In this edition of the Focus, guest editor Adele Esposito introduces the research perspective developed by a group of young scholars and heritage practitioners involved in the new MA Program ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’ (Leiden University). The first group of graduates, together with young scholars working on heritage in Asia, have collectively produced a ‘manifesto’ with the purpose of initiating a proactive and policy-oriented debate on the politics of heritage, to which all our readers are invited to contribute.
The Focus
Theorizing Heritage

Pages 19-23

Guest editor Adele Esposito introduces five articles that explore research on Asian heritages, both on a global and official level, and at a local and personal level. All contributors have in some way been involved with the new MA programme 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe', and together they have developed a ‘manifesto’ to which you as the reader are invited to respond.

Pages 24-25

Giulia Di Pietro’s essay presents emerging strategies of industrial heritage preservation in Asia through the artistic rehabilitation of abandoned and disused structures. By describing the trajectory of the 798 Dashanzi electronics factory in Beijing, she highlights the negotiations between grassroots community and top-down institutionalization and their implications for the preservation process.

Pages 26-27

Abby Hsian-huan Huang shows how the World Heritage Discourse promoted by UNESCO’s official documents has been appropriated by various social agents in Taiwan, to the point of being ‘reversed’ (diverted from its original presuppositions and objectives).

Pages 28-29

‘Local assemblages’ of heritage cannot be explored through official texts alone; Sadiah Boonstra demonstrates this by discussing the tactics that allow Wayang puppeteers in Indonesia to ‘adapt and bend’ official heritage discourses.

Page 30

Sara Guagnini’s contribution highlights how state-owned heritage management has failed in protecting, recognizing and optimizing the use of the broader historical context of Borobudur Temple Compound (Central Java) - World Heritage Site since 1991 – to the detriment of both people and nature in the surroundings.
With autumn 2014 arriving, it is time to take stock of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-supported programme ‘Rethinking Asian Studies’, which officially began earlier this year (www.rethinking.asia). After only a few months of activities, this experimental programme, aimed at redirecting Asian studies to better reflect the global consequences of new Asian modernities at play, has already positioned itself as one of our institute’s driving intellectual engines. The unique opportunities built upon an inclusive network of scholars, artists and other social leaders with their institutions in Asia, North America, Europe and Africa.

Philippe Peycam, Director IIAS

MOBILISING THEMATIC FORA

The programme should not only help us to decentralize knowledge about Asia, but also represent important practice by exploring alternative narratives of Asian agencies often found beyond academic representations—exemplified by traditional area studies whose orientations continue to be framed by national histories and geographies—as they often restrain our imaginations, with little room left to explore other possible histories and geographies.

One clear result of the programme (forum #3) is to question our conventional spatial and geographical configurations of Asia, its three sub-fora comprising: ‘The Bay of Bengal’, a part of which we are of the opinion has the potential to erase 19th and 20th century configurations such as notions of ‘South’ and ‘Southeast Asia’—a roundtable ‘Belonging Across the Bay of Bengal: Migrations, Networks, Circulations’ is being organised at Princeton University at the end of October. ‘Central Asia’ as an intellectual field is emerging out of Empire; yet, the question of where such an imagined realm begins and ends, and for whose interests, remains elusive (a roundtable was organised in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, last August); it was preceded by an international conference co-organised by IAS—see page 40 of this issue. A third sub-forum seeks to ‘revise state-society relations through the perspective of Borderlands’—by precisely engaging these man-made spaces delineating national projects (these ‘products of social and political negotiations of space’). A first meeting will be held in November, at the Institute of East-Asian Studies, in Lyon. Another approach to these multiple (Asian) realities follows the intellectual project of introducing a diversity of interconnected views, considering lives and perspectives of social as well as ecological actors usually not heard from ‘the bottom-up’. Two forums tackle this objective: one taking the City as a multi-levelled framework of knowledge, the other addressing localities as a sensitive and potentially emancipating site of social mediation. Buzz concepts such as ‘generic cities’, ‘smart cities’ branded by many Asian states—with their corresponding metropolitan and city-based perceptions of urban spaces, ecological disasters and the negation of a community’s ‘right to flourish’—calls for a comprehensive, locally-sensitive approach, a new way of doing urban planning, as the August roundtable in New York suggested (see page 41 of this issue). It also calls for a different, ‘subaltern’ reading of the urban social landscape, a subject that will be explored in Mumbai in December.

The other socially-framed forum focuses on crafts and craftsmen/women. An IAS Summer School entitled ‘Reading Craft: itineraries of culture, knowledge and power in the global world.’ was organised at the University of Chiang Mai (see page 42 of this issue). The training brought together twenty-two PhD students from the world to creatively confront their research project with local situations as they are lived by northern Thai artisans. It was followed by a cross-sector roundtable on ‘Cloth, Culture and Development’, in which local weavers and other practitioners exchanged with Thai and international scholars. What emerged from these two exercises is that craft must be taken seriously as a truly integrative site of societal mediation. Craft forms stand at the nexus of a multiplicity of interests ranging from those of artists/artisans, entrepreneurs, local communities (rural and urban), NGOs, and the State, with a capacity to bring together generations, genders, classes, urban and rural and multiple while triggering interactions between social groupings, and, in the realm of education, promoting a platform for trans-sectorial interdisciplinary ‘artisanal knowledge transfer’. This latter idea of ‘Craft as a Pedagogy’ will be further explored in a workshop in Delhi in March 2015. ‘Craft as a Pedagogy’ will be further explored in a workshop in Delhi in March 2015. There then is the forum on ‘Artistic Interventions’, which serves to interrogate the arts and artists as socially active as ‘artist-citizens’ engaged in artist-run projects. The work project wants to move beyond traditionally restrictive knowledge of art—as a reified art for art’s sake, too-easily captured into becoming a commercial commodity—to consider it as another essential form of public knowledge that, in dialogue with traditional disciplinary area studies, has the potential to foster radically new ways of reimagining social times and spaces. The fifth forum, ‘Views of Asia from Africa’, promises to be another breakthrough for it will help us in the Asian studies community to think in a more decentralised, multi-vocal fashion, with fresh new intellectual paradigms and references to incorporate. This is a long-term process no doubt, but with over 50 already selected participants, and nearly 50 panels and roundtables accepted, our planned conference ‘Asia Studies in Africa. Challenges and Prospects of a New Axis of Intellectual Coherence’ is set to serve as a great catalyst likely to trigger new alignments in the ways regional studies are conducted, thereafter contributing to move Asian Studies beyond the old hierarchy of (intellectual) values I referred to earlier.

An important note must be made: due to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the conference in Accra (Ghana), originally set for January 2015, is being postponed to September 24-26, 2015 (see inset text right). By opening these new spaces of intellectual interactions and maturation, I am confident that the ‘Rethinking Asian Studies’ programme can effectively help us shape a more globally connected network of individuals and institutions working concomitantly on, with and in Asia in the global world.

Philipppe Peycam, Director IIAS

The Newsletter is a free quarterly publication by IIAS. For a free subscription: iiasnews@iias.nl.

From the Director | 4

ICAS

WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU that after ample discussions among the organizing committee members and among partner institutions, we have decided to postpone the Conference.

The new dates will be 24-26 Sept 2015

The venue will remain unchanged: the University of Ghana at Legon, Accra, Ghana.

It should be noted that Ghana is not affected by Ebola. The country’s capital, Accra was even chosen by the World Health Organisation as its regional centre from where it will co-ordinate its efforts (which is already underway) to fight the Ebola epidemic.

We understand, however, the worry conveyed to us by participants and partner institutions.

The postponement will offer us the opportunity to expand the conference’s programme and to make it even more inclusive. Already over 50 panels and roundtables have been accepted, a sign of the resounding success of the initiative even before it actually takes place.

New submission deadlines

The new deadline for panel and paper submissions is now 15 February 2015. The new deadline for submissions to the Asia-Africa Book Prize competition is now 15 March 2015.

New registration deadlines

Registration fee: Early Bird: 15 June 2015
Regular rate: 31 August 2015
On-site: 24 September 2015

For more information please visit our website www.icas.org.africa.
We thank you for your continuing support and we look forward to meeting you in Accra in September 2015!

Conference Organising Committee
Wobly Kaliki A-ASIA
Lloyd G. Ads Amido A-ASIA
Philip Peycam IAS/ICAS
Paul von der Velle IAS/ICAS

Dimensions of Globalisation.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.


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IIAS Photo Contest: Picturing Asia

We are proud to announce the winners of the IIAS Photo Contest 2014. We received over 1000 photos, and after lengthy considerations the jury selected the 6 category winners, whilst the public voted for their favourite photo and awarded it the ‘Public Vote’. View the winners online: http://tinyurl.com/IIAScontest.

The contest

On the occasion of IIAS’ 20th anniversary we considered a number of ways in which we could invite our readers and other interested parties to interact with us and our explorations of Asia in a fun and creative manner. As a result, at the beginning of 2014, we initiated a photo contest welcoming people around the world to submit their photos for 6 different categories. Six months later we had received a staggering number of more than 1000 photographs.

With so many entries, the jury faced quite a task. Firstly, they judged photos based on their relevance to the category; secondly, on their photographic quality; and thirdly on their originality. Long-lists were compiled by each jury member, and their combined selections (approximately 150 photos) were uploaded to Flickr.com, and made available to everyone to vote for the ‘Public Vote’ winner. The long-list album is still accessible at www.tinyurl.com/IIASphotos. Subsequently, the jury compiled shortlists for each category, and eventually whittled each list down to one winner.

The categories

Anyone interested in submitting photos to the contest was asked to ‘tag’ each of their photographs with one of the contest categories, which were as follows: Asian Cities, Global Asia, Asian Heritages, Asia’s Pop Culture, Everyday Life in Asia, Mobile Devices.

The winning photos

On these pages we present to you the category winners and the winner of the public vote. We congratulate all the winners and thank everyone who participated. Many of the entries will be published in future issues of The Newsletter to accompany articles or reviews. Each winning photograph is accompanied by a brief commentary from the jury.

1. ‘Big Boys’ by Rajesh Dhar
   Winner in the category Asian Heritages
   Caked in the sandy clay of the ‘Akhara’, the ‘big boys’ sharpen their skills. Following strict principles that focus on the building of strength and living a pure life, the practice is unfortunately in decline. The composition of this image is intriguing, with the figure in the foreground dramatically cropped. The torso draws us into the image. Each figure is cleverly ‘framed’ by the others to create various singular portraits – each a ‘story’ in its own right. As our eyes fall upon the figure furthest from us, poised with his batons on his shoulders, is he deep in concentration? Or has the photographer’s very presence disturbed him? Does this question make us question how we ‘read’ images that attempt to record some form of cultural heritage?

2. ‘Street Saloon’ by Sudipto Das
   Winner in the category Asian Cities
   This wonderfully composed photograph of a roadside barber trimming the beard of a client in Kolkata, India, makes dramatic use of the ‘borrowed landscape’ of an enormous film advertisement placed against a wall to create a blood-filled, fiery, and altogether disconcerting image of what might otherwise be a simple glimpse of everyday life in the city. The red comb in the customer’s black board is reflected in the barber’s mirror, linking the two subjects of the photograph to the overrated, bloody image behind them, even as an actor’s gun appears to be pointed directly at the two men, confusing the line between the characters in the film and the photograph.

3. ‘Refreshments’ by Janne Cress
   Winner in the category Global Asia
   These young boys have just completed a horse race by the young boys dressed in traditional garb consuming drinks, it is in fact a candid shot that impeccably captures the emotional mix of exhaustion and excitement on the boys’ faces. Furthermore, the juxtaposition presented by the young boys dressed in traditional garb consuming according to which people are squeezed into a tube, we are witness of a quiet resignation. Modernity is shown by four smartphones, but wait there is still hope. A newspaper is read by somebody who defies the media-literate lifestyle of his co-passengers. Put him in the middle, the photographer shows the sacrifice to read a newspaper squeezed by others. He, the reader, is a survivor.

4. ‘Tokyo Subway, Japan’ by Ross Tunney
   Winner in the category Mobile Devices
   ‘Tokyo Subway’ shows the urbanite in its own right. Unlike the stereotypes of the Tokyo subway system, according to which people are squeezed into a tube, we are witness of a quiet resignation. Modernity is shown by four smartphones, but wait there is still hope. A newspaper is read by somebody who defies the media-literate lifestyle of his co-passengers. Put him in the middle, the photographer shows the sacrifice to read a newspaper squeezed by others. He, the reader, is a survivor.

The jury

The Photo Contest jury comprised five members with different backgrounds, but all with a strong connection to visual content and/or Asia: Dr John Kleinen, Visual anthropologist and historian, associate professor emeritus at the University of Amsterdam, affiliated to the Amsterdam International School for Social Science Research (ASSR); Dr David Odo, Anthropologist and museum ethnographer, director of student programs and research curator of University Collections Initiatives at Harvard Art Museums; Paul Oram, Graphic designer, providing design and layout for The Newsletter; Sandra Dehue, Sinologist and editor at IIAS; Sonja Zweegers, Anthropologist and managing editor of The Newsletter.
5. ‘Brotherhood’ by Yordan Ahmadinata
Winner in the category Everyday Life

The palette of alternately intense and muted colors, the contrasting diagonal and curved lines, and incorporation of shadow and reflection, come together to create this beautiful photograph of two young boys. Given this picturesque but clearly impoverished setting, the photographer could have chosen to make a very different kind of picture, but the playfulness evident on the face of the younger child transcends the environment and delights the viewer.

6. ‘Food not Bombs’ by Emmanuel Maillard
Winner in the category Pop Culture

This attractive picture not only successfully captures the style and rebellious energy of this Yangon punk band, but, by framing it against the ‘food not bombs’ graffiti background, also reveals its socio-political involvement. The different levels of energy of the various band members further add to the overall high quality of the picture.
Vedic chanting in Kerala

On 7 November 2003 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the Tradition of Vedic Chanting (India) a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. According to Indian tradition, four Vedas – the Rigveda (hymns), the Yajurveda (sacrificial formulas), the Sāmaveda (chants) and the Atharvaveda (magical formulas) – are considered to be non-human in origin (apauruseya), beginningless (anādī) and eternal (nitya). This awareness prompted Brahmins of India to create unique methods for their preservation and transmission without even changing any of the accents. These methods are based on sophisticated mnemonic techniques and rely on different versions of repetitions.

Natalia Korneeva

The techniques

To memorise so much information – more than 10,500 mantras and different modes, with accents and tones – Nambudiri Brahmins have used different methods from ancient times, most of which were transmitted orally in Malayalam and Sanskrit. Some of them were published in Malayalam; some exist in manuscript form. In 2010, the Sree Sankaracharya University in Kalady published some of them in Sanskrit, in addition to several previously unpublished treatises, in the book Preservation Techniques of the Rigveda Chanting of Kerala.

At the beginning of a pupil’s training (during the first six months), the accents are taught by an unusual method. The teacher physically moves the pupil’s head with his right hand, in the following way: head straight – the uditta (raised accent, accentuated syllable), downward – the anuditta (syllable preceding the uditta, not-raised, not-accented), head to the right – the svarita (syllable following the uditta, sounding), to the left – the ārcika (‘accumulated’ accent). [See video 1]

The class always begins with the recitation of the sacred syllable Om by the teacher, followed by the students. During the next stage of the training the accents are stressed by placing the hands into particular positions (mudras): the hand up – the uditta; down – the anuditta; to the right – the svarita; to the left – the ārcika. [See video 2]

For the Rigveda recitation and the chanting of the Sāmaveda, Nambudiris use two sets of mudras or hand gestures. The Ṛgvedic mudras, besides stressing the accents, are used to indicate the ends of words of the Ṛgveda-pātha or ‘word-for-word’ recitation, which clarifies obscure places in the text. The Sāmavedic mudras represent musical accents and phrases and are used less than the Ṛgvedic mudras.

Pupils learn the sāṃhāti-pātha and the Ṛgveda-pātha without knowing Sanskrit grammar or the rules of sāṃhāti – they learn these rules through practice involving the body. It should be...
noted that oral memory has a high somatic component and from all periods of time, across cultures, we have indications that traditional composition has been associated with hand activity. According to Indian tradition, an endless mechanical repetition provides error-free memorisation.

The Nambudiris also follow unique techniques, which differ from mnemonic techniques elsewhere in India. Some scholars of the Vedas would have nothing to be scholars of. “scholars of the Vedas would have nothing to be scholars of.”

Natalia Korneeva, independent research scholar, Moscow (natananker@gmail.com)

All photos and videos in this article were taken in traditional Brahmin villages in Kerala visited during the cultural tour following the 6th International Vedic Workshop (January 2014, Kozhikode). The videos referred to in the text can be viewed in the digital version of this issue of The Newsletter.

References
1. Along with the Āśvalāyana school, the Nambudiri Rigveda is of the Śāṅkhyāyana (Śāṅkhyāyana) recension, which is called Kaschātaki in Kerala and now not found anywhere else in India. The Nambudiri Vajurveda is of the Taittirīya recension, but follows the closely related śūtras of Bādhūyāyana and Vāḍhula, which is uncommon in the rest of South India, where the Taittirīya recension is rather common. The Nambudiri Śāṅkhyāyana belongs to the Jamniyāya recension and except for in a couple of isolated Tamil villages has not been found anywhere else. See Staal, F. 1983. Nambudiri Veda Recitation. The Hague: Mouton, p.53; Staal, F. & J. Levy. 1968. The Four Vedas: The Oral Tradition of Hymns, Chants, Sacrificial and Magical Formulas, NY: Arch Records, p. 3; Staal, F. 1983. Agra: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, Vol. I, pp.171-172
4. I am obliged to Dr P. Vinod Bhattathiripad who read the draft of this paper and made several important corrections. I am also happy to acknowledge him and other organisers of the 6th International Vedic Workshop (January 2014, Kozhikode) and the cultural tour that followed the workshop (www.ivwa2014.org) for the opportunity to become acquainted with the unique traditions of Nambudiris.
6. Ibid, p.2
9. The Vedic texts are presented in two versions: the śruti-pātha and the pāda-pātha. Śruti-pātha means ‘conjunction’, ‘continuity’, the sūkta-pātha – the continuous text in which the phonological alterations (sandhi) apply between words. Pāda means ‘word’, the pāda-pātha – ‘word-for-word’ text in which alterations (sandhi) are decomposed into separate words. The pāda-pātha is a base for other modifications.
14. Along with the conventional division of the text of the Rigveda into mantras, anuvākas, sūktas and mantras or ṛṣis, Nambudiris also use another division of the Rigveda into ṛṣiṣṭakas, adhyāyas, ṛṣiṣṭakas, adhyāyas, kṣas, anuvākas, sūktas and mantras for the purpose of memorisation and recitation (the colloquial pronunciation is āstama and vāstama for vāstukā).
Notes on Vyayam: a vernacular sports journal in western India

The initiation of vernacular press in western India was followed by the penetration of print and proliferation of a range of journalistic endeavours by the early twentieth century. While political journalism has had its share of historians, the story of sports journalism has remained rather under-researched and obscure in mainstream narratives of the subcontinent. In this article, I focus on the contents and policy of a unique Marathi language periodical, Vyayam [Exposure], which was launched in 1915 and was committed to the popularization of sport and physical culture especially among the educated middle classes of the region.

Vyayam had categorically asserted its stance to steer clear of political issues, most probably to avoid colonial surveillance and censorship. Indeed,Vyayam featured political sketches of anti-colonial nationalists and also occasionally of foreign statesmen like Woodrow Wilson of the USA and Benito Mussolini, but the journal disavowed any overt expression of anti-colonial and nationalist emotions. It did include biographical sketches of foreign statesmen like Woodrow Wilson of the USA, and Benito Mussolini, but the journal disavowed any overt expression of anti-colonial and nationalist emotions.

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The editorial of October 1915, focused on physical training for the educated. “The main theme of our journal is ‘Exercise’ and its propagation.” Vyayam disavowed any overt expression of anti-colonial and nationalist emotions.

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Vyayam was appointed as the co-editor of this journal. It was published by the Shriramavijaya Printing Press, situated within the princely state of Baroda. A sportsman trained in western as well as indigenous sports, the journal seemed to cater certain kinds of audiences. The objectives of the periodical, as presented in its inaugural editorial of October 1915, focused on physical training for the educated. “The main theme of our journal is ‘Exercise’ and its propagation. Vyayam meditating on one’s worldly, spiritual and social desires, readers will recognize the importance of expressing anti-colonial and nationalist emotions. It did include biographical sketches of foreign statesmen like Woodrow Wilson of the USA and Benito Mussolini, but the journal disavowed any overt expression of anti-colonial and nationalist emotions.

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Mamun and the ‘Kaum Imam San’ of Cambodia

Discourse on syncretic Islam could, according to recent scholarship, explain the practices of a Cham community known as the ‘Kaum Imam San’ by some and the ‘Bani of Cambodia’ by others. This community, numbering about 50,000 today, has gained about 50,000 attention; perhaps due to the following reasons. First, the community has attracted scholarly interest through the newfound efforts backed by the American embassy to increase basic literacy in the endangered Cham script. Second, the community has attracted the attentions of the purification efforts of Salafi- or Tablighi-influenced elements of Cambodia’s Islamic community. Finally, it is likely that the Kaum Imam San have also attracted a potentially disproportionate amount of scholarly attention (per population) as a result of their vibrant religious traditions, which mix elements of Islamic, Khmer and ancestral worshipping practices with the unique historical memory of the saint named Kaum Imam San, in order to produce a truly lively experience.

William Noseworthy

A NUMBER OF SCHOLARS have written about elements of the ‘Mawlut’ and ‘Chai’ ceremonies of the Kaum Imam San, while only few have elected to study the ‘Mamun’ ceremony. Mawlut from Arabic Mawlid refers either to Mawlid N-Nabiyyi—‘the birthday of the prophet’—or Mawlid Imam (for a Sufi or a locally childcare Shafi’i influenced ceremony) during the nineteenth century Imam who secured the recognition of the Kaum Imam San in Cambodia through his partnership with the Khmer king, Ang Duong. These ceremonies are calendar events and occur once a year. Meanwhile, Chai ceremonies have an added flare of Southeast Asian ancestor worship and spirit possession rituals. They can take place at any time and are more a matter of a family securing enough funds to put them on, in order to purify the spiritual and physical essence of a sick, terminally ill, or otherwise afflicted member of the family or village group. Although Mamun also features this distinct flare, it, like Mawlut, only occurs once a year: at the end of the rainy season, after the Khmer water festival, usually in conjunction with the boat race on the Mekong, just as the moon becomes full. As tradition has it, when the moon is right, the ancestors are ready.

Mamun

Mamun is intended to be a celebration of the specifically Cham royal ancestry of the Kaum Imam San group. During Mamun, the great ancestors of the Kaum Imam San come alive through spirit mediums. Meanwhile, during the days, Islamic rites are held to bless the Kaum Imam San villagers and lineage. It is traditionally a three day ceremony, continuing into the early hours of each morning. However, in recent years it seems that the ceremony has become shorter. This past year Mamun lasted only one full afternoon, evening and morning. Additionally, although reported that traditionally the Khmer Royal family also used to visit Mamun, this has not once occurred in recent memory. This year, Mamun happened to take place just after the Islamic ceremonies of ‘Asura’, which are celebrated by the Kaum Imam San, the Shafi’i Sunni mainstream Muslims, as well as the Tablighi- and Salafi-influenced elements of the community. Just two days after Asura, the ceremony began when the Kaum Imam San priests (gaom) gathered under a small tent (gaom Mamun). As with other ancestral worship ceremonies and religious occasions in Southeast Asia, food plays a central role in Mamun. It is the women (and predominantly elderly women [mum] who busy themselves with the food preparation. In particular, the Cham concept of ancestor worship called mbeng muk kei includes the Cham word mbeng, which connotes possession as well as celebration. The food being offered is for the ancestors to imbibe. Notably, unlike certain other Cham ceremonies in Vietnam where rice porridge [jo] or cooked rice [gaom] is offered, during Mamun the central offering is rice noodles [poch]. The rice noodles are placed on a platter [dalem] along with curry [kan] and a special green sauce [jo domay]. Chilies adorn the center of the platter for extra flavor.

The opening

As the offering platters are slowly moved into the gaom Mamun, the son gather. They are led in prayer by a head Imam from the community, which begins with the Al-Fatiha verse of the Qur’an (the opening). However, the tonal quality of what follows is of greatest interest. In Vietnam, the Awal [the ‘Rave of Vietnam’] have recently been noted to have a tonal quality to their chants that demonstrates a distinct Buddhist influence. The Al-Fatiha is recited in a lower register. Meanwhile, throughout Shafi’i Sunni Southeast Asia, the Al-Fatiha is generally recited in a comparatively higher register. The register of the Kaum Imam San prayers appears to be in the middle, occasionally leading observers to a state of surprise and wonder when they hear prayers being recited in a relatively high-pitch, forte, but with also a rhythm still showing some traces of potential influence from Buddhist chants. To learn more about the prayers that follow the Al-Fatiha during Mamun one should study gift literature – a form of text that explains when to use certain verses [surah]. However, the gift will only get one so far, as what follows the few surah that are recited during Mamun appears to have no written regulation, although it is guided by oral conceptions of Cham traditional practices [adat].

After the opening prayers of Mamun have been recited the offering platters are placed in front of the priests of the community, who eat first, followed by elders male, elders women and then younger members of the community. As the evening begins, the eldest females of the community take center stage, as it is only these priestesses that have the power to call upon the ancestor spirits (‘Chai’ and ‘Po’). These aspects of the evening may also be compared to elements of the popular Chai ceremonies covered by other scholars – including the emphasis on the historical memory of the Kingdom of Champa, and how 5,000 members of the upper echelon and royal family moved to form the Cham community in Vietnam [adat]. Although they were joined by later migrations and more heavily influenced by Islam in Khmer territory, this memory of the Kingdom of Champa is critical.

Origins and visitation of Po and Chai spirits

The oldest ‘Po’ and ‘Chai’ are said to have come from the Kingdom of Champa. Certain Po and Chai names—‘Po Luhan’, ‘Po Traong’ and ‘Muk Thang Ahabok’, for example—can also be found in Cham ceremonies in Vietnam, although their forms, understandably, take on different apperations during the Mamun ceremonies. First, almost all of the Po and Chai spirits visit the ceremonies through the bodies of women. Second, as with Chai ceremonies, during Mamun there are other spirits. This can be explained in two ways. The first is through a sort of psychologizing of the post-Khmer Rouge experience of the Cham community. The second is through an oral narrative that states that the son had an original flag from the Cham royal family in their possession. The flag was traditionally folded and held many Po and Chai spirits inside. Within recent memory [after 1993] or on the occasion of post-conflict reunification, the flag opened and a whole new series of Po and Chai appeared.

