the Waldschoesschen bridge across the valley would tarnish the natural beauty of the area.

Ean Lee

EXTENDING SOME 18 KM along the river, from the Ubibau Palace and Ostragehege fields in the north-west, to the Pillnitz Palace and the Elbe River Island in the south-east, the Dresden Elbe Valley features low meadows, monuments and parks. It was recognised as a World Heritage Site in 2004. In March 2007, an administrative court in Bautzen ruled that the €160 million bridge project should proceed, in spite of the threat that the site would be struck off the World Heritage List. In negotiations, the Committee urged the German authorities to build a tunnel as an alternative and advised that the potential damage caused by such a project should be addressed, and that the property would be deleted from the List if work on the bridge was not stopped.

The Dresden Elbe Valley, Germany.

The Dresden Elbe Valley, an 18th and 19th century cultural landscape, was eventually removed from the list in 2009, and joins the Oryx Sanctuary as sites that have had their world heritage status rescinded.

Oman takes the dubious honour of being the first country to have an inscribed site removed from the list. The Committee took the unprecedented measure of de-listing Oman’s Oryx Sanctuary in 2007, after Oman decided to reduce the size of the site’s protected area by 90%, in contravention of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention. Oman’s decision to reduce the area for protection, as well as the decline in the population of the rare Arabian Oryx from 450 in 1996 to 65 in 2007, was perceived by the Committee as damaging the outstanding universal value of the site. The Committee believed that Oman failed to fulfil its obligations in conserving the sanctuary and also by planning to proceed with oil drilling at the site.

As the natural sanctuary was a massive 27,500 sq km before the reduction, the viability and capability in preventing habitat degradation and the poaching of the Arabian Oryx have always been questioned. While two sites have been taken off the list, many countries are eying to get their sites on it year after year, with the knowledge that inscription will galvanise tourism at their sites and benefits can be reaped. The long-term value of World Heritage Site status, however, has come under greater scrutiny.

Underhill says that it is difficult to avoid these consequences of gaining the world heritage status, quoting a 2008 Unesco mission finding: ‘Commercial interests have driven measures to facilitate large numbers of tourists, compromising the authentic heritage values which attracted visitors to the property in the first place.’ He argues that Unesco, with limited funds and despite its moral authority, is unable ‘to do much to help the swelling number of sites’.

Conservation is not always the goal, and a world heritage listing ‘represents a marketing tool that can turn obscure sites into must-see destinations’, Underhill says. Referring to the ancient city of Lijiang in China, he notes that the number of visitors rose annually from 1.7 million to 4.6 million in the decade of it being listed. Similarly in Siem Reap, Cambodia, the annual number of visitors at the Angkor Wat temple complex currently stands at more than a million, while in 1992 the figure was less than 10,000 per year.

In a recent Newsweek article, ‘To list or not to list’, William Underhill suggests that the list should be restricted, and resources should be concentrated on the sites that demand assistance most. He writes that there is deepening concern ‘the scheme, intended to preserve the world’s greatest treasures, may actually be contributing to their demise’.

Reservations

A few years ago, similar cautions had been expressed by New York Times journalist Seth Kugel in a provocative piece, ‘Flip side of the world heritage status’, which was published in the International Herald Tribune and other publications. In his article, he asks whether the World Heritage List’s meaning has been watered down by its rapid expansion.
One of the major benefits of a site making it onto the list is the recognition that translates into tourism income, and a proliferation of travel websites and publications, as well as heightened interest, which business agencies are certainly well aware of. Consequently, how should the effects of increased tourism and development be dealt with?

As a focal point and coordinator within Unesco, the World Heritage Centre provides advice to states, organises international assistance, and coordinates the reporting on conditions of sites and emergency action undertaken when a site is threatened, including day-to-day management of the World Heritage Convention. Kugel points out that the main objective of the World Heritage Centre is to conserve sites for the next generation through international cooperation, but its official mission statement makes no reference to tourism and economic development. He questions whether the World Heritage Centre can effectively monitor the rapidly-expanding number of listed sites, and provide technical assistance on conservation.

In his Newsweek article, Underhill reports that the centre employs less than a hundred personnel, and that its annual revenue of about US$20 million, including donations, can barely help developing countries in conserving their sites. The World Heritage List has increased steadily since it was introduced in 1978, recognising 12 sites, with the number of properties on the List now expanded to 890, of which 690 are cultural, 175 natural and 25 mixed sites. Today, Unesco world heritage status is well established and promoted by travel agents and websites.

Historical background

It was after World War One that the idea of initiating an international movement to protect heritage arose. The historical background to the World Heritage Convention was an event in 1959 which was a major contributing factor: international concern arose at that time by the decision to construct the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, which would have inundated the valley and destroyed a treasure of ancient Egyptian Civilisation, the Abu Simbel temples.

Abu Simbel temple, Egypt

Unesco initiated an international safeguarding campaign, following an appeal from the Egyptian and Sudanese governments. The temples were moved and reassembled in another area, with archaeological research expedited in the region that was later flooded. It was a successful campaign which cost an estimated US$80 million, with about 50 countries donating some US$40 million.

Borobodur Temple, Indonesia

The significance of shared responsibility and solidarity among nations in protecting prominent cultural sites inspired further efforts in the conservation of Italy’s Venice and its Lagoon; Indonesia’s Borobodur Temple; and Pakistan’s Moenjodaro Archaeological Ruins, leading eventually to the implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, as well as the establishment of the World Heritage Committee and Centre.
World Heritage site status: boon or bane? (Continued)

Promoting tourism, preserving heritage

In ‘Social Quality in the Conservation Process of Living Heritage Sites’, author Ping Kong refers to the ratification of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1972 and observes that ‘since then, both public and private sectors around the world have attached growing importance to the safeguarding and conservation of selected cultural and natural objects’, focusing on physical, ‘tangible’ characteristics. He also finds that ‘World Heritage sites receive major publicity and as a result become notable attractions for large numbers of tourists from all over the world’. However, in spite of the clear economic benefits and political prestige, this massive influx of tourists disrupts and in most cases, in the long run, destroys the social quality of the indigenous community. The deterioration of social quality could ultimately undermine the application of ‘conservation policies’.

The world’s ‘most outstanding’ sites face threats from tourism, while the World Heritage listing does not offer much in the way of support to alleviate the threats, writes Bart J.M. van der Au in his 2005 book, ‘Preserving the Heritage of Humanity: Obtaining World Heritage Status and the Impacts of Listing’. His research is an attempt to determine if the Convention has been effective in better preserving heritage sites; to examine whether inscription raises the level of preservation; and to determine whether the ‘best’ sites are selected.

The book also analyses the effects of tourism to see if they endanger a listed site, and asks whether the international community is willing to assist, and is capable of acting when sites are threatened, and if countries contribute financially through the Convention.

Among the major conclusions drawn from this study is one concerning outstanding universal value: there is doubt as to whether all inscribed sites meet the criterion. The research notes that with four cultural World Heritage sites for every natural site, and about half of the cultural sites located in Europe, questions are also raised regarding an imbalance in the list, and the willingness and capability of European countries to nominate (cultural) sites.

As says that there are no indications that the listed sites lose their outstanding universal qualities as a consequence of rapidly increasing visitor numbers after the World Heritage listing. He suggests that there could be a positive impact from the ‘high-visitor induced pressure’ to a majority of the listed sites in terms of site management, based on the assumption that visitors ‘only continue to visit high-quality environments’. However, with an unlimited number of visitors having unrestricted access to almost any site or part of it, he says that ‘World Heritage status has not had much influence on the site’s visitor management’.

Writing for API in 2008, Denis Gray said that an official count had revealed over 160 hotels and guesthouses providing accommodation in Luang Prabang ( Laos), a World Heritage site. From interviews with Luang Prabang experts and residents in 2007, AFP reported on the changes, noting that ‘World Heritage status has turned the former Laos Capital from a ghost town into a tourism hub, but too much of a good thing could soon prove the kiss of death’. Francis Engelmann, former UNESCO advisor and resident, complained of the increase in cars and noise, and cautioned that the 700-year-old town might turn into ‘a mono-industry where everything depends on tourism’.

Luang Prabang, Laos

The report said that the trendy mantra in Luang Prabang were concerned with sustainable and ethical eco-tourism, as in other parts of Asia, but the operational plans of tourist officials in Laos pushed for ‘more, more, more’.

Issues and debates

Heritage professionals have been debating the World Heritage scheme and its future. ‘Tjana Rakic explores the subject in her 2007 paper, ‘World Heritage: Issues and debates’, focusing on the indefinite expansion of the list as a contentious issue among heritage professionals. According to her, Peter Skoberne, the then Assistant to the Director (Central Europe) of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Natural and Natural Resources), was concerned that the list will include many high quality sites but will become too numerous to manage, with some sites not even meeting the criteria.

There are arguments for the list to be limited, with the warning that its significance might be lessened. Georgina Peard, a former programme officer at IUCN, was reported as saying that the credibility of the list is closely linked to the concept that it is not indefinite. To maintain credibility, Peard suggests that the priority should be on managing the existing sites rather than on inscribing new ones. She is supported in this argument by James Arnold, manager of the New Lanark Heritage site in the UK, who claims that inscription does not imply that sufficient funds will be offered for site preservation.

With unlimited growth of the list, Rakic cautions in her paper that there may be dilution in the value of the World Heritage site status, and doubts the abilities of Unesco and its advisory bodies in preserving listed properties, due to limited expertise and financial support for necessary conservation work.

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Acquiring the World Heritage label is neither necessarily an honour for the local population, nor a useful leverage for tourism and environmental organisations, as indicated by the discussion paper, entitled ‘World Heritage as NIMBY? The Case of the Dutch Part of the Wadden Sea’. Relating to the bilateral nomination of the Wadden Sea by Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, the paper was produced in 2002 by Bart J.M. van der Au, together with Peter D. Groote and Paulus P.P. Huigen.

Discussion in the paper focuses on the growing ‘opposition to handing over local or national heritage to mankind, as represented by Unesco, the few benefits for local populations; and the avenues through which local stakeholders can challenge imposition of the World Heritage status’. It reveals that local stakeholders, in public consultation within the Netherlands, did not support the nomination, and seems to have adopted the ‘Not in my backyard (NIMBY)’ approach to World Heritage inscription (the Wadden Sea has recently been inscribed on the list under the nomination of Germany and the Netherlands).

The study examines the factors which affect the nomination process; opposition by locals, the tourism industry and environmental agencies; and interests at stake that complicate benefits and costs evaluation and the assessment of the World Heritage status from a rational rather than emotional perspective. It concludes by raising the possibility that ‘far from being atypical, the lack of local support for the case of the Wadden Sea may be representative of a more general trend’.

As reported by Underhill in his article, Dresden city councillor Jan Mücke makes a strong point of it, giving attention to the locals, who supported the bridge plan in two referendums, and to whom ‘ridding the city of choking traffic was more important than any accolade’. The city councillor said: ‘In a democracy, we cannot have a dictatorship of a minority that, acting out of esthetic grounds, thinks they know more than the overwhelming majority of citizens’.

Local or international

Exploring the issues in depth, the above-mentioned paper refers to the English site of Stonehenge, which dates to a time when identifiers such as ‘English’ or ‘British’ had yet to be developed. It says that the English should be prepared to share Stonehenge with the rest of the world as a legacy, but finds that the national organisation, English Heritage, which arranged the nomination for inscription, seems to want ‘to keep it for themselves’. The sign at the site reads: ‘Stonehenge belongs to the nation and falls under the guardianship of English Heritage’.

Despite the obligation that ensures international protection of a site following listing, the authors argue that tangible protection of the site must be carried out at the national level, making international assistance impractical, particularly since Unesco requires that a national World Heritage Act be implemented as a condition for inscription.

Underhill notes that some countries in the developed world may harbour resentment towards outside interference and presents the US as an example. He points to the case of Unesco placing Yellowstone National Park on its endangered list in 1995 (after a private company proposed gold mining in the vicinity of the park) as a cause for American mistrust of UN interference, and a possible explanation of the absence of any proposal for new sites in the US to be listed.

Zacatecas, Mexico.
The Convention is a primary symbolic attempt to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of humanity at the international level, As observes in ‘Preserving the Heritage of Humanity’. ‘The step from national to global heritage is predominantly a symbolic one, as the World Heritage Convention hardly leads to a better preservation of listed sites’, he says, adding that ‘most actors involved in it – Unesco, countries and stakeholders of World Heritage sites – have been able to use the convention for their own purposes’. While it is difficult to ascertain that tourism is a direct consequence of a World Heritage award, the fact remains that heritage sites are increasingly being commercialised through tourism development. As says that by putting a site under a ‘spotlight’ (through inscription), it is under great danger as it attracts a large number of tourists, and heritage preservation seemed to have a very problematic co-existence with tourism at most World Heritage Sites’.

As writes that the debates ranged from numerous management issues caused by ‘high visitation numbers, such as managing the increased numbers of visitors, finding the balance between conservation and commercialisation of the site, producing and implementing an appropriate management plan and implementing appropriate site monitoring systems’.

He points out that cities, such as Zamose (Poland) and Zacatecas (Mexico) are both in dire need of renovation, but receive scant national or international financial support in their preservation efforts, and that ‘the accolade ensuing from World Heritage designation is more often capitalized on by the tourism industry rather than accompanied by increased preservation efforts’.

Filling the gaps
Ultimately, as Underhill affirms, ‘there is no question that Unesco can exert a positive influence’, and the agency can help to avert the worst depredations. In 2004, ICOMOS produced a study, compiled by Jukka Jokilehto, to provide quantifiable evidence in assisting the effort to ensure that World Heritage is adequately reflected on the list. Titled ‘The World Heritage List: Filling the gaps – an action plan for the future’, it contains an analysis on both the World Heritage and Tentative Lists that could be used for developing a global strategy for a ‘credible, representative and balanced’ list.

Addressing gaps in the list for cultural properties, this study proposes an action plan to redress the perception that several of these properties do not reflect ‘the total corpus’ of the world’s cultural heritage, in all its diversity and complexity. Certainly, after more than 30 years of implementation of the Convention, more critical assessments of its contributions toward preserving the world’s most outstanding heritage properties are to be expected. Such assessments shall be beneficial in making the Convention more effective, such as by rendering more emphasis on the international rather than national in the selection of site and impact of listing; addressing the two major management issues of 1) reconciling conservation and commercialisation, and 2) dealing with an increased number of visitors to sites; and ensuring that the value of World Heritage status will not depreciate as more sites and properties are added to the list.

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Illustration
The Bangladesh government has placed the eradication of child labour in the leather sector high on its agenda, but many children are still found working in different parts of the production chain. Children are pulled to Dhaka by job opportunities, but more importantly, pushed to live in difficult conditions at home in the countryside. Once they arrive in Dhaka life is hard and returning to their village is no longer an option.

"I am from Noakhali and I migrated to Dhaka one year ago, together with my uncle and my aunt," said a 16-year-old boy from my village in my town and then stopped. My uncle asked me if I wanted to work in Dhaka because I was doing nothing. My father was ill, so I left. He died one month ago. My brother is a shoeing operator in this tannery and he arranged the job for me. My job is to help iron the leather to dry it and make it flat. I work from 6 am to 8 pm, 5 days a week. I earn 1000 taka a month."

Anna Ensing

The British Government has placed the eradication of child labour in the leather sector high on its agenda, but many children are still found working in different parts of the production chain. Children are pulled to Dhaka by job opportunities, but more importantly, pushed to live in difficult conditions at home in the countryside. Once they arrive in Dhaka life is hard and returning to their village is no longer an option.

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The leather industry is a male dominated sector and working conditions in the tanneries and small factories are harsh. Hazaribagh is one of the most polluted areas in Dhaka. Living conditions also affect the children's health and well-being. Hazaribagh is one of the most polluted areas in Dhaka. The inhabitants are exposed to health hazards created by the tannings process and other stages of leather production. Boys who also live at their workplace are affected 24 hours a day. More importantly, these boys have lost contact with their families, they have no leisure time and they don't go to school. The incomes are often not sufficient for the entire household and children have to contribute. Other children have lost a parent, which results in a serious decrease in household income.

Some of the boys have migrated to Dhaka independently. They are expected to support themselves and also to send some of their income to their families. The boys usually end up working in a tannery or a factory since these workplaces also offer a place to sleep; some boys are able to live as a paying guest with a relative or a village neighbour. This is the case for ten-year-old Mamun, who lives and works in a belt factory at the Bangladeshi tannery. Mamun is the only working child at the factory and describes his daily life as follows:

"My father, mother and brother are still in the village. I came to Dhaka with my uncle when I was very little. For the past two years I have been working in this factory with 12 other persons. We work from 10 in the morning to 12 in the night. We sleep here, at the workplace, and take our food all together. I get 1000 a month a month."

Reasons for work

The first and most frequent reason children give for having work is poverty. Rural poverty is widespread and may be aggravated by 'shocks' (death or illness in the family), which are often an immediate cause for children to start working. Children in the countryside, but also in urban areas, are aware of their poverty and feel responsible for supporting their family.

A second relevant explanation is related to education. Children not only stop school because they work, but many also appear to start working because they have not been enrolled in education or they have dropped out. In particular, the increase in costs when advancing from primary to secondary education is a reason for parents to pull their children out of school. As a 16-year-old boy explained: 'The person with whom I arrived in Dhaka said to me: 'he is doing nothing in the village, shall I take him?' And my mother welcomed this because we were neither studying nor earning money.'

There are also pull factors that explain why children work in the leather industry. Big companies generally do not employ child labour, because of the need for assured labour and quality products and because inspections are most likely to take place in their enterprises. Small and informal companies, however, do employ children. These entrepreneurs are never necessarily merciless exploiters of cheap and docile labour. Many originate from poor families themselves, some have even been child labourers. After years of low paid work, they have managed to save and set up their own business. Because of the low investments and production costs, their products are of relatively poor quality and only sold for the domestic market. They employ child labourers for social considerations, but at the same time, the economic benefit of hiring children instead of adults is quite substantial.

Some children at work at home with their parents where, for example, they manufacture leather gloves. In these cases, the businesses who give preference to child labourers often have no knowledge of who exactly is doing the work. It is an example of subcontracting within the family. The reason parents involve their children in 'helping them', as they call it, is that they get paid per unit and the child's help increases the family income.

Working conditions

The working conditions of children vary per production stage and specific activity. In general, children work long days and have assisting tasks. Working schedules in tanneries and factories can be 14 hours a day, 7 days a week. Working in a tannery leaves most children little time to play, or to travel to their parents in the villages. Most children don't use gloves, boots or masks and come into direct contact with chemicals and hazardous waste produced in the tannery (Gain 1998; Karmi 2005). Children are exposed to health hazards created by the tanning process and other stages of leather production. Boys who also live at their workplace are affected 24 hours a day. More importantly, these boys have lost contact with their families, they have no leisure time and they don't go to school. If they were to quit their job, they would also lose a place to live. Moreover, as long as they are responsible for their families in the countryside, returning home is not an option. Since there is no alternative work, most of these boys end up working in the leather sector until they are adults.

This study was part of the IREWOC project "Worst Forms of Child Labour in Asia", for which research was conducted in Nepal, Indonesia and Bangladesh. The project was financed by Plan Netherlands.

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References


About Us

The Bangladesh Council of Leather Industries was established on June 1, 1975. The main objectives of the Council are: to promote and protect the interests of the leather industry and the leather workers, and to stimulate and encourage research and development in the leather industry.

The Council has a Board of Directors consisting of representatives of the leather industry, the government, and the Labour Department. The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Council.

The Council has two main functions: to promote and protect the interests of the leather industry, and to provide a forum for discussions on matters of common interest to the industry.

The Council is responsible for the implementation of the various programs of the government, as well as for the promotion of the leather industry. The Council is also responsible for the protection of the interests of the leather workers.

The Council is a non-profit organization, and all its activities are financed through membership fees and the proceeds of its activities.

The Council is a member of the International Confederation of Leather Industries (ICL), which is an international organization of leather industries from all over the world.

The Council is also a member of the Bangladesh Business Council (BBC), which is a umbrella organization of all the business associations in Bangladesh.

The Council is also a member of the Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), which is a umbrella organization of all the chambers of commerce and industry in Bangladesh.
SCENE 1: A middle-aged Malay male walks out of my local barber shop run by a Tamil-Hindu proprietor. A few seconds later, he returns and points indignantly at hair stubbles on his chin that had somehow escaped the barber’s blade. Before the bemused barber could react, he storms out dramatically and utters, ‘pundik!’ (Tamil for vagina).

SCENE 2: A few months later, I am at my local car accessories shop to purchase a button battery for my car keys. The Chinese male attending to me is not sure about something and he consults the shop manager, a young Malay woman. In response to his query, she punctuates her sentence with ‘Soh hai!’ (Cantonese for stupid vagina).

SCENE 3: I am working late into the night on a document that is due early the next day. I am tired and am not in an inspired mood given the last minute nature of the request. Suddenly, the computer screen turns pitch black, losing the hard intellectual labour of the last one hour. I raise my hands in exasperation with the expiute ‘fuck!’ exploding out of my mouth.

FINALLY, all my interviewees admitted to a familiarity with polyglot swearing, a bonus of living in racialised and multicultural Malaysia. Whether through active learning or by osmotic enculturation over the years, they have acquired a working knowledge of a smattering of ‘swear words’ in different vernaculars.

For me, this suggests an arresting visual image. Picture the face of a heavily tattooed structure of a common language that supposedly facilitates intercultural communication and therefore unifies all speakers of diverse linguistic origins. Beyond and out of sight runs a substratian network of intersecting tunnels (sewers) laden with picturesque vocabularies that flow and mix in the heavy traffic of everyday interactions.

While all Malaysians might not be fully aware of each other’s entire lexicon and the nuances in deploying them, what remains interesting, as a subject for anthropological research and for constructive engagement, are the unintended ways in which subaltern ‘dirty words’ have the power to shock, insult and disrupt as well as to connect forcefully and meaningfully across diverse cultures.

