This Focus moves forward a long-stalled reconsideration to argue that the relationship between language, ethnicity, and identity in Burma is not necessarily set in stone. Rather, language may be one element informing an ongoing process that various groups engage in to define themselves in relation to others.
The Focus
Does language equal ethnicity in Burma?

After decades, the possibilities for doing research in and about Burma have slowly begun to increase. Guest editor Patrick McCormick pairs the trajectory of the country, which cut itself off from the international academic community, with the stagnation of Burma Studies. Yet the hurdles academics and intellectuals face are still steep.

29-31 Introduction

After decades, the possibilities for doing research in and about Burma have slowly begun to increase. Guest editor Patrick McCormick pairs the trajectory of the country, which cut itself off from the international academic community, with the stagnation of Burma Studies. Yet the hurdles academics and intellectuals face are still steep.

32-33
The Tai or Shan people of Burma stand in a complex linguistic and cultural relationship with the peoples around them. Mathias Jenny explores how they have adopted ideas and linguistic practices from their larger, more powerful neighbours, while simultaneously fulfilling that same role for nearby upland peoples.

34-35
The Kachin have long featured in anthropology, but how long has this super-ethnic category indexed a local reality? André Müller presents a linguistic analysis suggesting that at least some of the speakers in this category have been in close contact for a long time.

36-37
Keita Kuraba and Masao Imamura trace the rise of Jinghpaw as the language franca and preeminent medium of cultural and literary expression among the Kachins in Burma since the nineteenth century.

38
What happens when people are made into an ethnic group, yet one without a common language or script? Takahiro Kojima explores how various Palaung groups have struggled to agree upon and promote a common Palaung language and script.

39
Rachel Weymuth focuses specifically on the technical aspects of creating a common Palaung language out of disparate lects, a process involving considerations of power and prestige.

40-41
‘Reducing’ speech to script means actually reducing its variety and variation. Through the lens of creating a Palaung dictionary, Nathan Badenoch traces this process to remind us that the ways Palaung groups have related to each other and their larger neighbours is hardly unchanging.

42-43
People tend to equate language with ethnicity in Burma. Yet as Patrick McCormick explores, in whatever way speakers of Burmese dialects consider themselves – as an ethnicity separate from the majority Burmans or not – they tend to occupy the same hierarchical position as the Burman majority.
The 2016-2017 academic year started well for IIAS, as we received a major grant from the New York-based Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to continue our innovative work to develop new research and teaching paradigms that seek to move beyond traditional area studies, towards what can best be defined as globally connected humanities.

Philippe Peycarn

The FOUR-YEAR GRANT, through a collaborative platform of over twenty Asian, African, European and North American universities and their local social and cultural partners, will support work toward the co-creation of an alternative humanistic pedagogy curriculum. This follows the successful completion of a previous three-year project (Rethinking Asian Studies in a Global Context; www.rethinking.asia), also supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to rethink the scholarly practice of area (Asia) studies in today’s global context.

The new programme is entitled Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World. The initiative calls for expanding the scope of the humanities by mobilising the knowledge in ‘everyday life practices’ that have remained largely unrepresented in contemporary academia. It will connect and mobilise a global network of individuals and institutions capable of generating such knowledge in Asia and Africa in order to develop new pedagogies for teaching, research, and dissemination of this knowledge across disciplinary, national, and sectorial borders. The aim is to contribute to the realignment of the social role and mission of institutions of higher learning with regard to the humanistic principles and values that inspired their establishment in the first place (see also the article on pages 14-15 by Aarti Kaur and Françoise Vergès).

This overall goal encompasses the following objectives: the establishment of a trans-regional consortium of engaged scholars, educators, and institutions committed to innovations in research and education; the development of experimental methodological interventions through the collection, production, and analysis of humanistic ‘meaning-making’ knowledge in four regions – Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and West Africa – along key ‘sites of knowledge’ and common themes of comparison; the encouragement of university-society participatory activities and, when possible, their institutionalisation in the form of trans-disciplinary centres for testing curricula and pedagogies in partner institutions; the joint finalisation of a curriculum matrix capable of integrating other forms of humanistic learning out of different local contexts.

My message here would not be complete without saying a few words about ICAS 10. Work is currently underway to prepare for the convention that will take place in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 20-23 July 2017, in partnership with Chiang Mai University (CMU). The tenth edition of the biannual ICAS event will be innovative in many ways. In close collaboration with CMU, IIAS is seeking to diversify the range of activities and experiences at the convention, with an effort toward closer connections between intellectual and cultural activities within the local society (ICAS 10 will take place directly after the annual International Thai Studies Conference, to be held at the same venue). In addition to thematic panels, roundtables and keynotes, the convention will host art and craft exhibitions, film viewings, and academic-civil society exchanges.

Another major innovation concerns the ICAS Book Prize (IBP), now in its seventh edition. For the first time, the IBP will feature publications in languages other than English: Chinese, Korean, French and German. We believe this will contribute to the extension of ‘spaces of knowledge’ about Asia, and facilitate exchanges between them. The IBP is made possible thanks to the collaboration with a number of key partners including Leiden University’s Asia Library, the CIS-Release Asie, the Hong Kong Institute of Education, the Seoul National University Asia Centre (SNUAC), the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA), and the Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften.

As these two major IIAS undertakings demonstrate, 2017 – hailed as the ‘Asia Year’ in Leiden (see page 47) – will see IIAS continue its pioneering work to expand knowledge on and with Asia, in the world.

Philippe Peycarn, Director IIAS
New urban proletariat

Resettlement is a tool applied by many governments as a cure to social or environmental ailments, a step in infra-structure projects or an instrument of social engineering. People are resettled when the land has to be cleared for construction works, when natural disasters strike or environmental conditions deteriorate, but also when states want to assert their sovereignty and enact a process of far-reaching political, economic, and demographic transformation.

In China, resettlement is part of a large number of state programs affecting both rural and urban populations. Perhaps the best-known case took place as a result of the Three Gorges Dam construction project on the Yangtze River. Another case that gained international attention concerned pastoral populations inhabiting regions as distant as the Tibetan plateau, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. In 2015, the Chinese government pledged that by the end of the year it would move ‘the remaining 1.2 million herdies’, which begs the question of how many pastoralists were already ‘moved’ previously. The main reason for resettlement was stated to be the need to conserve the environment, which was said to be suffering from desertification brought on by overgrazing; it was said that removing people and their herds from the land would remedy the problem. The second reason given was the government’s desire to improve the living standards of the pastoral populations, to give them better access to education and healthcare facilities, as well as markets and other achievements of ‘developed’ society. This ‘developmental’ component is inseparable from resettlement; by implementing resettlement the Chinese state is helping the pastoralists to become ‘developed’ and to make economic ‘progress’, but it also ‘develops’ the country or at least its image.

Resettlement is implemented top-down rather than in deliberation with the communities affected by it. The conditions for requiring resettlement also appear to be quite arbitrary. The narrative about desertification has been proven wrong for the last thirty years; a recent book edited by Behnke and Mortimore shows once again that desertification was a non-event that grew or was ‘cultivated’ by different economic and political actors in order to achieve their own goals. The same applies to a belief that there is a causal link between mobility and poverty and that ‘under-development’ of pastoral regions is a result of pastoral mobility. As is typical of many discourses on pastoral populations, this one too feeds on imagery originating from ‘agricultural’ and ‘settled’ societies, which hinders the understanding of pastoral systems and rationalizes interventions. Finally, when applied to mobile populations, the term ‘resettlement’ is misleading, as it implies that people being ‘re-settled’ are sedentary people, moved from one settlement to another. The Tibetan pastoralists involved often lived in houses during winter and spring, but moved to tents in higher elevations during summer and autumn. They maintained herds of yaks and sheep which provided them with subsistence and cash income. Even though their mobility had already decreased compared to a century ago, due to thefragmentation of pastoral lands or growing importance of markets and services that anchored pastoralists to settlements, they did not have an all-year-round dwelling and were not permanently settled. Therefore, it would be more accurate in their case to talk of ‘settlement’ or ‘sedentarization’ rather than re-settlement. Extending to pastoral contexts the use of the term resettlement obscures the magnitude of change and the often over-imposed nature of this intervention.

Sedentarization of pastoralists on the Tibetan plateau is a component of a variety of programs that have similar but not always identical goals, target and scope. These programs impress with their technical and financial investments, but they also raise important questions about the rules of participation and its consequences. Scholars have debated the degree of force or persuasion with which the programs were implemented; although some pastoralists volunteered to take part, others were selected by lottery or by local political leaders in order to meet the desired quota. The results of these programs, both already observed as well as expected to ensue, range from economic empowerment through loss of nomadic lifestyle and knowledge, to the trauma of displacement, negative impact on community cohesion, religious cults and more. This essay discusses yet another aspect of these programs: their role in the urbanization process in pastoral Tibet. It gathers my observations from the region called Golok, north-eastern Tibetan plateau, from 2007, when these programs were gradually introduced, and 2014, when they were completed.

2007
In 2007, when I started my research, the state programs of moving pastoralists into towns were just gaining momentum. Dawu, prefectural capital of Golok and my home at that time, grew larger as more and more accommodation was built for incoming pastoralists; each new neighbourhood was bedecked with billboards informing people about the goals of the program and the funds invested. It was a hot topic of discussion; pastoralists expressed their doubts and concerns: “Why does the government do it?” And, “Do you think we will really return to our land in ten years?” At the same time, town residents expressed other worries; prophesying with regard to the newcomers, and fearing an increase in crime and loss of security, they declared: “They will end as beggars, thieves and prostitutes.”

I considered conducting research about the program as I was struck by the novelty of this phenomenon and the grim narrative about the governments’ hidden agenda of eradicating pastoralism. However, the atmosphere surrounding the topic was so tense that many people cautioned me not to visit the ‘resettlement village’ too often. They perceived it to be a politically sensitive topic, and in their opinion it would be wiser to stay away from it. Still, I managed to speak with many pastoralists and visited their homes, both those in the town and in the highlands. Several themes recurred in their narratives.

First of all, the diversity of the pastoralists’ experiences was striking. Some recalled real environmental problems with the desert encroaching on their land, but others said that they had lush pasturage that could feed even bigger herds than they owned. This could indicate that the correlation between the implementation of these programs and their ecological reasons was often rather weak. In addition, the pastoralists had varying expectations of life in town. Their local officials promised them a ‘better life’; but this notion was interpreted in numerous ways. Some pastoralists sought education for their children, others closer contact with relatives working in town, or better access to healthcare. Many sought an easier life in terms of workload, with less of the physical work that consumed their days on the grasslands. Finally, there were also those who sought nothing from life in town; they did not want to move, but were forced to. The pastoralists’ experiences differed with regard to their material situation, depending on their earlier economic status and on what their community leaders had negotiated for them. Most families sold their livestock before moving to town, providing them with some savings. All families were given a simple house and a state subsidy, but on top of that there were also some ‘extras’. People from some townships received coal, others grain or clothes, and yet others no help in-kind at all. This diversity of expectations and experiences showed how easily broad generalizations can be inaccurate, even on the scale of just one ‘resettlement village’, which comprises people from different townships.

Secondly, a certain narrative about poverty was evident in conversations with people regardless of their financial status. This manifested itself when they spoke to me, a European foreigner. However, a Tibetan scholar who studied this topic had similar observations: “This was a sign of how a scholar or an outsider can be taken (or mistaken) for a ‘carrier of hope’, and that being an outsider has its limits.” Several themes recurred in their narratives. Both already observed as well as expected to ensue, range from economic empowerment through loss of nomadic lifestyle and knowledge, to the trauma of displacement, negative impact on community cohesion, religious cults and more. This essay discusses yet another aspect of these programs: their role in the urbanization process in pastoral Tibet. It gathers my observations from the region called Golok, north-eastern Tibetan plateau, from 2007, when these programs were gradually introduced, and 2014, when they were completed.
Why town development needs pastoralists

The carwash saloons, eateries and construction sites needed a labour force, as did the traffic and cleaning sectors. Street vendors selling plastic jewellery and other cheap goods were recruited from among the settlers. But they also found jobs in shops where pastoralists were the main clients and where common language and cultural affinity mattered; even though growing in size, Dawa remained the capital of a pastoral prefecture and it was the pastoralists who were the driving force of the local economy and the service sector. Finally, the monolithic iron industry offered employment, too. The street adjoining the monastery is now filled with carvers’ tents, where before only a handful of people had done this work. Workers armed with drilling machines, carve Buddhist prayers on oven-cold stone slabs, which are sold to pilgrims and tourists. Writing skills are not essential, as the process is monotonous. Even the monastic keepers have to do such work.

The Chinese state settlement programs have to be understood beyond environmentalist policies to ‘restore’ Tibetan grasslands to their ‘original’ shape, or as an intervention to improve the standard of life of populations who live far away from towns, schools and hospitals. If settlement was only about environment, one would have to conclude that it did not always match its goals, many sources report that grazing bans were not even implemented and that grasslands in fact suffered under-grazing rather than returned to some idyllic state. If settlement was meant to improve the material standards of people’s lives, one would need to ask according to which criteria such change should be measured. The pastoralists’ stories concerning their financial precariousness; even if sometimes exaggerated, do not create a picture of affluence and satisfaction. At least in the first years after the move, the ‘quality jump’ either did not take place or was difficult to see.

The settlement programs should instead be considered within the context of China’s urbanization drive. In moving pastoralists to towns these programs produced urban citizens. This dimension of the settlement, as fuelling the town development, was not included in the official portfolio of reasons when these programs were introduced. However, it is in this context that they have appeared particularly effective. Even if the settlers retained their rural residence registration (which in China is still difficult to change) they became de facto urban dwellers. Their lives, even with difficulties, became town lives. And where the development of towns creates jobs for people, people are needed for the development of towns.

New urban proletariat

There is no doubt that people can adapt to the most adverse conditions and few pastoralists can do it, as well. Existing literature reports on the initial shock and confusion, and discusses the identity crisis and social and psychological problems that haunt people who are thrown into new and, for many, unfamiliar settings; the next few years will perhaps bring new studies showing how things have evolved. For many people the psychological back to the highlands now seems impossible. “They will never go back to their land”, as someone told me in 2014. “Here, they can only earn some money, but who will give them a job when they are back on their land?” It appears that, after the initial years, people came to perceive urbanization as a one-way street or a process from which there is no way back. Likewise, a similar perception was that as soon as one becomes a paid labourer there is no return. Once you lose your economic autonomy, you will not be able to regain it.

The settled pastoralists made a transition from life defined by self-employment and a high degree of autonomy, to a life working for others. If this was not enough, it was often work in sectors that are not particularly well-paid or well-respected. The art of survival for this new urban proletariat depended on their ability to find economic satisfaction whilst being an under-class in the local society. If they wanted to survive, they had to redefine their thinking about jobs that they had previously never wished to do. “People’s attitudes to work are changing”, as some pastoralists said in 2014. “Evidence of construction sites was something we despised. Let alone garbage collecting!”

Towns are the habitat of people who are not economically self-sufficient and who have to rely on others. In effect, they bring forth new needs and job opportunities, binding their citizens with new ties and absorbing newcomers who both fill existing niches and create new ones. Dawa is a special case. It is a growing town that produces jobs and investments, with the hope to attract tourists, and it provides new settlers with an existing social and economic environment. But how are settlers surviving in other locations? One can only hope that as long as they are relocated into, or near to, existing towns, rather than brand new settlements in isolated areas, they will be able to depend on the existing social and economic structures, into which they can hopefully assimilate, with better or worse results.

References


6 See pages 55-56 of this Newsletter to read about my research topic.


Japan-Morocco economic and technical cooperation in the fishing sector has inadvertently resulted in Moroccan domestic politics integrating Western Sahara into the national territory. Japanese cooperation does not officially extend to Western Sahara due to the region’s disputed political status, yet it was nevertheless effectively used by the Moroccan government to develop the fishing industry in the region. This was motivated by the rich fishing grounds off the south-Atlantic coastline, from Tarfaya to the Mauritanian border, which are good for more than 60 percent of the Moroccan national fishery production in quantity and value. Furthermore, after thirty years of Japanese cooperation, the Moroccan fishing industry in Laâyoune and Dakhla (Western Sahara) now plays a leading role in the south-south cooperation between Morocco and sub-Saharan countries, by initiating workshops and educational programmes designed for the transferral of technical knowledge.

Mayuka Tanabe

The Newsletter | No. 75 | Autumn 2016

The Green March brings forth the desert treasures

Above: Disembarkation of sailors at the port of Laâyoune (photo by author).

FISH MAKES UP HALF of all animal protein consumption in Japan, the highest rate in the world, the fishing industry has long been a vital part of economic and social life of the nation. Since the 1960s, however, Japan has had to start importing fisheries products (seaweed) as a way to counter-balance the loss of domestic and distant-water production. As reliance upon imported fisheries products intensified in the mid-1980s, cooperation with African and Oceanic countries was a necessary measure for the Japanese government in securing fisheries import while maintaining relationships through technical and economic cooperation.

The start of the Japanese-Moroccan cooperation was the fisheries agreement signed between the two countries in 1985, in which the Moroccan government allowed thirty Japanese high-sea vessels to fish tuna and bonito in their 200 miles offshore. Since then Morocco has also supported Japan’s position at ICCAT Madrid (concerning tuna fishing), with regards to the Washington Treaty (International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling 1956), and the IWC (International Whaling Commission). In short, Japanese fisheries diplomacy in Morocco has had three main objectives:

1) securing food import for the Japanese nation;
2) acquiring rights for their vessels to fish off the Moroccan Atlantic shores;
3) acquiring political allies to defend their position on whaling and tuna fishing in the global context. So far the two countries have built a mutually beneficial relation, in terms of strengthening their political and economic influences in the African continent and beyond.