The diversity of Po and Chai spirits present during the Mamun ceremonies varies by family and lineage. It is traditionally a three day ceremony, continuing into the early hours of each morning. However, in recent years it seems that the ceremony has become shorter. This past year Mamun lasted only one full afternoon, evening and morning. Additionally, although reported that traditionally the Khmer Royal family also used to visit Mamun, this has not once occurred in recent memory. This year, Mamun happened to take place just after the Islamic ceremonies of ‘Asura’, which are celebrated by the Kaum Imam San, the Shafi’i Sunni mainstream Muslims, as well as the Tablighi- and Salafi-influenced elements of the community. Just two days after Asura, the ceremony began when the Kaum Imam San priests (gaom) gathered under a small tent (gaom Mamun). As with other ancestor worship ceremonies and religious occasions in Southeast Asia, food plays a central role in Mamun. It is the women (and predominantly elderly women [mum]) who busy themselves with the food preparation. In particular, the Cham concept of ancestor worship called mbeng muk kei includes the Cham word mbeng, which connotes possession as well as celebration. The food being offered is for the ancestors to imbibe. Notably, unlike certain other Cham ceremonies in Vietnam where rice porridge [jo] or cooked rice [gaom] is offered, during Mamun the central offering is rice noodles [poch]. The rice noodles are placed on a platter [dalem] along with curry [kan] and a special green sauce [jo domay]. Chilies adorn the center of the platter for extra flavor.

Above: Offerings of Royal Objects in spirit mediums channeling Po and Chai spirits.

Below: Kaum Imam San clergy read the ‘Surah/’ manuscript.
In 1950, Prime Minister Abdul Halim's cabinet identified malaria, tuberculosis, yaws, and leprosy as the 'Big Four' endemic diseases [Penjakit Rakjat] that enraptured the overall vitality of the country's population. Unlike leprosy, yaws is a disease that has escaped public consciousness worldwide. Although not fatal, the disease was the leading cause of disability in Indonesia during the 1950s. Indonesia's anti-yaws campaign, launched in 1950, was the world's most comprehensive attempt to combat this disease at the time. Yet to date, victory against yaws has remained elusive.

Raden Kodijat: architect of Indonesia's anti-yaws campaign

The global campaign to eradicate yaws began in Indonesia in 1950 as a part of a national health programme. Raden Kodijat, Indonesia's first Health Minister between August 1948 and November 1945, argued to the effect that Indonesia suffered from an acute shortage of physicians, and where distances covered by the TCPS teams were enormous. In order to overcome the acute shortage of physicians, Soetopo appointed djuru pateks to administer penicillin injections. The djuru pateks and nurses would meet with subdistrict and village heads [lurah], provide education vis-à-vis yaws and enlist their support. Male nurses supervised the implementation of the programme at the subdistrict level. The village headman would assemble the enslaved population to determine the prevalence of yaws. Children's Fund (UNICEF). The programme was initially executed in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, where congenital yaws were treated with an injection of procaine penicillin G [practically 25% aluminum monostearate (PAM)], a one-shot treatment schedule that reduced the per capita cost of the yaws treatment. The Indonesian government, under Soetopo’s directive [Indonesia’s Minister of Health in Abdul Halim’s cabinet between January and June 1950] pursued a policy of mass treatment of entire village populations using penicillin, irrespective of whether or not villagers were infected with yaws. Kodijat, who opposed what he saw as the wasteful expenditure of UNICEF funds, advocated that penicillin should only be administered to patients with active yaws lesions aware of the potential side-effects that injections could induce in patients. Initially, Soetopo questioned the feasibility of the Kodijat Method for two reasons: (a) the country suffered from an acute shortage of doctors and nurses needed to execute the anti-yaws campaign; and (b) the limitations placed on the Kodijat Method because of not treating latent yaws cases (patients who did not manifest evidence of yaws lesions), as the latent yaws cases constituted a potential reservoir for the transmission of future infections. In an attempt to remedy the perceived shortcomings of the Kodijat Method, Soetopo designed a two-pronged strategy: a modified version of the Kodijat Method, officially known as Treponematoses Control Programme Simplified (TCPs), which advocated: (a) that the Kodijat Method would be used for densely-populated Java; and (b) that total mass treatment (using penicillin injections) of all village residents would be implemented in the Indonesian Outer Islands where the population was sparse and dispersed, and where distances covered by the TCPs teams were enormous. In order to overcome the acute shortage of physicians, Soetopo appointed djuru pateks [yaws scouts with elementary education] to detect yaws cases and administer treatment, conduct periodic resurveys of the population, and to follow up treated patients.

The Campaign against Yaws in Postcolonial Indonesia

In 1950, Prime Minister Abdul Halim’s cabinet identified malaria, tuberculosis, yaws, and leprosy as the ‘Big Four’ endemic diseases [Penjakit Rakjat] that enraptured the overall vitality of the country’s population. Unlike leprosy, yaws is a disease that has escaped public consciousness worldwide. Although not fatal, the disease was the leading cause of disability in Indonesia during the 1950s. Indonesia’s anti-yaws campaign, launched in 1950, was the world’s most comprehensive attempt to combat this disease at the time. Yet to date, victory against yaws has remained elusive.

Yaws, Also known as frambise in Dutch and patek in Bahasa Indonesia, is a neglected tropical disease that affects the skin, bones, and cartilage of the human body. The disease is caused by a spirochete treponema pallidum pertenue, a bacterium that is closely related to the bacterial family of treponemal infections, which cause syphilis. Yaws is transmitted through person-to-person non-sexual contact with fluid from the sores of the infected patient. Within two weeks, a young child or adult may develop rashes on the skin on the where the microbe initially entered the body. Soon, these sores disappear. Later, skin lesions appear all over the body. Other symptoms of yaws include bone pain and disfigurement of the skin. If the disease is not treated within five years of the initial infection, the nose and bones of the patient become disfigured.

Yaws has been metaphorically referred to in international health literature as a ‘disease at the end of the road’, the road being the symbol of socio-economic development – and is deemed to be caused by inadequate hygiene. Since World War II, yaws can be easily cured using penicillin, and this is true in cases where the treatment is evident within a few days. During Indonesia’s anti-yaws campaign, villagers unceremoniously accepted penicillin injections as a cure for the disease, but in the process, they failed to implement long-lasting preventative measures such as community hygiene.

In search of a magic bullet

Treponema pallidum pertenue (WHO) was founded in 1948 with the utopian vision of building a decent, peaceful, and road being the symbol of socio-economic development – and is deemed to be caused by inadequate hygiene. Since World War II, yaws can be easily cured using penicillin, and this is true in cases where the treatment is evident within a few days. During Indonesia’s anti-yaws campaign, villagers unceremoniously accepted penicillin injections as a cure for the disease, but in the process, they failed to implement long-lasting preventative measures such as community hygiene.

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paramedical personnel, djuru pateks were utilised not only to diagnose yaws, but also to administer penicillin injections. Yaws eradication in Indonesia during the 1950s was internationally well-recognised. Soetoepo was nominated as a member of the WHO Expert Committee on Venereal Diseases and Treponematoses in 1953, which was constituted by WHO to study the worldwide prevalence of yaws and venereal diseases, and to design suitable epidemiological interventions for affected countries. But, it was Kodijat who would become a national hero in Indonesia’s campaign against yaws. He had the reputation of being soft-spoken, yet iron-willed. UNICEF had to convince him of the therapeutic efficacy of penicillin against yaws. Only after he had tested penicillin at his hospital in Yogyakarta, and had carefully analysed its effects, did he agree to accept penicillin in treating yaws patients. His painstaking experiments with penicillin used in the TCPS, and his immaculately kept field data and survey maps, were a model for international epidemiologists. For his exemplary community leadership in organising the TCPS in Java, Kodijat was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Prize in 1961.

TCPS was a public health achievement for Indonesia in terms of reducing the overall prevalence of yaws from 165 in 1949 to approximately 0.58% in 1960. The TCPS was successful in remediying the acute shortage of skilled medical personnel throughout Indonesia through the recruitment of djuru pateks amongst villagers themselves. Once the prevalence of yaws in a given subdistrict had dropped below 0.5%, djuru pateks were additionally used to detect leprosy patients, as was the case in Kampong Melayu (Jakarta) and Menganti (East Java). The integration of leprosy control activities into the overall activities of the TCPS was successful in reducing the cost of TCPS activities fourfold.

Relevance of the campaign

By the early 1960s, yaws had been banished to the status of a neglected tropical disease, few people were aware of it. The global anti-yaws campaigns of the 1950s and 1960s had decimated yaws to infinitesimal levels such that the campaign became a victim of its own success. Before long, eradication efforts were neglected in several countries, including Indonesia. The disease remains a challenge in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Solomon Islands, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Congo, and Central African Republic. But, there is room for guarded optimism vis-à-vis eradicating yaws globally by 2020, as only humans (and no other animals) are the reservoir of the disease. Following the development in 2012 of an available generic version of the drug benzathine penicillin – currently still used in treating yaws cases – advocate a search and treatment strategy of all yaws-infected individuals. The Indonesian Ministry of Health would eliminate yaws by 2013 as the Ministry of Health had to break with administrative protocols in order to facilitate the appointment of monits and djuru pateks. But, due to the political uncertainties in Indonesia during the transition from the Soekarno to the Soeharto era (1965–1998), UNICEF suspended financial assistance to the TCPS, and the detection and treatment of yaws patients was consequently put on hold. By 1969, although the overall prevalence of yaws in Indonesia had been reduced to 0.44%, there were sharp discrepancies across the country’s various regions. Where the provinces of Java recorded an overall prevalence rate of 0.22%, in the Outer Islands provinces, particularly West Irian, nearly 18% of the population was infected. The unsettled conditions during the 1960s, arising from the political differences between Java and the Outer Islands, impeded effective implementation of the TCPS in the latter.

Key health indicators such as ratio of physicians to the total population were lower than countries with a similar economic profile. In this regard, the disease eradication campaigns of the 1950s have valuable lessons to offer. The TCPS, in particular, is instructive in terms of how to organise a mass disease control campaign with optimal utilisation of scarce financial resources in an archipelagic country with variable population densities, and, how to contend with epidemiological conditions in locales wherein a standard epidemiological strategy will not work. Although the Indonesian economy is prospering relatively well today, compared to the 1950s and 1960s, the country continues to spend less on healthcare per capita than countries with a similar economic profile. Key health indicators such as ratios of physicians to the total population are also lagging. Indonesia’s physicians seem to be prisoners of the country’s bureaucracy that leaves little scope for individual initiatives in public health. To successfully eliminate yaws within the next five years, Indonesia would need to (a) balance on a knife edge the thoroughness required to track all suspected yaws cases in a community and the speed required to implement the campaign, and (b) skilfully coordinate between various governmental levels.

Vivek Neelakantan earned a PhD in History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Sydney in 2014. His main research interests include the history of science and medicine in postcolonial Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and the Philippines (vivekneelakantan@gmail.com)

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Forgotten disease, incomplete victories

Kaden Kodijat
1890-1966
Lifestyle migration involves relatively affluent people moving either part-time or full-time, permanently or temporarily, to places that they believe will offer them a better quality of life. There is usually an economic incentive to their mobility, but the search for the good life is paramount in their motivations. Lifestyle migration is an increasingly widespread phenomenon, with effects for migrants, locals, cultural and economic life, and it has been studied quite widely in European and American contexts, but has been overlooked in an Asian setting. Our research project was thus designed to address these gaps in knowledge and to capture the incentives, experiences and outcomes of lifestyle migration in Thailand, Malaysia and China.

Karen O’Reilly and Maggy Lee

RESEARCHERS SPENT A FEW WEEKS DURING 2012 WITH British lifestyle migrants in their homes and communities in Hua Hin, Thailand, and Penang, Malaysia. This project has investigated various forms of lifestyle migration, including retirees and second-home owners, self-employed, business expatriates, and those who married into local families. We carried out a total of 65 interviews using face-to-face, email, Skype and telephone interviewing. In addition, an online survey was completed by 112 people responding to questions about motivations and experiences of lifestyle migration in Thailand and Malaysia. We monitored a number of online expatriate discussion forums and analysed the content of several expatriate magazines, the membership and activities of many different organisations (e.g., St. Patrick’s Society of Selangor, International Women’s Association, Penang), and the content of migrants’ weblogs about life in East Asia. Lastly, we asked respondents to send us their own photos of life in Malaysia and Thailand.

In addition to studying British lifestyle migrants in Malaysia and Thailand, we also collected stories from 31 Hong Kong lifestyle migrants in mainland China (including some families of married couples, fathers and sons). Some of our ethnographic fieldwork involved shadowing the lifestyle migrants and their friends in their cross-border activities and visiting a large-scale residential property aimed at Hong Kong second-home owners and the fast-growing middleclass in post-reform China.

Attracting ‘affluent’ migrants

Both Thailand and Malaysia have been finding ways to attract relatively wealthy, especially retired, migrants to their countries as a way to create some stability in their economies. Thailand is promoted as a good destination for international tourists and retirees, with excellent medical care and educational facilities. In particular, Hua Hin is marketed as a desirable location for retirement due to its temperate climate, range of leisure activities (e.g., 12 golf courses), and Western-style shopping and entertainment. Malaysia is promoted to would-be second-home owners and long-term visitors as multicultural, exotically tropical, and safe and secure. It is also an important destination for medical tourism.

In Thailand, policy incentives to attract foreigners include the ‘Non-immigrant-OA-long stay Visa for a Retired Person’, introduced in 1998 for foreigners over 50 years old who have a minimum of 800,000 THB to bring into Thailand. Estimates from 2009 show that 28,309 people are registered as retirees (just under 1% of total in-migration to Thailand and almost 8% of the non-working foreign population). Similarly, Malaysia proudly offers the ‘Malaysia My Second Home Visa’ (MM2H), a renewable multiple entry social visit pass, initially granted for a 10-year permit. It is intended to draw retiree second-home migrants to their countries in itself, or an adventure in an otherwise monotonous daily life.

Those we interviewed in Thailand and Malaysia preferred the term lifestyle migrant because they believed ‘expatriate’ has negative connotations: western, white, privileged individuals whose motivation is to make money, and who lack any interest in the local society. They felt that, for them, migration was as much about new experiences, getting to know the new society and perhaps making a new home. Indeed, many of our respondents were actively involved in the local communities through being members of committees, engaging in voluntary activities, making local friends and building long-term relationships (including marriage). Migrants also pointed out that in many cases expatriate packages are not as generous as they used to be, so that no longer the driving force behind the move. Those who had migrated with their jobs often did not feel especially wealthy or privileged.

Social exclusion

For lifestyle migrants, the complicated and regularly changing rules and policies in countries of destination can make their lives precarious. For example, many of our respondents regularly filled in cross-border re-entry forms, making sure their visa was renewed. In Malaysia, because the closest and easiest place to go for this can be Thailand, it is known colloquially as the Thai Run. Because of the complexity of the rules, migrants may well not have access to proper health insurance, relying instead on travel insurance that is renewed through various complicated mechanisms, or choose to have no health insurance at all. One migration agent we spoke to told us he even advises his clients to not bother with health insurance, as the prices for local treatment and medicine are so cheap, migrants can afford to ‘pay as you go’.

Similarly, insurance companies tend not to provide cover for the very old and the very needy. Some people we spoke to had difficulty qualifying for insurance due to their age or level of health. One 59-year-old woman’s physical health upon arriving in Thailand has meant he is ineligible for health insurance, which leaves him and his wife waiting for medical cover and susceptible to large bills in the meantime. He told us, ‘The worst thing about it is medical costs. I’ve had problems with my throat, which cost me a fair bit of money. I’m still too heavy to get insured. Because of the operation I had I’ve lost about 10 stone, I’m still going down and I’ve got about 8 or 9 kilos to lose and then I get insured, until then I’ve got to pay for medical expenses and I can’t insure my wife until I’m insured. They don’t insure Thai. She can claim back on my insurance once I get it.’

Social exclusion is ‘the dynamic process of being shut out...from a range of political, social and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society.’ Social exclusion usually occurs as a combination of adverse social situations, for example unemployment, unfavourable job situation, low earnings, poor health and/or living conditions, and the inability to build social networks. Using this definition, there is a danger that some lifestyle migrants in East Asia suffer (or could suffer) from social exclusion. Some are living on 90-day visas with the insecurity of not knowing when they will be prevented from continually renewing their visas. Others are living with no (or with inadequate) health insurance, with all the risks that entails. Of course, if people are not helped to live safely and grow older comfortably, they may eventually return to the UK when their needs become too great to cope with. Similarly, many Hong Kong retired or elderly lifestyle migrants who relocated to take advantage of the low costs of living in the mainland a decade ago, now find they have to reconsider their options in the face of rising living costs and a growing lack of trust in China’s medical health system.

Overall, we argue that lifestyle migration is a way to think about different forms of migration driven by the search for a better quality of life, by people who are not compelled to move because of acute economic or security situations in their home country. Their stories also raise important questions about the ways in which lifestyle migration is being governed as states focus on attracting the ‘right’ migrants rather than serving their needs or protecting their rights.

Karen O’Reilly, Loughborough University, UK (k.reilly@lboro.ac.uk)
Maggy Lee, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong (leesym@hku.hk)

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Below: History and diversity in Penang. (Photo by Karen O’Reilly)
"Technoscientific practices rely on their own kind of magic, such as translating ultrasound signals into the language of pregnant women, or data points into definitive outcomes." ¹

In her chapter, 'Science and a little bit of magic', Lynn Morgans writes that scientific knowledge and technologies of reproduction involve notions of magic and 'irrationality' – qualities for which other knowledge practices are disparaged – in addition to their more public qualities of rationality and objectivity.

Jenna Grant

I THOUGHT ABOUT THIS WHEN, after describing my research on ultrasound imaging in Phnom Penh, people in the audience asked if I had seen any ultrasound images of the foetus. "Is that the new magic?" for Cambodians. One person who said this was an Australian working for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, then in the process of trying to secure funding to exhumate the bodies of Khmer Rouge prison victims, for war crimes. Another was a Buddhist monk trained in Dubuque, Iowa (USA), who volunteered at the Phnom Penh Municipal Referral Hospital. I spoke with him while we were attending a ceremony celebrating the donation of biomedical technologies, including ultrasound machines. Another was a Cambodian man who works in medicine and the body. The first two, the one who had spent many years in Cambodia, spoke of 'magic' in a tone that was disparaging towards Cambodians, whereas the Buddhist philosopher I spoke to more in line with Morgan, quoted above: ultrasound technology is not magic, for almost everyone. What do doctors, technicians and Cambodians that leads to us talk of as magic? Is magic a category of expected responses to technology, one that draws on a legacy of colonial and development encounters? Is it a category of possible beliefs, in this case about illness, medicine, or reproduction, that thus invites a classical anthropological explanation? Ultrasound technology does not produce magic until 1999 due to the effects of war and instability on the health system, has seen since proliferated, particularly in the private sphere. The people I talked to in hospital imaging wards, as well as outside of clinical settings, did not speak of ultrasound in terms of magic, though its workings and effects were considered powerful and mysterious. They sit with the majority of those who have had an ultrasound transducer placed on their skin in not being able to articulate how sound waves translate into pictures of tissues ordinarily unseen, or fetal measurements previously unknown, or diagnostics previously unavailable. When the patients did show me, though, was how imaging involves mediation, and how bodily interventions – diagnostic or therapeutic, magical and technological, Buddhist and biomedical – come in multiple forms.

Studies of biomedical imaging within cultural studies of science and anthropology show how imaging technologies configure scientific and medical professions, health care systems, and understandings of the body and disease. They describe how doctors and technicians produce and interpret biomedical images, and how these images simultaneously produce and reveal natural facts about bodily interiors. Studies of prenatal ultrasound imaging illuminate how its uses and effects were configured in culturally specific, magical and technical, Buddhist and biomedical – come in multiple forms.

The following story speaks to a second category of magic, which is how technology may be taken up with other-than-biomedical understandings of life, death, and disease. I met Sarouen, a 41-year-old woman with a calm intensity, at the public maternity hospital in Phnom Penh. She had come for her second ultrasound scan, and explained to me, in her case, she had a specific expectation for what ultrasound visualization should do. She lived with her three daughters in the far northern suburbs of Phnom Penh. Her fourth child, a son, had died in a road accident. Sarouen was now pregnant with her fifth child. That morning she had been bleeding and her doctor sent her to check the pregnancy with ultrasound. Sarouen told me and Sophean, my research assistant, that she believed this new child was her son who died, returning. In a dream, her son told her that he wants her as his mother again. "It is him again! He asked to come back!" "Veu broume heov! Veu som nok vey sho!""Her son had died one year ago exactly. She was worried about her bleeding because she could not bear to lose her son again. Sarouen was unlike many of the pregnant women I spoke to in that she did not seek out an ultrasound exam (or more than one) for any of her previous pregnancies. She had not participated in the widespread commercialization of this medical service. In her view, ultrasound exams were "not necessary" because her previous four children were born and lived healthily without them. She came for her first ultrasound scan because she wanted to confirm her dream as well as confirm that the pregnancy was still viable. She has a story folowing popular Buddhist notions of rebirth; though in her case, it was a particular and familiar spirit. The spirit of her dead son returned, wanting her to bear another son. Sarouen did not say that ultrasound would visualize the spirit of her dead son. This would not be ultrasound's magic. Rather, the information from ultrasound worked in triangulation with information sensed from non-rational or unconscious ways of knowing. In her case these facts were in harmony, and didn't ask what she would have done if they were in contradiction. Sarouen's story illustrates how ultrasound may be motivated by desire for a certain kind of knowledge and reassurance, where past, present, and future family are at stake. Her story suggests that ultrasound imaging is a node of biomedical and other-than-biomedical understandings of pregnancy, and the entangled realities of dream worlds and waking worlds.

What, now, to make of the consistency in the comments about technology, Cambodians, and magic at the beginning of this article? In addition to the two loose categories I proposed – that in this context, ‘magic’ connotes a response to technologies, or to technologies cohabiting with non-biomedical beliefs – I think these statements also reveal expectations of (medical) anthropology’s proper object. For a while, it seems like there may be a place for foreign, and foreign, research that combines anthropology + Cambodia + biomedical technology was puzzling. Suggested alternatives varied by interlocutor: A team had been working on traditional birth practices in the countryside! Public health researcher: Why not study health problems, such as maternal mortality? Medical doctor: Are you studying misuse of technology? Development worker: How do we get more technologies into Cambodian hospitals to modernize medical care? Health official: But how do we regulate these technologies? I hope my readers will ask questions of the stories I have told about ultrasound, as well as ask questions of my accounts of how ultrasound technology and foreign technologies are an important corrective to simplistic ‘first contact’ stories forges about peoples inability to understand technology. But as anthropologist Brian Larkin argues, they may end up downplaying “the autonomy of the objects, and the very real uncertainties and epistemic instabilities of objects that are not properly understood. Anthropological arguments stressing the (photo by author)
A satellite’s view of Nalanda’s past

Nalanda is believed to have been the world’s oldest residential monastic university, and a continually active Buddhist centre of learning from the 5th to the 12th centuries AD. This report describes how modern satellite technology can augment traditional archaeological efforts to shed light on Nalanda’s past. It is an outcome of a multidisciplinary research project entitled *A study of Nalanda using GIS and remote-sensing*, conducted by the author under a Fellowship awarded by Nalanda University in 2013-2014. A detailed essay is under revision and review for *Archives of Asian Art*.

M.B. Rajani

How large was Nalanda?

Xuan Zang, who resided at Nalanda between 635 AD and 641 AD, has made by far the most detailed record of the spatial layout of various structures within the complex. Translations of his description list structures such as monasteries, temples, images, stupas, a gate, walls, tanks, etc.1 The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has conducted excavations in several phases. The excavated remains comprise sixteen large structures: a row of four temples or Chaityas on the west (numbered 3, 12, 15 and 14), a row of eight west-facing monasteries or Viharas (numbered 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) parallel to the temples, two smaller north-facing monasteries (numbered 1A and 1B), and to the east of Monastery 7 are Temple 2 and the Sarai temple (Fig.1).

Footprints on the environment

A long-lasting residential establishment must draw resources from the local environment for its sustenance, with water being perhaps the most essential. A synoptic view from a satellite allows one to survey large swathes of land and identify present and, more interestingly, past sources of water. Careful examinations of coarse resolution satellite images (from Landsat) have shown an unusual cluster of such water bodies surrounding Nalanda in a pattern not seen elsewhere in the vicinity. This, together with their proximity, suggests that they may be associated with the site, and may therefore help trace its extent.

Fig.2 shows these water bodies surrounding the excavated site and neighbouring villages, and suggests an approximate boundary. Tanks in the vicinity of the site have been noticed and explicitly mentioned by Chinese travellers and, later, by British explorers. It is believed that these tanks were not primarily intended as reservoirs, but were dug for earth needed to make the enormous quantity of bricks required for building the monasteries and temple structures.2 However, satellite image analysis show that the shapes, location and layout of the tanks display careful planning; they are mostly geometrical (squares or rectangles), with sides roughly parallel to the four cardinal directions. Such precision may have been unnecessary if these tanks were excavated solely for mining earth for brick making. The largest tank, Dighi Pokhar, has a conspicuous eastward spread unlike the other large tanks (Indra Pokhar and Pansokar Pokhar), which snugly bound the area containing the remains (see Fig.2). Analysis of a Cartosat1 image reveals a 10 km long palaeochannel terminating at Dighi Pokhar’s eastern end. At some time in the past, this palaeochannel would have been fed by water curving off from the nearby river Panchana. Further ground observations and archaeological explorations are necessary to establish whether the diversion was man-made or natural.

The cluster of water bodies around Nalanda suggests that the area within may have had a higher elevation. The present study analyses a Digital Elevation Model (DEM) – generated using a pair of stereo-images from Cartosat1 – demonstrating that the topography within the proposed extent is not a single long ridge, but is comprised of two distinct clusters of mounds. The southern cluster is larger and comprises of the entire excavated area and adjacent regions, including the villages of Muzaffarpur, Kapata, Surajpur and Baragaj. The northern cluster is smaller, covering Begumpur and her environs. For brevity, these clusters will be referred to as the southern and northern mounds. Both harbour several interesting details that are virtually impossible to discern at ground-level.
This suggests that there may be additional similarly shaped structures south of Monastery 1. A ground study showed undulations along this feature, as though the surface cover was hiding some structure underneath. These circular mounds were found while exploring this area on the ground, one of which lies along the axis-line referenced above.