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Deep play with the forbidden
Multiculturalism is often understood as a collection of taboos: the things one must be politically correct about, whether one is convinced of them or not. Yet every catalogue of what to do and not to do includes an unwritten and informal ‘swear word’ catalogue of what may be done despite politeness and correctness and, often, these breaches of fixed codes are the oil in the sometimes machine-like mechanisms of multicultural coexistence. In anthropology, we have the odd term ‘jargon’ (coined by A. R. Rackitt-Brown) for such culturally based taboos. The term is odd because it is borrowed from the language of computers. It may appear superficially, is not about disrespect at all, on the contrary, it demonstrates a shared confidence that can breach and bridge the boundaries that politeness universally demands. Most of us know just such ‘jargon’ as family matters: odd confidences with your grandparents (past: never tell your parents to tell you that), with your sister-in-law (again: pest), or with the much-maligned mother-in-law or her daughter-in-law.

When such taboo breaches occur in public, they take on an extra charge and are become cultural symbols. Of course they may at other times appear as codified, as a sign of play. This is why I am interested in these bumaye, those everyday and even ethnic jokes. All of them play with obscenity, prejudice and even racism, but the point is, they play with them.

And play has a deeply human potential of sharing liberation from the sometimes all too serious life with another person who appreciates that momentary liberation from normal norms.

Cord Bauman
University of Amsterdam

Don’t take it ‘easy’ in Indonesia
Yeoh Song Guan is such a talented writer! Why isn’t he more famous? Have the phrase ‘societal enculturation’ and will steal it for sure. Three Malay swear words I find particularly interesting: ‘kera’ (monkey) or ‘sakai, prak’ (macaque) to suggest an absence of the distinctive smell. And as for gampang, it’s not difficult to see how ‘easy’ in Indonesian can become the moral laxity needed to produce an illegitimate child.

Amir Muhammad
Writer, publisher and occasional movie-maker

This is a chapter from the book The Malaysian Way of Life, edited by Julian C. H. Lee (Uphala: Marshall Cavendish). It features 30 contributions from authors including Janet Carton, Bill Wiknes, Lee San Ooi, Joel Kahn, Alberto Coss and Michael Billig. These contributions appeared the Malaysian arts, culture and politics magazine, Off The Edge, over 2006 and 2009. The book is available from www.kinokbooks.com

in polyglot and multiethnic Malaysia, swearwords - like the artefacts of cuisine, dressing and worldview - are open to the forces of hybridisation. And they are also equally subject to the need for appropriate public linguistic and social behaviour as powerfully mediated by the schooling system. Yet, at the same time, there runs an undertone of contra- ptedual education. For instance, while I was in lower secondary school, graphic ‘dirty words’ from the Malay, Chinese and Tamil lexicon were uttered with ease among male friends and foes without fear of intellectual property infringement. In as much as these words arguably worked to bridge ethnic and cultural domains, they also skirted the boundaries of supposed civic behaviour as far as was possible, they were out of the earshot of the figures of authority – teachers and prefects – to escape disciplinary retribution.

Not surprisingly, ‘dirty words’ were on abundant display in the private-not-private space of bodily exudation – the boys’ toilet walls. Anonymously etched on them were Picasso-like and grotesque artistic renditions of the human genitalia and acrobatic coital poses. Sometimes, to make doubly sure that there is no doubt as to the target of their pieces of work, they would be cleverly captioned with the names of individuals, local and foreign.

For many in adult life, the spectrum of the polyglot lexicon of local swearwords has dwindled or lapsed through infrequent use. They have been overshadowed by English expletives popularised in commercial movies and pornography.

dirty words

Interviewed friends and colleagues of both sexes and of different ethnic ancestries. I asked them to ‘talk dirty’ to me. I requested them to list all the swearwords that they know and describe how they would use them. Though most of my ‘findings’ were not novel, there were some surprises.

Firstly, a large proportion of ‘dirty words’ that they could remember in their own vernacular usually referred to human genitalia. Female genitalia (eg., Malay: pantat; pud; Tamil: punk or kottie; Hokkien: cebai) were far more readily recalled than those of the male’s (eg., Malay; butut; Tamil: kott; Hokkien: long choo). If the male’s genitalia are used, it would be to highlight its shortcomings and impotency.

Tamil slang has the additional feature of including pubic hair in the repertoire of insults. If it becomes part of the other option of saying ‘pluck your pubic hair’ to get one’s offensive point across. This is not surprising if one is familiar with the grammatical grammar of hair still salient in South Asian cultural and religious practices. For instance, loose and unbound hair is associated with brazen sexuality and the loosening of social control; whilst a shaven head signifies asceticism and order. By comparison, the Hokkien-Chinese equivalent seems to make great play on the bad odour of the female genital (chow cebai) as a metonym for the despicable character of the person intended. Clearly, the politics of pollution (smell) is foregrounded here.

Another thread cutting through my interviewees’ comments is one that would not be surprising to feminists. If the speaker’s intention is to denigrate the hearer more sharply, he/she has the option of resorting to phrases highlighting the latter’s mother’s genitalia as a focus of attention (eg., Malay: ‘pluck your pubic hair’ to get one’s offensive point across. This is not surprising if one is familiar with the contextual grammar of hair still salient in South Asian cultural and religious practices. For instance, loose and unbound hair is associated with brazen sexuality and the loosening of social control; whilst a shaven head signifies asceticism and order. By comparison, the Hokkien-Chinese equivalent seems to make great play on the bad odour of the female genital (chow cebai) as a metonym for the despicable character of the person intended. Clearly, the politics of pollution (smell) is foregrounded here.

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Yet another category of vernacular insults refers to the act of copulation. Again, the persona of the mother is a popular trope. And play has a deeply human potential of sharing liberation from the sometimes all too serious life with another person who appreciates that momentary liberation from normal norms.

While all Malaysians might not be fully aware of each other’s entire lexicon and the nuances in deploying them, what remains interesting, as a subject for anthropological research and for constructive engagement, are the unintended ways in which subaltern ‘dirty words’ have the power to shock, insult and disrupt as well as to connect forcefully and meaningfully across diverse cultures.

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'The study of sexuality and power

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All Java knows this – how the Dutch allowed the kraton [of Yogyakarta] to be turned into a brothel and how [Prince] Dipanagara [1785-1855] has sworn to destroy it to the last stone'.

Peter Carey


Below: The mystic prince and his family. Coloured drawing of Dipanagara in exile in Makassar (1833-55) reading a text on Islamic mysticism (tasawwuf) accompanied by his wife, Radèn Ayu Retnaningsih, and one of his sons, 'Pangéran Ali Basah', who is holding a vision of a Javanese spirit. Leiden Codex Orientalis 7398 (Kees van Hugenhout's collection). Photograph courtesy of the Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden.

The WORDS OF THE LEIDEN LAWYER, Willem van Hogendorp (1795-1838), then serving as a legal adviser to Commissioner-General L. P. J. du Bus de Gisignies (in office, 1826-1830), could not have been more blunt. Writing to his father Gijsbert Karel (1762-1834) during the second year of the Java war (1825-30), the 32-year-old Willem confided that the liberties that the Dutch government representatives in Yogyakarta had allowed themselves on the eve of the war 'could never see the light of day' and had 'rightly provoked Dipanagara’s just rage' (Van Hogendorp 1913:40). Reflecting that it was not ‘the war as such or the number of our enemies’ which constituted his greatest concern for the future of Dutch rule in the Indies, but rather what he termed ‘the spirit of the whole population of Java from one end to the other […] They are fed up with us’ (Van Hogendorp 1913:170). He then offered this pithy summary:

‘The feeling of unrest is extremely great throughout Java […] As concerns the cause [of this] it is nothing else than that the Dutch Government […] has made such trouble over the past ten years most vile in the eyes of the Javanese.’ (Van Hogendorp 1913:142)

The Leiden lawyer’s words were echoed by the Java War leader following his capture in Magelang on March 28, 1830. During conversations with his German officer escort, Lieutenant Julius Heinrich Knoerle (1798-1833), at the time of his voyage into exile in Manado in May-June 1830, the prince launched a torrent of abuse against the Dutch officials of the pre-war period and their inability to speak anything but market Malay, complaining that ‘Chevallier [P.F.H. Chevallier, Assistant-Resident of Yogyakarta, 1795-1825, in office, 1823-1825] and other Dutchmen had trotted into our [Yogyakarta] kraton as though it was a stable and had shouted and called as though it had become a market’ (Van der Kemp 1896:313-4). So offensive was the conduct of the Dutch in the eyes of the Javanese at this time that one of the prince’s relatives, the chief pĕngulu (senior religious official) of Rembang, would later cite the sexual conduct of Java’s post-1816 colonial masters as amongst the four key issues that would need to be addressed before the Java War could be brought to an end (Louw and De Klerk 1904, iii:494).

Plus ça change?

But were these issues really so new? Surely, the behaviour of Dutch East India Company (VOC) officials in the 18th century had hardly been characterised by respect, especially when it came to relations with indigenous women? The Dutch Indies was a slave-owning society and would remain such well into the 19th century. In Surabaya, Semarang and smaller VOC posts outside Batavia, it was common to find Company officials maintaining harems of female slaves. Willem van Hogendorp’s uncle, Dirk (1761-1822), like his nephew newly arrived in the Indies and then serving as Gezaghebber (Commissioner) of Surabaya and the Doutbhoek (in office, 1794-98), expressed...
Towards an intimate history of the consolidation of Dutch rule in early 19th century Java

his horror at the ‘scandalous behaviour’ of his superior Johan Frederik van Reede tot de Parkkerl, the Governor of Java’s Northeast Coast (1757-1802, in office, 1796-1801), who could be seen ‘reading the Bible and praying in the midst of a dozen Makassarese and Javanese harlots who encouraged his lechery’ (Boisma and Raben 2008:70). With the rise of European women cut off by the disruptions caused by the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1789-84) and the subsequent Revolutions and Napoleonic conflicts in Europe, concubinage, or the sexual exploitation of local women, became increasingly the norm for VOC officials, especially for lower-ranking military personnel who were not allowed to marry (Boisma and Raben 2008:70).

Nor was it just amongst Europeans that such practices of concubinage and sexual exploitation were noted. The practice of allowing European and Chinese visitors to the javaanse and Balinese courts to access lower-ranking court women who functioned as prostitutes was apparently common in pre-colonial Indonesia (Andaya 1998:16; Cruze 2004:70). In the mid 18th century, there is an interesting example of the use of such women to cement a political relationship between well-born javanese and senior European officials. In the Chronicle of the Fall of Yogyakarta (1812-16), the princely author, an uncle of the third sultan of Yogyakarta, Hamengkubuwana II (reigned, 1812-1814), relates how he himself, a woman of Balambangan origin from the eastern salient of java, came to the court of the first sultan, Mangkubumi (reigned, 1749-1792), as one of the ruler’s wives. She had apparently been given to the sultan by the Governor of Java’s Northeast Coast, Nicolaas Harning (in office, 1754-1761), in payment for Mangkubumi’s personal gift of his own favourite unfruitful wife, Raden Ayu Sepuh, whom the Yogou monarch had presented in recognition of the Governor’s skill in brokering the Giyanti treaty (13 February 1755). The treaty had divided south-central java between the courts of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, thus paving the way for the foundation of Mangkubumi’s kingdom (Carey 1992:54).

Whatever one may think of the use of women as pawns in an elaborate system of exchange between powerful 18th century men, at least in this case a degree of respect appears to have existed between Mangkubumi and the Somarang Governor. In the years preceding the Java War such feelings were no longer evident. At the political level, the coming of Herman Willem Daendels (1762-1818), Napoleon’s only non-French former Napoleonic war officers and fortune seekers descended to java. The period which followed the formal British handover of java on August 19, 1816, witnessed a tide of former Napoleonic war officers and fortune seekers descend- ing on java to make a career for themselves (Van den Doel 1994-49). The majority of these newcomers had no prior experience of the Indies (Van den Broek 1893:3). Indeed, ‘instead of knowledge of far-off affairs’, one keen-eyed traveller wrote shortly after the hand-over, ‘they brought over a numer- ous and needy progeny, and had no other intention […] than to restore in the shortest possible time […] their dilapidated affairs in the mother country so that, without having to trouble themselves further with the Indies, they could return home with their nests nicely feathered’ (Olivier 1830, III:425; Van den Doel 1994-49). They also brought with them the values of post-Revolutionary Europe, what M.K. Gandhi would later describe as the ‘moral righteousness which looks down on people outside Europe’ (Gandhi 1900, V:22:158).

Reflecting on this event, the post-Java War Dutch Resident of Yogyakarta, Frans Valck (1799-1842, in office 1831-41), himself intimately involved with the sexual politics of the court in the 1830’s, wrote that the decline in the morals of the women of the Yogyakarta kraton could be dated back to the British attack (Carey 2008:440). Although none of the Yogyakarta Residents during the British interregnum (1811-1816) appear to have taken advantage of their position to have such liaisons – the scholar-administrator John Crawford (1783-1868, in office, 1811-1814, 1816) and his military and civilian successors were either expressly uxorious or skilful in hiding their intimate affairs – this was not the case after the Dutch return in 1816.

The returned Dutch Administration 1816-1825

The period which followed the formal British handover of Java and its dependencies on August 19, 1816, witnessed a tide of former Napoleonic war officers and fortune seekers descend- ing on Java to make a career for themselves (Van den Doel 1994-49). The majority of these newcomers had no prior experience of the Indies (Van den Broek 1893:3). Indeed, ‘instead of knowledge of far-off affairs’, one keen-eyed traveller wrote shortly after the hand-over, ‘they brought over a numer- ous and needy progeny, and had no other intention […] than to restore in the shortest possible time […] their dilapidated affairs in the mother country so that, without having to trouble themselves further with the Indies, they could return home with their nests nicely feathered’ (Olivier 1830, III:425; Van den Doel 1994-49). They also brought with them the values of post-Revolutionary Europe, what M.K. Gandhi would later describe as the ‘moral righteousness which looks down on people outside Europe’ (Gandhi 1900, V:22:158).

Such ‘moral righteousness’, however, went hand-in-hand with a permissiveness in sexual matters which the javanese found highly offensive. The sexual mores of senior Dutch officials soon became a source of comment in the principalities, and nowhere more so than in Yogyakarta where Dipanagara and its kraton contemporaries were shocked by the behaviour of the new Resident, Major Hubert Gerard van Nuyssen van Burger (1782-1832, in office, 1816-22), whom the prince described tactfully as someone ‘who [merely] enjoyed eating and drinking and the spreading of Dutch ways (karĕmanya mangan-minum lan anjrah cero Weil)’ (Carey 2008:108). One of the new Resident’s ‘Dutch ways’ was his maintenance of a curious ménage à trois in which both he and his deputy, R.C.N. d’Aub (1786-1824; in office, 1817-1823), shared the same woman. Another was his penchant for liaisons with professional women, such as the well-endowed dame de Pekalongan (lady from Pekalongan) whom Nahuys described as making the demi-mondaines of the Palais-Royal entertainment centre in Paris look like amateurs (Houben 1994:108). The gallant major, though, never quite reached the level of his opposite number in Surakarta, Deenik Willem Pieter van Haak (1779-1840; in office, 1816-1817), a strong supporter of the former Franco-Dutch regime, who went through a whole series of relationships with javanese mistresses and left behind a bankrupt estate and ten illegitimate children by the time of his death in Surabaya in 1840 (De Haan 1935:558-9).

Eurasian mistresses and dalliances with the wives of junior officials were one thing, seducing and appropriating the womenfolk of well-born javanese quite another. Yet this appears to have been increasingly the norm amongst Dutch officials in central java in the years leading up to the java War. In words of his own volition, ‘the hatred and contempt’ which the javanese felt for Europeans in these years ‘were clearly quietened by what both senior and junior officials permitted themselves with regard to native women: a number of Residents known [to me] by name forced the [javanese] chiefs under their authority to surrender their legal wives [and daughters] to them’ (Van Hogendorp 1913:40).
In the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Java War, the sexual conduct of the Dutch Resident of Yogyakarta Antonië Hendrik Smissaert (1777-1832, in office, 1823-1825), and his senior officials—namely Assistant-Resident Chevallier, and the official Residency Translator, Johannes Godlieb Dietrée (1782-1826, in office, 1796-1825)—was cut from the same cloth. Aided by the Yogyakarta prime minister (poti), Danuura IV (in office, 1813-47)—a serial philanderer— as well as Dipanagara’s stepmother, Ratu Bu (post-1820, Ratu Ageng), the mother of the fourth sultan, Hamengkubuwana IV (reigned, 1814-1822), and her lover, the commander of the royal bodyguard, Major Tumenggung Wiranagara, acted as ‘procurers’ of court women for European officials (Carey 2008:440); the senior representatives of the Dutch government in Yogyakarta engaged in a debauch.

Dietrée, an Islamic convert and according to one source pious about his religious duties (Carey 1981:260 note 106; 2008:549), appears to have maintained clandestine relations with various women of rank in the court, amongst whom was a sister of Dipanagara’s uncle, Pangíran Mangkubumi. When news of these affairs between the court Raden Ayu and the patih and the Residency Interpreter was relayed to Dipanagara by his stepmother, Ratu Bu (Ageng), he is supposed to have told her, ‘I do not wish to know anything about them, I leave them all to your ordering!’ Chevallier, meanwhile, appears to have been driven by an erotic energy which bordered on the manic. His actions were rendered doubly abusive by his overweening arrogance and contempt for the ‘inlander’ (native) evident in all his contacts with the Javanese. A typical product of the brash new Europe of the post-Revolutionary era and with little understanding of Javanese society—like so many who made their way to Java in the post-1816 period—this former hussar officer and Waterloo veteran could perhaps be seen as a classic illustration of Ann Stoler’s argument that sexual control was fundamental to the way in which colonial policies operated in the high colonial period (Stoler 2002:78). Except that in Chevallier’s case unbridled lust rather than control seems to have been the essence of his dealings with the court Raden Ayu.

His superior, Smissaert, who later attempted to shift most of the blame onto him for the outbreak of the Java War—not so difficult given that he had conveniently died in the meantime—wrote that Chevallier had constantly engaged in love affairs with Javanese princesses and the wives of Javanese nobles, stating that ‘in general his conduct with numerous Javanese women and girls was not only extremely improper but sometimes even attended by insults.’ Interestingly, Smissaert himself admitted candidly to the Dutch monarch that although he had strictly eschewed love affairs with court women, ‘It would be hypocritical to pretend that in a land where it was generally known that there was more laxity over the rules of decency towards women than in the Netherlands, and where the [local] women themselves were not of the highest virtue, he [Smissaert] had excelled over his predecessors and contemporaries in his [sexual] conduct […].’

As for Smissaert’s deputy, it seems he even boasted of his conquests (Van Hogendorp 1913:143; Van Praag 1947:266), brushing aside all his superior’s warnings about the dangers of relationships with the court princesses. According to a Javanese source, Chevallier had mistrusted one of Dipanagara’s...
sisters whom he had found bathing in a river and had lived for several years with one of the prince's unofficial wives. 14 When the concubine (selir) in question tried to go back to her own residence at Tegalrejo, Dipanagara had apparently refused her entry because she had slept with a European. Chevallier himself is then said to have gone to see the prince to ask why she had not been admitted, to which Dipanagara had replied – understandably – that he did not maintain his selir for the pleasure of the Assistant-Resident, whereupon Chevallier had become angry stating that 'he would do what he liked with native women' and had hit the prince over the head.15 This report seems so outrageous that it would be hard to credit, but for separate evidence deriving from one of the prince’s senior religious advisers, Kyai Gajali, that Dipanagara’s treatment by Chevallier and the Residency Interpreter was quite unbelievably awful (Carey 2008: 550-1).

Conclusions
In the utterly altered epoch in which elite Javanese were living after June 1812, such sexual exploitation of their womenfolk by powerful Europeans may have seemed yet another humiliating aspect of their colonial status. But they might have reflected on the changes which had occurred since the late 18th century when relations had been marked by rather greater reciprocity and respect, at least at the elite level. The reforms introduced by Daendels’ Franco-Dutch regime (1808-11) and the subsequent British interim administration (1811-1816) may have changed the political face of Java forever, but it was at the personal level that their impact was most acutely felt. This was particularly the case in the aftermath of the Dutch restoration in 1816 when the racism and arrogance of post-Revolutionary Europe struck Indonesia with the force of an Asian tsunami. In the run-up to the Java War, the behaviour of the Dutch representatives in Yogyakarta proved to be a major contributing factor in the break with Dipanagara and the prince’s decision to go to war in 1825.

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H.M. de Kock (in office, 1827-30; 1830-31), H.M. de Kock private collection 111, J.F.W. van Nes (in office, 1827-30; 1830-31), the chief minister’s conduct with the ladies of the court was ‘improper’, and he stated that he ‘sometimes took women from the court to the villages to debauch them’. National Archief, H.M. de Kock private collection 111, J.F.W. van Nes (Yogyakarta) to H.M. de Kock (Magelang), 16-12-1829.
H.M. de Kock private collection 402, De vooroordeel, ’s-Gravenhage, 11-10-1829, testimony of Kyai Rosali, ‘Korte verhandeling’ (for full title see note 8 above), 28-1-1830.
Kakawin world; Marriage and sexuality in the Indic courts of Java and Bali.

