Asia’s remarkable economic and political growth has led some to believe that future historians will be calling the twenty-first century the ‘Asian Century’. One of the most important factors fuelling growth is the region’s rapid urbanization. Urban Studies and Architecture are important disciplines for anyone interested in trying to pragmatically direct this growth, and help to improve people’s lives. In the Focus section of this issue, guest editors Gregory Bracken and Bart Kuijpers present ‘New Designs for Asia’ – student work from the Architecture Faculty, TU Delft, the Netherlands.
Two teams from the Vertical Cities Asia competition present their winning designs. The first team takes an holistic approach to aging (of people and the city) and seeks to renew the city pattern of Seoul whilst maintaining its authenticity. The second team puts forth that the much needed densification of the old city does not have to mean the obliteration of existing urban life.

The chief innovation of Elsa Snyder’s design is the subtle reinvention of traditional shared family space in Hong Kong. By making clever use of historical Chinese spatial dynamics, she has presented us with a viable alternative to the ubiquitous ‘pencil’ tower.

Bart Kuijpers’ contribution seeks to breathe new life into the old alleyways of Shanghai, particularly the now vanishing shikumen houses. The project’s design allows for plenty of scope for the rich social interaction that typically takes place in the older neighbourhoods of the city.

Jasper Nijveldt’s elegant scheme shows a profound understanding of the underlying principles of Chinese urbanism. His large-scale housing project, located in Chengdu, seeks to nurture the everyday human experience of space in a Chinese city.

Jonathan van der Stel’s design is in essence one for a new university in Hong Kong, yet it is also an expression of the city’s impact on a newcomer: its ‘bigness’ has a beauty to it, but it can simultaneously leave one with a terrifying sense of insignificance.

Ting Wen’s contribution critiques neoliberal policies and the urban regeneration, and gentrification, that result in social exclusion for those unable to partake in this brave new world of globalized capitalism. Her case study looks at the old Kai Tak Airport site in Hong Kong.
Building community

With an average of 60 postdoctoral fellows per year, from various nationalities, disciplines and backgrounds, IIAS can rightly claim to be supporting one of the most significant communities of Asia scholars in the world. The impressive numbers are primarily the result of the diversity of fellowship programmes offered by IIAS.

Philippe Peycam, Director of IIAS

**TO START WITH**, the institute sponsors a number of positions usually earmarked for one of its three thematic clusters: Asian cities, Asian heritages, Global Asia. (There is also an ‘open’ slot for projects that fall outside the three defined categories.) These IIAS-sponsored fellowships represent the large majority of the 1- to 18-month positions on offer.

To their number can be added the joint IAS-ISEAS fellowship position with its unique transregional character. The position was first filled by two fellows, Elizabeth Chandra and Albert Tang, who focused on ‘Intra-Asian connectivity’; the next timeslot for this position will focus on a Heritage-related subject.

Another collaborative project is the one supported through IAS by the Gonda Foundation. It is meant for researchers working on Indology and who need access to the invaluable collections at Leiden University. Thanks to this programme, IAS remains one of the most active gatherings of South Asian classicists in the West.

Similarly, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IAS have been collaborating for nearly a decade to facilitate exchanges between Dutch and Chinese academic institutions. We, as a result, regularly receive scholars from China who join the larger group of IAS fellows in Leiden.

Two new and exciting fellowship partnerships are also worth describing here. One relates to the *Urban Knowledge Asia programme (UKNA)*, for which IAS serves as the coordinating institute and full member. IAS welcomes a number of scholars from India and China working on urban-related subjects; at IAS in Leiden they work closely with their colleagues attached to TU Delft, also member of UKNA. The second new initiative recently developed is the joint programme with the *African Studies Centre* (ASC), on the subject of Africa-Asia relations. This pioneering programme will ensure that IAS and ASC, in line with their involvement in the establishment of a lasting Asia-Africa academic exchange platform, will be on the forefront of this emerging interregional dialogue.

I will not mention the self-funded positions nor will I go into detail about some of the ‘historical’ research positions that have been granted to a few individuals for multi-year periods. What I should add here, however, is that ever since we decided to revise the fellowship programme and implement the three thematic clusters – a process that has meant the reallocation of funds and the reorganisation of workspace (especially after the closing of the IAS facilities in Amsterdam) – a new dynamic has taken root among the fellows in residence in Leiden.

The sense of community, shared with the IAS team, has taken many forms: dinners at the institute, film screening sessions, brown bag lunches, lecture training exercises, cultural outings, etc. All activities contribute to closer ties between fellows, knowledge exchanges, interactions with the IAS staff, and sometimes direct contributions to the shaping of new IAS initiatives.

The secret of this chemistry? The endless commitment of the IAS staff, including Fellowship Coordinator Sandra van der Horst. Sandra is more than a coordinator. She plays the role of cultural ambassador, broker and facilitator for the numerous issues and experiences encountered by newcomer fellows. Well done Sandra, and thank you!

Philippe Peycam, Director of IAS
In 2009, three young singers, who had met at the conservatory and had studied a traditional folksong genre called *urtyn duu* (long-song), created a folk pop-group. Like the pictures provided in the liner notes, which were unusually commercialized for a traditional folk genre music, their music was unexpected and provocative for the majority of the Mongolian folk music audience. This new direction was unusual not so much because of the melding of Western instruments such as piano and synthesizer with a traditional vocal genre, but rather because of their unique acoustic ‘harmonizing’ of independent, ornamented and melismatic vocal solos, while retaining the traditional singing style and improvisation, and using mostly traditional songs.

**New tradition, new identity**

It seems now that the new Mongolia requires, in terms of culture, not only the ‘old’ tradition, but also a tradition which can attract audiences both inside and outside Mongolia. In response, fusion groups such as the long-song group Shurankhai have experimented with introducing new elements into the traditional music. Altan Urag, most likely the first folk-pop group in Mongolia, and later groups such as Dimog, Borte, Horuu, and Khusugtun, came from a younger generation of folk musicians, and were academically trained in Mongolian traditional music as well as in Western musical theory and history, by either Russian teachers or Mongolian teachers who had studied in the Soviet Union. They therefore easily cross the boundaries between traditional and non-traditional music.

During the 1960s and 1970s, when traditional musicians started to train professionally, there was clearly a cosmopolitan and transnational movement among cultural groups in Mongolia. Mongolians had been, even then, to position themselves on the international world map through their music and culture. In post-socialist Mongolia, such cultural movements continue either through the promotion of traditional, and ever more ancient music, or through a constant negotiation between traditional and non-traditional, as well as through the invention of non-traditional sound from traditional sound. In recordings and interviews with numerous long-song singers, both in Ulaanbaatar and in the countryside, made between 2006 to 2012, I found that these traditional long-song singers were constantly looking for a ‘real and authentic (unjihene) tradition’, such as those rare songs that survived in the remote countryside. The stories reveal how the culture that thrived between 1920 and 1990 is no longer considered part of ‘authentic’ tradition. Notwithstanding the variation of folk culture, not only the ‘old’ tradition, but also a ‘new’ tradition, simply a medium for the creation of new music. On the other hand, tradition becomes a reinforcement of the ‘ancient’, yet ‘authentic’ traditional world, as part of a new Mongolian identity.

**Continuity as cultural heritage**

Back in 2006, I met a singer named Dadshuren, who lived in the remote countryside of Dundgovi province. He was a nomad, and I had to track him down, with the help of other herdsmen who encountered on the way. He was one of those singers who had been left behind, yet who carried a immense amount of knowledge of the long-song and who sang these songs so beautifully in his yer (yurt). At that time, Dadshuren and other ‘old’ countryside singers maintained their nomadic ways and still lived as herdsmen; as a result, they were not regarded in the same light as urban singers and received neither respect nor recognition as skilled and professional musicians. However, when I returned to Mongolia in 2012, Dadshuren had been designated, ahead of the urban singers, as a cultural intangible heritage asset. Not all the countryside singers will be promoted in this way, but it certainly shows Mongolia’s change of heart toward what remains and how Mongolians now understand their own tradition.

When I was out following singers on the open steppe, I learned that Mongolians have a great sense of distance and direction. There is no compass, there are no signposts on the steppe, but Mongolian drivers always know where the road is and in which direction they must drive. Mongolians have unpredictable lives; a nomadic history, a socialist experience, a transition into a democratic, free-market system, bordering Russia and China, in the heart of Inner Asia. They have always been on the move, and have continuously defined and redefined who they are and where they are going. As their most recent transformation shows, Mongols are extremely adaptable to the circumstances, yet entirely focused on identity. They negotiate so as to survive, and thrive by holding on firmly to this sense of identity. Such has also been the case for the long-song tradition. One simple long-song often taught to beginning singers is Khoolshin Khayalin (A beautiful bay horse). In the two verses of this song, the lyrics talk of how Mongols deal with change. The beautiful bay horse is timed:

* In order to catch it, you should kneel by its legs.
* A foreign [new] land [environment] is difficult

In order to adjust to it, you should wait and patiently bite your time.

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The 1876 Chinese post office riot in Singapore

The 1876 Post Office Riot is often lumped together with other nineteenth century Chinese secret society riots in Singapore, but it was in fact the owners of Chinese remittance agencies who instigated the riot to defend their new business practices against an intrusive colonial state trying to regulate modern transportation and communication networks.

Lane J. Harris

AT 7:30 IN THE MORNING of 15 December 1876, an Indian police officer of the Singapore colonial government noticed a crowd of Chinese reading a placard at the corner of Philip and King Streets. The placard offered a 100 taal reward for the capture of two kraals (tribes) in Tiong Bahru, Ong Kong Chad and Ong Kong Teng, who were opening the new Chinese Sub-Post Office (批信) to handle letters and remittances to China, at 81 Market Street at 8 o'clock that morning.

Less than an hour later, some in the crowd gathered outside the Sub-Post Office threw a brick that inciting the 'mob' to ransack the office. Demolishing the premises, rioters attacked the Ellersbrough New Market Police Station where the police fired into the crowd killing three and wounding several others. Police arrested 40 rioters, most of whom received a caning and a term of 'vicious imprisonment'.

Deciding that the dead men were secret society members, the colonial government demanded the arrest of Lim Ah Tye, the leader of the Teochew (Taizhou) branch of the ghee hin secret society. The government also detained a number of Chinese investors in the new remittance and transportation business, including Ong Kong Teng, who volunteered to act as a monopoly agent for the post office.

Two days later, the colonial government returned the towkays, or foreign agents, to the owners of Qiaopiju (批信), which steamed out into the northeast monsoon swell. Instead of charging large remittance fees, the agents transformed themselves into Qiaopiju (批信), literally Overseas Letter Offices, specializing in mobilizing shipping and transportation through a diasporic network, and providing remittance and other banking services to overseas Chinese.

The Qiaopiju firms also developed a new business strategy. To limit their liability, Qiaopiju owners stopped transmitting currency and shifted to small slips of paper known as pixin (批信) representing the amount sent by each remitter. They placed the slips inside a small parcel, referred to as a 'clipped package' (剪包), and entrusted it to the supercargo of a China-bound ship. Instead of charging large remittance fees, the firms used this procedure to retain the remittances as a form of temporary capital over the time it took the Chinese ship to reach its destination. The capital was used to purchase goods in Southeast Asia, sell them in Hong Kong or coastal China, and then pay the remittances. Qiaopiju owners also used the funds to engage in exchange rate speculation between the interests in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, and China to make their profits. Lastly, to protect the remitter, the Qiaopiju also provided hips (弊), a return receipt, that not only verified delivery, but also included a short note from the recipient as a check against fraud. This new business model increased profit margins, allowing Qiaopiju firms to expand to new locations, and provided more security for remitters.

The Singapore colonial government and the Qiaopiju in the 1870s

In the 1860s and 1870s, national and colonial officials throughout the world sought to define and enforce state postal monopolies to control communications and transportation networks. In Singapore, Postmaster General Henry Trotter (served 1871-1872) first breached the subject of disbanding the Qiaopiju firms in mid-1872, claiming they were violating the terms of the India Post Office Act of 1866, making the post office a government monopoly. The Qiaopiju not only violated a state monopoly, Trotter argued, but siphoned off a significant portion of state revenue. The Singapore Legislative Council considered the proposal, but the Attorney-General rejected it on the grounds that the indemnity, with postal matters within the jurisdiction of colony, which included Singapore, but not China.

The Legislative Council's discussion sparked the interest of two Qiaopiju owners in Penang, Ong Kong Chang and Ong Kong Teng, who volunteered to act as a monopoly agent for the Singapore Post Office. The Qiaopiju owners were freed. Defiantly, the colonial government 'Red-haired Barbarians'. Shopkeepers refused to re-open until the government deported Lim Ah Tye. Local shops reopened on Sunday and by Monday morning the owners of the Sub-Post Office, 'in a considerable funk', cleaned up their office as police patrolled the block.

Colonial officials and newspaper reporters portrayed the riot as a conspiracy of secret society 'evil wended rascals' who 'duped' the 'coolies' into not ing against the government. Sir William Jervois (1821-1897), governor of the Straits Settlements, described the 'coolies' as 'unfortunate dupes of these crafty leaders'. Scholars have followed these contemporary accounts by arguing that the riot 'emanated from some leaders of the secret societies' or was 'fomented by Chinese secret societies'.

Emphasis on secret society involvement in the riot, however, distracts attention away from the broader political context and slight the significance of the postal issues at stake.

Overseas agents in the South Seas, 1850-1870

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, the emergence of new communications and transportation technologies transformed the information infrastructure around the world. In Singapore, the colonial state used the new technologies to intercede in existing communications and transportation networks under the guise of creating a state postal monopoly. For overseas Chinese involved in the remittance trade, the new networks allowed them to create more efficient profit-making strategies. The colonial government circumventing uncertainty about international postal law. As Jervois explained, the Qiaopiju did not have a monopoly on the collection of remittances, but did have one on their transmission. As Jervois explained, any Chinese firm could collect remittances, but all remittance collecting agents of the state, Jervois removed their ability to use the new communications and transportation networks to profit on remittances as a form of temporary capital. The owners of the Qiaopiju firms, using the secret societies to organize the protest, instigated the riot to defend their new profit-making strategies.

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Notes
1 The above narrative and quotes that are based on the Straits Times (16, 23, and 30 Dec. 1876, 19 May and 4 Aug. 1877, 8 Nov. 1877), Straits Times Observer (26 Dec. 1876, 1 Jan., 3 Sept. 1877), and the Straits Observer (20 Dec. 1876).
4 Other general names for Qiaopiju include Letter Agency (批信局), Qiaopiju Office (批信局), Overseas Letter Office (批信局), Overseas Post Office (暹局), pixin (批信), Qiaopiju (批信), Overseas Letter Office (暹局), and Letter Shop (信局).

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Economic and social developments significantly stimulated both quantity and genre variety of the literary production in Tokugawa era Japan (1603-1868). Hitherto most western academic discussion shows a strong affinity to philosophical treatises and economical theories of prominent scholars, records of the ruling class and the popular literature of the townspeople. Studies of works classified as nôsho, writing on agricultural matters, are notably scarce. One may assume this lack of interest would simply reflect an absence of intellectual depth within these most diverse texts, but a closer look reveals quite the opposite and shows links to current global struggles.

The genre trouble

The aforementioned works are of a rather encyclopaedic character used by a small elite group, or are concerned with the administrative aspects of agriculture and other knowledge necessary for government officials. In contrast, many nôsho show a more practical approach to farming and are mostly packed with down-to-earth advice for tax paying farmers. This can be described as one key feature of the nôsho; simultaneously, it gives us a hint about who authored them, and reflects the time they came into being.

Thus, farming is crucial to the building of a society for it secures the lives of people by providing food, clothes and shelter. In the end, it is required for maintaining peace and works as the foundation for education. This view on farming is located at the very heart of Confucian philosophy and understanding of agriculture’s impact on political actions and vice versa.

Written by court physicians for adopting the botanic-pharmacological hokusou [Teaching on materia medica], and by scholars of the related meibutsu [Teaching about the naming of things] to assign Chinese characters to plants and herbs growing on the Japanese archipelago.

Written texts are the main authoritative sources of knowledge in Japan for a considerable time and books imported from the continent dealing with agriculture can be traced back to the 9th century. But access to these works was limited to scholars or at private writing schools in urban areas. But as the village headmen, for they were able to read and explain their content, thereby spreading advanced knowledge about economics and farming to the semi-illiterate.

The emergence of nôsho

According to the historian Tsukuba Hisharu, Japan’s written culture was without nôsho well until the early modern times. In this time period prevailed under the Tokugawa hegemony, but Japan was largely secluded by governmental efforts from nearly any direct contact with the rest of the world. Likewise, the world’s former landowning warriors and peasants became separated, transforming the first group into a bureaucratic class, paid in rice stipends to be produced by the latter. But commercial growth, the spread of the monetary system and diversification of economy paves the way for the emergence of written essays focusing on the needs of the peasantry.

The Compendium of Agriculture

Of all nôsho, the Nôsho zenshû [Compendium of Agriculture; 1697] by Miyazaki Yasuada (1623-1697) stands alone as the great prototype of early modern Japanese treatises on agriculture and went through several reprints during the whole Tokugawa era. Miyazaki was of samurai descent and the son of a commissioner for forestry affairs (sanrin bugyô) in the territory of Aki province on Kyushu. He became acquainted with the subject early on, and possessed the literary skills to consult authoritative Chinese works, most specifically the Wèngzhèng gǔshù [Compendium of Agricultural Administration; 1639] by Xì Guāng-qì (1562-1633).

Miyazaki’s own Compendium, his endeavor went beyond a mere repetition and transportation of Chinese knowledge. He traveled the countryside, interviewed old and skilled peasants (rônô), and built up his own empirical farming experiences during almost forty years. This enabled him to review Chinese treatises, select the most useful information, and adjust them to the conditions in Japan. He was one of the most striking features of the Nôsho zenshû, for it reflects Miyazaki’s approach to a synthesis of theory and practical experience, an approach adopted by later authors, like Sonagaaya Yasu for the compilation of his Nigetsumon kesshi [Accurate record of the mirror of agricultural techniques; 1723].

In ten volumes, Miyazaki provides basic information on soil preparation, selection of seeds, the right time of sowing, irrigation, harvesting and the like – familiar issues for a great many of centuries and also sprouted off the ideological seeds of Confucian ethics and thinking about economy, but came into bloom only quite recently.

So to say, the nôsho of Japan rooted in the grounds of agriculture already conducted for a great many of centuries and also sprouted off the ideological seeds of Confucian ethics and thinking about economy, but came into bloom only quite recently.

The Compendium is well known for its ideological seeds of Confucian ethics and thinking about economy, but came into bloom only quite recently.

The eleventh volume was added by Kaibara Rakken (1625-1702), older brother to the famous Neo-Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekkon (1630-1714), and deals with the administrative aspects Miyazaki skipped almost entirely. Miyazaki’s focus on the former landowning warriors and peasants is practical use of acquired theoretical knowledge transmitted in vernacular Japanese, shows that the Compendium was not intended to be a text for scholarly discussion or government officials, but to be a guidebook for the economic benefits of the Japanese farmers. Although Miyazaki’s outstanding role in the history of Japanese writing on agricultural matters is widely acknowledged and permanently mentioned by Western scholars, his impact on many of the following authors of nôsho (throughout the Tokugawa era) regarding content, structure and even methodological approach is not thoroughly recognised.

TAKING THE CULTIVATION OF CROPS as the basis of nearly any economic activity, the necessity of information and knowledge in agriculture was not intended to be a text for scholarly discussion or government officials, but to be a guidebook for the economic benefits of the Japanese farmers. Although Miyazaki’s outstanding role in the history of Japanese writing on agricultural matters is widely acknowledged and permanently mentioned by Western scholars, his impact on many of the following authors of nôsho (throughout the Tokugawa era) regarding content, structure and even methodological approach is not thoroughly recognised.
As expressed at the beginning of this article, the limited interest of western scholars for nôsho seems to reflect the belief that agricultural writings in general are not a prolific source. Additionally, in spite of being subsumed under one generic category, their diverse content and style may perhaps confuse and discourage interested scholars. Yet they are a treasure trove ready to be discovered.

Guides for the world of today

While Miyazaki complained in his 1697 Compendium that highly educated government officials or scholars have neither interest in nor knowledge about agriculture and therefore are not capable of educating the people properly in these matters, the farmer and philosopher Fukukawa Masanobu described quite a similar view in 1975: 'Because the Ministry of Agriculture has no clear idea of what should be grown in the first place, and because it does not understand the connection between what is grown in the fields and the people’s diet, a consistent agricultural policy remains an impossibility. [...] Until now the line of thought among modern economists has been that small scale, self-sufficient farming is wrong – that it is a primitive kind of agriculture – one that should be eliminated as soon as possible.'