The northern mound

The northern mound is much smaller than the southern one, but it has a very interesting shape. The northwest, northeast and southeast extremes of the mound form three corners of a four-pointed feature. This feature measures 450m (northeast-southeast corners) by 400m (northwest-northeast corners), but its elevation is only around 4-5m higher than the surrounding area. This mound lies to the west of Dighi Pokhar, and may correspond to Buchanan's observation when he approached this area from Bihar shelf on 8 January 1812. He crossed the river Panchana and "About four miles from thence I came to a tank called merely Dighi, which is the commence- ment of the rains. ... Immediately west from this tank is a very considerable space elevated with the fragments of brick".7

A field exploration was undertaken to seek evidence (undulated surfaces or exposed old walls, for instance) along the periphery of this feature. The residents of the village were inquisitive and perhaps apprehensive about the purpose of our visit. However, they were forthcoming with information, especially once they were invited to examine the 3D satellite image of their village and environs (Fig. 3). As we probed them for information about any exposed old structures in the vicinity, one resident reported that a small trench had recently been dug on his land and offered to lead us to it. As the team followed him, our GPS track traced northward, then eastward, and ended by the trench located almost precisely at the north-eastern corner of the northern mound. The asterisk in Fig. 2 indicates this location, where a brick structure – perhaps only the proverbial tip of the iceberg – has been discovered. The massive structure one suspects lies hidden beneath the northern mound is comparable in size and shape to the Vihara quadrangles of Vikramashila (in Bihar) and Somapura (in Bangladesh).

Conclusions

This study, using satellite images, has identified several features that are of archaeological interest in the environs of Nalanda. They are:

• The pattern of water bodies surrounding Nalanda, possibly indicating the site's extent and spread in south to north direction.
• A palaeochannel that drew water towards the site from the river Panchana, which intersects the site at the eastern end of Dighi Pokhar, and could explain why this tank extends significantly further east than other tanks.
• Within the proposed extent there are two separate (northern and southern) clusters of mounds.
• Vegetation patterns indicate that along the line of Temples 3, 12, 13 and 14, there may have been two additional temples to the north and one additional temple to the south. Similarly, an extension of the main row of monasteries to the south is hypothesized.
• The northern cluster of mounds includes Begumpur, and reveals a shape suggesting that the mound might be hiding remains of a large four-pointed structure. A field expedition has revealed that the location of the brick structure excavated recently in Begumpur coincides with the northeast corner of the four pointed substructure.

These findings were presented at the international conference held in Rajgir (January, 2014), jointly organised by Nalanda University and IAS: "Cultural Heritage: Environment, Ecology and Inter-Asian Interactions". The satellite data analysis was conducted in the laboratory facilities of Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (KSR SAC) Bangalore.

M.B. Rajani is Guest Faculty at the Archaeological Sciences Centre, IIT Gandhinagar. Her PhD and post-doctoral research interests are in space-based remote sensing applications for archaeology (rajani@iitgn.ac.in)

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Music travels as people migrate from one place to another. As a shared human activity, music often appeals to peoples of different ethnicities living in different places, and transcends various boundaries that are often defined by ethnicity, nation and religion. In this sense, music demonstrates ‘trans-border humanity’ or bonds amongst human beings in the midst of differences, conflicts, and transformations. This essay seeks trans-border humanity by tracing music that has travelled with migrating peoples around Northeast Asia, and beyond.

Islands. Photo

CASE STUDIES OF TRAVELLING MUSIC exemplify shared sentiments, memories, and human sensibilities that illustrate chains of humanity beyond historical, cultural, and geopolitical divides. Trans-border humanity may also contribute to solutions to international conflicts and antagonism caused by exclusivist ideologies based on nation, ethnicity or religion. It identifies human beings in diversity and multiplicity rather than in a single attribute, such as nationality or ethnicity, and proposes alternative views of people as mobile and in expanding networks across spaces and times.

In search of trans-border humanity, I begin the musical journey in a small island group, called the Ogasawara Islands, where peoples from different places have intersected and created a unique musical culture, and then extend the scope to Japan, the Russian territory Primory Krai, and Central Asia.

Ogasawara musical culture

The Ogasawara Islands (or Bonin Islands in English) are a cluster of small islands located in the Pacific Ocean south of Japan. A boat trip of 25.5 hours from the Tokyo metropolitan area is the only public access to this small place, where fewer than 2500 people reside today. These islands were uninhabited until 1830, when fifty Caucasians and some twenty people from Hawai’i first migrated to one of the islands, called Chichí jima. Since then, the people in this small place have suffered various hardships, including Japanese colonial (1905-1945), discrimination at home, alienation amongst the islanders, colonial migration to Micronesia (1920s), forced evacuation during the Pacific War (1944), segregation under the US Navy (1946-1968), and repression to Japanese administration (1968). Although island life has greatly improved since the reversion, the entangled history still casts a shadow on Ogasawara and its people.

Reflecting the complexity of history and society, Ogasawara musical culture reveals diversity in its practices and performances. Migrants from different countries and islanders travelling around the Pacific Ocean have provided a variety of musical genres in this small remote community. For instance, colonial immigrants from Japan provided such performing arts as taiko drumming and bon dance in Ogasawara. When Japan established its mandate in the South Pacific (1922-1945), many islanders travelled around Micronesia and transmitted the dance called Nanjō odori (literally ‘South Pacific dance’) to Ogasawara. After the war, under the control of the US Navy, some islanders worked in Micronesia temporarily and encountered local songs with Japanese lyrics; they were also exposed to western music. Later, a Japanese songwriter Matsuoka Takeshi (b.1946) learnt from a similarly displaced Jewish musician. Kyo continues her story: in the village of nowhere, ethnic Koreans, who were displaced in different places, sang songs together, inspired by the genres and melodies of the Ogasawara tunes, and then the South Korean government expressed its concern over the culture of the Ogasawara Islands and the possibilities of cooperation for mutual and common humanity.

Transversal journeys of music continue from Ogasawara to many places in Northeast Asia, and beyond. There are numerous examples of music that have travelled around and appealed to various peoples living in different places. I recognise that music can be utilised to promote ideosyncratic nationalisms and ethnocentrism that sometimes prevent trans-cultural communications and international conversations. Nonetheless, there are still cases of music that have been transmitted against political and ideological manipulations.

The song Imjin River is a good example. It demonstrates music travelling despite arbitrary politics. In 1957, the North Korean government released the propaganda song Imjin River — the river that divides the homeland into two countries. The song became popular in North Korea and was also disseminated amongst ethnic Koreans (Koreans in Japan) through school education at Chosen Gakkō (Japanese Schools in Japan). Later, a Japanese songwriter Matsuoka Takeshi (b.1946) learnt the song from a Zainichi friend and translated the lyrics into Japanese for a commercial recording (1968). First, Chogin Pihgchul (The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan) tried to utilise the opportunity for North Korea propaganda, and then the South Korean government expressed its concern about a North Korean song being widely disseminated in Japan. Under such political pressure, the recording was eventually withdrawn voluntarily from publication. However, the song Imjin River strongly appealed to the sentiments of Japanese audiences, and thereafter various Japanese and also Zainichi artists frequently performed Imjin River as part of the Japanese music scene. In 2005, the movie Pachigiri (Break Through) was released featuring stories about the song Imjin River. Although the lyrics lament a homeland divided into two countries, the song itself has transcended political boundaries and manipulations, and achieved transnational popularity.

There are also cases of songs that have travelled from Japan to other places, including Primorsky Krai and Central Asia. The song Urajio Bushi is one such example; it travelled from a rural area of Japan into continental Asia. The song is considered to be a variation of a local song from the Amakusa area, Japan. It tells about nostalgia for home: “Someday, I would like to return and disembark at the port of Nagasaki (located near Amakusa).” In 1881, a regular boat service opened between Vladivostok and Amakusa, and many Japanese began to move to the Russian Far East. Koyukisyo (Japanese overseas prostitutes, often hailing from the Amakusa area) were sighted with migrant and disseminated the song about their home in Vladivostok. At that time, Vladivostok was a rapidly growing city, in which Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Russians, and other peoples from different regions intersected. Later, the song Urajio Bushi became popular in the Russian Far East and even in Manchuria, as Koyukisyo had moved around these areas under the Japanese colonial scheme.

Some Koryo-saram (ethnic Koreans in the post-Soviet States) also remember Koyukisyo and their Japanese tunes as part of their nostalgia for home in the Russian Far East. The study of Koryo-saram and their musical experiences could also be an interesting study for trans-border humanity. These people first migrated to the Russian Far East due to historical difficulties when the Joseon Dynasty of Korea (1392-1910) began to decline. Then, under the politics of the Soviet Union, they were forced to move to Central Asia during the late 1930s; they were suspected of being spies for Japan. After having experienced the pressures of various international politics, some Koryo-saram sing Japanese tunes with Korean lyrics.

In her book, Zainichi journalist Kyo Noduko introduces Zainichi-saryo located in a village in Chirichig (Uzbekistan), who sing a song of nostalgia, Go Gak Sen Choeto (The Mountain and the River of Resistance), which is adapted from a Zainichi song Tenner no Bi (The Beauty of Nature) (2002, 2003): “They even perform the music with musical instruments such as the violin, accordion and mandolin, learnt from a similarly displaced Jewish musician. Kyo continues her story: in the village of nowhere, ethnic Koreans, who were displaced in different places, sang songs together, inspired by the genres and melodies of the Ogasawara tunes, and then the South Korean government expressed its concern over the culture of the Ogasawara Islands and the possibilities of cooperation for common humanity amongst apparent differences. By realising and respecting trans-border humanity, we can enable constructive communication for mutual and galvanising interaction rather than pursue ‘negotiations’ primarily for one’s own benefit.

I believe that the research on trans-border humanity will inform us of a new and innovative knowledge that guides us to the future of a shifting world. Music travels as people migrate from one place to another, and the journey towards trans-border humanity continues to demonstrate the chains of humanity beyond great distances.

Masaya Shishihara is an ethnomusicologist, who conducts research on ‘music, travel and translation towards trans-border humanity.’ He currently holds a postdoctoral fellowship at IAS (m.shishihara@ias.ac).
Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict has been characterized by the growing distance that separates Sinhalese Buddhists from Tamil Hindus. A look at the Catholic Church of the island nation shows that a similar lack of communication and indifference exists within a community united by religious faith but separated by politics, language, and culture.

Bernardo Brown

ON JANUARY 8TH 2011, Rev. Rayappu Joseph, the Catholic Bishop of the Sri Lankan Province of Mannar, testified before the ‘Lessons learnt and Recommendations Commission’ (LLRC) appointed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa after the military defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009. The aim of this commission was to inquire into the origins and consequences of the armed conflict that had confronted the Sri Lankan army and Tamil separatists since 1983. Members of the Catholic clergy set up to address the period between the years of 2002, when the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE signed a ceasefire agreement, and 2009, when the army delivered the decisive military blow against the LTTE in the northern and eastern parts of the island.

Despite the skepticism with which the commission was received by Tamils in the north and east of the country and the widespread criticism it received from the international community for its lack of independence to investigate accusations of war crimes – Bishop Joseph and other members of the Catholic clergy offered their depictions in Mannar. Amongst the many grievances expressed by the Tamil population of Sri Lanka, which Bishop Joseph enumerated to the LLRC, he declared that 146,679 people remained unaccounted for from the last stages of the war (during the first half of 2009). This statement incensed the government in Colombo and led the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Sri Lankan Police to pay Bishop Joseph a visit and question him over his sources of information.

A year later, briefly after the LLRC report was published, Bishop Joseph sent a letter addressed to President Rajapaksa and the UN Human Rights Council in which he demanded the appointment of an independent investigation as it would be the only reliable approach to seek justice for Sri Lankan Tamils. The letter was endorsed by thirty Catholic priests from the Northern Province. Bishop Joseph wrote, “The LLRC has quite rightly identified abuses by the LTTE and also came up with some positive recommendations that have potential for reconciliation. But it has failed to address critical issues of truth-seeking and accountability, despite strong evidence and testimony presented before it. The record of various domestic bodies whose recommendations successive governments have ignored [...].”

On February 18th 2013, another letter was sent to the President and the UNHRC, this time signed by a staggering 133 members of the clergy, not only Catholics, but also Anglicans and Methodists, as well as 54 Catholic nuns working in different parts of the country. With this new letter, a broad international network of Christian solidarity movement started to take shape and garnered support for Bishop Joseph’s demands for justice and accountability. In this strongly worded and widely distributed public appeal, the signatories stated that, “In the last year, those responsible for criticising and challenging the government in peaceful ways, including by engagement with the UN, have been assaulted, questioned, arrested, threatened, dismissed and intimidated by government ministers, officials, military and police.”

Sinhalese Catholic response

While Bishop Joseph’s concern for the humanitarian needs and civil rights of the people of Mannar received the support of many in the country and across the international community, it also generated cautious reactions amongst some Sri Lankan Christians who were anxious to publicly assert their allegiance to the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. As Sri Lanka polarized over matters of human rights and terrorism, the ethnic conflict continued to reconfigure identities, seeing through religious communities and nurturing antagonisms amongst the Christians of the country. This phenomenon was particularly significant amongst the multi-ethnic Catholic communities, as they are the only religious denomination that cuts across the linguistic and ethnic cleavages of Sri Lanka. Many Sinhalese-speaking Catholics in the southern parts of the country sided with the Buddhist majority and were staunch supporters of the military push against the LTTE.

Even amongst Catholic clergy, many Sinhalese priests were wary of supporting Bishop Joseph and considered that his outspoken stance was detrimental to the future of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. This lack of solidarity towards clergy in the dioceses of Mannar and Jaffna was even more disquieting considering that many Sinhalese and Tamil members of the clergy spent long years living and studying side by side at institutions like the National Seminary in Amplegama. A Catholic activist in Colombo, whose work focuses on bridging the cultural, linguistic and political gulf that separates Sinhalese and Tamil Catholics, referred to the deep difficulties faced by his project of generating spaces for dialogue. A Sinhalese Catholic himself, who attends a parish in southern Colombo, he said, “This is the most important thing. This is the only reason why we exist, this is the only reason why we exist.”

The Salman Rushdie fatwa started to question the government’s human rights record. In this strongly worded appeal, Bishop Joseph’s diocese has not only been favored with support from the government but has also been commended for its efforts towards reconciliation. For the inauguration of the new church that was partially built with the labor of army personnel, Bishop Ponniah wrote to President Rajapaksa, “We want to show our confidence to and to honor you for the solemn opening of this new Church [...]. People of Sri Lanka and my entire diocese will be very grateful for your generous act.”

In a conversation I had with Bishop Joseph in September 2013, he observed that Catholics in the south had shown the greatest concern for the plight of Tamil Catholics. The only exception to this situation that he could think of was provided by Sinhalese and Tamil seminarians who developed a genuine concern for the hardship of the fishermen from other parts of the country during their years as students. But he also argued that this effort to cross ethnic and linguistic boundaries was not sustained beyond the seminary and as soon as young priests completed their training and were appointed to their own parishes, that compassionate sense of community seemed to disappear.

Ethnicity and religion

That Catholics in the south consider themselves Sinhalese first and Catholics second is a widespread perception that started to take shape after the 1960s, when the historically privileged Catholic communities of Sri Lanka felt pressured to acquiesce to the demands imposed by the Sinhala nationalist movement. After more than two decades of conflict over the administration of educational resources in independent Sri Lanka, Catholics finally ceded to political pressures and many grew openly critical of Tamil political demands. If Catholics had been able to give up their positions of privilege and adapt to the new reality of the coexistence of Buddhism and Hinduism, the Tamils should follow suit and find ways to adjust to life in a Sinhala dominated nation. As a Sinhalese Catholic teacher explained, “Catholics in the south do occasionally, the community link hard as the Buddhists do, they are more compassionate, but they will consistently stand on the side of Buddhists. They see themselves much closer to Buddhists than to Tamil Catholics, although they protect both religions.”

In recent years, sectors of the Catholic Church that have endorsed the work of the government have indeed received a number of material benefits. These are especially demonstrative in improved educational facilities and larger financial resources for reconstruction. Rev. Joseph Ponniah - Catholic Bishop of Batticaloa – praised President Rajapaksa as a “bridge builder” during a visit to the town of Vakara for the opening ceremony of the new St. Peter’s Church in September 2013. By adopting a less confrontational attitude than Bishop Joseph, his diocese has not only been favored with support from the government but has also been commended for its efforts towards reconciliation. For the inauguration of the new church that was partially built with the labor of army personnel, Bishop Ponniah wrote to President Rajapaksa, “We want to show our confidence to and to honor you for the solemn opening of this new Church [...]. People of Sri Lanka and my entire diocese will be very grateful for your generous act.”

Adopting a similar approach, the overwhelming majority of Sinhalese Catholic friends supports the Archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, who cultivates a cordial relationship with President Rajapaksa – allegedly facilitating Catholic alignment with the Sinhalese Buddhist majority of the country. From their perspective, Bishop Joseph does little for the benefit of Catholics, and is only mindful of “the fishermen of Mannar and human rights activists in Colombo.”

Those who approve of the Archbishop’s stance consider that his proximity with the President is instrumental to avoid the troubles currently faced by other minorities in the country. Recent attacks by radical Buddhist organizations like the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) on Sri Lankan Muslims have had deadly consequences – at least three men were killed in anti-Muslim riots last June in the coastal town of Aluthgama. These episodes have lent credibility to the anxieties of Catholics who cultivate a low profile and seek to further censor the declarations of Catholic activists and the activities of Christian humanitarian NGOs in the north of the country.

In August of this year, some of these fears materialized when a group of monks, followed by several dozen civilians, broke into a meeting of families of the disappeared in Colombo at the Center for Social Research (CSR). Although no violence was kept at bay, it provided a disquieting reminder of the meager levels of tolerance that prevail in postwar Sri Lanka.

As political discrimination and the stigmatization of minorities have continued to characterize the country since the end of the armed conflict, the hope of peace and reconciliation has become a dream in Sri Lanka after a conflict that had been still a long way from reality. As a consequence of this lack of visible improvement, religious minorities have not only become increasingly weary of open conflict but also of government that can bring unwelcome attention, but now also have strong evidence as to what responses they can expect to actions that attempt to question the government’s human rights record.

Bernardo Brown received his PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Cornell University. He is currently working on a monograph about South Asian Catholic migrant chaplains. A former BAS fellow, he now holds a postdoctoral fellowship at the Asia Research Institute in Singapore. (bb66@cornell.edu)
India, the largest democracy in the world, has achieved an enviable distinction in conducting free and fair elections regularly and making the transfer of political power a routine and smooth affair. Some may dismiss this as a mere demonstration of the success of procedural democracy, hiding its failure to achieve substantive democracy.

True, Indian democracy falters on many counts – poverty, education, health, employment and governance. But it is a little unfair to demonise this democratic deficit, taking into account India’s gigantic size, population, poverty and enormous diversity in terms of language, religion, region and culture. Incidentally, no democracy on earth does epitomise perfection and India is no exception, particularly considering its unique features; rather, India’s sanogenic simmousion to achieves should not be seen as its solemn quest in the direction of perfection.

Pralay Kanungo
The Opinion

IN THIS CONTEXT, the recently conducted sixteenth general elections has not just been a mere mechanical transfer of power from the Manmohan Singh-led Congress to the Narendra Modi-led Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, but it has also been a site of engaging debates over the idea of democracy itself and its working – covering a range of issues like political leadership, secularism, development, entitlement and governance.

No doubt, there was Modi magic all the way, but the magic was played out not in a world of fantasy or hallucination, but very much in the competitive arena of democracy.

The Congress party-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA), being in power for two-consecutive terms (2004-2014), was facing a strong anti-incumbency before going to the polls.

The marathon exercise took place in 9 phases, extending for 36 days, whereby 5.8 million Electronic Voting Machines were used and millions of polling officials worked round the clock under the supervision and control of the Election Commission, perhaps the most trusted institution in India with a glorious track record.

The outcome of this spectacle was a spectacular victory for the Narendra Modi-led BJP which captured 282 seats on its own. A positive, confident and aggressive Modi went to the electorate with his mesmerizing oratory. Modi’s speeches were no less than a spectacle, which particularly appealed to the aspiring youth. Moreover, his strong leadership and winning spree had already made him the darling of the party cadre. Hence, the RSS sided with Modi and the BJP declared him the Prime Ministerial candidate.

The Congress had not just lost an election, but its leadership had been utterly censured. The UPA II government developed so many scandals, mal-governance and policy paralysis.

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Theorizing heritage in Asia as an ‘encounter’

Whilst preparing the program for a seminar on ‘heritage studies’ in the context of Asia, I (not without difficulties) was translating the position paper from English into French, when I realized just how much the research questions would have to be changed had I written the text in an Asian language. I asked an Indonesian friend to translate the text for me, and he stumbled upon various problems concerning the meanings of the words that I had used, concluding that it was “impossible to say the same things in Indonesian”. Our failure to accurately translate made me realize that these ‘problems’ were, in se, valuable research objects. This ‘accident’ opened up a research avenue on heritage and Asian languages that I am now starting to develop through two collective research projects.1 Also, it led me to consider the full and still undeveloped potential of ‘critical heritage studies’ of Asia and Europe.

Adele Esposito
Theorizing heritage in Asia as an ‘encounter’ continued

CRITICAL HERITAGE STUDIES, as an epistemological extension of the Anglo-Saxon Cultural Studies, are an emerging and quickly expanding field of scholarship. Drawing on the pioneer work by Lowenthal “The Past is a Foreign Country,” Smith and Harrison, two of the most renowned scholars in the field, have called into question the relevance of heritage notions shaped according to European cultures. They have shown at which point ‘heritage’ is a cultural construct, the result of a social process. Any expression of the past has value per se, which point ‘heritage’ is a cultural construct, the result of a social process. Understanding the nature of the process of heritage recognition, Lexen has explained that the questions asked in heritage studies “have graduated from ‘how to conserve?’ to ‘why conserve?’ and then to ‘for whom to conserve?’.” This reflexive approach has gained momentum in the social sciences during the last years; the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), created in 2011, has on a global scale gathered together hundreds of scholars working on heritage from a ‘critical perspective’.

Exported heritages

As heritage, as an institutional practice, has mainly been based on European understandings of values, scholars working on non-Western contexts have played a paramount role in deconstructing assumptions concerning notions and well-rooted practices of heritage management. In this framework, Asia has been considered as an irreplaceable source of research materials for addressing productive critiques of dominant heritage approaches. Developing this perspective, scholars focusing on various contexts have pursued two main avenues of investigation: one the one hand, they have studied the conflicts between institutional approaches and the interests of other social groups (namely, local residents and associations) concerning the ownership and management of heritage; on the other hand, they have shed light on ‘alternative’ approaches to the legacies of the past that are rarely labelled ‘heritage’, as they are embedded in people’s everyday lives. Even if some of these authors have questioned the conceptual and geographical boundaries of Asia, various initiatives in the field, including the publication of edited volumes and conferences, have considered Asia ‘as a whole.’ By doing so, it has been implicitly assumed that there is something common to various case studies located in the continent that make it possible to put them together under the common umbrella of Asian heritages and to imagine policies and measures that would specifically address this region. Of course, I appreciate that, as scholars and teachers, we must position ourselves in the international arena of area studies and we have to define our field of knowledge in order to raise the interests of our readers and students. However, by advancing in the exploration of the field, I have realized that theorizing the heritage of Asia is becoming a well-established avenue of inquiry. So, in this brief introduction to a Focus on ‘critical approaches to heritage in Asia and Europe’, I would like to raise two questions: first, why is scholarship in this field developing this common position? and, second, what is specific to heritage in the contexts of Asia, if not its great diversity? I would like to suggest that future research queries the assumption of ‘commonality’ and ‘singularity’ of heritage in the context of Asia, through extensive ethnographic and comparative research. This is, in my view, one of the potential and promising developments of critical heritage studies in the context of Asia.

Heritage, as an institutional practice aiming for the conservation of selected remains from the past, was born in Western Europe, and was later ‘exported’ to the European colonies, and namely to Asia. Throughout the 20th century, international organizations, and especially UNESCO after its creation in 1946, have contributed to the dissemination of European-based notions of values on a global scale. The impacts of this ‘movement’ – from Europe to Asia – have been widely addressed by scholars who have identified the discrepancies between an international heritage culture and local contexts. As a reaction to the cumbersome place of origin of the theories and practices, which have been disseminated throughout Asia starting from the second half of the 19th century. However, far from being a coherent system that is passively ‘received’, the ‘micro-histories’ of heritage conservation show that European cultures have been constantly renegotiated at various levels. Kastriotis has argued that, as a professional archaeologist in Laos, she had to adapt her technical knowledge and methodologies to local conceptions of sacredness that dictate what has to be conserved and how. In this Focus section, Huong shows how the World Heritage Discourse promoted by UNESCO’s official documents has been appropriated by various social agents in Taiwan, to the point of being ‘reversed’ (diverted from its original presuppositions and objectives). Di Pietro shows how the ‘creative industry’ policy, originating in Europe, is ‘translated’ in the context of China and is strategically used by governmental bodies and a community of artists for their own objectives. To what extent can we still speak about ‘Eurocentric heritage cultures’, when the elements that compose these cultures are readdressed and transformed?

A field of encounters

Drawing on these examples, I would like to make one step forward and to approach heritage in the context of Asia as a field of multi-directional connections (rather than as the clash between two worldviews) that generate local assemblages of heritage notions, measures, and practices, coming from various backgrounds, and re-contextualized in the strategic agendas of the stakeholders involved in heritage conservation. Europeans have long been fascinated by the alterity that the ‘East’ represents, as shown by Orientalism and by the numerous influences in the field of the arts and spirituality. But, vice versa, Eastern cultures have (and are) attracted by what the ‘West’ represents for them. This is particularly true in the field of heritage where European theorists, lawyers, and practitioners are seen...
as breed authorities. Mutual fascination and influences help re-conceptualize heritage as a field of encounters, in a historical perspective. So, further research – and this is the perspective we develop in the framework of the MA Program ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’ (see ‘This Focus’ below) – shall investigate the encounters between different notions and approaches to heritage, which create the opportunities for productive exchanges (and sometimes for dynamic controversies) between cultures. These encounters are often changing and unstable; first of all because they result from daily practices of conservation and from the evolving dialogues between the people involved in specific heritage programs; and secondly, because in the present context of globalization, a large number of heritage notions, measures, and practices circulate quickly across the countries, and participate in the elaboration of syncretic heritage cultures. These ‘local assemblages’ are not visible to those who choose to study heritage only through the analysis of official texts (e.g., laws, conventions, policies, as they are described ‘on paper’), since they are produced in the ‘interstitial spaces’ where personal encounters take place and conflicting worldviews are put face to face.17 For instance, they can be explored through the micro-negotiations engaged on a daily basis by the inhabitants living in the surroundings of protected areas (Guagnini, in this Focus), or through the tactics that allow the Wayang puppeteers in Indonesia to ‘adapt and bend’ official heritage discourses (Boonstra, in this Focus) for their own ends.