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Notes
2. On Lieutenant Hector Maclane of the 14th (Buckinghamshire) Regiment of Foot who was wounded in the Java War, see Carey 1992: 414 note 78; Carey 2008: 349.
3. The author’s own position as Resident of Yogyakarta to fight the fifth sultan, Hamengkubuwana V (reigned 1822-1825, 1826-1835), to fight with his own sulu (in office, 1824-1825, 1826-1835), to fight with his own sulu wife (sultana) (Houwen 1994:109) and, according to one hostile source, even to impose one of his own discarded mistresses on the young sultan as an official consort, Houwen 1994: 199-200.
4. Willem van Hogendorp remarked that with regard to such sexual relations ‘the British Administration [1811-1816] gives a completely different picture. It seems merely to be a principle to which the situation in which prevailed after the Dutch return in 1816’, see Van Hogendorp 1813-40.
5. This was of Abou’s wife, nie Anna Louisa van den Berg, whom Nahuys would later marry after she had divorced d’Abo in 1824. Van Hogendorp 1813-40.
6. This was d’Abo’s wife, nie Anna Louisa van den Berg, whom Nahuys would later marry after she had divorced d’Abo in 1824. Van Hogendorp 1813-40.
7. According to a later Yogyakarta Resident, Johan Frederik Wairawan van Nes (in office, 1827-30; 1830-31), the chief minister’s conduct with the ladies of the court was ‘improper’, and he stated that he ‘sometimes took women from the court to the villages to debauch them’. National Archief, H.M. de Kock private collection 111, J.F.W. van Nes (Yogyakarta) to H.M. de Kock (Magelang), 16-12-1829.
10. National Archief, Van Alphen Engelhard private collection (on- winsten 1941) 28, ‘Stukken Smisaeart’, A.H. Smisaeart (‘The Hague’) to King William (The Hague/Brussels), n.y. (9-9-1828), who mentioned Chevallier’s ‘rude and unfriendly’ (rue en ommrède) manner towards the Javanese on the many tours which he did with the path through the countryside. He would also drink alcohol in the open on these tours (Carey 1981:256 note 89).
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

The author is preparing an Indonesian translation of his Power of Prophecy, to be published in 2011 as Kuasa Nium: Pengaruh Dipanagara dan ekstrim totonan lane di Jawa, 1785-1855 by KPC (Kerusakan Populer Gramedia).
In recent years, much has been written on the subject of art collections stolen during the German occupation of Holland during World War Two and the return of these artworks to the original owners or their heirs (such as the well-known collection of the Dutch art dealer Jacques Goudstikker). In occupied Europe works of art stolen by the Nazi’s and bought at bargain prices were transported to Germany. But what of the art collections in the former Netherlands Indies during the Japanese occupation? Louis Zweers reveals their fate.

Louis Zweers

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Religion and Global Empire

Scholars working on issues relating to the place of religion in Asia generally share two rather basic problems: ‘religion’ and ‘Asia’. The tendentious nature of both of these categories as they have been used in the history of the modern academy, the Eurocentric origins of their formulations and the political background to their inventions intertwined with the history of 19th century imperial expansion are generally well acknowledged in the field. Research that looks to the relationship between religion and Asia also needs to confront the history through which these two categories have been interrelated and symbiotically manufactured in the modern academy.

Kiri Paramore
I would suggest there have been two major reactions to this over the past 20 years. One is simply to refer to new, more modern and less politically laden Western theoretical literature in place of that condemned in the second half of the 20th century as orientalist. The rise of the use of postmodern theories of cultural critique, for example as in this reaction. Foucault and Derrida (to use just two examples) are as Eurocentric in the historiographical basis of their theories as any Orientalists of the turn of the century, as, unlike Hegel or Marx, they did not even engage studies of non-European societies. Yet some have regarded it acceptable to use them as theoretical prisms in the way that Marx or Weber were employed earlier. This is why I refer to the postmodern trend in scholarship on East Asian history as ‘neo-orientalism’. It forced a variety of human experience into limited theoretical constructs which were conceived only in relation to Western experience, while also aggressively denying the validity of alternative academic approaches, in a similar manner to the classic orientalism described by Said.

The problems inherent in the Western academic tradition of the study of politics and religion in Asia have also, however, been answered in a very different way by scholars who have approached the issue in a more transnational fashion. The systematic critique of what came to be called orientalism during the 1970s, led by the likes of Perry Anderson, and institutionalised by Said, led to scholars in the 1990s who sought to narrate a history of Asian societies which redefined the role of both religion and Asia in the world, including in the global empires of the 19th and 20th centuries. Scholars like Peter Van Der Veer have challenged the very idea of being able to narrate a single Asian history, for example as ‘Asia versus’ - thereby removing the basis of otherness which underlay the construction of Asia as an alterity. His positioning of religious experience to the margins of the contemporary modern empires and nation-states similarly broke the chains that had formerly shackled the religious sphere to the realm of passive interiority.

Most of the articles in this special issue follow this trend by showing how interaction between religion and politics was often affected by issues which crossed borders, not only in terms of interactions between colonised and coloniser, but also in the exchange and development of both secularist and state religious nationalisms in Asia's countries and regions, including before the modern period.

In the first article in this collection, Peter Van Der Veer argues the necessity of looking through what he calls the archive of imperial knowledge to understand what he sees as the particular modern encounter that links the study of religion in Asia to modern, global structures of knowledge. The critical lens through which he formulates this ‘archive’, and the agency for different players around it is made clear through reference to what he sees as the common global experience of modernity. The subsequent piece by Prasenjit Duara, conversely, looks beyond modernity back to earlier periods of Chinese history. His paper confronts what he calls the ‘liberal-tradition’ with the history of religion and politics in pre-modern China. Instead of focusing on a ‘modern encounter’, he presents the politics-religion-identity-relationship across a much broader length of history, employing and then significantly reformulating ‘asial age’ theory in the process. The opening two articles thereby present us with an interesting methodological tension between approaches centring counter-narratives and critique on the globalised political context of a shared modernity versus those who want to also look at earlier history and therefore choose comparative frameworks which elit parallels of experience.

There exist similar tensions in the next three articles, each of which span to three centuries of history in examining the role of Christianity in the making of modernity in Japan and China, respectively. Yaeji Kuo follows Van Der Veer in making modernity the centrepiece of her article on Eastern Christianisation. She looks at the rise of Confucianism in China. Kuo digs into the 17th century history of Christianity in China to formulate her analysis of the late 19th early 20th century. In doing so, however, she makes clear not only the parallels between the two, but also the completely different nature of the late 19th century as a world dominated, militarily and commercially, by the great empires and their imperialis and its theology. In contrast, although on the one hand acknowledging the critical role of 19th century imperialism on Japanese modernity, my own article seeks to locate the development of modern Japanese politics in changes that occurred in earlier Japanese thought. By pushing the critical period of change back out of the ‘encounter’ of the 19th century into the 17th and 18th, I am searching for another model of development, one that acknowledges not only modern encounters, but also pre-modern parallels. Sakuneeij Wasawara engages both methods in a tour de force analysis of modern Korea's struggle with the place of religion in politics. He covers the pre-modern Confucian state of the Choson, the massive social role of Christianity and Buddhism in modernisation, and the new religions and practices which emerged from them. Wasawara points out certain parallels to recent theories on secularism in the West, notably that of Charles Taylor, but ends his article with an intriguing comparison between the two Koreas, North and South, a comparison which invokes the pre-modern influence of Confucianism as much as the ultra-modernity of Marxist-Leninism.

The last four articles, all by PhD candidates, present more focused and empirical research on important issues relating to religion-political relations in post-war Vietnam, pre-war fascist Japan, and Japanese occupied colonial Korea. Kaya Rosaku looks into an intriguing recent example in Vietnam’s attempt to mediate the place of local religion in the state through Marxist-Leninist frameworks. Alia Rizvi, by contrast, shows how a millenarian Christian group in fascist Japan employed Zionism to justify 1930s military expansionism. Dermott Walsh looks at the role of dualism in the works of a Japanese philosopher of the same era – Nishida Kitaro. Rather than the usual focus on politicalised Buddhism, Walsh instead uncovers a progressive Confucian orientalism in Nishida’s thought, one that offers something beyond the cliché of fascist nihilism within which this philosopher’s work is so often read. Jung-Shim Lee likewise writes a Buddhist leaning history of the colonial period. Korean nationalist novelist Han Yongon to uncover his advocacy of Confucian values – but in this case ultra-conservative ones. In doing so she illustrates disturbing parallels between Han and the Japanese colonial administration’s own discourses on women, causing her in the end to reflect critically on the violence inherent in anti-imperialist nationalism.

In addition to the breadth of disciplinary and area speciality represented in this Focus section of the RAS Newsletter, an edited volume collection on the theme of ‘Neo-Orientalism’ and the post-1960s in Asia is currently being prepared in Tokyo. Expanded versions of at least six other papers presented at the conference are also currently awaiting publication in refereed journals.

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References
To understand the connections between religion, power, and identity one needs a comparative framework. In fact, our work is always within a comparative frame. However, in general there is not enough reflection on the extent to which our approaches depend on arguing and comparing with the already existing literature on a topic. (My early work on pilgrimage was entirely framed by the comparison of my field results with those of Louis Dumont, Jonathan Parry and Chris Fallows), on the way of terms that have emerged in entirely different historical situations and thus carry in them implicit comparison (like middle class values in contrast to communist values), the ways in which we study ourselves are connected with the present with the past or their situation with that of others. To claim, therefore, that one is a sinologist or indologist or ethnographer and think that specialisation in a region and subject, given sufficient linguistic and cultural competence, is enough to claim mastery over a subject—as if one is not standing constantly in a reflexive relation to both discipline and subject—gives perhaps a certain psychological fortitude, but is untenable.

A long history of interactions

Comparison is at the heart of cultural analysis. I see comparison not primarily in terms of comparing societies or events, or institution building, but rather as a reflection on our conceptual framework, as well as on a history of interactions that have constituted our object of study. One can, for instance, say that one wants to study church-state relations in India and China, but one has to bring to that a critical reflection on the fact that that kind of study already presupposes the centrality of church-like organisations, as well as the centrality of Western secular institutions. But one can also see that it is connected to the political influence of evangelical networks in the US. At the most general level one might assert that there is a religious revival in many parts of the world, but without wondering where religion has been all the time when it was not yet ‘revived’. At the same time, one needs to be very cautious with the notion of the polarisation of religion, since religion is always political, always concerns power, including the definition of power. When Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka, Burma and Tibet take to the streets to resist the state they are ‘doing politics’. I would suggest that it is wrong to see that as something that does not fit their renunciation, that is against their religion but that religion brought about by extreme circumstances. Rather, I would argue that Buddhism is just as political as all the other religions.

Nationalism itself is never self-sufficient, but always relates to an emerging world order of nation-states, even in the imperial periods. We understand that the connections between nation and religion are not primarily in terms of comparing societies or events, or institutional building, but rather as a reflection on our conceptual framework, as well as on a history of interactions that have constituted our object of study. One can, for instance, say that one wants to study church-state relations in India and China, but one has to bring to that a critical reflection on the fact that that kind of study already presupposes the centrality of church-like organisations, as well as the centrality of Western secular institutions. But one can also see that it is connected to the political influence of evangelical networks in the US. At the most general level one might assert that there is a religious revival in many parts of the world, but without wondering where religion has been all the time when it was not yet ‘revived’. At the same time, one needs to be very cautious with the notion of the polarisation of religion, since religion is always political, always concerns power, including the definition of power. When Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka, Burma and Tibet take to the streets to resist the state they are ‘doing politics’. I would suggest that it is wrong to see that as something that does not fit their renunciation, that is against their religion but that religion brought about by extreme circumstances. Rather, I would argue that Buddhism is just as political as all the other religions.

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The value of comparison

Rather than focusing on the comparison of India and China, in this article I would like to discuss conceptual problems. When politicians in India or China say that they want to bring Hindu identity or Confucian harmony back into politics one may wonder whether these aspects of politics have ever been away. One can be certain that these politicians want, in fact, to bring about change instead of referring to the past. Similarly, when American politicians want to spread religious freedom all over the world one may understand this as part of a global expansion of human rights, but one can also be certain that it is connected to the political influence of evangelical networks in the US. At the most general level one might assert that there is a religious revival in many parts of the world, but without wondering where religion has been all the time when it was not yet ‘revived’. At the same time, one needs to be very cautious with the notion of the polarisation of religion, since religion is always political, always concerns power, including the definition of power. When Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka, Burma and Tibet take to the streets to resist the state they are ‘doing politics’. I would suggest that it is wrong to see that as something that does not fit their renunciation, that is against their religion but that religion brought about by extreme circumstances. Rather, I would argue that Buddhism is just as political as all the other religions.
20 The Focus: Religion and Global Empire

The historical roots and character of Secularism in China

‘...unlike the West, which had to deal with a powerful Church for centuries, the Chinese had begun with a secular outlook that ensured that no Church could be established to challenge political authority.’

Prasenjit Duara


PROFESSOR WANG GUANGWU’S observation and claim about Chinese religion is an important one: Prasenjit Duara argues that this statement is fundamentally correct for much of Chinese history. In this article, he explores the roots of this statement and the implications for our understanding of Chinese state and society. Note another related comment, this time from the 4th Century BCE text GuoGuo, quoting a minister explicating cosmology to the king of Chu:

“Anciently, men and spirits did not mingle... (there were special men and women called shen and wan) who supervised the position of the spirits at the ceremonies, sacrificed to them, and otherwise handled religious matters. ... But later, men and spirits became intertwined... with each household indiscriminately performing for itself the religious observances which had heretofore been conducted by the shamen.
As a consequence, men lost their reverence for the spirits, the spirits violated the rules of men, and natural calamities arose. Hence, the successor of Shihao, Quanwu, charged Chong, Governor of the South, to handle the affairs of heaven in order to determine the proper places of the spirits, and Li, Governor of Fire, to handle the affairs of the Earth in order to determine the proper places of men. And such is what is meant by cutting the communication between Heaven and Earth.”

Prof. I.C. Chang notes that this myth is the most important reference to shamanism and its central role in ancient Chinese politics in early China. He argues that the king himself was the most important shaman and that he and his priests sought to monopolise access to the sacred authority of Heaven. (Chang, Kwang-chih. 1983. Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Poltical Authority in Ancient China. Harvard University Press. 44-55.)

In other words, the emperor aided by his ritual specialists not only claimed monopoly of communication with sacred power with regard to other clergy or church but also with regard to the people. This modality of historical authority was very different from other Axial Age (AA) civilisations.

AA civilisation is a concept pioneered by Karl Jaspers who built on Max Weber and it was developed subsequently by S.N. Eisenstadt. It has recently become important once again in historical sociology. The period covers a thousand years from 600 BCE and concerns revolutionary developments in society, philosophy and religion across the geographical axis of China, India, the Middle East and Greece. Key thinkers and elite intellectuals sought the quest for human meaning beyond this world and beyond magic.

Key to AA is the split between transcendence and mundane. The goals of these civilisations were embedded in a divine transcendent realm. Although these goals were beyond human reach—Including that of the state—all humans should aspire towards their realisation. Several Indian religions felt they could never be realised in this world and became other-worldly. A deep tension developed in the Abrahamic religions between transcendence and human effort to realise it. e.g. “City upon the hill” (a phrase from the parable of Salt and Light in Jesus’ sermon on the Mount). He tells his listeners, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

In the Chinese religions, Heaven was transcendent, but its power, moral authority and ideals could be realised in this world. (According to Weber, it was not transcendent but immanent.)

In all AA civilisations, professional clerical groups emerged (church, priests, monks, ulama) as institutionally separate from the state in order to interpret transcendence and limit the moral authority of the state. They thus dominated a public sphere autonomous from the state. As a consequence of the divergence between the transcendent goals and its practical achievement, AA religions have a built-in motor or propensity to challenge the existing establishment and seek new means of personal and institutional change to achieve the transcendent goals. (Note, for example, how in India, bhakti and oppositional movements evoked institutional change to achieve the transcendent goals. (Note, for example, how in India, bhakti and oppositional movements evoked the transcendental authority and create a wandering public sphere). But co-optation is an ever-present possibility.

In China, the institutional separateness of Confucians and Daoists was never fully secured because the state claimed the monopoly of access to the transcendent. While the critique of the ruler based on Heaven’s authority was a recurring trend in China, co-optation was often the result. I see two basic reasons for this. The first has to do with the developed form of pre-Axial traditions of sacred authority in Shang China.

Anthony Yu has shown that there were always two forms of religious authority in China: Heaven and the ancestor. The emperor made two kinds of claim for his absolute sovereignty. One was in the cosmic realm of the relations between Heaven and Earth and the other was in the realm of human relations. The former derived from a transcendent Heaven and the latter from a less transcendent but no less powerful cult of the imperial ancestor who also had sacral potency. For instance, for punitive expeditions during the Shang, the emperor had to receive mandate from ancestor Di Yu, Anthony C. 2007. State and Religion in China. Chicago: Open Court. 30-40.)
The Newsletter

transcendent

into a symbol – or what Yu calls pre-Axial tradition

The rituals of the paint on canvas, Chinese artist, 19th

Left: Anonymous

Brookline MA. Monastery also in Rebellion located at the doing hall of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery also in Brookline MA.

Therefore, it is the pre-Axial tradition of ancestor-worship – or what Yu calls ‘ancestor-making’, whereby rituals transform a kin group into a symbol of divine power - that allows the emperor to pre-empt or pre-empt the transcendental power of Heaven.

Yet this is not entirely true. There is always a mix of AA and pre-AA ideas. Confucius and Mencius sought to locate Heaven beyond the exclusive access and control of the ruler and create a morality that also subjected the ruler and every individual to it. Not only was there a learned Confucian elite and Daoist priesthood present for millennia but also a Buddhist clergy seeking autonomy. In each case, however, the imperial centre was able to subordinate them to his power. Most famous was the first Qin emperor’s effort to exterminate Confucianism.

In the Han period, Confucius was ‘made’ into a linear descendant of the Shang. Thus, he was converted into an imperial ancestor which gave the emperor the greater right of ancestral access to his worship (% 45-48).

From one perspective, the political history of China may be seen as a contest between imperial authority and elites seeking to claim the authority of Heaven or other forms of transcendance. The Confucians and the Buddhists were, of course, the most important claimants. The institutional history of imperial China documents the rise and fall of the autonomy of Buddhist monasteries and the changing role of Confucians in the court and in the opposition. However, it is also believed that with the Kange era (1661-1722), the right of Confucians to manage the state as an authority outside the state – except under conditions of individual self-sacrifice – was extinguished and they were subordinated to imperial power for the last time.

From the perspective of Confucianism, the elite had to fight both the incorporation by imperial power as well as the challenge posed by the Buddhists (and to a lesser extent, the Daoists). Indeed, it is possible that by fighting the strong notion of transcendence of the Buddhists they were forced into an alliance with the state. Note also that ancestral worship and the lineage system (an instrument of attack against Buddhism) was one that joined Confucianism with the imperial state as part of imperial ideology. But perhaps the most important instrument to co-opt the Confucian literati was the examination system.

The examination system was not merely a means to co-opt the successful candidates. It reflected the genius of the imperial state which used it to prevent the kind of destabilisation of the imperial system caused by the commercialisation that burgeoned after the Tang Song transition (10th century AD). In Europe this destabilisation ultimately led to the rise of commercial bourgeoisies that overthrew the imperial orders, but in China the rural and urban commercial elites were often co-opted into the imperial system.

Because of problems of control and management, the imperial bureaucracy was very small in relation to the society it governed. It had to rely on an ingenious model of local government where the vertical becomes intertwined with competitive national identities, the potential for violence became much greater.

China has indeed been fortunate to not be possessed by faith-based communal division was never always hostile or militant but it was potentially so, particularly since the state was located within the community and could drive hostilities when there were disturbances. Faith-based communities became intertwined with competitive national identities, the potential for violence became much greater.

By and large, these movements were not violent or conflictual, but periodically Confucian orthodoxy and state repression led to opposition. There are many instances where opposition continues to make the state afraid of religion as a cover for politics. At the core of it, however, is a cultural logic of access to transcendence power. For Confucians it does not apply to the state. The cosmology of religious believers tends to empower those with the right to access. By banning religious groups the state does not necessarily use the right to access the will of Heaven. While the imperial state succeeded in co-opting and containing the old traditions’ right to such access, notions of alternative means to access to achieve transcendence were driven underground where they were disguised in cultural forms which were accommodating and resistant. As a result, in the religious, cultural and political realm, the fault line in Chinese civilisations emerged as one between the state-elite versus popular culture.

In the West and other parts of the world following the Reformation tradition, the individual’s proximity to Heaven (and in some cases, to be sure) was overcome by another lateral one. Here, transcendence and the individual’s proximity to it was forged around faith and a monothestic, personal God. The distance from transcendence was mediated by faith. While those who believed in the same God were theoretically equal and part of the community, those who did not were excluded. This idea of faith-based communal division was never always hostile or militant but it was potentially so, particularly since the state was located within the community and could drive hostilities when there were disturbances. Faith-based communities became intertwined with competitive national identities, the potential for violence became much greater.

Owensby’s study of the apocalyptic Way of the Temple of the Heavenly Immortals exemplifies how these societies mediated the tensions between orthodoxy and the state. Their pursuit of transcendence was mediated by faith. While those who believed in the same God were theoretically equal and part of the community, those who did not were excluded. This idea of faith-based communal division was never always hostile or militant but it was potentially so, particularly since the state was located within the community and could drive hostilities when there were disturbances. Faith-based communities became intertwined with competitive national identities, the potential for violence became much greater.

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References

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Left: Anonymous Chinese artist, 19th century. Ancestor gallery. Tempera paint on canvas, c. 185 x 90 cm.

The rituals of the pre-Axial tradition of ancestor-worship – or what Yu calls ‘ancestor-making’, transforms a kin group into a symbol of divine power – that authorises the emperor to trump or pre-empt the transcendental power of Heaven.

Left: Hieromartyr Mitrophan (Metrscope) Tat-Cheng Cheung, Chinese print of Peking, martyred in June 1900 (Boxer rebellion). The icon is painted by the sister of the Holy Martyr Convert, Brookline MA, based on the original icon of the Holy Martyrs of the Boxer Rebellion located at the doing hall of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery also in Brookline MA. 
IN THE NEW CENTURY, China continued to witness various political attempts to institute Confucianism as some sort of state religion. The Qing government’s stipulation of the worship of Confucius at all levels of the new-style schools in 1904 and Yuan Shikai’s revival of the state worship of the sage three years after the Republic was founded, were only two of the earliest examples. Meanwhile, remaining active and vital through the 1910s was the campaign led by Kang Youwei and his disciple Chen Huanzhang, petitioning for the constitutional acknowledgment of Confucianism as China’s national religion.

Historians have explained these 20th century impetuses for giving Confucianism public and institutional recognition in two ways. First, and a more cynical approach, is to read them as a form of modern identity politics. Cultural symbolism allowed for new apparatus for systematically re-educating the people about the sagely teachings and recreating a cohesively pious Confucian society. Kang blatantly admitted that this institutional mechanism was based on Western models. ‘Their chapels spread all over the land. Every day during the week, Kings and ministers, men and women venerate their god and recite from their scripture. Although their doctrine [is] shallow, their practice is methodical and orderly. In comparison, our doctrine is refined, but our practice has been crude.’