Western Sahara: the core of the Moroccan fishing industry

In November 1975 hundreds of thousands of Moroccans crossed their southern border into Spanish Sahara in the strategic mass demonstration known as ‘the Green March’. Accompanied by 20,000 troops, the event forced Spain to relinquish its power over the disputed territory. Although Morocco at first received very little resistance, it eventually became embroiled in a sixteen-year war with the Sahrawi Polisario Front, representing some of the indigenous population, until a 1991 UN ceasefire. Morocco has secured de facto control of much of the region (including the coast) since then. The development of the fishing industry in this region was one of the important Moroccan policies to create income opportunities for both Moroccan immigrants coming from the north of Tarfaya and also for the local Saharawi groups, in view of total annexation of Western Sahara to Morocco by means of economic integration. In light of this political context, Japan’s financial and technical support has played an indirect but significant role.

2015 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the start of the cooperation between Japan and Morocco, which began with a bilateral agreement on marine fishing in 1985. Japan-Morocco relations are characterised by the two countries’ heavy economic reliance on import and export of fisheries products. Morocco is the top exporter of fishery products in Africa. As a leading foreign exchange earner, accounting for 35 percent of agricultural and 12 percent of total exports, the fishing industry is an important economic sector of Morocco’s economy, with an inextricable connection to Asia, Africa and the European Union. Due to the growing demand for fisheries products, not only from Spain, Portugal and Japan, but also from Russia and China, the marine species off the Mediterranean and Atlantic shores of Morocco proper have become endangered. Therefore, south-Atlantic fishing off the shores of Western Sahara (Laâyoune, Boujdour and Dakhla) is of utmost importance to the Moroccan fishing industry; the Western Saharan coastal area accounts for approximately 50 percent (in quantity) of Morocco’s annual production of more than 1,000,000 ton. Furthermore, the types of fish caught in this region mainly consist of cephalopods (such as octopus and squids) and other deep-sea fish, which sell at a three or four times higher price than the sardines and small pelagic fish caught in Morocco proper. In 2013, the fish captured along the Western Saharan coast accounted for 64 percent of the Moroccan national production in value.

Although the JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) is not directly active in the development of Western Sahara, its models have nevertheless been locally adopted and implemented, exemplified by the highly computerised fish market, ‘the Hall of Fish’ (la halle au poisson) in the port of Laâyoune. Currently the ports of Laâyoune and Dakhla boast the most advanced levels of hygiene, traceability, inspection, and price control in the entire African continent, and strictly comply with the European Union’s import standards.

Since the 1980s, the Moroccan fishing sector has been profoundly transformed by Japanese cooperation. The development of infrastructure, fishing techniques and human resources has made Morocco less dependent on Europe and has increased its negotiating power with regard to fisheries agreements. Furthermore, the development of the artisanal fishing sector has contributed to a new pattern of internal migration of fishermen (see below), and has also helped them acquire new techniques and hygiene standards, making their products competitive in the international market.

However, Japanese cooperation has also had a profound effect on the integration process of Western Sahara into Moroccan territory. It started with the building of the port in Agadir in the mid-1980s, which initially served as a supply base for the Moroccan tanks rolling into Western Sahara for the war against the Polisario. Eventually the Moroccan government utilised the Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance) to build a dock for high-sea vessels, which became a national disembarkation point for the ships fishing off the shores of Laâyoune and Dakhla. The Japanese cooperation served as the foundation for the Moroccan government’s construction of the most advanced ports and fishery facilities in Western Sahara, which has become the undeniable centre of Morocco’s fishing industry.

The Moroccanisation of the fishing sector

The cooperation between Japan and Morocco officially started in 1985, at the request of the Moroccan government for help to ‘Moroccanise’ the professional workforce in the fishing sector, which had long been dominated by foreigners. Prior to this time, the Moroccan domestic fishing sector had no training institutions or fishing ports with docks; it lacked the necessary infrastructure for disembarkation and had no freezing facilities. Morocco was merely making its fishing grounds available to the European Union and was missing out on a significant amount of foreign currency.

In order to Moroccanise its high-sea captains and sailors, and to provide practical education for its mariners, the first EPM (École des Pêches Maritimes) was established in Agadir with JICA’s non-refundable financial and technical support. The EPM’s educational programme was supported by the UN’s FAO, and the curriculum was based on the French system. JICA sent several experts to teach navigational techniques. By 2000, thanks to these educational efforts, all the high-sea and inshore captains and mariners were Moroccan nationals. The EPM Agadir was upgraded to EPM (Institut Supérieur des Pêches Maritimes) in 2008. Currently there are five EPMs (Institut de la Technologie des Pêches Maritimes).
Japanese cooperation and Morocco’s south-Atlantic fishing

The current advanced state of the Moroccan fishing industry is the most successful example of the Japanese fisheries policies in Africa. After 30 years of Japanese cooperation in the Moroccan fishing sector, involving the non-refundable annual aid of 500 million yen (4.42 million euros), Morocco has grown to possess a solid infrastructure and expertise in the fishing sector. What characterises the Japanese cooperation most is the ‘win-win relation’, guided by the principle to help build up the national economy of the African country, as opposed to mere exploitation of resources. As a result, Morocco now functions as mediator of technical knowledge transfer, from Japan to countries in sub-Saharan Africa, referred to as ‘south-south cooperation’.

In March 2016, the 27th edition of the Crans Montana Forum took place in Dakhla, with the theme ‘Africa and the South-South Cooperation – Toward a better Governance for a sustainable Economic & Social Development’, reinforcing Dakhla’s leading position not only in the national fishing sector, but also in the national economy of the African country, as opposed to mere exploitation of resources. As a result, Morocco now functions as mediator of technical knowledge transfer, from Japan to countries in sub-Saharan Africa, referred to as ‘south-south cooperation’.

In 2013, the government of Morocco launched a national project to sedentarise the artisanal fishermen, the first fishing village being constructed in Imessouane, with docks and other substantial infrastructure. In order to sedentarise the artisanal fishermen, the first fishing village (village de pêcheurs, VDP) was created in Imessouane in 1996, on the Atlantic coast 99 km north of Agadir, with the Japanese aid of 63 million Moroccan dirhams. The project was designed to improve the living and working conditions of 200 artisanal fishermen on the site; to advance the safety of accessing and navigating the sea for 60 small scale boats; and to enhance the conservation and marketing of fish. The community based approach included the creation of a cooperative, which manages fishing activities and the general needs of everyday life, such as the distribution of oil, the mosque and meeting rooms for education. Freezing facilities, and the knowledge of how to fabricate ice, are crucial elements in raising the quality and value of merchandise. Following suit, three more VDPs were created on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts: Cala Iris (1996), Sousira Q’dima (1998-1999) and Sidi Hassen (2002-2003). Later, a number of unloading points, PDA (Point de Débarquement Aminélo), similar to VDPs but without ports, were created. The Moroccan government built a total of 10 PDAs up and down the coast, mostly in the Western Sahara.

The ‘sedentarisation’ of villagers in Imessouane was partly successful; their revenue went up significantly and many benefited from insurance (CNSS, Casse Nationale de la Sécurité Sociale). The fishermen come to the VDP as early as April, the morning to prepare their materials, and return to their home villages after work. Their wives engage in other economic activities, such as collecting mussels, herding and cultivating Argan trees. They also participate in literacy programmes at the mosque. Some of the fishermen have started cultivating Argan trees. They also participate in literacy programmes at the mosque. Some of the fishermen have

indigenous population simply resulted in more work performed by migrants from Morocco proper, since many of the locals rented out or sold their boats and did not actually work themselves. Some of the migrants from the north of Tarfaya (Agadir, Essaouira, Safi, El Jadida, Marrakech, etc.) are now settled in the region, with sufficient income to buy a house and educate their children, whereas others leave their families in the home villages and engage in seasonal labour.

South-south cooperation

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In March 2016, the 27th edition of the Crans Montana Forum took place in Dakhla, with the theme ‘Africa and the South-South Cooperation – Toward a better Governance for a sustainable Economic & Social Development’, reinforcing Dakhla’s leading position not only in the national fishing industry, but also in the south-south cooperation. More than 1000 participants from 130 countries were present, including African and European entrepreneurs looking for business opportunities in Western Sahara. By choosing the city of Dakhla as a venue for the forum, the Moroccan government intended to showcase the advanced state of its fishing industry and economic activities, and the impact on the sub-Saharan African countries’ development through regional cooperation. The strong relationship between Morocco and Francophone Africa dates back to the time of late king Hassan II, who sent several political advisors and made significant investments in various sectors such as banking, telecommunication and insurance in Gabon, Guinea, Benin, Senegal, Comoros and Madagascar. The south-south cooperation in the fisheries sector is aimed at further solidifying Morocco’s economic and political influence in West Africa.

Conclusion

Japanese financial and technical support to Morocco’s fishing industry has not only led to unbelievable development and growth – turning it from a lawless, artisanal and unproductive sector, into a high-tech and profitable industry – but the cooperation has also had an indirect effect on internal politics concerning the incorporation of Western Sahara. In a win-win situation, Japan benefits from Morocco’s fisheries products: the octopus collected in Dakhla alone constitute 40-60 percent of the Japanese market demand.

On 6 November 2015, the Moroccan nation celebrated their 40th anniversary of the Green March, like a swarm of bees they eventually extracted treasures from the deserted desert landscape. With the abundance of fishing resources, Western Sahara has become an integral part of the Moroccan economy, attracting migrants and foreign investors who, in so doing, recognise the region as Moroccan territory. Evidently, for the Moroccan government and its people, the Green March has no end.

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References


Below: Imessouane: the first fishing village (VDP) created by Japanese cooperation (photo by author).
The Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area

The Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area (LGBSA) in China’s Sichuan Province is a sacred site for the Maitreya faith, the main belief of the local people. It is a world heritage site (WHS) that was inscribed in 1996, together with the adjacent Mount Emei Scenic Area (MESIA). At 771 metres high, the Giant Buddha is the largest Buddha statue in the world. The LGBSA is located across the river from the ancient city of Leshan, and includes a number of important protected cultural monuments in a setting of great natural beauty.

The Giant Buddha was carved out of a hillside in the 8th century, and overlooks the junction of three rivers (fig. 1). Linyun Temple (fig. 2) stands on the cliff above the Buddha; it was first built in the 7th century, but destroyed twice between the 13th and 17th centuries. Its present structure is from the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The monks offer Buddhist services to, mainly, pilgrims who visit on special occasions each year (fig. 3). Other significant cultural structures in the area include Mahao Crag (fig. 4), a collection of over 500 tombs originating from the 1st to 4th centuries, and Wayou Temple, an important place of worship for local Buddhists.

Interestingly, there is also a theme park called Oriental Buddha Park (OBP), situated right in the middle of this WHS between the Giant Buddha and Mahao Crag. It is run by a private travel company, which has reproduced hundreds of famous Buddha statues found all over the world. The theme park is the second biggest attraction in the area, after the Giant Buddha itself, and many tourists pay to enter the park rather than visit other zones for free (or less). They are likely misled by all the advertising and the theme park’s obvious presence.

Conflict between local communities and the MC

Like other sacred Buddhist sites in China, Linyun Temple and its Giant Buddha statue were once local facilities. They stood in beautiful surroundings, amongst a number of small settlements (see map), whose inhabitants would visit the temple for their daily prayers and other religious ceremonies. The local residents were fishermen and peasants; fishing the river and farming the land in the mountains. However, in the early 1990s, large numbers of locals were relocated, thereby losing their land. This decision to relocate was made and carried out by the Management Committee (MC) of LGBSA, established to take charge of the WHS application in 1996 and currently the executive of the LGBSA.¹ The committee’s main concerns are the preservation of the inscribed cultural heritage and the investment in tourist services to bring money to the area, rather than the personal needs of the local people.

Bizijie is a community of 1244 households, located right at the main entrance of the LGBSA. Its name literally means ‘comb street’, indicating its original layout that is typical for a traditional Chinese village: a main street with branching alleys. The village used to be bigger, but many residents were relocated. The compensation was very low, and certainly insufficient. Those who remained lost their farmland and had to turn to other ways to make money, such as tourist services like snack bars, restaurants and souvenir shops. The revenue was at first not bad because of the village’s prime location at the entrance of the WHS area, but in 2004 a travel agency was established, under the supervision of the MC, which monopolised the local tourist business and isolated Bizijie from the tourist route by building blocks in the middle of the road between the community and the Scenic Area. Even though the blocks were dismantled a few days later, the conflict had taken hold and the locals lost their trust in the MC.² Most of the remaining residents gave up and moved out of the area, leaving all tourist business to be run by outsiders with little to no knowledge of local history, and who are not even Buddhists.

Another example of conflict between the MC and locals has taken place at the village Yucun. Yucun literally means ‘fishing village’, its 40 households used to make a living by fishing the rivers. Before the 1990s, all visitors to the Giant Buddha arrived by boat and walked through the village to the statue. However, in the 1990s the MC decided to reconstruct the village, and temporarily moved the inhabitants to Dinyouta. They promised they could soon return, yet this has still not been made possible. Currently Yucun is no longer a settlement, but just a street with restaurants, tea houses and souvenir shops. To be fair, the owners of these establishments are amongst the original inhabitants, but business is disappointing. The route to the Scenic Area has been diverted and tourists no longer pass through Yucun on their way to the Giant Buddha. The revenue is no more than basic living expenses, as one of the owners told us.

These are not the only examples in the area of people who have been forced to move. Many more have lost their land due to land expropriation by the MC. The compensation is minimal and they have not been given priority to employment by MC’s travel agency, even though most positions are non-technical and low-paid, such as cleaners and guards. Most of the young people have had to find work in other towns and cities. Ironically, the private travel agency running the Oriental Buddha Park is regarded in a more positive light by most locals. The OBP agency has also expropriated some farmland and has relocated residents, but it pays a higher compensation, many of the relocated people are hired by the travel agency afterwards, and all the residents get pension insurance – the three main concerns of relocation are much better dealt with by the OBP agency than by the Heritage MC.

¹ Xue Mei Zhao (LGBSA) in China’s Newsletter | No.75 | Autumn 2016

Xue Mei Zhao

The Newsletter | No.75 | Autumn 2016
The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the LGBSA, stated by UNESCO, lies in the unique landscape at the confluence of three rivers, the technique of constructing the Giant Buddha, and the testimony of the historical development of the Maitreya faith in China. The inscription of World Heritage Site attracts an immense amount of attention. In the questionnaire, 93% of the interviewees know of the site, though only 11% have been there. The number of visitors has been increasing steadily, reaching 3 million in 2012. However, the tourism boom seems to be overwhelming the sacredness of this Buddha site.1

There are two temples at LGBSA, Linyun and Wuyou, where religious services are offered by the same group of monks. Both temples used to be thriving and bustling on the 1st and 15th day of each month when hundreds of locals came to light incense and pray. The temples have different visitors now, mainly because of their respective locations. Locals only go to Wuyou Temple, as an entry fee is charged at Linyun. Linyun is always full of tourists whose main destination is the Giant Buddha. Most visitors offer incense, even though they are not necessarily devout followers, and many pilgrims are attracted by the reputation of the temple. The monks thus benefit from the fame of the World Heritage Site, and would now like to enlarge their temples and improve their living and work conditions. However, their plan has been refused by the MC, as the temples are important features of the WHS, situated right in the middle of the Scenic Area, where new construction is forbidden. In this case it seems that heritage protection is being given priority over religious demands, even though the religion is essential for the heritage value. However, the MC’s consideration may in fact lie with wanting to follow the WHS ‘rules’, as the inscription brings with it tourism and income for the local economy.

Based on the outcome of the questionnaire, the visitors’ appreciation of this heritage site is quite ambiguous. They agree with the OUV of the area, yet most visitors fail to see or understand the many cultural and historic aspects of the site. Their schedules are often tight, and they are commonly given only half a day by the travel agency to explore the Scenic Area. Their understanding of the history of the Maitreya faith or experiencing the local culture. The fact that the average tourist is unable to bring in money.

The management committee (MC) has worked hard to ensure no changes are made to the monuments, and have little significance for the MC development plans. The local belief, which is an indispensable part of this Buddha site, is given little attention simply because it isn’t constructed by the MC, as the temples are important features of the WHS, situated right in the middle of the Scenic Area, where new construction is forbidden.

The LGBSA has been valued as a masterpiece of great originality and ingenuity (criterion iv) and as directly associated with the living tradition of Buddhism (criterion vii). In direct accordance with WHS rules, the MC only takes great care of the various inscribed heritage elements on the site, rather than the integral development of the whole heritage site.

The Giant Buddha and its associated religious facilities are the main monuments, and are considered to be the main touristic resources. The problem is that the MC fails to find other ways than heritage tourism to develop the area; other local resources (such as the local culture and surrounding natural landscape) are out-performed by the main monuments, and have little significance for the MC development plans. The local belief, which is an indispensable part of this Buddha site, is given little attention simply because it isn’t constructed by the MC.