Fortunately, the situation may start to change as international organisations involved in development cooperation, like the United Nations, today openly discuss how current systems of extensive agriculture create more problems than they are able to solve in the short term. But in spite of scientific evidence and experiences from around the globe, the most prevailing view is still that small scale, intensive farming is unproductive and that indigenous knowledge is backward; this view also continues to be promoted by multinational corporations.

In this respect, it is not my opinion that the nôsho of early modern Japan show us a way ‘back to paradise’: scholars and statesmen in China and Japan alike tried to abandon a money-economy along with its negative side effects, and return to the past conditions of a mythical golden age of the sages, and failed. Nevertheless, early modern Japanese nôsho reveal attempts to respond to the intertwined social, environmental and economic problems such as partial rural depopulation, speculation, soil erosion, etc., which are major reasons for increasing poverty, and issues of food security and food sovereignty. These topics are ones that can also be found in today’s newspapers, and which can easily be expanded into discussions about social and ecological sustainability and challenges for energy supply, as was done recently in The Newsletter by Mairon Bastos Lima. The nôsho of early modern Japan might shed some light on current global challenges from a historic perspective and help us to modify the pejorative view on small-scale agriculture.

Looking at early modern Japan, with its secluded economy heavily dependent on agriculture and the cultivation of crops, with the taxes and salaries of the bureaucratic officials paid in kind – essays that enhance the agricultural output in various ways touch on every economical, social and cultural aspect of everyday life then, and continue to do so today. Although only described briefly here, the statements made so far don’t question why one should study the agricultural writings of early modern Japan, but why they aren’t studied more. Like the popular literature of the townspeople was once too profane for scholarly attention, the various nôsho still appear to be purposely overlooked; I do hope that one day they will be reconsidered and recognised as objects for further study.

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References


Notes

1 I deeply acknowledge my debt to Professor Klaus Müller, whose unpublished theses about the agricultural writings of early modern Japan of 1976 encouraged my studies and the writing of this article.


3 As listed in the Nihonkoku genzai sho mokuroku [Catalogue of books currently in Japan] compiled in the 9th century.


6 Crops of the Future – How to feed the world in 2050? Documentary by Marie-Monique Robin, shown on the German/French/Françophone programme ARTE on 4 September 2012.

7 Based on a chapter of Secure Oil and Alternative Energy (Annah & Yang 2012), Marcin Bastos Lima points out the importance of involving small-scale farmers in national programs to reduce rural-urban migration and thus fighting poverty for Brazil. Bastos Lima, M. 2012. ‘The Brazilian biofuel industry: achievements, challenges and geopolitics’, The Newsletter, Vol. 62, Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies, p.35.

All pictures courtesy of Professor Wolfgang Michel.
Ian Leonard Cook

The Study

The Opinion

More on Singapore’s Bukit Brown

There is pressure world-wide concerning how societies, and nation states more specifically, manage their dead. On the one hand, there is the practical consideration of body disposal at the time of death. On the other, there are social and cultural considerations that link to beliefs and identities and which are important for social stability and cultural sustainability within and across communities. Such value systems are under threat because of the infrastructural and spatial needs of growing populations, particularly in urban spaces.

SINGAPORE IS NO EXCEPTION, and neither is Sydney where I live. On ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) radio, 22 December 2012, Tom Nightingale reported that: “Sydney cemeteries are set to run out of space in just over 20 years and authorities are hinting at the possibility of reusing old graves.” He also commented that legislation would most likely be tabled in the New South Wales (NSW) State Parliament in early 2013.

Further afield, a recent post on the ‘illicit-cultural-property. blogspot.com.au’ (16 January 2013) reports on an Associated Press story where “In Egypt at the Dahshour necropolis, modern cemetery expansion and looting are putting the much older pharaonic necropolises at risk.” Such urban pressures are not a recent phenomenon, and they were not always about burial space per se, but space for purposes such as civic amenities and infrastructure development. For example, the principal cemetery for the colony of NSW (1793-1820) made way for the construction of Sydney’s Town Hall in the 1860s and the exhumation of some 50,000 graves from Singapore’s century-old Bidaddi (Christian, Muslim and Hindu) Cemetery was undertaken from 2001 to build public housing. The history of reclaiming cemetery land in recent times in Singapore goes back to the 1820s, which is not surprising (the total land area of the island is about 700 square kilometers with an expanding population and commensurate infrastructure requirements). The pressures to reuse cemetery land to meet population growth continue because it is conveniently accessible, inexpensive to recycle and to date, associated with low political risk.

World population stands at a little over seven billion people and the annual global mortality rate is approximately 56 million. This represents about 0.8% of the total population and by any reckoning represents an enormous number of bodies to be disposed of in one way or another. Moving from the global to the local, Singapore’s population in 2012 was 5.31 million and included 3.82 million residents consisting of 3.29 million citizens and 533,000 permanent residents. The total number of deaths in 2011 for Singapore was 18,027 (approximately 0.5% of the resident population) and while not all these peoples’ remains stayed in Singapore, one would think that the majority were cremated or buried on the island and that is where they will stay, or will they?

Connections, corridors, and communities

I was fortunate to attend the 3rd Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network held last September in Singapore (see the conference report in The Network pages of this publication). The theme of the conference focused on the exploration of ideas and research associated with ‘connections, corridors, and communities’ in the borderlands context. Cemeteries in general and more specifically, memorials, graves and columbariums are borderlands of a sort. Out-of-session conference chatter can prove very useful and the Singapore conference was no exception.

During an after-dinner conversation, Michel Baas (IIAS/ARI) suggested that my wife and I visit the Bukit Brown Cemetery while we were in Singapore. To retrospect the experience seemed particularly relevant to the conference program.

Bukit Brown provides connections between important aspects of Singapore’s past and present, an ecological corridor linking key green areas on the island as well as a doorway into the intricacy and complexity of Chinese culture, especially that associated with migrants from Fujian and other Southern Chinese provinces. Bukit Brown provides a wonderful window into the Chinese clan system, familial and geopolitical. It is a valuable genealogical resource and a gateway into Singapore’s recent history and Chinese relations with the colonial administration up to the time of independence and in the early years of post-independence.

Bukit Brown cemetery is the largest Chinese cemetery outside China. With approximately 100,000 graves it is a remarkable historical space, even in international terms. While the cemetery has been closed since 1972 and neglected to some extent over the last forty years, it has had its enthusiasts. Recently there has been a renaissance of interest because its integrity is under immediate threat from road building and its longevity is in doubt because of plans to use the cemetery for a housing estate. A quick Internet search on Bukit Brown reveals the extent to which the cemetery has become a site for community engagement, a place for recreation, reflection and celebration – all important ingredients for identity-making and nation building and hence cultural sustainability. Hui Yew-Foong’s article in the winter 2012 issue of The Newsletter (issue #62, p. 44) frames many of these issues very clearly. And even on a first visit it is evident that the cemetery holds a vast amount of historical, cultural and social information that could provide a multi-layered and rich resource for local, regional and international researchers and scholars for many years to come.

Intergenerational ethics

Bukit Brown is in danger because of the competition for space in Singapore. This includes space for both housing and infrastructure. The Urban Redevelopment Authority announced that Bukit Brown Municipal Cemetery was earmarked for housing in 2011. In a response to a Government announcement in March 2012 regarding the construction of an eight-lane road, including a vehicular bridge, through Bukit Brown cemetery, the Singapore Heritage Society commented: “While we acknowledge the efforts to minimize disruption, the Singapore Heritage Society still has the following reservations. The 8-lane highway will destroy almost 4000 graves as well as the key landmarks of the internal road network, such as the main roundabout and the main gate, all of which form a central part of people’s social memories of Bukit Brown.”

Protecting historical spaces as an anchor for memory, identity and local distinctiveness is an issue about integrity and authenticity; so snipping off bits of the whole interferes with the significance of the whole, devaluing the space and consequently impacting on its intrinsic value, social wellbeing and social function. It also impacts on potential instrumental values related to economic opportunities such as tourism, as well as education and the broad foundation of nation-building. Such discussion can be approached through the lens of heritage management and that will be pursued shortly, but before then, I would like to reflect on Bukit Brown’s future in the context of intergenerational ethics. Essentially,
do we (as insiders or in my specific case, outsiders) owe those that have contributed to the building of Singapore, or more generally the world we live in, any special consideration regarding the protection (maintenance of the integrity of) their burial sites? And should this apply universally or only in special circumstances? I’ll get back to this.

Stephen M. Gardner’s discussion of intergenerational ethics with respect to climate change, in his book A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change, is appealing in his argument about the responsibilities of the current generation (especially those in developed and rapidly developing nations) regarding the wellbeing of future generations that very probably will bear the brunt of our current behavior with respect to the production of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Is this thinking relevant to the Bukit Brown case/situation? Is there an ethics associated with those who have gone before us that is beyond identity making, production and if there is, why should we behave ethically? There will be no repercussions if we behave badly, or will there be?

I can’t help thinking that Bukit Brown does fall under the umbrella of issues that Gardner associates with ‘a perfect moral storm’ for responsibilities to future generations. If this is true, how should we approach such a problem, and is the past so fundamentally linked to the present and the future that the contribution of the road development cannot be treated without proper regard in the way nations are managed today? My view is that if you cannot respect the ideas, values and actions of those who have contributed to our present and our previous places of burial, then we are on shaky grounds for leading an ethical life now, and for protecting the interests of those that will follow us.

Heritage, symbolism, significance

In looking at Bukit Brown through a heritage lens there are two further issues that are worth consideration. The first relates to heritage and the utilitarian value of Bukit Brown, in particular the significance of the cemetery as a heritage place both in terms of tangible and intangible heritage, and the second, concerns the powerful symbolic meaning of the place, particularly at a personal level.

While Bukit Brown’s fate might be decided, there are many questions that seem relevant still. For example:

- What intrinsic and instrumental values does Bukit Brown display or reveal?
- Does it provide a breathing space in a highly urbanized environment?
- Does it represent an outstanding entry way into Chinese and in particular Hokkien and Teochew culture: geomancy and feng shui, etc., and is this important?
- Does Bukit Brown have economic value other than space for housing and infrastructure/transportation development and if so what might those benefits be?
- Could Bukit Brown contribute to local environmental sustainability?
- Can it play a part, even if a small one, in contributing to climate change mitigation?
- Could Bukit Brown form a cornerstone in Singapore’s commitment to the protection and ways of living of future Singaporeans by acknowledging this particular, past population of residents who have contributed to the building of the nation and how might this be done?

If Bukit Brown has both environmental and cultural significance, possibly of substantial value or even outstanding universal value, then an integrated environmental impact assessment for both the planned road and the flanked future housing estate would have been, or would be, meaningful in terms of the ‘moral storm’ argument.

Similarly, the economic contribution of the road development and future housing proposal could have been, or could be, usefully assessed by alternative cost benefit strategies for keeping or destroying Bukit Brown. One might enquire, for example, whether current approaches to meeting transport needs, with their focus on the automobile (influenced by international thinking from as long ago as the 1930s, from the likes of Robert Moses in New York?), continue to be relevant, notwithstanding tensions between population growth, infrastructural needs and evolving community aspirations for high standards of living with strong links to private automobile use.

A key question that is worth exploring is whether the current fabric of Bukit Brown is of sufficient significance that it could be listed on the World Heritage List (WHL)? And if it were, what would be the benefits to Singaporeans in economic and social terms. The latter being part of a separate, but associated symbolic value argument for the long-term sustainability of the nation from tourism earnings (in its broadest definition – cultural and educational) as well as political, diplomatic and strategic benefits.

Personal reflection

I have asked myself why my short visit to Bukit Brown made such a strong impression. Among other things, the place puts forth three recommendations, namely, gazetting Bukit Brown as a heritage site for legal protection, full documentation of Bukit Brown, and the cultural tourism heritage park for Singaporeans to enjoy.” These recommendations represent a valuable first step for securing the integrity of the place and working towards examining the feasibility of World Heritage listing. In this context it is worth reviewing what appear to be the most relevant criteria for assessing the appropriateness of a WH proposal. Of the ten criteria12 the following may be relevant:

- to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a significant stage in) human history;
- to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

(Them Committee considers that this criteria should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria).

Furthermore, the World Heritage Committee states that the protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations. Since 1992 significant interactions between people and the natural environment have been recognized as cultural landscapes. If Bukit Brown has outstanding universal value it will be as a significant global cultural landscape. Notwithstanding the above, is the heritage value of Bukit Brown also important for Singapore’s nation-building effort? And if it is, then it needs to be protected formally through legislation whether or not WH listing is seen in a positive light and achievable.

World heritage site

The Nature Society (Singapore) advocates that the entire 233 hectares of Bukit Brown be designated as a heritage park with the cultural and natural/ecological components integrated as one entire entity. They also state: “The heritage park could possibly be proposed to the UN as a UNESCO World Heritage site to attract tourists and other visitors, but more importantly to showcase thesurprising cultural, historical, and biodiversity wealth that Singapore holds.”

In the press release announcing the Singapore Heritage Society’s position paper on Bukit Brown Cemetery: “The Society suggests two other things, the paper puts forth three recommendations, namely, gazetting Bukit Brown as a heritage site for legal protection, full documentation of Bukit Brown, and the cultural tourism heritage park for Singaporeans to enjoy.” These recommendations represent a valuable first step for securing the integrity of the place and working towards examining the feasibility of World Heritage listing.

Before ending I would like to return to the beginning and the dilemma of the remains of the dead and where, and how and should they be preserved. In particular, is there a position between the pragmatics of recycling cemeteries for various purposes – from health management to the pressing needs of growth – and an appropriate ethics of respect that acknowledges the impact past, present and future, and which is more than mere tokenism? If there is, how might it be shaped and applied. Could such an approach accommodate a scope that is universal rather than just for special cases such as Bukit Brown? Somehow an ethic for ‘sometimes’ doesn’t seem right, yet there seems to be no other option considering the seriousness of the problem. Pursuing what can be preserved when it can has its shortcomings from the perspective of a global intergenerational ethic concerning the remains of the dead. Such an ethic, nevertheless, may provide a useful reference point for the way communities might consider or frame their actions to protect what they hold dear.

Ian Cook is currently a deputy chair of AusHeritage Ltd, a network promoting the engagement of Australian heritage practitioners internationally. He is co-author of A contemporary guide to cultural mapping - an ASEAN-Australia perspective, in print, and manages 3CS AsiaPacific, a consultancy focussing on heritage, culture, risk and vulnerability (iancook@bigpond.net.au).

Notes
2 Population Trends 2012, Department of Statistics, Singapore. In addition to the figures quoted there is a non-resident population of 4.9 million.
3 Bukit Brown Cemetery actually consists of two cemeteries – Bukit Brown and She Ong Cemetery. For the purpose of this article Bukit Brown is used generically to stand for both places.
5 ibid, p11.
6 SHS Researcher. Personal interview with Bukit Brown.
7 The Study | 9
8 The Newsletter | No.63 | Spring 2013
According to most historiography regarding ISS partnerships and policies, China’s involvement with its creation and on-going development has been insignificant despite it being the first major cooperative space science project in history. As the second country to launch an operational space station, China’s unique perspective provides an opportunity to assess how technical, commercial, financial, and cooperative solutions have evolved. China’s participation in the ISS has created a new scientific and economic environment in which international cooperation is inherently partial. China’s involvement with the ISS has created a new scientific and economic environment in which international cooperation is inherently partial. China’s involvement with the ISS has created a new scientific and economic environment in which international cooperation is inherently partial. 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China’s involvement with the ISS has created a new scientific and economic environment in which international cooperation is inherently partial. China’s involvement with the ISS has created a new scientific and economic environment in which international cooperation is inherently partial.

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China’s remarkable state-led growth and rapid industrial development continues to beguile and amaze. It has brought plaudits across the world and has even spawned a new development model – the Beijing Consensus. But away from the headlines there is one industry in which state intervention appears to be having little or no effect. An internationally competitive software services industry centered on large, domestic firms – prioritized by the Chinese Communist Party since 2000 and targeted accordingly – remains elusive. India’s success in the same industry, however, provides several pointers for Chinese policymakers as to how their current software struggle could be overcome.


Notes
2 For example, Spectramind was acquired by Wipro in 2002 with Daksh being purchased by IBM in 2003.
3 These conditions have long since dissipated. The market conditions that the software services industry development in India, can, the appropriate lessons be drawn and a policy framework, specifically suited to the Chinese context, be devised.

Above: Indian Call Center. Image reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy flickr.

Drawing on evidence from the successful development of the software services industry in India, this article identifies five policy lessons that may hold the key to China eventually succeeding in its bid to become a software services superpower.

Lesson 1: FDI is an outcome, not initiator, of software success.
At the centre of Beijing’s software strategy is Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in software services and also IT-enabled services (ITES), such as call-centers. The Chinese government believes such FDI will act as a catalyst for the growth of a wider and more advanced software services industry. Accordingly, it has sought to attract this FDI via the construction of an array of cyber-parks, replete with advanced telecommunications infrastructure and an array of subsidies and tax breaks for would-be exporters of software services and ITES.

The rationale for this strategy is the belief that IT-related FDI in cyber-parks ignited the rapid growth of the Indian software services industry. The belief is based on a 2007 report from the World Bank-affiliated International Finance Corporation titled Leapfrogging? India’s Information Technology Industry and the Internet. The report, which has influenced IT policies from Beijing to Nairobi, asserts that “software exports, the earliest harbinger of a more widespread IT expansion, began only in 1985 when Texas Instruments established its subsidiary in Bangalore.

The problem is that this claim is erroneous. Software exports from India by local firms began in 1974, over a decade before Texas Instruments’ Bangalore subsidiary was established, and facilitated by the Indian state’s 1972 Software Export Scheme. Moreover, while Texas Instruments was certainly the first foreign transnational corporation (TNC) to establish a software development centre in the country, IT-related FDI only began arriving in India en masse from 2000 onwards, soon after the success of Indian software firms had unequivocally demonstrated the viability of the country as an export platform for software services. As IT-related FDI race an outcome of India’s software success, and not its initiator, Chinese policymakers need to re-evaluate the importance they give it.

Lesson 2: The domestic market is the spring board to export success.
As the software services market in China is nascent, while the global software and ITES market is huge, exports have been seen to offer a more tantamount and easier trajectory to growth. However, this policy position ignores the fact that an important precondition for the export success of Indian software firms was their earlier experience of serving the domestic market. The first Indian firm to export software services, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), won its initial 1974 software export contract with the Institutional Group and Data Company, on the back of its experience of software provision for 15 Indian banks. Similarly, Computer Maintenance Corporation (CMC) won highly lucrative contracts with the London Underground and various ROI ports around the world on the back of their earlier experience in major infrastructure-related software projects in India. Moreover, TCS and CMC are not anomalies. All other major Indian software firms also benefited from experience derived from domestic software service provision in some way or other. Beijing therefore needs to consider how China’s internal market can better be utilized to enhance the competitiveness of local firms.

Lesson 3: Call-centers don’t lead to higher-end software services exports.
In terms of calls and tax breaks, the Chinese state has shown no distinction between call-centers serving Western customers and firms engaged in the export of software services. This is despite the former being little more than a glorified production line (white-collar sweatshops) and the latter being a higher value-added sector. The reason for this lack of discrimination is the assumption – based on Beijing’s understanding of the Indian experience – that call-centers and other ITES provide the first step on a ladder to more advanced software service exports.

Again, this assumption bears no resemblance to how the software services industry in India works. First, ITES exports via call-centers began at the turn of the century, more than 25 years after TCS first exported software from the country. Therefore call-centers, such as General Electric’s Nextel Call-centers, and other software export service companies such as Daksh, EXL and Spectramind who provided third party service providers for companies such as Amazon and Citibank, could not have been the first step in a transition to a software services industry. Moreover, these call-centers have not evolved into higher-end software services. The Indian third party customer service providers, for example, never developed into software service firms. Rather, most were acquired by software service firms, as such firms sought to integrate call-centers within their widening service portfolios. The Indian and overseas firms have shown a marked preference to keep higher-end services in their country of origin, the India-based TNC call-centers have also not witnessed any upgrading in the services they export. Thus, given that call-centers serving Western customers are unlikely to export success.

Lesson 4: Conducive market conditions are key to any rapid transformation of software firms into major industry players.
The Chinese state has focused on getting its internal conditions ‘right’ with the assumption this will lead seamlessly to the growth of large, internationally competitive Chinese software service firms. The Indian experience, however, suggests that facilitating market conditions also play a key role in any rapid transformation of small software firms into significant industry players.