Acknowledging the interactive relationships of various social agents with ‘received’ European-based heritage frameworks, I argue that the specificity of heritage in the context of Asia is its inter-subjective nature, where the dialectic relationship with the other (and what defines the other) is regularly redefined as a result of evolving acculturation processes. This approach to the study of heritage strengthens its embodied nature and calls for widespread idea of power, further research shall consider heritage as the ability to take root in space and time, and thus as a meaningful cause and a paramount arm in the vital negotiations of power in contemporary Asian societies.

**This Focus**

The aim of this Focus section is to give an account of the research perspective developed by a group of young scholars (MA students, PhD candidates, and post-doctoral fellows) and heritage practitioners who gravitate around the research cluster: Asian Heritages of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) and the MA Program ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’. In 2013, IIAS and LIAS (Leiden University Institute for Area Studies) jointly launched this MA track to address the issue of Heritage in a pluri-disciplinary and interactive fashion, combining teaching, research and community engagement. In this program, students learn to articulate their own scholarly approach from a plurality of social and cultural aspirations and stakes, reflecting the inherently contentious nature of cultural heritage in any given context. They indeed also learn to elaborate contextualized (research-based) methodologies of heritage practice, including historically and culturally sensitive heritage management policies.

With the objective of decentering knowledge on heritage management practice, the program sets out to establish a trans-regional network involving four universities in Europe and Asia: Leiden University, National Taiwan University, Yonsei University, and Gadjah Mada University. Students who wish to obtain the MA degree at Leiden University can also engage in a Double Degree track by completing an additional year at one of the Asian university partners.

The organizers of the Double Degree MA program consider Asia fertile ground for new theoretical and methodological insights on this highly contested subject. Drawing on individual research located in various contexts of Asia, our first group of students (academic year 2013-2014), together with two young scholars who also work on heritage in Asia, have collectively produced a ‘manifesto’ with the purpose of initiating a proactive and policy-oriented debate on the politics of heritage, to which all our readers are invited to participate. Far from aspiring to speak about Asia as a whole, our statements wish to contribute to the field of heritage studies and are based on our knowledge of specific situations and places in Asia.

**Adèle Esposito** is a Research Fellow at CNRS/AUSSER; lecturer at LIAS/Leiden University and coordinator of the MA Program ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’ IAS/Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University.

**References**

1 Namely, the research project ‘Heritage Vocabularies for Architecture and Urbanism in Southeast Asia’, piloted by the Architecture School of Paris-Belleville’s research group AUSSER (Architecture, Urbanism, Society: Knowledge, Teaching, Research); and the prospective project ‘How do you say heritage? Intercultural encounters over heritage values and practices East–Asia–Europe’, piloted by the International Institute for Asia Studies (IIAS).


7 Chapagain & Silva. 2013.

8 See for example, Daly & Winter. 2011, pp.5–8

9 Such as the events mentioned by Chapagain (2013, pp.14-15).


17 ibid., p.21
The notions of ‘heritage’, nowadays shared worldwide, were originally shaped following European cultural backgrounds and are mainly based on material authenticity, aesthetic qualities, and historical and artistic values. Disseminated on an international scale, first by the colonial powers, then by organizations such as UNESCO, and appropriated and reassembled by local agents, these notions deeply influence the way heritage is currently defined and managed on the global level. An emergent thinking developed by researchers, but also by international organizations, institutions, and practitioners in the field of critical heritage studies has recently started to call into question the dominant paradigms that influence heritage recognition, and to evaluate the relevance of these paradigms outside Europe, in particular in postcolonial contexts. We have observed that the current avenues of inquiry in heritage studies are keen on producing well-argued critiques of institutional heritage practices, but show some difficulties in proposing positive and forward-looking approaches for dealing with heritage in contemporary societies.

A manifesto

This text is generated in response to the manifesto produced by the Association of Critical Heritage Studies in 2011. A team of MA students and PhD candidates, enrolled in the Leiden University program Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe have compiled this text, with support from the MA program coordinator, Adèle Esposito, and independent researcher, Ian Dull. This manifesto aims to foster debates, raise critiques, and propose rethinking heritage as the active opposition of the complex phenomenon of heritage in contemporary societies. Based on our research in various contexts of Asia, we wish to make some preliminary statements, which may help to problematize contemporary heritage approaches and elaborate on policies and management measures.

Plural views and dynamic struggles for power

As a consequence, a statically upheld concept of heritage as apolitical is still disseminated in large parts of the world. We believe that in order to raise a general awareness of heritage as a fluid multivalent concept, it is necessary to reveal the politics underlying heritage in order to understand the invention of tradition inherent in it and understand the different localized perspectives by policy-makers, governments and communities that continuously modify heritage-making processes. This can be achieved by incorporating legal inclusions of ethical argumentation in relation to heritage, with legal recognition of local, possibly ethnic, notions towards heritage.

Nationalistic discourses on heritage and assessment reports of institutional conservation projects generally hide conflicts: they reflect a previously hidden relationship between the stakeholders involved in heritage conservation, around a supposedly shared heritage culture. However, behind this cultural heritage is the playground of plural views and dynamic struggles for power. The denying of controversies perpetuates a superficial understanding of the politics of heritage and undervalue the creative potential of conflicts. We consider conflicts surrounding heritage as a positive opportunity for engaging negotiations between the stakeholders. Far from being flattening compromises, negotiations and consultations that include transparency and motivations of interest, are processes through which innovation is defined, by the combination of various meanings and approaches to heritage.

Material stability and cultural anchors

Global heritage discourses emphasize heritage practices when they are associated with the conservation of physical artifacts. In these discourses, heritage conservation is described as an action that supports the construction of local identities and enhances tourism development. However, these
discourses rarely take into consideration the implications of heritage conservation for people who live in the proximity of celebrated heritage sites. Our research on Shangri-La (Tibet) and Borobudur (Java-Indonesia), has shown that villagers suffer disfranchisement and marginalization as a consequence of institutional heritage recognition and tourism-driven development (fig. 1). They lose the power to give voice to their cultural representations, to own, use, and benefit from the space where heritage is located. We argue that heritage sites must not only be considered as a cultural commodity, but also as the living environment of the inhabitants who seek material stability and cultural anchors. We defend the right of the people to achieve cultural and economic self-determination through the use of heritage.

Ideas of authenticity

Heritage, as an institutional practice, is highly political and hierarchical. Dominant social agents, political and cultural elites, decide which legacies deserve special attention, while others — that may have fundamental values for other social groups — are outside heritage recognition. Our research has shown that this selective process is particularly strong in the field of ‘intangible cultural heritages’. Why should a performance genre be superior to another within a cultural discourse? National institutions tend to overlook this question and to take superiority for granted, when providing a tentative list of ‘cultural masterpieces’ to UNESCO. When the Peking Opera was inscribed on the UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2010, for example, very little was said to argue for the genre’s preeminence status (fig. 2). It was described as the national opera par excellence, based on the fact that Chinese intellectuals had invented this genre in the early 20th century, with the ideology of cultural nationalism as a backdrop. These “politic of significance” (Herf 2000) beg to be deconstructed. Institutional bodies must deepen their awareness of the regimes of values, which influence their selections. Authenticity is an essential qualifying factor defining the value of cultural heritage. In institutional heritage conservation, and especially in those programs led by international organizations, judgments of authenticity mainly lie with the experience of the past in terms of the form, the function, as well as the material value, sometimes regardless of heritage evolution through time. In line with the Nara Document of Authenticity of 1994, we find there is a need to contribute to a broader understanding of this criterion by different population groups in different periods, and that the Asian contexts we have studied offer complex ideas of what is authentic and why. Authenticity shall be perceived in different contexts in which all kinds of interactions between heritage and people are taken into account. Our research on Hollistatt See in Guangdong has shown that the replica of the World Heritage Site of Hallstaat (an Austrian city) challenges the internationally shared notion of authenticity based on the cult of the ‘original’. We have discovered that the promoters and the users of the new city attach cultural meanings and social values to the ‘copy’ that are related to the fascination with foreign heritage and culture. Analyzing the case of Hollistatt, authenticity and falseness appear to be relative and questionable categories. This extreme example leads us to question the plurality of visions encompassed by the notion of authenticity. Yet previous research has often ridicule and condemned these kinds of projects. Breaking with this judgmental attitude, we call for further research, aiming to understand the social, political, and cultural contexts, which give rise to specific, sometimes disruptive, ideas of authenticity.

Dear readers of The Newsletter, you too are welcome to respond to this manifesto. Do you work on heritage in the context of Asia? Would you like to make a statement drawing on your own research?

You are invited to submit a short article (max 400 words) before 15 Dec 2014, to the following email address: criticalheritagestudies@gmail.com

Selected contributions will be published in the next issue of The Newsletter (issue #70, February 2015).
Taking stock of transformations

Endowed with authenticity, conserving material heritage was long considered an end in itself. While that tradition is not over, critiques of it have meant that alternative justifications for heritage conservation are increasingly prevalent: identity, development, and tourism represent the most common few. Yet employing heritage to work for so many aims only reinforces the concept of its uniqueness. Indeed, what other cultural product is tasked with so much political and economic work? Nowadays it is truer than in cities, which serve as economic, political, cultural, and social hubs, and host any number of the diverse representations of these pillars of society. Where heritage once struggled to survive in cities facing development, ‘heritagization’ is now a default, with the use of heritage districts to promote urban economic development and revitalization for touristic pleasures an almost ubiquitous desire. In opposition to the diversity of city forms and the buildings within them, the logics, and the heritage they produce, stay the same. Gentrified streets reign, alienating residents from their cities, despite all of the talk of localized identity and development. The consistent use of these same logics worldwide represents a new form of authenticity. Where authenticity responded to scientific needs, identity, development, and tourism only respond to new incentives. Though the impact of heritage in a number of domains cannot be denied, why must heritage be a necessary discourse in every place? Heritage is no doubt one of the defining methods of our time for taking stock of geographical, social, and cultural transformations, yet, as with any methodology, we must inquire into which phenomena it is best suited to study. One cannot forget that heritage and the past it includes form only one portion of the diverse representations of these pillars of society.

A special thanks to Rebecca Bego, Siobhan Campbell, Sonja Laukkanen, and Non Arkarapsrartkul for their participation in our informal ‘Manifesto writing sessions’. And, last but not least, our gratitude to professor Michael Herzfeld for inspiring us.

Non Arkarapsrartkul, from Harvard University, and a postdoctoral fellow at the New York University in Shanghai, has responded to this manifesto with the following text.

Toward affordable and diverse urbanity: historic preservation of a global city

My research deals with the preservation of historic housing in the center of Shanghai, known as lilongs. Shanghai’s government regards the historic preservation of select sites, including the lilongs, as essential to the branding of a city with global ambitions. Yet, there is little consideration for the ways in which existing residents of said ‘historical monuments’ fit into the overall architectural preservation of the sites. Hence, we are seeing an increasing interest in architectural preservation rather than a preservation of culture and way of life. How did I arrive at such a conclusion? The answer to such a process lies in both the planning policy and the historic preservation program. You may wonder why designated historic structures are not clustered in groups but scattered around the city. That’s because the Shanghai government handspick ‘worthy’ structures to preserve, making the ‘unworthy’ structures available for immediate bulldozing. As a result, you find many preserved historic sites in the middle of surrounding high-rise buildings, and the remaining residents, who are mostly older, find such encroachment to be daunting. They are used to shopping at cheap street markets, but due to the new urban development, find themselves surrounded by ‘modern’ supermarkets where fruit and vegetables cost ten times more. The same changes apply to the residents’ social lives that they used to share with neighbors from nearby communities. Once the network of cross-community friendships and contacts is gone, remaining residents are unable to maintain the sense of a neighborhood, and they may eventually move.

I believe that there is a possibility for the preservation of both architecture and community culture. Even though Shanghai technically belongs to everyone, no one with an income lower than that of the upper middle class will want to travel to the city if it becomes too expensive. In addition, the monotony of having just one class of residents in a city is a kiss of death for urban livability. If the only method of preservation is one that emphasizes architecture at the expense of older residents who become displaced (even if they choose to be displaced for the money offered to them), we will end up with a proto-upper middle class city that lacks diversity and community culture. We should not just aim for preservation of architecture and culture, but should aim for diversity. I believe that if we create a livable environment for the residents, they will want to stick around to tell stories of the past to the younger generations and the newcomers to the city. Isn’t that what preservation is all about?

People criticize the ‘Disney Land’ approach to preservation because it only maintains the architectural facade, not the social fabric. Thus, most people visiting a renovated lilong will know little or nothing of the history of the place, and will simply see that it ‘looks old and different’, but I believe that the old and the old can co-exist. The old residents are also happy to see the city grow and develop, and they want to be a part of it despite their age. So it is unfair to think that because they are old and probably poor, they should not be living in the city center. In fact, because they are old and know the place well, they care most for the place. Going back to what the urbanist Jane Jacobs used to say, the sense of belonging ‘from within’ is precisely what creates the sense of safety and community – not the security cameras and patrolling inattentive old-looking uniforms hired to symbolize, in the most superficial way, some sense of history.
As testified by a UNESCO report on the Asia-Pacific region, the preservation of industrial heritage in Asia is still at an early stage of application, and constitutes a controversial topic for many countries belonging to this region. The report makes the comparison with European countries’ conservation practices and their relationship with their industrial past. Indeed, European countries have a common history of industrialisation that proceeded at a relatively homogenous pace. Moreover, industrialisation is now a relatively pleasant memory because the technological advancements that brought about have made many countries – the UK, for example – very proud of their industrial past and willing to consider it part of their national heritage.

In many countries of this area, industrialisation is still an ongoing process, often the outcome of a colonial domain, and produces heavy dioxides, such as pollution, environmental degradation and labour exploitation. Countries that have only recently achieved a high level of industrialisation, consider it too recent to be worth preserving. In fact, the World Heritage List counts only two industrial heritage sites in the whole Asia-Pacific region. However, this does not mean that industrial heritage has not been re-evaluated. Dachshu Factory in Beijing is among the best examples of this trend.

Urban redevelopment
Considered among China’s largest hubs for the exhibition and commercialisation of contemporary art (covering approximately 1.360 square kilometres), the 798 Dashanzi Factory (originally named 718) was founded in the 1950s in the district of Chaoyang (North-East Beijing) to produce electronic components for the military. At the end of the 1980s it was gradually dismantled as a consequence of the wave of deindustrialisation that followed Deng Xiaoping’s reform period. At a stage of semi-abandonment, towards the end of the 1990s, the government-appointed owners of the factory, the Seven Stars Group (SSG), decided to rent out the empty spaces in order to collect money to pay the laid-off workers’ pensions. Coincidentally, the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) in Beijing was looking for large spaces to rent in order to hold sculpture workshops; the factory caught the CAFA’s attention, not only because of the large space and low prices, but also because of the aesthetic value of the abandoned factory buildings. After the CAFA later left to its new official location, it was replaced by an impressive number of artists who decided to install their studios there, and who formed an artist village.

The industrial complex, which had formerly been turned into smaller and more manageable units, now saw the merging of five of its six establishments under the name Seven Stars Science and Technology Co. Ltd. (also Seven Stars Group - SSG), one of the first high-tech companies in Beijing. In this context a greater role was being given by the government to financial institutions, real-estate developers and individuals. In Beijing, a new ring of buildings developed by this wave of urban redevelopment came to be added to existing assets that followed a concentric pattern around the city centre; from pre-1949 traditional buildings to socialist buildings developed by the Maoist government. Although redevelopment of dilapidated neighbourhoods and rural land for housing and business, on the one hand meant that people could improve their living conditions, on the other it also limited their improvement, because after redevelopment house prices were raised and, as the process of gentrification generally implies, parts of the population (mainly the lower classes) were pushed to the outskirts of the city due to financial constraints. As a consequence, the process of urban redevelopment has mostly facilitated the upper-middle classes in the purchasing of housing.

Effectively, after a few years of artistic activities, the SSG, a state-owned enterprise, had a plan approved by the city government to turn this area into a “heaven for new technology and commerce” – the Zhongguacun Electronics Park – by 2005, and to develop the rest of the land into high-rise modern apartment.

One of the main reasons for the activism behind 798 was to impede the destruction of such an important historical site, for its cultural and symbolic value in Chinese recent history. As one of their first protest acts, the art community established an International Dashanzi Art Festival. Subsequently, a book titled Beijing 798, edited by Huang Rui and Robert Barnell members of the community as well as activists committed to the 798 cause – was published to stress the importance of the area’s architecture, history and artistic production. A counter-offensive was presented by the Seven Stars group in 2004 when, together with the local government, they realised that the protest might become a serious obstacle for their urban development plans. They started increasing rental prices and renting the venues to new tenants, to foreigners and to cultural-related organisations, in order to hinder the activities within the artist village.

A year later, in a final attempt to protect the art villagers from eviction and to save the buildings from demolition, the local artists’ organisation supported by Li Xiangqun, a local sculptor and Tsinghua University professor elected to the People’s Congress in 2004, felt a proposal to the local government to turn 798 into an art district. The crucial element that helped them in attaining their goal and preserving the 798 was the introduction, in the same period, of ‘creative industries’ policies.

Creative industries
When China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, its administration of culture came to involve the idea of ‘creativity as a source of innovation’. Scholars and important official figures, such as Li Wenjie, became inspired by the ‘creative industries’ policies, promoted in 1998 by the British Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) at the end of the 1990s, and praised them as emblems of the new ‘creative’ path China was undertaking. Michael Krane stated that China has a ‘creative complex’ – compared to
adoption of creative industries policies

other countries – because of its manufacturing role in the global markets and that the adoption of creative industries in China might be a consequence of this and a way to achieve the same innovation levels as other leading global powers. Indeed, this strategy takes inspiration from John Howkins’ theory of the creative economy, which sees intellectual property as an element on which countries can capitalise and base their development strategies. His theory is complemented by Michael Porter’s theories concerning the idea of ‘clustering’ – intended as a spatial agglomeration of firms doing business in compatible fields, as a competitive strategy for concentrating and improving creation of wealth in specific areas – and the idea of Richard Florida with regards to the ‘creative city’, assuming that currently there is a tendency that can be observed in the ‘creative sector’ of clustering in cities that favour the three Ts (talent, technology and tolerance). This issue of ‘clustering’ has been widely debated among scholars who dismiss its assumptions as a neoliberalist way of dealing with the issue of creativity in relation to cultural policy and economic development and of facilitating the gentrification of degraded urban areas and neighbourhoods.

In ideological terms, these policies were aimed at reversing the image of China as a manufacturing country, one that imported ideas and ‘copied’ from the West, into a producer of innovation and lifestyle. In practical terms, the promotion of the creative industries also involved benefits such as a tax reduction of 15-20%, residence subsidies for talents up to 20% and free advertisement for those who embraced them. By the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen had already embraced the creative industries as a local development strategy and in Beijing there were already ten established creative clusters. Moreover, this project was involved in administrative plans for urban redevelopments scheduled in view of the 2008 Olympics, and has been strongly endorsed and advertised by the government. In 2008 these clusters’ revenue accounted for 10% of Beijing’s internal GDP.

798 Art Zone

The adoption of the label ‘798 Dashanzi Art Zone’ happened in 2005, and coincided with the Beijing municipal government’s recognition of the area as a ‘modern heritage’. Finally, in 2011, the local government established an institution for the strategic planning and preservation of 798 as a national hub of contemporary arts, which downsized the role of administrative intervention to daily management, and ultimately shifted most of the power into the hands of the local government. This meant that the local community no longer had a voice in the decision-making process. In addition to the benefits, creative industries also become a crucial element for the government to regulate the new paths of culture in 798, but at the same time guaranteed the role of the CCP in directing them. On the one hand, the loss of the art community through gentrification, meant a dramatic loss of appeal of the 798 as an underground environment, which is clearly reflected by the adoption of the term ‘Art Zone’, replacing ‘artist village’. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the government’s plan to economically develop the area proved effective, since not only did 798 become a symbol of well-functioning creative industry, but most institutions of 798 as a creative industry also allowed for the maintenance of its structures, which remain stable and in good order. Indeed, most of the original members of the artist community left the village or were indirectly evicted by rising rents. Nevertheless, many members also benefited from the development process: they became well-known, were provided a larger pool to whom they can show their works, and made a sufficient amount of money to keep their studios as showrooms in 798. Those artists who were deeply outraged by the commercialised track undertaken, did not return after its officialisation, and have now moved to other, lesser known, artist villages and keep producing their works there.

For centuries, China has experienced a dynamic history of systematically destroying the remains of previous generations: a Maoist period that demolished most ancient structures to achieve its industrial dream; or the contemporary socialist-capitalist period, in which technological advancement and economic development has supplanted all regards for urban conservation. In addition, the urban population of China holds many contracting opinions with regards to their industrial heritage. To conclude, despite the regretfully negative outcome for many of the original members of the 798 art community (before its officialisation), and without sharing the theoretical assumptions of the creative industries as a whole, I do believe that the ‘creative industries’ discourse has been cleverly appropriated by the original grassroots movement and has been instrumental in preserving the 798 buildings and avoiding their demolition.

Giulia Di Pietro, MA student Leiden University

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2. Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

3. ‘Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System’ were included together in 2000 for their outstanding universal value.


6. Robert Barnett was the first foreign occupant of the 798.

7. Liu Wenes is Vice-Chairperson of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and Director of the Research Centre for Creative Industries at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (RCI SAS). He was and remains the principal architect and proponent of this idea in China.


14. Creative industries in this context involve visual and performing arts, film, TV, music, design, architecture and new technologies such as software, games, and mobiles.


Since UNESCO launched the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972, it has not only built up a platform for transnational cooperation in heritage protection, preservation, and education, but has also created a powerful international reference for heritage definition. Scholars have criticised the paradigms used by UNESCO for universalising the definitions and typologies of heritage and standardising the conservation approaches based on European philosophy, without taking into account different interpretations in diverse cultural contexts.\(^2\)

While UNESCO has become a single target in “authorized heritage discourse”,\(^1\) and its formulated heritage paradigms have been criticised as a globalising program to local contexts,\(^4\) it is also important to recognise that UNESCO is an intergovernmental organisation composed of States Parties\(^5\) and to acknowledge in what ways it has been manipulated by them. Askew and Logan both point out that States Parties have used UNESCO and the World Heritage List for their national interests;\(^6\) Long & Labadi assert that States Parties use the World Heritage List as “a form of soft power”, a means of communicating their cultural, social and even environmental credentials to the world;\(^7\) Tim Winter demonstrates how countries in Asia (China, Japan, Korea and India) have used heritage aids as their international relations strategy.\(^8\) They all show how UNESCO might indeed be forcibly imposing its Eurocentric and state-centric paradigms on States Parties, but also that it is noteworthy to study how the States Parties possibly manipulate UNESCO’s paradigms and World Heritage status for their own ends.

This article explores two ways in which the World Heritage system can be reversed in application, the international conventions can be reversed to national heritage policy; in principle, the goal of safeguarding heritage aids as their international relations strategy.\(^6\) They all show how UNESCO might indeed be forcibly imposing its Eurocentric and state-centric paradigms on States Parties, but also that it is noteworthy to study how the States Parties possibly manipulate UNESCO’s paradigms and World Heritage status for their own ends. However, the goal of safeguarding heritage aids as their international relations strategy.

Taiwan Focus

Taiwan lost its UN membership in 1971 to the People’s Republic of China, and has since been ineligible to join affiliated organisations, including UNESCO’s Convention. Nevertheless, UNESCO has indirectly played an important role in Taiwan. The Council for Cultural Affairs (文資會), hereinafter referred to as CCA, hereinafter referred to as CCA,\(^9\) asserted that Taiwan, as a member of the ‘global village’, should not be excluded from UNESCO’s World Heritage affairs just because of its unrecognised status. As a consequence of its lengthy exclusion, Taiwan has fallen ‘behind’ the world trend in heritage protection and regulation by almost 30 years (dated back to the year when the Convention was launched). In an attempt to catch up with current trends, to update fellow countrymen with the concept of World Heritage, and to learn methods of protecting cultural and natural heritage, CCA has organised a series of World Heritage forums in Taiwan since 2001.\(^10\) It also joined ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)\(^11\) in 2003 through the Bureau of Cultural Affairs (文資會, hereinafter referred to as BCA)\(^12\) organisation.

This article explores two ways in which the World Heritage system can be reversed in application, the international conventions can be reversed to national heritage policy; in principle, the goal of safeguarding heritage aids as their international relations strategy.\(^6\) They all show how UNESCO might indeed be forcibly imposing its Eurocentric and state-centric paradigms on States Parties, but also that it is noteworthy to study how the States Parties possibly manipulate UNESCO’s paradigms and World Heritage status for their own ends. However, the goal of safeguarding heritage aids as their international relations strategy.

Taiwan Focus

Taiwan lost its UN membership in 1971 to the People’s Republic of China, and has since been ineligible to join affiliated organisations, including UNESCO’s Convention. Nevertheless, UNESCO has indirectly played an important role in Taiwan. The Council for Cultural Affairs (文資會), hereinafter referred to as CCA, hereinafter referred to as CCA,\(^9\) asserted that Taiwan, as a member of the ‘global village’, should not be excluded from UNESCO’s World Heritage affairs just because of its unrecognised status. As a consequence of its lengthy exclusion, Taiwan has fallen ‘behind’ the world trend in heritage protection and regulation by almost 30 years (dated back to the year when the Convention was launched). In an attempt to catch up with current trends, to update fellow countrymen with the concept of World Heritage, and to learn methods of protecting cultural and natural heritage, CCA has organised a series of World Heritage forums in Taiwan since 2001.\(^10\) It also joined ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)\(^11\) in 2003 through the Bureau of Cultural Affairs (文資會, hereinafter referred to as BCA)\(^12\) organisation.

Although UNESCO has indirectly played an important role in Taiwan, the country not even recognised as a state by the UN (or UNESCO). Moreover, Taiwan has even referred to UNESCO’s conventions in law making. The Taiwanese national law, Cultural Heritage Protection Act (文化資產保存法, 1982), was modelled after UNESCO’s Convention and has been modified over the years under the influence of UNESCO’s developing paradigms. The 1982 version of the Act was antique-centred, starting with the definition and related regulations of ‘antique’ (古物)\(^13\) in 1982. In the 2005 version, the notion of ‘cultural asset’ was developed from antique-centred to monument-centred, with an increasing number of the articles concerning monuments (古蹟)\(^14\). New categories ‘historic building’ and ‘cultural landscape’ were added to the Act in 2005 and 2005 to include more diverse types of cultural assets. In the latest Draft Revision of the Act (2013), ‘intangible heritage’ is officially differentiated from ‘tangible heritage’. Drawing on the definition of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)\(^15\) article 2, the Taiwanese draft includes five categories: ‘traditional performing arts’, ‘traditional craft art’, ‘folk customs’, ‘oral tradition’ and ‘traditional knowledge and practices’.\(^16\)

Abby Hsian-huan Huang

Photo by author

Zhaishan tunnel in Kinmen. Located in the southwest of Kinmen Island, it was built in 1960s for military purposes. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of flickr.