Kang Youwei’s fascination with the religious practice of the West was not uncommon among those who bothered to learn about Christianity. However, placed in the whole elite stratum, they were the minority. The widespread anti-Christian sentiment among the socio-political leaders had its deep roots in the international conflict caused by Western expansionism. For most educated Chinese, Christianity, which had been illicit since 1724, could only be openly practiced on Chinese soil because of the Western powers’ intervention. The Treaty of Tianjin, signed after China’s military defeat by France and Great Britain in 1858, forced the Qing government to acknowledge that ‘the principles of the Christian religion... have proven to lead people to good deeds,’ and to warrant Christian missionaries the rights to travel and preach freely in China. Although historians nowadays are cognizant of the different social and ideological origins of the global mission activities emanating from Europe and North America and those of Western colonial imperialism, to the elite of 19th China, these were indubitably intertwined forces.

The numerous legal disputes involving Christian missionaries and converts in the mid and late decades of the 19th century further aggravated official and elite members in China. Most of these legal cases were about confiscated church properties during the Christian proscription and civil conflicts between Christian and non-Christian communities. They almost invariably ended with the invocation of treaty rights by missionaries and the interventions of the foreign legations through China’s bureau of international affairs, Zongli yamen and the interventions of the foreign legations through China’s bureau of international affairs, Zongli yamen. The numerous legal disputes involving Christian missionaries and converts in the mid and late decades of the 19th century further aggravated official and elite members in China. Most of these legal cases were about confiscated church properties during the Christian proscription and civil conflicts between Christian and non-Christian communities. They almost invariably ended with the invocation of treaty rights by missionaries and the interventions of the foreign legations through China’s bureau of international affairs, Zongli yamen. The process compromised the juristic power given to local officials and magistrates, leaving them with a bitter antagonism against the missionaries and their political backers.

The second encounter between Confucianism and Christianity

On June 19, 1898, in the midst of China’s intense Hundred Days’ Reforms, Kang Youwei, the leading advocate for fundamental changes according to the Western model, submitted a memorandum to the Manchu emperor calling for a state-sanctioned church (jiaohui) of Confucianism. The proposal never came to fruition. By the end of the summer, the conservative faction in the court re-established control, revoked all the directives of institutional change and divested the reform-minded young emperor of executive power. Kang Youwei fled to Japan and many of his associates were executed. As Ya-pei Kuo reveals, however, the idea of a state-sanctioned religion based on ‘Confucianism’ did not die.

Ya-pei Kuo

The Focus: Religion and Global Empire

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Ya-pei Kuo
to the cluster of moral and cultural values that every exemplar of Western society, even a non-churchgoer, could emulate. Missionaries entered China in 1858, when Victoria announced to the ‘Princes of India’ that ‘[t]ruly relying on ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the salve of religion, we declare alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects,’ she used the term in exactly this broad and diffuse sense. Not only was Christianity invoked to signify the British state’s internal coherence. The Majesty’s use of religion to demarcate the West and its others in the world was also typical of her time.

As the fundamental engine of a civilisation’s potency, religion became an important lens through which the global power structure was understood. In the early 1800s, Timothy Richard, a Baptist missionary from Wales, published a series of maps and charts that provided statistical information about the world. On a chart that compared the sizes of adherence to different religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism with respective numbers of their following. Not only did Christians outnumber 440 million the followers of all other three religions (respectively, 70 million, 50 million, and 1 million) combined, they also had the widest area distribution. Richard deliberately noted that Christianity ‘government’ (as all five continents of the Americas, Europe, Australia, and Africa, accounting to 80 per cent of the land on the earth. In contrast, Confucianism ‘government’ only China, Islam the Arabic world, and Buddhism less than one-tenth of a percent of the globe. Other than informing his reader of Christianity’s predominance, a chart like this forcefully inscribed the assumption of religious exclusivity into the reader’s mind: one geographic area was ‘governmented’ by only one religion. Populations in the Americas, Australia, Africa, or even in Europe, might have multiform faiths and practices. Yet, diversity and complexity had to be suppressed in this projection of religious uniformity in each area.

Presentations like this also emphasized placed religion at the centre of the geopolitical of the 19th century. Richard’s chart gave little attention to individual nation-states. Mentioning China and Thailand as the lands of Confucianism and Buddhism, it subsumed the identification of all state entities under larger religious rubrics, indicating the existence of a higher force than politics in shaping world events. W. A. P. Martin, an American Presbyterian missionary to China, when narrating Christianity’s strength, also stressed its independence from the operation of political regimes. Judea was annexed by the Romans yet, in the end, the conquerors had to submit themselves to the religion that came from Judaism. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the barbarians, their Christian faith continued to prevail over the medieval period. Being cogent of these historical precedents, Christian missionaries, according to Martin, consciously maintained their autonomy from the state. They were funded exclusively by their churches and followed no state orders when deciding where they went. Clashing civilisations

Eager to overcome the Chinese elite’s anti-Christian sentiment, missionaries were quick to respond to Kang’s memo-

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In 1888, leading Japanese government figures met to formulate what would become the first modern constitution of a non-Western country. One of the major issues they discussed was what role religion should play in the new state. In this article, Kiri Paramore examines both the role of Western state models, and Confucian political ideas in informing constructions of political modernity in 19th century Japan.

Kiri Paramore

In 1884, Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909), the Prime Minister of the Meiji government, drafted the first imperial constitution with the following words:

“If we wish to establish a constitution now, first we must look for a central axis for our nation, and establish what we should say that central axis is… In Europe… the existence of religion, and the employment of religion as a central axis, deeply embedded in the minds of the people, has ultimately unified the minds of the people. In our country, however, religion does not possess this kind of power… In our country the only thing that can be used as a central axis is the imperial house. Therefore, in the drafting of the constitution, we must focus our minds on using this point, raising up imperial rule, and striving that it not be restrained.”

This quote concisely sums up the motivation for the creation of what would later be labelled State Shinto – the integration of the emperor into the modern Japanese political system. It explains the primary role given to religion in the late 19th century construction of the political and ideological structures of modern Japan as an attempt to replicate a Western model. The “Western model” that the constitution aimed to emulate, however, could not have been further from the theoretically imagined model of the “secular West”. Hirobumi’s vision of the central political role of religion in the systems of Western empire is rather closer to that of recent academic analysis by the likes of Peter van der Veer.

“Modern Japan” and the “Western model”

The Japanese case, however, represents more than just an example of “Western impact”. Indigenous Japanese society and its political culture were not simply objects of Westernisation and modernisation. Conversely, they were primarily – through most of the 20th century certainly – agents of modernisation and Westernisation, embracing and advocating Western political systems and technology and imposing it on others (China and Korea being the major examples in this manner). The “Western model” that the constitution aimed to emulate could also be a “misunderstanding”. It would be very easy to overlook Buruma’s position by stating simply that Hirobumi’s analysis was a misunderstanding at all but rather, a good grasp of the reality of modern Western imperial states: an insight to be learnt from. After all, if we look at the social and political role of religion at this time, be it the use of Catholicism in Vietnam, or the complex relations between religious, national, imperial and colonial identities in India and Britain, or the phenomena of the Christian missions in China – all phenomena that Japanese leaders and thinkers were very familiar with throughout the 19th century – it is clear that interaction between religion and expansionist state activities existed.

To simply say that the Japanese conception of the role of religion in modern nations was a sharp insight, however, in some ways brings us to the same end-point as stating that it was a complete misunderstanding. Both positions are based on looking at the situations in Japan and Europe pre-1930s as if they were totally unrelated and foreign phenomena. A more interesting venture is to tease out commonalities between both Western and Japanese uses of religion in early-modern statecraft. In particular, to look at how these two interpreted each other when their political-technical systems were (to an extent) standardised in the process of so-called ‘Westernisation’ or ‘modernisation’ in Japan in the late 1800s. Looking at this historical background allows us to go beyond narratives of ‘reactions to the West’ and rather, look at the development of political ideas in Japan in parallel with the plurality of experiences of other societies during this period.

18th-19th century Japanese Confucian political philosophy

By 1888, the greatest influence on the creation of frameworks of statecraft and governance by members of the Japanese elite like Hirobumi was undoubtedly the West. But leaders like Hirobumi were also influenced by a political tradition which had developed a role for what we could call religion in statecraft through a primarily (although not exclusively) non-Western tradition of Confucian political philosophy. This political philosophy emerged partly in reaction to circumstances in Japanese society (both economic and political) during the period of Tokugawa state (1663-1868). Although not primarily influenced by the circumstances or political paradigms of early-modern Europe, it perhaps demonstrated many parallels with them – a point I will come back to.

One particularly powerful work of Confucian political philosophy which deeply influenced Hirobumi and most other samurai who played central roles in the Meiji revolution was the 1825 work New Thesi (Shinron) written by the Mito domain samurai intellectual and Confucian Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863). New Thesi, in a tradition of Confucian political writing seen throughout the previous 200 years, called for reform and improvement of shogunal systems of government to bring them into line with the Confucian ideal of governance. Seishisai’s political philosophy standpoint was influenced primarily by the earlier Tokugawa Confucian thinker Ogita Sora (1663-1728) and nativist reactions to Sora from the late 18th century. But Seishisai’s views were explicated primarily in terms of a reaction to the threat of Western imperialism, sometimes even referring to the efficacy of elements of Western political practice in contrast to (from Seishisai’s perspective) problematic elements of contemporary Chinese and Japanese governance.

In Shinron and supporting writing from the same 1820s period, Seishisai identified links between governance and religious politics, placing at the core the unity of the integrity of the Japanese state. Seishisai, following a number of earlier Tokugawa scholars, regarded the success of Western imperial expansion as being linked directly to technology, capitalism or gunpowder, but to the incredible levels of political and social integration provided by the so-called ‘religious systems’ of Western states. The key to these states, and the chain difference with the declining Chinese and Japanese, was the West’s use of Christianity. Seishisai saw in Christianity Western states’ central deployment of the ‘prerogative’ or ‘method’ of what the Confucian political philosophical tradition he was writing from called ‘rites and music’ (Jp. regaku, Ch. liye) and his 19th century scholars have described this Tokugawa conception of the political utilisation of rites and music as ‘religion’. The deployment of religious practice in statecraft.

The major intellectual influence on Azusa Seishisai’s conception of the central importance of rites and music, and indeed the major figure in the history of Tokugawa Confucianism, was Ogita Sora. One of Sora’s key philosophical positions was to use the Confucian ‘Way’ (the means of achieving social harmony in line with nature) with the rites and music of the Ancient Sage Kings of China – a semi-mythical and exotic antiquity. For Sora, unlike most other Confucians in East Asia at this time, Confucian truth was to be found not in moral prescriptions of earlier philosophers like Mencius and Zhu Xi (1130-1200), the Neo-Confucianism familiar to readers of Hegel and Weber but in the historical truth of the rule of the ‘Ancient Sage Kings’ of Chinese antiquity – a pre-700AD period.

By the 1820s, the ‘Western model’ was seen as a modernising force. Coming from Sora’s golden age, was a time when historically, as Sora correctly points out, political structures in Chinese society were feudal – as they were in Sora’s Tokugawa Japan. Sora’s Confucian heroes were thereby feudal sovereigns and lords – practitioners of politics rather than their commentators.

According to Sora, the Confucian Classics themselves were written for no other purpose than to instruct the ruling class (which for Sora meant the samurai) in how to rule over society. For Sora, the way to hold sway over society was through Neo-Confucian self-cultivation – which Sora labelled as ‘selfish’ and ‘Buddhist’ but through the rites and music established by the Ancient Sage Kings in Chinese antiquity and revealed in the ancient texts. Sora’s rites and music concept, although proposed as the underpinnings of a political system, emphasised a practice that was clearly religious, even transcending the temporal world.

Pervading heaven and earth, the substance of the rites reaches minute, subtle areas, giving everything its standard, and provid- ing systematic order to irregularities. There is no aspect of the rites that the way does not penetrate. Princes study them, while the common people follow them… By following the rites, people are transformed. Once transformed, they follow the rules of the Lord on high (Jp. Ch. Di) unconsciously and unknowingly. How could there possibly be anything that is not good if the rites are thoroughly followed?

What had previously been referred to in Neo-Confucianism as absolute moral values such as benevolence and righteousness were instead interpreted by Sora as manifestations of social relations demonstrated through the practice of rites and music. Sora’s original take on Confucianism became popular in his own lifetime and continued to hold sway as one of the dominant trends in Confucian thought in the modern period. Figures like Nishi Amane (1829-1897), for example, a contemporary of Ito Hirobumi, one of the earliest Japanese philosophers educated in Western studies in Leiden) the initiator of many of the modern legal institutions of the Japanese Meiji period, continued to show the influence of Sora throughout his life.

Sora’s work was also possibly just as important as the provocateur of the growth of Japanese nativism or kokugaku, one of the major intellectual currents linked to the growth of emperor-centric nationalism and the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Key early figures in kokugaku, like Motoori Norinaga (1735-1801), deliberately replaced Sora’s idealised ancient China with a set
Pre-modern antecedents to the role of religion in modern imperialism

The parallel development of the role of religion in Confucian models of politics in Japan gave Confucian political thinkers, like Seishisai and modernising politicians like Hirnbusi that reference. The nature of Japanese political modernity then (what some would call its ‘success’), was influenced not so much by the extent or lack of its conformity to Western models, as by the extent of parallel development of both traditions and also informed and affected by their bordering regions.

The nature of Japanese political modernity then (what some would call its ‘success’), was influenced not so much by the extent or lack of its conformity to Western models, as by the extent of parallel development of political outlooks—over time determined equally by the earlier parallel development of both societies and also informed and affected by their bordering regions.

The Focus: Religion and Global Empire 25

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4. Wakabayashi, Bob Tadashi. 1986. Kikōben, Masahide (ed.) 1973. Seishisai partly engaged and partly courted the popularity of Japanese Confucianism’s lens on Christianity as statecraft and invented custom, many of Norinaga’s ideas were clearly influenced not so much by the extent or lack of its conformity to Western models, as by the extent of parallel development of both traditions and also informed and affected by their bordering regions.

Pre-modern antecedents to the role of religion in modern imperialism

of imagined traditions and customs of an ‘ancient’ Japanese past. Based on a sanctification of Japanese classical literature and invented customs, many of Norinaga’s ideas were clearly searching for an indigenous rites and music. The Kikōku or Norinaga, although originally conceived in direct opposition to Sorai’s ideas, came to be, in part, integrated into some forms of Japanese Confucian political philosophy—notably that of Azazawa Seishisai.12

Japanese Confucianism’s lens on Christianity as statecraft Seishisai partly engaged and partly courted the popularity of Kikōku’s ideas, not only through his clear Japanese nationalism and by also through his disparagement of China and its positioning of the Japanese imperial line as objects of religious worship. To some extent, he conflated Sorai Confucianism with Kikōku by advocating a system that, at its heart, basically inserted Japanese emperors in the place of the roles Sorai saw the Chinese Ancient Sage Kings playing in history.11

Seishisai’s view of the West’s deployment of Christianity for social control was thereby coloured totally by Sorai’s conceptions of rites and music— as delivered through both Sorai’s own philosophy, and the bastardised nativist versions of it presented later by the Kikōku movement. Seishisai analysed the Western imperialist deployment of religion through the Sorai constructed idea of rites and music. Of course, as Seishisai himself explained, what he saw the Westerners using were not the ‘real’ natural rites and music of the ancient Sage Kings, but another kind of rites and music which functioned similarly. Both the Way of the Sages and the Way of the Barbarian Gods, China/Japan and the West, were described as worshipping Heaven or the Lord of Heaven and employing rites and music. The difference being that while in the Central Kingdom (China/Japan) Heaven was originally (by the sages) worshipped correctly through fatherly and sovereign, in the West the rites were used to worship a ‘barbarian god’ (Christ) who was set up to displace the natural social relations which underlay order. The Way of the Sages was contrasted against The Way of Barbarian Gods.

Normal human sentiment is to stand in awe of Heaven’s author- ity. So the Sages revered Heaven. Serving Heaven was like serving their parents. Through their ancestors, they honored to Heaven. Serving their ancestors was also like serving Heaven. There were the appropriate rites and the appropriate music....In this way the masses came to have a mind to stand in awe of Heaven’s author- ity, and thereby revere the sovereign. Heaven and sovereign were one. The masses were nurtured. This is the sages’ great perspec- tive and method of governing the world and ruling the masses. The barbarians and their lackeys set up a foreign god, and using the music, they corrupted the sages’ masses. They thus use the masses natural inclination to respect Heaven [their natural religious inclination] to get them to respect their rulers and better.12

This later development of Confucian political philosophy on the role of religious practice as part of nation-state construction and national expansion, although on the one hand having clearly originated in Confucian political philosophy paradigms, can be said to have also interacted directly with observation of the employment of religion in Western Imperial expansion. This was the writing that formed an important ideological underpinning of the Mei-ji revolution and the reform of government—especially in regard to the role of religion—which followed.

The key developmental background to this writing, however, was clearly the move in the 18th century away from a Neo-Confucian emphasis on morals to the Sorai-inspired emphasis on rites and music. A move from justification of order on shared static moral norms, to one based on shared religiously inclined social prac- tices. This movement clearly shares parallels with changes that occurred in a similar period in Western Europe—both in religious thought through the influence of Puritanism and Calvinism, and through related changes to political philosophy that emphasised social mores and behaviour over mores. Some scholars have related these parallels in Japanese and Proto- tarian religious thought to the consequent rise of commercial society in both places. Japan from the 1600s, under Tokugawa rule, attained a level of market integration and commercialisa- tion throughout the country which began to dwarf that seen in earlier pre-modern global history. This can be seen, for instance, in terms of the growth of urban centres, volumes of trade and development of financial institutions, growth trends that were only matched in Europe from the 18th century onwards.

The pre-modern basis of the ‘modern encounter’ Bō Hirnbusi in 1888 saw Christianity as an underlying part of the Western political construct of empire just as Azazawa Seishisai had 60 years earlier. But their understanding of the role of religion in modern Western empire was informed not only by observation. Simply looking at something does not enable understanding. There must be references, analogies and parallels from which to construct an understanding based on observation.

The parallel development of the role of religion in Confucian models of politics in Japan gave Confucian political thinkers like Seishisai and modernising politicians like Hirnbusi that reference. The nature of Japanese political modernity then (what some would call its ‘success’), was influenced not so much by the extent or lack of its conformity to Western models, as by the extent of parallel development of both traditions and also informed and affected by their bordering regions. The history of the ‘modern encounter’ other than only the agencies of empire and modernity. To historicise a true encounter, it is necessary to provide a model for telling the histories of both sides of the interaction. This requires a parallel outlook, and therefore a focus on history before modernity. Serious study of immediately pre-modern (early 19th-century) history is the only way to truly understand the imperial encounters and thereby the history of modernity.
The summer of 2008 saw protests in Seoul against the perceived lack of laïcité of the administration of President Lee Myung-bak. A permanent protest centre was established in the city centre with panels informing the public about the transgressions of the government. The climax was a large demonstration in which as many as 200,000 people took part. However, as Boudewijn Walraven reveals, the protest was not inspired by Korean followers of Richard Dawkins and not at all directed against religion itself.

Boudewijn Walraven

IT WAS THE MAIN TEMPLE of Chogye-jeong, Korea’s most prominent Buddhist order, that hosted the headquarters of the protest and was not spared. The protesters were Buddhist monks and nuns who had come from all over the country to vent their anger. They judged, not entirely without reason, that Lee Myung-bak, a Presbyterian elder, condoned pro-Christian pronouncements by his officials that contravened the religious neutrality that might be expected from the state. Someone familiar with Charles Taylor’s assumptions that secularism in the West is an offshoot of Christianity,1 would perhaps have expected things to be the other way around, with Christians, who have accepted a Western word for ‘religion’, and in many Western values, as the champions of secularism against the Buddhists. This prompts the question what meaning secularisation has for Korea.

Until the end of the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) Buddhism, then the dominant religion, was closely tied to the state. As Sem Vermeersh has stated2 political power was often articulated in terms of Buddhist symbols or ideas. Buddhism was especially invoked to justify the Koryŏ kings’ right to rule: in a relationship of mutual dependence, the king relied upon the dharma, but the dharma also needed the protection of the king.3 At the same time, however, Buddhism did not enjoy a monopoly and one person could very well be a pious Buddhist as well as a staunch Confucian. The potential of a possible conflict between the two creeds only became a significant actually when, at the end of the Koryŏ period, Neo-Confucianism, with its more ambitious philosophical or metaphysical claims, garnered a following in Korea. This heralded the ‘Confucian transformation of Korea’, which began in earnest in 1392 when a dynastic change put an end to the dominance of Buddhism and started a process that aimed to make Confucianism the only officially acceptable orthodoxy and a blueprint for the social order.4

There is no doubt that the Confucian view of the universe became the ultimate concern of the literati, who in their fervour did not hesitate to resort to iconoclastic violence to destroy shamanic and Buddhist temples. Nevertheless, Confucianism never managed to establish a true monopoly, except in the public sphere. There, by the second half of the Chosŏn and all other creeds and cults — whether shamanic, Daoist or Buddhist — had been eliminated, while everyone in the ruling elite was expected publicly to adhere strictly to mainline Neo-Confucian orthodoxy.5 In this respect, Korea was different from both China and Japan. The state tried to limit rituals to those that were acceptable to Confucians and attempted to prescribe exactly who was allowed to perform what rites. The result was a ritual structure that allowed the level of ancestor worship neatly coincided with the administrative structure, with the king at the apex, as the state’s high priest.6 The sacred order, in other words, was immanent in the social order, and consequently completely centred on man. Tangmung slōnscp (What Ignorant Youths Should Learn First), a popular primer of Confucian teachings in Chosŏn Korea, states this at the outset: ‘Among the ten thousand beings between Heaven and Earth it is Man who is the most noble, and this is because only man possesses the Five Bonds [i.e. the values that regulate the most important human relationships].’