Benefit from private business

Profit, under MC supervision

The communities living in and around the site

Survival, employment and better living conditions

Private tourist business owner

Benefit from private business based on the heritage resource

Local believers

Survival, employment and better living conditions

The communities living in and around the site

Survival, employment and better living conditions

The communities living in and around the site

Survival, employment and better living conditions

Local believers

Survival, employment and better living conditions

The communities living in and around the site

Survival, employment and better living conditions

Local believers
Access to social security rights and their portability for migrant workers is emerging as a legal dilemma. The urgency of this topic was emphasized in the broader framework of discussions that took place during the ASIA-EU People’s Forum (AEPF) held in Ulaan Baatar from 4 to 6 July 2016. 750 participants from civil society, academia and parliaments from 42 countries had a fruitful meeting, under the main theme ‘Building New Solidarities: Working for Inclusive, Just and Equal Alternatives in Asia and Europe’, which led to the adoption of the ‘AEPF11 Final Declaration’ submitted to the 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit. As emphasized by Tina Ebro, who represented the International Organizing Committee, “we met at a time of growing inequalities, injustices and turmoil world-wide. There was a strong consensus at AEPF11 that the dominant development approach over the last decades – based around deregulation of markets, trade liberalisation, the privatisation of essential services and resources – has failed to meet peoples’ needs and rights, and contributed to climate change with its catastrophic consequences”.

Elisa Fornalé

THE DIFFICULTIES for migrant workers in accessing social protection can lead to greater vulnerability and discriminatory treatment in the exercise of their rights. In response to this situation, the ‘Final Declaration’ adopted by the AEPF recommended, in particular, that the ASEAN member states “implement universal and comprehensive social protection, guaranteeing decent work, food, essential services and adequate income to vulnerable groups” and that they “respect the rights of migrants and refugees, and adopt legal and political frameworks which allow them safe movement.”

Starting from this normative exhortation, the focus of this contribution will be to unpack the contemporary multilayered social protection regime to identify which “layer” is in charge of migrants’ social rights and in particular to explore the role currently played by regions and regional agreements. This contribution discusses two interrelated issues: the legal implications of emerging regional migration regimes for the social protection of migrant workers and how this level of analysis interacts with the global migration governance.

Social protection, regionalism and migration

To make sense of this analysis, it is necessary to clarify the interaction between social protection, regionalism and migration. Social protection is part of a progressive shift from the domestic domain to a composite multilevel legal environment that draws upon migration law, labour law and human rights law. This shift is partly due to greater cross-border mobility and the emergence of new legal-political arenas, such as regional regimes, which have made the need to recognize the rights of non-citizens a supranational issue. Equally important is that the states no longer have sole responsibility for providing social justice and “the idea of social solidarity can no longer be treated as a national or local monopoly”.

At the international level, the human right to social security was first recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 22), a non-binding instrument, which inspired the establishment of a universal international system of social security. The social protection of migrant workers has been a central theme since the inception of the International Labour Organization (ILO); 31 Conventions and 24 Recommendations have been adopted to “make social protection a reality for all”.

In the case of migrant workers, the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention n. 102 (art. 68); the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention 1962 n. 118, are relevant. Additionally, in 2012, the ILO Recommendation concerning National Floors of Social Protection (no. 202) established an international system for the maintenance of acquired rights emphasizing the key role of bilateral and multilateral social security agreements. As stated by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its comment no. 19 with respect to the specific issue of portability, “where non-nationals, including migrant workers, have contributed to a social security scheme, they should be able to benefit from that contribution or receive their contribution if they leave their country”.

With a view to facilitating the effective implementation and exercise of social protection at a domestic level, the member states have taken various measures at the bilateral and multilateral levels through which migrant workers can maintain and export the social security rights acquired in their country of employment.

From a historical perspective, the first instrument developed by member states to guarantee equal access to social protection for migrant workers was the bilateral social security agreement. These agreements originated in the nineteenth century as a response to several emerging issues related to the movement of foreign workers. At that time, the development of social security standards was very limited and these kinds of instruments facilitated only a minimum level of protection. After World War II, the issue of social security became increasingly relevant and the number of bilateral agreements concluded rose considerably. Bilateral agree-
ments are the preferred option for extending social security coverage, because the countries involved can easily reach an agreement on their content and the drafting process generally requires less diplomatic effort. At the same time, the diffusion of these agreements can put at risk the promotion of universal coverage, in fact Olivier raised the concern that this multitude of agreements can create “different entitlements for different categories of migrant workers”.4

In parallel with the bilateral agreements, regionalism started to emerge as an efficient level of cooperation to ensure cross-border coordination and to influence bilateral and domestic measures. Regional social security agreements soon started to develop.5 A significant example is the European-Mediterranean Agreements adopted between the European Union (EU) and Maghreb countries in the 1990s (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) that address the protection of social rights for migrant workers working in the EU. In addition, in Africa, the Economic Community of West African States adopted the General Convention on Social Security in 1993, to guarantee the equality of treatment between national and non-national workers and the preservation of acquired rights. It is becoming clear that regions should play a paramount role in ensuring that migrants’ social rights are respected. This can be best explained by examining the strong relationship between migration and regionalism.

Regional projects are developing in various geographical6 contexts and “migration in the form of free circulation of people” is a key element in achieving integration.7 The implementation of these regimes is shifting the normative debate from a global scenario to a regional domain where the needs of people involved in the free movement dynamics can be better looked after, ensuring that their human rights and social needs are met and overcoming the nationalist perspective by generating comprehensive regulations.8

The European experience revealed the challenges and the complexities of this issue. It has been identified as a best practice example of how to overcome the fragmented scenario that results from the simultaneous existence of several bilateral agreements and to establish a more consistent regulatory framework. This framework includes the protection of social security rights of third-country nationals.9 It is increasingly clear that “constitutional commitment to respect for human dignity and ‘market freedoms’ (e.g. free movement of workers and their families) may require legal protection of ‘positive liberties’ by means of social rights (e.g. to education, health protection) in order to empower individuals to develop their ‘human potential’.”

To test this idea of the advantages of linking regionalism, migration and social protection, I would like to introduce some insights from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These insights will be used in an attempt to determine whether the regional layer has a major role in increasing access to social rights by facilitating, for instance, the adoption of social security agreements or whether states will still operate in new forms of unilateralism to deal with commercial legal gaps.

Access to social protection for migrant workers is a complex issue in the region and it is destined to become a priority in the economic and political community. First, several legal barriers are present at national levels that affect the ability of individuals to gain full access to social benefits and de facto limit their possibilities. For instance, they have to fulfill specific requirements, such as minimum length of residence or minimum contributions, to be entitled to social security benefits. Second, the implementation of national social security policies is linked with adequate effective portability of acquired rights, which can affect their decision to return to their countries of origin. In fact, contrary to the idea of a “socially integrated region”, different states worldwide, not to mention ASEAN member states, have failed to establish a common standard to be achieved by the ASEAN member states to underpin the social rights of migrant workers. This understanding is supported by the importance of fostering the social protection system at a domestic level, in particular the adoption of regional standards.10

The normative process in this context evolved with the adoption of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, adopted in 2009,11 and with the recent adoption of the ASEAN Convention on Migrant Labour and Social Protection 2015.12 This non-binding instrument recognizes that “everyone at risk, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups, are entitled to non-discriminatory social protection that is a human right” and this requires the development of appropriate tools, such as the establishment of “universal health coverage”. These capacities were paved for the ASEAN member states to commit to developing specific measures and to increasing the capacity to expand the coverage of social protection to strengthen ASEAN’s economic integration. Indeed, due to the non-ratification and implementation of international standards or social security agreements, a major emphasis on the crucial role of regionalism is imperative.

The ASEAN adoption of social security agreements with reference to progressive implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection. This requires the drafting at domestic level by each member state new plans of action on “common social protection gaps and concrete actions”13. This will lead to the definition of national SPIs (social protection floors); a set of minimum and comprehensive social security systems. In this regional effort, the member states will attempt to foster the implementation of the new ILO Recommendation n. 202 in the four sectors identified: access to essential health care, to basic income security for children, to basic income security for persons of working age, and to basic security income for older persons. In particular, one SPI entails all elderly people to social protection and countries will be fully responsible for developing national schemes for providing universal pension coverage. It is noteworthy that many citizens in Asia currently receive no, or very low, pensions.

The project of deploying regional migration governance as a meaningful tool to implement international human rights standards should not be judged to result in an effective framework, even though criticism can be raised about the potential delays and challenges in the implementation of the regional level. This cannot invalidate the relevance, thus, given the slow progress of unilateral frameworks, it has the potential to capture and to strengthen the global, domino-like effect of achieving greater social integration. In fact, the regional layer can facilitate the adoption at the domestic level of new regulations in line with the content of the ILO standards through fostering the implementation of national Social Protection Protection. In addition, it can facilitate the future adoption of new bilateral or multilateral agreements to improve cooperation between countries and facilitate the portability of social security rights for migrant workers.

As remarked by Bettis: “at the moment, social contracts remain state-centric and ill-adapted to a transnational world. Education, health care, pensions and taxation systems remain rigidly fixed to particular states and territories. Over time, there will be a need to conceive of ways in which the provision of social services can be adapted to cross international borders in a transnational world.”14

Regionalising social protection for migrant workers in ASEAN

The ongoing research project on Regional Migration Governance (R_emigra) explores whether ASEAN regional project can potentially improve the current underdeveloped scenario advancing the idea of a “socially integrated region”.15

Regionalism and human rights of migrant workers, the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers adopted in 2007 states that a basic social security system needs to be implemented progressively as an indispensable precondition for ensuring their integration. This Declaration is inspired by international human rights instruments in the context and is intended as a binding treaty at a common standard to be achieved by the ASEAN member states to underpin the social rights of migrant workers. This understanding is supported by the importance of fostering the social protection system at a domestic level, in particular the adoption of regional standards.16

In fact, this normative process will facilitate the adoption at the national level. This cannot invalidate the potential delays and challenges in the implementation of these regimes is shifting the normative debate from a global scenario to a regional domain where the needs of people involved in the free movement dynamics can be better looked after, ensuring that their human rights and social needs are met and overcoming the nationalist perspective by generating comprehensive regulations.17

References

1 This article uses social ‘protection’ and social ‘security’ interchangeably. With respect to social protection, the article uses the definition adopted by the International Labour Office: “interchangeable with social security, as protection provided by social security in case of social risks and needs”. (ILO, 2011). The ILO defines social protection as policy measures to protect its members against social risks and to reduce the effect of those risks that would be caused by the absence or reduction of income due to different causes “(sickness, maternity, unemployment, disability, old age, and death of the breadwinner), the provision of health care, and the provision of benefits for families with children”.


4 See the following adoption of the International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (art. 9) and the most recent International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (art. 27).

5 See supra Blomberg.


7 The first multilateral social security agreement was concluded by the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden) in 1919.

8 Such as the European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).


10 Dracup, B. 2013. Regions, Migration and Social Policy: What are and what could be the linkages?, keynote address delivered at the UNRISD Conference on Regional Governance and Socio-Political Rights: Institutions, Actors and Processes.


13 See supra Tamagno.

14 See supra Dracup.

15 See the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, 2007.

16 In the Declaration, member states committed to “ensure that all ASEAN peoples are provided with social welfare and protection frameworks based on comprehensive legal integration and legislation by improving the quality, coverage and sustainability of social protection and increasing the capacity of social risk management.”

17 The state of social protection in ASEAN at the dawn of integration. ILO. Geneva (2015).

Heritage and political change in Indonesia

Adrian Perkasa, my friend and colleague from Airlangga University, drove a circuitous route, avoiding trucks, chickens and rice driving on the road, on our way to the shrine known locally as Watu Ombu. As occurred at all of the small shrines near villages, the Caretaker (Juru Peihara) appeared a few minutes after we arrived to see what we were doing and chat about the place his family had looked after for three generations. It was the day after the monthly special day on the Javanese calendar (Malam Jumat Legi) when many Javanese people visit shrines, and the offerings from the night before were evident. The Caretaker had also gathered a set of fourteenth century foundation stones from the Majapahit kingdom, excavated by traditional brick makers, that he was keeping on site. There were large trees within the shrine’s compound and other residents were sitting around chatting or keeping an eye on their rice drying in the parking lot.

Tod Jones

Centralising culture

The Sufhato era command culture model of cultural management, which was challenged by the rise of mass popular culture in the 1990s, began to break down in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis and the resignation of Suharto in 1998. Two shifts in particular were important. First, cultural policy was realigned from an affiliation with education to an affiliation with tourism. Second and more importantly, cultural policy was one of a number of policy areas decentralised in 2002, devolving control of the cultural bureaucracy from the national to the provincial and district levels. While thousands of staff shifted from the national bureaucracy to the provincial and district bureaucracies, this did not include archaelogical offices (Bala Pelestarian Cagar Budaya and the Balai Konservasi Birobudur) that remain centrally controlled from the Directorate of Culture and continue to manage archaeological sites. From an educational function, culture was aligned with the economic goals of tourism and regional development.

Decentralising culture

Decentralisation of culture (fig. 1) was one of a number of policy areas decentralised in 2002, as part of the process of decentralisation that occurred from 1997 to 2010. One of the most important aspects of decentralisation was the transfer of responsibility for cultural management from the national to the provincial level. This allowed local governments to develop their own cultural policies and manage their own cultural resources. The Indonesian National Trust (Badan Pelestarian Pusaka Indonesia - BPI) formed in 2004 from a network of city-based groups and individuals across Indonesia. The Indonesian National Trust became an important voice for heritage management at the local level, working to protect and conserve archaeological sites and artifacts. The Trust helped to ensure that local communities had a say in the management and preservation of cultural resources, and worked to promote awareness of the importance of cultural heritage.

Changing heritage management practices

The political climate in democratic Indonesia also offered opportunities for civil society groups to push for new heritage agendas. The Indonesian National Trust (Badan Pelestarian Pusaka Indonesia - BPI) formed in 2004 from a network of city-based groups and individuals across Indonesia. The Trust became an important voice for heritage management at the local level, working to protect and conserve archaeological sites and artifacts. The Trust helped to ensure that local communities had a say in the management and preservation of cultural resources, and worked to promote awareness of the importance of cultural heritage.

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3 Suharto cabinet, but executed during the Reform period.
4 Authoritarianism in the Indonesian State: Cultural Policy across the Twentieth Century to the Reform Era”, 93:147-76.
5 Culture, Power, and Authoritarianism in the Indonesian State: Cultural Policy across the Twentieth Century to the Reform Era, Indonesia 93:147-76.
Moving Cambodia

In November 2015, the multi-media exhibition Futurographies: Cambodia-USA-France, curated by our students, opened at the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center at The New School, New York (www.newschool.edu/sjdc).

In 2016, it travelled to Sa Sa Bassac Gallery in Phnom Penh (February) and to the Parsons Paris Gallery (April). The exhibition reflected almost five years of our research and teaching focused on migration, the poetics of urban transformation, the mobility of culture and commodities, and artistic practices in states of emergency.

Jackiran Dhillon, Radhika Subramaniam and Miriam Ticktin

CAMBODIA HAS RECENTLY become a locus of inquiry, and its history and politics drew our diverse disciplinary approaches to cultural and social science students through the collision of methodologies. In the conversation below, we reflect on our collaboration and the issues the project raised in the context of our ongoing work.

RS: How do you think our varied backgrounds influenced what we did?

JD: As a scholar and advocate committed to social transformation, I foreground the interconnections among flows of knowledge, capital, labor, power, and people and examine their implications for social movements. Since 2010, I have worked in Cambodia, which is an exemplary space for exploring the intersections of trans-national exchanges – its political history is deeply intertwined with other Southeast Asian countries, with Europe because of French colonization, and with North America through the US bombing during the Vietnam war, and in general, because of international aid. Since I teach at an institution, the relationship between Cambodia and the US is a launching point for my students to interrogate the politics around development and humanitarianism. I was really excited when the opportunity to translate some of this into a curatorial platform emerged in 2012-2013 through my collaboration with Radhika.

MT: My role was to bring to bear the relationship of Cambodia with France in shaping both historical and contemporary lives. This transformed our place of inquiry into a tri-local (Cambodia-US-France) space, bringing in imperial histories and diasporic presents, and how people, ideas and experiences move in relation to these. I had worked with undocumented immigrants in France, researching their relationship with French colonialism and racism, but I knew nothing about Cambodia.

RS: Our earlier project, which also culminated in an exhibition, was more bi-lateral. The exhibition coincided with ‘Season of Cambodia’, a festival of art and performance that took place across New York in April 2013. We were eager that it not be about a place far away, and that it was not only historical but also traceable in the present, such that we were all implicated. So we highlighted US involvement in Cambodia. Interestingly, the New School has a direct link to this history – it functioned as a regional hub for the 1970 student strike against Nixon’s Cambodian incursion. Art and design students, at the time, shelved their thesis show to mount an anti-war exhibition called My God! We’re Losing a Great Country. People, in France, researching their relationship with French colonialism and racism, but I knew nothing about Cambodia.

JD: Yes, I’ve been teaching ‘Lang in Cambodia’, an immersive and mobility course for seniors since 1999, since it broadened everyone’s thinking about how Cambodia has been produced as a ‘developing’ country in need of Western aid. But combining different methodologies was particularly challenging: leading students in intense ethnographic research in three different countries, and then asking them to translate this knowledge into an exhibit.

RS: I had two impediments; my work focuses on what I call ‘cultures of catastrophe’ informed by training in anthropology and performance studies. As the director (of the New School’s) galleries, I have over a decade’s experience in art in the public domain. Despite this, the exhibition format was challenging for everyone, not just the students; how to make an argument visually and spatially that isn’t reductive or merely illustrative and also open to the inevitable ambiguity of art? That was the real risk as an educator – really in the students critical, reflexive thinking about context and representation, while also encouraging an exuberant leap of faith into the realm of art where material and meaning might exceed one’s framework. The students chose to split and juxtapose these strands in the exhibition with two intertwined timelines, one artistic, one historical. As a visual solution for an intractable disciplinary conundrum, it was quite striking, and elicited vigorous discussion in the gallery. But the split also perpetuated the separations we were trying to work against. For an art gallery like Sa Sa Bassac, the historical timeline seemed extraneous or even counter-textualizing the art; there, it was relegated to a handout rather than an interference on the wall. I understood the reasons, even the awkwardly academic quality of the timeline, but this was one of those stilted movements across disciplines that interested me – the inegalities of translations and mistranslations.