Since UNESCO launched the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972, it has not only built up a platform for transnational cooperation in heritage protection, preservation, and education, but has also created a powerful international reference for heritage definition. Scholars have criticised the paradigms used by UNESCO for universalising the definitions and typologies of heritage and standardising the conservation approaches based on European philosophy, without taking into account different interpretations in diverse cultural contexts.\(^2\)
Heritage diplomacy of Taiwan
Taiwan does not always passively accept UNESCO’s paradigms, but also has initiated potential transnational nomination projects. In 2004, the government of Taiwan funded approximately US$7,000,000 for two restoration projects in Antigua Guatemala (capital city of the former Guatemalan province of Guatemala): the Las Casas Monastery and the Sor Juana de Maldonado Monastery. Founded in the early 16th century, the city is known by UNESCO and was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1979. The total amount of financial assistance UNESCO allocated to Antigua is US$7,000,000. The Taiwanese government not only provided a large grant, but also sent a research group from National Cheng Kung University to assist in the restoration work. The assistance was not through UNESCO, but through a direct government-to-government arrangement with the Guatemalan government, with the goal to benefit their relationship.

The diplomatic relations between Taiwan and Guatemala are complicated. Recently (in 2012), the Guatemalan President Alfonso Portillo was caught using a bank account in New York City to launder money that he had received as a bribe from Taiwan. Portillo admitted that he had accepted the money in exchange for a promise that his country would continue to recognize Taiwan diplomatically while he was in office from 2000 to 2004. (Available in Taiwanese diplomatic terms, with only twenty countries in the world, most of which are in Central America. To preserve these ties, the Taiwanese government has executed the strategy of ‘dollar diplomacy’, whereby ‘heritage’ has become a new tool. Former vice-president Lu Hsiu-lien (呂秀蓮) signed a letter of intent in 2005, promising that Taiwan would provide aid to restore historical sites in Antigua, thereby facilitating developing Taiwan’s diplomatic relations with Guatemala.21

One may conclude that Taiwan has been exploited by Guatemala, for its skills and resources. Taiwan has been participating in this heritage project, found a way to promote itself as a nation. When the Las Casas Monastery re-opened as a museum, Taiwan’s contribution to the restoration was signposted in Chinese, Spanish and English, and Taiwan’s national flag was seen flying over the new museum. By showing local and international collaborators how to undertake such restoration projects, the project coordinator believes the project will be a stepping-stone for Taiwan towards more international collaboration projects in the future.22

It is also interesting to see how an excluded state such as Taiwan positions itself in a World Heritage restoration project. The case shows that UNESCO’s conventions and its practices: although UNESCO claims to preserve the world heritage of mankind as a whole, it does not include heritage of all states, nor does it give sufficient assistance, even to those who are already inscribed on the World Heritage List. This could be attributed to UNESCO’s structure as an inter-governmental organisation, whereby it is largely reliant upon the participation and donation of States Parties.

Potential world heritage in Taiwan
In 2002, CCA initiated the Potential World Heritage Sites in Taiwan Program. Although the government acknowledges the fact that the potential sites do not conform to the UNESCO World Heritage List, it still wishes to award sites with an equivalent to the UNESCO World Heritage designation. The program started by asking for domestic recommendations from local governments, experts and historians, resulting in eleven sites of value as potential world heritage sites. Later in the year, CCA invited foreign experts to visit the eleven sites and to assess them for their potential as World Heritage sites.23 One of these experts, an Australian architect, commented: “Everyone wanted to please and inform in the hope that their site might be considered of World Heritage value.”24

The history of vestige of Kinmen. Photo reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Liu Wu on flickr.

Can the serial transnational nomination be an icebreaker?
Despite its exclusion from the UNESCO World Heritage list, the state of Taiwan does not give up. The desperate state has even considered a serial transnational nomination as a strategy to have Taiwan located inscriptions.25 On 12 December 2013, the MOC Minister Long Ying-tai (龍應台) proposed that Taiwan collaborate with China to nominate properties together. Long’s statement set off a Fairmont of debate, not only among officials, but also in the media and on the Internet. At the Legislative Yuan, there are two different opinions held about the idea of preparing the nomination of serial transnational properties together with China. The sovereignty of Taiwan is the main concern. Some legislators pointed out that, since Taiwan is not a member of the UN (or UNESCO), there is a risk that any Taiwanese property will end up being inscribed as China’s, instead of being shared by two states. As a result, the inscription may incorrectly infer that Taiwan is part of China. One legislator even argued that Taiwan could be named ‘Taiwan, China’ in the nomination document, similar to when it joined the WTO.26 Yet, some legislators share Minister Long’s sentiment, and believe that UNESCO’s World Heritage is about preserving the heritage of mankind, which is beyond politics.

The sensitive nature of a Taiwan (ROC)-China (PRC) collaboration stems from the decades-long conflict between the two states over which is the ‘true heir’ of traditional Chinese Culture. The competition is not only fought through the media, but on a cultural level. To exacerbate matters, the specific Taiwanese location that Long suggested for nomination (together with China), was once the military frontline of the cross-strait conflict, Kinmen, where numerous battles took place during the post-Cold War era (second half of 20th century) between the PRC and the ROC. Yet, in the eyes of the Taiwanese government, the negative impact of Kinmen and its military remnants have been transformed into a peace memorial and are valuable for present tourism. The battlefield remains in Kinmen and Xiamen (in China) are living museums of the cold war history; together, they are witnesses to the fact that the intense cross-strait relations have become peaceful.

Importantly though, is the idea of sharing heritage between Taiwan and China really about protecting serial transnational properties, or is about separate interests? To date, China has 47 properties on the World Heritage list and 38 elements on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list; thus, unlike Taiwan, it has no need to collaborate with other states or locations. The idea would conflict with China’s intention to ‘share’ heritage with Taiwan? It would see little benefit in the arrangement. And, would a collaboration reflect a cross-strait reconciliation, as the Taiwan government puts it, or would it simply risk Taiwan’s sovereignty on the world stage? I leave these questions open for further research.

Conclusion
Scholars have pointed out that ‘UNESCO World Heritage interventions are judged by observers on the basis of their impact on individual assets or cultural values, which would undermine local ways of coping with the past, memory transmission and of culture.’25 But the Taiwan case study shows that UNESCO criteria can also be appropriated by local contexts and that UNESCO’s World Heritage project and status can in fact be used for national interests. Becoming a world heritage site should not be simplifies as a homogenising trend of globalisation; the designation provides a platform for nations to promote their national distinctiveness and compete with others. Not only does the ‘local’ have to find a way to apply global policies to a local context, and to represent local culture within the global framework (i.e., UNESCO’s criteria for selection), but the ‘global’ is also appropriated to meet the needs of the ‘local’. The translation of World Heritage paradigms is mutual, and worthy of further investigation in future critical heritage studies.

Abby Hsian-huan Huang, Research Master in Asian Studies, Leiden University

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1  Use the term ‘paradigms’ here to refer to the ideas of heritage and the models of heritage conservation endorsed by UNESCO. Even within UNESCO, there is no single and coherent paradigm of ‘the heritage’, so I use a plural noun that refers to a range of paradigms. See for instance, the work of international teams for the inscription of World Heritage, and the principle of the UNESCO’s World Heritage center, that are stated in the Convention and the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2013).
5  States that have signed the agreement of the Convention are States Parties in UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre. In 2012 there were 191.
6  note 2
7  ibid
9  The Council for Cultural Affairs was the council for cultural infrastructure in Taiwan, including promoting national and local culture and making cultural policies. In 2012 it was upgraded as a larger organization, the Ministry of Culture.
11  ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a non-governmental international organization dedicated to the conservation of the monuments and sites of the world. It is one of the advisory bodies to UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee to evaluate the nominated properties for World Heritage inscription. Unlike UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention, which is ratified by States only, ICOMOS also accepts support from individuals and institutions.
12  TICCH (The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage) is a non-governmental international organization dedicated to the study and preservation of industrial heritage. In 2000, TICCH became ICOMOS’s designated consultant in assessing industrial sites for the World Heritage List. Taiwan has joined TICCH as a country.
13  The Taipei Declaration can be accessed here: http://tifsun.com/taiwandeclaration
14  In the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (1982), ‘cultural assets’ refer to assets having historic, cultural and artistic value: guwu (antiques), gui (monuments, including ancient buildings and archaeological sites), gu (folk customs and related artefacts), and natural cultural landscapes.
15  The ‘intangible cultural heritage’ is manifested inter alia in the following domains: traditional art forms, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b)performing arts; (c)social practices, rituals and festive events; (d)knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e)oral traditions and expressions.
16  http://whc.unesco.org/en/55/assistance
18  Taipei Times, 21 March 2005 http://www.tpehub.com
19  http://tifsun.com/byncku
20  Introduction to Potential World Heritage Sites in Taiwan (2003), p. 2
21  The Taipei Declaration
22  My translation and summary. For more information, see pp. 33-34 of Fu, Chao-qing (2013). ‘Rang shijie xiang kan Taiwan: dengguo lanfanghua shijie wanban yuhan de yiwei’ (Looking at the world heritage of Taiwan: beyond the colonial end and the modernization dilemma). (Making the world see Taiwan: the meaning of inscription on UNESCO Cultural Heritage Sites), Kuo, Chao-feng (ed.), Taipei: Taipei Cultural Heritage Foundation No. 61, p.29-34, Taipei New Century Foundation.
24  ‘Serial transnational nomination’ was added to the UNESCO Operational Guidelines in 2013, referring to a series of properties located in the territory of different State Parties, which do not need to be contiguous but that are nominated with the consent of all State Parties concerned.
25  Taiwan joined WTO in 2002 as ‘Chinese Taipei’ (Separate customs territory of Taiwan, People’s Republic of China). In 2013, Taiwan joined the WTO as a country.
Cultural heritage is often associated with something from the past, but labelling something from the past as ‘heritage’ is a way of dealing with the past in the present. Cultural heritage can be seen as a process in which the meaning and value of the past in the present is created and re-created, authorized and re-authorized by those who have the power to do so. Such negotiations often deal with issues of political, national, religious, and ethnic identity issues, linked to local, national and world value systems for culture. These values and meanings of culture are not static, but change over time; the addition of the concept ‘intangible’ cultural heritage to the heritage vocabulary attests to this.

Sadiah Boonstra

IN 2001, UNESCO LAUNCHED the project ‘Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity’ with the objective to encourage the identification, preservation, and promotion of cultural expressions, such as language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture, and other arts, as well as traditional forms of communication and information. As a listing system similar to the World Heritage List, the – at the time – new heritage concept aimed to balance the focus of UNESCO’s concept of the 1973 World Heritage Convention on tangible remains from the past, such as monuments and buildings, and to make the heritage concept less Eurocentric and more representative of its member states. The first nineteen Masterpieces were proclaimed in 2001; two years later 28 Masterpieces were added, among which The Wayang Puppet Theater of Indonesia.2 In the same year UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

To shed light on how the process of heritage formation developed, this article will discuss the case of the wayang performance tradition, from colonial to postcolonial times in Indonesia. It will discuss the relationship between colonial and postcolonial power structures, legacies of the colonial past and contemporary heritage formation, specifically the concept of intangible cultural heritage in the Masterpiece program.3

Wayang

The word wayang is a general word that is applied to many kinds of traditional theatre in Java, Bali, Lombok, and some other parts of Indonesia and other countries of Southeast Asia. It can mean a (wayang) performance, (wayang) puppet, or (wayang) character. The two most widespread forms are wayang kulit and wayang golek. Wayang kulit is played with carved and painted flat puppets made of water buffalo hide, against a screen that is illuminated by a lamp throwing shadows and is watched from both in front and from behind the screen. Wayang golek uses wooden doll-like rod puppets without a screen.7 The telling of wayang stories – the most popular being the Mahabharata and Ramayana – is supported by music from the gamelan orchestra and singers. Although wayang can be traced to the tenth century, detailed Javanese, Dutch, and English descriptions of wayang date only from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to historian L.J. Sears, “The shadow theater, as it is known today, developed within an atmosphere where 19th century discourses of science and progress were permeating, both contributing to and drawing from Javanese and Dutch intellectual exchanges.”8 The study and development of wayang is thus intertwined with the political context of colonialism and its power relations. Consequently, wayang has been incorporated in a western body of scientific colonial knowledge and has come to refer to an ‘authentic’ indigenous past. It has become a symbol of Java or Bali or Indonesia or the East Indies. Wayang puppets are depicted on book covers, exhibition posters, on the walls of Indonesian restaurants, and can be found in oriental antique stores and food shops. With the submission and proclamation of the wayang puppet theatre as a UNESCO Masterpiece, both the Indonesian state and UNESCO confirm this essentialist connotation in the context of the nation.8

The Masterpiece candidature file

The national wayang organizations Sena Wangi (Sektoris Nasional Pewayangan Indonesia, or National Wayang Secretariat) and Pepadi (Persebaran Pedalangan Indonesia, or the Indonesian Puppeteers’Pedralangan Union) prepared Indonesia’s “candidature file” for wayang, according to the UNESCO Guidelines for the Submission of the Second Proclamation of Masterpieces in 2002.8 The candidature file entitled WAYANG. The Traditional Puppetry and Drama of Indonesia comprises the initial file, a later-sent addendum including a five year action plan for the preservation and development of wayang, as well as a ten-minute video. The candidature file describes five forms – Wayang Bali, Bali, Wayang Kulit Purwa, Central Java, Wayang Golek Sundan, West Java, Wayang Bonjer, South Kalimantan, Wayang Palemboeng, South Sumatra – as a “representative ‘self-portrait’ to present a glimpse of the growth and development of Indonesian wayang up till this time.”9

An international jury evaluated the candidature file based on criteria of outstanding cultural value found in either “a high concentration of outstanding intangible cultural heritage or an outstanding value from a historical, artistic, ethnological, sociological, anthropological, linguistic or literary point of view.”10 The candidature file argues for the outstanding value of wayang because “it has succeeded in achieving high artistic quality” as it is “an art which has the qualities of artistically (very noble) and edifying (very beautiful), or ethical and aesthetic.” This argument is strengthened with the statement that “Western culture experts have even admired wayang”, and that “it is perhaps the most complex and sophisticated theatrical form in the world.”11 The international value of wayang is confirmed with the enumeration of Western scholars who conducted research, indicating that wayang is “very attractive to foreign audiences.”12

The description of wayang in the candidature file can be regarded as a compilation of previous discourses about wayang. Colonial scholars in interaction with the Javanese elite developed a discourse that became the standard or traditional idea of wayang by the end of the 1930s; it was one that emphasized philosophical and mythical elements and focused on wayang’s deeper meaning as a mirror of life. This discourse proved to be foundational. Although it acquired new elements under President Sukarno (1945-1966) and President Suharto (1967-1998), they also both re-authorized and restated the existing discourse. The discourse developed in colonial times can be found in the candidature file, which calls wayang “adiluhung (very noble) and edifying (very beautiful)” and “not simply an entertainment [...] because wayang is an illustration of human life.”13 The file continues by arguing that “The wayang stories and all their paraphernalia effectively express the entirety of human life [...] the wayang performance is an illustration of a spiritual journey to understand the meaning of life and the process of approaching the Supreme God.”14 As such, the discourse in Indonesia’s candidature file for wayang can be regarded as another authorization of colonial and postcolonial discourses.

The need for safeguarding and conservation of wayang is emphasized as it is arguably on the verge of extinction. The accompanying preservation plan Perco Kidde [Five Actions] aims “to revitalize wayang in ways desired by individuals and communities involved in wayang.”15 Measures include Membership Cards for Pepadi members, the establishment of a Code of Ethics for puppeteers [enforced in 1996], and the exercise of “care and quality control with regards to groups of individuals wishing to perform wayang overseas, both in terms of content of the performances, as well as regarding the artists involved.”16 To guarantee the transmission of wayang skills and knowledge Sena Wangi and Pepadi designed a plan to promote wayang preservation and development at traditional wayang schools, and at formal educational institutions such as ISI Surakarta, Denpasar, and Bandung.17 The plan furthermore proposes an inventory, documentation and information on classical and new wayang forms; education through training and seminars; development of organizations, and institutions, development of wayang artists, experts and aficionados, and development of a wide range of collaborations with overseas organizations and individual experts.18


Heritage paradoxes

However, the real motive behind the safeguarding rhetoric of wayang’s nomination is national identity building. “The vision of Sena Wangi is the desire to make wayang one of the pillars of national culture”16 as “this appreciation is a source of great pride for all those involved in wayang and indeed for the entire Indonesian nation.”17 The proclamation should turn wayang into a pillar of national culture, and should improve Indonesia’s image on an international level. Wayang as an expression of Javanese culture is affirmed as national culture, and vice versa. Indonesian national culture is argued to be Javanese culture. This notion of Indonesian culture directly relates to Sukarno’s and Suharto’s postcolonial nationalist discourses, which entailed that being Javanese was the best way of being Indonesian, which in turn is related to the Javanese cultural nationalist discourse of the early twentieth century. Wayang is framed in the international heritage discourse by its proclamation as a UNESCO Masterpiece, and is used to show the world Indonesia’s great cultural achievement. The international acknowledgement is used as an affirmation of Javanese identity on a national level. In other words, the nationalist discourse about wayang acquired backing through international acclaim of Javanese culture. The international heritage discourse thus anchors wayang in a national context. Consequently, the proclamation of wayang as a Masterpiece does not make it part of global heritage, but rather secures it in a national political discourse that finds its roots in colonial and postcolonial power relations.

This means that although UNESCO aims to highlight global cultural diversification, State Parties utilize UNESCO’s standard setting policies such as the Convention for Intangible Heritage for their nationalist agendas. Although the heritage discourse incorporates all previous discourses of wayang, the proclamation of wayang as a UNESCO Masterpiece in my view further fixes the already entrenched colonial and nationalist discourses. Starting in colonial times, the documentation of wayang inadvertently established guidelines for the performance tradition, by producing texts and other forms of registration, such as cassette, video’s, DVD’s and VCD’s. In effect, the documentation created tangible forms of what is celebrated as intangible cultural heritage. The candidature file and the following proclamation of wayang is yet another text about wayang, but written by UNESCO, a standard-setting organization with a global authority in the field of cultural heritage. Consequently, anyone who reads the candidature file will likely evaluate the wayang performance practice based on the text in the file. The effect is that approaches or discourses that fall outside the description in the file might be judged as ‘not correct’. This has happened since the start of the wayang documentation. Heritage discourse of wayang thus produces tangible forms of documentation, which functions as a frame of reference and at the same time invoke a legitimacy for the preservationist attitude seen earlier in Dutch orientalist scholars, the Javanese courts of the 1920s and 1930s, and the rigid national-cultural approach of Suharto’s New Order. This stance seems to be driven by an anxiety that old wayang forms are disappearing and nothing new that is worthwhile is replacing them.

Sadiah Boonstra is currently an independent historian and curator. Her research interests include cultural heritage and contemporary Indonesian history.
Borobudur saujana: as far as you can(not) see

Saujana, which literally means as far as you can see, is the Indonesian translation for the UNESCO category acknowledged in the World Heritage Convention (WHC) as cultural landscape (CL). The term is defined in the Indonesian Charter for Heritage Conservation as the inextricable unity between nature and manmade heritage in space and time. Unfortunately, of the 66 designated world cultural heritage landscapes, only one is located in Indonesia. This is despite the fact that CLs in Indonesia have the same outstanding characteristics when compared with others on the UNESCO list: Borobudur Temple Compounds (central Java, Indonesia) – a World Heritage Site since 1991 – is an ‘outstanding’ example of how ineffective is the application of the WHC in Indonesia, as it does not take into account the local notion of saujana.

Sara Guagnini

DURING MY FIELDWORK in the summer of 2014 I was astonished by the interconnections between the landscape and human settlements established around the Borobudur compound. This is a characteristic which has been given just to the temple itself, while Borobudur’s surroundings have not been extensively studied nor promoted as a touristic destination. Local activists believe that the government does not consider the temple’s surroundings as ‘heritage’, because it would then be believed to involve the ‘district residents in the tourism management and share them with the profits. The residents, meanwhile, are calling for a more responsible and integrated management of the temple and its surroundings that prioritizes cultural and educational values instead of finance.

My research is in line with previous studies on the imbalance of the geographic distribution of sites recorded as CLs on the World Heritage List (WHL). Akagawa and Sirisriak discuss this imbalance by applying numerical data, criticizing the Eurocentric nature of the WHC and questioning the etymological meaning of cultural landscape as an outstanding worldwide value. According to these authors, WH nominations depend on the efforts of each nation-state, which means that political and economic factors play a key role in safeguarding heritage. I have found that the Indonesian government, by disregarding the landscape as the contextual setting of the Borobudur Temple Compounds, has endangered the site’s conservation, to the detriment of its living culture. The situation is quite common among former colonies, in which governments – involved in the management of the combination of the natural environment. Regrettably, Soeroso,6 Rhami,5 village chiefs, heritage activists and members of the NGO JAKER (Jaringan Kepariwisataan Borobudur – Borobudur Tourism Network) have all put forth that heritage tourism at Borobudur could in fact be turned into an asset for conservation and economic development for the whole district, if only the tourism management integrated the inhabitants and acknowledged the values of the landscape. To differentiate from the static images of ancient Buddhist temples, promoted through touristic brochures, these groups argue for a ‘dynamic’ conception of heritage. They explain that the Borobudur Compounds listed as world heritage sites represent the center of a mandala – an integrated cosmological representation of the world organized around a unifying center. The mandala is a Buddhist concept and a Japanese philosophy based on the achievement of a harmonious relationship between humans, nature and God. According to the local activists, Borobudur is now a ‘broken mandala’, which needs to be fixed in order to achieve harmony once again. The Borobudur Compounds are at the center of an integrated system, from which energy is dispersed into the surroundings. In this system, all the stakeholders are given a specific position and power within the mandala, and all of them have to share responsibility to achieve balance. They argue that the notion of a mandala could be integrated in the description of Borobudur as a cultural landscape. They explain that tourism programs and activities bounded by the mandala would help to grow the local economy in the temple’s surroundings. Only then will local inhabitants have the means to preserve their environment, no longer being compelled to sell their land to developers who build luxury resorts that disrespectfully exploit natural resources. Hence, the harmony will be restored.

Borobudur’s mandala’s outstanding values

Although the idea that the Borobudur Temple Compounds represent a mandala has received great scholarly attention, the volumes dedicated to Borobudur have not stressed the link between the temple architecture and the surrounding landscape. Borobudur lies in the Kodam Plain, embraced by four volcanoes: Merapi, Merbabu, Sumbing and Sindoro. The nearby Setumbu Hill is the ideal place from which to observe Borobudur from a distance; in the early morning the temple appears to rise out of the mist, like a floating lotus.

At the center of the Borobudur area, we find two Buddhist temples, Mendut and Pawon, which together with the main temple are listed as world heritage sites in 1991. The area also contains several other historical remains (Selogriyo, Nganang, Ausu and Gunungsrari). The land comprises dry fields, gardens, plantations and human settlements; nine varieties of bamboo, raw materials for medicines, and the planting patterns found in the area still adhere to Javanese traditions. Many of the activities carried out by Borobudur’s inhabitants relate to the landscape; besides farming, people use natural resources for pottery making, crafts and traditional cooking. The integration between nature and humans is also seen in local traditions and ceremonies, such as traditional dances, music and visual arts. The value of Borobudur’s landscape appears in the diversity of its natural beauty, rural scenery and its inhabitants’ livelihoods, which are all connected and cannot be understood as separate entities.

Borobudur saujana

According to the Indonesian Charter for Heritage Conservation, Indonesian heritage is the legacy of nature, culture and saujana – lit. ‘as far as you can see’ – which is a weave of the two. However, because heritage originally related to only historical remains or natural areas, the management of the combination of the two – saujana – lacks effectiveness. For instance, the Borobudur state-sponsored preservation is focused just on Borobudur Temple, which is classified as a ‘masterpiece of monumental art’, but not as a cultural landscape. This omission prevents one from recognizing how Borobudur temple is at the center of a bigger structure, of which the inhabitants and their daily activities are integrated parts. Embracing the temple compounds in its wider context and recognizing the role of its inhabitants is crucial steps if integrated conservation wants to be accomplished. After all, who can better express the outstanding value of a place, if not a person who is part of the place itself? These people do not yet have a voice, and are consequently marginalized in the name of development. Along with their identity, the ‘outstanding’ value given to some heritage sites by the WHC vanishes.

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3. Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), a human geographer, first used the term kulturkreis[6] (cultural landscape) to describe the role played by local communities in shaping landscapes. Naturalist philosopher, Carl Ritter (1779-1849), later expanded the meaning to include the ways in which the natural environment influences the evolution of human civilizations.

Even though the ancient lake has disappeared, you can still see Borobudur floating like a lotus. Photo reproduced under a Creative Commons license courtesy of India Kurniawan on Flickr.
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http://newbooks.asia/review/ raden-saleh

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Reviewer: Michael D. Panto
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Reviewer: John Walsh
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Reviewer: Ghislain Nadri
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Reviewer: Rachel Parkh
Reviewed publication: Owen, L. N. 2012.
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Industrialization in late-developing ASEAN countries
Reviewer: Kai Chen
Industrialization in Late Developing ASEAN Countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam
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ISBN: 9789971694036
http://newbooks.asia/review/industrialization-late-developing-asean-countries

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Reviewer: Yogesh Raj
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New Delhi: Primus Books & ICHR
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A pioneer in Yokohama
Reviewer: Benoît Leduc
Reviewed publication: van Assendelft de Coningh, C. T. (edited and translated from ‘Ontmoetingen ter zee en te land’)
A Dutchman’s adventures in the new treaty port
Indiaopolis: Hackett Publishing Company,
ISBN: 9781603848367 (pb)
http://newbooks.asia/review/pioneer-yokohama
Filipino Ilustrado scholarship: boding the nation?

The attention that Filipino scholarship at the end of the 19th century critically deserves has finally arrived in this work, although Resil B. Mojares’ *Brains of the Nation* (2008) provided the necessary route for a more nuanced and sustained study on the subject. The rather long, to some extent vague title should have been replaced with an accurate expression that could have rendered the contents satisfactorily. In fact, can we really say that these Filipino scholars were Orientalists, practitioners of Orientalism as a discipline? Or is it better to situate their intellectual production not as Orientalism per se, but as modern knowledge in aid of *Ilustrado* propaganda? This latter, however, circumscribes the rather different politics not limited to propaganda that each of these authors offer in their respective works. It goes to show that labelling their works is as difficult as giving title to the whole. Why “and the end of Spanish colonialism”? Did these scholarly works prefigure the closing of a dying empire?