The humanism of Confucianism is tempting to compare the human-centred ideology of Chŏnsŏn Confucianism with some of Charles Taylor’s statements about the origins of secularism. ‘I would like to claim that the coming of modern secularism in my sense [that is, as a state in which people have the conscious option to believe or not] has been coterminous with the rise of a society in which for the first time in history a purely self-sufficient humanism came to be a widely available option’ and ‘... the general understanding of the human predicament before modernity placed us in an order in which we were not at the top.’ Of course, Taylor aims to explain the general secularism in the West and does not formulate a theory with pretensions to universal validity. It is possible, however, to see parallel developments in East Asia, albeit that the specific conditions were very different. It is my contention that in Chŏnsŏn Korea Confucianism as the dominant creed created a very similar state of affairs, propagating an ideology of a ‘purely self-sufficient humanism’, in which man stood at the top and that, as in the West, a religious view that regarded the sacred as immanent in the worldly order was an essential step in the direction of secularism, if we take the term as denoting an order that was centred on man rather than the divine. Consequently, Confucianism as it flourished during the Chosŏn period also had a lasting impact on Korea’s religious configuration even after it had gone into a decline itself, fundamentally influencing the way other religions were seen and are seen, even today. A tendency came into being to judge all religions in terms of the contribution they make to human society.

It is clear, though, that the humanism of Confucianism did not necessarily or immediately imply secularism in the full sense of the word. If there was more important in Confucianism, I would be tempted to call Chosŏn Korea a theocracy, because its officials were also its priests. All rituals explicitly sanctioned by the state, except ancestral rituals, were performed by the king and his bureaucracy. By the end of the Chosŏn period, however, even before the dynasty formally ended, the legitimacy of the Confucian state and its sacred nature was undermined by external and internal challenges. To use Peter Berger’s terminol- ogy, the ‘sacred canons’ of Confucianism, so intimately linked to the administrative apparatus, lost its ‘plausibility structure’ due to the government’s failure to find adequate solutions to the problems of the times. The nearly universal consensus that the Confucian state embodied the sacred order disappeared for ever.

The notion of the Confucian state as sacred disappeared, but not the idea that the nation embodied an ultimate, sacred value. Modern historians are often inclined to see parallel developments in East Asia, albeit that the genesis of secularity in the West and does not formulate a theory with pretensions to universal validity. It is possible, however, to see parallel developments in East Asia, albeit that the specific conditions were very different. It is my contention that in Chŏnsŏn Korea Confucianism as the dominant creed created a very similar state of affairs, propagating an ideology of a ‘purely self-sufficient humanism’, in which man stood at the top and that, as in the West, a religious view that regarded the sacred as immanent in the worldly order was an essential step in the direction of secularism, if we take the term as denoting an order that was centred on man rather than the divine. Consequently, Confucianism as it flourished during the Chosŏn period also had a lasting impact on Korea’s religious configura-

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The Newsletter

Japan was in the consciousness at Korean national strengthening. The Great Progenitor, 'Teaching of the Great Progenitor', which was founded in 1909 with the overt aim of strengthening Korean national consciousness at a moment when Japan was in the process of annexing Korea. The Great Progenitor is Tan’gun, the mythical founder of the ancient state that is seen as the first Korean state (assumedly in 2333 BCE). As is common with many of these new religions, Tan’gun squatted as a parent figure of several or new groups, some of which have been active in recent decades.

One of these propagates the idea of the worship of Tan’gun as an answer to the question whether God privileges the ‘nation’ over other categories very firmly in the positive.11

In post-liberation Korea, Christians are divided over many denominations and a wide political spectrum, from ultra-conservatives to ferociously anti-communist to liberals and left-leaning quasi-marxists. Obviously, this means that Christianity cannot be a monolithic force, which stands in the way of the state’s drive for control over the religious sphere and other religions. There is no doubt that Christians generally would like to increase their influence. One of the reasons the government can into trouble last year was that the national chief of police had expressed support, on a poster, for an evangelisation meeting for police officers. It is also not unusual to hear pastors advocating the eradication of all Buddhist temples and shamanic shrines from the puppet

In his thoughtful book Korean Spirituality, Don Baker recently described the introduction of Christianity in Korea as an important paradigm shift, from ‘ritual-based’ to ‘faith-based’ religious communities, pointing out that the term that is usually translated as ‘belief’ (신信) changed in meaning from ‘relating on/trusting to’ believing in the existence of.12 I do not think that this paradigm shift is irrelevant to the problem of the relationship of religions, state and nation. In fact, it is behind Korean Christians’ intolerance toward other faiths, which is the cause of recent Buddhist protests against the government, and occasionally has even induced Christian fanatics to set fire to Buddhist temples, threatening freedom of worship. However, a paradigm shift that is more crucial for the relations between state and religion took place in the Chosön period, when a system was in place to dominate that seamlessly merged liturgical structures with social and administrative structures, opening the way for an identification of ultimate concerns with concerns about this world and its social institutions. The collapse of Chosön Korea allowed the transfer of the ultimate Confucian values, which were embodied in the nation, to be further secularised, in the sense that belief became a free choice. Although some Christians might wish otherwise, the situation that prevailed in Chosön Korea, with one single creed—in cross Confucianism—as the backbone of a coercive national structure that was in a position to dominate all other existing religious strands, has little chance of a return under the present conditions of a pluralist society in South Korea (in which, it should be remembered, a sizable proportion of the population—47% according to a 2005 census—does not identify with any religion at all).

On the other hand, the heritage of the past, when the sacred was embodied in the social order, endures in North Korea. If we consider Chuch’æ’s or (better) philosophy to be the national religion of North Korea (as Eun Hee Shin does in her contribution to Religions of Korea in Practice), the situation in the North is comparable with that which prevailed in Chosön Korea.13 Chuch’æ’s thought combines the ‘philosophical principle that the human being is the master of everything and decides everything,’ with rituals with strong religious overtones such as the worship of Kim II Sung (whose death was followed by his apotheosis as the eternal leader). Kim II Sung’s statement that ‘the people are my Heaven’ echoes with Mencius’s ‘the people are my Heaven’ echoes with Mencius’s ‘Among the ten thousand beings between Heaven and Earth it is Man who is the most noble, and this is because only man possesses the Five Bonds.’14

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8. This, too, distinguishes Korean religious history from the rest of East Asia; Wang Guangwu, “Roads to Progress and Tradition”, JSJ-Newsletter no. 18 (February 1999), pp. 3 and 14.
Negotiation over religious space in Vietnam

From the 1950s, North Vietnam underwent anti-superstition campaigns in the name of the new socialist modernisation project. After the end of the Vietnam War this process included the South. In Vietnam, like in China and Soviet Russia, religion was considered a harmful superstition. In its ideological struggle the state aimed to build a ‘new culture’ that would substitute religion. A glimpse into the Government Gazette – Công Báo – displays the failure of this secularising agenda, its transformation over the years, as well as dissonance between the state’s goals and their realisation in everyday life.

Edyta Roszko

ONE OF THE MAIN TARGETS of the new socialist modernisation agenda of the Vietnamese government was to strip the traditional social order of its sacred character and mysterious aura in order to transform the Vietnamese people into a new and advanced society, with its progress based on education and rationality rather than ‘God’s works’. The Party attempted to raise the masses’ political awareness through instruction, in the hope that they would voluntarily abandon superstition without the need to reinforce it with a ban. In its efforts to make Vietnam a secular society, the government adopted Marxist-Leninist theory according to which religion would naturally disappear when humankind enters the period of Communism, and ‘highly advanced material production, culture and science’. The Party ideologists blamed religion for the hardship and backwardness of the life of the masses, saying it wasted time and money that could be better spent on education or national agriculture production.

It is not without significance that the first task of the policy of ‘separation of politics and religion’ was a total restructuring of local village politics in which the two spheres were merged. It was believed that a systematic selection of ‘proper’ aspects of Vietnamese tradition would put an end to ‘corrupt and feudal practice’. In light of such rhetoric, village festivals, life-cycle rituals and places of worship – the spaces that sustained old power and prestige – became targets of the state’s campaign against superstitions. Following Marxist principles, religious buildings such as village temples, pagodas and shrines were defined in terms of class struggle and considered to be a threat of feudalism, ignorance and exploitation. The state, concerned with introducing a ‘new culture’ and a ‘new way of life’, undertook the task of turning religious buildings into spaces of secular rather than religious utility.

Nevertheless, implementation of the new ideological agenda was not always a peaceful process as the state had intended. In Northern Vietnam from the 1950s to the late 1960s, sacred spaces that, as it was believed, sustained unequal relationships and wastage of village resources were converted into granaries, storehouses and schools, while clergy were forced to cast off their robes and return to secular life. Spirit medium rituals were banned and ritual professionals were controlled by local authorities. Since 1975, this process has spread across the southern parts of Vietnam as well and lasted until 1986, when the state relaxed its enforcement of anti-superstition law. The most severe persecutions of religion occurred in 1976-79, when the state attempted to pursue a policy of collectivisation in the South.

Religious building or exhibition hall? Debating religion

Various researchers working either on Soviet Russia, China or Vietnam discuss the separation of politics and religion and of a total restructuring of local village politics as ‘secularisation’, ‘desacralisation’ and the ‘desacralization’ or ‘disempowerment of the religious domain’, or ‘ritual displacement’. They do not aspire to argue here which of these terms is the most satisfactory. Rather, my aim is to present the emic viewpoint, which gives us a sense of how this process is presented in official discourse. Comparing various issues of the Official Government Gazette – Công Báo – and local narratives, we find that the gap between the official goals of a new use of sacred spaces and their implementation and the people’s feelings about it becomes evident. While for the state the ongoing process of transferring authority from religious communities to the state was an attempt ‘to disinfect’ the local landscape and to make it predictable and manageable, for the common people it was an abuse and profanation of spaces that had not ceased to have sacred status.

In official discourse, spots of scenic beauty, exhibition halls, cultural houses and schools were presented as better substitutes for sacred locations, as places of education and social life. It is worth pointing out that the state was selective in its acceptance of the ways of converting temples, in its view, into more functional, non-religious spaces. The analysis of the Official Gazette – Công Báo – from 1953 onwards reveals that the state had its own vision of how to make use of temples. In its rhetoric, the government proclaimed that although the ‘communal houses, Buddhist pagodas, shrines, and temples, and imperial tombs have for centuries been exploited by feudal tyrants, who turned them into places giving them prestige in order to close to all classes of people and to sow superstitions to captivate people’ they should be utilised in an appropriate way. ‘A proper way’ was understood as ‘turning all places of worship into schools, exhibition halls, gathering places, and cultural houses’. However, the next six years did not bring a significant improvement in the situation and the Party had to sharpen its tone. Still in a self-critical temper, Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng reacted to the destruction of temples by pointing out the poor record of activities of administrative committees (uỷ ban nhân dân) to ‘preserve all places of historical interest, to teach people about their value and to transform them into museums’. He stressed that these places have been lost and destroyed due to the lack of interest or even awareness of the official duty of preserving the historical heritage and, as a consequence, of the low level of training of local cadres.

In 1973, two years before the end of the Vietnam War, the state, specifying its agenda towards Buddhist pagodas and the clergy, had to again remind local authorities of the policy of protecting all places of historical and cultural interest. The government ‘officially’ called for ‘preserving thoughtfulness and cleanliness’ vis-à-vis Buddhist pagodas and forbade ‘perturbing the feelings and beliefs of the people’ by destroying Buddhist sculptures and instruments or using them in an inappropriate way.

According to the government order, all sites of historical interest including sites of scenic beauty that could be Buddhist pagodas or temple complex were defined in official discourse as People’s Committees (uỷ ban nhân dân) and cultural offices (sở văn hoá). It meant that any renovation and construction work in places of worship and of historical and cultural value must be officially approved by these bureaus. In the North, during the land reform (1956) and the time of budget subsidies, many Buddhist pagodas, like communal houses and local shrines, suffered extensive destruction as their
facilities and property were repossessed by village agricultural co-operatives or simply cleared of clergy and left empty. As a result, monks and nuns who depended largely on these properties were dissociated from the basis of their livelihoods.

Theoretically, the Buddhist clergy could count on official guarantees to continue their religious activities, if they voluntarily handed their land to the village co-operatives and joined common production. The co-operatives were expected to allot the monks and nuns to brigades based on practical abilities and their religious tasks in order to ensure their livelihoods.15 In reality, however, the clergy had little choice: the state recommended transferring the most suitable local clergy as tour guides. It was supposed that monks and nuns could help local cadres with instructing visitors on the history of pagodas and scenic sites.16 During the land reform, those pagodas that temporarily maintained their plot of land were taxed and their clergy were expected to work in its rice fields, shoulder-to-shoulder with common people instead of relying exclusively on the believers’ labour.17 Although a campaign of agricultural collectivisation generally failed in the southern regions of Vietnam, many temples and pagodas lost their properties.

In reality, however, the Vietnamese procedures of converting temples into secular places did not differ markedly from those implemented in Republican China and later in Communist China and Revolutionary Russia. Yang and Poont20 report that a large proportion of urban temples were turned into modern schools and exhibition halls and sacred objects were broken or smashed with a hammer. In Luehermann’s15 analysis of desecrations in Post-soviet Russia, one can find examples of sacred groves in the countryside turned into parks or of crematory churches used as public toilets. Malamé22 also gives an account of what happened in the Thinh Liet commune of North Vietnam after the land reform in the mid-1960s: Smashing many symbols, destroying the structure of temples or turning them into private houses, granaries and the like was performed with such great vigour that it is remembered vividly by the villagers even today. Nonetheless, most of the villagers felt that the abuse of and reverence towards temples and gods must, sooner or later, meet with supernatural punishment.

Yet as Poont20 illuminates, the shrinking and periurbanisation or even destruction of religious space hardly led to a break with religious traditions. In Guangzhou City, the temples in their secular disguise as schools and exhibition halls still retained sacred significance as places where people managed to preserve small deity images that they continued to worship. Yang22 gives an example of a temple located close to Shanghai where, in 1927, the young Nationalists beheaded the city god. The local people pulled the head from the gutter and put it on the altar, when the temple was restored. In Siberia, in the 1930s, even though all village churches were closed down people did not cease to gather at nights behind anti-religious activists and chant their prayers.23 In Thinh Liet commune, as soon as anti-religious vigour subsided, the villagers resumed worshipping their deities.

Revival and the changing discourse on religion

The recent liberalisation of the market in Vietnam fostered changes not only in the economic but also in the social sphere. In the last 20 years, one can observe a noteworthy upturn in the state’s attitude to religious spaces: the temples’ festivals have been revived as a glorification of the national culture after a long absence in village life, publications devoted to famous ancient Buddhist pagodas, temples and the national heroes who defended the country’s sovereignty have flooded the bookshops and the restoration works and renovation of religious buildings have become an inherent part of the local landscape. Religion, previously excluded from the public sphere by the state, has been revived under new socio-political conditions. However, in opening up public space for religion, the socialist state neither admits limitations to its power nor reneges control over religious practices. Although the state no longer plays the strong ideological role in people’s lives that it did before 1986, it still tries to standardise religious practices. The state has begun to promote a new rhetoric of harmony between ethical religious values and the ideology of the socialist system. In stressing this attitude, it utilised the architecture and art of pagodas and temples to be a symbol of the Vietnamese tradition. Villagers who want to re-claim their sacred spaces are encouraged by local state agents to apply for official recognition of the sites for which they can prove an artistic and historic value or the historical or cultural character of the residing deity. This has far-reaching implications for religious spaces: the territory of the residing deity and temples into state recognised ones required from villagers a kind of momentary and strategic conformity.

Conclusion

The study of the Công Bố reveals that through the 1950s and the 1960s the state faced difficulties in implementing its agenda. In reaction, the state was little concerned with the new roles of villages and temples and used them as it was most convenient for them: as granaries, storehouses, private houses or for co-operative production. While earlier issues sound the alert over the miserable conditions of religious buildings, the late 1970s issues give up the self-critical tone and ignore the actual disregard for religious buildings. This sudden silence is only broken in later editions which depict a landscape of mushrooming historical and cultural monuments across the country.

These days, the relationship between religion and the Communist state is presented in the public sphere as a harmonious one in which state is tolerant and helpful. At the same time, some of the religious traditions are seen as representations of Vietnamese culture and national identity. For example, the traditional cult of ancestor worship has been revived as a “hero-centred political culture”, since the state’s focus is on the exemplary service of the ancestors. In theory, the Vietnamese state allows full religious freedom; in practice, it enforces its power on religion by patrolling and directing religious practices. Most of all, this guidance occurs at the rhetorical level. However, it sometimes happens that the state will support religious activities in opposition to the socialist programme. From the state’s standpoint, all attempts to take advantage of religious freedom and to disturb peace, independence and unity of the country and to propagate superstition are misconduct with law.

While relations between the state and religion remain rather antagonistic, the state is not extremely repressive. At the same time, the state continues a functionalist attitude towards religion. Religion became a useful tool in the hands of the Communist state to carry out the social project of a national and cultural homogeneity. Moreover, religion linked to the politics of nationalism is seen by the state as a positive dimension of the tradition of western culture in Vietnam and so-called evils.

To end, the best summary would be that of Philip Taylor, whose analysis well captures the nature of the relationship between modern cultural policy and popular religion: “whose analysis well captures the nature of the relationship between modern cultural policy and popular religion: “Religion, State & Society 34-2.

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The work of the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) has come to be seen as an attempt to create a system that incorporates both Western philosophy and insights gleaned from the Zen Buddhist tradition. However, this interpretation fails to account for the variety of influences that lead Nishida to formulate his unique insights. In his early work Nishida refers extensively to the Confucian tradition as well as to Buddhism, a fact which becomes especially important when we turn to Nishida’s interpretation of key problems in ethics.

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30 The Focus: Religion and Global Empire

Confucian thought in early Nishida

The JAPANESE PHILOSOPHERS who have come to be known as the “Kyoto School” are perhaps best known for their attempts to reconcile Eastern and Western philosophical perspectives. While this is undoubtedly an interesting and unique aspect of their thought, it is certainly not the only avenue worthy of exploration. An investigation of other influences on the work of Kyō School thinkers reveals interesting angles which have been largely ignored in English language scholarship. Especially notable is the influence of Confucianism on the early work of the foremost member of the Kyō School, Nishida Kitarō.

The idea of Kyoto School philosophy essentially evolved from the work of Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945). The publication of his first work, An Inquiry into the Good (1911), has such an influence on the beginning of modern Japanese philosophy. The main concept of the book, the idea of ‘pure experience’ (jainsen keika), is often seen as the pivotal idea in Nishida’s entire philosophical project. The general consensus among scholars is that while the phrase ‘pure experience’ was a direct translation of a term from William James, the content of the idea is generally believed to have been drawn largely from Nishida’s experiences of Zen meditation during the period from the late 1890’s to 1906. Thus, the perception of Kyoto School philosophy as the ‘merging’ of Zen ideas with Western philosophy seems to find validation in the very origins of the tradition.

However, even a quick glance at the index of Inquiry is enough to indicate that such an analysis is simplistic. In the text, Nishida refers frequently to the Confucian tradition. I will show shortly that this is not merely incidental; rather, in order to understand properly Nishida’s much ignored ethical project we must investigate thoroughly the Confucian roots of Inquiry. However, for now we must ask why this lacuna regarding Confucianism developed within Nishida scholarship in the first place? The answer can be found in the explicitly Buddhist orientation of subsequent Kyoto School philosophy. The philosophies of figures such as Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990) and Masa Abe (1915-2006) rely heavily on themes from Buddhist philosophies of figures such as Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990) and Masa Abe (1915-2006) rely heavily on themes from Buddhist philosophies. Nishida seems to have been fascinated by one doctrine in particular, that of the ‘Unity of Knowledge and Action’ (Chin. chih hsing ho-i, Jpn. chigayōkido), which suggests that one cannot have purely theoretical knowledge, that in fact once one knows something, this knowledge will inevitably manifest itself in action. Bridging the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge was, for Nishida, the key to overcoming the ethical dilemmas which had plagued Western philosophy for centuries.

In Inquiry, Nishida would re-formulate Wang’s insight as “Conduct” (kōi). “Conduct” can best be interpreted as ‘pure experience’ manifest as action. An example of what ‘Conduct’ means in real terms is provided by Nishida in the last chapter of Inquiry entitled ‘Knowledge and Love’, which was an earlier essay appended to the text. Here Nishida refers to the famous story from Mencius 2A.4.6 about the child about to fall into the well and the fact that anybody witnessing this action would act instinctively to save the child (Inquiry p.174) (Jpn. p.244). For Nishida, this is how ‘pure experience’ becomes manifest as ‘Conduct’ in the ethical sphere. In Inquiry, one of Nishida’s key critiques of what he calls ‘Rational Theories’ of ethics in Western philosophy is the idea that somehow one can be in possession of an abstract idea of ‘the good’, that one can know an ethical truth solely via the intellect. For Nishida, following in the footsteps of Wang, such knowledge is impossible. The fact that there might be a concurrent manifestation of knowledge as action is the key, which Nishida felt, distinguished his ethics from thinkers in the Western tradition, such as Kant and T.H. Green. If one is in possession of such knowledge of “the good”, there would be no doubt, since ethical action, such as saving the boy from the well, would result. This stance also has implications from an epistemological perspective, as it rebukes the idea of ethical knowledge as a purely private issue; rather, any ethical knowledge must inevitably become manifest as a public act, which is open to scrutiny and criticism. Such a stance is in direct contrast to what happens when we interpret Nishida’s understanding of ‘pure experience’ as a Buddhist idea. Such an interpretation, the very private nature of the experience results in the impossibility of proving its veracity in the public sphere, leaving any recourse to ‘pure experience’ as an explanatory concept open to objections from the fallacy of the ‘argument from authority’. One cannot claim universal truth for a concept on the sole basis of the authority of one’s own experience of the said concept. There has to be a means to provide proof to a wider community, otherwise such claims from experience become authoritarian assertions. Nishida’s idea of ‘Conduct’ as the manifestation of ‘pure experience’, drawn from the Confucian tradition, takes the concept beyond the purely personal, and into the public, ethical sphere.