MT: On that, one of the key questions we faced was how to detect histories in the present. Where and how do we trace Cambodia in France and France in Cambodia? Our students wanted to use categories they are familiar with, i.e., identity. So, they asked, where are the Cambodian-French? How big are their communities, do they organize as a diaspora? In that, our challenge was to trace these histories while being attentive to the mobility of conceptual categories themselves – not simply the mobility of people. Translation never results in sameness. In France, identity categories are not politically recognized in the same way as in the US, either by the state or the public. French theories of republican universalism suggest that, in the name of equality, one should keep identity (race, religion, ethnicity) in the private sphere, enabling one to claim equality in the public sphere. One exists as a citizen, not as a kind of citizen. Of course, there are many critiques of republicanism (i.e., how race can be reproduced; yet does one tackle all-too-real racisms if there is no acknowledgement of racism), and while things are changing, this way of looking at the world underlies much of French society.

JD: As an experiment, this was ambitious and hugely productive, but not replicable any time soon! The unique investment of students, in a very visceral way, to think deeply about the kinds of interconnections and ideas that are no longer welcome, being deported, and blamed for the effects on them of the trauma of war. The US’s own participation in that horror is ignored with the violence and suffering of others.

RS: Nevertheless, for students, there was almost a sense of relief when we caught up with a fantastic hip-hop group called KomLong Khmer (Khem Power) in Paris whose raps were later included in the show. Although of diverse backgrounds, they were the first to speak in terms of a hyphenated identity – ‘franco-cambodgiens’. This says a lot about the ways in which the cultures overlap and intersect. What meaning does hip-hop, forged from the US experience of racism, have for those dealing with French republican racism – and how does such expression manifest within a different political framework?

Questions of identity dogged our heels – for instance, in how context affected the reception of the exhibition. We had been insistent with the students on keeping dynamic these triangulations: history-memory-mobility, ethnography-art-dialogue, Cambodia-USA-France. Yet, it was often the ‘Cambodia show’ in New York and Paris, or an exhibition by ‘diasporic artists’; Remember the Khmer Times headline? ‘Diaspora Unite to Exhibit Alternative Futures’. Still, if I had one take-away, it would be that this ‘three-eng’ kept us generically off-balance so that certainties were always out of reach.

MT: For my part, I was struck by the fact that the exhibition format opened up a way to grasp both the ‘imaginary’ (i.e., unrealized futures), and the ‘real’ that nevertheless eludes understanding (i.e., how equality could justify genocide).

JD: As an experiment, this was ambitious and hugely productive, but not replicable any time soon! The unique investment of students, in a very visceral way, to think deeply about the kinds of interconnections and ideas that are no longer welcome, being deported, and blamed for the effects on them of the trauma of war. The US’s own participation in that horror is ignored with the violence...
We are witnessing the emergence of neo-liberal universities and a rationalisation of programs and departments of humanities and humanistic social sciences. Disciplines fostering humanistic knowledge are increasingly being disavowed under charges of elitism or ar-Raw_text_end
Towards alternative pedagogies

We wish to explore the different arenas where knowledge about being human is creatively and collectively released, while being attentive to conditions that have undermined these spaces of cultural expression and transmission. Masking the conditions of production, distancing producers from consumers and accumulation of human and extra-human nature has been a requirement of capitalist technology. Why and when do people come together for music for instance? How does music persuade one to rethink classroom pedagogy? What are the forms of knowledge (cognitive, sensorial, emotional and social) that are produced in these spaces of conviviality generated through music? How is this knowledge produced? How do music-making interfaces have the potential to mobilise trans-border networks and narratives to illuminate alternate geographies and modes of development and important spaces for knowledge production and transmission.

Such an approach will give back to the body and the senses their central place in knowledge transmission along with written texts. Combining perspectives from the natural, social sciences and the humanities through the heuristic of a site of knowledge, brings to the fore the question of how knowledge is produced, by whom, for whom and to whom. The methodology opens up for description and analysis our relational, negotiated, and partial perspectives. It recognises that only a long, complex practice of critical thinking and feeling, together with a dialogue between different ethical, aesthetic and moral traditions can respond to the continuing human crises of dislocation, dispossession, fragmentation and polarisation in the world today.

The recently awarded IAS-Mellon program, titled “Humanities across Borders, Leiden; and Fellow, Madras Institute of Development Studies Chennai, India” is an opportunity for creative experiments in humanistic pedagogies across multiple collaborating institutions of higher education and their civil society partners in Asia and Africa. Over the next four years, we hope to engage in curriculum development with embodied teaching and learning practices in the spaces of exchange offered by the program, together with its expanding network of interacting partners, committed to the development of a curriculum of human sciences across borders.

Aarti Kaurwela, Academic Director, IAS-Mellon program Humanities across Borders, Leiden; and Fellow, Madras Institute of Development Studies Chennai, India

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3. The project (www.rethinking.asia) contributed to the breaking down of artificial boundaries of region, nation and discipline in reconfiguring theory and method in Asian studies along five discrete forums and to make visible otherwise marginalised or hidden actors, genealogies, networks and circulations in the world.
12. Ibid., p.25.
**Pentecostal megachurches in Southeast Asia**

Terence Chong

THE ARTICLES PRESENTED HERE are ethnographic studies commissioned by the Regional Social and Cultural Studies Programme at the ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute on Pentecostalism in Southeast Asia. Part of an edited volume to be published by ISEAS, these articles are excerpts from chapters which examine the growth of Pentecostal megachurches in urban centres in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore as well as their congregations and the politics and history from which they have emerged and flourished. Indeed the independent Pentecostal movement has been growing rapidly in Southeast Asia in recent decades, benefiting from the broader expansion of charismatic Christianity from the 1980s onwards in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as further afield in Taiwan and South Korea.

The conventional definition of ‘Pentecostalism’ is the emphasis on the deeply personal spiritual experience of God, baptism of the Holy Spirit, expressive worship, belief in signs and miracles, and glossolalia. According to estimates, there are 7.3 million Pentecostals in Indonesia; 2.2 million Pentecostals in the Philippines; 206 thousand Pentecostals in Malaysia; and 159 thousand Charismatic Pentecostals in Singapore.

A 2011 Pew Research Centre study estimated that there are 279 million Pentecostals worldwide, comprising 12.8 per cent of all Christians. There are no accurate estimates for the number of Pentecostals in Southeast Asia but the percentage of Christians (including Catholics) in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore are 13.2 per cent, 8.8 per cent, 85 per cent, and 18 per cent, respectively. The exact number of Pentecostals is difficult to pin down because most country censuses do not differentiate Pentecostals from the larger Christian community. In addition, Pentecostalism does not have strict doctrines or hierarchy, and may manifest as standalone churches or as fringe congregations in mainstream denominations. There are several reasons why Pentecostal growth in this region is important. Firstly, to a large extent the Pentecostal movement has an ethnic face. The majority of Pentecostals in urban centres like Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Surabaya, Jakarta and Manila are, with some notable exceptions, upwardly mobile, middle-class ethnic Chinese. In countries where the ethnic Chinese are in the minority, Pentecostal churches and cell groups are crucial spaces for social networking, business contacts and identity-making.

Secondly, it has a wide economic appeal suggesting an ability to tap into different concerns and aspirations. For while the Pentecostal megachurch is often associated with the middle classes, it has great attraction for the poor and the working class in urban centres like Manila. Thirdly, the central figure of the charismatic leader in Pentecostal Churches means that senior pastors enjoy great deference and sway over large congregations. In actual terms, this has meant the ability to mobilise financial capital, and the conflation of politics, business and religion to varying degrees raises the spectre of religious nationalism.

Perhaps most crucially, these studies will demonstrate that Asian Pentecostalism has both transnationalising and individualising characteristics. Drawing from the west and other parts of the world, Asian Pentecostalism is also driven by local prophetic preachers who are able to craft contextual theologies. As such, Asian Pentecostalism is simultaneously recognisable as a part of a global phenomenon and available for examination only as a politically and historically specific movement. These articles, together with the other chapters in the edited volume will offer an updated ethnographic survey of Pentecostalism in Southeast Asia.

Terence Chong, Senior Fellow, ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute; and regional editor for the News from Southeast Asia section in the Newsletter.

**Counting souls: numbers and mega-worship in the global Christian network of Indonesia**

En-Chieh Chao

INDONESIA HAS a Pentecostal community of an estimated 6 million, among which the Mawar Sharon church is one of the most dynamic and popular. Also known as ‘The Rose of Sharon’ or GMS, the youth-centered church is particularly attractive to students in Indonesian college towns. While the Mawar Sharon or GMS, the youth-centered church is particularly attractive to students in Indonesian college towns. While

Surabaya, Indonesia’s second-largest city, has a population of 3.12 million (5.6 million in the metropolitan area). Known for shipbuilding, food processing, electronics and furniture manufacturing, the city’s residents comprise the Javanese majority, Madurese, and Chinese, as well as other ethnic groups such as the Sundanese, Minangkabau, and Bugis. In terms of its religious profile, Surabaya hosts the Grand Mosque of Surabaya and is a strong base for the country’s largest Muslim organisation, Nahdlatul Ulama.

Alongside GMS as one of the fastest growing churches in Surabaya is Bethany Indonesian Church. Bethany is the largest Pentecostal church in Indonesia with over 1,000 branch churches around the country and claims to have more than 250,000 members. Like GMS, Bethany was founded and led by ethnic Chinese Indonesians, although the latter’s congregation is predominantly middle-aged while the former is especially popular among university students. Both these Pentecostal churches are more of a middle-class religious phenomenon that arose as a result of economic growth under the New Order (1966-1998) regime, than an ethno-religious movement.

One of the key characteristics of contemporary Pentecostalism is its extension to areas of life beyond the religious. Pentecostals in Surabaya, for example, conduct self-help workshops for career building, family bonding, women’s issues, children and youth. Such programmes are not confined to Pentecostals. They are also common among their middle-class Muslim counterparts who combine theology and entrepreneurship and hold seminars in prestigious hotels. However, unlike Islamic peganun ulama (great sermons) and other self-help workshops, most of which are somber affairs, the praise and worship of Bethany and GMS, and Pentecostalism in general, are far more boisterous, resembling pop concerts. These praise and worship events are locally known as ‘KDI’ (Kebangunan Rekognisi Rohani, literally ‘Service of Spiritual Growth’), and demonstrate that Pentecostalism is not only a ‘portable faith’ for the individual, but also a show-business faith designed for the collective.

The ingredients to such boisterous ‘mega-worship’ are upbeat music, dramatic sermons and dynamic dance. Replacing traditional instruments like the pipe organ or choir hymns are R&B bands, meandering gurus, and FM radio pop songs. In the megachurch sensationalism unites believers with the divine while the flashy multimedia employed
The indigenisation of megachurch Christianity: Jesus is Lord in the Philippines

Jayed Serrano Cornelio

THE JESUS IS LORD (JIL) Movement is one of the biggest independent megachurches in the Philippines and has even been described as one of the fastest growing churches in the world. It claims four million members in the Philippines and 55 other countries.

In 2013 JIL celebrated its 35th anniversary at the open-air grounds of the Lomega Grandstand in Manila. With an estimated 120,000 individuals, the event was called the ‘Theme Celebration of Righteousness’, which organisers have explained in two ways. On one hand, the revolution pertains to a spiritual transformation that individuals have to undergo for the sake of salvation. Clearly, this idea cannot be detached from JILs evangelical ethos. On the other hand, as far as JIL is concerned, such an idea has implications too on the way it sees Philippine society. Speaking at the anniversary, Bro. Eddie Villanueva, founder and senior pastor, emphasized that “the triumph of justice and righteousness must prevail, because, the Bible says, justice and righteousness are the foundations of God’s throne.”

The anniversary’s theme neatly defines JIL and its social location as an evangelical church in contemporary Philippines. It is clearly repackaged itself as a force in Filipino society, from an emerging Charismatic church in the 1970s, to a religious entity with political leverage and ambitions today.

What is interesting about JIL is that throughout its history, it has maintained a particularly Filipino identity that differentiates it from many other megachurches in the Philippines, who either attack churches in the West, or have a strong Filipino sense that marks it as an indigenised form of the megachurch phenomenon.

This is precisely this indigenisation that shows how JIL is a unique case of doing megachurch today. While it is evangelical and charismatic and thus shares theological positions with many other conservative churches in the West, JIL is also an example of the megachurch phenomenon. It clearly fulfills these expectations in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia. JIL presents itself as an alternative specifically because of its indigenised identity. In this sense, it is part of a wider story concerning the unfolding of Christianity in the global South. In other words, indigenization is how a megachurch sees itself first and foremost as an embodiment of Filipino Christianity that at the same time adds to the already rich tapestry of Asian Christianities. What is interesting is that while it may be theologically conservative as a charismatic and evangelical entity, JIL has offered itself as an alternative in other respects. It caters for the working class Filipino when many other megachurches have proven their success by affiliating with the burgeoning affluent and cosmopolitan segment of the population. JIL too has presented itself as a political alternative that instead of simply supporting a set of election candidates, felt it is important to understand the importance of social justice and to make it popular with the Malaysian Chinese middle-class.

Brother Eddie himself can run for president at least twice. JIL demonstrates that megachurch Christianity is not a homogenous phenomenon, but that it is often associated with a growing middle-class and its accompanying theological and political conservativeism. While these are other churches that clearly fulfill these expectations in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia, JIL presents itself as an alternative precisely because of its indigenised identity. In this sense, it is part of a wider story concerning the unfolding of Christianity in the global South. In other words, indigenization is how a megachurch sees itself first and foremost as an embodiment of Filipino Christianity that at the same time adds to the already rich tapestry of Asian Christianities. What is interesting is that while it may be theologically conservative as a charismatic and evangelical entity, JIL has offered itself as an alternative in other respects. It caters for the working class Filipino when many other megachurches have proven their success by affiliating with the burgeoning affluent and cosmopolitan segment of the population. JIL too has presented itself as a political alternative that instead of simply supporting a set of election candidates, felt it is important to understand the importance of social justice and to make it popular with the Malaysian Chinese middle-class.

The megachurch's ability to be the largest in South-east Asia with a seating capacity of 5000. According to the church's website, it is dedicated to the pursuit of social justice and to make it popular with the Malaysian Chinese middle-class.

JIL demonstrates that megachurch Christianity is not a homogenous phenomenon, but that it is often associated with a growing middle-class and its accompanying theological and political conservativeism. While these are other churches that clearly fulfill these expectations in the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia, JIL presents itself as an alternative precisely because of its indigenised identity. In this sense, it is part of a wider story concerning the unfolding of Christianity in the global South. In other words, indigenization is how a megachurch sees itself first and foremost as an embodiment of Filipino Christianity that at the same time adds to the already rich tapestry of Asian Christianities. What is interesting is that while it may be theologically conservative as a charismatic and evangelical entity, JIL has offered itself as an alternative in other respects. It caters for the working class Filipino when many other megachurches have proven their success by affiliating with the burgeoning affluent and cosmopolitan segment of the population. JIL too has presented itself as a political alternative that instead of simply supporting a set of election candidates, felt it is important to understand the importance of social justice and to make it popular with the Malaysian Chinese middle-class.

JIL is known to be adaptable to the local culture in which it is located. While it is important to recognize this adaptability, it is equally important to refrain from the tendency to homogenise Pentecostal churches based on common traits. Asian Pentecostalism, for example, has been argued to be recognisable as a global faith with specific localities with clear indigenous characteristics, while politically and historically different from ‘Western’ or ‘American’ models. Calvary Church in Kuala Lumpur is certainly evidence of this. Pentecostalism is known to be adaptable to the local culture in which it is located. While it is important to recognize this adaptability, it is equally important to refrain from the tendency to homogenise Pentecostal churches based on common traits. Asian Pentecostalism, for example, has been argued to be recognisable as a global faith with specific localities with clear indigenous characteristics, while politically and historically different from ‘Western’ or ‘American’ models. Calvary Church in Kuala Lumpur is certainly evidence of this.
Since 2009, the Seoul National University Asia Center (SNUAC) has been proposing new contents and perspectives on Asia by integrating regional and thematic research across Asia. SNUAC seeks to be the leading institution for research and scholarly exchanges. The center features three regional centers, the Korean Social Science Data Archive (KOSSDA), and seven thematic research programs. By fostering ‘expansion’ and ‘layering’ between Asian studies and Korean studies, the Center endeavors to shape new frameworks of Asian studies that go beyond a ‘Western-non-Western’ dichotomy. The Center will continue to support the pursuit of scholarly excellence in the study of Asia by providing opportunities to conduct international collaboration on an array of topics in Asia research.

For further information please visit: http://snuac.snu.ac.kr/center_eng

History and hybridity of East Asian food culture

KIM Chong Min

Asian foodways today are as diverse and multifaceted as the complex political, ecological, institutional, and socio-cultural transformations the region underwent throughout its modern history. Extensive inter-cultural exchanges in food culture in Asia occurred on the occasions of colonization, wars of various scales, and, more recently, globalization. These changes made at macro-political levels often introduce new factors to the local food practices, influencing and enriching the ways of preparing and consuming food at the everyday level. In this issue of News from Northeast Asia, we have three articles each capturing key aspects of the history of Asian foodways: the article by Seejae Lee examines acculturation in the formation of Western-Japanese fusion cuisine in modern Japan that began with the Meiji Restoration in late 19th century; Young-ha Joo writes about the history of the instant ramen industry in Korea, Japan and Taiwan, which reflects the exchanges and hybridization of food in colonial and post-colonial East Asia; and the article by Zhao Rongguang illuminates Chinese national culinary culture, focusing on philosophical, historical and cultural dimensions.