Most importantly, major Indian software firms such as TCS, Infosys and Wipro could not have transformed from niche operations to industry leaders and then major industry players without changing their core operations. In addition, the provision of basic software services to medium-sized businesses was relatively new and commercial relationships had not yet been cemented. Moreover, this was a market segment generally neglected by the major software service firms. As such, the market was wide open and provided the ideal starting point for small, ambitious but well-run software service firms.

Finally, Indian software firms faced little competition in tapping this rapidly expanding and relatively open market. Advances in telecommunications firms from all over the developing world to undercut Western rivals by providing services by remote delivery from their home country. However, due to the Indian government’s pioneering initiatives in developing a software industry, the only firms in the developing world with the capabilities and contacts to effectively exploit this opportunity were from India. It was these highly conducive market conditions that provided the basis for the best-managed Indian software firms to rapidly expand and transform themselves into major international players. China’s timetabling regarding the growth of large domestic software service firms must, therefore, take into account market conditions.

Lesson 5: There are hidden, and counter-intuitive, costs that come with software services success.
The Chinese state has assumed that the development of a thriving software services industry will boost IT diffusion (understood as the uptake of information technology by firms, schools and other institutions). This view is, however, overly simplistic. In poor countries it is important to appreciate that software piracy is the chief mechanism by which IT diffusion occurs. Moreover, the uptake of IT increases productivity and competitiveness for domestic firms, making IT diffusion an important facilitator of development. As such, governments with developmental agendas have tended to turn a blind eye to software piracy, which can be a significant impediment to attracting IT-related FDI, or even a hindrance to the development of a software industry in general. There is, therefore, paradox between promoting the development of a software services industry on the one hand and facilitating IT diffusion and its developmental returns on the other.

In India, this tension was resolved in favor of further developing the software services industry. Thus, the Indian government in New Delhi and the state governments with major IT hubs (e.g., Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) have clamped down on software piracy with deleterious effects on IT diffusion. The software services industry in India was thus booming, but the country’s international ranking in IT diffusion was plummeting. 4 And within India, states with major Indian software hubs have seen their IT diffusion rankings fall vis-a-vis other Indian states with no software hubs. 5 As such, Chinese policymakers new to acknowledge that success in software services may come at the expense of IT diffusion and the government needs to have an open and honest debate regarding the potential trade-offs involved in becoming a software services superpower.

From lessons to plans – a conclusion of sorts.
For China to replicate Indian success, and also avoid or limit the costs that have come with it, a much closer reading of the Indian experience in software services is required. Only by understanding the underlying and often counterintuitive technical conditions by which the software services industry developed in India, can the appropriate lessons be drawn and a policy framework, specifically suited to the Chinese context, be devised.

China’s software struggle: five lessons from the Indian experience
The Academy of Brunei Studies

The Academy of Brunei Studies is Brunei’s main centre for humanities and social science research relating to Brunei and neighbouring regions of Borneo. Graduate studies are an important component of this research and there are currently forty local and international students at the Academy studying for MA by Research and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. The Academy is currently expanding its graduate programme and particularly encourages applicants in the following fields:

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The Making of the Asia Pacific: Knowledge Brokers and the Politics of Representation is about the power of narratives in shaping the ‘world’ of the post-cold war Asia Pacific. Laden with economic, social and political meaning, policy and academic discourses authorize and provoke certain understandings about the region, while preventing counter-narratives from emerging. By no means free-floating, they are tied to the particular interests and ideologies of their narrators and users. This book critically examines the purposes, practices, power relations and protagonists behind policy networks such as the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific and the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council. In decoding the conventional lore advanced by established international relations narratives on the Asia Pacific, The Making of the Asia Pacific points the way to a more democratic knowing, doing and being vis-à-vis the region.

See Seng Tan is associate professor, deputy director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, and head of the Centre for Multilateralism Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

New Asia Books is an initiative of IIAS
Reassessing Qing provincial power

In recent years historians began the process of diverging from traditional, imperial-centric narratives within the historiography of China to address political, economic, social, and cultural variations at regional, local, and individual levels. The works that came out of this reassessment highlight how a singular, grand account of Chinese history overlooks peculiar and unique events that often do not fit precisely into the traditional mold. At the same time many of these ‘bottom-up’ works often failed to provide any historiographic relevance to larger historical patterns and events, leaving historians to debate the value of seemingly esoteric contributions to the scholarship. In Qing Governors and Their Provinces, R. Kent Guy attempts to bridge the imperial-local divide by studying the creation, maintenance, and flexibility of provincial bureaucracies – particularly the role of governors – during the early to mid-Qing dynasty.

Mathew Brundage
As a society ruled by status, life in Tokugawa Japan was highly compartmentalized. People, food, clothing, books, everything was organized into discrete hierarchal categories. Even though research has already shown that in practice these categories were more fluid than previously assumed, rigid compartmentalization continued to be at the core of political discourse throughout the period. What should we make of this discrepancy between reality and discourse? Incompetent rulers simply fooling themselves? Not likely. After all, they did manage to squeeze out more than 250 years of enduring peace. In Roberts’ new monograph, we are presented with a compelling answer to this conundrum as he sets out the ‘cultural logic’ through which apparent contradictions between political reality and discourse were reconciled and, in fact, made perfect sense to contemporaries.

Niels van Steenpaal


ROBERTS DISCOVERS THIS ‘CULTURAL LOGIC’ in the distinction made between omote (outside) and uchi (inside) spaces. By delegating the authority over domains to warlords, the Tokugawa daimyo had created a feudal system; a poity of “sealed-off spaces” that “permitted interiors and exteriors to be incongruent” (p.5). Whereas previous research, influenced by modern conceptions and expectations of a penetrating and all powerful state, have interpreted this incongruence as a sign of weakness on part of the bakufu (shogunate; military government) to enforce its policies, Roberts argues that to contemporaries it constituted an “ideal form of politics” (p.196). As long as domains showed subservience in the omote adherence to official regulations, the bakufu was not concerned with the details of its uchi politics. Any incongruence between the two was simply acknowledged as an “open secret”, a “mutually arranged management” of disobedience (p.7).

Open secrets

The image that Roberts paints is that of a performed political order. “The ability to command performance of duty – in the thespian sense when actual performance of duty might be lacking – was a crucial tool of Tokugawa power that effectively worked toward preserving the peace in the realm” (p.3). Each of the chapters in this book is a case study of one particular occasion in which this performance is used to resolve or negotiate discrepancies between omote and uchi. Although some of these performances might already be familiar to specialists of premodern Japanese politics, Roberts’ treatment brings much added value; his extensive use of original archival sources has resulted in vivid narratives brimming with detail. The glimpses that these narratives offer into the “open secrets” of the day are as entertaining as they are enlightening. We learn for example that the daimyo (lord) of Tosa, in order to prepare for the bakufu Touring Inspectors, ordered that where rest houses should be built as convenience of the Inspectors “old wood should be used so that they look like they have been there a long time” (p.62). Similarly, the domain officials of Tahara “had the roads swept but made sure that the brown marks were erased” (p.66).

The (mal)practices of adoptions provide yet another example of the same kind of apparent idiosyncrasies. One of the Grand Inspectors, responsible for making sure the lord was alive while making his adoption request, all too frankly admits that “usually they were all dead and cold, but the family would lay him out on a futon behind a folding screen just as if he were alive. I act as if he is alive… Some relative from behind the screen presses the lord’s seal to a document as if he did it himself” (p.79). By demonstrating that these open secrets only make sense when filtered through the ‘cultural logic’ of the omote/uchi dichotomy, and furthermore, by doing so through case studies from the early Tokugawa period when the power of the bakufu was at its prime, Roberts convincingly makes his case that the discrepancy between reality and discourse was at the heart of Tokugawa political culture, and did not necessarily signify waning authority.

Shared knowledge

As Roberts certainly succeeds in his aim to “create a space of acceptance for a certain cultural approach to interpreting the politics of the Tokugawa world” (p.198), it will be up to others to explore the details and limitations of this approach. Perhaps the most pressing issue in that regard is the question of formation. In contrast to the ‘sealed-off’ nature of uchi space, omote space requires a pool of shared knowledge amongst multiple ‘Others’, the formation of which, in a period of still immense cultural differences amongst geographical regions, poses a problem; who decided on the shape and content of omote, and how did people come to share these conceptions?

Previous scholarship has already demonstrated that these conceptions certainly were not created unilaterally by the bakufu at the start of the Tokugawa period. The omote identity of meikun (benevolent ruler), for example, came into being only in the specific socio-political conditions of the latter half of the seventeenth century, and only as the result of a dynamic discourse between bakufu, regional lords, and carriers of literary/philosophical tradition. Although Roberts has highlighted the omote ‘performance’ of regional lords vis-à-vis the bakufu, the origin of the script, as well as the roles of the other actors still remain to be clarified. In that sense, Roberts’ work is one small piece in the puzzle of Tokugawa political culture, but it certainly is an important one, and will undoubtedly cause many of us to tread more carefully when dealing with the ‘deceptive’ nature of omote sources.

Comparative approach

Roberts has delivered an outstanding work. The research is thorough, the thesis is compelling, and the writing is clear. Add to that the variety of topics handled in the case studies, and one must conclude that this is a work that deserves to be read not only by specialists of political culture, but everyone with an interest in premodern Japanese culture and society. Roberts’ emphasis, that although the omote/uchi dichotomy is appropriate to the Tokugawa setting, it “easily could be used to analyze and create a dialogue with the premodern histories of some non-Japanese places” (p. 197), is surely an invitation to scholars of other cultures to engage in a comparative approach as well.

Niels van Steenpaal, The University of Tokyo, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Fellow (nielsvansteenpaal@hotmail.com).
This catalogue presents the impressive collection of Vietnamese ceramics in the Museum of Art in Birmingham, Alabama, published in conjunction with their exhibition, which opened in January 2012. The museum had started collecting Vietnamese ceramics less than forty years ago. Along with a steady stream of gifts and purchases – among them, also some from the Hoi An shipwreck – the museum was fortunate to receive as a major addition an important private collection in 2005 and 2007.

Brigitte Borell, independent scholar (b_borell_seidel@hotmail.com).

Reviewed publication:
John A. Stevenson and Donald A. Wood, with Philippe Truong. 2012.
Seattle: University of Washington Press;

THREE ESSAYS, accompanied by a chronological table and a map, precede the catalogue. John Stevenson, the co-curator of the exhibition, gives an overview of the development of Vietnamese ceramics as an art form, including the earliest glazed wares of the Han-Viet period (111 BCE to the late second century CE), the flourishing production during the Ly and Tran dynasties in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, the fifteenth and sixteenth century blue-and-white wares intended for Islamic markets from Indonesia to Persia, and the sixteenth and seventeenth century ornate wares for use in Buddhist monasteries.

Philippe Truong offers brief information on the state of research of Vietnamese ceramics, including archaeological work and finds from shipwrecks, in particular, the five important shipwrecks identified along the Vietnamese coast between 1990 and 2002, with dates ranging from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries: the Hon Cau Island wreck (aka Vung Tau wreck), the Hon Dam Island wreck (aka Phu Quoc II wreck), the Cu Lao Cham wreck (aka Hoi An wreck), which is particularly important for Vietnamese blue and white export wares of the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries, and the Ca Mau and Binh Thuan wares. In addition, he explores the intricate matter of forgeries of Bleu de Hue, though the catalogue contains none of these special Chinese blue-and-white porcelains ordered for the Vietnamese court in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He distinguishes three phases of reproduction, each spurred by different collectors’ interests: a first phase in the nineteenth century, which comprised a variety of copies copying the characteristic eighteenth century Trinh marks; a second phase in the 1990s to feed a new collectors’ market with a fresh esteem for these wares, generated by academic publication on the subject; and a quickly-following third phase of excellent twenty-first century copies not easily recognised as forgeries.

The essay by Donald A. Wood, the museum curator, is devoted to the decorative motifs on Vietnamese ceramics. He includes an abundance of information for the reader to promote understanding and appreciation of the motifs and their intrinsic meaning, with emphasis on Vietnamese traditional legends and folklore. In particular, he highlights the meaning of Buddhist motifs and the Buddhist context of many types of wares.

The catalogue comprises 219 objects, covering the full range of Vietnamese ceramics, all accompanied by excellent colour illustrations (167 objects with full catalogue entries, the remaining 52 added at the end, with shorter texts and smaller illustrations). A great number of the pieces (over 40%) were already included – often with different or additional illustrations – in the publication on Vietnamese Ceramics edited by John Stevenson and John Guy (Vietnamese Ceramics: A Separate Tradition, Chicago: Art Media Press, 1997); at that time, some were already in the possession of the Birmingham Museum of Art, others were still in private ownership. However, bibliographic references for the individual pieces are generally omitted, although these would have been useful for the lay – and the academic – reader of the catalogue, as they are part of each piece’s research history.

The ceramics from the period of the Ly (1009-1225) and Tran (1225-1400) dynasties, often esteemed as the most creative and distinctive period of Vietnamese ceramics, form the heart of the collection with about half of the total catalogue numbers. These include a number of pieces of great beauty, in particular among the pieces with ivory-coloured glazes. Worth mentioning are the unique ewers (cat.23-26), which are also remarkable for the lightness and thinness of their potting, the pair of brown-inlaid jars (cat.17 and 18), assumed to have been a pair for at least seven hundred years. Also well represented are ceramics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, among them, some excellent blue-and-white pieces, painted with the freshness and spontaneity that characterises Vietnamese ceramic art. Notable is the kendi (cat.125) showing unusual scenes with human figures, and the charming water dropper in the shape of a pair of nesting ducks (cat.137). Most spectacular are two pieces decorated with underglaze-blue painting enhanced with overglaze enamels: the plate (cat.120), another example for the rare depiction of human figures in a landscape, and the large jar (cat.121), famous for its representation of various mythical creatures.

In addition to these Vietnamese wares, which were all made in the north, in the Red River valley and Thanh Hoa Province, the collection also includes a few ceramics that were produced in the Champa kilns in central Vietnam. The catalogue entries are subdivided following different topics – chronological, typological, thematic, temple use, everyday use – each preceded by a brief introduction, thus pointing out different interesting accents in the ceramics’ development, for instance, the decoration in underglaze iron-brown preceding that in underglaze cobalt blue (cat.110-114). It is a splendid collection of Vietnamese ceramics and a delightful catalogue for ceramic enthusiasts, indispensable for collectors and researchers of Southeast Asian ceramics alike.

Brigitte Borell, independent scholar (b_borell_seidel@hotmail.com).
New Designs for Asia

Student Work from the Architecture Faculty, TU Delft, The Netherlands

Asia’s rapid and remarkable economic and political growth, and the region’s increasing importance in the world has led some to believe that future historians will be calling the twenty-first century the ‘Asian Century’. We are already beginning to see a shift from the centuries-old Atlantic-centred weltanschauung to an increasingly Pacific-centred one. One of the most important factors fuelling Asia’s remarkable growth is the region’s rapid urbanization. As a result, urban studies, and its sister science architecture, are important disciplines for anyone interested in trying to pragmatically direct this growth, and improve people’s lives in the process.

Gregory Brandon and Kurt Kuipers
The FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE at the Technical University of Delft has seen an increase in the number of students from Asia in recent years. Despite this, students with Asia attract a majority of Asian students, particularly from China. These students come to TU Delft to learn Western ways of doing things (and to get an internationally recognised qualification), but they are primarily doing so in order to be able to apply what they have learned back home. Studios that deal specifically with Asian topics are, as a result, very attractive. TU Delft’s openness to Asia can also be seen by its involvement in what they have learned back home. Studios that deal with Asia in recent years. Design studios that deal with Asia attract the students of Delft has seen an increase in the number of students from Asia in recent years. Students from Asia are involved in a studio system. This is very like an atelier or office, where life. Densification (a neologism you will see mentioned again in some of these projects) can, rather, be a process where people with a non-technical background, concentrating on maps and perspective renderings. No architect or urbanist can communicate without being able to effectively gather and present their material in a drawing, but many of them are also becoming good at expressing themselves verbally. You will see how you will go through the design projects presented here.

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Bart Kuipers recently completed a Masters in Architecture in the Explore Lab at TU Delft, graduating cum laude, and is currently working as an architect in Shanghai (bartkuipers.com).

All images have been produced by the individual authors themselves, unless otherwise specified.

New Designs for Asia continued

The projects

Vertical Cities Asia is an annual urban-planning competition, which is held between two universities from North-America and Asia. TU Delft has participated in every edition of this annual competition, usually sending two teams. The projects ‘The Open-Ended City’ and ‘Lifetime City’ won joint first prize last year (and, interestingly, Jasper Nijveldt, one of the other authors represented in this Focus section of the Newsletter is accompanied by written discussions of the various projects’ origins, programmatic requirements, chief design decisions, and why these were chosen, as well, in some cases, the theoretical research that informed these decisions. With this in mind we invite you to first ‘read’ the drawings and then turn to the written articles. We have selected drawings that will be the most easily read by people with a non-technical background, concentrating on maps and perspective renderings. No architect or urbanist can communicate without being able to

Team A, ‘The Open-Ended City’, consisted of Stef Bogaards, Samuel Liu, Jan Maarten Mulder, Erjan Prins, and Claudio Succaci. Their aim was to propose a development that is able to retain the authenticity of the city while extending the dialogue between what exists and what is to come. They wanted to uncover and intensify what already exists, while renewing the city pattern. Their master plan was based on the premise that not just ‘everyone’s ages’ (the theme of the competition) but that everything ages. Their intervention seeks to address the problem of ageing in an holistic way, paying attention to the particular needs of the elderly in Korea, while also operating within a broader framework which takes cognisance of the fact that cities, too, are constantly ageing, and growing. Located at the heart of these new communities are hybrid school centres with elderly healthcare facilities that use rare open plots of land to provide a new type of public space. This clever combination of East-Asian veneration and European standard can serve as a catalyst for urban regeneration and growth, as well as allowing meaningful interaction between old and young.

Elsa Snyder’s project seeks to redefine the notion of the traditionalt typology in China. This small-scale medium-scale development is a sensitively nuanced alternative to the ubiquitous ‘pencil’ tower. The project pays attention to the particular needs of the elderly in Korea, seeks to address the problem of ageing in an holistic way, paying attention to the particular needs of the elderly in Korea, while also operating within a broader framework which takes cognisance of the fact that cities, too, are constantly ageing, and growing. Located at the heart of these new communities are hybrid school centres with elderly healthcare facilities that use rare open plots of land to provide a new type of public space. This clever combination of East-Asian veneration and European standard can serve as a catalyst for urban regeneration and growth, as well as allowing meaningful interaction between old and young.

Team B, ‘Lifetime City’, which consisted of Laura Dinkla, Katerina Salenkskii, Maria Stamati, Johnny Tascon Valencia, and Qiu Ye, identified the inherent characteristics of Seoul’s Yongson district (the site for the competition) and used them as the point of departure for their design. They saw existing urban life as being combined with a new way of understanding the role of the street in their proposal (with its focus on traditional neighbourhoods, which they saw as places where people and the city have evolved together). They posit a high-density proposal for the area that does not necessitate the wiping out of existing urban life. Densification (a neologism you will see mentioned again in some of these projects) can, rather, be a process where people with a non-technical background, concentrating on maps and perspective renderings. No architect or urbanist can communicate without being able to.

Bart Kuipers’ contribution is another housing project, this time in Shanghai. It seeks to breathe new life into the old alleyway neighbourhoods of the city, particularly the now vanishing shikumen houses. By designing a bold reinvention of the typical high-rise apartment block, Jade Well Apartments reclaims the rich diversity of the alleyway street life and should act as a welcome home for their former residents (the shikumen will simultaneously be upgraded for new up-market residents). This design will enable the shikumen’s former residents to stay close to their old homes, while allowing them to keep in touch with friends and neighbours. The project’s design also allows for plenty of scope for the rich social interaction that results in social exclusion for those

Jasper Nijveldt’s large-scale housing project is located in Chengdu, China and seeks to nurture the everyday human experience of space in a Chinese city. This is a bold and imaginative scheme which, like Elsa Snyder’s, borrows intelligently from China’s venerable and馥cur urban traditions. This elegant scheme shows a profound understanding of the underlying principles of Chinese urbanism and can act as a timely reminder of what is being lost, but also what can be achieved by those intelligent and sensitive enough to take the trouble to design well.

Finally, Ting Wen’s written contribution is less about the design process itself, but more about how she describes her urban intervention in the Kowloon City district of Hong Kong. She describes her urban intervention in the Kowloon City district of Hong Kong. His work is more about the thought piece that situates her project within a wider politico-intellectual context, particularly its critique of neoliberal policies and the urban regeneration, and gentrification, that results in social exclusion for those unable to partake in this brave new world of globalized capitalism. This piece should help to clarify some of the socially driven decisions that were taken during her design process. Its point of departure for her scheme is to act as an alternative strategy for the redevelopment of the Old Kai Tak Airport site, which is located nearby, and which is intended to become a new Central Business District (CBD) for the Territory. It also seeks to capitalize on some of her site’s favourable factors, including its lively food culture, the result of years of inter-Asian immigration. Finally, it also illustrates how new life can be breathed into existing housing stock, particularly the shophouse. The resulting design scheme should see benefits for everyone, even the global capitalist.