While I have focused on the influence of Confucianism on the early Nishida, it is clear that this particular influence waned as Nishida’s career progressed. Nonetheless, ‘pure experience’ remained key to much of Nishida’s subsequent philosophical development, despite metamorphosing into numerous different guises. While there is no agreed manner of dividing Nishida’s philosophical thought into ‘phases’, it seems fair to suggest that the idea of ‘pure experience’ becomes less a psychological or metaphysical concept as Nishida’s thought develops. He seems to want to interpret ‘pure experience’ as a kind of logical concept, which can somehow transcend the subject-object dualism which is inherent in language. This leads to a distinct ‘Zend’ undercurrent in many of his later works, culminating in the explicitly Buddhist orientation of his last published text. To my mind, it is a shame that Nishida’s thought did not continue to move in the direction of the ethical issues highlighted in Inquiry. The suggestion of an inter-subjective practical ethics, which functions beyond the duality of subject and object, and instead of good and evil, is a fascinating prospect, the possibility of which is enough to justify further investigation of the significance of Nishida’s ethics.

THE TENDENCY TO SEE Zen as the overriding influence on Nishida has led scholars to emphasise the metaphysical aspects of Nishida’s thought and, thus, to overlook its ethical importance.
In late 19th and early 20th century Japan, several popular religious movements and ideologies emerged combining nationalist notions on the divine nature of the Japanese people and country with millenarian beliefs on the imminent replacement of the current world order by a perfect new world. ‘New religions’ such as Ōmoto and Sokka Gakkai drew on existing Shinto and Buddhist notions, reinterpreting them in the context of modern Japanese society.

Other movements and religious leaders at the time used millenarian and nationalist notions in their attempts to reconcile an imported Christian belief system with their Japanese identity. Alke Rots examines one of these leaders, the evangelist, theologian and missionary Nakada Jūji (1870-1939).

Nakada Jūji was born in 1870. He grew up in the town of Hinoaki, present-day Aomori prefecture, where he was a member of the Holiness Church, Publishing Department. In his twenties, he moved to the US, to study theology at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. This institute was founded by Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899), one of the most influential of the Holiness Church and wrote extensively on the experience of sanctification or ‘holiness’ (the experience of being washed away from sins by the grace of Christ), missionary activism and, significantly, a radical pre-millenarian eschatology. These ideas became the point of departure for Nakada’s theology. Back in Japan, he founded the Oriental Missionary Holiness Church (Tōyō Senkyōkai) together with two American missionaries, in 1905. However, despite the initial similarities in belief systems, Nakada’s condemnation of Western anti-Semitism fits well with his attempts to discredit the Jewish people as a whole. As they had long constituted ‘the Other’s West, which was presented as responsible for the corruption of Western nations, Nakada condemned the increasing persecution of the Jews, he also condemned the increasing persecution of the Jews, and stressed the urgency of collective prayer to rescue them. Eventually, Nakada’s theological project developed into a myth of differentiation between East and West, and a Christian-Zionist ideological legitimisation of Japanese militarism and imperialism. Despite its radical conclusions, it was embedded in contemporary religious and political discourses and drew on a variety of ideological sources (European millenarianism, Christianity, and theories of ethnic descent), which it combined creatively. As such, it can be seen as a peculiar but genuine attempt to re-appropriate Christian ideology in such a way that it could be made compatible with Japanese national identity. Alke P. Rots

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4. NJZ. Vol. 2, p. 177-175.
11. He based this thought on the paradigm, dominant in Europe at the time, that the sons of Noah (Shem, Ham and Japheth) were the earliest ancestors of the world’s races, according to which, it was believed, all nations could be categorized into categories. See Seisho yori mitaru Nihon [Jews seen from the Bible]. NJZ. Vol. 2, pp. 75.
14. Needless to say, the Arab population of British Palestine (i.e. the vast majority) was remarkably absent from Nakada’s scheme of events.
Han Yongun (1879-1944) was a Buddhist monk and an ardent Korean nationalist and a great poet, active during the colonial period (1910-1945). Buddhism is generally seen as the underlying ideology of his spiritual, nationalist and literary practices. It is often held that his nationalism and literature could remain morally and politically pure, original and non-compromising thanks to its grounding in profound Buddhist philosophy. But Buddhism was not his only religious belief. Nor was it the only political instrument of anti-Japanese resistance and Korean nationalism. Jung-Shim Lee reveals a more complicated and heterogeneous relationship between religion and politics in Han’s writings than is often assumed.

Women, Confucianism and nation-building in Han Yongun’s novel Death

Han Yongun was imprisoned by the colonial authorities for three years. The love triangle in the novel is divergent from the habitually assumed Buddhist perspective. In reaction to the decadent tendencies of free love, Han Yongun reinvented Confucian moral injunctions of chastity, as well as the role of motherhood for women is stressed. The woman’s body is claimed primarily in relation to child-bearing. This negates the body itself, its sexual nature and its role in romance and pleasure. According to Han, women’s bodies conceive, raise and sustain members of the (Korean) nation who will construct future Korean society. Women’s role in educating children would properly determine the future of Korea. It follows then, that chastity and marriage become the basis for the plot of Han’s novel Death.

The novel deals with a love triangle involving Yŏngok and her two suitors, Chong'ŏl and Sŏngyŏl. Yŏngok and Chong’ŏl are in love. They are freed from traditional customs of early and late marriages and are expected to follow the Confucian ideal of a “good wife and wise mother”. But Sŏngyŏl, who symbolises Japanese colonialism, is never satisfied with Yŏngok and makes the heroine his concubine. His approach to nationalism was not simply a nationalist discourse. In his novel he also employs Confucian principles to create a new kind of hybrid identity - that of colonised subjects. This set Korean nationalism apart from the Japanese experience. In the love triangle in the novel, Confucianism rather than Buddhism was important as historical source material for re-evaluating the political experience of Korea whose nation-building plan. Han’s nationalist effort was not simply a nationalist discourse. In his novel, Han Yongun reinvented Confucian moral injunctions of chastity, as well as the role of motherhood for women is stressed. The woman’s body is claimed primarily in relation to child-bearing. This negates the body itself, its sexual nature and its role in romance and pleasure. According to Han, women’s bodies conceive, raise and sustain members of the (Korean) nation who will construct future Korean society. Women’s role in educating children would properly determine the future of Korea. It follows then, that chastity and marriage become the basis for the plot of Han’s novel Death.

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IN RECENT DECADES, Malaysia has been profoundly changed both by forces of globalisation, modernisation and industrialisation, and by a strong Islamisation process. Some would argue that the situation of Malay women has worsened but such a conclusion is challenged by this study of the everyday religious practice of pious women within Kuala Lumpur’s affluent, Malay middle class. Here, women play an active part in the Islamisation process not only by heightened personal religiosity but also by organising and participating in public programmes of religious education. By organising new forms of collective ritual and assuming new public roles as religious teachers, these religiously educated women are transforming the traditionally male-dominated gendered space of the mosque and breaking men’s monopoly over positions of religious authority. Exploring this situation, the book argues that the situation of Malay women has worsened but and as current theories of female agency and power.

HOW DID East and West Germany and Japan reconstitute national identity after the Second World War? Did all three experience parallel reactions to national trauma and reconstruction?

History education shaped how these nations recognised their national identities. Because the content of history education was controlled by different actors, history education materials framed national identity in very different ways. In Japan, where the curriculum was controlled by bureaucrats bent on maintaining their purported neutrality, materials focused on the empirical building blocks of history (who? where? what?) at the expense of discussions of historical responsibility. In East Germany, where party cadres controlled the curriculum, students were taught that the Second World War was a capitalist aberration. In (West) Germany, where teachers controlled the curriculum, students were taught the lessons of shame and then regeneration after historians turned away from grand national narratives.

This book shows that constructions of national identity are not easily malleable on the basis of moral and political concerns alone, but that they are subject to institutional constraints and opportunities. In an age when post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation has become a major focus for the parallel revision of portrayals of national history and the institutional reconstruction of policy-making regimes.

IN THE 1980s, writers, filmmakers, and artists began to probe the contradictions in China’s urbanisation policies and rhetoric. Powerful neoliberal fiction, cinema, documentaries, paintings, photographs, performances, and installations contrasted forms of glittering urban renewal with the government’s inattention to liveable urban infrastructure. Narratives and images depicting the melancholy urban subject came to illustrate ethical quandaries raised by urban life. Visser relates her analysis of this art to major transformations in urban planning under global neoliberalism, to the development of cultural studies in the Chinese academy, and to ways that specific cities, particularly Beijing and Shanghai, figure in the cultural imagination. Despite the environmental and cultural destruction caused by China’s neoliberal policies, Visser argues for the emergence of a new urban self-awareness, one that offers creative resolutions for the dilemmas of urbanism through new forms of intellectual engagement in society and nascent forms of civic governance.
Indian students back home and abroad


Mukherjee’s book could not have been published at a more pertinent time. Studying abroad, and in particular Indian students studying abroad, has recently become headline news following a series of racist attacks in Australia. Mukherjee’s book comes at a time when studying abroad (by Asians, and in particular by Chinese and Indian students) has been discovered as a new and even newsworthy topic. This has a lot to do with the fact that studying abroad has increasingly become connected to the idea of migration. As I have shown myself in recent publications on the topic of Indian students in Australia: many are (also) migrants. As skilled migration programmes and the business of making money out of offering education to foreign students become ever more entangled, both at the level of the state and the individual, a complex new debate has arisen on the place of students and (temporary or permanent) skilled migrants in society. Mukherjee’s book, interestingly, deals with the opposite. It takes the lives of students who studied in the UK but then returned to India as a central element of analysis. Historically, this was pretty much what things usually went. In general, students who came to a particular country for a number of years to study – either privately funded or on some kind of scholarship – often returned home with a particular purpose, such as helping the development of a freshly independent nation.

The ‘thing’ to do
From the 1870s onwards, small numbers of Indian students found their way to Oxford and Cambridge. This was partly the result of the British opening up their examinations for the Indian Civil Service. Besides preparing for these examinations, in some prosperous Indian families, studying abroad had become the ‘thing’ to do. Initially, studying abroad was something only the upper-middle and upper class could afford. You needed a certain amount of influence and connections but, most of all, a considerable sum of money to be able to send your offspring overseas.

After World War Two, the idea of studying abroad, and who would be able to do so, changed considerably. Many countries in South and Southeast Asia became independent and confronted with the ‘threat’ of communism – certainly after the communists took over mainland China in 1949 – and the Cold War brought shocks to the West, Western countries approached this problem in various ways. One way of dealing with it was by calling security pacts and forming military alliances with countries, for example, in East Asia. Significantly, however, these countries had reached the conclusion that in order to contain the spread of communism they had to face up to the reasons why this had occurred in the first place. Western countries realised that the political stability of many former colonies was highly dependent on social and economic development. Besides the obvious humanitarian and economic reasons, it was also the political context that triggered western countries to provide aid in order to make sure economic and industrial development could take place in the developing countries. Consultants and advisors were sent, recommendations given and finances provided for the establishment of institutions for the training of scientists, engineers and administrators. In addition, some developed countries agreed to educate and train a certain number of students in their own institutions and at their own expense. Educational and scholarship opportunities were also opened up to unqualified students from developing countries. It was, of course, made clear that these students had to return home after completing their studies so that they could assist in their countries development.

What started was fitted in the fifties continued in the sixties. Overseas students were seen as important ‘interpreters and translators’ for the United States; they would one day go home and explain to their fellow countrymen what the US or the ‘West’ stood for and, hopefully, this would be a useful tale of progress and freedom.

Change in the air
From the mid 1960s onwards, the narrative on studying abroad shifted to the issue of non-return by overseas students and, connected to this, the issue of brain drain. Publications at this time clearly reflected this worry. At first, the overseas student was a guy who would help us out his country and, in addition, promote the message of capitalism and freedom; now, he was slowly starting to be perceived as a person who failed in both fields: the risk that he might not return to his home country meant he wouldn’t be able to help his country develop and progress and, at the same time, he would not be able to bring home positive tales of having befriended Americans and how much he had enjoyed living a capitalist lifestyle among them. In fact, by the late 1960s, that second reason had already largely disappeared from the pages. Speculating about the reasons for this made little sense without elaborating on, for example, how the Cold War was developing, where the Vietnam war was heading, how the Flower Power movement had unfolded and how public opinion generally was changing on war and peace related matters. Yet change was in the air and the decades to come certainly showed a whole new approach to offering education to overseas students.

Current debates on foreign students can clearly be connected to the commodification of higher education which started in the 1980s. At the time, budget cuts in various countries led to a feverish period of education reform. Universities were encouraged to recruit foreign students who would pay full tuition fees and thus present themselves in the form of net income. Mukherjee’s study does not deal with this – as her study deals with the period of 1904-1947 – yet it can be placed in the wider historical context of studying abroad, which does not necessarily need to end where she stops. The book typically shows the kind of thinking that came with studying abroad, underlining all the more how much has changed since then.

The desirable ‘other’

The way studying abroad is sold in India now – whether it concerns studying in Australia, Canada or the US is all about using images and slogans which communicate the desirable ‘other’; a place where one needs to be. In Australia, in recent years, this was also about creating a migration desire, in countries such as the US and the UK this was less so. Yet whereas in colonial days the desire reached out to the business and situation. Yet the most important thing we can learn from Mukherjee’s study in perspective to current developments is that the UK’s intentions in terms studying abroad or the recruitment of overseas students does not always result in the desired outcome. The way studying abroad is sold is much more about money, making sure that the countries in question can support their own educational structures. A cynic would wonder: what’s new? The money that the West requires still needs to be generated in the East. Yet, I would argue, with one notable difference: increasingly students from India know exactly what kind of transnational journey they are about to embark on.

Australia has recently introduced a policy change making it almost impossible for foreign students to obtain permanent residency rights after graduation. This policy change has already created a boom in overseas students’ enrollments from the year 2000 onwards. Other countries, such as Canada, who are keen to attract students, are facing the same problem. International students, have already announced policy changes making it easier to stay onwards after graduation. At the same time, the UK has issued new regulations again making it almost impossible for foreign students to obtain permanent residency after graduation. This possibility had previously been almost impossible for foreign students to obtain residency rights after graduation. This possibility had previously been impossible for foreign students to obtain residency rights after graduation. The way studying abroad is sold in India now – whether it concerns studying in Australia, Canada or the US is all about using images and slogans which communicate the desirable ‘other’; a place where one needs to be. In Australia, in recent years, this was also about creating a migration desire, in countries such as the UK this was less so. Yet whereas in colonial days the desire reached out to the business and situation. Yet the most important thing we can learn from Mukherjee’s study in perspective to current developments is that the UK’s intentions in terms studying abroad or the recruitment of overseas students does not always result in the desired outcome. The way studying abroad is sold is much more about money, making sure that the countries in question can support their own educational structures. A cynic would wonder: what’s new? The money that the West requires still needs to be generated in the East. Yet, I would argue, with one notable difference: increasingly students from India know exactly what kind of transnational journey they are about to embark on.

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Southeast Asia and the great powers

The latest offering from the prolific and much-respected historian, Nicholas Tarling, is an epilogue to his trilogy of books *Imperialism in Southeast Asia (2001), Nationalism in Southeast Asia (2004)* and *Regionalism in Southeast Asia (2006)*. Tarling felt he had devoted too much space to the role of outside powers in Southeast Asia in the first two books and insufficent attention in the final book. This epilogue attempts to re-dress this balance and ‘examine what had interested great powers in the region in the past and what had involved them there’. (p.2)

Ang Cheng Guan

Tarling addresses the interests and involvement of outside powers in Southeast Asia by posing a series of questions: How substantial were those interests? How continuous were they? How were they defined? How were they pursued? To what extent were they grounded in Southeast Asia or import? (p.8) The author adopts what he calls a ‘novel’ approach in the writing of this book, combining both the theoretical (‘parth’) and the historical (‘largely’). By theoretical, Tarling refers to the need to address the nature and dynamics of the inter-state system, which he does so only rather briefly in his introductory chapter. There is really no serious attempt to engage in the debates and issues of international relations theory. The strength of the book, however, lies in the historical. Whereas most international relations accounts include only a general historical background, Southeast Asia and the Great Powers weaves stories that cover two centuries. A long-term account, as Tarling explains, ‘indicating change and providing context and comparison, may enhance explanation of the recent and the contemporary. It may point to influences and traditions that affect the views of the leaders and those they lead, and help to validate the suggestions the book offers’ (p.8). Among these suggestions is the notion that since the late 18th century, the interest of the great powers in Southeast Asia has been largely limited. Interest could, however, be boosted or restrained depending on the changing priorities and relationships of the powers in the region. In turn, interest could become intervention if local opportunities present themselves - such as division or among states in the region which might seek help, support and security vis-a-vis neighbours, hegemons or other outside powers. (p.8) Tarling describes this best with regards to the evolution of British interests in Southeast Asia. Initially, Britain’s priority was to sustain the balance of power in Europe. She was therefore willing to exercise restraint and tolerate Spanish, Dutch and French interests in Southeast Asia, in which she had ‘little intrinsic interest’. However, as Britain’s commercial interest (intra-Asian Trade) (the trade route to China) in Southeast Asia grew, so did the tensions in Anglo-Dutch relations and the potential influence on the region of her French rival. Consequently, the British took measures to actively boost, protect and advance its own interests in the region. That the British were able to extend its influence in certain Malay states was largely a result of the willingness of local elites/authorities to make use of British power to back their interests. Another example is the involvement of the external powers during the Cold War particularly in Indochina. Tarling also posits that post-independence, Southeast Asian leaders are aware that to prevent external intervention, they must deal with and manage their own intra-regional differences among themselves.

For this book, Tarling adopted a country-by-country approach beginning with India, followed by Britain, France, Japan, Russia, the US, China and ending with Australia and New Zealand (together in one chapter). Aside from clarity, there is a logic to arranging the countries in this chapter as Tarling hopes to show how these major powers reacted to each other and to Southeast Asia. In fact, each chapter stands rather independently and can be read on its own. The book is more a re-telling of the future of the great powers in Southeast Asia, rather than a discussion of a common theme. Together they form a collage of Southeast Asia and the great powers over two centuries. The downside to this approach is that those interested in the policies of the regional countries may find the narrative rather segmented and occasionally repetitive. However, the focus of this book is principally on the Big Powers. I concur with the author who himself concedes that it is perhaps controversial to include a chapter on Australia and New Zealand. The book ends somewhat incongruously with an account of New Zealand and the region. Tarling justifies this, however, by stating that these two countries, small as they may be, are closer to Southeast Asia than most of the other powers discussed in the book.

*Limited intrinsic interests*

The inclusion of India as a Big Power also raises questions. In the chapter on the sub-continent, the main point highlighted by Tarling is the ‘striking disparity between its cultural influence and its political role’ (p.41). In the chapter on Britain, Tarling says that Southeast Asia was of little intrinsic interest for the British. It was important in so far as it was connected to the inter-state rivalry between the British, Spanish, Dutch and the French. There was an element of commercial interest but not particularly. Tarling concludes, it was ‘strategic interests that were most responsible for Britain’s interests in Southeast Asia’ (p.82). Similarly, in the shortest chapter in the book, Tarling says of the French venture in Indo-China, while it might have led to a major military struggle, ‘its intrinsic interest in Vietnam was never strong’ (p.92). As for Japan, Tarling thought that Tokyo might not have conquered Southeast Asia if not for the impact of the war elsewhere and the Japanese really had no coherent policy for the region. Russia too had only ‘limited and intermittent interest in the region’ and its entry into the region was due to the Cold War. Throughout the Tsarist period, for example, Russia had no direct interest in Southeast Asia at all. Like Russia, the US only became interested in Southeast Asia during the Cold War and its involvement in the Vietnam War. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, American interests in the region ‘had always been limited and largely indirect’ (p.136).

The chapter on China stands out and this attests to my earlier observation that the chapters can all be read individually and separately. Tarling starts the chapter on China with a very contemporary observation that the ‘rise’ of China at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries has led to much speculation about its future role in the world and in Southeast Asia. It is the only chapter that starts this way and is in sharp contrast to the chapter on India, the other old colonial power, which begins with a consideration on the 18th century, mentions Southeast Asia only in passing and goes on to describe India-Indonesian relations in the 1950s. Tarling’s China, however, is ‘geographically proximate, historically, it (China) has always been in some sense a Southeast Asian power’ (p.164). He poses the question, is history a useful guide for the future? Tarling’s own response to this is that history is unlikely to provide clear guidance. In his words, ‘Looking to the past with such a purpose in mind had, after all, always to be done with caution: it is likely at most to tell you what is unlikely, to remind you of what to consider rather than what to conclude’. I find that, having read a well summarised account of the period from 1949 to the end of the 1970s, Tarling’s China narrative lurched rather quickly towards the mid-1990s, leaving perhaps too much about the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s unread.

Tarling is able to summarise and distill the key elements and issues of the 18th and 19th century very well and eloquently. However, his treatment of the later part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is somewhat patchy and less satisfactory. I get the sense that he is unsure of when the appropriate ending point for each country he has surveyed should be. To be fair, it is not easy to cover more than two centuries of history in a short chapter and in a book that covers nine countries/powers, (not to mention the ten Southeast Asian states).

Tarling decided against a concluding chapter choosing instead to end with a survey of Australia and New Zealand. In the last paragraph of his book, however, he reiterates that, for the most part, the interest of the great powers towards Southeast Asia was ‘limited’ and that ‘their interests elsewhere frequently took priority’, and ‘that their rivalry in the region or in the larger world often intensified their involvement in the region, though occasionally lessening it’. The history lesson to be learnt from this book is that ‘If Southeast Asian states avoided divisions and separations they increased their chance of constraining the external powers…’ (p.164). He poses the question, is history a useful guide for the future? Tarling’s own response to this is that history is unlikely to provide clear guidance. In his words, ‘Looking to the past with such a purpose in mind had, after all, always to be done with caution: it is likely at most to tell you what is unlikely, to remind you of what to consider rather than what to conclude’. I find that, having read a well summarised account of the period from 1949 to the end of the 1970s, Tarling’s China narrative lurched rather quickly towards the mid-1990s, leaving perhaps too much about the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s unread.