Formation of Japanese-Western fusion cuisine in Modern Japan

Seejae LEE

MODERN JAPAN has created Japanese-Western fusion dishes such as kare-raisu (curry rice), tonkatsu (pork cutlet), and korokke (croquettes) in the process of adopting Western culture. Three factors served as the impetus in the advancement of fusion cuisine in Japan, which fundamentally changed the food culture of the country.

Firstly, during the Meiji Restoration, Japan pursued a policy of active importation of Western food culture. Driven by the agenda for Japan to ‘leave Asia and join the West’, the Meiji Restoration was a set of structural reforms aiming to Westernize every institution from state systems, industries, and military, to education and culture. The movement to adopt Western food culture was also triggered by these reforms.

Following the Meiji Restoration (1867), Japan started bringing imports of Western dishes and ingredients. As is widely known, since its debut in the country at the birthday banquet for Emperor Meiji in November 1877, French cuisine has been invariably served in Japan at all official receptions for foreign diplomats. As eating meat had long been prohibited prior to the Meiji Restoration, the introduction of Western cuisine focused on meat dishes signified a radical transformation in the food culture. The announcement that the emperor partook of beef was aimed to Westernize Japanese eating habits, but it was also intended to weaken the power of the Buddhist doctrine of ahimsa, in the process of suppressing Buddhism and establishing Shinto as the state religion.

After the announcement, Japanese government officials, intellectuals, businessmen, and other elites started consuming Western food en masse. Representative reformist Fukuzawa Yukichi became a passionate proponent of a meat diet after drinking milk helped him recover from a serious disease in 1871. He criticized the traditional taboo on consuming meat, saying, “It has been a long-standing custom for over a thousand years in this country to consider eating meat as contaminating, and many people have recklessly hated it. In the end, it is the hearsay of the un schooled and unlettered who know nothing of human nature”. Thus, the announcement of the emperor’s consumption of meat created favorable conditions for the spread of Western cuisine and the development of fusion dishes.

The second factor was the introduction of meal provisions in the military, schools, hospitals, and other modern organizations. After the Meiji Restoration, in 1868, the state took the initiative, claiming that Japan cannot build a prosperous and powerful state if its soldiers are frail, so they should eat beef just as Westerners do. Western food came to be associated with a strong army and, consequently, a strong nation. Soldiers were provided with Western-style meals from the early years of the Meiji period. The Japanese government considered the consumption of meat as an important part of its strategy for achieving national prosperity and military power and started canned food manufacturing for the purpose of supplying meat in field rations. During the Sino-Japanese War (1894), the army received a supply of canned food worth 2 million yen, with 25%
Imperialism and colonialism in the food industry in East Asia: focusing on instant Ramen

Young-ha JOO

ONE EVENT OF PROFOUND INFLUENCE on the food cultures of Korea, Taiwan, and Japan after World War II was the supply of surplus wheat by the United States in the form of grants or credits. In 1953 and 1954, American farms yielded an extremely bountiful wheat harvest. From the position of the US government, it was a surplus product. In the post-war years, America’s surplus agricultural produce was given as aid to the countries of Western Europe. However, as the productive capacity of European agricultural industries quickly recovered, they no longer needed American surplus products. In this situation, Washington turned its focus towards Japan, Korea, and Taiwan as potential destinations for its excess farm commodities. These three countries shared important similarities: all of them suffered from shortages in staple foods and all three were under the political, economic, and military umbrella of the United States.

In 1945–1953, during the periods of the United States Military Government and the Korean War, the United States supplied a substantial amount of foodstuffs to Korea under the Military-Defense Assistance Act (MDA). For instance, between 15 December 1948 and 31 December 1949, the grant-type food assistance amounted to US$ 13million. From 1953 to 1961, surplus agricultural produce was supplied along with military aid under the Mutual Security Act (MSA).

In 1954, the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), which was in charge of planning American overseas assistance, supplied a substantial amount of foodstuffs to Korea under the Military Government and the Korean War, the United States supplied a substantial amount of foodstuffs to Korea under the Mutual Security Act (MSA). Consequently, the Westernization/modernization fervor is not as strong as it was during the Meiji period, even though Japanese-Western fusion cuisine continues to serve as an important part of the modernization of Japanese food. It may usher in a new stage of food Westernization, following the introduction of Western cuisine during the Meiji Restoration and the proliferation of Japanese-Western dishes. On the other hand, culinary traditions from other countries in Asia and beyond are entering Japan, rapidly shifting its food landscape in the multicultural direction.

The establishment of canned food manufacturing, development of refrigeration technology, modernization of cooking utensils, and other industrialization projects played an important role in the modernization of Japanese food. The popularization of korokke was largely related to the large-scale cultivation of potatoes in Hokkaido. The early 20th-century launch of domestically produced curry powder, which had previously been imported from England, led to wider consumption of kore-niisi. Cooking the dish in Japanese homes became possible when the manufacturing of solid curry rous began in 1959. Japan also started the industrial production of coarse breadcrumbs for tonkatsu and exported them overseas. The simultaneous industrialization and modernization of the country was a decisive factor in the development of Japanese-western fusion cuisine.

So far, rice has maintained its position as the primary staple in fusion dishes. If bread replaces it, this will trigger another major transformation in Japanese food culture. It may usher in a new stage of food Westernization, following the introduction of Western cuisine during the Meiji Restoration and the proliferation of Japanese-Western dishes. On the other hand, culinary traditions from other countries in Asia and beyond are entering Japan, rapidly shifting its food landscape in the multicultural direction. Consequently, the Westernization/modernization fervor is not as strong as it was during the Meiji period, even though Japanese-Western fusion cuisine continues to serve as an important part of the modernization of Japanese food. It will be interesting to observe how Japanese cuisine will transform in the future based on the influences of different cultures.

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News from Northeast Asia continued

Chinese food: basic theories and diverse realities

Rongguang ZHAO

A CHINESE PROVERB GOES, “Different kinds of water and soil raise different kinds of people (一方水土一方人).” There is a similar saying in the West: “You are what you eat.” Only when you know the entire history of a nation can you fully understand its food culture.

The basic concepts and theories of Chinese food science that emphasize the uniqueness and dependence on the diet and food culture of the Chinese were largely determined during the Warring States period (5–2 centuries B.C.E.). They can be summarized by the following four principles:

1) Unity of food and medicine (食療合一). In traditional Chinese pharmacology, whose history goes back over 4,000 years, medicine originates from food. The idea of the unity of diet and treatment was systemized and popularized during the Zhou dynasty (11–3 centuries B.C.E.). Food and medicine were considered distinct yet inseparable from one another.

2) Nursing one’s health with food (養膚). Lao-Tzu and Chuang-tzu emphasized that, when consuming food, one should not rely on doctors but “the tongue cannot be satisfied.” According to them, not only should one restrain his desire, common for all humans, to try every taste, but one can gain health, even though the tongue is demanding. In contrast, “the tongue cannot be satisfied.”

3) Theory of the nature of taste (味極). The Chinese, since ancient times, have been aware that the “nature of the taste” of ingredients, the taste of food, and the influence that the interaction of the two has on a person. Believing that the nature of an ingredient is revealed in its taste, the ancient Chinese believed that the interaction of the two has an important role in the type of ingredient.

4) The food folklore of Confucius and Mencius (儒家與孟子). A food proverb that Confucius and Mencius frequently quoted that can be interpreted as “to be refined on two things, be appropriate with three issues, and avoid ten wrongs” (二不: 不食、不話、不議 - from Confucius’ and Mencius’ canonical works). This proverb can be interpreted as “if one has been basic nourishment in order to survive but has to work hard to get food, more than that, one has to get food in a proper way as well as respect and practice food rituals.”

The food culture of the Chinese nation is characterized by five features, in terms of its forms and historical development: the broad spectrum of available ingredients, abundance of dishes, flexibility of cooking methods, continuity of regional cuisines, and cultural and religious influence. These features shaped the traditions and essence of Chinese food culture today.

China has always been very diverse geographically, and this explains the existence of the wide variety of food ingredients and the extensive range of their distribution. The Chinese made edible many living things that are not known or considered taboo in other nations; some of these become delectable dishes. It is wide scope and abundance, along with the unique Chinese ideology on food and culinary art that predetermined the flexibility of traditional Chinese cooking. "Collecting experience by hand" is an important characteristic of the traditional Chinese cuisine, stemming from its history. Areas with different food cultures have developed in China from separate areas from the perspective of food history, the culture and climate of each of those areas has evolved gradually through a long historical process. In China of the Middle Ages, different regions were able to maintain distinctive features for a relatively long time because of their isolation, self-sufficient natural economics and the conservative feudal politics on one hand, as well as the primitive commodity economics and poverty of the common people on the other. The needs of daily life and the extensive cultural and religious influence that came from the Japanese modern food industry, which emerged in the late 19th century. The addition of American surplus wheat made the invention of instant ramen and its expansion possible. Furthermore, during the colonial period in Korea and Taiwan, the Japanese modern food industry acquired the image of being advanced, and this contributed to the rapid dissemination of instant ramen throughout the region. In short, it is no exaggeration to say that the combination of "old imperialism" symbolized by Japan and the "new imperialism" represented by the United States gave birth to instant ramen. Even though the colonial period was formally over, the flavors of food products spread by an empire in its colonies were continuously reproduced in their localized forms by the former colonial peoples after liberation.

Professor Young-ha JG0, Graduate School of Korean Studies, Academy of Korean Studies (durujiru@aks.ac.kr.)
Islam in China

Lena Scheen

Terrorism, war, refugees, niqab, Syria, ISIS or Daesh. It is hard to find a recent newspaper article on Islam that does not contain one of these words. But how often do we read about the twenty-five million Muslims living in China? Ever since the first Muslim traders arrived in the Chinese Empire over 1400 years ago, Muslims have played an important role in Chinese history. For this first issue of China Connections—a series on China’s relation to the world and hosted by the Asia Research Center (ARC-FD) at Fudan University and the Global Asia Center (CGA) at NYU Shanghai—we invited four scholars to write about their research on Islam in China. Together they explore questions such as: Why did the Qianlong Emperor issue an imperial edict to conduct an empire-wide investigation of Hui Muslim communities in 1781? How did a small town in Yunnan Province become a center for Islamic learning? And how do its current residents deal with the haunting ghosts of 1600 Muslims killed in 1975? How does institutionalization play a role in the unification of the spatially dispersed and ethnically diverse Chinese Muslim communities? And how does a Chinese Muslim studying in Egypt experience the Arab Spring? It is through these stories of cultural exchange, conflict, and integration that we hope to provide a deeper, more layered understanding of Islam today.

Lena Scheen, Assistant Professor of Global China Studies at NYU Shanghai, and Regional Editor for ‘China Connections’ (lena.scheen@nyu.edu).

Who were the Hui?
The first empire-wide investigation of Hui communities in Qing China.

Meng WEI

ON 29 MAY 1781, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-95) of China issued an imperial edict to conduct an empire-wide investigation of Hui communities. The order was in response to the ‘fanhui’ rebellion (also known as the ‘salar rebellion’) by the Hui minority in Gansu province. It was immediately passed down to the lowest levels of Qing government and detailed reports were sent to the governors or governor-generals of the eighteen provinces (‘China proper’) for investigation and then made known to the Emperor. The results of the investigation provided the Qing state with a renewed understanding of the Hui landscape of its empire and constituted the basis for future policymaking towards the Hui. The ‘fanhui’ rebellion was inspired by Ma Mingqin (1779-87), a native of Gansu and a Sufi leader who introduced the ‘new teaching’ to the region following his return from several years of study of Jahriya Sufi practices in Yemen. In a simplistic view, ‘fan’ is a term often associated with non-Han populations neighboring ‘China proper’, while the term ‘fanhui’ in this context mainly refers to the Salar, a Turkic Muslim group in Gansu. The introduction of new elements into Islam triggered dissention and even violence among adherents of different and competing Islamic teachings. However, the prime cause of open conflict between the new teaching ‘fanhui’ and the Qing state was the Qing state’s inconsistent legal implementations and misconceptions over peoples classification during the transitional period when the regions that used to be ‘fan’ were becoming an administratively part of ‘China proper’ as a result of the Qing westward expansion in the eighteenth century. After the rebellion, the ‘new teaching’ was labeled as a ‘heterodox teaching’ (xiangjiao) by the Qing state. On 29 June 1781, the Qianlong emperor issued another imperial edict to command that the investigation had to remain unalarming in order not to cause further disturbances. During the investigation, anyone found involved with the ‘new teaching’ would be seized immediately, interrogated strictly by provincial governors or governor-generals in person, and punished severely. Under this climate of suspicion, the investigators devised and deployed various strategies to access and probe into the Hui communities. For example, a Governor of Henan province selected local officials who, dressed in Muslim attire, had to go undercover among the Hui community. In another instance, a Governor-general of Sichuan brought in for interrogation as many as nineteen senior Hui residents from the provincial capital and its suburbs and four ‘headmen’ (xiangbao) selected by local officials and responsible for maintaining public safety as well as managing secular matters. Secret investigations in various Hui communities throughout the province were made afterwards to testify their testimonies. The main goal of the edict was to find out whether there existed any positions or titles such as ‘imam’ (zhengjiao) and ‘imam-superior’ (zongzhangjiao) among the Hui communities, and, if so, to abolish them in an effort to prevent other rebellions by such religious leaders. The Qianlong emperor was probably relieved to find out whether these positions or titles were in fact not found in most of the provinces being surveyed. In addition, unlike the Hui in the ‘fan’ regions, the Hui in ‘China proper’ turned out to be mostly peaceful, law-abiding, and not infected by the ‘new teaching.’ This little-studied yet pivotal episode opens a rare window onto the Hui landscape in Qing China and offers a unique insight into the ways in which the Qing state perceived, identified, and managed the Hui. One striking feature found in the official reports is that, not distinguished from the Han, the Hui were all registered as ‘commoners’ (menen or qimen) into the baojiao system, an instrument of social ordering implemented by the Qing. However, although the Hui and the Han fell under the same legal category, by employing various investigative methods, Qing investigators still found their ways to single out and identify the Hui, evident by the number of Hui households and mosques they kept record of in their reports. In the very process of exhaustively searching for and recording the quantities of Hui households and mosques at every corner of ‘China proper,’ the Qing state envisioned the Hui communities in its various provinces as belonging to a same group, one that the state could keep monitoring ever since.

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1. “Baojia was a system under which households were refigured into nested decimal groupings of ten, one hundred, and so on for purposes of assigning collective responsibility in public security and other matters and for fixing personal responsibility for the group on a single ‘headman’ at each level of the hierarchy”. Rowe, W.T. 2001. Seeing the World: Chen Hongmou and Elite Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century China. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p.388.
CONFERENCES IN CHINA

Shanghai Forum
28-30 May 2016, Shanghai
http://www.shanghaiforum.fudan.edu.cn/en

The Shanghai Forum, launched in 2005, is known as one of the most famous international forums held in Shanghai. Co-hosted by Fudan University and Korsa Foundation for Advanced Studies, and undertaken by Fudan Development Institute (FDI), the Forum is a non-governmental and non-profit academic organization, which holds an annual symposium each May in Shanghai. This year’s theme was “Economic Globalization and Asia’s Choice – Interconnectivity, Integration and Innovation: Building Community of Common Destiny in Asia.” Shanghai Forum takes its mission to “Concentrate on Asia, Focus on Hot Issues, Convene Elites, Promote Interactions, Enhance Cooperation and Seek Consensus” seriously. It endeavors to build an interactive platform for multi-sided communication amongst academic, political, commercial, and policy circles to pool together significant problems in both Asia and the world and will bear discussed comprehensively and profoundly, so as to seek consensus on Asia’s economic, political and social development.

Shanghai Archaeology Forum
13-17 December 2015, Shanghai
http://shanghai-archaeology-forum.org/

Founded in 2013, Shanghai Archaeology Forum (SAF) is a global initiative dedicated to promoting the protection and utilization of the world’s archaeological resources and heritage. The 2015 SAF was co-organized by the Shanghai Academy, the Institute of Archaeology at CAS, Shanghai Municipal Administration of Cultural Her-itage, and Shanghai University. The forum aims to provide a better understanding of the importance of the field of archaeology and the protection of cultural heritage for our common future.

To celebrate the excellence of archaeological research, the SAF Awards were presented to those individuals and organizations who have achieved distinction by making major discoveries and contributions, thereby fostering and inspiring the work of the past three years. The World Archaeology Keynote Lecture Series presented case studies illustrating key issues such as diverse forms of social and cultural identities, the complexities and ambiguities of cultural identities and power relations, the active roles of indigenous agency, practice and ideology in structuring colonial interaction, cultural persistence and the importance of historical contingency and local context.

The Public Archaeology Lecture Series promoted public awareness and knowledge of the ever-increasing wealth of archaeological finds. The Public Archaeology Lecture Series invited three important archaeologists, Charles Higham, Lothar van Falkenhausen, and Colin Renfrew, to share their experiences on archaeology with students, and the general public. After the public lectures, the audience was given the opportunity to engage with the distinguished archaeologists, discussing archaeological findings, as well as their concerns on the appreciation and protection of cultural diversity and the challenge of sustaining heritage in our globalizing world.