From top to bottom: 
Stef Bogaards, Samuel Liu, Jan Maarten Mulder, Erjan Prins, Claudio Succaci.

From top to bottom: 
Laura Dinkla, Katerina Salenkskii, Maria Stamati, Johnny Tascon Valencia, Qiu Ye.
Architecture is by its very nature a product of its broader socio-economic and political context. Spurred by what has been dubbed the Bilbao effect, developers and city planners have come to see iconic architecture as playing a central role in attracting such investment in the form of tourism and Big Money, resulting in the production of architecture that is in favour of visually consumable forms. Our aim is to propose a development that is able to retain the authenticity of the city while extending the dialogue between what exists and what is to come.

Stef Bogaerds, Samuel Liew, Jan Maarten Mulder, Erjen Prins, Claudio Saccucci

TheArchitecture or Master Plan does not have to announce itself, or be sensationalised, but should focus primarily on creating the ideal backdrop for the flourish of activity. We sought to uncover and intensify what already exists, renewing the pattern of the city based on the city itself. Our master plan hinges on the premise that not just ‘everyone ages’ (as outlined in the competition brief) but rather, ‘everything ages’; we addressed the ageing issue in an holistic way, understanding the needs of elderly people in Korea and catering to this need by the provision of easy access to the programme and the creation of more opportunities for interaction, all within the broader framework of the fact that cities are constantly ageing and growing too.

A substantial amount of time was given to understanding the needs of Korean people, and the importance of strengthening community ties. We explored the idea of community through programmatic circles, as a means to organize programs in a meaningful way, which would provide for the needs of an ever-ageing population within a walkable radius of five minutes. The potential of these communities is that they disperse functions, as opposed to create agglomerations of one particular kind of activity. At the heart of the communities are the hybrid centres that extend the functionality of a typical school to cater for elderly healthcare needs too, while the school yards (located amidst a sea of tight-knit developments) were the only open plots and provided an opportunity for a new type of open public space. This was an interesting overlap, because it was not just an opportunity for a new form of mixed programme utilizing the existing open space, but also because of the high priority that Korean society places on education, with families moving to particular locations primarily because of certain attractive schools. Serving as a catalyst for urban regeneration and growth, these hybrid centres would attract more people to live in surrounding areas whilst serving the people and allowing the elderly to share their experience and knowledge with younger generations.

In addition to catering to communities, the leisure seekers form another important user group in the Yongsan area, as the newly formed park and surrounding museums and water-front districts are developed. This will liven up the whole area and create a buzz that most residential neighbourhoods lack. The event core comprises cultural and leisure programs that are situated between the communities, binding them together, but also creating a strong connection to the park and the waterfront from the Yongsan station, which is situated in the middle of the site.

By prioritizing the long term growth of Yongsan in the design process, the strategy primarily focuses on creating conditions and rules that will guide the growth of the city. By varying this set of rules – the permeability of the block, the height of buildings, setbacks and plot coverage according to the specificity of the site – we were able to define and differentiate four communities. This broad framework allows for the preservation of qualities that make cities interesting and at times unpredictable and unique places, whilst embracing the high densities required in the brief.
Walking through the city of Seoul is a vibrant experience. People eat, drink, walk through shops or sit in a park. They live and grow old in a city that lives and grows old with them. Not just everyone ages, but everything ages. Activities, buildings, emptiness, centralities, high density, all together create different atmospheres in different places. As part of the Vertical Cities Asia 2012 competition, we worked on identifying the inherent characteristics of Seoul's Yongsan district and used them as a starting point for the new design of the site. Existing urban life and a new way of understanding the role of streets merge in our proposal.

Laura Dinkla, Katerina Salonikidi, Maria Stamati, Johnny Tascon Valencia, Qiu Ye
KOREA HAS FLOURISHED in the twentieth century. Its economy grew, so did its population. From 1963 until the mid-1980s, Seoul’s population rose by more than 10 million. However, this demographic growth did not see an expansion of the city’s borders. Therefore, the city has densified within its borders. At the same time, the elderly population has increased dramatically. Estimates say that by 2050 more than 50 percent will be 55 years or older. How should a city be designed in this ageing context?

In recent decades Seoul, as well as many other Asian cities, has seen an increase in urban density, which has meant the removal of hundreds of traditional neighbourhoods. Developers demand space for modern, luxury apartment complexes. These complexes are often serialised high-rise apartments that do not represent the identity of the city, but merely market requirements. These complexes are located throughout the city, generating high-density areas towards its borders, as well as increasing the use of automobiles and increasing commuting time.

The answer, while also addressing the above-mentioned issues, was to be found in the traditional neighbourhoods. In these places the people and the city evolved together. As a result, the urban shape, its vitality and its atmosphere spontaneously reflect people’s needs. This fact can be perceived in the accessibility to basic urban services. From the analysis of successful residential areas, it is clear that people have, within convenient walking distances, basic destinations such as grocery shops, hair salons, churches, community centres, public transport stations, parks, friends’ houses, and so on. According to the International Longevity Centre, this condition is one central characteristic of what they call Lifetime Neighbourhoods: “lifetime neighbourhoods are those which arrange their services, built environment and public spaces in such a way so as to facilitate access by those with reduced physical abilities” (ILC, 2007). One basic design premise for the present work is that if the city works for an elderly person, it works for everyone.

A high-density proposal in Yongsan does not need to result from the wiping out of the urban life that has evolved over the years in the form of neighbourhoods, replacing them with high-rise serialised apartments and office complexes. Den densification can be a process within neighbourhoods where urban life evolves over the years. By using densification instead of replacement, the urban life in neighbourhoods can be protected and enhanced. In order to face the social challenges of ageing in Seoul, we propose Yongsan to be a city of neighbourhoods; a city where everyone, whatever their age, can find a place to settle, to live, and to be part of an on-going local process. A process that did not begin with this project, but that this project will reinforce.

The proposal
We focused on existing elements in the site and the context, such as streets, green areas, and water. After researching neighbourhoods in different cities around the world (and in Yongsan as well), we identified a specific neighbourhood structure and a hierarchy between the streets. We came to the conclusion that the most important part of the neighbourhood is its streets, starting from the neighbourhood’s backbone that contains all kinds of local functions such as grocery, bakery, hairdresser, and so on. Some secondary streets provide functions at a larger scale and link the local backbones to the primary roads, which in turn connect the neighbourhood to the city.

Our most important strategy was to identify the existing neighbourhoods, with its street pattern, and densify the site by adding further neighbourhoods and using the above-mentioned street structure.

The site, Yongsan, is a strategic part of the city in which to implement this strategy. It used to be the southern border of Seoul in the 1940s, but with expansion south of the Han River, Yongsan rapidly fund itself located in the geographic centre of the metropolis. Nowadays it is a vibrant mixed-use area surrounded by residential neighbourhoods and Seoul’s three Central Business Districts (CBDs). A highway to the south of the site provides direct connection to the rest of the region by car, as well as to Incheon International Airport. Yongsan Station provides urban transportation by train, metro, and bus. This infrastructural linkage constitutes the reason why commercial attractions, such as the electronic market or the recently built I’Park shopping mall in Yongsan Station, are located here.

Proximity to the United States Army Base Yongsan Garrison is another characteristic of the area surrounding our site. These facts have had consequences for the structure of the neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods to the west of the site have turned into commercial dependencies of the electronic market since it arrived here in the 1990s; neighbourhoods to the east spontaneously mix local people and immigrants, particularly those related to the military base.

After researching these and other functions, we based our new program for the different districts on a mix of existing and proposed functions. In this way each district can have its own character. After all, our master plan is proposed as part of the evolution process of the structures and communities identified in Yongsan. This way, neighbour-

hoods become supporters of the daily life that underpins our proposal. Our design will make sure that this is still possible in the future when even more people live in the city and grow old. People will be able to live in Yongsan for a lifetime. It can become a Lifetime City.

Fig. 1: ‘Lifetime City’ master plan.
Fig. 2: Section. Bridging the site.
Fig. 3: The atmosphere of the city.
Fig. 4: Increasing density on the site.
Fig. 5: Revealing the water stream.
Fig. 6: New electronic market as seen from the park.
Fig. 7: New Yongsan Station.
The concept of the global city is taken to extremes in Hong Kong. In many ways the city epitomizes the definition of what one might consider a truly global city in the contemporary context. Despite the highly global nature of Hong Kong, there remains a strong sense of the local that provides contrast and friction to some of these globalizing forces.

Elsia Snyder

Redefining the Hong Kong typology

The increase in luxury accommodations in the central area of Hong Kong is subverted due to rapid redevelopment and alterations of the city landscape.

Fig. 1: The siheyuan or traditional Chinese courtyard house was chosen as a starting point for the formal composition of the entire building. The public/private relationships are arranged along a vertical axis to create a layered and diverse structure.

http://tinyurl.com/cno76un.

Fig. 2: Vertical public/private relationships. The public/private gradient encompasses various functions at various scales, ranging from large-scale public functions at the ground level, to smaller scale private functions for residents in the upper portion of the building.

Fig. 3: Section perspective through upper dwelling block.

GIVEN THE RAPID political and economic changes that have taken place in Hong Kong since the 1960s, the built environment has become a prime example of the conditions under which the city operates. In his book, Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance, Acibar Abbas describes one of these conditions as a “culture of disappearance”, which he asserts is a direct consequence of speed related to globalization. Disappearance and speed can also be applied literally with respect to changes and development on the urban scale, as in many cases the sense of permanence in Hong Kong is subverted due to rapid redevelopment and alterations of the city landscape.

Today, Hong Kong’s urban environment can be read as a palimpsest of the changes and influences it has been subject to through colonialism, capitalism, neoliberalism and the technological boom of the late twentieth century. Although many of the major transactions and exchanges appear to occur on a global scale, these networks and flows also have physical implications on the built environment of the city. After its introduction in 1988, the UDC had slated almost all of the older districts of Hong Kong Island for renewal, save the Central Business District. Many of the current renewal projects have moved across Victoria Harbour and are now concentrated on the Kowloon Peninsula, such as the Kowloon Tong redevelopment, which will see the displacement of 4829 individuals. Government land policy encourages the proliferation of high-end residential developments, while a growing disparity of wealth is forcing poorer residents out of the city and into the poorly connected peripheral New Towns. In this global space of flows, architecture is an object as much as it is conduit for both global and local networks.

Located around the border of Sheung Wan and Central, the study area chosen for the site is one with a considerable number of older buildings from the mid-twentieth century, more specifically, four-to-eight storey tong lau shophouses. High land prices in Hong Kong have sandwiched the study area between two distinct development zones, the Central Business District to the north and a high-end, high-rent residential area to the south, moving upwards towards the Peak. As a result, this older neighbourhood fabric has been increasingly under threat from redevelopment and many tong lau are being demolished in favour of 40-storey high-rise towers. Alternately, smaller scale gentrification projects are also becoming more common in the area. Although often well intentioned, these projects also increase the possibility of raising prices, forcing existing residents out of their own neighbourhood. The site for this design is the former Police Married Quarters at 35 Aberdeen Street, one of the oldest parts of the city. The building has been vacant since 2000 and has been used for various exhibitions since then. The most recent redevelopment scheme for the block had it transformed into an arts and culture hub, but it failed to address the pressing need for affordable housing.

There are several open spaces in the area, ranging from recreational parks to small sitting-out areas. However, there is still a shortage of open public space given the density of the area. Programmatically the area is quite varied, but clustered into a few distinct groups. SOHO and the area around the Mid-Levels Escalator is a large entertainment hub with many bars, restaurants, and boutiques. Further west there are more community-oriented functions such as churches and schools, while Hollywood Road is a hotspot for galleries and antique stores. At the westernmost part of the study area, Tai Ping Shan Street is home to many small-scale design firms, boutiques, and creative outlets. During my site visit I identified several user groups who frequented the area, namely the young creative class, business people, tourists, children, and elderly residents (especially women).

Using this experience of the site (and the research I undertook prior to visiting Hong Kong), I developed a few key points which drove the research and design process:

* What is the new Hong Kong typology and how can it fit the needs of present and future Hong Kong?
* What are the new Hong Kong typology and how can it fit the needs of present and future Hong Kong?
The Newsletter would cater to families, the elderly, the young creative class, housing would be the main component of the program and groups that I had observed while in Hong Kong. Affordable the design project, it was important to keep in mind the user give it stronger identity. When determining the program for node within a larger network of creative and green spaces that In terms of an urban strategy, the site was envisioned as a

• Existing housing typologies in Hong Kong do not address the complexities of the urban condition in the city and sever ties with the city’s vibrant street life.
• Increasing development of old building stock into luxury high-rises will displace existing residents and make the neighbourhood unaffordable.
• There is a large number of elderly, young, and disabled residents – combined with the aforementioned issues this points to an acute need for affordable housing in the city centre.
• What is the balance between gentrification and redevelopment?
• The site is located between areas of activity; how can it better bridge these areas?
• Lack of community amenities for all ages and/or groups (green space, community centres).
• Given Hong Kong’s climate and environmental concerns, sustainability should play a large role in the project (e.g., dealing with microclimates, mediating pollution, sustainable energy/materials).

In terms of an urban strategy, the site was envisioned as a node within a larger network of creative and green spaces that would act to strengthen the overall coherence of the area and give it stronger identity. When determining the program for the design project, it was important to keep in mind the user groups that I had observed while in Hong Kong. Affordable housing would be the main component of the program and would cater to families, the elderly, the young creative class, and students. Workshop space and studios would also serve the above-mentioned groups, while small-scale commercial enterprises would be an opportunity to get business people involved in the development. Much needed open space would be an amenity for all groups, as well as a flexible exhibition and community space for the arts.

One of the first steps in moving forward with the design work was to investigate some traditional Chinese dwelling typologies. The two most interesting were the siheyuan and the tu lou. The siheyuan, or courtyard house, has a public to private gradation that I thought could be successfully manipulated to suit a new urban context in Hong Kong. The courtyard house was taken as a starting point for further formal exploration and the public/private relationships were arranged along a vertical axis, instead of horizontally. By vertically separating the upper and lower massing, a space for semi-public vertical courtyards is created.

A series of 11 unit types were designed to fit with the user groups defined at the outset of the design process. Arranged in various configurations throughout the building, these units form the main component of the design. The units are compact but flexible enough to allow changes in family size/user needs. One of the more important units is the family duplex unit. Given that it is not uncommon in Chinese culture for parents and children to live together for longer periods of time than in Western culture, this unit is designed as a duplex, with a 41m² unit for an elderly couple, combined with a 140m² unit for a family of up to four. The configuration also provides a 22m² outdoor terrace which acts as an extension of the indoor living spaces.

Along with designing the courtyard spaces throughout the building, rooftops became an important part of the design as well. Rooftops can be used as terrace spaces for the residents, gardens for growing food and other plants, as well as infrastructure for water collection. The modular design and simple unit layouts makes the project affordable, while the series of vertical courtyards and open circulation spaces encourages passive cooling and reduces the required energy loads for the building. This reconceptualization of the courtyard house provides a new alternative to the isolated high-rise typologies prevalent in Hong Kong, and infuses public space, green space and flexible dwelling typologies into the design.

Elsa Snyder completed her Masters in Architecture at the Hong Kong studio in July of 2012, graduating with an honourable mention. She is currently working as an architect in the Netherlands (elsa.snyder@gmail.com; www.elsasnyder.com).

Notes
Updating Shanghai: life from the ground up

This project is located in Shanghai, China’s biggest city, and the fastest growing city in the world. The social structure of two common but opposed housing typologies has been researched: the old alleyway neighbourhoods of Shanghai, and the contemporary residential high-rise tower. This project aims to use the good characteristics of the alleyway neighbourhood and apply them to residential high-rise design, while also trying to maintain the alleyway neighbourhood’s social structure and its architecture.

Bart Kuijpers

From shikumen to high-rise

In 1842, after the First Opium War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Nanking (now Nanjing), Shanghai became one of the treaty ports where the British were allowed to trade with the Chinese from within ‘their’ territory. Shortly afterwards, the French and Americans signed similar treaties, also setting up their own concessions, as these territories were known. Shanghai consisted of three separate areas: the Old Chinese City, the French Concession, and the International Settlement. The Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) saw great numbers of Chinese flee to the safety of the foreign concessions. In order to house all these refugees, thousands of wooden barracks were built in rows. None of these have survived (they proved to be fire hazards and were extremely uncomfortable), but they served as a precedent for the shikumen, a type of alleyway house which combined elements of Chinese, British, and French culture; in many way just like Shanghai itself, with its distinct mingling of cultures.

Three major types of alleyway house can be distinguished: the Early Shikumen, the Later Shikumen, and the New Style Lilong (a shikumen is a particular type of alleyway house, while a lilong is a cluster of them – which may or may not include shikumen). From the 1870s to the late 1930s thousands of these houses were built, giving homes to local Shanghainese and migrants from the surrounding provinces. They also slowly densified as time passed.

Shanghai’s development was halted by the Second World War (which started in 1937 in China), and this was followed by nearly three decades of neglect by the Communist government in Beijing after 1949. Shanghai was stuck in a time warp with little or no urban renewal until the 1980s and Deng Xiaoping’s Open Door policy, since which time Shanghai has been in the grip of a construction boom of unprecedented proportions. In 2000 Shanghai had approximately 3,500 buildings of eight storeys or taller; this number grew to over 20,500 by 2010, with nearly 4,000 of them being 20 storeys or more. A large number of these have been built in the former foreign concessions, land that used to support alleyway neighbourhoods. As the alleyway houses fell into disrepair, high-rise towers became the preferred housing typology for both the Shanghainese as well as immigrants.

A typological analysis

In recent decades, millions of square metres of alleyway houses have been destroyed to make way for high-rise towers. In this process, not only the buildings but also the lifestyle and social structure that resided within these neighbourhoods have been destroyed. Research into the social structure of both the alleyway neighbourhoods and residential high-rise towers was carried out, using four aspects of environmental psychology: 1) Distance in Man, 2) Territoriality, 3) Privacy Zoning, and 4) Environmental Appraisal and Assessment (from Robert G. Gifford’s Environmental Psychology).
The alleyway neighbourhoods are known for their lively atmosphere and the life that takes places within them. A typical alleyway neighbourhood is enclosed by a line of shophouses that are directly connected to the street. At several points, this line is punctured, most notably on the north and south, where a large entrance gives access to the main alley: the 里弄 (rìlòng) or ‘lane’. This alley connects the entire neighbourhood and is a place where all residents can meet as well as where small-scale commercial activity can take place. From this semi-private main alley, there is access to semi-private side-alleys: the 里巷 (lǐxiàng) or ‘neighbourhood hall’. As its name suggests, this space is almost used as an extension of the house and all kinds of activities take place in it, from playing cards to washing vegetables and, most importantly, gossiping. The side alleys are connected to the courtyards of the houses. These are private, but because of the high number of residents living in one house (a house of seven rooms can contain up to seven families) it is not as private as the residents might wish. Combined with the fact that the amenities and building quality are completely outdated, it creates an uncomfortable indoor atmosphere, so it comes as no surprise that so much life takes place outside. As a conclusion to this analysis, three ‘social hotspots’ have been identified, these are the transition areas between each of the different zones: from public to semi-public, semi-public to semi-private, and semi-private to private.

When comparing this fluidity of space-use to the high-rise towers, it is clear that there is a big difference. High-rise compounds are guarded, effectively shielded from the rest of the city; only residents have access to the compound and in smaller compounds there is little space available for social interaction. In the towers themselves, the biggest problem is the elevator. A large number of residents are able to use the elevator, but due to its cramped dimensions users will almost always experience it as a violation of personal space. Of course, quality and comfort in these contemporary high-rise apartments are a lot better than in the alleyway houses, but it is the lack of social space that creates a more individualistic and isolated lifestyle.

The design: Jade Well Apartments, 五井公寓

For the design, one major goal was set: 1) maintain and renovate the remaining shikumen on the site and 2) maintain its social structure and keep the original residents on site. The chosen location, Nantang Xiaoqu, is located in Zhabei District, just north of Suzhou River, and consists of a number of 6, some of which have already been destroyed. The project consists of three areas: 1) Maintaining and renovating the three alleys on the west, which will provide housing for the new and fastest growing class in China: the upper class. 2) A high-rise tower, located on the eastern part of the site will be the new home of the original shikumen residents. 3) A public area, consisting of shops and a park and accessible to everybody, and will connect the above functions.