Erwin S. Fernandez

Reviewed publication:


THAT YOUNG FILIPINOS were engaging in scholarly polemics shows how sophisticated these cultivated minds were. Educated either in Manila or in Madrid or both, they were the crème de la crème of their generation who had mastered the language of their colonial superiors and began to interest their affairs in the affairs of their country. One of the very first to display competent knowledge was Gregorio Sancianco (1852-1897), a Chinese mestizo, who wrote *El Progreso de Filipinas* (1881), a treatise urging for economic reforms and dedicating it “to the Filipino proprietors.” He lamented among other things the lack of “centers of instruction necessary for their [Filipino] moral and intellectual conditions” and that “educational services are absolutely indispensable for the moral and material state” of the country (xvi, ix). Citing the very few Filipinos who were studying in Madrid, including a certain Paterno and Juan Luna, he concluded that the country needs centers of instruction and education to develop young minds. Unfortunately, Thomas failed to include Sancianco in her study or to even mention him.

Young Filipino scholars for (and against) the nation

These scholars, namely Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera (1837-1925), Pedro Paterno (1838-1919), Jose Rizal (1861-1896), Isabelo de los Reyes (1844-1938), Mariano Ponce (1833-1912) and Pedro Serrano Latkat (1853-1928), constitute the terro fime of Philippine scholarship that creatively engaged with modern scholarship and knowledge embracing ethnology, folklore, philology and history. While traditional Filipino historiography would lump Ilustradós writings as composing the literature that articulated the ‘nation,’ Thomas stresses a valid point that “the ilustrados’ aims...may not have been clearly ‘nationalist’ or even clearly ‘anti-colonial’” (12). There were divergences and inconsistencies that were apparent in the so-called ‘nationalist’ movement that seemed at first to appear as monolithic. Thomas’ work focuses on the scholarly writings and the different political projects and possibilities that these authors herald or map for the Philippines.

She begins by placing them in the context of the history of Orientalism, how India captivated the Orientalist imagination and the parallels and distinctions between Philippine and Indian intellectual experiences. The crucial difference between the two, as she pointed out, was while India could argue for a narrative of decline from ancient greatness with surfet of antique sources of texts, Filipino intellectuals had ingeniously invented a plot of decay from limited and even lack of pre-colonial texts, a discussion tackled deftly in chapter five. It is not entirely correct to say “lack of surviving ‘original’ texts” (33), as the Laguna Copperplate Inscription (LCI) proves, but the validity of conclusions on the migration of Hindus to the archipelago is far fetched and confirms the ignorance of Pardo de Tavera’s methods. The dearth of Spanish scholarship on the Philippines forced these young cosmopolitan Filipino intellectuals to pioneer in ethnological and folklore studies, subjects that were treated in depth in chapters two and three. In chapter four, Thomas fascinatingly examines the origins and effects of an orthographic reform in which a revised antique sources of texts, Filipino intellectuals had ingeniously invented a plot of decay from limited and even lack of pre-colonial texts, a discussion tackled deftly in chapter five. It is not entirely correct to say “lack of surviving ‘original’ texts” (33), as the Laguna Copperplate Inscription (LCI) proves, but the validity of conclusions on the migration of Hindus to the archipelago is far fetched and confirms the ignorance of Pardo de Tavera’s methods. The dearth of Spanish scholarship on the Philippines forced these young cosmopolitan Filipino intellectuals to pioneer in ethnological and folklore studies, subjects that were treated in depth in chapters two and three. In chapter four, Thomas fascinatingly examines the origins and effects of an orthographic reform in which a revised orthographic reform of Tagalog effectively challenged the old and antiquated Spanish orthography, which resonated with the prime movers of the Philippine revolution. Again in chapter five, Thomas keenly observes the notable absence of Muslims in Ilustrado conception of Philippine history and that the Moros were “an unsettling presence for an idea of the Filipino people or nation” (175).

Still why would these scholars engage in such disparate scholarly enterprise? Thomas was not categorical in her answer: “Not all of them set out to lay the scholarly foundations for a Filipino ‘nation’ as such…” but she adds that, “When taken as a whole (and only when taken as a whole), the writings made it possible to think with certainty and a sense of inevitability of ‘Filipinos’ as a distinct ethnic people with ancient roots, an emerging modernity, and a political future” (203).

Contexting friar-scholars?
The book’s five neat chapters seem not enough and beg for more. I am still wondering about the reasons these young Filipino scholars would write or were able to write books on their homeland. Part of the answer might be found in the state of higher education in the Philippines before 1872, which is not examined as rigorously as possible. The effect of Maura law on educational reforms should not be underestimated particularly the teaching of Spanish to Filipino children. The events leading to the 1872 mutiny, though mentioned, is not tackled as much as it should. Sancianco (1881) did reference and was fully cognizant of them. Also, anti-friar sentiments prevalent among the Ilustrados, one that accused the orders as purveyors of obscurantism in the country, did not receive the thorough discussion that they deserve. Did these Filipino scholars want to challenge the dominance of friars in knowledge production so as to replace them as an authority regarding their country? The friars in their chronicles of their religious orders posted a number of theories on the origin of Philippine peoples. It was not Ferdinand Blumenstein (1828) who originated the series of migrations that would explain the diversity of Philippine population. One of the latest was Fr. Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga (1830) who said that Philippine languages were dialects of one language superficially from Madagascar to Christmas Island and that Philippine natives were descendants of people from South America. Sinibaldo de Mas (1843) theorized that Philippine languages belonged to a bigger family than Malay, called Oceania, and that two types of races existed in the Philippines, the aborigines and the immigrants, so that intermarriages between the two produced mestizos and mulattos better known as Malays. Thus, Fr. Francisco Baranera, author of the *Compendio de la historia de Filipinas* (1780), as cited by Thomas (81) was not the first to adopt Malay nor to propound these racial waves of migration. Were De los Reyes and Paterno, who cited Baranera, attempting to supplant the role of the friar-scholars who came to dominate both backward and advance scholarship on the Philippines?

Thomas’ work

This significant work by Thomas should be welcomed in an effort to re-acquaint the present generation of Filipinos and non-Filipinos with the rich legacy of 19th century Philippine scholarship in our post-colonial age. That there was a rich body of Philippine studies in Spanish by Filipino scholars could have dodged the establishment of a Philippine university manned by Filipinos, an event that occurred in the creation in 1898 of the Universidad Central de Filipinas, which eventually closed upon the outbreak and escalation of the Philippine-American War. And irony of ironies is that an American scholar would help in the resurrection of this body of Filipino scholarship that had become unreadable to an English- and Tagalog-speaking generation of Filipinos, with no small thanks to American imperialism that gave birth to a fascist ethnocratic state.

Erwin S. Fernandez is presently affiliated with Abung na Panagbayan Pangasinan [House of Pangasinan Studies] (winf@tree@yahoo.com)

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Brains of the Nation: The Newsletter | No. 69 | Autumn 2014 The Review | 33

Above: A ‘calesa’, a horse-drawn rig, standing in front of one of Manila’s oldest churches, the Binondo Church.

Oldest churches, standing in front of...
On top of the world

Clare E. Harris begins *Museum on the Roof of the World* by juxtaposing two striking quotes, one from a member of the British imperialist Younghusband Expedition of 1904, who declares: “Every Tibetan ... ought to be in a museum,” and the other from a Chinese blogger in 2008, who threatens that the Chinese will put Tibetan culture in a museum, “if you [Tibetans] behave badly” (1). Harris’ point is hard to miss: for some British then and some Chinese now, museums were/are understood to be effective tools of control over the Tibetan population.

Jeff Kyong-McClain

Reviewed publication:

Barbarians or Shangri-La?
Reflecting on this situation, Harris further notes that, “the position of Tibet in the twentieth century can be described as doubly colonial,” as most artifacts of Tibetan heritage remain to this day under the control of people other than Tibetans (5). Through extensive use of archival sources, as well as interviews with interested parties around the globe, and of course the ‘art’ itself (the volume is amply illustrated with black-and-white images as well as a generous selection of color plates), Harris proceeds to contest the contested nature of Tibetan art, culture and national identity. Although packed full with many fascinating asides, the main trajectory of the volume is to show how Westerners (usually the British) first used museums to create an image of a barbaric Tibet, which was later spectacularly transformed into its opposite: Tibet as ‘Shangri-La.’ Just as this more positive, though equally mythic, construction was taking root in the West, Chinese nationalists picked up on the power of museum display and began to present and interpret artifacts in such a way to show traditional Tibet as a theocratic and oppressive land, in need of liberation from outside. Finally, Harris closes with case studies of several contemporary Tibetan artists, who are trying to resist the museum effect, and maintain instead a living Tibetan culture.

The invention of art
Interestingly, the Younghusband Expedition marked something of a turning point to a more cheerful interpretation of Tibet. Harris carefully discusses the writings of members of the expedition who gathered Tibetan objects and shipped them back to Britain, and shows that in their view the former ‘idols’ could also be cast as native art, a category to be appreciated, not derogated (though Harris also exposes the rampant looting that went on during the Expedition, in the name of knowledge production). This invention of ‘Tibetan national art’ eventually led Western scholars to suppose there might be a nation deserving of self-determination, which combined with the whimsy of post-WWI Western spiritual seekers to lay the groundwork for the more fantastic interpretations of Tibetan culture now famously emanating from Hollywood.

After China’s fancifully-named ‘peaceful liberation of Tibet’ in 1951, museum representation of Tibet once again soured. Tibetan artifacts, and eventually the Potala Palace itself, were, at best, ‘downgraded to the level of ‘folk culture’’ and said to be the work of a “decadent elite” (157). In all displays there was and is a strong emphasis on the “inalienable connection between China and Tibet” (189), and Tibetans who think otherwise have no voice. Such being the case, Harris notes an odd twist on the debate of repatriation of artifacts, as there are currently very few Tibetans calling for the return of artifacts from Western museums to Tibet. The last two chapters consider the case of ethnic Tibetan contemporary artists, active both within and without of China, who attempt to use their work to challenge the perceptions of their culture but also Western ‘Shangri-La’ distortions, and meet on equal footing with artists from around the world. Some of these oppose the idea of museums outright, as invariably restrictive to their ruminations on Tibetan cultural identity.

There is much to recommend and very little to criticize in Harris’ volume. If we were to nit-pick, Harris is plainly sympathetic (and with good reason) to the Tibetans who are not permitted to represent themselves. Nonetheless, for the most part she remains even-handed in her description of Chinese interests and activities in the area, but occasionally she seems to see ethnic oppression as a problem on one’s own terms. For instance, that the Chinese state disapproves of ‘common people’ in Tibet possessing ‘relics’ may not be, as she suggests, a question of ethnicity, but one of state control over the past more generally, applicable to Tibetans and Chinese equally (185), or another, the desacralization of the Potala Palace could perhaps be juxtaposed with the desacralization of the Forbidden City, in which case the question would be one of the modern world’s attack on divine kingship, not China on Tibet (195-99). These points and others, of course, could be debated, and Harris’ writing style is clear and engaging, and the text would surely provoke fascinating and productive debate in upper level Asian History and Art History classes, and among educated laypeople in general. The Museum on the Roof of the World is a welcome addition to the literature on museums and nationalism, and makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of how the leadership of the modern Chinese state used European imperialist techniques, like building museums, to gain control of the multi-ethnic Qing territories.

Jeff Kyong-McClain is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (jkyongmcclain@uark.edu)

Ghosts of the past

From time to time, an edited volume comes along whose table of contents and list of authors are simply exciting. *Ghosts of the Past in Southern Thailand* is one such volume. Editor Patrick Jory is joined by twelve eminent scholars to uncover not only the history of southern Thailand, but more specifically, its histography, noting how local nationalists approach the history of Patani.

Shane Bartlett

Reviewed publication:

The Newsletter | No.69 | Autumn 2014
On Tuesday 16 July 2013, the Supreme Court in Mumbai upheld a high court verdict from 2006, which had quashed the Maharashtra state government’s order to ban dance bars in the state. This fact, and the research that will undoubtedly follow it, are all sequels to Anna Morcom’s brilliant new book, which went to press before the Supreme Court had reached its verdict. After seven years of being banned, dance bars were allowed to open again. This was certainly good news for the tens of thousands of women who had been employed in these bars, and whose loss of livelihood as performers had catapulted many of them into the very sex work from which the ban was supposed to save them.

Lalita d’Perron

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Indeed, both defenders and opponents of the ban used similar imagery to make their case to be one of ‘saving’ the women from victimhood: while the bar’s advocates say that dance bars were a cover for prostitution and trafficking rackets, those opposing the ban claimed that without legal places to dance, most of these women would end up as transactional sex workers. In both sides of the debate, therefore, the dance bars were stylized as places that could meet the various criteria of respectability in bourgeois society was paramount.

Skilled or victim?

Anyone familiar with the history of the tour of North India and the redolent in the South will spot the uncanny similarities with late nineteenth and early twentieth-century campaigns to gentrify the performing arts, turning them into palatable cultural forms that could be Mobilized for the nationalist endeavor. As with the dance bar ban, in the earlier debate the art of dancing was largely if not entirely removed from its context of being a hereditary skill, and was re-framed as a victim of modernity. The state stepped in to racialize their bodies and be akin to, or actually be, prostitutes. The perceived connection between dance and prostitution has been widely discussed in various scholarly works on the performing arts in South Asia. Morcom’s analysis of the dance bar ban reveals how the debate surrounding female performers and dance has not actually moved on much in over a hundred years. Although what used to be the moral issue of ‘prostitution’ is now the development issue of ‘sex work’ and HIV/AIDS, in many ways the debate remains framed in terms of women having improved lives if they do not have to dance. This framing of dance as part of sex work entirely denies the reality that for most of the performers, dancing is their trade, their labor, their skill, their family tradition, and indeed has been for centuries.

Woman-identified performers

The book starts with a somewhat disappointing introduction. While most of us who teach or present on courtesan culture have used movies to give our audience a taste of what performance may have looked like, opening a book of this caliber with an analysis of the film Pakeezah seems superfluous. However, by the end of the introduction it is entirely clear that this is a book based on rigorous and broad scholarship. Morcom includes a historical overview of female hereditary performers in chapter one, an analysis of the casts and communities of these performers in chapter two, and in the third chapter she introduces her reader to transgender and gender-variant chapters. Such organizational issues are laid bare in the shifts the focus to the twentieth-first century, and examines in chapter four how even sexy Bollywood dancing has made it into the acceptable realm of the middle-class, juxtaposing this with the ongoing stigmatization of hereditary performers. In chapter five we learn about the bar girls, the ramifications of the dance bar ban, and the necessity to frame arguments both for and against the ban in terms of labor and human rights. In her final chapter, Morcom returns to women-identified performers and the way their lives and livelihoods have been affected by NGOs, community-based organizations, and an increasing globalized awareness of ‘gay rights’.

One of Morcom’s radical additions to scholarship on dance in India is that she includes in her analyses kathus, a term she never fully defines but which usually refers to women-identified. assigned-at-birth men who live as men in their daily lives but present as women when performing. Sexes are increasingly conflated with hijras (transgender women who were born assigned-at-birth men), in part because kathus lack of access to appropriate performing spaces leaves them in need of other earnings, which they can often acquire through association with hijras. Morcom’s inclusion of women-identified and transgender performers alongside cisgender female dancers is quite revolutionary, and very much appreciated. Although Morcom herself occasionally stumbles on terminology (her uncritiqued use of the term ‘offenism’ is somewhat grating, and terms such as ‘transvestite’, used to distinguish from ‘transgender’, could have been explored more), her work also highlights how unhelpful ‘Western’ and development-related language can be. The term MSM (men who have sex with men) is often used in discourses on non-Western societies, allowing for the fact that the term ‘gay’ and attendant identity politics are irrelevant in many cultures. However, as Morcom points out, the term MSM nevertheless ties itself to the binary gender division of male/female, a division that many kathus do not recognize. Modern feminist discourse may want to take note of how Morcom includes all women-identified dancers in her analyses, and while she does separate her discussion into cisgender (as far as which, incidentally, she never uses) and transgender performers, her narrative flows easily and inclusively, without any hint of sensationalism.

Sense of déjà-vu

Anyone working in the field of South Asian performing arts needs to read this book, as should those interested in the lives of female and women-identified performers. However, Morcom’s scholarship reaches far beyond the arts, and this book reveals the potential of modernity in illuminating yet, actually, predictable ways. Morcom herself refers to her ‘shock’ (27) at realizing that there continues to exist a dimension of Indian culture that involves hereditary female performers. However, more surprising than many of Morcom’s conclusions as to the ongoing detriment of the post-colonial project to hereditary female-identified performance is the fact that so many of us who work in the field had not realized or verbalized it before. In that sense, the experience of reading Morcom’s book is similar to watching a movie you have seen but which no longer lingers in your consciousness: a sense of déjà-vu combined with not all that surprised at any of the revelations. Morcom shows that history unfortunately does repeat itself, though she also offers positive interpretations and analyses. This book is a unique addition to the scholarship on performance, and Morcom has written it in a highly erudite, well-researched, yet extremely readable manner.

Lalita d’Perron, University of Wisconsin-Madison diperron@southasia.wisc.edu

Review publication:

Loading blame in Patani as Indian or Arab, they were more mixed, bringing knowledge from the Muslim world to Patani, but also returning with Southeast Asian knowledge to produce new syntheses. One particularly impressive chapter is Francis Bradley’s study of the Siamese conquest of Patani. Bradley uses primary sources to document this violent episode, but also places these findings in a convincing theoretical shell, challenging the long-standing idea of low-casualty traditional warfare in Southeast Asia. From this point, the chapters progress more or less chronologically, concluding with Duncan McCargo’s insightful analysis of militant leaflets.

Despite several wonderful chapters, the book as a whole suffers from some shortcomings. One drawback is its repetitiveness, as several chapters recount the same historical events. For example, Kobkua Suwabbathat-Pian’s chapter on recent Patani nationalist writing begins with an overview of Patani history. It is not that the overview is not well-written, but it was not necessary this late in an edited volume, taking space that could have been used to extend the author’s impressive research. Related to this, several historical documents, namely the Holy Quran, the History of the Moley Kingdom of Patani, are analysed anew by several chapters.

Each chapter repeats the background of the texts and the authors fall to build from their own sources. However, crucially, each chapter once again relates historical events, but also jumps between past and present. More substantively, it can be difficult to distinguish between the nationalist texts reviewed and the author’s own position, especially in statements such as “the Thai military and intelligence are acutely aware of what strength the Patanian psyche draws from the oneness of Islam with the memory of a glorious past” (206). The chapter’s chaotic organization is exemplified by a long section on the final conquest of Patani, which wanders to include a paragraph on Chaovalit Yongsakul, a contemporary politician. While the chapter includes important and interesting discussions, it was difficult to locate a take-away point.

A second concern is how the volume links to the present, especially since this link is used to centre the entire collection. The back cover reads that historical relations between Malays and the Thai Kingdom rest “at the heart of the ongoing armed conflict.” A sentiment echoed throughout the book. No evidence is provided for this assertion beyond the lone chapter on the current violence by Duncan McCargo, which shows how anonymous leaflets credited to the militants mention historical events. Perhaps a more accurate statement would be that ongoing ethnic tensions do not recognize.

Morcom’s scholarship reaches far beyond the arts, and this book reveals the potential of modernity in illuminating yet, actually, predictable ways. Morcom herself refers to her ‘shock’ (27) at realizing that there continues to exist a dimension of Indian culture that involves hereditary female performers. However, more surprising than many of Morcom’s conclusions as to the ongoing detriment of the post-colonial project to hereditary female-identified performance is the fact that so many of us who work in the field had not realized or verbalized it before. In that sense, the experience of reading Morcom’s book is similar to watching a movie you have seen but which no longer lingers in your consciousness: a sense of déjà-vu combined with not all that surprised at any of the revelations. Morcom shows that history unfortunately does repeat itself, though she also offers positive interpretations and analyses. This book is a unique addition to the scholarship on performance, and Morcom has written it in a highly erudite, well-researched, yet extremely readable manner.

Lalita d’Perron, University of Wisconsin-Madison diperron@southasia.wisc.edu

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IIAS Publication Series

In 2014, IIAS replaced its existing IIAS and ICAS publication series with three new IIAS publication series: 'Global Asia', 'Asian Cities' and 'Asian Heritages'. Each series has its own editor and editorial board. As before, the books are published by Amsterdam University Press (AUP). If you are interested in publishing a book in one of our series, then please do not hesitate to contact its editor.

Global Asia
Series editor: Tal-Wing Ngo, Professor of Political Science, University of Macau, China (talwingngo@gmail.com)

Asia has a long history of transnational linkages with other parts of the world. Yet the contribution of Asian knowledge, values, and practices in the making of the modern world has largely been underrepresented until recent years. The Asian world is often viewed as a challenge to the existing world order. Such a bifurcated view overlooks the fact that the global order has been shaped by Asian experiences as much as the global formation has shaped Asia. The Global Asia Series takes this understanding as the point of departure. It addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region, as well as Asia's projection into the world through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies, and so forth.

The series aims to publish timely and well-researched books that will have the cumulative effect of developing new perspectives and theories on global Asia.

New Titles

Immigration in Singapore
Author: Norman Vasu
Editors: Wen Ling Chan & Su Yin Yeap
Release date: 01-11-2014
Series: Asian Cities

This study traces the socio-political effects of immigration on Singapore and its population, a topic that has been the subject of intense debate in the nation as its population grows increasingly diverse. Beyond the logic of economic imperatives, the book aims to explore the larger consequences of taking in large numbers of immigrants, and its analysis should appeal to scholars of migration, social change, and public policy.

Norman Vasu is Senior Fellow and Deputy Head at the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENs), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His most recent publications include an edited book with Yolanda Chin and Law Kam-yee, titled 'Nations, National Narratives and Communities in the Asia Pacific' (London and New York: Routledge, 2013) and the article with Damien D. Cheong: 'Immigration and the National Narrative: Rethinking Corporatism in Singapore', Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies 31(1), 2013, pp. 5-28.

Migration and Integration in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia: A Comparative Perspective
Authors: Marshall Clark & Juliet Pietsch
Release date: 01-11-2014
Series: Global Asia

This volume brings together a group of scholars from a wide range of disciplines to address crucial questions of migration flows and integration in Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Comparative analysis of the three regions and their differing approaches and outcomes yields important insights for each region, as well as provokes new questions and suggests future avenues of study.

Marshall Clark is a Senior Lecturer at the Research School of Humanities and the Arts of the Australian National University in Canberra. Juliet Pietsch is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University.
Artistic Interventions. Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia

Two-day workshop, 30-31 March 2015, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, China
Call for papers: deadline 15 November 2014

ORGANISED by IIAS, the Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands) and Hong Kong Baptist University. This event is part of the research network ‘Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context’, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York and coordinated by IIAS in collaboration with numerous institutions in Asia, the United States, Europe and Africa (see p45 of this issue; www.rethinking.asia)

This call for papers and art projects is for PhD students and artists to submit their abstract for a two-day workshop to be held on 30 and 31 March 2015 at Hong Kong Baptist University. The workshop aims to move beyond the traditional paradigms of western scientific representation by re-examining the fundamental concepts of time and space in the construction of knowledge of and from Asia. During the first day of the workshop, leading scholars in the field of history and cultural studies, and artists from different localities in Asia, including Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia and South Korea, will question the politics of history and cartography and explore new possible forms of knowledge.

This call for papers and art projects concerns the second day, during which PhD students and artists are invited to present and discuss their work with these scholars. Limited funding for travel and accommodation is available. The workshop itself will be free of charge.

The Workshop
The Artistic Intervention workshop aims to critically interrogate prevailing categorisations of the history and cartography of Asia as institutionalised in Western humanities and open up alternative and new forms of knowledge and practices. During the two days we will discuss the fundamental concepts of time and space in the construction of knowledge of and from Asia. While area studies continue the endeavors of knowledge production, its inevitably intricate connections with national histories and geographies are increasingly foregrounded.

Knowledge of Asia is still very much constructed by temporal narratives as vigorously and imaginatively as by spatial fixations: in other words, by their histories and geographies. Given that national histories are often deeply entrenched in authoritative discourses that maintain the imagined boundaries of the nation-state, and thereby erase or silence other possible histories and geographies, Prasenjit Duara’s call to rescue history – and geography, we add – from the nation, remains as urgent as ever.

We think of the arts, the role of artists, artist-activists and artist run spaces, as a potential rescue tool, capable of moving beyond traditional paradigms of Western scientific representation. The workshop aims to question how artistic practices can help reimagine both time and space in the context of Asia, when put into an intimate dialogue with area studies and related methodologies and disciplines, such as anthropology, art history, cultural studies and so on. The alleged ‘rise of Asia’ feeds into different nationalisms in the region and beyond, making such reimagination even more urgent. Its dependency on a meta-discourse on development and modernity are resonances of concepts that are deeply entrenched in social Darwinism, making this discourse on ‘the rise of Asia’ all the more complicated, especially in its denial of human complexity and a human craving for aesthetic and political aspirations.

The workshop seeks to probe into artistic and activist practices that prefigure alternative histories, as well as processes that present different mappings of the world, the country or the city; these will be put in dialogue with area studies knowledge production that also seeks to destabilise existing cartographies and historical accounts. A transnational and diasporic remapping of Asia, in conjunction with exploring its multiple histories, holds the potential to question if not undermine emerging nationalisms and prevailing reifications of the idea of ‘national cultures’.

Confirmed speakers
• Dr. Zheng Bo (Assistant professor at the School of Creative Media, specializes in socially engaged art, City University of Hong Kong)
• Zoe Butt (Executive Director and Curator of Sàn Art, Ho Chi Minh City)
• Tiffany Chung (Artist, Ho Chi Minh City)
• Xing Danwen (Artist, Beijing)
• Griddiya Gaweewong (Artistic director of the Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok)
• Edwin Jurriëns (Lecturer in Indonesian Studies at the Asia Institute, Faculty of Arts, the University of Melbourne)
• Dr. Anson Mak (Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University and artist)
• Prof. Eva Man (Executive Associate Dean of Graduate School & Professor in Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University)
• Tozer Pak Sheung-Chuen (Conceptual artist, Hong Kong)
• Dr. Y. Yang (Assistant professor, specializes in contemporary literature, film, and cultural studies in English, City University of Hong Kong)

Organisers
• Dr. Sadahiro Boonstra (IIAS) s.n.boonstra@vu.nl
• Dr. Yiu Fai Chow (Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, Hong Kong Baptist University) yfchow@hkbu.edu.hk
• Prof. Jeroen de Kloet (Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies, University of Amsterdam) j.dekeloet@uva.nl
• Dr. Yit Li (Visual Studies Program | Visual + Critical Studies Graduate Program, California College of the Arts) yli@cca.edu

Call for papers and art projects for PhD students and artists

Applications should include:
• an abstract of your paper, max. 300 words
• a one-page CV, including contact details of at least two referees

Applications should be sent by 15 November 2014 to Ms. Myian Cheung c/o Dr. Chow Yiu Fai at miyancheung@gmail.com
Selected candidates will be notified by 15 December 2014.