China Connections continued

Shadian’s Muslim communities and trans-local connectivity: observations from the field

Hyjyu (Janice) JIONG

I REACHED SHADIAN TOWN after a three hour drive from Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province, China. As I stepped out of the car in the chill of a late November night, the site of Shadian’s magnificent Grand Mosque and the call to night prayers reminded me that it was in a zone quite different from Kunming. Shadian has ten mosques, with the Grand Mosque – model- ed on Mecca – the largest mos- que in Medina – being completed in 2009 - as its symbol. Almost ninety percent of Shadian’s fifteen thousand residents are Muslims, belonging to the Han Chinese group. However, Shadian is also known for the so-called Shadian Incident of 1975, in which villagers forcefully opened closed-door mosques dur- ing the last years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The “incident” left 1,600 people dead at the hands of the People’s Liberation Army. “The old Islamic schools in Shadian used to have various kinds of topics, but everything has been burnt,” lamented my informant, Mr. Ma. Across the Mosque was the Islamic Culture and Arts Center that exhibits and sells Sino-Islamic artworks. Within a few blocks of the Grand Mosque, one senses a mix of forward-looking aspirations and painful memories, reflecting a continuous history of repres- sion and resilience in Islam.

Shadian’s trans-local networks in history

Islam in Yunnan expanded during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), when, under the influence of two sensible Malikis from Bukhara (current Uzbekistan) was appointed as the provincial governor, promoting both Islamic and Confucian institutions. According to Mr. Ma, “he also built aqueducts, without him you would not see present-day Yunnan.” Following waves of Muslim settlement into the town since the thirteenth century, Shadian became a part of caravan trade routes between Yunnan and Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar and India. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, trade became so important that, just before the Chinese communist victory of 1949, around 700 out of Shadian’s 980 families, had two to three horses conducting commerce across northern Thailand and Myanmar.

In the first half of the 20th century, Shadian also emerged as a significant center for Islamic learning. For example, of the thirty-three students from China who studied in Cairo’s Al-Azhar, all grew up here. Many of the thirty students from China who studied in Cairo’s Al-Azhar have taken a central role in building a strong network in and outside of China. Three Islamic institutions form the backbone of this network. Firstly, the mosque plays a central role in the Chinese Muslim community. Besides its religious function as a place of worship, it also provides a spiritual guide to the Chinese Muslims, offering religious meetings, courses and other Islamic educational programs. Secondly, the modest (grammar school, or primary level) and madrasa (Islamic college or high school) provides the Chinese Muslim community with education in Islamic knowledge, faith reinforcement and traditional Chinese culture. The next generation. Most madrasah and madrasas in China are attached to the mosques, however, there are also quite a few madrasahs set up independently and open to all Muslims in society. They are not only responsible for the maintenance of Islam and to cultivate young Muslims, but also to strengthen and revive Islamic consciousness of Muslims of all ages. Madrasahs and madrasas often regenerate the vitality of the community.
Snapshots of Sino-Muslim students living in Egypt

Shuang WEN

THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA resumed sending Chinese Muslim students to al-Azhar University in Egypt in 1982. A small number of the students are sent by the Islamic Association of China, headquartered in Beijing, and approved by the Chinese Embassy in Cairo. These students can enjoy the benefits of an education exchange agreement between the PRC and Egypt, i.e., they can live in the international student dorms at al-Azhar University and receive a modest monthly stipend. Most, however, travel on their own initiative; they are unable to enjoy the benefits of the education exchange agreement and have to fend for themselves. So when the Arab Spring broke out in January 2011, their lives in Egypt suddenly became uncertain. Below are two snapshots of these self-funded Chinese-speaking Sino-Muslim students.1

Nabil comes from a pious Muslim family in Henan. He went to Egypt in 2008 to study Islamic law at al-Azhar University, aspiring to become an Alim (a Chinese term for imam) upon graduation. Because he did not have much prior knowledge of Islamic studies or the Arabic language, he did not receive a fellowship from the Islamic Association in China. However, he was very driven and passionate about his studies. When the uprising in Egypt erupted, his family members wanted him to return. However, just like many of his fellow Muslim students from around the world, he was excited about the revolution. He saw that people who held prior grades for personal reasons became supportive of each other, as if they were united by a moment of uncertainty. Feeling inspired, he made a conscious choice to stay in order to witness the unfolding of a historical event in the Islamic world. He believed that this experience would strengthen his faith and enrich his personal growth in life.

Khalid

Khalid is originally from Henan as well, but his family is not particularly strict with religious practice. Not being able to pass the entrance college exam in China, he went to Al-Azhar University simply out of curiosity for the outside world. Although the tuition and living expenses in Egypt are not beyond the affordability of his family, they are still a financial burden. After a few years of trying, Khalid still could not pass the Arabic language exam, let alone enter a degree program. Feeling adrift and not wanting to return home empty handed, he decided to open a Chinese restaurant in the neighborhood of the international students dorm of Al-Azhar University. Although Khalid had not been particularly good at academic studies, he did manage his business well. Hand pulled noodles, stro-fries and hotpots attracted many curious diners. Khalid not only earned enough profit to pay back the original financial support from his family, but also sent extra money back to Henan. However, as the Arab Spring continued, many international Muslim students – Khalid’s restaurant’s major client – left Egypt. If the political uncertainty continued, he would not be able to keep the restaurant afloat. However, if Khalid returned to China without Arabic language skills or religious training, his employment prospects would be bleak, which was the reason for him to leave in the first place. Khalid found his niche in Egypt, but his way of making a living is threatened by the political instability. To leave or to stay, that was a big question for him when he met in July 2013. In his capacity as a restaurant owner, Khalid welcomed the Sino-Muslim students at al-Azhar University. In fact, a majority of them are like him. Not being able to enter a college in China, they went to Egypt without much religious or Arabic language knowledge, or even awareness of what to expect. As a result, they needed to first take prerequisite language classes. However, as the Arabic language is very difficult, most of them cannot pass the language exam after repeated trials, which means they cannot enter the Al-Azhar University degree program either. Out of frustration or financial constraints, they drop out of school, but have managed to make the best of their experience in Egypt by finding different jobs to make a living. Some Sino-Muslim students work in marble-making, shoe-making, and plastic recycling factories. Others sell small made-in-China inexpensive products at the Khan al-Khalili market. Some even become door-to-door sales persons or tour guides. For them, Egypt has become a place of survival rather than religious learning.

Shuang WEN is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at NYU Shanghai

References

1 Sino-Muslim is a term coined by scholar Jonathan Lipman in his book Familiar Stranger (University of Washington Press, 1997). Names of the Sino-Muslim students in this essay are not their real names.
Pakistan clarified

Once a failed state, forever a failed state. That, in a rough synopsis would apply to Pakistan over the last three quarters of a century, after its independence from British India. It actually was more a secession from British India than independence from England. The separation, on the eve of independence from India, was exerted under the slogan of Muslim autonomy and safety. Behind that movement with a religious call for action, to an extent in conjunction with the colonial administration, were the big feudal lords and the high brass in the military.

Kevin Evans

Reviewed title:

ANOTHER FEATURE of contemporary Indonesian electoral politics, noted in this volume, is that the political ‘bad’ of electoral violence is largely absent. Even in Aceh, a region whose people have long suffered from civil strife, levels of violence and intimidation are now declining towards the national norm. This also reminds that efforts at future electoral and wider political reform need to take account to preserve those positive factors that represent the strengths of the existing system all the while redressing those areas that are poor in need of redress.

The volume also reveals other unusual dynamics. Most notable is mutual candidate support at different levels (from national, provincial to local) and quite intriguingly among candidates across parties but based upon other primordial affiliations that transcend partisan loyalties. This finding should beg for further research and understanding certainly by party leaders.

Indeed this issue also offers an insight into another element of the political system in Indonesia that calls for more detailed exploration, namely the very weak and frail structure and place of the political parties. Frequent references by party activists interviewed to the old Soeharto era concept of the ‘floating masses’ in terms of politically disconnected voters reminds us that it is actually the political parties that are floating. They are clearly unanchored from community and ultimately very vulnerable. The impact of the open list PR system on the further enfeeblement of the party system needs to be seen in the context of the wider problem of the incapacity of parties to regularise internal political competition without degenerating into monarchies or splintering into several parties. The impact of the latter has been to thwart the emergence of genuinely large parties despite all the regulatory efforts to restrict the entrance of new parties into the system.

Kristoffel Lieten

Reviewed titles:

THE STATE THAT EMERGED in 1947 was deficient and remained deficient in many respects. It continued to have all the ingredients of backwardness, such as low levels of industrialisation, stark poverty, mass illiteracy, a chaotic and deficient infrastructure, etc. In addition to the various interconnecting features of underdevelopment, it had two additional circumstances which would put a spanner on development and justice: the economic and political power of the landlord-military combine and the strategic role of Pakistan in the Cold War (against the Soviet Union and Afghanistan), and nowadays in the Coalition of the Willing. This coalition induced the United States and an international consort to financially bail out and sustain the regime, however badly it managed its own affairs and its democracy. Such financial, political and military support have failed to provide the panacea to either development or a victory over ‘Muslim terrorism’.

Both features of landlord power and international connivance have been addressed in two recent books, which go a big way in accomplishing the analysis of Pakistan. Scholarly studies have been few, and quite a number of them have focussed on politicking and terrorism. Nicolas Martin has

Electoral dynamics in Indonesia

This volume contains an incredibly valuable treasure trove of insights that delve beneath the legality of Indonesia’s electoral system. In doing so it shines a light on the good, the bad and the ugly ways people win elections in this country. As for the good, many of the tactics and strategies deployed would be quite familiar to candidates elsewhere in the world in both new and established democracies. Building campaign teams, information networks, contact points and understanding community needs are the nuts of bolts of functioning democracies anywhere.

Kevin Evans

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produced an anthropological study on how control over resources, particularly land, allows the landed elites to keep the disenfranchised poor in their thumb the country poor. The result, he writes, after a careful study stretching over 25 weeks of field work, starting in 2001, is that Islam and violence, which in turn creates a state of vulnerability and fear among the poor.

New forms in an old straightjacket

In the introduction, Martin writes: “It is a world inhabited by absentee landlords with vast estates, large retinues of servants, cattle rustlers, criminals, palaces and mistresses and unscrupulous farm managers, bureaucrats and politicians. Their mansions in Lahore are staffed with valets, butlers, drivers, cooks, and maids, all brought from the villages of their estates. Here they continued to play a high ranking role in keeping labour unfree. The debt relationship binds not only the immediate family, but also the next of kinsmen, and the labourers. A minority of the poor have benefited from post-colonial policies, the controlled access to the public services, such as health care, education, and, in the same vein, the access to the state institutions and NGOs. Some argue that it is too early to claim that the establishment of these organisations, but it is not quite improbable that they have some kind of commonality of interests with the elite.”

It questions theories such as by Anatol Lieven (Pakistan: A Hard Country, London: Allen Lane, 2001) that patronage in Pakistan is a mirage; what really matters is the rule by the canon of modern state management. This, bent on blocking the emergence of impersonal governance, but disenfranchise the majority of poor. Landlord power is a political economy that seeks to cover the stench of corruption with the fragrance of kinship ties in the servicing of debts. It displaces the potential for development, central on the agenda. It ultimately backfired by creating a feudal state. It once served the regime as a short cut for the battle with the communist regime in Afghanistan.

Landlord power

Martin’s book deals with some of the very essentials of village life. It explains how, despite the rapid transition to capitalist farming, feudalism had managed to thrive in Pakistan for decades. Martin was in the lucky position that circumstances allowed him to study in the green revolution Sargodha district, within the middle – and upper sections of the old landed class. He could get access to the state institutions and thus contributing to his book. He was in a position to study in more detail the protestations of debt bondage and the abysmally stark inequality, especially in the lower sections of society. It is considered to be the study of the study of Poverty, Poverty and Power in Pakistan by Syed Mohammed Ali. It deals with market development and the role of the state in the redistribution of wealth to democracy, impoverishes, disempowers and entangles. The ethnography presented in the book looks at the functioning of various mechanisms, such as monopoly of resources, debt bondage, electoral politics, decentralisation of state institutions and the recourse to Islam, in the emergence of a new class of political entrepreneurs from the middle - and upper sections of the old landed class. It questions theories such as by Anatol Lieven that patronage is a mirage. What really matters is the rule by the canon of modern state management. This, bent on blocking the emergence of impersonal governance, but disenfranchise the majority of poor. Landlord power is a political economy that seeks to cover the stench of corruption with the fragrance of kinship ties in the servicing of debts. It displaces the potential for development, central on the agenda. It ultimately backfired by creating a feudal state. It once served the regime as a short cut for the battle with the communist regime in Afghanistan.

A powerful nexus, including NGOs

Although capitalism has pervaded Pakistan, it operates through patronage, not the legislation and state organisation and state organisation and state organisation. The problems which face Pakistan, Ali argues, emanate from the uneven landholding patterns which also allow a disproportionate control over state resources.

A number of case studies presented information indicating that even more where money was deployed, it was not always a guarantee of electoral success. Equally the special public funds made available for poor were being used by the system. How much? Do these members of the voting public represent a significant number that party leaders and incumbent MPs should actually consider their actual performance for the actual five year period? A number of case studies presented information indicating that even more where money was deployed, it was not always a guarantee of electoral success. Equally the special public funds made available for poor were being used by the system. How much? Do these members of the voting public represent a significant number that party leaders and incumbent MPs should actually consider their actual performance for the actual five year period? 

The timing of the release of this volume could hardly be better. The country will soon begin to focus on further improving its electoral systems and procedures. The detailed information provided at quite granular levels offers excellent evidence of the impact of the electoral system and of wider issues of electoral management.
From the other side of the fence¹ Two new books about Bali

One of the recurrent problems faced by producers of academic knowledge is its institutional separation from not only the people it is about, but from many of the people who would like to read it the most (try getting anything non-sensational published in the mainstream media). A converse problem is the system of institutional gatekeeping that prevents those without proper institutional credentials (implicit as well as explicit) from joining the disciplinary conversation (try getting something into an academic journal without institutional affiliation, let alone proper referencing style). Bali, because it is as popular among uncertified scholars as certified ones, and among popular readers as academic ones, is a fruitful case study for exploring these contradictions.

Graeme MacRae

Reviewed titles:

THE MOST INTERESTING early scholarship on Bali was in fact done by gifted amateurs – expatriate artists (Miguel Covarrubias, Colin McPhee, Walter Spies), colonial administrators (e.g., F.A. Liefrinck) and eccentric refugees from the stifling normalities of European society (e.g., R. Goris). A few certified academics (Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Jane Belo) did also produce books but ironically almost nobody reads them, then or now. Today there is a constant discourse about the multiple issues that Bali is facing, some (but not all) well-informed and thoughtful. There is also a substantial read- ership of expatriates and thinking tourists hungry for books which translate academic knowledge about Bali into accessible form, but relatively few books really serve this market.

Two recent books speak into this in-between market, but from outside the academic arena: Majapahit Style by Made Wijaya and Proy, Magic, Heal by David Stuart-Fox. Stuart-Fox has credentials as an academic specialist on Bali – author of a PhD thesis and definitive monograph on one of Bali’s major temples Pura Besakih and as highly respected within the academic world as it is within the community. He prefers to downplay these credentials and his career has in fact been largely in the ill-defined borders of the academic world – as compiler of the definitive (pre-digital) bibliography of literature on Bali, long-serving (now retired) librarian of the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden and freelance scholar writing since the 1970s on Balinese arts, religion, and culture. Proy, Magic, Heal is written deliberately for a popular audience and its subject is a pop-culture phenomenon but it is based on decades of in-depth research.

The second author, Made Wijaya, died, suddenly, unexpectedly and tragically, between the writing and publication of this review, which now takes on an element of obituary. He was a veteran of the expatriate community in Bali, tropical landscape designer extraordinaire, one-man multimedia production machine and much more. His book masquerades as a picture book about ‘style’, and its erudition lightly, but it is actually a contribution to the study of Javo-Balinese history that deserves to be taken seriously, not least for its innovative methodological approach to interpretation of cultural transmission.

Both authors are gifted and well-qualified amateurs (in the original sense of the term) speaking over the fence. But who is listening? To date I can find no reviews of either in scholarly journals and only one of each in other media. This is a loss for us all, on both sides of the fence. In my discipline (anthropology) we frequently bemoan our failure to com- municate our (usually inherently interesting) knowledge to non-specialist audiences and I understand it is so in other disciplines. Likewise, scholars outside the academic system who have real difficulty getting their (sometimes well-informed) views heard within the circuits of academic discourse. Some of this fence is structural – a system of academic recognition that increasingly privileges sophisticated (i.e., theoretically framed) and accountable ‘academic’ values over more everyday ones of readability and accessibility, and in effect becomes a system of gatekeeping. Likewise the mainstream media are, in my experience, surprisingly resistant to contributions of academic knowledge unless they happen to address the sensational issue du jour. But some of it is also habitual and often it becomes easier not to try.

The result is that we are all the poorer – on both sides of the fence. These two books remind us of a greater mission for which we all have some responsibility and that we lose sight of at our peril, especially in a time when universities are, ironically calling for our research to be more relevant and publicly accessible as exemplified by the growing media genre of (sometimes well-informed) ‘science journalism’.