The main focus of this design has been the high-rise tower, which uses the concept of improving social structure by using the characteristics of the alleyway neighbourhoods. Most residential high-rises are south-facing slabs with the elevator on the northside, but in this design a hexagonal building surrounds the centrally located elevator shafts, creating a large light well. The elevator ‘lobby’ is completely open and directly connected to the public areas. The slightly raised slabs are divided horizontally in three, allowing the elevators to be divided in three as well, limiting the number of people one can encounter, and making the elevator a slightly less awkward experience.

The elevators are connected to the residential slabs via a series of sky-bridges that function as a transition space, but which are large enough to be used as a social space as well. The sky-bridges also connect to one another, both visually and physically, creating three vertical alleys. The sky-bridges give access to a gallery, which in turn connects to a small courtyard: small semi-private-to-private outdoor spaces. Each apartment has its own or a shared courtyard.

Residents are able to personalize these spaces, within certain limits. The apartments are also organized from private to public with the living rooms facing towards the central ‘light well’. The spaces enclosed by the hexagonal building where all the social spaces are located. This space is very open and is organically shaped. The bedrooms, which are located on the edge of the building, are the most private spaces, being farthest away from the central social spaces. Being the most private and facing outward to the most public city, the outside of the building is very straight and angular. As the intended residents for this tower are the former alleyway-house residents, mostly from lower socio-economic groups, the apartments are modest in size, the majority being between 40 to 60 square metres. In total the tower is 27 storeys, with 9 storeys per ‘vertical alley’.

Where two alleys meet, a larger social space is constructed, with a large deck allowing for small commercial and social activities. The three transitional areas identified in the social structure of the alleyway neighbourhood can also be located within this design: namely the open elevator lobby on the ground floor, the sky-bridges, and the courtyards.

In conclusion

One of the most interesting aspects of China is that the past and future are happening at the same time right next to each other. In this design, an alternative reality is created, bringing the futuristic lifestyle of the new upper classes to the colonial era alleyway house, while bringing the old-fashioned lifestyle of the alley to a contemporary high-rise tower. It is impossible to say whether the spaces designed will be used as intended, but the most important aspect is the provision of these spaces, which are lacking in regular high-rise towers. And we must not forget the original residents, most of whom are real Shanghai residents. Now they can stay in their own neighbourhood, with their friends and acquaintances, instead of being relocated far outside the city centre.

Bart Kuijpers recently completed a Masters in Architecture in the Explore Lab at TU Delft, graduating cum laude, and is currently working as an architect in Shanghai (bartkuijpers.com).
Enclosure – with the wall as its most prominent architectural element – represented for centuries a key human experience of space in Chinese cities, but is today regarded as a relic from the past. Yet enclosing walls provide a structure for one’s position in space, time and society and a tangible spatial reference for everyday life. Walls were therefore crucial elements in the development of cities. This worked on every scale, from country and city, to house and bedroom. The Wall, my masters’ graduation project, presents a contemporary interpretation of this in an urban-architectural design, for the city of Chengdu in Western China.

China progressively developed its perception of space for centuries by a process of accumulated evolution rather than outright revolution. Before the recent modernization, Chinese cities were conceived as a whole, and were usually based on a plan that was consistently applied to the existing topography. It was a collective work of art. A few principles were systematically applied following ancient precedents (see the perceptual city-forming principles listed below). These shaped the perception of space for centuries, but are coming under increasing influence from Western urban and architectural models.

Alternative urban-architectural design in Chengdu

What if we revive these principles as a basis for city form? In this project the city of Chengdu is used as a case study. This city is at the very heart of China’s dramatic transformation. It is also a city under pressure from the enormous number of new immigrants from rural areas. Like many Chinese cities, recent growth has been explosive, and a lot of valuable arable land has been lost. If the population growth of the city continues in the same space-consuming manner as during the last decade, it will need to double its size in the next twenty years, resulting in urban sprawl, traffic congestion and a further increase in air pollution. Chengdu will become more congested and will decrease in livability and efficiency. The current urban model is no longer sustainable. The city has reached a crossroads.

New paddy-township

A new township is being designed as part of the Wall and will house 60,000 inhabitants. The landscape on this particular site is terraced to accommodate agricultural lots that produce rice, wheat, vegetables, tea, medicinal herbs, tobacco, silk, beef, and pork. The valley, the hills with bamboo thickets on them, and the ponds that store water, will be incorporated if possible. The existing roads will be upgraded to become primary roads for the township. New secondary lanes are added in an east-west direction, bringing hierarchy to the network. These lanes follow the edges of the terraced rice paddies. These lanes, open to the south, will take full advantage of the (scarce) sunshine in winter and of the prevailing winds in summer. Small public spaces are organized in a linear manner along the lanes. What results is a hierarchical system leading from the public to the very private. The hierarchy is emphasized by varying the width of the lanes.

This framework defines zones for building. Within these zones, walls are gradually erected on plot lines, to further enclose urban spaces. In this way building lots are created for a variety of dwelling typologies. Certain plots are reserved for semi-public spaces and for access. Walls on these plots will be perforated to allow penetration into the block. Entrances of the individual units are from these communal spaces. The subtle distribution of local materials, plants, and streamlining water contributes to the quality and sensorial experience of the urban spaces. The township is canopied under trees rising out of small open areas.

The township is formed by the existing characteristics of the location, and holds an interpretation of fundamental perceptual principles of Chinese culture. It offers a series of enclosed worlds with humanly scaled courtyards, gardens, and architectural models.

Perceptual city-forming principles

Based on Chinese literature, five crucial city-forming principles are formulated: Linearity, Hierarchy, Unity, Human Scale and Enclosure. In China’s old cities, space is organized in a linear and hierarchical manner with small and scattered nodes along the street, while in the West (mainly Europe) big central scattered nodes along the street, while in the West (mainly Europe) big central.

Perceptual principles of Chinese culture. It offers a series of enclosed worlds, the essence of the Chinese perception of space. Space is fundamentally perceived as a series of enclosed worlds, and the smaller units repeat the forms of the larger one, on a reduced scale (fig. 5).

1. Perceptual city-forming principles

2. Hierarchy.

3. Unity.

4. Human scale.

5. Enclosure.

6. New paddy-township

Fig. 1: Linearity. Left: Chinese linear public space. Right: Western central square. (after Mao 1990)

Fig. 2: Hierarchy. Left: Chinese hierarchical organization. Right: Western non-orthogonal urban tissue. (after Mao 1990)

Fig. 3: Unity. Left: Walls defined the street in China. Right: Open face to the street in the West. (after Mao 1990)

Fig. 4: Human scale. Top: Evenly distributed, small-scale open spaces in China. Below: Large open spaces, characteristic of block in West. (after Mao 1990)
Everyday human experience

Is falling back on historical city-forming principles a useful step in the rapid modernization of urban China? In China the re-creation of traditional districts is becoming widespread, but mostly with local identity becoming an ornament displayed to attract tourists rather than to shelter communities. Space is seen as an autonomous phenomenon that does no more than form a static ‘image’ that looks historical. This often leads to closed, sometimes authoritarian, and brittle places. This project did not consider the historical image as being useful, but rather the older perceptual principles. As a Western designer it is almost impossible to fully understand the evolution of Chinese cities and to fix its value for today’s rapidly changing society, but somehow current urbanization tends to neglect these principles. Public space is not organized in a linear way, and tends to neglect existing topography with a view to designing large over-dimensionalized spaces. The relation towards the street is also often problematic. The buildings themselves are more and more conceived of as individual objects, instead of being part of an urban context. By once again incorporating these principles into city-making, this project attempts to contribute to the meaningful everyday human experiences of space in Chinese cities.

Jasper Nijveldt studied Architecture at TU Delft, graduating cum laude as an urban designer. Last year he won the second prize in the Vertical Cities Asia competition (mail@jaspernijveldt.com; www.jaspernijveldt.com).

Notes
Sublime and heterotopic landscapes

The current state of the Asian urban environment is characterized by a high level of capitalist policies. Due to land-scarcity and economic benefit, a mass migration surge from the countryside to the coast is taking place in most Asian countries. To handle the influx of these people, many cities resort to a ‘maximum profit per footprint’ policy. Here the smallest possible piece of land is extruded as high as possible into the air, to be divided into tiny fragments, often not exceeding 20m². The resulting urban situation is that of walking through a canyon-like abyss, shaped by the concrete forest of anonymous towers.

Jonathan van der Stel

The Sublime is an overwhelming experience, both beautiful and terrifying; a Heterotopia is the place of the Other, but serves as a reflection of the ‘everyday’ world.

MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, these towers have no discernible architectural features and/or quality. They are placed haphazardly onto the topography, often without regard for the neighbourhood or the surroundings. The result is that developments in Asian cities tend to resemble one another. The city becomes a highly disconnected/disjointed space between the public domain and the private sphere. This project tries first of all to define these aspects in the city of Hong Kong; secondly, it maximizes them in order to (paradoxically) balance them out.

The program of the project is that of a university. In order to get a grip on these characteristics they had to be defined in an abstract sense. This became 1) the Sublime, as expounded by Immanuel Kant in response to Edmund Burke’s Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful and 2) the Heterotopia, a concept developed by French poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault in an article entitled ‘Des Espace Autres’ (published in France in Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité in 1984, but originally introduced by him during a lecture he gave in 1967).

The Sublime can best be described as an overwhelming experience, which is both beautiful and terrifying at the same time. A well-known example would be Caspar David Friedrich’s painting Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (1818).

Here we see a well-dressed gentleman, overlooking a mist-filled mountain valley; how he got there we don’t know. He is standing on the peak of a rough mountain terrain, absorbing the beauty (or maybe getting ready to jump).

A Heterotopia is the place of the Other, a secluded place that can exist by itself and also serve as a reflection of the ‘everyday’ world, for example, a library, a cemetery, a university, or a prison. These concepts define the experience when first visiting the megalopolis of Hong Kong. The sheer largeness of it all has a kind of beauty, while also the terrifying sense of being utterly insignificant. On the other hand, most recently developed Asian cities have this aspect, this largeness, thus leaving open the question of ‘background’. If it is so big, what are we meant to read it against?

To read the city against a neutral background was the initial concept of this design project, much like the space of a monastery which is conceived as defining the interior space...
of the courtyard against the ‘wild’ nature outside the monastery walls. The building had to become a defining space in the city, giving condition to the inside and the outside. Even though, in a strict sense, there is no such thing. By making the building a closed square, the condition arises out of itself. Taken from a map of the city, coordinate lines are brought into reality. These lines, which help one orientate and navigate the spaces on the map, form the first plan for the square. 560 metres square, with a depth of 18 metres and rising 100 metres into the air, the university is superimposed onto the existing fabric of the city. The structure is build up in such a way that it, despite its abstract shape, leaves all the buildings intact. Where needed, it either touches or jumps over existing buildings thus forming a second landscape in the city.

One can enter the university through a multitude of entry points. Common functions, which are shared by different faculties and the city, are located at the square’s four corners. These include, for example, the restaurant, sporting facilities, large auditoria, etc. These main entry points are supplemented by three additional entry points located between them. The connection with the city can happen through a seamless ascension out of the urban fabric. Making use of the existing elevated pedestrian walkways, one can move seamlessly up to the different faculties are given shape according to different areas in the city. The morphology is abstracted and retracted in the university as a synecdoche of the city itself. While in the centre of the square the image will be one of a bright glittering ocean-like canvas behind which sit the buildings that are directly visible. This is due to the system of freely penetrable aluminium paneling that is used. These can move in the wind and play out a game of waves, giving a surreal spectacle of illusionary endlessness. The interior structure will only be vaguely readable, thus allowing for a growing and shrinking of the forces of nature, while the inside spaces are contained, acclimatized, and protected. Lighting conditions will also reflect this relationship, with maximum contrast between the naturally lit, vertical street conditions and the inside spaces, which are either completely dark (i.e., when unused) or brightly lit by artificial lighting. The visitors can lose themselves here, feeling a desperate need for grounding, combined with a twinge of fear: the fear of being lost. This aspect is reflected in the artificially constructed multiple perspectives used in the section drawing of part of the square (fig. 2). Every space has its own vanishing point, thus exists within itself, while all the while relating to the rest of the drawing. Combine this with the shifts in bridges, sudden drops and chasms, and the occasional forceful gust of wind and the new Sublime landscape is created as a city within the city.

Recognizing the fact that existing buildings will abut this new structure, especially the high-rise towers, will provide a new dimension to the city. Inside the university, the different faculties are given shape according to different areas in the city. The morphology is abstracted and retracted in the university as a synecdoche of the city itself. While in the centre of the square the image will be one of a bright glittering ocean-like canvas behind which sit the buildings that are directly visible. This is due to the system of freely penetrable aluminium paneling that is used. These can move in the wind and play out a game of waves, giving a surreal spectacle of illusionary endlessness. The interior structure will only be vaguely readable, thus allowing for a growing and shrinking of the forces of nature, while the inside spaces are contained, acclimatized, and protected. Lighting conditions will also reflect this relationship, with maximum contrast between the naturally lit, vertical street conditions and the inside spaces, which are either completely dark (i.e., when unused) or brightly lit by artificial lighting. The visitors can lose themselves here, feeling a desperate need for grounding, combined with a twinge of fear: the fear of being lost. This aspect is reflected in the artificially constructed multiple perspectives used in the section drawing of part of the square (fig. 2). Every space has its own vanishing point, thus exists within itself, while all the while relating to the rest of the drawing. Combine this with the shifts in bridges, sudden drops and chasms, and the occasional forceful gust of wind and the new Sublime landscape is created as a city within the city.

Although the project has a high level of abstraction, the premise is nonetheless brought to a credible level.

The structure is modular, as is its contents and programme, thus allowing for a growing and shrinking of the university as required. A system of construction has been designed in order to deal with the narrow spaces of Hong Kong’s streetscape.

The current situation in China is that migrants want the next generation to do better than they have; sending them to a good university is one very practical option for betterment, and it creates a unique opportunity for Hong Kong, which will lose its Special Administrative Region status within China in 2047. Remodelling itself into a ‘knowledge city’ will give it enough distinction in the Pearl River Delta region. This square of university program will function as an attractor and intensifier of city program, leaving a possible future scenario where banks and offices inside the square are taken over by university program and student dormitories.
With the rise of Neoliberal policies, cities, especially global cities, are experiencing large-scale urban regeneration. During this process, specific social groups are absent from the decision-making processes. There is exclusion of people and territories that, from the perspective of the dominant interests of global capitalism, shift to a position of social irrelevance. Is there an alternative urban solution for the development of these ‘black holes’? Kowloon City, one of the urban ‘black holes’, will be a case study in the Hong Kong context.

Ting Wen

Governance beyond the state

Globalization of market forces, deregulation of financial institutions, and the privatization of public services are all signs of the rise of Neoliberal policies, and are also most obvious in global cities. Along with globalization and the liberalization process there is the emergence of a constellation of managerial practices for governance within a generic Neoliberal frame. Its essence is the Foucauldian notion of governmentality: power working as network. Planners and local authorities adopt a more proactive and entrepreneurial approach aimed at identifying market opportunities and assisting private investors to take advantage of them. In this way, more social actors enter the governmentality, including private agents, designers, architects, planners, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups, corporations, and so on. This new urban governance is defined by Erik Swyngedouw as ‘Governance beyond the State’.

Advances in telematics changed capital manipulation and the world market. Decision making does not necessarily have to be in the exchange location but can be situated in better places, with more favourable circumstances. Cities are trying to find their competitive positions in the context of rapidly changing global conditions. Political transformations are initiated in an attempt to align local situations with the requirements of the international economic system. In other words, urban policy shifts away from social distribution (like welfare considerations and direct service provision) towards new economic policies (like more market-oriented approaches aimed at pursuing economic promotion and competitive restructuring). Under this policy a series of large-scale urban development projects are implemented by a combination of public and private-sector interests.

Urban regeneration is presented as an opportunity to change economic hierarchies and reposition the city on the map of the global landscape. The city’s elite institutions indulge themselves in drawing a splendid image of the ‘good business climate’ for the outsider, investor, developer, businessman, or the wealthy tourist, and sells the image of being a cultural centre and tourist destination. While the reorientation in attitudes to urban governance that has taken place in advanced capitalist countries, the ‘managerial’ approach so typical of the 1960s, has steadily given way to ‘entrepreneurialism’.

‘Pluralistic governance’ or ‘democratic deficit’: the Hong Kong story

Neoliberal policy is celebrated for its co-ordinated action of different actors, the building of network governance, and more efficient forms of urban management. Is it really so perfect? Hong Kong, being synonymous with Neoliberalism, has experienced economic take-off due to Neoliberalism. The large-scale construction of physical infrastructure and hyper-concentrated facilities has enabled Hong Kong to offer its intermediaries greater capacity to compete. The city has become a paradise for investors. In 1970, the first supermarket opened and then the first department store. Old blocks were demolished, and massive urban interventions sprang up like mushrooms. However, behind the vivid, booming images of that highly centralized CBD core lies a large population being suburbanized in comparatively low-standard accommodation and with income inequality. The so-called shift from centralist, formalized, bureaucratized, hierarchical, top-down planning to decentralized, informal, flexible, bottom-up and networked planning approaches are coming hand-in-hand with increasing urban asymmetry.

In traditional Hong Kong streets, commercial life spills out from the shophouse, with merchandise on the sidewalk. Various street markets and hawkers stalls make the street life more dynamic. Sellers often join the lively commercial atmosphere. Buyers and sellers often know each other and may develop longstanding trading relationships. People are embedded in a larger network of social relationships, including family and friends, which engenders loyalty as well as obligations. By comparison, in the new ‘business climate’, market rules tend to evolve slowly away from the egalitarian and into one form dominated by official controls outside, and more privileged controls inside. Taxes, import regulations, the imposition of pricing structure and the pressure on small businesses becomes too great. Only big company or brand names have the ability to locate in certain places.

In this situation, specific social groups, like those with low-income, racial minorities, immigrants, and certain types of workers, are absent from the city centre or other ‘developed’ areas. There is exclusion of people and territories which, from the perspective of the dominant interests of global capitalism, shift to a position of social irrelevance. It leads to the constitution of what Manuel Castells calls, the ‘black holes of informational capitalism’. The beautiful pictures described by the social elites who indulge in the Neoliberal framework are based on an increasing inequality in the inhabited environment.
Kowloon City redevelopment

Challenges for Kowloon City redevelopment
In order to change the monocentric urban structure and regenerate the ‘black holes’, the Hong Kong Metropolitan Selected Strategy proposed in 1991 a redevelopment framework for the Kai Tak Airport that envisaged a mix of public and private housing, new commercial developments, and high-tech industrial zones. Later on, in the Hong Kong 2011 Policy Report it was pointed out that “the development of the Kai Tak area, the South East Kowloon has the potential to become the second “Central” in Hong Kong.” Kowloon City, located besides the former Kai Tak Airport, is part of the new CBD framework.

Kowloon City, or Lung Shing in Cantonese, is a sub-district and is named after Kowloon Walled City. A large part of the population here are Asian immigrants who came through the Airport. Due to cheap living they managed to settle down. The dominant typology in the area is the shophouse, most with affordable prices. Residents therefore get the chance to start small business (like restaurants). As more and more exotic restaurants appeared, Kowloon City achieved a reputation for its special Food Street.

As time went by, and most of the surrounding areas were regenerated into modern blocks, Kowloon City still retained its old city fabric and lifestyle. The cheaper living costs also attracted more inhabitants, socially excluded from the city centre. On one hand the community successfully keeps the lively social and commercial life traditional to Hong Kong; on the other, outdated infrastructure becomes a big barrier to future prosperity. Statistics indicate that the median monthly domestic household income of the community is HK$13,600, which is quite low compared to the average standard of the district, which is HK$20,000. The employment rate, especially for women, is also 6 percent lower than the average. Even among the working population, 20 percent engage in home business and around 43 percent work in the relatively low-income labour industries like manufacturing, construction, wholesale, and transport. More than a quarter of the population is facing difficulty in finding better jobs in more developed districts. They have no choice but to remain trapped in place. Social exclusion, inequality in facilities, and poverty are common problems for residents in Kowloon City, making it one of the biggest of the urban ‘black holes’.

South East Kowloon project seems like an opportunity for the area to get rid of this regrettable status quo. The splendid regeneration plans will help locals get better connected to the infrastructure network and create more employment. However, as mentioned above, the dearth of decision making for specific social groups, namely the majority of the local population, will also bring a risk of unequal gentrification. How to balance the demand of development and prevent its valuable identity from being swallowed up by the big Neoliberal urban interventions will be the biggest challenge for the Kowloon City redevelopment.