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Apply to present your book or pitch your PhD by 30 March 2015
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Display your products at ICAS 9
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The twists and turns to the presidency
Ulla Fionna

It was a positive sign that candidates with questionable track-records such as Golkar’s Abdulrah Jakobie struggled for support, despite his party coming strong in second place with 17.75 percent votes. His image suffered badly because of his inability to solve the Lapindo case, and despite his party’s solid machinery, he becomes the first Golkar chairman not nominated as either presidential or vice-presidential candidate since the first direct presidential election in 2004. Jokowi’s only serious rival was Prabowo Subianto, an ambitious former military general whose name has been closely linked with the disappearance of student activists in 1998.

Prabowo ran and lost alongside Megawati in 2009, but his Gerindra Party did well with 11.8 percent in the April legislative election. Head-to-head, Jokowi had a comfortable lead against Prabowo. In mid-May, most surveys put Jokowi in front with twice as much support for Prabowo. After the deadline for nominating candidates passed, only two names remained: Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto. Almost immediately, Prabowo demonstrated the formidable capacity of his campaign team. With the financial backing of his businessman brother, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, and coterie of experienced international campaign professionals, he managed to cut Jokowi’s lead quickly. As of June, Prabowo’s poll numbers increased significantly to 38 percent, while Jokowi hovered at 44.5. The former managed to convince many voters that he was the decisive leader that the country most needed. At this point, I was still optimistic that most Indonesians would not want to vote for Prabowo, whose ‘decisive’ image also carried the risk of a democratic rollback and even a return to authoritarianism.

However, by early July, I was concerned and frustrated. It was nearing polling day and it looked likely that many Indonesians would be swayed towards Prabowo. Experts and observers were clearly apprehensive. Even Jokowi’s early critics, who initially disparaged his lack of clarity on campaign issues, started to campaign against Prabowo. The prevailing mantra was that while Jokowi may not be the best person to be President he was surely better than the alternative. To make matters worse, Jokowi’s campaign lacked coordination. In stark contrast, the Prabowo camp was successful in starting several rumours including the possibility that Jokowi may be Megasawat’s puppet, a non-Muslim, a Chinese, was under foreign influence, or even communist. The man who barely three months ago looked set to waltz his way to the presidency was suddenly looking weak and helpless against a team who did not shy from dirty campaign tricks.

Depressed and preparing for the worst, I rationalised that if Prabowo were elected, it would be a wake-up call for Indonesia from complacency. If so, Indonesia would soon realise its mistake and vote him out in the next election. However, a couple of days before polling day, the momentum began to swing back against Jokowi. Whether it was because voters saw beyond the smear campaign, Jokowi’s convincing debate performances, or the possibility that Jokowi may be Megawati’s puppet, a non-Muslim, a Chinese, was under foreign influence, or even communist, the man who barely three months ago looked set to waltz his way to the presidency was suddenly looking weak and helpless against a team who did not shy from dirty campaign tricks.

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The role of the internet and social media in the 2014 Indonesian elections

Kathleen Azali

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF Indonesian presidential elections, the 2014 elections witnessed just two candidates: Prabowo Subianto and Joko Widodo. It was also the first time the internet and social media played such a consequential part in the process.

Only 70 million, out of 250 million citizens in Indonesia, are registered to vote. However, as more and more Indonesians use low-cost mobile devices, internet penetration has increased from less than 15% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2012. Indonesia also has the fifth highest number of social media users worldwide, following the US, Brazil, Japan, and the UK. According to research by Semiotic in 2012, jakarta is the world’s most active Twitter city, surpassing London and Tokyo, while Bandung ranked sixth. Facebook recorded more than 200 million interactions related to the Indonesian elections between March and July 2014, while Twitter recorded nearly 95 million tweets on the subject, starting at the beginning of 2014. This activity intensified during the final week of the elections, with a number of elections-related hashtags, such as #Jokowi, #PrabowoHatta, reaching worldwide trends. It must be remembered, however, that massive uses of bots and baking attempts to manipulate social media have also been reported from both sides; these trending topics must thus be interpreted with caution as increased mentions or followers on social media do not necessarily translate to increased mentions or followers.Followers do not necessarily translate to increased mentions or followers. Therefore, many have noted that Prabowo’s campaign was far more systematic and highly coordinated. jokowi’s campaign, in contrast, was less coordinated with different messages and accounts driven by random and unpaid volunteers. There might have been more than 1,000 disparate initiatives supporting jokowi, resulting in a cacophony of diverse voices that made campaign messaging fragmented and incomprehensible. Nevertheless, despite this fragmentation, many came to rely more on their social media rather than on official news outlets for the latest political updates. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, and mobile text messages also played a crucial role in the organization of events, like rallies and concerts. It must be remembered, however, that massive uses of bots or #Pilih_No1_PrabowoHatta, reaching worldwide trends. Nevertheless, the internet is not open, neutral, or free from barriers or censorship. Access to the internet and mobile gadgets in Indonesia exceeded 80% of the population. At the same time, it would be short-sighted to limit the analysis of its potential to only those with direct access to the internet, since the reach and influence of those potentially influenced by the information can be larger. For example, many issues raised online and on social media eventually crossed into mass media outlets like television and newspaper, where they gained significantly more attention. Ultimately, political participation and new media should not be separated from the society and media landscape that they are situated in.

Kathleen Azali, Research Associate, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

This year’s presidential elections in Indonesia have been defined as the most important political event of the country’s recent history. And yet, the background of this enormous event was a strange and bizarre culture of political campaigning. Joko Widodo, Governor of Jakarta, a self-made entrepreneur (ibu-ibu donning Hermes bags), paraded in Jakarta’s main sports arena (GBK, Gelora Bung Karno) on a pure-white stallion. Glad in safari attire and a kris (traditional dagger) strapped to his thigh, he reviewed his ‘troops’ in front of thousands of supporters. While his former post as commander of the Special Forces (Kopassus) during the Suharto years explains the militaristic penchant, it signaled a deeper meaning for many. It showed that Prabowo had, very early on, understood the longing for authority in large sectors of the population who saw in the country’s recent democratic experiment a threat to national integrity and a way for a corrupt and decentralized bureaucracy to accumulate astronomical sums of money.

However, the GBE campaign also made clear to observers and the general public that Prabowo truly believed in his own ‘manifest destiny’. After all, there were indications that he was a descendent of the legendary Javanese war leader Diponegoro (1785-1855), an illustrious heritage that made jokowi’s modest background look even duller. The Prabowo campaign also tried to show through the newspaper Obor Rakyat (The People’s Torch), published specially for the campaign, that jokowi was, in fact, a Christian-Chinese, working for Israel, America and the Vatican – in short an infinit and an enemy of Islam. The newspaper also stated that jokowi’s party, the PDIP, was the ‘Party of the Cross’ (Partai salib), working towards the Christianization of Indonesia. No doubt these ‘revelations’ played a part in lowering jokowi’s standing in Muslim circles, particularly in the Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) of East java, where the newspaper was largely distributed. On the evening of Election Day, after the quick-count results came in, Prabowo appeared on TV declaring that he would not recognize the results of the seven institutes that had declared jokowi the winner. After all, four other institutes had announced results showing that he himself had won (although none of these four made their data public). Prabowo declared that he would retract from the process. A day later, he announced that he was taking the case to the Constitutional Court. According to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), an Islamist party and staunch supporter of Prabowo, his victory was solid. The party’s real count results were exactly the same as the nation-wide poll result it made available to the public.

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Gwenaël Njoto-Feillard

THIS YEAR’S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS in Indonesia have been defined as the most important political event of the country’s recent history. And yet, the background of this enormous event was a strange and bizarre culture of political campaigning. Joko Widodo, Governor of Jakarta, a self-made entrepreneur (ibu-ibu donning Hermes bags), paraded in Jakarta’s main sports arena (GBK, Gelora Bung Karno) on a pure-white stallion. Glad in safari attire and a kris (traditional dagger) strapped to his thigh, he reviewed his ‘troops’ in front of thousands of supporters. While his former post as commander of the Special Forces (Kopassus) during the Suharto years explains the militaristic penchant, it signaled a deeper meaning for many. It showed that Prabowo had, very early on, understood the longing for authority in large sectors of the population who saw in the country’s recent democratic experiment a threat to national integrity and a way for a corrupt and decentralized bureaucracy to accumulate astronomical sums of money.

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Both candidates used social media extensively, though many have noted that Prabowo’s campaign was far more systematic and highly coordinated. jokowi’s campaign, in contrast, was less coordinated with different messages and accounts driven by random and unpaid volunteers. There might have been more than 1,000 disparate initiatives supporting jokowi, resulting in a cacophony of diverse voices that made campaign messaging fragmented and incomprehensible. Nevertheless, despite this fragmentation, many came to rely more on their social media rather than on official news outlets for the latest political updates. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, and mobile text messages also played a crucial role in the organization of events, like rallies and concerts.

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Kathleen Azali, Research Associate, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Changing patterns of power in historical and modern Central and Inner Asia

Conference, 7-9 August 2014, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Organised by the International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies (IUCIAS), IIAS, and Ulaanbaatar University.

Irina Morozova and Willem Vogelsang

IN AUGUST 2012, AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP on ‘The legacy of perestroika discourses in knowledge production on Central and Inner Asia’ was organised by the Humboldt University in Berlin, Volkswagen Foundation, the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), the National Institutes for the Humanities (Japan), the Union of the Historians of Mongolia and hosted by Ulaanbaatar University in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. During the workshop, a small number of scholars in the field of Central and Inner Asian Studies held a separate meeting to discuss a plan to establish an international association for the study of Central and Inner Asia and to organise an international conference to bring together a large group of researchers from all over the world to discuss various issues in a field of research that, especially over the last two decades, has gone through a number of rapid developments and changes. The intention was to especially focus on participation by Asian scholars, to give them an opportunity to discuss their work and research results in an international context.

The major developments and changes that occurred in the area include: the period of perestroika; the demise of the Soviet Union; the establishment of a number of new independent states; shifting geo-political alignments; a new approach to their history by many of these new states; the challenges posed by more ethno-nationalistic historiography; and added to all that, a growing awareness that Central and Inner Asia are inexorably linked to developments elsewhere in the world. These changes contribute to the situation, felt by many, that an international dialogue between scholars from all over the world to discuss the role, the position, and the history of such a large part of the Eurasian landmass was sorely needed. The small group that met in Ulaanbaatar in 2012 decided to seek the establishment of the ‘International Unit for Central and Inner Asian Studies’ (IUCIAS) and subsequently received the support from IIAS (Leiden, the Netherlands) and Ulaanbaatar University, to organise an international conference, with the result that between 7 and 9 August 2014 some one hundred scholars from all over the world, and especially from Asia, came together in the brand new premises of Ulaanbaatar University. The international academic committee of the conference established by the Unit, together with IIAS, proposed the conference topic: ‘Changing patterns of power in historical and modern Central and Inner Asia’.

The conference aimed to highlight the current state of knowledge in research on the history of Central and Inner Asia since the twelfth century until the present day. Understanding various patterns of power in a historical context, including their meanings, concepts and semantics, their competition, appropriation and exchange, as well as institutions and schemes of redistribution, is vital in this respect. The conference addressed how patterns of power are reflected in the process of social adaptation, how this process allows former elites to retain their privileged access to resources, material and ideological assets, and how it enables new elite groups to emerge.

The programme was convened by Professor J. Boldbaatar (Ulaanbaatar University), Dr Irina Morozova (Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany / IUCIAS) and Dr Willem Vogelsang (IIAS). For the three days of the conference, a large number of broad themes were discussed, ranging from the structure of the medieval Mongolian Empire and its impact on society, to specific case studies of modern developments in some of the new states of the area. The setup of the conference followed the well-established pattern of many conferences organised by IIAS; namely a series of parallel sessions of one and a half or two hours each in which three or four contributors present their paper, an abstract of which is sent to all participants well in advance. To improve communication between all participants, simultaneous translation was provided in English, Mongolian and Russian.

The first morning of the conference, after a series of welcoming words by, among others, the Rector of Ulaanbaatar University and host of the conference, Professor Oh Doek Kyo, the floor was opened to key-note lectures by two distinguished scholars in the field. The first, Academician Sh.Bira, addressed a historical topic by discussing Mongolian Tenggerism. The second speaker was Academician Nikolai Kradin, who talked about the academic study, over time, of the historical dynamics in the succession of Inner nomadic empires.

Academician Bira (Ulaanbaatar University), in his talk on Tenggerism, discussed the development of this belief (roughly translated as ‘heavenism’), which inspired and motivated the unprecedented rise of the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries. In its final form, after it had absorbed many aspects of Buddhism, Tenggerism became the official ideology of the Mongol Empire. This phase is related to the reign of Kubilai Khan, under whose rule the Mongolian Empire reached its greatest extent and universal character.

Academician Kradin (Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladivostok, Russia), addressed the nature of the dynamics of different cultural, economic, and social processes among the ancient and medieval nomadic empires of Central and Inner Asia. In doing so, he outlined the changing approaches to the study of nomadic societies over time, and the different factors that determined the structure of these nomadic and semi-nomadic societies.

The subsequent 27 panels covered a wide range of subjects. Nation building of the new states was an important topic that was discussed in many panels, and so was the role of informal structures. In this context, one of the panels focused on ‘State-building in post-socialist Central and Inner Asia: propaganda, regional politics and militias’. Also of particular interest were two consecutive panels on the subject of the dynamics of Mongolian pastoralists, organised and led by a number of Japanese scholars, led by Dr Hiroyoshi Kacabima (Hokkaido University), and including Dr Yuki Konagaya (National Institutes for the Humanities in Japan, and co-organiser of the conference). Two other panels, chaired by Dr Zanaa Jargal (Center for Citizen’s Alliance, Mongolia), addressed the issue of power and gender in Central and Inner Asia.

An important part of the programme was a podium discussion on the subject of ‘Eurasian frontiers and borderlands: the continuity and change of power models’. The discussion, moderated by Dr Irina Morozova (Humboldt University, Berlin), was conducted by Academician Bira, Academician Kradin, and Professor Morris Rossabi (Columbia University, New York).

Conferences are places where people meet and become acquainted with each other’s work and background. The informal part of a conference is therefore very important. Ulaanbaatar University took this point very seriously, and with great hospitality they organised the joint lunches every day, and invited all participants to a dinner on the first evening. This dinner was particularly fascinating since it was enlightened by a singing performance of one of the organisers, Academician Boldbaatar, who together with Mrs L. Chuluunchimeg, a famous singer, introduced the participants to a number of Mongolian songs that told the story of the rich Mongolian past.

The first general meeting of the International Unit for the Study of Central and Inner Asia took place at the conference. The first set of Statutes of the Unit was adopted, as well as the membership regulations followed by the scholars’ joining the Unit as new members. The Unit aims at networking and institutionalisation, stimulating research programmes and organising academic meetings, and seeks to involve professional individuals and scholars on the basis of their academic qualifications and potentials, regardless of their national affiliations.

For more information, please contact Dr Irina Morozova at iucias.ub@gmail.com.
Critical reflections on the future of planning

Public City, Private City workshop
27-28 August 2014, New York City

Paul Rabé

ON 27 AND 28 AUGUST 2014, Paul Rabé, Coordinator of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) at IAS, and Anupama Rao, Associate Professor of History at Barnard College/Columbia University, convened a workshop entitled Public City, Private City at the Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University.

The workshop was the first of three to be organised as part of the urban component of the IAS Asia, Urban Knowledge Studies in a Global Context programme, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York and coordinated by IAS, this programme aims to generate new humanities-focused research and knowledge in the field of Asian studies and urban studies by stimulating discussions between a range of different scholars and researchers in Asia, the United States and Europe.

The overarching theme of the New York workshop was the role of planning in the production of the built environment. Traditionally a public task, justified by the assumption that government is better able to protect the public interest, urban planning is increasingly being devolved to private parties, particularly in many South and Southeast Asian cities. In this context, the workshop considered the impact of these new planning forms, many of which are accompanied by high degrees of speculation and the privatisation of public space. The workshop convenors sought to analyse the implications of these shifts through structured discussions around four main topics:

1. The rise of the ‘generic’ city: the long-term consequences of modern city-making in Asia and beyond
2. The past and future of planning
3. Alternate modes of city-making
4. What role for urban knowledge?

Discussions centred on the politics of planning (from the physicality of plans to their modes of ‘visualisation’) and on the way in which historical legacies of planning, spatial segregation, and informality challenge contemporary arguments about urban convergence. The focus was on contemporary Asian cities, but insights on comparative urbanism from other parts of the world – especially the United States – were featured prominently in the analyses.

The participants
Workshop participants comprised a mix of architects, planners, academics in the humanities and social sciences, lawyers, artists and PhD students (for the full list of names please refer to www.urbanknowledgeias.com/[public-city-private-city]). The workshop also featured two prominent special guests: Ritchie Torres, member of the New York City Council representing the Central Bronx, and Arjun Appadurai, professor of Media, Culture, and Communication (NYU).

The thought-provoking keynote outlined Appadurai’s current interests in the sociology and ideology of global finance and its impact on housing markets in the West and, more recently, Asia. The monetisation of risk, through the growing use of derivatives, has a very direct impact on the health and growth of cities through the sub-prime mortgage market. As is well known by now, this led ultimately to the financial crises in the United States and Europe in the late 2000s. What is less well known, Appadurai explained, is that this industry and culture of ‘numerically manipulable risk’ is now spreading fast in China and India as well. The consequences of this, Appadurai suggests, are spectacular housing booms (particularly in China, for now) and massive urbanisation driven by housing developments – rather than the other way around. The result is a bi-polar world characterised by a high-end global financial economy, on the one hand, and an underclass of millions of labourers, on the other, and a wealth production machine that represents an almost completely different economy from the larger economy.

Global finance
Arjun Appadurai (left), a world renowned author and expert on the cultural dynamics of globalisation, delivered the workshop’s keynote address on Asian Cities: Connectivity and Comparisons.

Next workshop
The theme of the bi-polar economy will be further explored in the second workshop to be convened by Paul Rabé and Anupama Rao in the context of the Rethinking Asia Studies programme. The second workshop will explore current thinking, research and practice on ‘subaltern urbanism’ in the global economy and will be held at the Columbia Global Center in Mumbai, India, on 10-11 December 2014.

For more information about the Rethinking Asia Studies in a Global Context programme: see page 45 of this issue as well as visit the website www.rethinkingasia.asia
Reading craft in the global ecumene

Organised by IIAS in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences at Chiang Mai University and supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (New York).

Bryce Boomer & Chanjitra (Baitong) Chanorn

THS AUGUST, THE IIAS SUMMER SCHOOL, entitled ‘Reading craft: itineraries of culture, knowledge and power in the global ecumene’, convened in one of Southeast Asia’s most renowned centers of skilled craft production, Chiang Mai, a city of almost one million people located in northern Thailand. The program drew 24 graduate students from American, European and Asian universities whose focus on craft and craft production ranged across numerous disciplines. This is the second time that the IIAS Summer/Winter School has ventured away from the Netherlands, and the decision proved to be an inspired choice. The Chiang Mai location allowed participants to engage in exciting and rewarding field visits to craft sites where they could learn from skilled Thai artisans through participation, observation, and interviews. This hands-on exploration into craft production was the highlight of the ‘school’, which was five days of intense reading and discussion that primed participants to interact with craft in a new and intellectually stimulating way. The participating graduate students roundedly admired the Summer School’s innovative field research component and the chance to learn craft from some of Chiang Mai’s most skilled and respected artisans.

Presentations and discussions
On Monday, the school began with individual presentations by graduate students on their doctoral research projects and introductions from the programs five co-conveners: Aarti Mai, a city of almost one million people located in northern Thailand. The program drew 24 graduate students from American, European and Asian universities whose focus on craft and craft production ranged across numerous disciplines. This is the second time that the IIAS Summer/Winter School has ventured away from the Netherlands, and the decision proved to be an inspired choice. The Chiang Mai location allowed participants to engage in exciting and rewarding field visits to craft sites where they could learn from skilled Thai artisans through participation, observation, and interviews. This hands-on exploration into craft production was the highlight of the ‘school’, which was five days of intense reading and discussion that primed participants to interact with craft in a new and intellectually stimulating way. The participating graduate students roundedly admired the Summer School’s innovative field research component and the chance to learn craft from some of Chiang Mai’s most skilled and respected artisans.

A guest lecture by the anthropologist Alexandra Denes (Chiang Mai University) discussed the festivals and ceremonies of Thailand’s minority Khmer population. These ceremonies, many supported by the Thai state, promote the cultural practices of these minority communities, but always in ways that frame this ethnic group as a Thai minority. State support for non-Thai culture groups can also be read as a tool for taming challenges to Thai identity and pre-empting the formation of unly non-Thai identities that could provoke challenges for the Thai state. Both days included time for students to meet with the five conveners to receive critical advice and guidance on the subject of the Ph.D. research.

Wednesday, the third day, was given over to group discussions with three of the co-conveners. Discussions were grounded in readings selected and distributed by the conveners that bring out particular methods for analyzing and interpreting craft. Pamela Smith’s discussion sessions were devoted to understanding craft as a knowledge system, a knowledge system that is mediated by the teaching relationship that exists between the master and the apprentice. Discussion groups considered the advantages that can accrue to scholars when they devote themselves to learning the very skills that they write about in their scholarship.

Françoise Vergès led students in discussions that framed the production of craft within global capitalism, and within a global system of values that can transform craft producers into anonymous workers producing objects for a global market. Aarti Kawla asked students to consider the ways that crafts become signifiers within national discourse over authenticity, origins, cultural aesthetics, and ethnic identity. A related question was also asked: if the artisans themselves are subalterns, how might histories of these peoples disrupt national discourses on craft and identity?

Field visits
Armed with these new research perspectives, students and conveners spent the fourth day of the school. Thursday, conducting a field visit to one of seven pre-selected field sites. These field visits required a great deal of pre-planning by organizers. Assistance provided by staff at Chiang Mai University (CMU), particularly from co-convenor Chayan Vaddhanaphi, who directs two institutions associated with Chiang Mai University, the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Develop-ment and Center for Ethnic Studies and Development (CESD), was instrumental in the success of these visits. CMU Anthropology grad student Chanjitra (Baitong) Chanorn, who assisted in organizing the Summer School and was also a participant, described the months of work spent locating craft production sites, making preliminary visits, and selecting artisans who could inform students about craft production from a variety of angles. “We [the CMU organizers] have been amazed by the number of artisans and the variety of crafts,” Baitong reports, “I have to confess that even though I am a Thai PhD candidate who is working on craft, I had no idea that there is this great a variety of craft production in Chiang Mai.” Moreover, survey trips were a pleasure because the “artisans are amazingly proficient and the crafts are wonderful, and, more importantly, they [the artisans] seem very happy in what they are doing.”

The seven selected craft sites included the following: Indigo dying and weaving at the village Bang Tung Hua Chiang; traditional wood carving in Ban Tai; commercial wood carving also in Ban Tai; silver/embossing in the Ban Wua Lai neighborhood of Chiang Mai; lacquerware in Ban Wua Lai; bronze ware, gold engraving, and tiered umbrella manufacture in Chiang Mai; and Buddha image making also in Chiang Mai.

Chiang Mai, craft city
The ancient city of Chiang Mai was founded at the end of the 13th century and quickly became a center for commerce and religious pilgrimage. Its power ebbed and flowed, in some periods Chiang Mai’s power extended throughout northern Thailand, in others it was colonized by neighboring Burma, but in all of these periods it was an important inter-cultural crossroads that accommodated the different cultural practices from Sri Lanka, India, China, Burma, Laos, and Central and Southern Thailand. The kings of Chiang Mai, like monarchs throughout much of Southeast Asia, organized arts in urban districts and villages. These communities have certainly been transformed by Thailand’s rapid economic development over the last few decades and by Chiang Mai’s geographic position as a post-colonial tourist destination. Yet, they have not been destroyed. Buddha molding, woodcarving, silverworking, and many other arts are still being practiced in the zones established by Chiang Mai’s past kings. Many in these communities see themselves as carrying on artistic traditions that are many hundreds (if not thousands) of years old.

The site visits encouraged deeper interaction with the themes of the Summer School. Chiang Mai’s craft productions centers are grounded in artisanal traditions and modes of training and rituals that are many, hundreds of years old. Yet, they are almost entirely broken away from old economic systems of patronage and sacred and royal production. Chiang Mai woodcarvers, for example, continue to take commissions from Buddhist temples, but the bulk of their production is for the global market, particularly for sale to tourists in the many night markets and tourist spots that are prevalent in northern Thailand. However, the relationships between master and apprentices, the modes of training, and the community-building rituals that woodcarvers engage in, simultaneously situate wood carving in the social and cultural world that existed long before the global commodification of Thai woodcarving. Participants at each of the seven site visits encountered similarly complex examples of the way that craft production is at the intersection of multiple, often contradictory, global and local forces.

Participants who visited the silver embossing community at Ban Wua Lai encountered a community of silver workers, who in coordination with their community temple, were able to tap into state and local resources to help promote and strengthen the craft. Thai state discourse on support of local cultural practices, the preservation of traditional arts, and economic development became tools through which this community could garner governmental support and elite patronage for its activities. Through these channels a new silver working training center was organized in the community and study modules on silver work, including hands-on training, were incorporated into the nearby rural school system. More impressive still, the community received the financial support necessary to begin the construction of the world’s first silver temple an impressive example that when completed will be completely covered, inside and out, with embellished decoration in silver, aluminum and zinc. The Ban Wua Lai artisan community, like others, is now situated within the processes of revision, tradition, reinvention, state discourse, identity, the global, and the local.

Diversity
Students benefited from the extreme diversity of the participants’ co-conveners’ disciplines. The fields of history, anthropology, sociology, political science, archaeology, global studies, art history, philosophy, performing arts and design were all represented. This diversity strengthened field visits, in which participants approached the study of craft from very different disciplinary vantage points. This diversity may also have contributed to the spirited and somewhat fractious debates that dominated the last day of the Summer School as students struggled with the most appropriate or most valid way to represent and describe the field research of the previous days. The debate itself spoke to the deeply felt experiences that were generated by the IIAS Summer School ‘Reading craft: itineraries of culture, knowledge and power in the global ecumene’ and to the vibrant interactions that can develop in this kind of valuable multidisciplinary setting.
To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, a seminar was organised on 27 June 2014 at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne by CHAC (Centre d’Histoire de l’Asie Contemporaine, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) and GRIC (Groupe de Recherches Identités et Cultures, Université du Havre). It was attended by around 30 participants including 12 presenters. A more complete report in French is available at www.bandungspirit.org. The complete proceedings of the seminar will be published in 2015.