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My conclusion is that this book, rather than being a epilogue, is more of a companion volume to *Regionalism in Southeast Asia* (2006). It is definitely an erudite and stimulating survey that we have come to expect from Nicholas Tarling. I cannot think of a better book on the international history of Southeast Asia.

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In our third age

In our third age, whether we like it or not, the past catches up with us. The past may, accordingly, become a story-telling friend: a pleasant companion – as is apparent from Nicholas Tarling’s History Boy; a memoir.


The point is not whether we should deal with the past or not; with our lives willy-nilly revisiting us, we have little to choose from. The past is how we have lived with the inevitable perils and the inevitable gains. Some of us write it about us to examine it and be with it; others visualise the evolution of their lives and personality in a Bilogismnon that may offer something of solace. It is clear that he holds this view. In his History Boy, he presents a memoir that relates the way they went to the theatre. Tarling’s is within this latter category, but in the absence of marriage and children, his privately published memoir is presumably addressing an audience of former students, friends, relatives and colleagues.

The recounting

As a fellow Southeast Asianist, I am interested in the relation of others, and so I solicited to do a review. As a result, and for fairness’ sake, I had to read through a 277-page colloquy devoid of internal tension, plot or action in which hundreds of names are dropped and not a single character comes to life. Even the author remarks it as a ‘fictional’ figure. Whereas it is clear that he holds this view. In his History Boy—dear—the biography draws heavily on its Petronian personality. We get to know the names of his siblings but nothing about the author’s relationship with them. At the end, we know that Tarling has no affinity with dogs, the army and sports; that he is a reticent person, sticking to himself and books; a perennial bachelor; a keen student and a successful academic; noisy dorms, colleges, flats, hotels, and neighbours (three to four score mentions) get on his nerves, at the same time that he is most relaentless in his critique and in listening to his records— he hints at two to three hundred performances and compositions. He also likes to watch theatre and, especially in his later career, to act on the stage, but also there we have to do with listings that, in the absence of content or setting, fail to enrobe the narrative. In a way the author anticipated that he would not qualify as a Bilogismnon or even as an intellectual biography when he warned the reader that he has no real aptitude for ‘original’ or ‘imaginative’ writing (p.47).

For the outsider, the interest of the book is in fleeting remarks about one or the other of the places that occurs in the text, such as Singapore as a China town in the late 1950s and Hong Kong without high rises, or about certain historical concepts such as a city or a clear, the novelty of having a radio, sea travel to Australia, and occasional opinions on the academic curriculum, but like with the names of persons referred to, it all remains perfunctory. Intellectual biography

We need scholarly memoirs that show us the origin and development of ideas, and so I sympathise with the urge of the author to express a personal moment superfluous. As eggheads, we usually have no experience with creative writing; the texts we produced were written in an entirely different mode, and with close to 20 books to his name, Tarling will be remembered as a prolific historian of Southeast Asia, the intellectual background of that enterprise would have provided us with a significant contribution to historiography-in-action. With History Boy, however, we have no more than a boring, linear progression from station to station, from renowned scholar, then from dean to vice-chancellor—in brief, an extremely personal account that holds little of interest for his fellow Southeast Asians.

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Niels Mulder

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References


The Review 37

Inventing ourselves as Filipinos

Despite myth and ideology, the US is a multicultural society that, because of its segregationist tendencies, nurtures ‘primordial’ identity feelings. As one of the biggest Spanish-speaking countries, this is obvious enough among the Chicanos and variant Latinos, but other second and third generation descendants of original immigrants are also stimulated to keep their ethnic identity alive. Over time, such identity is increasingly rooted in group- and generation-specific rituals and other invented traditions. Identities evolve over the years and, at the personal level, even over one’s life time.

Niels Mulder


GONZALEZ PARAPHRASED his book title, ‘The Day the Dancers Came’ by the Filipino American writer Biemenders Santis, as the story of an old-timer, ‘indented’ labourer eagerly anticipates evolving his youth, his nation, his origin, through watching a Philippine cultural show that he once came to— ‘and that does not mean any recognition, he has, on the other hand, that he is an outsider, without identity, and no better than refuse.

The audience of the performances the author describes is as different from our parish as the other face of the moon. It consists of the children (and grandchildren) of postwar, mainly middle-class immigrants who currently study at colleges and universities, and who organise, for their own benefit, the yearly Philippine Cultural Nights that are the proper subject of the memoirograph.

A national repertoire

In order to trace the evolution of the shows’ contents, the author takes us back to the 1930s, when contemporary cultural expressions were emulating the example of American popular culture. At that time, educators Jorge Bocobo and Francisca Reyes Aquina felt that the country, on the eve of commonwealth status, and impending independence, needed to develop a cultural repertoire rooted in the pre-Spanish past. In order to do so, they sought inspiration in the folklore (costumes, music, dances) of the groups that had withheld the ibanon intrusion and retained much of their own. Subsequently, they invented and developed a national repertoire that, in the 1950s, culminated in the internationally acclaimed pageant of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company. According to a fellow critic, this troupe presents: ‘an ethnic dance culture which has gone beyond simple preservation and into creative growth’, which ‘can be an effective Cultural Mission to the Americas and Europe’ (p.72).

Whereas it may be expected that, in the course of its adaptation to theatre and stage, and in its development as a world-class dance company, the original sources, of inspiration ‘up there in the hills’ get distanced or even become unrecognisable, the rise of Banyan to its current position is accompanied with a deep cultural crisis in which the nation seemed to be deprived of identity and purpose. In this way, Bayanihan filled a void and became a primary site of ‘Philippine identity.’

This iconisation of folklore-derived ‘culture’ that exists as it did formally ends in the 1970s and into the present, acquired such rigidity as to become standardised ‘rites of passage’ that, of course, with each following generation of students will be understood in different ways. Before this time, the PCNs have become an easy target for satire (ch. 5) that has, however, not made a dent in the programming.

The crux is the performance

The author is a musician, composer and theatre performer who, as an academic, focuses on Filipino American and performance studies, and so it is strange that ‘performance’ takes the centre stage. This results in straightforward descriptions of shows, countless names, and a collage of dates and historical titbits that fail to evoke the forest that has gone lost for the trees. What has become clear, however, is that the PCNs are there to stay as a ritual of belonging to the Filipino community in America, comparable to celebrations of those of Irish, Italian, Mexican, or Chinese descent. In this context, the author has used the idea that participation in a PCN serves as a rite of passage (p.90) and persuasively so on the way to becoming fully fledged Filipino American [7], with the rite: itself evolving nostalgia, or the desire to obliterate history and to turn it into a legitimate private or collective (presumably identity-confirming) mythology (pp.142-3).

Whereas this interpretation sounds plausible, I dearly miss the subjective experience of the audience and, largely, of the performers, too. By stating that the PCNs are an expression of diasporic identifications, we still remain in the dark about the subjective experience of the audience and, largely, of the performers, too. By stating that the PCNs are an expression of diasporic identifications, we still remain in the dark about the subjective experience of the audience and, largely, of the performers, too. By stating that the PCNs are an expression of diasporic identifications, we still remain in the dark about the subjective experience of the audience and, largely, of the performers, too.
Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense

Along the Archival Grain attempts to illuminate both the processes of colonial administration in the Dutch East Indies through their archival records and the processes of historical research in untangling these narratives. Stoler goes through the personal letters, as well as the official reports of particular civil servants, painting a broader picture of their world-view and life in the Indies. She traces the evolving attempts to classify and control the different groups in the Dutch colonies, which was particularly marked by ambivalence towards Indies-born Dutch, and concern about those raised in the Indies.

Katrina Gulliver

While there is an implicit focus on power shifts, politics and authority, it seems that the pieces have been carefully chosen for their individual perspectives on the greater events and trends. There is a general balance between civilian and military writers, for example, and insiders and outside observers to the event or moment in question.

An educational literary journey

My only real qualm about this book relates to the Reader's proposed readership. The authors state that 'the Reader is a primer for anyone who wants to know why Indonesia looks the way it does today' (p. 162). For me and for previous reviewers, the carefully selected content held together, made sense and even elicited awe at times. But I tried to put myself in the shoes of a newcomer to Indonesia or even Asian Studies, an undergraduate student perhaps – the kind of non-specialised reader I suppose the editors envisaged – and I wondered how they would make sense of it, all its breadth and detail. Would they indeed be able to glean an understanding of this fascinating nation in at least some of its historical, social and cultural complexity? After all, it was an educational literary journey, even for someone reasonably well-versed in Indonesian matters.

Laura Noszlopy

The Indonesian Reader provides an introduction to the world’s largest archipelago. The fourth most populous country in the world, encompassing nearly 18,000 islands, Indonesia has a larger Muslim population than any other nation. This title, aimed at the traveller, student, and expert alike, includes journalists’ articles, explorers’ chronicles, photographs, poetry, stories, cartoons, drawings, letters, speeches, and more, conveying a sense of the history, culture and diversity of this extraordinary land.

Laura Noszlopy

The Indonesian Reader

The Indonesian Reader: History, Culture, Politics.


WHEN I FIRST picked up this book I was sceptical about how its editors would manage the enormous task at hand. The attempt, however, ‘ imperfect and incomplete’, ‘to show some of the arc of Indonesia’s histories and societies over the centuries, from geographic, cultural, political, economic, and religious points of view’ (p.8) is audacious, to say the least. But I believe the editors, an historian and a literature scholar, have done a fine job of it.

The book is divided into ten distinct parts, arranged thematically into a loose chronology. Each part contains up to a dozen pieces drawn from primary and secondary sources, political, commercial and literary materials, written by men and women, indigenous and foreign authors. Much of the material has been translated into English (and I wonder if the series editors left in something of a Dutch ‘flavour’ to the English style).

A cornucopia of sources

It really is an extraordinary cornucopia of sources that illustrate some of the pivotal and unique moments in Indonesia’s life. Opening with excerpts from the 5th century Kutek Inscriptions, the region’s earliest known examples of writing which were found on stone pillars in eastern Borneo, the Reader then takes off with its own trajectory across time and the islands. In between, the materials track the growth of Islam, the colonial experience (for both sides of the coloniser and colonised), independence, and modernity. Aplenty, the book ends with two illuminating notes — and very typical of the contemporary scene — from the Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) and Jakarta-based journalist Dini Anwar, respectively. SBY discusses Indonesia’s reaction to the 2005 controversy surrounding the publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper, the appeal for tolerance and understanding in the world’s most populous Muslim nation. In some contrast, Dini Anwar discusses the potentially far-reaching privations that may be imposed following the ratification of the so-called ‘anti-pornography bill’ by the Indonesian parliament. Snapshots like these demonstrate the real tensions at the heart of contemporary Indonesia.

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My only real qualm about this book relates to the Reader’s ‘misunderstanding’ and misconstrual of their intention by those questioned, among whom were lowly clerks in those very offices charged to carry out the investigation’ (p.162).

This clearly indicates that it was less about poverty in absolute terms, and more about whites whose lifestyles were seen as unsuitable, and particularly unbecoming for Europeans in a colonial environment. The simplistic assumption of financial need on the part of those who hoped for a local style also demonstrates the reluctance of the official view to understand those who may have chosen such an affinity. The presence of despising such people could not completely hide the concern and even fear that the existence of those who had ‘gone native’ elicited among administrators.

Sending sons to Europe

The issue of the Rambouillet (the qualification required for a career in the colonial service, which was only offered by the academy in Delft) brought to a head the tensions between the Indies-resident Dutch and the colonial administration. The costs (both financial and personal) of sending sons to Europe for a decade or more of schooling caused strains for families in the Indies, which were met with condescension from the authorities in the Netherlands. Most poignant of all are the disjunctions between what was seen, and known, by administrators in the Indies, and what refused to be seen or accepted by their bosses.

Attempts were also made with new schools in the colonies to improve (particularly mixed-race) children, to raise them as an ideal aritpalassal class in the Indies. These schools included agricultural colonies, designed both to improve, and limit the aspirations of, those enrolled. These agricultural colonies, based on French models, were of limited success. However, they demonstrate a growing anxiety about the role of the Eurasian community and how these people should be classified in colonial society.

Through these studies of individual instances, which demonstrate different facets to the administrative challenge of the Indies, Stoler also demonstrates the challenge of the historian to read through the ‘partial understandings, epistemic confusion’ (p. 185) of the records left by various civil servants. This is a densely written and researched account, which illuminates Stoler’s long research in Dutch archives. It is certainly a useful addition to the historiography of Dutch rule in the Indies, but more broadly for those studying colonial administration anywhere.

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IIAS News

IIAS Fellow Symposium

THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE for Asian Studies held its latest Fellow Symposium on Wednesday 9 June 2010. Three IIAS researchers presented their work in progress to their professional colleagues in the Netherlands. Each presentation was followed by the comments of a discussant. The symposium was open to all: MA and PhD students, researchers and lecturers.

Manuela Ciotti talked on Political agency and gender in India: Women, Dalits (untouchables) and subalterns between the nation and its ‘others’. Juliana Abdul Wahab presented about his work on The database of Early Medieval North Indian Copperplate (CF) Grants. Alex Stolyarov talked on Reality TV and Globalization and Alexander Stolyarov talked to academic life at the university by engaging in teaching, research and mentoring at various levels.

As part of the same event IIAS together with Amsterdam University Press launched: South Asian Partition Fiction in English: From Khushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh and Retro-Modern India: Forging The Low-Caste Self by Manuela Ciotti.

ICCR and Leiden University sign MoU for Chair for the study of Contemporary India

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Leiden University, The Netherlands signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on June 3rd, 2010 to establish a long term Chair for the study of Contemporary India at Leiden University. The Chair will function under the aegis of Leiden University’s Faculty of Humanities and the visiting professor will have an office at IIAS. The MoU was signed by His Excellency Mr. Manbir Singh, Ambassador of India in the Netherlands, on behalf of ICCR, and Prof. Mr. P.F. Van Der Heijden, Rector Magnificus and President on behalf of Leiden University.

Under the terms of agreement, ICCR, in consultation with the University, will appoint a suitable Indian academic to hold the Chair for a period of two years. During his/her term, the Chair will contribute to academic life at the university by engaging in teaching, research and mentoring at various levels. The Chair will commence from September 2011. The MoU will remain valid for five years until June 2017.

Leiden University is the oldest institution of higher learning in the Netherlands with over 18,000 students. Leiden University has a unique combination of excellence in the fields of international law, political science, and a specialised department of South Asian Studies with a focus on India through the unique Kern Institute. It has an international reputation as a leading research university. This makes Leiden University an ideal Dutch partner to host an India Chair in the politics and economy of modern India. The establishment of a Chair of Contemporary Indian Studies is an important step in furthering ICCR’s wider mandate of fostering and strengthening educational and cultural bonds and towards enhancing academic knowledge and awareness about India through academic exchanges.

Gerard Persoon becomes IIAS Professor

GERARD A. PERSOON has recently taken up a position as IIAS Professor at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University. He will be in charge of research and education in the field of Environment and Development. His research will focus in particular in relation to the position of Indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia.

His PhD research dealt with processes of change among a number of tribal groups in Indonesia. Over the past 23 he has worked at the Department of Environment and Development of Institute of Environmental Sciences at the same university. For the last 12 years he was the head of this department which implemented an interdisciplinary research and education programme with a focus on rural environmental problems in developing countries. A lot of research of the programme took place at the two research stations in Northeast Luzon (the Philippines) and North Cameroon. In both cases hundreds of master students of various disciplines were able to conduct research in an interdisciplinary and intercultural setting. During the same period he has been involved in numerous development and nature conservation projects in Southeast Asia. He is also a member of several committees and boards of organizations active in this field.

Prof. Persoon’s first task as IIAS Chair was to convene the workshop “Indigenous Peoples in Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands. New laws and discoveries. New Realities?” on 18-19 May 2010. This was a joint workshop with IIAS, the Center for Asia-Pacific Areas Studies (CAPAS) and Academica Unica, Taipei.

In the course of the two days, the workshop discussed the present position of indigenous peoples in Southeast Asian countries and the Pacific Islands from a legal and social perspective. It also reviewed the impact of recent national and international laws and conventions on the everyday realities and examined the region’s indigenous peoples’ movement from a sociological perspective.

At the moment he is supervising PhD students from the Netherlands, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Cameroon.

His publications deal with natural resource management with a focus on rainforests in Southeast Asia, the position of indigenous peoples and a number of methodological issues. He has also published extensively on the island and people of Siberut (West Sumatra) in Indonesia which is one of his long term research interests.

In memoriam

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death of Professor Frans Hüsken on 28 April 2010. Frans Hüsken held the chair of Cultural and Social Anthropology at Radboud University of Nijmegen since October 1990. He was born in 1945 in Nijmegen and studied non-Western Sociology at the Radboud University where he developed his interest in Indonesia.

He was a passionate scholar with research interests in historical and political anthropology and the history of anthropology. His fieldwork focused on socio-economic, political and cultural transformations, particularly in rural Indonesia.


Before his appointment at Nijmegen, he was a senior lecturer at the University of Amsterdam, fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies and Professor at the University of Berne (Switzerland). Frans Hüsken was actively involved in boards and committees of several scholarly organisations including the NITU/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies in Leiden and WOTRO Science for Development. From 1992 until 2001 he was President of BAS.

Our thoughts are with his wife Cora Govers and his son Joris.

Gerard Persoon

Frans Hüsken (1945-2010)
What do Chinese negotiators think? Lessons from Copenhagen

The Climate Change Global Summit in Copenhagen in December 2009 provoked strong responses from commentators, activists, politicians and country leaders. There was a palpable sense of disappointment at the watered down accord issued at the end of so much effort and talk. Perhaps most remarkable, however, was that the world’s largest carbon emitter – China – was singled out as the biggest impediment to reaching a full agreement with specific targets. Much has been written about why China refused targets and what its objectives were. Less has been said about what the Copenhagen process shows about China’s negotiating behaviour. What happened in December was deeply revealing and understanding it might aid any future international negotiations involving China.

However, fractious battles to forge consensus amongst the political elite in Beijing have been in the past, there has usually been a clear leadership figure or, at the very least, a leading group made up of the Party Secretary and Premier. In the 1980s, the era of Deng Xiaoping as paramount leader, the whole Opening-Up policy was dependent on Deng’s political support. Without this, nothing happened. Even in 1992, with clear opposition in the party to greater opening up, Deng was able – at the age of 87 – to undertake his Southern Tour and reaffirm the Chinese government’s commitment to greater economic reform. In the 1990s, Jiang Zemin as Party Secretary and Zhu Rongji as Premier and Head of Government, pushed through tough state-owned enterprise reform and secured China’s entry to the World Trade Organisation, despite internal opposition. They faced down issues over relations with the US and the policy on Taiwan, and reined in the People’s Liberation Army in 1998 by divesting it of commercial interests.

The Hu Jintao-Wen Jia’bo era has been defined by power in consensus building. The period of the ‘big, powerful leader’ dominating the landscape is over. Maosit and Dengist centralised power was partially discredited by the Cultural Revolution of 1967 to 1976 and the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. Unlike their predecessors, Hu and Wen do not possess the immense political capital to unilaterally force issues through. They have turned this into a strength, however, by creating a more modernised sense of the exercise of power. They patiently build wide agreement within key departments of the state and the party. There are no longer all powerful Godfathers.

It had been a great balance of Godfather: however, Copenhagen might have been easier. Hu and Wen have been pretty open about the absolute priority of economic growth for their legitimacy and the hold of the Communist Party on power. Without said GDP growth, China will be swamped with unemployment. It will run out of wealth to address some of the issues it has put on hold – the building of social infrastructure, equality and, most relevant to Copenhagen, environmental sustainability. The current Chinese government has made it clear that this, at heart, is their key red line. For Hu and Wen to choose to fight over this would be political suicide.

Below: Chinese premier Wen Jia’bo addressing the COP15 climate change talks in Copenhagen, December 2009.

Chinese leaders are predominantly from a scientific background. Seven of the current nine members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, the summit of decision making in China, are technocrats. Hu is a water engineer, and Wen a geologist. They are more scientifically literate than the vast majority of their western counterparts. In the last five years they have shifted from their position of regarding scientific evidence for man-made climate change with scepticism. Their own scientists have gathered evidence, which appears to accord with what the rest of the world is saying. The impediment of an elite in Beijing regarding the need for caps on emissions, etc, as yet another western originated plot to stifle their growth is now largely gone. That, at least, is progress.

Just as in Western societies, there are a wide spectrum of views within society about climate change, carbon emissions and how to deal with it. Chinese leaders getting out of step with public opinion and signing up to deals which could be interpreted as not in China’s interests would be incendiary. Hu does not want to go down in history as the second Zhao Ziyang, unceremoniously turfed out of power for selling out China’s interests, especially at a time when China is about to attempt its first ever truly peaceful leadership transition from the end of the fifth generation of leaders, something that needs to happen by October 2012.

Running parallel to this narrative, was a second one, of the elite themselves, whose consensus on such a complex, new, and central issue had been hard found. For them, China’s position was not the issue that was up for negotiation; it was the need to bring the rest of the world closer to China. Wen Jia’bo was there not, as he stated to one leader, to ‘negotiate’ but to simply assert. Attempts to push him into negotiation were doomed. He had no power base or authority to make any changes to China’s position. Had China really expected to negotiate at Copenhagen they would have sent Hu Jintao himself. For two days, Wen suffered the indignities of being important and begged and pressured into a negotiation he knew he had no need to enter into and which he had no locus to become involved in.

Climate change is a unique issue and the demands that it makes on policymakers in China particularly complex. But this issue and China’s approach to it are not going away. So what can we learn about Chinese negotiating behaviour from Copenhagen? Consensus is hard won and once reached, tough to shape or move. There is no powerful figure in contemporary Chinese politics that can assert a position and then carry public opinion with them. Instead, there is a delicate and complex symbiosis between opinion and leadership, involving a process of negotiation which is ill understood and opaque. And finally, any negotiation tactic and positions on these ‘global issues’ are linked with the needed reform of its own decision-making and administrative systems. Their lack of accountability and transparency impact on China’s position on outward-looking issues like climate change and economic reform. Until they change, China’s stance is unlikely to shift.