Alternative urban strategies
Responding to the challenges of the Kowloon City redevelopment, the most important consideration of the design is to include local inhabitants in future scenarios and pre-empt their exclusion. The regeneration strategies should be based on the advantages of existing intimate social relations, but without fundamentally changing the social structure. On these principles, the main urban strategies are as follows:

1) Compress the scale of the urban intervention, only launching it in the most promoting place. 2) Selectively demolish existing buildings. 3) When building new ones, avoid big vertical and volumetric extensions as well as re-enforcing the benefits of the present building typology. 4) Keep the street spaces as lively social places, extending them by adding more possibility and flexibility.

The final design maintains the dynamic street life of the community and expands it vertically. There will be the insertion of open green space at different levels. The locals will also have more opportunities for starting their own businesses, but also the developers will get better conditions for building new establishments. In this scenario the inhabitants, developers, investors, and tourists can all benefit from the upgraded urban environment.

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Unreliable Truths
Transcultural Homeworlds in Indian Women’s Fiction of the Diaspora
Sissy Helff

With its focus on transcultural homes, Unreliable Truths gives textual discussions of diaspora from an exhibited postcolonial point of view and coincides with an investigation of transcultural available narratives in the representation of a g/local South Asian diaspora.

Sissy Helff is currently guest professor for English literature and visual culture at the University of Darmstadt. Her most recent publications include several co-edited volumes: "Aktuelle Positionen zum europäisch-afrikanischen Diskurs; Material – Gestaltung – Kritik; Material – Gestaltung – Kritik" (Darmstadt, 2012). Her most recent publications include several co-edited volumes: "Aktuelle Positionen zum europäisch-afrikanischen Diskurs; Material – Gestaltung – Kritik; Material – Gestaltung – Kritik" (Darmstadt, 2012).

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As the organisers of an anthropology conference on Medical Pluralism held in Rome in 2011 noted, medical pluralism – generally understood as the co-existence of diverse medical traditions in a single setting – is something of an ‘old fashioned’ topic in the social sciences. Although the term itself came into vogue only in the 1970s its emergence as a focus of research dates back to the 1950s, when anthropologists started to observe the expansion of ‘Western’ medicine or ‘biomedicine’ into developing country contexts and examine its effects on indigenous understandings and practices regarding illness.

Helen Lambert

Reviewed publication:


At that time there was a prevailing assumption in public health circles that the putatively inherent superiority of biomedicine would automatically lead to major health improvements and the decline of other medical traditions. In the following decades many studies instead documented the continuing preferment of other approaches to managing illness and highlighted the nature found within traditions such as Ayurveda and Siddha that are often portrayed as single unified systems, with distinctive regional variations (Abraham on ‘Kerala Ayurveda’), the differences between institutionalised Siddha as taught in Government colleges versus that informally transmitted through families or apprenticeship (Sébastia), and distinctions in the ways biomedical diagnostic tests and patient understandings are negotiated by practitioners who seek to practise ‘authentic’ Ayurveda as compared to those practising a more syncretic variant (Bode).

While all the chapters in the volume demonstrate an impressive depth of scholarship relating to their chosen subject, some receive quite well-known arguments already familiar from existing literature, such as epistemological differences between understandings of disease etiology and approaches to diagnosis in Indian medicine in contrast to Western biomedicine, or contiguities between indigenous therapeutic traditions and the ways biomedical diagnostic techniques and patient understandings are negotiated by practitioners who seek to practise ‘authentic’ Ayurveda as compared to those practising a more syncretic variant (Bode).

As a whole this volume offers a range of richly detailed case studies of some of the main medical Traditions and practices that go to make up the diversity of ways in which health-related problems are treated in India. Despite some inevitable shortcomings it contributes both to our comparative understanding of the nature of Indian medical pluralism as a contemporary phenomenon, and sheds light on the profound potential positive and negative implications of state intervention in shaping this phenomenon. Incorporating historical, sociological and anthropological perspectives, it will be a valuable resource for students, scholars and policy makers alike.

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The discourse on globalization (Thai: lokaphiwat/lokanuwat, Vietnamese: toàn cầu hóa), weak vs. strong states, the nature of socialism, the nature of capitalism or other integration into a neo-liberal economic framework and ‘free market capitalism’, still prevails in many discussions about Southeast and East Asian economies. In particular, discussions about socialist societies (China, Vietnam, and Laos) are too-often labeled 'socialist' whereby economic integration into the global market and capitalist economy are thought to be the solution to the woes of drastically unequal populations. Statistically more rare are calls for class-based analysis, representations of oral histories, and the concerns of those who are most likely to be affected (for the worse) by the outgrowth of some of the world's most rapidly developing markets. Nevertheless, a rich literature in the field of Southeast Asian studies, and the potential for a new area of 'Zomian studies' – or studies of a relatively culturally diverse massif – have combined to form a critique of common perceptions imbedded in English language press and certain academic discourse of, as Glassman states, “globalization studies” (5,41).1

William Noseworthy

The vantage point which one chooses for the centrality of analysis is crucial as Walker has argued that previous territorial ambiguity arose “as a result of spatial competition” (Walker, 34). Therefore, the study of the South China Sea as a geographical unit is generally accepted in all English discourse, and is the recognized name of the region by virtually all Southeast Asian states. However, to take the perspective of the Vietnamese-language sphere, the study of this region would dramatically shift. The Vietnamese name is the Biển Đông or Eastern Sea. Simply by shifting linguistic spheres, the focus of the study shifts away from the centrality of China. Similarly, studies of Zomi and the Cams are inherently problematic in the centralities that they presume, although they are not necessarily irredentist. For example, while studies of Zoma often propose to be studies of the highlands in a way that is completely admirable (and necessary), the very name Zomi,

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The Review

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language, despite recognized success in the organization of academic conferences, the achievements by students, and a recognized need for the preservation of minority identity. They are Burmese migrants in Thailand who have moved to work as cleaners or to work in rubber plantations. They are the Naxi, a highland minority in China who are "reduced to displaying traditional costumes and performing Dongba music to dance for tourists" (122). They are Thai garlic growers, and individuals like Dr. Yu, who sought to educate about the social impact of development in Zonia and the GMS, and the founders of the Southeast Asia Rivers Network (SEARIN). All of whom have been silenced at one point or another because of their attempts to educate others about the impact of unequal development in Southeast and East Asia.

Conclusion

Although they do not take the need for class-based analysis at the center of their discourse, Michaud and Forsyth present work that substantially adds to the Glassman perspective. Furthermore, their greater attention to the dynamics of Zonia more greatly rounds out Glassman's geographical understandings of the GMS as well, as, although Glassman is critical of Thai-centered concepts, research restrictions have made Glassman's work a relatively Thailand centered narrative. Meanwhile, Michaud and Forsyth provide narratives that engage directly with the Thai, Tày, Duyên (Chinese: Quizi), the Tarieng, the Khmu, the Lamet, the Hani, the Tai speaking peoples of Chô Đôn (Chi Bôn Province) and Bôn Lươn (Than Uyên District, Lai Châu Province), the lower classes of Shên, Dák, and Sêkôngnâma (Chinese: Xishuangbanna). Thus, Michaud and Forsyth fill in the geographical regions of the GMS that Glassman's analysis is not particularly strong in drawing examples from, such as territories controlled by the Vietnamese government and also on the borderslands of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Nevertheless, even in these examples there appears to be a greater drawing from the Thai-Kadai language family than others. In the end, it is clear that only through a combination of these works and others will individuals be able to come to a decisive answer of what future development will look for the analysis of political ecology as a field remains an open, provocative, and relevant horizon.

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References


Notes

1 All page numbers refer to Glassman, 2010 – unless otherwise specified.
Art is a foreign country, discovers Winter one cold December day in Amsterdam. The place of discovery, though, is of no significance; it could very well have been in Manchester, or Bandung. The work of art she saw made her pause, ponder and revisit it. And because the language of art is not our mother-tongue, we have to engage with artworks to learn to passionately appreciate works of art – a part of this learning process is that we slowly learn to differentiate and become able to offer reasons beyond merely liking this, but not that, particular work of art.

Roy Voragen

Contemporary art from Indonesia is hot: exhibitions around the world attest to that. This hides the fact, though, that the art’s infrastructure at home is in a dire state; for example, no university has a department of art history, which is as unfortunate as the fact that Indonesia does not – yet – have a public art museum. Of course, Indonesia has quite a few private art museums, but this is more than a building with a collection, it should also facilitate research and publications. Still, when I visit exhibitions, artist studios, artist-initiative spaces and galleries I see plenty that doesn’t warrant cynicism, as is the general mood when the arts infrastructure is the topic of conversation.

A home for criticality

Recently, I took a train from Bandung to Yogyakarta – a city famous for its kraton, where Sultan Hamengkubuwono X reigns (he is also the governor of the Yogyakarta province), and the nearby Borobudur and Prambanan temples – at the invitation of Ellert Haitjema, an artist visiting from the Netherlands. He picked me up from the station and off we went by motorcycle, passing the hectic touristic Marlioboro Street and the kraton. Left and right I saw graffiti I hadn’t seen on my last visit. Ellert took me to Rumah Seni Cemeti, Cemeti Art House, where he had just finished his three-month artist-in-residency. We sat down, talked about his work, sipping sweet coffee and smoking incessantly until dusk.

Cemeti’s domicile might have been modest, but from the onset it was a place packed with ambition. FX Harsono, Agung Kurniawan, Heri Dono, Agus Sowage, Sanja Saj尼亚, Eko Nugroho, Tintin Wulia and Jimmy Kusidjananto, among many others, all exhibited at Cemeti and are currently all globe-trotting today’s art world. Notably, many of the works shown at Cemeti are critical – a critically considered unbecoming by many. Tintin Saj尼亚 claims that his art is merely candy-to-be-sold as commodities on the crazy art market.

Nindityo Adipurnomo and Mella Jaarsma lament the apolitical attitude of many in the arts; recently they wrote: “The arts are in crisis, and we hope for a reaction – any initiative that could shake things up. But, to be honest, those in the art community who are voicing concerns are mostly 35 years and older. Meanwhile, the younger generation moves around in a comfort zone or in confusion, not wanting to be patronized by the previous generation and at the same time not having enemies to rebel against.” Not all art needs to be political. Not all artists need an enemy. However, what’s alarming is that many youngsters, not only young artists and curators, have little awareness of politics or its history (what retired generals and many others, all exhibited at Cemeti and are currently all globe-trotting today’s art world. Notably, many of the works shown at Cemeti are critical – a critically considered unbecoming by many. Tintin Sajニア claims that his art is merely candy-to-be-sold as commodities on the crazy art market.

Residency program

Artist R.E. Hartanto, who exhibited with three Bandung-based artists at Cemeti in 2006, was amazed with the ease and tranquility with which their exhibition was set up. This was the result of years of experience and discipline. During the nineties, Cemeti only occasionally received artists-in-residence, but by 2006 it had developed a structured residency program in the form of ‘Landing Soon’ (sponsored by the Dutch embassy in Jakarta and Heden in The Hague), which invited artists from Indonesia and the Netherlands to Yogyakarta. In 2010, this residency program was continued as ‘HotWave’ to include artists from Australia (the latter are sponsored by Asialink) and artists from Asia (who have to bring their own funding).

Cemeti’s residency program promotes exchange, research, experimentation and collaboration. It is not just for artists; Cemeti has opened its doors for curators, writers and managers to undertake a residency as well. The program can further one’s career – because curators from abroad have found their way to Cemeti – although this is rarely the main motivation to apply to the program. For example, Bandung-based video art collective Tromarama had already exhibited in a dozen countries by the time they participated in the HotWave4 residency in 2012. For Indonesian artists, Tintin Wulia says, a residency is an excellent way to connect to a local audience. And as Ellert Haitjema mentioned, a residency in a new environment sharpens one’s senses. He particularly enjoyed using objects of which he didn’t understand the use – to put it crudely: a table isn’t recognized
Cemeti Art House and 25 years of contemporary art

As a table – and with their utility out of the picture the image imagining could run wild. Upon his return to Amsterdam, he was able to revisit his earlier works and approach them anew.

Tromarama saw the interaction with foreign artists as an interesting aspect to the residency, despite how visual and verbal miscommunications can occur because of different cultural backgrounds and reference points. Another problem might be – at least for Cemeti – the unpredictability of whether the artists will collaborate fruitfully or will actually create a composition. In the 1990s quite a few artist-initiatives have been set up, to show their work: it offers an alternative for art criticism.

Cemeti recognizes and takes its responsibilities. Cemeti is one institution in its own right, which Mella Jaarsma and all those people responsible for its flourishing. Cemeti has altogether; it now refers to an art space, its programming runs into exhibitions, Cemeti will live on.

What’s in a name?

After 25 years, Cemeti has a solid name; so much so that I never heard a single person ever say ‘Cemeti’. It has become an institution in its own right, which Mella Jaarsma is reluctant to admit; she writes: ‘Cemeti is often no longer seen as the ‘alternative’, but as an established art institution […] What are we alternative to, if there is no establishment except commercial galleries?’ Sure, Cemeti cannot be an alternative to non-existent public art museums. And for a long time, commercial galleries were not willing to show the works Cemeti was showing; but that is no longer the case, which has naturally hurt Cemeti’s level of income.

Cemeti isn’t a commercial gallery; sales are made to facilitate program-making, not to make a profit. Jaarsma and Adipurnomo don’t receive salaries; when Cemeti was 70% of their time there. Now that Cemeti focuses purely on making programmes, not on making art, Jaarsma and Adipurnomo don’t receive salaries; when Cemeti was still putting on monthly exhibitions they spent approximately 70% of their time there. Now that Cemeti focuses purely on program-making, it is around 50%.

Notes


2. Throughout this essay I deliberately don’t use ‘Indonesian art’, so as to avoid essentializing, anthropologizing and exoticizing art that is made here.


6. www.mellajaarsma.com; from 1-9-86 till 31-8-87, Nindityo Adipurnomo was a resident at the Rijksakademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam.

7. http://ivaa-online.org; Farah Wardani is the director of IVAA, she did an internship at Cemeti Art House.


10. The exhibition, Masu Lalo Mesa Lopez, showed work from R.E. Hartanto (who spent two years at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, where he was also my neighbor), Prilla Tania (recently completed a residency in Medan, Sunaryo (founded Selasar Sunaryo Art Space in 1998, www.selasarsunaryo.com) and Tisna Sanjaya. Email 29-11-13.

11. Tin Tin Wulia studied in the US and Australia; her work often deals with the contingency of geopolitical borders. Email 7-2-13.


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17. Djien, O.H. 2003. ‘Is painting marginalized in the era of contemporary art?’ 15 years Cemeti Art House, Exploring Vacuum, p.193. OHM Museum, his private museum, has come under scrutiny after some claim that some paintings (previously) owned by OHM are forgeries.


19. This forum is headed by curator Alia Swastika, who worked at Cemeti (2004-2008). She curated the Yogyakarta Biennale in 2011; the foundation supporting this biennale was co-founded by Cemeti.
As a student at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, a visit to Leiden during a long holiday weekend in the Netherlands was enough to convince my wife and myself that it would be a desirable place to live. It was also within easy reach of the libraries in the U.K., France, and Germany – and so in 1995 when I was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad fellowship I chose the International Institute for Asian Studies as my post-doctoral host institution. That was the beginning of an association that has now extended for 17 years, and will I hope continue for many more.

Alex McKay

WHILE THE INITIAL BUREAUCRACY involved in taking up residence in a new country was time-consuming, the IIAS proved the perfect place to be a post-doctoral research fellow in my field of Indo-Tibetan history, and Leiden proved to be a delightful place to live. I confess to having been a complete novice in regard to my new country, indeed I wasn’t even quite sure if Leiden was the same town as Leyden, place of publication of so many of the old books I studied! But I soon began to imbibe the cultural history of this remarkable country, to distinguish its regional traditions, and to glean some inklings into the religious and historical forces that produced the unusual blend of social liberalism and familial conservatism that governs this unique land. I also discovered the depth and antiquity of the Leiden tradition of Asian studies, symbolised by the presence of botanical gardens, museums, and that most distinguished of academic publishers, Brill (with whom I now serve as a series editor for their Tibetan Studies Library).

We quickly adapted to shopping at the Saturday market and – after extensive research – became authorities on the cake shops of Leiden. We also ensured we were punctual and learned not to walk on the cycle paths, qualities essential to integration into Dutch society. We even learned to trust public transport timetables, having been accustomed to the number of prominent IIAS alumni in the world of Asian networks of scholars. I encounter IIAS colleagues across the globe, Hans Hägerdal in Korea, Tak-Wing Ngo in Hawaii, Ken Wells in Canberra … the list goes on.

We have been fortunate enough over the years in Leiden to witness so much of what it has to offer, the wonderful formality and tradition of a doctoral viva, the riches of the Ethnography and other museums, herring, and parties on 3 October, the Netherlands scoring five goals against Germany, and the extraordinary, unique spectacle of the Elfstedentocht. Who could have imagined that a cross-country skating race could be so captivating? Then there is Queen’s Day, which happens to coincide with my wife’s birthday, and musical memories such as Mozart in the Pieterskerk, a string quartet in a small stone room on Breestraat after a viva, or emerging into the winter snow after a concert by the Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi had almost convinced us we were in the Australian desert.

On my most recent visit to IIAS I felt like a senior scholar, or perhaps a living relic, with only my old friend and colleague Paul van der Velde and the soon-to-depart computer wizard Manuel Haneweld still left from the staff during my first visit. IIAS had moved to a new location on the Rapenburg, with a new Director, Professor Philippe Peycam, and boasted an even more complex coffee machine. But behind the doors new visiting scholars were labouring over their books and computer screens, planning new conferences and publications, and developing new networks. The work of IIAS persists, and The Newsletter maintains its window onto current academic events and subject trends. Long may they continue.

Alex McKay is a specialist in Indo-Tibetan history and culture. He is the author of nearly 40 academic articles, and has edited a number of works, including the three-volume History of Tibet (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), and is the author of two monographs (Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre, 1904-1947, Curzon Press, 1997) and Footprints Remain: Biomedicine Across the Indo-Tibetan Frontier, 1870-1970, (University of Amsterdam, 2007). He has recently completed a third monograph, a history of the pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, and his current interests focus on Sikkim and Bhutan. He has held various fellowships at the IIAS, and research and teaching posts at London University SOAS and UCL.
Tamil merchants in India and abroad (9th-14th centuries)

Risha Lee

BETWEEN THE NINTH AND FOURTEENTH centuries, merchants with ties to India’s southeastern Tamil region played a crucial role in facilitating trade throughout the Indian Ocean. They transported India’s highly sought-after goods—luxury items such as spices, horses, weapons, cloth, pearls and gems, as well as everyday items, like rice and oil—to all corners of the Asian world, via the southern maritime route. These exchanges linked multiethnic actors into interlocking geographic and cultural networks, and produced a premodern world system. South Indian-style art and architecture and at least nine Tamil language inscriptions have been discovered in Southeast Asia and China, located along the Indian Ocean trade routes that these individuals would have travelled.

Knowledge of intra-Asian contact and exchange from this period has been derived mostly from Arabic and Chinese sources. The preference for these sources can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, they are more abundant in comparison to the subcontinent’s dearth of written history. Secondly, written history in premodern India in large part has been limited to inscriptions, carved into the walls of stone temples. These inscriptions are site-bound and only partially published. Inscriptions also generally do not record standard ‘histories’, such as a recitation of dated chronological events.

Not just royalty

A wealth of non-written history for merchants exists, however, in the form of objects and monuments patronized by them. In south India alone, hundreds of stone temples and some devotional bronze statues of deities bear inscriptions attesting to either the local or partnership by merchants. This empirical fact has gone largely unnoticed for some time by art historians of India, who have tended to presume that only royal patrons were responsible for creating the majority of objects and monuments. As research increasingly demonstrates, however, many works of art often received patronage entirely independent of any royal source, or from royal/non-royal collaborations. Several recent studies indicate that merchant patrons played particularly active roles in commissioning art and architecture all over India.

Merchants comprised a distinct class of non-royal individuals, whose profession required intense mobility and continual negotiation between local and cosmopolitan identities. There was a huge range of professional differentiation, with merchants specializing in the sale of specific goods at various locales, including local and regional markets, and periodic fairs. Supralocal merchant organizations were relatively independent of any royal source, or from royal/non-royal collaborations. Several recent studies indicate that merchant patrons played particularly active roles in commissioning art and architecture all over India.

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The construction of the Yunnan railway: as seen by a French engineer (1904-1907)

Vathana Pholsena

THIS ARTICLE HAS ITS ORIGINS in a collection of photographs and letters donated to the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore by Elisabeth Locard; they had once belonged to her great-great uncle, Albert Marie, a French engineer who was sent to work on the Yunnan railway in Yunnan Province, China, between 1904 and 1907. In total, the collection includes 138 photos and 159 letters that Marie produced during his three-year assignment in south-western China.