Darwis Khudori

Bandung Conference, Bandung Spirit, Bandung Era

The seminar in Paris, as a part of the ‘Bandung spirit’, will be held in 2015 in order to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Bandung Conference. The three speakers were: Ricardo Farxes (These last seventy years in Latin-American continent: between the Non-Aligned and the Cold War, Omar Benderra (from Bandung to BRICS: a Fanonian outlook on the multipolarity) and Nguyen Duc Huy-Mai (New Bandung Spirit: an open new era for the renaissance of a multipolar world), followed by a plenary discussion.

Main issues of the discussions

The discussions following the paper presentations allowed for a deepening and extension of the theme of the day. The most important issues discussed were:

1. The assessment of Bandung 60 years on: Statements such as “Bandung has failed” or “Bandung did not keep its promises” or “Bandung did not give any alternative to the hegemony of superpowers it denounced”, are not relevant. “Bandung” (in the sense of the Conference itself and the dynamic of development that followed it) has demonstrated immense achievements. The proofs are numerous. However, Bandung has its limits that explain its erosion. It is these limits that should be studied.

2. The essence of the Bandung Spirit: The essence of the Bandung Spirit was and is “non-alignment”. Non-alignment to the hegemony of the two blocks of superpowers of that day – West and East – who unilaterally and for their own benefits imposed their rules on the whole world. Today, one hegemonic block remains: the economic triad of USA, EU and Japan and (industrialised Southeast Asia), which imposes a “neo-liberal globalisation” on the whole world. The Bandung Spirit is to be interpreted today as non-alignment to neo-liberal globalisation.

3. France and Bandung: The hostility of the Western Block (USA, UK, France, etc.) towards the Bandung Conference has been revealed in various books. The French diplomatic archives show that France as a colonial power, was very concerned by the Conference (the Vietnam affair was not totally settled; North Africa claimed its independence; Algerian war had just started; Sub-Saharan Africa started to move). The archives show that France closely followed the Conference and its constellation (Bogor, Bandung, Cairo, Conakry, Beograd, Mogad, Algiers…) from its preparation in 1954 to its end in 1965.

4. The world without Bandung: What would be the world if Bandung had not taken place? The Bandung Era, between 1945 and 1990, was the first wave of the rise of the peoples of the South forcing the North to adjust itself to the requests of the South. Today, while the North has taken back its control over the world through neo-liberal globalisation, there are signs of affirmation of the rights of the peoples, nations and states of Africa, Asia and Latin America that could be considered as the second wave of the rise of the South. At an academic level, without Bandung, there would have been no area studies linking Africa-Asia, and Africa-Asia-Latin America.

5. The enlargement of Bandung: Latin America has been aligned with the Bandung movement from the 1960s (with the foundation of Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 and the Tricontinental Conference in Havana 1966), but the Non-Aligned Movement only really took off after 2000. Now, the time seems to have arrived for a larger alliance of peoples, nations and states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The position of the peoples of the North is crucial. Do they remain silent by supporting de facto the imperialist politics of their leaders? Or, are they willing to align with the enlarged alliance of Bandung? Bandung was a world political success because it was led by the states. In order to make the second Bandung or the second wave of the rise of the South a success, the alliance of the peoples of the South and the North has to grow into an alliance of the states.

6. The ‘emerging’ countries

The term BRICS to represent a group of ‘emerging’ countries does not correspond to reality as it involves two contradictory phenomena: ‘lumpen development’ and ‘emergence’. The first is characterised by economic growth accompanied by pauperisation of the population, while ‘emergence’ is characterised by a sovereign construction of a coherent, integrated and efficient national productive system capable of competition and exportation, accompanied by a rural development allowing an equal access to land for the rural population and a guarantee of national food sovereignty. According to these criteria, the only country really ‘emerging’ is China. Some countries only have certain elements of emergence (Brazil, India), while many do not have any elements of emergence at all. They are more accurately ‘subemerging’, and suffering from lumpen development, a development mainly based on the exploitation of natural resources and characterised by a widening gap between the rich and the poor.

7. The China-Africa relationship

In response to the call of the Bandung Final Communiqué, China is the only country that has been developing an economic and cultural cooperation with Africa in a methodical, systematic, consistent and continuous way since the end of the 1950s up to the present. Its approach is completely different from that of G7, which takes a position of “done”, imposing severe conditions (especially liberalisation and privatisation) that jeopardize the national sovereignty of those African countries wishing to receive their ‘aid’. On the other hand, the Chinese ‘win-win’ approach does not impose any conditions. Meanwhile, Chinese actions in Africa are often critiqued by representatives of the North, especially since China became Africa’s primary trading partner in 2008, overtaking USA and EU. This issue should be watched carefully by using rigorous scientific approaches.

8. Other issues

A number of other issues were raised without further discussion that may be added in future meetings. These included:

a) The African problem (the relationship between Africa and the world the reveals the weakness of Africa and there is a risk to the destiny of Africa continues to be decided by others. Why is this?), b) China: sovereign or imperialist? (For example, the sovereignty claimed by China over almost all of the Eastern Sea or the South China Sea?); c) the reunification of Korea; d) The women question; e) The question of religious diversity among up Africa and Asia; f) The question of arms control; g) The question of Palestine.

The third panel was dedicated to the development in Africa, Asia and Latin America in connection with the Bandung Conference. The three speakers were: Boutros Labaki (Deployment and erosion of the Bandung project), Samir Amin (From the Bandung Era to neo-liberal globalisation), and Lazar Kozzerbo (Experience of the International South Group Network under the light of Bandung), Youcef Benaballah (Experience of development in Africa and Asia: the logic of development through the case of Algeria, Korea and China) and Nadia Chettou (Africa and the economic locomotives of the South: reality and perspectives).
WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME FOR TEA at the Princessehof this autumn? Starting on 6 September, the Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics in Leeuwarden is laying on a spread with the exhibition ‘Time for Tea’. The exhibition explores various tea cultures and includes nearly 1000 objects that reveal the diversity of ceramic objects used for serving and drinking tea. Complete tea sets, exquisite bowls and cups, unique teapots and beautiful tea caddies convey the history of tea in China, Japan, England and the Netherlands.

Tea cultures
Tea has a unique history. ‘Time for Tea’ transports visitors through different countries, periods and tea cultures in China, Japan, and the Netherlands during the 17th and 18th centuries, England in the 18th and 19th centuries, and again in the Netherlands during the 20th and 21st centuries. The journey begins in China, where tea drinking originated. Tea was initially regarded as a medicine, but a rich tradition surrounding social tea drinking soon arose. Buddhist monks introduced tea to Japan, eventually giving rise to the Japanese tea ceremony; even today, serving tea correctly in Japan is considered as something of an art. In the early 17th century, the Dutch East India Company brought tea and associated ceramic wares to the Netherlands. At first, the hot drink was a luxury beverage enjoyed by high society, but before long tea became a social event for people from all walks of life. Over the years, tea became interwoven with daily life: nowadays it is served and drunk everywhere, and the culture of tea shows no signs of abating. Chatting with friends over high tea, with trendy teahouses popping up everywhere and deliveries of fresh mint struggling to meet demand: tea is hot!

Ceramics
The exhibition ‘Time for Tea’ includes an enormous diversity of ceramics made for serving and drinking tea. The museum’s sizeable collection is complemented with objects loaned from other museums and private collections. From China, we have the austere pottery of the Chinese Buddhists and the famous blue-and-white porcelain used by the Ming Dynasty elite. The refined Japanese style is characterised by its simplicity. The Netherlands also has a grand and very varied assortment of tea wares, ranging from industrial to artisan and bold design.

Activities
The Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics has compiled a comprehensive and appealing programme of activities to accompany the exhibition. Adults can enjoy tea ceremonies, tastings and guided tours. There are also lectures about tea, tea culture and ceramics, opportunities to consult with antiques specialists, and a valuation day. During the holidays in autumn, at Christmas and at New Year, children can participate in creative workshops such as making and painting teacups. In short, there are plenty of activities for young and old during ‘Time for Tea’.

IIAS Outreach Lecture
De vroege wereldreizen van een theekopje
13 Feb 2015, 14:00 - 15:30
To compliment the exhibition an IIAS Outreach lecture by Prof. Anne Gerritsen will be held at the museum. Please note the lecture will be given in Dutch.

The lecture
How and why did people drink tea in the past? This seemingly innocent question can only be answered by looking not only a long way into the past, but also across a wide geographical expanse. When tea first arrived in Europe, it already had a long history within Asia. Tea leaves, but also the material culture associated with the production and consumption of tea, had in fact travelled across long distances, and had created connections between disparate parts of Asia. This talk will explore the early history of tea culture in Asia, with special attention given to the emergence of brown teaware in southern China during the Song dynasty, and the desire for these brown wares in Japan, where they became highly sought-after cultural objects.

Anne Gerritsen
Anne Gerritsen holds the Kikkoman Chair of Asia-Europe Intercultural Dynamics at Leiden University, with special attention for material culture, art and human development; a position funded by the Kikkoman Foundation and the Association of Friends of Asian Art (VVIJK). She was trained as a sinologist in Leiden, Cambridge and at Harvard University, and has published in the fields of global and local history with special attention given to early modern China, women and gender, and material culture, especially porcelain. She is in the process of completing a book-length study on the history of Jingdezhen, the city where most of the porcelain in the early modern world was manufactured.
IIAS research and projects

IIAS research and other initiatives are 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. IIAS also welcomes research for the open cluster, so as not to exclude potentially significant and interesting topics. Visit www.iias.nl for more information.

Global Asia

The Global Asia Cluster addresses contemporary issues related to trans-national interactions within the Asian region as well as Asia’s projection into the wider world. The cluster aims to bring together the best minds from Asia and the rest of the world, to exchange views, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies and so forth. Past and present trends are addressed. The cluster aims to expand the understanding of the processes of globalisation by considering the varying ways Asian and other world regions are interconnected within a long-term historical framework. Acknowledging the central role of Asia as an agent of global transformations, it challenges western perspectives that underlie much of the current literature on the subject and explores new forms of non-hegemonic intellectual interactions in the forms of ‘south-south-north’ and ‘east-west’ dialogue models. In principle, any research dealing with Asian global interactions is of interest.

Asian Borders Research Network

The Asian Borders Research Network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central-East and Southeast Asia. The concerns of the ABRN are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilization and conflict, market development and environmental concerns. The ABRN organizes a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. The fourth conference, organized with the Southeast Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong will take place from 8-10 December 2014 in Hong Kong, and is entitled: ‘Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships’.

Coordinator: Eric de Maaker (maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

The Energy Programme Asia (EPA) is conceived and designed to study the effects of global geopolitics of energy security on the one hand, and policy to increase energy efficiency and estimating the prospects for the exploitation of renewable energy resources on the other. EPA’s current and second joint comparative research programme with the Institute of West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is entitled The Transnationalization of China’s Energy Resources: case studies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017).

Involving various Chinese and Dutch research institutes, this programme 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. It seeks 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 economies. This programme is sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IIAS.

Coordinators: M. Aminie, Programme Director EPA-IWAAS (m.p.amineh@uva.nl or m.p.amineh@iias.nl), Y. Guang, Programme Director EPA-IWAAS/CASS (www.iias.nl/research-energy-programme-asia-epa)

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance

The IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia, is engaged in innovative and comparative research on theories and practices – focusing on emerging markets of Asia. Its multi-disciplinary research undertakings combine approaches from political economy, law, public administration, criminology, and sociology in the comparative analysis of regulatory issues in Asia and in developing theories of governance pertinent to Asian realities. Currently the research projects fall within the following interlocking areas: State licensing, market closure, and rent seeking; Regulation of intra-governmental conflicts; State restructuring and re-cycling, and Regulatory governance under institutional voids.

Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo (t.w ngo@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

Asian Cities

With a special eye on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longstanding 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, activists, planners and architects, educators, and policy makers. By bringing together science and practice, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities ‘in context’ and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

The Postcolonial Global City

This research programme examines the postcolonial cities of South, East and South-East Asia, and how some of them have emerged as global cities. The ABRN organizes a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. The fourth conference, organized with the Southeast Asia Research Centre of the City University of Hong Kong will take place from 8-10 December 2014 in Hong Kong, and is entitled: ‘Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships’.

Coordinator: Greg Bracken (gregory@cordweller.com)

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)

Consisting of over 100 researchers from 14 institutes in Europe, China, India and the United States, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) represents the largest global academic network on Asian cities. UKNA’s objective is to nurture contextualised and policy-relevant knowledge on Asian cities, and seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. To this aim, the programme hosts a variety of projects and events that reach out to researchers and practitioners across Asia through the exchange of research findings and other information about Asia’s urban development.

Coordinators: Paul Rabie (p.e.rabie@iias.nl) and Gien San Tan (g.s.tan@iias.nl)

Graduate Programme in Critical Heritage Studies

Over the last few years, IIAS has been intensively engaged with the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (IUS) and targeted Asian partners in the development of a special master’s and PhD track in the field of ‘Critical Heritage Studies’. The uniqueness of this initiative is that the MA/PhD in Leiden will be combined with a parallel set of courses at a number of Asian universities, allowing for the students to obtain a double (MA and PhD) degree at the end of their training. Students can already opt for the focus on ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’ but can also engage in a Double Degree, offered by Leiden University and one of the Asian partners (currently National Taiwan University in Taipei, Yonsei University in Seoul, and Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta).

The MA heritage focus is supervised by Dr. Adde Esposito (IUS/IllAS). Prof. Michael Herzfeld (Harvard) is a guest teacher and the Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative of IIAS.

Indian Medical Heritage Research Network

The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network wants to stimulate social and cultural-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unani-Bid, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. Of special interest is the integration of Indian medicine in Indian public health and its role as second resort for middle class Indians and Europeans. The network offers a virtual space on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IndianMedicalHeritage) for collecting research findings and other information about India’s medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds.

Coordinator: Maarten Bode (m.bode@iias.nl)

Asian Heritages

The Asian HERITAGES CLUSTER explores the notion of heritage as it has evolved from a European-originated concept associated with architecture and monuments, to a unique and dynamic field of study that incorporates cultural trends and social transformations over time. This includes the contested distinctions of ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in defining one’s own identity or identities vis-a-vis those of others. It addresses the variety of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for social agency. It aims to engage with the concepts of ‘authenticity’, ‘national heritage’ and ‘shared heritage’ and issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. It will critically address the dangers of commodification of perceived endangered local cultures/heritages, languages, religious practices, crafts and art forms, as well as material vernacular heritage.

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Coordinator: Maarten Bode (m.bode@iias.nl)

Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context

A research network supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

With the objective of reshaping the field of Asian Studies, the three-year pilot programme (2014-2016) ‘Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context’ seeks to foster new humanities-focused research. In practice, this means adapting Asian Studies to an interconnected global environment built on a network of academics and practitioners from Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa. Educational opportunities are created by selecting cross-disciplinary methodological questions likely to shift scholarly paradigms as they pertain to Asia. In the process, the initiative seeks to shape academic communities around new themes of research, embedding a new humanities pedagogy that valorizes scholar from the four world-regions and beyond.

The initiative is coordinated by IIAS, in collaboration with numerous institutions in Asia, the United States, Europe and Africa, and is funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York. The pilot programme includes a range of scholarly activities such as workshops, conferences and summer schools in five topical areas, or, that cut across regions and disciplines:

1. Artistic interventions: Histories, Cartographies and Politics in Asia
2. Asia in the Global South, South-South knowledge network with connections between other academic centers in Europe and North America, but also Latin America and Oceania.

In 2012, a roundtable in Chisamba, Zambia, led to the establishment of the pan-African ‘Association of Asian Studies in Africa’ (AASA). AASA’s development is headed by a steering committee of scholars, mainly from Africa and the diaspora, and the inaugural conference will take place from 24-26 Sept 2015 in Accra, Ghana, under the title: ‘Asian Studies in Africa: The Challenges and Prospects of a New Asia of Intellectual Interactions’. It will be the first conference held in Africa that will bring together a multidisciplinary ensemble of scholars and institutions from the continent and the rest of the world with a shared focus on Asia and Africa’s intellectual interactions.

More information: www.asias.inAfrica
Along with the research fellows, who are attached to one of the IIAS research programmes, the Institute yearly hosts a large number of visiting researchers (Affiliated Fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.

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  15 Sept 2014–15 Sept 2015

- **Ghulam Nadri**
  Political Economy of Eighteenth-Century Gujarat: History of Indo in Colonial India
  29 July–28 Aug 2014

- **Tak-wing Ngo**
  Extraordinary Chair at Erasmus
  ‘IAS Centre for Regulation and Governance’
  State-market relations and the political economy of development
  1 May 2008–30 Apr 2017

- **Lance Nolde**
  A History of the Sama Bajo sea peoples of eastern Indonesia during the early modern period
  1 Aug 2014–30 May 2015

- **Elena Paskaleva**
  Reading the architecture of paradise: the Timurid Kosh
  1 Sept 2012–31 July 2014

- **Saraju Rath**
  Indian manuscripts in the Netherlands: from forgotten treasures to accessible archives

- **Dang RUI**
  Methods and strategies of stimulation and optimization for building and environment: based on comfort and energy consumption
  1 June–30 Nov 2014

- **Masaya Shishikuru**
  Trans-border humanity through case studies of travelling music and migrating peoples in northeast Asian contexts
  1 Mar–31 Dec 2014

- **Thabita Speelman**
  2014 MA Thesis Prize Winner
  High-speed rail development in China
  1 Aug–31 Oct 2014

- **Hongbo SUN**
  Energy Programme Asia (EPA) scholar
  26 Nov–5 Dec 2014

- **Yi WANG**
  Cataloguing the Van Gulik Collection

- **Juan WU**
  A Study of Legends of King Ajatasatru/Koushu in Indian Buddhist and Jain Traditions
  1 Jan 2014–30 June 2015

- **Liang XU**
  Scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
  1–30 Sept 2014

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

Lance Nolde

Changing tides: a history of power, trade, and transformation among the Sama Bajo sea peoples of eastern Indonesia in the early modern period

**ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme**

A joint fellowship offered by the African Studies Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies

THIS FELLOWSHIP aims to attract researchers whose work is informed by current theoretical debates, in the social sciences and humanities, on global connections and who are able to critically engage with shifting paradigms in ‘area studies’ beyond the ways in which these have traditionally been conceived in the West. We are particularly interested in receiving fellowship proposals that go beyond a mere analysis of current issues associated with African-Asian comparative economic developments or Chinese investments in Africa – although none of these themes, if appraised critically and for their societal consequences, will of course be excluded. Our definition of Asia and Africa is broad and inclusive, Asia ranging from the Middle-East to the Pacific Coast, and Africa from North-Africa to the southern tip of the continent.

Application deadline: 15 March and 15 September each year. For more information and application form, go to: www.iias.nl/page/asc-iias-fellowship-programme
Tabitha Speelman
High-speed rail development in China
2014 MA Thesis Prize Winner

CHINA IS BUILDING THE WORLD’S LARGEST and most advanced high-speed rail (HSR) network. And it is doing it fast. Its first high-speed rail connection opened in 2008, by the end of 2013 it had over 11,000km of dedicated high-speed train tracks, and by next year this number should be up to 18,000km. But are all aboard? Contrasting state and citizen perspectives, my MA thesis Fast and Forward? High-speed rail reform in China and what it costs to whom (2012) looked into a transportation revolution based on seemingly self-evident narratives of progress and speed.

After a deadly train crash in 2011, the HSR and the overheated development it had come to symbolise, was widely questioned. During my 2012 fieldwork, respondents overwhelmingly pointed to the importance of a safe and sustainable mode of development that should take things a bit slower and that put travelers’ needs at the center of policy making. In addition, as a mode of transportation set to replace the much more affordable regular rail, HSR also reinforces and actively enlarges social inequalities. Suddenly, many were forced onto bullet trains – with train personnel walking through the aisles selling Haagen-Dazs ice-cream and microwave popcorn – they simply cannot afford.

The state responded to some of these criticisms, for example by slowing down the driving speed of HSR trains by about 50km/h on most trajectories and dismantling the Ministry of Railways, an institution known for its corruption. But overall the blueprint stands unchanged, slowly integrating into Chinese society and winning fans abroad. With premier Li Keqiang as its ‘chief salesman’, Chinese and winning fans abroad. With premier Li Keqiang as its ‘chief salesman’, Chinese HSR technology is being bought by an increasing number of countries, a phenomenon that has been dubbed ‘high speed rail diplomacy’. By way of comparison, China’s major state newspaper the People’s Daily recently ran an article on US high-speed rail development titled America’s High-speed Dream – a Worldwide Joke.

Seemingly primarily an issue of spatial restructuring, HSR development in China extends into cultural, social, and ideological territory. Who gets to define what modernity in China should look like? How do considerations of costs and benefits to different parts of the population feature in the state’s setting of China’s reform agenda? What is the significance of Chinese HSR development, both to China and to the rest of the world?

Being awarded a 3-month fellowship at IAS through the IAS National Master’s Thesis Prize gives me the opportunity to return to this topic. Academic coverage of China’s transportation reform has been sparse, and during my time here, I hope to integrate my 2012 and 2014 fieldwork findings into a preliminary study on the social impact of high speed rail reform in China. Based on public opinion survey and participant observation on trains and buses in Jiangsu and Guizhou – two provinces showcasing the variety of development speeds in contemporary China – I argue that the ideologically motivated HSR strategy displays both structural strengths and weaknesses of China’s adaptive authoritarianism.

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to apply for a fellowship to work on a relevant piece of research in the social sciences and humanities.

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, cosmopolitanism, méttisage 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 globalisation 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 are addressed.

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

For information on the research clusters and application form visit our website:

www.iias.nl
Beginning of the Becoming: Batak sculpture from northern Sumatra

The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) in Singapore is currently presenting an exhibit that examines the extraordinary sculptural traditions of the Batak people, who live in the mountain heartlands around Lake Toba. This striking environment has nurtured an intriguing culture rooted in early Austronesian traditions including animism and ancestor veneration.

David Alan Henkel

THE COLLECTION OF BATAK SCULPTURE and other ritual or daily use objects began in the mid to late 19th century as part of what was then the emerging science of ethnology. Inspired by the principles of Linnaean classification, colonial officials, missionaries and museums began obtaining and exhibiting these objects, not as art, but as artefacts of what they viewed as primitive, backward societies. It was believed that these objects could shed light on the communities as well as the history of man. Over the course of the twentieth century attitudes toward ethnographic art began to change and some collectors began selecting works based on their aesthetic merit.

Art or ethnography

This exhibition at the ACM – titled ‘Beginning of the Becoming’, which is a literal translation of the name of the Batak’s supreme god Malup Yo' Ngal – is more art historical than ethnographic and focuses on sculptural works. Many of these sculptures were made by the datu, an important functionary who served Batak society as a sort of shaman, priest, ritual practitioner and healer. The works were largely made for ritual purposes and had to conform to formal standards in order to be effective. However, given the great variety and creativity of these sculptures it is also clear that there was substantial leeway for the carver to express his imagination and creativity. Scholars argue about the relative importance of aesthetics in tribal art, but this exhibition suggests that Batak sculptors meant for their works to be beautiful, even as they were also meant to be ritually powerful.

A wide variety of three-dimensional human figures or gono-gone, were produced by the Batak sculptor. These included deities, spirits, literally ‘living ancestors’, which represent departed relatives and sometimes came in male and female pairs. Pangubalang figures on the other hand were carvings of dead spirits enshrined by the datu to protect the community and ward off supernatural attacks. They can usually be identified because they are charged with pupuk, a magic substance inserted into a cavity carved into the figure and plugged with a peg or resin. Pogor figures were also protective and were meant to ward off malevolent spirits. The most important item in a datu’s paraphernalia was certainly his staff. These come in two main forms, the tungkol malehat, which is characterised by a large human figure usually shown riding atop a mythical singo or lion. He is usually surrounded by other smaller figures with their hands pressed together in what appears to be a sign of obeisance. The totem pole-like tungkal panaluan on the other hand is characteristically topped by a male figure, usually shown standing over a female figure with a descending series of human and animal figures including, lions, buffaloes, horses, elephants, dogs, snakes, lizards and crocodiles.

Magic and mythic

The datu needed to produce a wide variety of medicinal concoctions both for use in healing and for the animation of protective amulets and figures. The most infamous of these were a class of magic substances known as pupuk made from disagreeable substances such as rotten leaves, soil from the site where two animals had fought or the itchy scales of the sugar palm. The datu stored his concoctions in ceramic or earthen jars with carved wooden stoppers, known as gari-gari, or in lidded wooden or bamboo containers called perminaken. Often these were imported stoneware or ceramic jars from China and Southeast Asia which were highly prized as heirlooms. Medicine horns known as sofah were containers for roji in pogor, or ‘the king of protective medicine’, one of the most powerful magic substances in the datu’s pharmacopoeia. They were made from the hollow horn of a water buffalo with a wood stopper that is often carved with elaborate naga morsarang, a powerful mythical dragon-like creature. Mythical creatures such as the singo and naga are common in Batak carving and often adorn containers or the handles of tools and weapons. Lizard images were regarded as protective and are often carved on house doors or covers of boxes and other containers. Aside from mythical creatures though, carved, three-dimensional figures of animals are comparatively rare in Batak art. Among the more intriguing are large bird figures called monuk monuk, which appear to have been suspended, probably in the rafters of the traditional clan houses. These almost certainly relate back to an almost ubiquitous Austronesian belief in a spirit bird that could communicate with the gods and ancestors in heaven. Not all forms of art in Batak society were strictly the province of the datu. Some craftsmen specialised in making hospi hats and other musical instruments. Iron smiths forged beautiful yet functional weapons, bronze smiths cast containers, tools and decorative handles or finials and gold and silver smiths produced jewellery and added decorative touches to a host of other objects such as the sheaths of swords and daggers. Weaving was the province of Batak women and the most skilled of these were much admired for their dexterity. Houses were built by specialists known as pande runu (literally house building master) who specialised in the construction and decoration of these often immense structures. The most skilled were widely celebrated and richly rewarded for their work and were in constant demand among the wealthier clans.

The exhibition

This exhibition challenges preconceptions and asserts a rightful place for Batak sculpture in the global artistic canon. It includes over 80 works in wood, stone, and bronze, most on loan from the famous Mandala Foundation collection, including 20 objects that have been generously donated to the ACM by the foundation. The show will be on view at the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, until 29 March 2015.

David Alan Henkel, curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum (David_Alan_Henkel@nhb.gov.sg)