¹ From the other side of the fence

Majapahit Style
Wijaya was perhaps the best known of the talented expatriates who arrived in Bali in the 1960s and 70s, many of whom have lived there ever since. He arrived as a designer of spectacular and romantic gardens for hotels across Asia, he was a one-man multimedia factory – producing an endless stream of photographs, videos, cultural commentaries, and public satires, much of it cleverly disguised as social gossip. Among all of this he has consistently studied and analysed Balinese architecture and developed a series of arguments about its structural, spatial and aesthetic principles and practices. Majapahit Style (Volume 1) is the latest chapter in this opus magnum, expanding his thinking about Balinese architecture to, but also from, its historical origins in neighbor- bing Java and beyond.

Majapahit Style presents itself, I suspect somewhat tongue-in-cheek, as yet another offering in the glossy coffee-table book genre of (this or that) style. But what it represents is the fruit of decades of research, exploring, documenting and reflecting on architectural, aesthetic and ritual practices, first in Bali, then across Indonesia and further across Southeast-, South- and East Asia. The resulting text moves across time and space and between andane and analysis, expert opinions and personal ones, assertions and speculations, but between them is a thread of argument, not always explicit, but constantly present and systematic. This is what we all lose when the evidence of Majapahit material culture, especially architecture, has largely disappeared from its historical heartland, it lives on in the material design heritage of other places and times – spread across the archipelago and especially in Bali, where aspects of it survive in living traditions of aesthetic and ritual practice. This argument is implicit in the structure of the book, which moves historically from earliest to latest manifestations.

Images of the Canton factories

The port city of Canton (now Guangzhou), China, served as a vital hub in the early phase of modern global trade. In the 18th century, numerous European companies set up shop in the designated foreign quarter of factories and warehouses. Like their peers around the world, Chinese artists adapted quickly to the sweeping social, economic, and aesthetic changes wrought by these mercantile aspirations on a world scale. The resulting artworks – often labeled as ‘export art’ – have long been characterized by art historians as inauthentically hybrid, and thus not deserving of scholarly attention. As a broad category, export art encompasses a great diversity of objects made by artists throughout China in a variety of styles and mediums. These include paintings, fans, textiles, decorative and utilitarian ceramics, lacquer ware, and much more.

Hope Marie Childers

Reviewed title:
Paul A. Van Dyke and Maria Kar-wing Mok. 2015. Images of the Canton Factories 1760–1822: Reading History in Art Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press ISBN 9789888208555

THIS OBJECT-ORIENTED VOLUME, co-authored by Paul Van Dyke and Maria Kar-wing Mok, examines representations of Canton via a specific type of Chinese export art, using fresh eyes and new angles. Bookended by an introduction and conclusion, the volume consists of nine chapters: six are chronological surveys, each spanning approximately a decade, the remainder consist of thematic analysis. The introduction provides a succinct history of the founding of Canton’s European merchant district, beginning with the construction of China Street in 1760 (p. xx). The study concludes with the years preceding the Great Fire of 1822, when the entire quarter of factories burned down, thus changing the landscape forever.

The authors train their eyes on painted panoramas of the Canton factories, specifically those found on porcelain punchbowls and on two-dimensional surfaces, from small gouache panels to large canvases in oil. Their objective, as referenced in the book’s subtitle, is ‘reading history through
of Majapahit architecture, expands geographically across the vast region of Majapahit influence and architecturally across time, space and even cultural boundaries. This book belongs on the same shelf as the Jero Tapakan films by Linda Connor and Tim Asch, Barbara Lovric’s work on early Chinese export art of the period and historians of global exchange of passages make for rather dry reading, an unavoidable art: This is achieved using a kind of dialogical method: close scrutiny of archival sources enables the authors to weave an integrated story of the company’s presence and activity in Canton, depending on the waxing and waning of their commercial fortunes. As Van Dyke and Mok suggest: “This ongoing rivalry between Europeans – combined with the Hong merchants’ willingness to make the changes they wanted so long as they paid the costs – resulted in the gradual transformation of the landscape” (p. 12). In turn, that shifting panorama of factories and warehouses along the quayside can be recognized in visual form on pots and paintings. The study is distinguished by two fresh approaches brought to bear on the many portraits of China Street and its shifts over time. The first is their painstaking cross-referencing of logistical minutiae gleaned from the archives against close observation of the paintings. As a result, the original arrangement requires readers to access the images through a mostly linear path through the text itself (which does not provide Platte- and Figure-numbers). This discourages casual browsing, ultimately limiting its audience. The book’s many strengths include its well-organized and comprehensive bibliography, an appendix indexing primary sources pertaining to early company movements, and a scrupulously detailed chronology. The book provides a set of parallel timelines from not only the usual colonial-era archives (e.g. British and French), but under-utilized collections in Denmark, Sweden, and Belgium, as well as a Chinese-language source now available online. While not a theory-driven study of the genre, this extensively illustrated (100 color plates and 32 black and white figures), fact-rich analysis will serve as a valuable reference for a range of collections of Chinese export art of the period and historians of global trade in the early colonial era. It should also be broader appeal among art historians, who have taken greater interest, of late, in such popular, but non-traditional forms. The hallmark of such art is its fast-moving fusion of varied influences, including French, Dutch, and Chinese, all cradled in the rich local artistic tradition. This cross-cultural hybridity has been viewed with skepticism, yet it seems that scholars of Chinese art history are beginning to acknowledge this intriguing and vital – if undervalued – stage in China’s formidable aesthetic legacy. Hope Marie Childers, New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. (childers@alfred.edu)
The ICAS 10 Asian Studies Book Fair

ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2017, will host our first ever Book Fair, focused on Asian studies publications. The ICAS Asian Studies Book Fair will not only provide a platform for books in the English language, but also in Chinese, French, German, and Korean, to reflect those additional languages now eligible for the ICAS Book Prize. It will be the perfect showcase for all your Asian studies publications.

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The Paragraph

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Burma and ethnicity tend to be closely associated in people's minds when thinking about the diversity of the country, or when analyzing the conflicts there, many of which have yet to be resolved. Ethnicity forms such a naturalized part of the intellectual landscape dealing with the country that few have stopped to consider its complex relationship with language. The decades-long closure of the country means that the ideas of earlier scholarship still continue to hold powerful sway. With new possibilities for travel and research inside, thanks to the political changes starting in 2010, foreign researchers have recently been able to move around more in the country, to observe patterns of language-use, and to speak with people about their thoughts concerning their own identities. This special issue moves forward a long-stalled reconsideration to argue that the relationship between language, ethnicity, and identity in Burma is not necessarily timeless, a given, or set in stone. Rather, language may be one element informing an ongoing process and negotiation that various groups engage in to define themselves in relation to others.

Patrick McCormick
Contextualizing language and ethnicity in the study of Burma continued

Burma and Burma Studies

Burma is open for business. Recent changes in government have meant positive developments for those doing research in and about the country. While some foreign researchers already found ways to do research inside in the 1990s, it was not until the early 2000s that greater numbers started to arrive. Even if many of the technical difficulties and restrictions, such as obtaining long-term visas or access to areas outside major cities, still remain in place or are only gradually beginning to ease, more people inside the Burmese system may be embracing the idea of openness, change, and possibility. Just in the past few years, an ever-growing number of scholars and researchers have been spending time in the country.

Moving intellectual conversations forward in the study of Burma has been a slow process, and it is worth reviewing how this came to be. For decades, Burma Studies mostly fell off everyone's radars. Before WWII, much of the scholarship related to Burma was the work of scholars-officials of the British colonial administration, including historian D.G.E. Hall, J.S. Furnivall, and archaeologist-art historian-linguist Gordon Luicci, and their Burmese protégés, such as Taw Sein Ko, Pe Maung Tin, and Htin Aung. After WWII (followed by independence in 1948), several foreign researchers conducted fieldwork through the early 1960s, and some of the resulting scholarship remains influential even today, such as the work of anthropologist Melford Spiro.

When U Ne Win came to power in 1962, he effectively shut the country off from the outside world, and access for foreigners was tightly restricted. Many scholars who had intended to study Burma chose alternative research sites, although others tried to study the country by proxy by doing research among cross-border communities who either lived on both sides of the Thai-Burma border, or had moved to Thailand to escape conflict inside Burma. Research on Shan, Mons, Akha and some other upland groups falls into this category. Few of those researchers spoke Burmese or had much direct experience with the country, so that it was difficult for them to place their observations in a larger Burmese – as opposed to Thai – context. Finally, there were some scholars, such as historians Victor Lieberman and Michael Aung Than, and the political scientist Robert Taylor, who were either able to negotiate access to the country or the nature of their work allowed them to make use of documents and other sources available outside of the country.

This decades-long, near-total hiatus in research and scholarship has put Burma Studies in a rather different situation than found in other nearby countries. Scholarship on Thailand or Indonesia, for example, is now in its third or greater generation, meaning that much of the earliest scholarship produced during the colonial period or contact with the west – has been reexamined, built upon, rethought or discarded. Next door in India, generations of local and international scholars have engaged in lively debates to rethink much of the received wisdom on the Subcontinent. These efforts have included projects of intellectual decolonization.

In Burma Studies, however, the earliest classical scholarship of the colonial era (and just after) is still highly important, simply because there have been so few scholars to revisit it. In many fields, vast amounts of primary sources have yet to be properly processed. In history, for example, primary sources in Burmese, Pali, and local languages have yet to be read and catalogued, much less annotated or analyzed. Within Burma itself, early colonial work has come to define how Burmese understand themselves, not to mention how they practice academia.

From an institutional perspective, universities throughout the world offer some support to Burma Studies, most importantly the Center for Burma Studies at Northern Illinois University, which opened in the 1980s. While the Center is a huge boon for Burma Studies, throughout the rest of North America, Europe, Australia and Japan, faculty working on Burma-related topics, not to mention actually offering instruction in the Burmese language, have been all too few and far between, especially in comparison with Indonesian, Thai, or Vietnamese. Now, however, Burma Studies are finally moving forward, with new researchers working on Burma-related topics. Within Burma itself, opportunities impossible even just a few years ago are slowly emerging, such as working with local universities and faculty. In 2015, a foreign student studying anthropology was allowed to spend time in a Burmese village, something which, as far as I know, has not happened since the 1950s.

Towards the future

The most recent change of government may bring about many positive changes. Over the next several decades, the economic and political situation may foster much greater prosperity. The brain drain may reverse, or at least be stemmed, and educated people may start to see the possibility of having the kind of life they want inside the country. As has happened in India with the rise of the middleclass, there may be a greater demand for the use of local languages, even in higher education.

Thongchai Winichakul has written of ‘home scholars’ to talk of Thai educated abroad, but who write or produce in Thai, with local audiences in mind. While home scholars may now be a common feature of the Thai intellectual landscape, they have only recently begun to appear in Burma. One such appearance is in the burgeoning Burmese-language print media, which is thriving after censorship restrictions were eased. The numbers of such home scholars may continue to grow and acquire a greater voice. The possibilities for genuine collaboration and collegiality between foreign and local researchers may also grow. In the Philippines and Singapore, such academic collaboration between colleagues has been possible. These two advances have obvious links with language: the possibility of a genuine Burmese-language intellectual milieu developing, while at the same time, having the self-confidence and English-language skills to engage with international scholars. Or, as in Japan and increasingly in Thailand and elsewhere, providing foreigners with opportunities and incentives for learning the local language.

I would like to end on a final note of caution with regard to what may be a form of narcissism: the assumption that once Burma improves its educational system its intellectual ideas will be similar to those of the West. Today, many Burmese speak of education in the country as having fallen behind or having been cut off from the rest of the world, and as needing to catch up. Outsiders voice similar sentiments, speaking for example of how old-fashioned ideas have lingered in the country, or how academia is in a ‘time warp’. It would be dangerous, however, to think that as more Burmese are educated in universities with better resources and teaching methods, that their research interests or perspectives will become ‘just like ours’.

The Newsletter | No.75 | Autumn 2016

Below: Market in Dawei/Tavoy. Image reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Prachatai on flickr.
To illustrate, we can return to the example of Thailand. Even though Thais have been exposed to western-style education and ideas for decades, many Thai research agendas reflect local perspectives and interests. Research in history, for example, is very much informed by the royalist-nationalist school of historiography taught in schools. History is a good example of differences in what is at stake depending on whether one is embedded in local, national intellectual worlds, or writing as an international scholar. For local scholars, history is deeply imbricated in ideas about the self and identity, which are taught early on. Many are reluctant to allow the interpretation of `our` past to fall into the hands of outsiders. International scholars, however, tend to see questions of history in abstract ways and engage in conversation more with each other than with local audiences. More importantly, the way they deal with the topic – supposedly in `objective` or `scientific` ways – may ride rough over cherished local interpretations and ideologies.

Language does not always equal ethnicity

I am happy to bring together the work of several scholars who have been working on questions of language, script, ethnicity and identity in Burma. This collection comes out of the Language, Power, and Identity in Asia conference, which the IAS held in Leiden in March of this year. If there is one question that unites these papers, it is one of `origins`. Ethnic names and categories have such a solidity in Burma, and indeed ethnicity and `differences` have long been both a cause and consequence of conflict and violence. In discussing their research topics, each author teases out strands from the solid-seeming categories of ethnicity and language. Tug on Palaung scripts and language, and we find Shan models the solid-seeming categories of ethnicity and language. Tug on the names for the Burmese dialects have changed and shifted over time. The sounds of some of the Burmese dialects reflect contact with speakers of surrounding languages, as over time they have shifted their own language and identities.

In bringing these contributions together, I hope to bring some nuance to conversations about language, ethnicity, and identity. I would like to foster disciplinary border crossing. As someone who has worked both as a linguist and as a historian, I have seen how historians struggle to understand linguistic concepts, and linguists often use historical writing uncritically to interpret linguistic data. When talking about language contact or multilingualism, non-specialists often think this results in a language meltdown, with people speaking `pidgins` and `creoles`. The contributors to this Focus section provide concrete examples of what actually does happen – how speakers of one language replicate the words and grammar of another – while describing the context of hierarchy in which these replications occur.

Looking at how speech communities stand in relation to each other, how those positions can shift over time, and how the communities themselves change over time, all gives us some insight into how definitions of language and ethnicity are processes with a time depth. In revisiting and rethinking some of these ideas, or looking into the evolution of languages and scripts, we recognize that even if categories of language and identity are in some sense constructed, they still have a reality and a vital importance to the people to whom they belong.

Our contributors are affiliated with institutions in Switzerland and Japan. Jenny, McCormick, Müller and Weymouth are all at the Department of Comparative Linguistics at the University of Zurich, where we have been working on a project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation on the history of language contact in what we call the `Greater Burma Zone`, which we understand as Burma, but in a lesser way than the current political boundaries. Cultural and religious networks have also connected peoples in what is now Burma, with parts of Northeast India, Bangladesh, Yunnan, and northern Thailand. Badenoch, Imamura, Kojima and Kurabe are linguists, anthropologists, and geographers doing trans-disciplinary studies at Japanese institutions. Much of the Burma-related work coming out of Japanese universities is not well known in English, which is particularly regrettable in that Japanese scholars place particular emphasis on the importance of long term fieldwork.

All of us would like to thank the countless number of local people in Burma and elsewhere who have worked with us and given us support in so many ways. The Greater Burma Zone project would also like to gratefully acknowledge the help and participation of the Anthropology Department of Mandalay University.

Names, spellings, classifications

The authors in each of their contributions have followed their own spellings and used terms related to the names of countries, ethnic groups, and languages in their own way. This diversity reflects the fact that knowledge related to the country is still emerging and in process, without any kind of definitive consensus. Badenoch, Kojima and Weymouth each classify varieties of the Palaung languages differently. Some authors have used the term `Myanmar`, while others prefer `Burma`. The term `Myanmar` in English merges together language, people, and country, and its spelling reflects an attempt to represent the sounds of British English, whereas the spelling with a final `-r`. The change from `Burma` to `Myanmar` affects only English, and no other language (French, Thai, or the indigenous languages of Burma other than Burmes) has been forced to modify their usage.

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The author, Mathias Jenny, and André Müller would all like to acknowledge the generosity of the Swiss National Science Foundation, whose grant has made this research possible.

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Below: Farmer on Inle Lake. Image reproduced under a creative commons license courtesy of Roman Koroh on flickr.
The Shan of northern Myanmar speak a language of the Tai-Kadai family found from southern China, across Mainland Southeast Asia, through northern Myanmar and into Northeast India. Names connected with the Shan give us some insight into the historical range and connections between speakers of Shan and its relatives. ‘Shan’ itself is a Burmese name related to the old name for Thailand, ‘Siam’, and the second syllable in the name Assam of Northeast India and the ‘Ahom’, a Tai-speaking people after whom Assam is ultimately named. The Shan call themselves ‘Tai’, as do speakers of many related languages.

Mathias Jenny

AS A LINGUISTIC AND HISTORICAL TERM, ‘Tai’ refers to a branch of the Tai-Kadai family, while ‘Thai’ refers specifically to the language of Thailand. Widespread as the Tai-Kadai family is, only two languages have official status as national languages: Thai in Thailand and Lao in Laos. Depending on the definition, many peoples, languages and scripts may fall under the term ‘Shan’, but here I just consider the largest language and script of Burma. Today Shan is a medium of instruction in informal and monastic education, although there is pressure on the central government to change its decades-old policy of only allowing Burmese to be used in government schools. Shan has been a literary medium for a few centuries, for both religious and secular texts. There are a few different writing systems that have been used for Shan, but the most widespread has been in use for centuries, although it was modified to represent all the sounds of the language only in the late 1960s. Today a substantial number of books and journals are published regularly in Shan, together with online magazines and newspapers.