Albert Marie was born on 25 August 1875 in Viviers in south-eastern France. After obtaining his degree in engineering, he soon accepted a job offer from the Compagnie des chemins de fer de l’Indochine et du Yunnan, which had been recently founded in 1901. He subsequently left for south-western China in June 1904.

Marie’s photos and letters from during that time constitute the raw material for this overview, which focuses on a few themes, including the daily lives of the railway company’s employees, work on the construction sites, and local inhabitants. It aims to provide a snapshot of a French colonial agent’s life in early twentieth-century China.

The journey from Marseille to Yiliang

The Sino-French agreement, signed on 12 June 1897, secured France’s access to and exploitation of natural (in particular, mineral) resources in the three southern Chinese provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan, as well as opened up prospects for future projects to improve or build transport infrastructure in the region. Such projects were facilitated the following year by another Sino-French accord dated 10 April 1898, which effectively bestowed on the French government the right to construct a railway from the borders of Tonkin (today’s northern region of Vietnam) to the capital of Yunnan, then called Yunnan-Sen (now Kunming). The construction work began in 1900. Ten years later the line was completed; it covered a total distance of 465 km, stretching from Hanoi (a port city located on the lower Red River on the eastern coasts of Tonkin) to Yunnan. The brand new train station of the provincial capital, then called Yunnan-Fou, was officially inaugurated in 1910.

Albert Marie departed from Marseille on a liner, probably in late May 1904. He arrived in Saigon about a month later, and was instantly overwhelmed by the beauty of the place that materialized before his eyes in the form and structure of French-style urban architecture and planning. He wrote:

—I am still under the charm of everything I have seen thus far. Saigon surpasses all the cities we stopped by, and the city truly deserves her name of Pearl of the Orient. Wide and straight roads, with seamless lush greenery; superb constructions, comfortable hotels, where, for example, everything is rather expensive. […] one enjoys again European life here, and the only thing, except for nature, which would make one believe that one is no longer in France is the population that is almost entirely Chinese […]. This country is a dream country. Never would I have thought to see this: Indochina, or at least what I know of today, Cochinchina, is a marvelous country. Everything will be done when railways crisscross it in every direction. And the so much disparaged French administration has achieved wonders here. Official buildings, the post-office, the city hall, are absolute jewels. Punctuation appears complete as well in the three southern Chinese provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan, as well as opened up prospects for future projects to improve or build transport infrastructure in the region. Such projects were facilitated the following year by another Sino-French accord dated 10 April 1898, which effectively bestowed on the French government the right to construct a railway from the borders of Tonkin (today’s northern region of Vietnam) to the capital of Yunnan, then called Yunnan-Sen (now Kunming). The construction work began in 1900. Ten years later the line was completed; it covered a total distance of 465 km, stretching from Hanoi (a port city located on the lower Red River on the eastern coasts of Tonkin) to Yunnan. The brand new train station of the provincial capital, then called Yunnan-Fou, was officially inaugurated in 1910.

Albert Marie was based in Yiliang for slightly over a year. His integration into the French-style urban architecture and planning.

Poor maritime connectivity in the Straits of Malacca

Nathalie Fau

CONNECTIVITY HAS BEEN A KEY CONCEPT debated by the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), particularly since the adoption of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) in October 2010. One of the MPAC objectives is to enhance regional connectivity by promoting sub-regional initiatives, which usually focus on less developed areas of the ASEAN region with less developed infrastructures.

The north-south configuration of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore has led to a geographical organization comprising of two sub-regional initiatives, known as the generic term ‘growth triangle’: the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). This approach was later enhanced by the introduction of the concept ‘growth corridors’, a new development tool funded by the World Bank and introduced in Asia, Latin America and South Africa.

One of the aims of the development of cross-border maritime corridors is to help twin or sister ports to cooperate, in the same way as twin cities on opposite sides of a land border do. In order to encourage links between these major ports, priority has been given to the improvement of their infrastructures, such as bridges and facilities to handle fast ferries and roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) ships. However, maritime links do not seem to be as efficient as land corridors. This was shown by several studies, including those done by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and by Bancenyong. These studies concluded that the volume of intra-IMT-GT maritime trade was quite small. They also revealed that the weakest points in the economic corridors of IMT-GT were transversal maritime corridors linking the two sides of the Straits of Malacca and the poor logistics integration of Sumatra compared to the linkage between Thailand and Malaysia.

Impediments to development of maritime connectivity

As the Straits is seen as an international transport route rather than an internal sea, this presents several interesting and challenging dynamics. On one hand, the international community pays close attention to navigation safety, environmental protection and security in the Straits, and contributes to the upkeep of the sea lane. This is helpful to the littoral states that do not have the financial and technical means to maintain the Straits by themselves. On the other hand, the international attention presents a serious handicap to the construction of a transnational space within the area. Due to this fact, the littoral states are more concerned about harnessing the economic opportunities presented by the international shipping traffic through the Straits, rather than by regional cross-Straits traffic. Indonesia and Malaysia are especially afraid of being prevented from exercising their national sovereignty over the Straits, in the wake of the criticisms they received from the international users of the Straits over their capacity to fight piracy or eradicate terrorism in the region.

For many years the international navigation in the Straits benefited mainly Singapore. However, during the past decade, Malaysian and Indonesian ports have successfully diverted some of the business their way. The states’ rivalry...
Our life in Yléang [Yiliang] is rather enjoyable. Here is what my days consist of: I get up at 7 o'clock. Everything is at the foot of my bed - shoes, trousers, tie, shirt, socks, everything's in order. The sink is full, the glass of water, and the toothbrush with the paste is waiting. My clothes are all laid out and all the clean, thanks to my boy who's truly wonderful. On the table a tomato and cucumber salad, or something like that, and a cup of coffee. [...] at 7:30 I go to the office until 12:30 when my boy comes to tell me that there is "something to eat." Between 1:30 and 2 pm, I go back to work until 5:30. Then, a tennis game with everyone [...]. Yléang [Yiliang], 15 August 1904

Marie's imperious and affable character made him a popular member of the railway company's community. The Frenchman regularly shared with his European fellows a meal - in effect a traditional lunch - which served as a role model for many locals, too. His calibre was such that he was known as a "model" in his community. Marie confided to his parents in March 1905 "how important this gathering was for all of them in regard to their morale."

Marie and his companions constructed, to borrow Ann Stoler's "[was] for all of [them] in regard to [their] morale."

Work on the Yunnan railway line: building a legacy

The young man was ambitious, self-assured, and hardworking, as well as appreciated by his supervisors. He did not need to wait very long for advancement; after more than a year, on 15 September 1905, he was officially promoted to chief of the 24th ct, corresponding to a section of track that stretched from km 376 to km 390 on the line. This line was part of the stretch of lines situated in the valley of the Nam Ti river (in the basin of Paichai), which covered a distance of approximately 130 km (i.e., between km 300 and km 430) and peaked at an impressive height of 2062 metres on the final stretch.

The railway is celebrated for its heroic technical feats (the most famous of which is arguably the "truss bridge" pont sur arbois realizing a 100 meter-deep gorge), but these were accomplished by means of extraordinary human efforts and at the cost of thousands of lives. Out of the 60,000 coolies (from Tonkin and China) who worked on the construction of the railway, 12,000 perished on the building sites (mainly from accidents, illness, and malnutrition), out of which a horrifying 10,000 died in the Nam Ti valley. This was caused mainly to arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Though themes of violence and death on work sites do not feature prominently in the engineer's letters, they do come up intermittently in his accounts: arms smuggling, butchers murdering Chinese coolies (who also died from drowning in the Nam Ti river or falling into the ravines) and a French colleague working there. Thus...
Ronki Ram
Leiden University, the Netherlands, 7-8 December, 2012
Convened by Ronki Ram (Shahed Bhattag Singh Professor of Political Science, ICCR Chair Professor of Contemporary India Studies)

THE WORKSHOP, organized by International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (CSeAS) at the National University of Singapore, was held at the National University of Singapore and organised with the active support of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in the Netherlands, the Asia research Institute (ArI) and the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies (CSeAS) at the National University of Singapore, and with the active support of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in the Netherlands.

Ronki Ram (The other modernity and forgotten tradition: the resurgence of Dalit cultural heritage in contemporary India)

India has a credible reputation in preserving varied cultural heritage centers, yet Dalits hardly figure in this preservation scheme. They often attribute their conspicuous absence to their historic exclusion from civil society as well as to the dominant discriminatory social structures that relegated them to the periphery in the name of their so-called low caste. They also allege that their indigenous cultural heritage was deliberately destroyed as well as made oblivious with the clear purpose of denying them any space whatsoever in the corridors of power.

In the concerted efforts of reviving Dalit cultural heritage, tradition ceases to be a value of the past and modernity loses its aura in the fast acclimatizing present cast in the images of yesteryears. It is in this critical context that tradition and modernity have been acquiring new meanings and nuances, i.e. contextually redefined. This has also spilled over to social conflicts between the ex-Untouchables and the hitherto dominant communities, who find the resurfacing Dalit cultural heritage quite hard to digest.

Presentations
Dr. Ram Narayan Rawat (Forms of Dalit historical narratives in twentieth century north India: the Chamari Parivar and Adi-Hindi history) built a counter thesis to the mainstream historical narratives that traditionally traced the origins of the Chamars in the lost cultural narratives of Dalit histories. He underlined the urgency of locating ‘diversity of visions’ for a graphic understanding of scattered universe(s) of Dalits.

Prof. Badri Narayan’s presentation (Crossing borders: Bhagat (folk ballad) tradition of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and Nepal) argued that an alternative non-Brahmical art and cultural tradition has been developing along the Indo-Nepal border. The author built an interesting thesis that highlights the emerging trajectories of Dalit cultural heritage defying artificial state boundaries that separate people of similar cultural ethos and background.

Dr. Eva-Maria Hardtmann’s paper (Dalit women in poverty and in the Global Justice Movement) was inspired by the famous World Social Forum (WSF) held in Mumbai in 2004. What made this World Social Forum rather unique and historic was the participation of Dalit women, who were doubly oppressed and marginalized by both men in the Dalit movement and by the Indian feminist movement.

Prof. Rajne Lochan’s paper (Finding a voice, institutional mem- ories – rhetoric and ideas in creating and sustaining ‘Bhujung Mulwana’) dealt with the critical theme of creating a shared memory of repression and suppression through the agency of the non-political All India Dwarka (GSC/DBE) and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAWCF).

Mr. Surinder Singh’s presentation (Dalit identity: from a non-traditional movement of people to mass movement) talked about the concerted efforts of the historically socially marginalised, yet Dalits hardly figure in this preservation scheme, and how much mobility is constitutive and formative towards the emergence of borderlands. Connections draw attention to linkages across, as well as among borderlands. Corridors provide paths and networks across and within borderlands. How are these closed, diverted, reopened, or created, and what effects do their dynamics have on the borderlands, as well as beyond? Borderlands produce communities. How does spatial location at a border affect community formation and development?

The panels included in the conference engaged with these from a variety of theoretical angles and disciplinary perspectives. Panels explored themes such as ‘migrations and mobility’, ‘indigeneity, idea flows and media routes’, ‘landscape, militaries and diplomacy’, ‘agrarian expansion and territorial politics’ and ‘border commodities’. In addition to paper presentations, the conference included two round-table sessions designed for a more interactive format.

One of these discussed communities fractured across borders, the other considered the social and political impact of large scale hydro electric dam building across North East India and the Mekong River. All scholarly contributions explored how borders produce marginality and agency, generating both fundamental as well as applied knowledge.

Multidisciplinary perspectives
The desire for an intellectual space that can support the development of multidisciplinary perspectives on Asia’s borderlands was indeed a main incentive for the creation of the Asian Borderlands Research Network in 2008. In its search for paradigms that exceed state-centric and region-centric perspectives, the network has received ample support from the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in the Netherlands. This has consistently attempted to cater to both fundamental as well as applied concerns. This has resulted in sustained engagement with organisations active in the field of international cooperation, such as Panos and Cordaid. In addition, the network has profited from the involvement of scholars located in the regions it focuses on, and of those affiliated with mainstream academic institutions in North America, Europe and Australia. The increasingly large number of submissions that each edition of the conference draws, proves that Asian borderlands are enjoying growing scholarly attention.

4th Borderlands Conference to be held in 2014
Connections, Corridors and Communities received three times more paper proposals than it could accommodate within its three day/two parallel session format. The earlier editions of the Borderlands Conference were held in Gwagwal, India (2008) and in Chiang Mai, Thailand (2010). Given the success of the last conference, bids are now being considered for a 2014 edition – preferably in yet another borderland of Asia.


Tina Harris (Sociology and Anthropology department, University of Amsterdam) and Adam Maas (Institute for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, Leiden University).

Notes
1 A full outline and discussion of all the presentations can be found in the workshop report, posted on the IAS website.
IIAS research projects

IIAS research is carried out within a number of thematic clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents – all built around the notion of social agency. The aim of this approach is to cultivate synergies and coherence between people and projects and to generate more interaction with Asian societies. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics.

Asian Cities
WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longer-term Asian urban “tradition”, by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia and linking the various elements of city cultures and societies, from ancient to modern (colonial and post-colonial) times. Through an international knowledge-network of experts, cities and research institutes it seeks to encourage social scientists and scholars in the humanities to interact with contemporary actors including artists, ethicists, sociologists, educators and policy makers. By bringing together science and practice, IIAS wishes to initiate a productive dialogue where each participant can contribute to or enhance expertise and the potential to evolve into a broad multi-disciplinary corpus contributing to the actual development of Asian cities today.

Asian Heritages
THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European concept accepted with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested distinctions of “tangible” and “intangible” heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in framing and creating various forms of identity. The cluster addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications. It aims to engage in a broad range of concepts including the issues of “authenticity”, “national heritage,” and “shared heritage”, and, more generally, issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. It will also critically address the dangers involved in the commodification of perceived endangered local culture/heritages, including languages, religious practices, crafts and art forms, as well as material vernacular heritage.

Global Asia
THE GLOBAL ASIA CLUSTER addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within post-colonial urban space as well as between Asian regions and with the world, through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies and so forth. Past and present trends will be addressed. The cluster wishes to contribute to a better academic understanding of the phenomenon by challenging the Euro-centricity of much of its current literature, acknowledging the central role of Asia as an agent of global transformations. It also explores new forms of heterogeneous intellectual interaction in the form of South-South and East-West dialogue models. By multi-linking the field of Asian studies, an enriched comparative understanding of globalization processes and the role of Asia in both time and space will be possible.

PROJECTS AND NETWORKS
The Postcolonial Global City
This research examines the postcolonial cities of Southeast and South Asia, exploring some of them have made the successful transition from the former colonial networks to global cities in their own right. This is intended to be an interdisciplinary approach bringing together architects and urbanists, geographers, sociologists, religious studies, linguists and anyone else involved in the field of Asian studies. A key factor in the research is the architectural typology. Architecture is examined to see how it can create identities and how 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.

Coordinator: Greg Bracken
(gregorycartleaver.com)

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
Consisting of over 100 researchers from 12 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest academic international network on Asian cities. UKNA’s objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities. This will be achieved via research staff exchanges and targeted case study based research, focusing on three key areas: heritage, housing and the environment. The programme is funded by a grant awarded by the EU, and runs from April 2016. UKNA is the coordinating partner in the network and administrator of the programme.

Partners are:
Ambedkar University; Beijing University of Technology’s College of Architecture and Urban Planning; CEPT University; China Academy of Urban Planning and Design; TU Delft Faculty of Architecture; Ecole Nationale Supérieure de l’Architecte Paris-Belleville; Hong Kong Polytechnic University; Shandong Academy of Social Sciences, China; Shanghai University of Urban Planning; University of Macau’s Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities; University of Southern California’s Price School of Public Policy.

Coordinators:
Paul Rabl (p.rabl@iias.nl) & Simonne Bijlard (s.f.bijlard@iias.nl)

PROJECTS AND NETWORKS
Translating (Japanese) Contemporary Art
Takako Kondo focuses on the representation of “Japanese contemporary art” in art critical and theoretical discourses from the late 1980s in the realm of English and Japanese languages, including artists’ own critical writings. Her research is a sub-ject of (cultural) translation rather than art historical study and she intends to explore the possibility of making Asian contemporary art and other forms of contemporary art in order to establish various models for transcultural contemporary art.

Coordinator: Takako Kondo (k.koendo@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Asian Borderlands Research Network
The Borderlands Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central and Southeast Asia. A conference is organised every two years in one of these border regions, in cooperation with a local partner. The centre of the concerns of the Asia Borderlands Research Network are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transnational urban cultural practices, to ethnic mobilisation and conflicts, marginalisation, and environmental concerns.

Coordinator: O. van der Leeuw

Energy Programme Asia – EPA
The EPA research programme is designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy supply and the security of the European Union and main Asian energy-consuming countries and their national strategies for securing supply.

New Joint Research Project
Part of the EPA is the IIAS-WAASS-JC joint research project entitled: “The transnationalization of China’s oil industry: Company strategies, embedded projects and relations with institutions in resource-rich countries” (February 2013-December 2016). Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this comparative research project analyses China’s increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil). Through “embedded partnerships” it intends to create a knowledge-base that will be of interest to both Chinese, European and multinational companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economy. A core team of principal authors will present individual studies on various aspects and different countries. The resulting studies will be published in refereed journals such as Energy Policy, Social Aspects of Energy (Elsevier) and China Information and a book volume.

The project is managed by the IAS and the Institute of West and African Studies (IWAS) of the Centre for Social Sciences (CASS), in cooperation with three other CASS research institutes and four Dutch universities. Funded by the Chinese Exchange Programme of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IAS for the period February 2013-December 2016.

Jatropha Research & Knowledge Network (JARAK)
JARAK has become a partner in a new network called Jatropha Research and Knowledge network on claims and facts concerning socially sustainable jatropha production in Indonesia. Jatropha is a crop that seems promising because it can be used as a clean non-fossil fuel diesel and it can provide new income sources in marginal areas that will grow the crop.

Coordinators:
Dr. J.C. van der Leeuw
(j.c.vanlerwa@gmail.com)

Open Cluster
PROJECTS AND NETWORKS
Ageing in Asia
During the 21st century it is projected that there will be more than one billion people aged 60 and over, with Asia responsible for the greatest climbing to nearly two billion by 2050, three-quarters of whom will live in the developing world. 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 healthcare, including pensions systems, unleashing substantial debate and insecurity. Many Asian governments are facing comparable challenges and dilemmas, involving both the state and the future elderly. Furthermore, the economic shorter time-span. Research network involved:

Open Cluster

Coordinator: Carla Risseeuw
(c.risseeuw@iias.nl)

The Newsletter | No 63 | Spring 2013

The Network | 43
The transnationalization of China’s oil industry: company strategies, embedded projects and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries.

New Joint Research Programme

THIS IS A NEW JOINT research programme between the Energy Programme Asia (IiAS) and the Institute of West Asian and African Studies (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences).

This comparative research project will analyse China’s increasing involvement with governments, local institutions and local stakeholders in the energy sectors of a number of resource-rich countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America (notably Sudan, Ghana, Saudi-Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela, and Brazil). We seek to determine patterns of interaction between national institutions and Chinese companies, their relationships to foreign investment projects and the extent to which they are embedded in the local economy.

China’s huge demand and novel, but presumably non-political, approach to investment (including tied aid, loans, and trading credits) sets it apart from European international practices. The effects of investments in these resource-rich economies and societies (transactions, flows of capital, employment and income-generation, etc.) are not all of which are managed by China’s state-owned oil companies, require further analysis. We hypothesise a growing symbiosis between these enterprises and local institutions, and Chinese company and government behaviour significantly different between countries because of differences in institutional context and space and time-specific economic opportunities. Our analyses of investments and funding operations may provide important insights into the local effects of bilateral and global energy cooperation and the learning curves of international and local oil companies.

Organisation and members

This interdisciplinary research project will be managed by Dr. M.P. Amininé (The Energy Programme Asia – IiAS/UvA) and Prof. Yang Guang (Institute of West Asian and African Studies – CASS) in cooperation with the following Chinese/CASS and Dutch research centres and universities: the Institute of Industrial Economy-CASS (IIE), the Institute of Latin American Studies-CASS (ILAS), the Institute of Russian, East European & Central Asian Studies-CASS (IRECASS), the Centre for Latin American Studies-University of Amsterdam (CEDLA), the Department of Politics and Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology-University of Amsterdam, the Institute for Environmental Studies- VU Free University Amsterdam, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IiAS), and Leiden University.