Kerry Brown
Chatham House, UK
kerry.brown01@gmail.com
Indonesian social case studies and sociographic data: a longitudinal treasure trove

The University of Sydney’s Fisher Library, has placed 59 Indonesian social case studies dating from 1959-60 on the internet. The studies were produced by anthropology and anthropology students at the University of Indonesia and Gajah Mada University under the supervision of Professor Mervyn Jaspan.

There are also a number of ethnic studies carried out in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara and Sulawesi. There are also sociological studies of such diverse social groupings as academic staff at a unit of FKIP Bandung, an adult education committee in Karen, orphan children in a Tasikmalaya institution, an urban fire brigade, shoe factory workers, the Chinese community of Magelang, manual workers at a Bandung Home for the Blind, and lottery ticket vendors in Bandung.

These materials lend themselves most immediately to village longitudinal studies, using the original data, in order to examine social, economic and political change over the past 50 years. They could be used by undergraduate students studying individual villages for their final year theses, and also by higher degree students and scholars who might focus on a number of such villages to develop comparative analyses.

In Appendix 1 of that study there is a short description of each of the 37 villages including its geographical location. The study also lists the names and authors of the 37 Java village studies at pp. 383-6.

A community of scholars already interested in the re-study of the villages and communities has been developed under the creative leadership of the University of Indonesia’s Professor Iwan Pirous (iwan.pirous@gmail.com; pirous@ui.ac.id). The scholars interact through the internet group he established (datadesa@yahooogroups.com ) which is open to new members. It is designed to ensure that the planning for, and eventual results from, further studies of the villages are disseminated among the group and within the Indonesian academic community generally.

A full listing of the studies, and .pdf files of the original studies, will be found at: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/5935

Ron Witton
rwitton@uow.edu.au

MERVYN JASPAN (1926-1975), originally from South Africa, gained sociology and anthropology degrees from Natal and Oxford. In 1955 he was appointed to the Chair of Sociology at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, and in 1959 he was appointed to the Chair of Sociology at Padjadjaran University, Bandung. He later taught at the Australian National University and at the University of Western Australia, before relocating to Hull University where he died in 1975.

While teaching in Indonesia, Dr Jaspan supervised the theses of a vast number of anthropology and sociology students at both the University of Padjadjaran and Gajah Mada University. The theses provide a rich sociographic record of Indonesian village life in 1959-1960 and contain information on education, wealth distribution, politics, religion and social structure. A few of the theses have an urban focus.

When he came to Australia, Dr Jaspan arranged the microfilming of 59 of the social case studies of his Indonesian students. These materials have now been digitised and are easily accessible on the internet. There are 37 village studies spread throughout Java (14 in West Java, 14 in Central Java, and 9 in East Java).

There are also a number of ethnic studies carried out in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara and Sulawesi. There are also sociological studies of such diverse social groupings as academic staff at a unit of FKIP Bandung, an adult education committee in Karen, orphan children in a Tasikmalaya institution, an urban fire brigade, shoe factory workers, the Chinese community of Magelang, manual workers at a Bandung Home for the Blind, and lottery ticket vendors in Bandung.

These materials lend themselves most immediately to village longitudinal studies, using the original data, in order to examine social, economic and political change over the past 50 years. They could be used by undergraduate students studying individual villages for their final year theses, and also by higher degree students and scholars who might focus on a number of such villages to develop comparative analyses. Quantitative data from 37 of the villages on Java is already available in a comparative form in the appendices of my MA thesis: R. A. Witton, Schooling and Adult Education in Rural Java: A Comparative Study of 37 Villages, MA. dissertation, University of Sydney, 1967, and is available on the internet at: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/1761.
In 1977 Günther-Dietz Sontheimer (1934-1992) became a professor of the Religious History of South Asia with a special emphasis on Hinduism at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, where he also taught traditional law, Marathi language and literature. During his thirty years of research in India he made more than 22,000 slides portraying the everyday life and rituals of ordinary people, peasants, pastoralist communities and ethnic minorities.

Sontheimer's major concern was to make evident the continuity, interrelation and mutual impact of classical high and folk culture. He used art, art history, archaeology, modern languages and dialects, written records as well as oral traditions to understand the culture and religious life of the 'common people', especially the pastoral communities of the Deccan plateau. Aiming to preserve the oral traditions endangered by India's modernization, he recorded, transcribed and translated songs, myths, legends and folk tales often with the help of then-modern media such as film and photography.

The slide collection can be divided into five areas, four of which reflect Sontheimer's major research foci:

1. 'Folk gods' of Maharashtra (and the surrounding states) and their origins, evolution and forms of worship. A major part of the collection – around 4,000 slides – is dedicated to the god Khodoba and his main temple at Jijeri. Other pictures show different places of worship and gods such as Mhaskoba, Biroba, Dholoba, Dhuloba, and Vithoba.

2. The everyday and religious life of semi-nomadic pastoral communities, particularly the Dhangars, their habitat, wanderings, religious feasts, ancestors and gods.

3. The dissemination, meaning, diversity and beauty of memorial stones for ancestors, heroes and sots.

4. Tribal communities of Madhya Pradesh, particularly in the district of Bastar, their religious feasts and practices, including different kinds of ancestor, hero- and religious worship.

5. Temples, shrines, landscapes, towns and people in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Goa.

The collection with its portrayals of rituals and religious feasts, pilgrimages, devotion and possession is of special interest for Indologists, anthropologists and scholars of comparative religion. Of iconographic importance are also bronzes, insignia, and depictions of gods, people, animals, plants, temples, shrines and memorial stones.

Search overview:
Please use the guest login of the database HeidICON in order to search the collection. Choose 'EXC Asia and Europe > EXC Sontheimer' from the drop down menu. After this one can make a free keyword search. The category 'title/object' is useful for specific search queries, such as places, festivals and years, names of deities, the date of a festival according to the South Indian lunar calendar as well as subject headings.

The following lists are also useful for searching the Sontheimer Collection in HeidICON:
- Alphabetical Index of Place Names in the Sontheimer Slide Collection
- Catalog to the Sontheimer Slide Collection in Numerical Order
- List of Deities depicted in the Sontheimer Slide Collection
- Front door of HeidICON
- Direct link to EXC Sontheimer in HeidICON
- EXC Sontheimer introduction and contact information

For further information contact:
Dr. Sonja Stark-Wild
Library, South Asia Institute
University of Heidelberg
sonja.stark-wild@urz.uni-heidelberg.de
AAS and ICAS joint meeting 2011 Hawai‘i

It is our pleasure to inform you that the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) and the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) have a special joint meeting in Honolulu, Hawai‘i from 31 March to 3 April 2011. This marks not only the 70th AAS Annual Meeting and the 7th edition of ICAS but will create a new and inspiring platform for Asia scholars from all disciplinary and regional backgrounds.

Must attend event

We have no doubt that this will be a ‘must attend event’. We expect between 3000 to 4000 participants to convene at the Hawai‘i Convention Center. The meeting will connect with the city of Honolulu by way of an Asia Arts Festival which will be held simultaneously.

Call for Papers

The Call for Panels and Papers is online http://www.asian-studies.org/annual-meeting/index.htm The Deadline is 5 August 2010.

If you wish to contact colleagues to collaborate on a panel proposal, you may post a short announcement on the AAS website, at www.asian-studies.org/panel-links.htm. Please send an e-mail to Jon Wilson at jwilson@asian-studies.org to have your announcement included (or removed). We strongly encourage the formation of organized and institutional panels.

ICAS Book Prize

The ICAS Book Prize (IBP) seeks to honour the best of Asian Studies. The IBP 2011 is awarded for outstanding Asian Studies English-language works in the fields of the social sciences and humanities. We now invite all publishers | authors with Asian Studies books (with copyright dates running from July 2008 to July 2010) to compete. Prize money consists of 2500 euro for each category. Deadline 15 August 2010.

The deadline for sending in PhDs in the fields of the humanities and social sciences defended between July 2008 and July 2010 is the same as for the IBP. The prizes consist of the publication of the thesis in the ICAS Publications Series and / or a fellowship at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS).

For more information on the IBP, its rules and regulations, previous prize winners and editions please visit www.icassecretariat.org

ICAS Publication Series

For information on all titles published to date please visit www.iias.nl/publications

AAS Publications Series

For information on all titles published to date by the Association for Asian Studies please visit www.asianist.org/publications/index.htm

On behalf of the ICAS Team,
Dr Paul van der Velde
Chief Executive Officer ICAS
Conference on Migration and mobility in a global historical perspective

26-28 August 2010, Taipei, Taiwan

THIS IS THE THIRD of a series of conferences on Global Migration History. This third conference, in Taipei, focuses on the integration of migration flows in the last millennium and categories, worldwide, in particular in Asia. The first two days will be devoted to new evidence on the long term history of world migrations, with a particular stress on Asia. On the third day we will combine these new insights with the topics of the second conference on settlement processes, nurtured by the papers on diaspora, exile, identity and creolization. This will enable us to conclude the Taipei conference with a comprehensive conclusion on migration, and, settlement in a global long term perspective.

The programme can be viewed at:
http://www.iias.nl/events/conference-migration-and-mobility-global-historical-perspective

Conference Organised by Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Chinese Heritage Centre and National University of Singapore

In view of the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution in China, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Chinese Heritage Centre and National University of Singapore plan to co-organise a two-day bilingual (Chinese and English) conference on Sun Yat-sen and the Nanyang.

The 1911 Revolution, known in Chinese as Xinhai or Xinhai Revolution, was a watershed event in the history of modern China. It began with the Wuchang Uprising on October 10, 1911. The collapse of a dynasty in China that stretched for more than 2,000 years. It fact led to the establishment of the Republic of China, Asia's first republic.

The 1911 Revolution was led by Sun Yat-sen and the Zhongyue Tongmenghui, which was first established in Tokyo in 1905 and followed by the formation of a branch in Singapore and then other branches in Southeast Asia. Sun Yat-sen tirelessly traveled around the Southeast Asian region, drumming up support for the nationalist movement in China. Indeed the Zhongyue Tongmenghui

 movement received massive support from the “overseas Chinese” communities, especially the Nanyang community. The latter contributed morally and financially to the 1911 Revolution and in that way played an instrumental role in the establishment of modern China.

Extensive research has been conducted and voluminous literature produced in the last few decades on many aspects of Sun Yat-sen and the 1911 Revolution. However, they have tended to focus on developments and events in China. This conference hopes to contribute to the scholarship on Sun Yat-sen by focusing on Sun Yat-sen, Nanyang and the 1911 Revolution in China.

Seminars, workshops and round tables will be devoted to new evidence on the nationalist movement in Nanyang, and the contributions of Sun Yat-sen to the 1911 Revolution.

For further information contact:
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m.cvan.den.haak@lias.nl

For further information, please visit:
http://www.nipponfoundation.or.jp/eng/ReadJapan/Top.html

The Nippon Foundation

The Nippon Foundation 1-2-2 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8404 Japan Tel: +81-3-6225-5181 Fax: +81-3-6225-5180

Nippon Foundation book donation 2010

THE NIPPON FOUNDATION is pleased to announce that the Book Donation Project 2010, “100 Books for Understanding ‘Contemporary Japan’, is now calling for applications. University and public libraries around the world are invited to apply for a donation of up to one hundred highly informative books on contemporary Japan.

Please send required application materials to The Nippon Foundation by July 31, 2010.

Youth Innovation competition on global governance

2010, Shanghai, China

STUDENTS are INVITED to the 4th Youth Innovation Competition on Global Governance (YICGG), which will be held at Fudan University, Shanghai, China, this summer.

Youth Innovation Competition on Global Governance (YICGG) is initiated by the School of International Relations and Public Affairs (SRPA) of Fudan University, which is open to university students worldwide. In this competition, participants are called upon to design projects regarding global governance, which provides them the opportunity to show their originality, creativity and a sense of initiative.

All three previous competitions held, respectively, in Fudan University (Shanghai, China, 2007), Tor Vergata University (Rome, Italy, 2008), Ilia State University (Tbilisi, Georgia, 2009) attracted hundreds of young people all over the world. YICGG is designed to encourage participants to attend to global issues, stimulate their innovation, enhance global civic awareness, and shoulder their responsibility for a common future of humanity.

‘Globalisation’ is the theme of YICGG 2010. Nowadays, globalization is a major factor for the success of global governance. However, some different understandings on global governance have recently appeared, and one of them is globalization. The word ‘globalization’ is the combination of ‘global’ and ‘localization’, which implies one mode of global governance: to think globally and act locally.

This competition will be a 5-day event in the summer of 2010. As in previous years, YICGG 2010 will be a three-phase competition. The first phase requires each team to submit an original case study to support their point of view on globalization, either for or against. The qualified teams are encouraged to present their projects in the second phase. In the third phase, all the participants will be regrouped into different ‘world teams’, and a final proposal will be submitted by each World Team, explaining the design of their project. We look forward to thebirth of creative and ambitious blueprints or projects through this competition.

This year, participants will not only enjoy the opportunity to speak out their new ideas, receive face-to-face guidance from world top-ranking scholars in global governance field, meet young elites worldwide and build their social network, but also have the excellent opportunity to visit magnificent World Expo in Shanghai.

All participants are requested to pay their registration by 1 July 2010. Please note that it will not be possible to register at the conference. Conference registration is priced at €160 (students €70).

Crossing Borders in Southeast Asian Archaeology

27 September – 1 October 2010, Berlin

The 13th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists brings together archaeologists, art historians, and philologists who share a common interest in Southeast Asia’s past from prehistory to the historical period. Its aim is to facilitate communication between different disciplines, to provide a survey of present work in the field and to stimulate future research.

In view of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of China, the conference hopes to contribute to the scholarship on Sun Yat-sen by focusing on Sun Yat-sen, Nanyang and the 1911 Revolution in China.

Seminars, workshops and round tables will be devoted to new evidence on the nationalist movement in Nanyang, and the contributions of Sun Yat-sen to the 1911 Revolution.

For further information contact:
Ms. Martina van den Haak
m.cvan.den.haak@lias.nl

For further information, please visit:
http://www.nipponfoundation.or.jp/eng/ReadJapan/Top.html
Programmes

BAS CENTRE FOR REGULATION AND GOVERNANCE

The BAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative cross-disciplinary research on theories and practices and focusing on emerging markets of Asia. The Centre serves as a focal point of collaborative research between European and Asian scholars. Its multidisciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, sociology, and the history of ideas and institutions. The centre’s current activities are focused on: institutional voids in global governance, the formation of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently, the Centre facilitates projects on State Licensing, Market Functioning, and Rent Seeking; Regulation of Intra-governmental Conflict; Social Costs, Externalities and Innovation; Regulatory Governance under Institutional Void; and Governance in Areas of Contested Territoriality and Sovereignty. Coordinators: Tak-Wing Ngo. t.w.ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl

SCIENCE AND HISTORY IN ASIA

The complex links between science and history in Asian civilisations can be studied on at least two levels. First, one can focus on the ways in which the actors have perceived these links; how, on the one hand, some of these are used in the sciences that we now categorise as sciences, such as astronomy, for a better understanding of their own past; and, on the other hand, how they have constructed the historicality of these disciplines, giving them cultural legitimacy. Secondly, one can reflect on historiographical 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 organizing five international workshops in Cambridge, Leiden and Paris. Sponsored by: NWO Humanities. Needham Research Institute, Recherches Epistémologiques et Historiques sur les Sciences Exactes et les Institutions Scientifiques (REHSEIS) and BAS. Coordinators: Christopher Cullen (Needham Research Institute); c.cullen@ferrl.org.uk and Harm Beukers (Scaliger Institute, Leiden University) h.beukers@hum.leidenuniv.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 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, South Korea, and Vietnam and the PRC as the receiving countries, and Taiwan and South, East and South-east Asia, and how some of them have made the successful segue from nodes in formerly colonial networks to global cities in their own right. This is intended to be an inter-disciplinary approach bringing together architects and urbanists, geographers, sociologists and political scientists, as well as historians, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of Asian studies. The research concentrates on cities that have successfully made the transition from colonial to postcolonial nodes in the global network (e.g. Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai). A key factor in the research is architectural typologies. Architecture is examined to see how it can create identity and ethos and how in the postcolonial era these building typologies have been superseded by the office building, the skyscraper and the shopping centre, all of which are rapidly altering the older urban fabric of the city. Coordinators: Greg Bracken, gregory@curtislee.com

IIAS Research

THE NETWORKS

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 institutes and will jointly publish their research outcomes. Institutes involved: Institute of West Asian and African Studies (IWASS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Sponsored by: KNW China Exchange Programme and IIAS Coordinator: Mehdi Parviz Amineh m.p.amineh@vula.nl

NETWORKS

During the 21st century it is projected that there will be more than one billion people aged 60 and over, with this figure climbing to nearly two billion by 2050, three-quarters of whom will live in the developing world. The bulk of the ageing population will reside in Asia. Ageing in Asia is attributable to the marked decline in fertility shown over the last 40 years and the steady increase in life expectancy. In Western Europe, ageing populations developed at a slower pace and could initially be incorporated into welfare policy provisions. Currently governments are seeking ways to trim and reduce government financed social welfare and health-care, including pensions systems, unleashing substantial public debate and insecurity. Many Asian governments are facing comparable challenges and dilemmas, involving both the state and the family, but are confronted with a much shorter time-span. This research programme, in short, sheds light on how both Asian and European nations are reviewing the social contract with their citizens. Research network involved: Réseau de Recherche Internationale sur l’Age, la Citoyenneté et l’Intégration Socio-économique (REIACS) Sponsored by: IAS. Coordinator: Carla Risseeuw c.risseeuw@uas.nl

THE AWARD

The award consists of:
- The strengthening of both MA Thesis in Asian Studies.
- A maximum 3-month stipend of N 3,500 per month (to come to IAS to write a PhD project proposal or a research article)

Criteria:
- The MA Thesis should be on the broad field of Asian Studies; in the humanities or social sciences.
- Only MA Theses which have been marked with 8 or above are eligible
- The thesis must have been evaluated in the period 1 August 2009 – October 2010
- Both students and their supervisors can apply
- Please submit a hard copy of the thesis and covering letter including the grade awarded and your contact details.

Deadline: 1 October 2010, 9.00 am

International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
www.iias.nl
iias@iias.nl

Submissions should be sent to:
Secretariat
International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9590 • 2300 RA Leiden
Netherlands

The Newsletter | No.54 | Summer 2010

The Network 45
Corrigendum
corrigendum to ‘ancient glass from the silk road’, iias newsletter #53, p.37.

An error occurred in the above article in paragraph 3.
The correct text should read:

He suggests the few early findings in potassium glass and alkali glass.

Further information at www.giga-journals-family.org
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The Portrait

Simply a sari?

The sari has become a global image. Worn by Indian women of diverse religious and cultural groups from the north of India to the island of Sri Lanka in the south. Women proudly wear saris in countries as far apart as Suriname, Britain, South Africa and Indonesia as a statement of their Indian origins.

THE ORIGINS OF THE SARI are believed to date back to the 2nd century BC. One reason for the continued popularity of this form of draped clothing is a long established belief by (elite) Hindus that cut and sewn cloth was impure. As a result, the cloth used for saris is neither stitched nor tailored. The various types of sari reflect India’s diverse climate and geography, and its wide range of urban, village and nomadic life. The sari embodies India’s multicultural society, its economic and trade contacts, religious groups, artistic traditions, and much more.

Renowned for their colour and beauty, saris are made in diverse ways, reflecting their region of origin, the person wearing them and the occasion. There are hundreds of different forms, including printed, painted, woven and embroidered versions, or indeed a combination of these techniques. Their beauty is further displayed by the many forms of draping that can be used; sometimes traditional, others regional and more recently there are the styles derived from the Indian film industry, Bollywood.

A sari is a long length of material of between 4 to 8 metres in length, and 100 and 120 cm in width. A good quality example is usually longer and broader than a less expensive version. The basic layout of a sari consists of three areas: end piece, the field and the side or longitudinal borders.

Saris are one of the most elegant garments worn by women, but they do require experience to drape and wear them to their best advantage. Basically, a sari is worn by wrapping the material around the waist, then pleating the material at the front to create a wide, skirt section, then the remainder of the material is draped over the shoulders or head. In general, wealthier women, especially those in northern and central India, tend to wear silk saris, while poorer women or those in the south of the country opt for cotton versions.

Throughout the centuries a wide range of decorative techniques have been developed for saris. Some of these techniques are regionally linked, others can be found throughout the country. In the northwest of India, for example, painted and printed saris are common, while in the northeast woven forms are more widely available. In the last 50 years many of the regional variations have started to vanish as more and more mills have been set up to produce saris on a large scale.

Colour and motif symbolism plays an important role in Indian life and this is reflected in the motifs and styles of decoration found on many saris. Certain colours are associated with particular groups. The Brahmins (priestly caste), for example, are associated with white, which is seen as a pure colour. Some groups regarded white as the colour of mourning and so white saris are worn by widows. Red is seen as the colour of fertility and emotions and as such it is often worn by brides and young married women. Green is associated with fertility and growth, and so a woman wishing a child might wear a green coloured sari. Yellow is seen as a religious colour and associated with religion and asceticism. It is often worn by women who wish to express their desire for a more spiritual way of life. Dark blue and black are regarded by many in India as negative colours and impure and so few traditional saris can be found in these colours.

An ancient floral motif that appears on saris is the lotus, which is regarded as symbolising spiritual power, good luck and fertility. Throughout much of India the tree is regarded as a symbol of both fertility and protection, and as a result it is often included in some form on a sari. Another very popular motif is the kalga design, which is an elliptical, floral motif with a curved point at the top. This design has become known in the West as the Paisley motif after the motifs woven on ‘Kashmir’ shawls in the Scottish town of Paisley during the 19th century.

Collections: Textile Research Centre, Leiden (www.trc-leiden.nl) and Volkenkunde Museum, Leiden

Far left: handwoven jamdani sari from West Bengal (green with red stylised flowers).
Middle: handwoven jamdani sari from West Bengal (turquoise, geometric).
Right: brocade sari, Assam.
Inset from top to bottom: wedding sari from Kerela, Tamil Nadu. Silk kadi sari. Silk batik sari.
Photography: Joost Kolkman www.joostkolkman.nl