A core team of principal authors will present individual studies on various aspects and different countries. It consists of Mehdi Amininé (Programme Director EPA-IiAS and UvA) and Yang Guang (Programme Director IWASS-CASS); Eduard B. Vermeer (IiAS-Leiden University); Chen Miao (IWASS-CASS); Joyeeta Gupta (UvA); Barbara Hogenboom (CEDLA-UvA); Sara Hardus (UvA); Li Xiaohua (IIE); Liu Dong (IWASS-CASS); and Sun Hongbo (IWASS-CASS). Four external, independently-funded researchers will provide additional expertise: Raquel Shaul (Department of East Asia Studies, University of Tel Aviv); Robert Cutler (Institute of European and Russian Studies, Carleton University); Frank Umbach (German Council on Foreign Relations, Asia Pacific Program); and Laszlo K. Maracz (Department of European Studies, UvA).

This project is funded by the Chinese Exchange Programme of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Social Sciences (KNWV) and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences-CASS, and by the International Institute for Asian Studies, for the period February 2013 - December 2016.

For further information please contact: Mehdi Amininé (Programme Director – EPA-IiAS (m.p.aminine@iias.nl).

IIAS PhD platform and discussion group

THE IIAS PhD DISCUSSION GROUP on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/phd) forms part of our ‘National Platform for Asia Related PhD Research in the Netherlands’. The PhD platform was recently set up by IiAS as a tool to support PhD students and their supervisors in the Netherlands in their research.

In January 2012, the IIAS conducted a review of PhD research on Asia in the Netherlands (with a humanities and social sciences focus) and this led to the identification of more than 250 projects being carried out all over the country. What struck us most, was the enormous range of subjects studied, and the large number of Dutch universities, research schools and institutes involved.

Subsequent discussions indicated that PhD researchers in the field of Asian studies, linked to different organisations, rarely know of each other’s work, even when the respective PhD subjects cover a similar region and/or discipline and co-operation could benefit both parties.

IIAS therefore decided to set up a national PhD platform to help PhD researchers (and their supervisors) in the Netherlands to establish contact, as well as to disseminate information about relevant courses, lectures etc. for example, international visitors (research fellows, visiting professors), etc. The platform may also function as a tool to encourage groups of PhD researchers to initiate workshops, or to invite national and/or international scholars for lectures and seminars, etc.

Join the PhD platform on LinkedIn

To develop the platform, PhD researchers in Asian studies in the Netherlands, and their supervisors, are invited to join the LinkedIn group ‘IIAS PhD Platform’. We welcome all comments and recommendations posted to the site, which will help to develop the platform into a useful tool for anyone conducting PhD research in Asian studies in the Netherlands, and who would like to share information and experiences with fellow researchers.

A comparable Facebook discussion site has been set up at https://facebook.com/PhDplatform

We hope you will enjoy the discussions and find the information on the platform useful.

Willem Vogelsang, International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden

Asian Cities: Colonial to Global

Upcoming seminar
Leiden, The Netherlands, 23-24 April 2013

The 5th annual meeting of the IIAS-TU Delft Seminar Series on Asian Cities will be a multi-disciplinary investigation into the question how networks laid down during the era of Western colonial expansion in Asia have given certain cities a global edge. It seeks to investigate issues relating to the ‘post-colonial’ (i.e., the era following independence from colonial) imperial power(s) and their effects on the built environment.

During the seminar, scholars from around the world from such fields as the humanities, social sciences, architecture and urban studies, will present and discuss their on-going research. The seminar is also open for anyone interested in the subject and who would like to listen in.

Information

The seminar is organised by IIAS and the Dutch School of Design, Delft University of Technology. Please register if you would like to attend.

More information will be posted on the IIAS website: www.iias.nl/events and asian-cities-colonial-global
Patterns of Early Asian Urbanism

11-13 November 2013, Leiden, The Netherlands
International Conference ‘Patterns of Early Asian Urbanism’

Registration information and 2nd Call for papers and panels

I.AS, together with Leiden University’s Faculty of Archaeology and the Archaeology Unit of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS, Singapore) will be hosting an international conference, bringing together leading scholars from around the world to explore the theme of ‘Early Urbanism’ of pre-modern Asian cities, within the much broader context of urban studies, ancient and modern. The conference aims to examine Asian pre-modern cities through three major thematic strands, covering a wide geographic expanse throughout Asia (from Pakistan to Japan) and a time depth of cultural development across five millennia (from the Bronze Age through 14th century Angkor to 18th century East Asia). The three main themes to be explored are: a) processes of urban development; b) urban economy; and c) social fabric of the city.

The conference will provide a multi-disciplinary forum and we invite participation from the fields of archaeology, economy, geography, history, historical anthropology, philology, sociology, as well as modern urban planning and urban morphology. The most tangible results of the conference will be a special Focus section of the IAS Newsletter as well as an edited publication.

A more extensive description is available on the IAS website.

Registration

Registration for the conference is open from 1 March 2013. Conference fee: 150 Euro (including coffee, tea, lunches and a dinner) with a reduction for PhD students and those who register before 15 August 2013.

Call for papers and panels

We are still accepting proposals for papers/presentations and panels. To submit your abstract or proposal please use the web form provided on the IAS website.

Final submission deadline: 30 May 2013

We invite proposals for papers or presentations of 20 minutes in length. We encourage the submission of papers that address either one of the above-mentioned three themes, or that cross theme boundaries. Proposals that seek to draw comparisons across wider regions or open up new vistas for original research are particularly welcome. Please use the web form provided on the IAS website to submit your abstracts of 300 words maximum and a short author biography (including institutional affiliation). There is a separate form for proposals for panel discussions (3 to 4 speakers). An academic committee will select and group the proposals into separate sessions. Those who submit a proposal will hear by July 1st whether their proposal has been accepted and to which thematic panel it has been allocated.

Information/web-forms: www.iias.nl/event/patterns-early-asian-urbanism

International Workshop ‘Institutional Voids during State Re-scaling’

Monday 13 May 2013, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
ON 13 MAY 2013 over ten scholars from different institutions in Asia, Europe and Australia will convene in Rotterdam with the aim to combine the insights and findings from two previous workshops on institutional voids and state re-scaling.

The goal of the workshop is to look at the interactions and overlaps between these two frontiers of research so as to generate new research questions and scholarly agenda. Specifically, the workshop seeks to examine empirical cases about the process of state restructuring and re-scaling in a globalizing world; identify institutional voids as a result of scaling up or scaling down during the de-territorialization of the national state; analyse the social, political, coalitional, and economic contexts that facilitate the filling of voids by the creation of alternative forms of governance and the consequences; reflect upon existing theories of the state, sub-national and supra-national politics, and institutional change, as well as conventional concepts about the national-international division, public/private boundary, and the state-market dichotomy.

The workshop will be hosted by the Erasmus Centre for Emerging Markets at the Rotterdam School of Management, and is jointly organized by the IAS Centre for Regulation and Governance, Centre d’Études de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud (CEIAS) at CNRS-EHESS Paris, Centre for Governance, Institutions & Organisations (CGIO) at NUS Business School, and Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. Attendance

The workshop will be open for attendees. If you would like to attend, please consult the IAS website for the exact venue and how to register.

For more information, go to www.iias.nl/event/institutional-voids-during-state-re-scaling

Framing ‘Asian Studies’: Geopolitics, Institutions and Networks

Organized by International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden), in partnership with Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS, Singapore).

Call for Papers: Deadline 30 April 2013

The conference framing ‘Asian Studies’: Geopolitics, Institutions and Networks aims to examine and critically reflect on the ‘social framing’ of Asian Studies by focusing on four themes:

1. The influence of geopolitical factors on how knowledge about Asia is produced and disseminated;
2. The role of institutions in promoting and directing Asian studies;
3. The outlook of knowledge networks;
4. Critiques on the power structure underlying the observed patterns of knowledge production and dissemination of Asian studies.

A full description of the conference’s topic will be made available on the IAS website.

Applications and time-line

Please use the web form to register, and send an abstract of 300-400 words together with a short biographical note of max. 2 pages before 30 April 2013. We especially encourage young scholars from Asia and Europe to apply. Successful applicants will be informed by 20 May 2013. Submission of the full paper will be required by 1 October 2013 to allow for circulation among participants prior to the event. Selected papers from the conference will be published in a joint IAS-ISEAS volume.

For a full description and more information, see www.iias.nl/framing-asianstudies

IIAS National Master’s Thesis Prize 2013

IIAS offers an annual award for the best national master’s thesis in the field of Asian Studies in the Netherlands.

The Award

The honorary title of ‘Best Master’s Thesis’ in Asian studies
A maximum three month stipend (@ 1,500 per month) to work at IIAS, in order to write a PhD project proposal or a research article

Criteria

The master’s thesis should be in the broad field of Asian Studies, in the humanities or social sciences.
The thesis must have been written at a Dutch University.
Only master’s theses which have been graded with an 8 or higher are eligible.
The thesis must have been finalized in the period 1 November 2012 - 1 October 2013.
Both students and their supervisors can apply

Deadline

1 October 2013, 9.00 am
Submissions should be sent to:
The Secretariat International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9500
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
iias@iias.nl

Visit iias.nl to see who won in 2012!
List of fellows

Amineh, Mohdi
Domestic and geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union
1 Sept 2007 – 1 Sept 2013

Bennett, Gwen
The nation on display: cultural heritage interpretation in China’s peripheries and the creation of new national identity narratives
1 Sept 2012 – 28 Feb 2013

Bracken, Gregory
Colonial and Shanghai as an urban model for the 21st century
1 Sept 2009 – 1 Sept 2013

Cheng, Sinkwan
A land in ruins: Gandhara, archaeology and the creation of new national identity narratives
1 Sept 2012 – 1 Sept 2013

Diana, Antonella
Rises and reflux: experiments of governing on the China- Laos frontier
1 Oct 2012 – 31 Mar 2013

Esposito, Adele
Architectural and urban making in Southeast Asian heritage cities: the art of combining endogenous forms and exogenous Inputs. Hoi An (Vietnam) as a case study
1 Jan 2013 – 31 Nov 2013

Fazlла Yacobollah Zamindar, Vazira
A land in ruins: Ghondara, archaeology and the making of Indian civilisation
1 Jan 2013 – 1 Jul 2013

Hoogervorst, Tom
Linguistic evidence for cultural contact across the Bay of Bengal
1 Oct 2012 – 1 Jul 2013

Kawlra, Aarti
Kanchipuram sari: heritage, identity and the politics of culture
15 Sept 2012 – 31 Mar 2013

Kikuchi, Yoshiyuki
Asian philosophy of history and cultural heritage
4 Jul 2011 – 31 Aug 2013

Kondo, Takako
Translating (Japanese) contemporary art
1 Sept 2009 – 31 Aug 2013

Krug, Ulrich Timme
An Asian philosophy of history and cultural heritage
4 Jul 2011 – 31 Aug 2013

Mukherjee, Dipika
Negotiating languages and forging identities: Sundanese-Indian women in the Netherlands

Ngo, Tak-wing
State-market relations and the political economy of development
1 May 2008 – 1 May 2017

Okubo, Takaharu
The influence of Dutch jurisprudence in late 19th century Japan
1 Apr 2011 – 1 Apr 2013

Pascaleva, Elena
Reading the architecture of paradise: the Timurid Kush
1 Sept 2012 – 1 Sept 2013

Preaut, Karl
The Great Lord
15 Aug 2012 – 16 Mar 2013

Ram, Ronki
Dalit cultural heritage in contemporary India
1 Sept 2011 – 1 Sept 2013

Rath, Saraju
Indian manuscripts in the Netherlands: from forgotten treasures to accessible archives
5 Jan 2004 – 31 Mar 2013

Scheun, Lena
Urban renewal in Shanghai: social, cultural and mental implications
1 Sept 2012 – 28 Feb 2013

Sysling, Fenneke
Sino-Tibetan: discourse and canonized as local, regional, national and, more recently, global 'living' heritage
ca. 1880-1940

Wang, Ping
Architectural and urban making in governing on the China-Laos frontier
1 Feb 2013 – 1 Aug 2013

Yao Huina
International Assistance and Domestic Politics: A Comparative Study of Palestine after 1948 and China during the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945)
15 Aug 2012 – 16 Mar 2013

DURING MY RESEARCH PROJECT AT IIAS, I explored the mutual influence between international assistance and domestic politics by comparing the situation in Palestine after 1948 to China during the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945). My goal is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature, operation mechanisms and practical results of international political, economic and military aid. It will also help the recipient countries/areas to receive more and the right kind of assistance: the kind that aids their own development and maximizes effects.

International assistance is one of the important aspects of international relations. In the history of Asia, many countries/areas have accepted short-term or long-term international assistance because of war, unrest, poverty, or other reasons. In many cases, the provided international assistance had significant effects on the political system of the recipient countries/areas, their government functioning, the existing power structures and power relations, and even on the basic social values and societal development paths. In some cases, these effects were even so powerful that they changed the political structure and tradition of the recipients. In other cases, the international assistance was loaded with the national interests of the donor countries or institutions, and conflicted with the political interests of the recipients. On the other hand, the domestic politics of the recipient itself could also influence the nature and amount of international assistance given and the ways in which it was delivered. These effects in their turn were sometimes so powerful that it led donors to terminate their assistance, or even, in the case of a war situation, to redirect assistance to the other side of the conflict.

There are similar patterns and differences between Palestine after 1948 and China during the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945). The similarities are, among others: (a) they both fought for the survival of the nation and national sovereignty under very difficult circumstances; (b) they both needed, and accepted, international assistance; (c) in both cases different political factions existed; (d) in both cases the interaction between international assistance and domestic politics was significant. The differences are, among others: (a) China is a big country while Palestine is a small area without an established state; (b) China experienced a large scale war within a period of eight years while Palestine has experienced many conflicts of different sizes, over a long period of time; (c) the international assistance they accepted in various manners differed in nature and quantity; (d) there were differences in the ways in which and the extent to which domestic politics affected international assistance.

My stay with IIAS was a great opportunity to meet and interact with scholars from different countries, cultures and research backgrounds who presented different approaches to similar research questions, which enriched my own study. IAS provided a stimulating platform for discussion, connecting with peers and enhancing my professional network. I very much enjoyed the comfortable atmosphere and appreciated the kind and open-minded staff.

The making of a ‘craft tradition’ and the politics of cloth in colonial and post colonial south India

Aarti Kawlra
MY WORK AS UKNA FELLOW with IIAS contributes to a larger research project in which I attempt to explore the appropriate paradigm for internalizing heritage in the urban development strategy in emerging economies. During my three-month stay in the Netherlands, I looked at the experience of heritage conservation in urban development policy, in a number of Dutch cities.

High on India’s national development agenda is the plan to enhance the competitiveness of urban centers in order to attract investments and to stimulate the economic growth of the hinterland. A prime concern here is the revitalizing and redevelopment of the old city area, which is characterized by high density, congestion and environmental degradation. In this area there is a notable shift from state controlled and planned intervention to neo-liberal market-oriented development strategies, which means that the redevelopment and revitalization of the old city is also being propelled by the advantages of its central location and high land values. Very often the neo-liberal physical revitalization strategies are in conflict with heritage resources, often leading to their destruction and replacement by modern, in most cases western imitation, architectural structures. Such conflicts are common across all countries. Wanton revitalization has adversely affected and destroyed old neighborhoods, mostly low-income housing and associated city heritage.

Of late there is increasing concern for heritage and community conservation, with more cities giving importance to heritage issues in the development strategy. In fact, heritage conservation is even becoming important for neo-liberal urban development policy as ‘place marketing’. The attempt to internalize heritage conservation in the development planning process has been considerably influenced by European and American theory and practice. In India, the appropriateness of such strategy is now increasingly a subject for debate. European countries and the USA have a long tradition of heritage conservation, and are mostly low-income housing and associated city heritage.

WE ARE PARTICULARLY interested in researchers focusing on one of the Institute’s three thematic clusters: ‘Asian Cities’, ‘Asian Heritages’, and ‘Global Asia’. However, some positions will be reserved for outstanding projects in any area outside of those listed.

Asian Cities
The Asian Cities cluster deals with cities and urban cultures with related issues of flows of ideas and goods, cosmopolitism, métissage and connectivity, framing the existence of vibrant “civil societies” and political urban microcultures. It also deals with such issues as urban development in the light of the diversity of urban societies.

Asian Heritages
This cluster concentrates on the critical investigation of the politics of cultural heritage, and explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a Europe-originated concept associated with architecture and monumental archaeology to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values.

Global Asia
The Global Asia cluster addresses Asia’s role in the various globalization processes. It examines examples of and issues related to multiple, transnational intra-Asian interactions as well as Asia’s projection in the world. Historical experiences as well as more contemporary trends will be addressed.

Research projects that can contribute to new, historically contextualized, multidisciplinary knowledge, with the capacity of translating this into social and policy relevant initiatives, will be privileged.

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For over 400 years, blue and white Delftware has been the Netherlands’ most iconic national product. Initially intended as a faithful imitation of Chinese export porcelain, Blue Delft has never lost its appeal. Indeed, it is today attracting more interest than ever and is inspiring a stream of new products from contemporary Dutch designers. At a time when a sense of national identity is being replaced by an increasing focus on developments at the European level, the Delft Blue feeling is proving to be the ideal vehicle for the expression of national pride.

Titus M. Eliëns, Head of Collections

Ongoing exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, opened December 2012

THE GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG has one of the most important collections of Dutch Delftware anywhere in the world. A new presentation of this collection opened on 1 December 2012 and is now a key attraction of the Hague museum. Together with the accompanying Dutch/English-language book Het Wonder van Delfts Blauw. DelftWare WonderWare, the new exhibition offers a fascinating overview of the 400-year-long history of Dutch Delftware.

How Kraak porcelain conquered the Netherlands

Chinese export porcelain began to flood into the Netherlands in the early seventeenth century and had a decisive influence on the development of the blue and white earthenware we call Blue Delft. This Kraak porcelain, also known as ‘Wanli’ porcelain, after Emperor Wanli (1573-1619) - was made by the Chinese potters especially for export and was different in quality from the porcelain they produced for the internal Chinese market. Portugal had been the first European country to have trade links with the Far East and Portuguese traders transported the Chinese export porcelain on ships called caracca. This term was corrupted to kraak in Dutch and hence produced the expression kraakporselein (Kraak porcelain).

At the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese trade monopoly was broken by the Dutch. In 1588, the Northern Netherlands had won their independence from the great Habsburg Empire (which included Spain and Portugal). Shortly before that, the port of Antwerp, Europe’s main international trading centre, had been seized by the Spaniards, bringing trade to a halt. To secure the spice trade and in search of new opportunities, the Dutch now looked for their own sea route to Asia. Following the successful 1595-1597 expedition of Cornelis de Houtman and his discovery of the shorter route to the Indies (today’s Indonesia) via the Cape of Good Hope, the Portuguese hegemony was broken once and for all.

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The development of Blue Delft

The popularity of the blue and white export porcelain inevitably posed a substantial threat to the Delft earthenware industry of the day. With no access to kaolin, the Delft potters were unable to manufacture true porcelain. However, they did manage to produce a new kind of earthenware that successfully imitated the shiny surface, shapes and oriental-style decoration of Chinese porcelain. The blue and white colour scheme was imitated by coating the pieces of earthenware with a white tin glaze, to which the distinctive blue paintwork was then applied. Blue delft was soon recognised as a good and - at a tenth of the price - very cheap alternative to Chinese porcelain.

At first, the Delft potters sought to produce faithful imitations of the oriental shapes and decorations used in China in the successive stylistic periods. Imitations of Wanli porcelain are almost exact copies of the Chinese originals. Image 1 shows flatware and a ‘Perron’ bottle featuring the typical division of the decoration into vertical panels of varying width, filled with floral motifs and Taizé symbols suspended on ribbons. At the top, the decoration on the largest dish includes the double peach that is in China symbolizes longevity.

In the Transitional porcelain of the following stylistic period (1619-1662), these panels disappear. They are replaced by continuous decorative schemes, such as oriental scenes in garden-like settings, and the change is quickly reflected in the products of the Delft potters (image 3). Among the motifs typical of this Transitional style is the stylised tulip that appears on the neck of the bottle on the left. The jug is an item of European shape, which has been decorated with an oriental tableau by the painter in Delft.

When Emperor Kangxi (1654-1722) came to the throne in 1662, the Chinese porcelain factories began to develop a new product range and this, of course, quickly influenced the Delft potters. A favourite motif of this period is the elegantly dressed oriental woman known as a ‘Long Eliza’. She is shown here on two Delftware bottles that are direct imitations of Chinese originals (image 2). It is important to realise that the Delft potters adopted such motifs without any awareness of their original significance.