Before being firmly attached to the Burmese state through British colonial policies, Shan speakers in the language’s many varieties tended to live in the valleys of the uplands throughout northern Myanmar (what is now Shan State, parts of Kachin State, and parts of Sagaing and Magwe Regions), where they tended to be at the top of the local sociolinguistic hierarchy. The traces of Shan on other languages, and their traces of influence on Shan, tell us about the history of relations between these groups, and something about their relative positions in terms of prestige and hierarchy. Relatedly, we find that even today, in the age of ethnicity and nationalist logic, not just speakers of Tai languages, but sometimes even speakers of Austroasiatic languages consider themselves ‘Tai’ or ‘Shan’. The Tai Loi, for example, consider themselves Shan but still speak their Austroasiatic language at home. Such situations give us insights into the process of language-spread and historical identity formation not only in Myanmar, but places like Laos and Vietnam where similar conditions exist.

Forsing an ethnocity through language and history

Today many Shans understand themselves, and their position in relation to their neighbors, through ideas that developed during the nineteenth century. At that time, Siamese intellectuels created a narrative of the origins of the Thai people in response to expanding European colonialism in Southeast Asia. They based this account mainly on written sources, including the travels of European missionaries and traders. Some traced the history of the Thai and Tai peoples back to Central Asia, from where the Tai migrated into Sichuan and Yunnan, where they established the Nanzhao (Nan Chao) kingdom in the eighth and ninth centuries AD. When Mongol troops invaded in the twelfth century, the Tai were pushed further into the Southeast Asian mainland, including everyday vocabulary. As other authors in this Focus discourse, Jinghpaw itself is a dominant language in Kachin State, and functions as lingua franca. The large number of Shan loans, together with the absence of Jinghpaw elements in Shan, show that Shan was dominant, over Jinghpaw at least at some point in the past, even in areas where Shan has long ceased to be spoken. As in Palaung, Shan loans into Jinghpaw form layers of borrowing, in some cases combining elements of the two. In the word for ‘coconut’,
In another twist, some Burmese words have entered Jinghpaw through Shan. Many of these words uphold older Burmese pronunciations, still preserved in Burmese spelling. One example is jinghpaw panglò [pəl], ultimately from an early pronunciation of Burmese pinlò, written (PANΛ1J) (in his Focus article McCormick discusses the role of Written Burmese in reconstructing the history of sound changes in Burmese). Another is kàngmu [kədə], which translates to ‘food market’, and English, has subject-verb-object order, while Jinghpaw, referring to the ordering of words in a sentence. Shan, like Thai and Lanna Thai, is a language that has long been a prestigious language in the region. Taking part in a larger Burmese linguistic and cultural sphere does not necessarily mean that other peoples, like the Shan, who participate in Burmese networks of prestige, agree to current political arrangements.

The linguistic influence of Burmese can be seen on all levels of Shan vocabulary, and can incidentally be found far afield, even in places that today are not, or no longer, connected to the Burmese sphere, such as Meuang Sing in Laos. When comparing Shan to other closely related languages such as Thai Khen (the language of Keng Tung, closely related to Lanna Thai), some of the sound differences are striking. While all those languages have an ‘imploded’ /d‘/ and /b‘/ sound (as McCormick also discusses in this Focus), and the ‘fricative’ (/f/), Shan lacks these sounds, just as Burmese does. Shan does have the sound /p/ (r), an ‘aspirated fricative’, which is quite rare throughout the world, but which is also found in Burmese.

Structurally, it seems likely that Shan speakers have replicated certain Burmese patterns. For example, to say ‘in the house’, Shan speakers say hàn jì háin (literally at + in + house), which is exactly the same (if in a different order) as the Burmese háin hàn jì (literally house + in + at). The same phrase in Lao (which may be closer than Thai) would simply be nà hán. Today, Burmese influence is clearest in borrowings. Burmese terms abound in all domains of the Shan lexicon. While this was already the case in older classical texts, the number of Burmanisms has increased in modern prose, especially in formal and academic texts. Burmese is the sole language of state education and administration in the country, and the main language of media and commerce. Based on our project research, many Shan – especially younger people – are more at ease talking about professional or official affairs in Burmese, even though they describe Shan as their first language and the language of choice for personal conversations. Books and popular music, videos, and movies are much more widely available in Burmese than in Shan. While such media do exist in Shan, their production and distribution is more restricted. As is the case for many Burmese minorities, many Shan in Burma are therefore more fluent literate in Burmese than in Shan.

Shan is a medium of instruction in non-formal education, for example in monastic schools. Shan-language textbooks and readers are given as casebooks of Burmese government textbooks. As sometimes happens in these cases, the Shan has been translated following the Burmese a bit too closely. Not only can the Shan be awkward, but such texts foster language which converges ever closer to Burmese models. As was the case with Shan loanwords in Palaung, Burmese loanwords tell us a lot about how long Shan and Burmese speakers have been in contact, given how many the word was adopted. In many respects Shan and Burmese have rather different sound systems, but it is obvious that Shan phonology has been able to preserve sounds from earlier stages of Burmese. The Shan word pèl [kər] (capital) preserves an earlier pronunciation of Burmese pyagyi, one fairly close to that of Ra Ikhaing today. Similarly, Shan has a loan of Burmese sin jò (written <CA: KâHî>, which suggests that the loan came into Shan around the eighteenth century, when Burmese (j) had already developed into Sin (ţ) (written <C; KâHî>, but was not, as is found in British sources of the time.)

Little brother? Thai and its influence on ‘older brother’ Shan

In Thai, the name for Shan is Tai Shi (Big Tai), in contrast to one of the historical names for the Thai, Tai Noi (Little Tai), possibly in reference to historical relations and settlement patterns. Today, however, Thailand is very much the big brother to the Shan: large numbers of Shan speakers in Burmese know Thai from their experience as migrant workers in Thailand. Being culturally and linguistically closer to Thai than to Burmese, Shan has been under increasing influence from its ‘big brother’ to the south. The huge Thai entertainment industry, producing soap operas, movies, and karaoke videos, has long been a welcome alternative to Burmese State TV programs. Thai has become the language of choice for many Shan when it comes to globalization. Burmese influence enters Shan mainly through official channels like education, administration, and commerce; and historically also through religion.

A number of Shan political and cultural organizations, including online news magazines, are based in Chiangmai. Many Thai words for scientific and political concepts, which are otherwise absent from Shan, can easily be turned into Shan-like words. Some of these loans may be difficult to detect, especially if they consist of indigenous Tai elements, like Shan këm mët:jì (politics) from Thai këm [mêt]. We know these are Thai loans because of the parts exists in Thai but not Shan. More obvious are Thai loans from Khmer, which are otherwise absent in Shan. Structurally, Thai influence on Shan would be much more difficult to detect because the languages are very close grammatically. In Shan areas close to Thai, especially where there are substantial numbers of returned migrant workers, there may be some phonological convergence at work; one case is the reversal of the historical shift of Proto-Tai /ŋ/ to Shan /ŋ/. We find this shift in the Shan word pà:n [fø], which many young people now pronounce pêf, following the pronunciation of the Thai cognate [fê]. As young Shan migrant workers explained, “It sounds old fashioned to pronounce such words as pêf with p. Maybe some old people in the villages still speak like that.”

Positioning Shan

Shan, while an important language of administration and education in the past, has itself long been situated between two powerful languages, Burmese and Thai. Both languages have at different times exercised influence on Shan on different levels and in different domains. The pull towards Burmese has been increasing, with the greater integration and acceptance of the Shan into Myanmar, while Thai remains an attractive alternative that, at least superficially, strengthens a sense of pan-Tai identity. Shan cultural and political elites may be more interested in Thai connections, although common people may take a much more pragmatic approach, adopting whatever language they see as being useful in their daily lives.

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Speakers of the various Kachin languages often use the expression ‘Kachin’ or ‘Kachin language’ when speaking in English or Burmese to refer to the Jinghpaw language. There is, however, no single ‘Kachin’ language. The languages included in the super-ethnic category ‘Kachin’ include Jinghpaw itself, also spoken in China and Northeast India, where it is called ‘Singpho’; Zaiwa (Atsi), Lhaovo (Maru or Langsu), Lashi (Lachik or Laciid); Lisu, Rawang (Krangku), Nongchang (Maingtha or Achan, Nganchang), Pola (Bela), and Hpun. Pola has around 400 speakers and Hpun may no longer be spoken. As the recent work of Sadan, Robinne, and others has shown, the Burmese-language term ‘Kachin’ to refer to these peoples arose fairly recently in the context of colonial Burma. As a category, ‘Kachin’ may make sense most fully in English or Burmese, given that the term was created and given more meaning by successive governments to denote a category of people useful in the British colonial army. The question of how the people who now fall under this category may have understood themselves and their interconnections in the past and how their views have changed, may ultimately be unanswerable.

André Müller
is a wholly unrelated Tai-Kadai language. The Shan forms Focus, with Shan, which as Jenny describes elsewhere in this basically the same as Burmese. As Leach first described, Kadu is a relative of Jinghpaw, but has a system similarly to Jinghpaw, Anong, and Lisu, all of which make similar height distinctions, are of different shapes, which shows that the words were not merely borrowed. The evidence from some of the other languages is less clear. Rawang could be called a peripheral Kachin language and is from yet another part of the Tibeto-Burman family. The peripheral Kachin languages, such as Lisu and Rawang, do not show this kind of variability. Rather, the demonstrative always follows the noun, literally, ‘cat this’. In some of the close relatives of these languages, such as Burmese and Kadu, the demonstrative always comes before the noun (‘this cat’). It is not common in the languages of the world to have variation like this, so finding it here among the core Kachin languages is significant.

Variable participation in being Kachin

These two small – yet tantalizing – examples suggest that through close contact, as fostered through the clan and marriage systems, the core Kachin languages have converged in certain aspects of their grammar. In areas of Papua New Guinea and the Amazon, where cross-linguistic marriages have been institutionalized in similar ways as among the Kachin, we find similar patterns of convergence across languages. The evidence of the shared words and systems among the core languages suggest that the contact has been more long-term and closer than the contact with the peripheral languages like Lisu and Rawang. Indeed, the Lisu themselves know that they started moving into the area as late as the nineteenth century. Only a small part of the overall Lisu population participates in the Kachin clan system, and its exogamous marriage tradition. Only some speak Jinghpaw. Among the Rawang, only those in close contact with other Kachins share the kinship and clan system, even though they are linguistically strongly influenced by Jinghpaw, as manifested in a large amount of loanwords in nearly all domains, including grammatical words.

Not only peripheral Kachin groups contest being affiliated with the Jinghpaw, or being part of the Kachin system. In the past decades, each Kachin subgroup has founded its own ‘literature and culture’ committees (the term ‘literature’ in these names follows a Burmese English usage, which we would call ‘literacy’), promoted its own orthography, published primers and Bible translations. The Kachin Baptist Church, with its focus on Jinghpaw, was initially antagonistic to these efforts to create individual literary languages. These subgroup committees usually attempt to ‘purify’ their languages by replacing commonly used Jinghpaw words with newly coined words in a process similar to those in French, Icelandic, or Turkish. In places like northern Shan State where ‘pure’ Jinghpaw speakers are the minority, some subgroup Kachins prefer to speak their mother tongue (be it Lhaovo, Zaiwa, or Lashi) instead of using Jinghpaw as a lingua franca when talking to speakers of other Kachin languages. The closeness of many of these non-Jinghpaw languages facilitates this process, since the level of shared vocabulary among them is high enough to allow people to quickly gain passive fluency in the other languages through exposure. We thus see some evidence among some speakers of separating linguistically from the larger, otherwise more prestigious, languages and emphasize their identity as Lhaovo, Lashi, or Zaiwa.

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The actual words for these demonstratives in Lhaovo, Lashi, Pola and Zaiwa are all similar in form, which is not surprising given that the languages are closely related. The forms in Jinghpaw, Anong, and Lisu, all of which make similar height distinctions, are of different shapes, which shows that the words were not merely borrowed. The evidence from some of the other languages is less clear. Rawang could be called a peripheral Kachin language and is from yet another part of the Tibeto-Burman family. Here we find no distinctions in altitude. But its close relative, Lasi, spoken in Yunnan and adjacent Burma, does make height distinctions. Lisu, which some native speakers see as falling under Kachin while others do not, does make altitude distinctions. According to Ethnologue, speakers of Anong are shifting to Lisu.

When we consider the systems in closely related languages, we find a rather different picture. Burmese is closely related to Lhaovo, Lashi, Zaiwa, and Pola, yet does not make any height distinctions. Instead, the system focuses only on relative distance: di [this], bō [that], and hə [on] or ‘indeterminate distance’. Kadu is a relative of Jinghpaw, but has a system basically the same as Burmese. As Leach first described, speakers of the Kachin languages have long been in contact with Shan, which as Jenny describes elsewhere in this Focus, is a wholly unrelated Tai-Kadai language. The Shan forms closely parallel those of Burmese and Kadu. Even though Shan speakers live at a relatively higher altitude than the Burmese, they are still valley dwellers.

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Jinghpaw, the majority language among the Kachin people of northern Myanmar, has come to enjoy vibrant vernacular media. If you visit Myitkyina, the largest city in Kachin State today, you cannot help but see colorful posters advertising the latest Jinghpaw-language music. On the internet there are countless Jinghpaw-language websites, from frivolous to serious. This situation is remarkable because the language did not even have a writing system 125 years ago. Today the Jinghpaw media may be the most vigorous among the many minority language media of upland Southeast Asia. We explore how the Jinghpaw orthography became established and how vernacular media have grown.

Orthography and vernacular media

Keita Kurabe and Masao Imamura

The linguistic landscape of the Kachin region

The term ‘Kachin’ refers to a complex of upland people living largely in Kachin State and the northern part of Shan State in Myanmar, but also in neighboring areas of northeastern India and Yunnan, in southwestern China. Kachins speak many languages, including Jinghpaw (also called ‘Singpho’ in India and ‘Jing’ in China), Zaiwa, Na, Lhaovo, Lacid, Rawang, and Ngochang (whether or not Lisu or ‘Lishaw’ is a Kachin language is a question that Müller takes up in his piece in this Focus). While these languages are all of the Tibeto-Burman group of the Sino-Tibetan language family, they belong to distinct branches and are mutually unintelligible. Furthermore, even within one language, for example Rawang, the dialectal differences may be so great that speakers cannot communicate with each other. While many, speaking in Burmese or English, use the term ‘Kachin’ to refer to what is actually the Jinghpaw language, we use ‘Jinghpaw’ to distinguish it from the other Kachin languages.

In this world of multiple languages, Jinghpaw has functioned as a lingua franca. According to David Bradley, the Jinghpaw population is by far the largest, estimated at 650,000. The Zaiwa, Na, and Rawang populations are estimated to be 170,000, 100,000, and 110,000 respectively. The Lacid and Ngochang are considerably smaller.

Multilingualism is common; we can easily find people who can speak, for example, Jinghpaw and Na. This multilingualism, however, is not reciprocal, because not all the Kachin languages are considered equal in status. Jinghpaw is clearly dominant and of higher status. The vast majority of people who speak only Kachin languages are Jinghpaw-speakers. Those who speak Jinghpaw do not seem to be interested in learning another minority language, similar to how few native Burmese who speak Jinghpaw do not seem to be interested in learning another minority language, similar to how few native Burmese speakers are motivated to learn a minority language.

The development of the Jinghpaw orthography

Given the state of Jinghpaw, it is not surprising that Jinghpaw was the first Kachin language to acquire an orthography. The set of conventions used today for writing Jinghpaw was devised by Protestant missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed the Jinghpaw orthography and vernacular media is inseparable from global literacy campaigns of Protestant evangelism, whose most visible driver today is the Summer Institute of Linguistics International. Starting with Adoniram and Anna Judson, who arrived in Burma in 1813 and translated the entire Bible into Burmese by 1834, a succession of American Baptist missionaries came to Burma to translate Christian scripture into the local languages. Among the Buddhists, the missionaries were not successful. They did not, however, that ‘tribal peoples’ who lacked writing, such as the Karen, reacted much more favorably to them. The missionaries therefore shifted their focus to upland tribal groups. Because these languages were wholly oral and not written, the evangelists had to come up with an orthography for each language before translating the scripture. A myriad of local languages created much confusion among the missionaries who encountered them. Missionaries ‘discovered’ the Jinghpaw language in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but it took quite some while before Jinghpaw was identified as a separate language. At first, missionaries in Burma were working on Jinghpaw without realizing that fellow missionaries in northeastern India were working on the same language.

Efforts to reduce Jinghpaw to writing in northeastern India were initially vigorous; the Baptists used the Roman alphabet to transcribe Jinghpaw and produced a phrase book and vocabulary list in the early 1830s. These efforts, however, did not last long, perhaps because they realized that the number of Jinghpaw speakers in the region was rather small. Paul Ambrisse Bigandet, the French bishop of Rangoon known for his pioneering study of Buddhism (The Life, or Legend, of Goudoum, the Buddha of the Burmese), made visits to Bhamo in northern Burma in 1856 and 1865, marking the beginning of Roman Catholicism among the Kachins. During his first visit, Bigandet made a short vocabulary list of Jinghpaw, which was published in 1858 as a comparative lexicon of Shan, Jinghpaw, and Palaung. This work of Jinghpaw, written in the Roman alphabet, is one of the earliest references to the Jinghpaw spoken in Burma.

It was the Baptist missionaries in Burma who made gains in studying Jinghpaw systematically and in devising an orthography for the language. In 1873, Francis Mason, who had played a major role in translating the Bible into Shan and Sgaw Karen (1843) and Pao Karen (1852), arrived in Bhamo in northern Burma and spent two months studying Jinghpaw. Josiah Cushing, who had translated the Bible into Shan, paid his first visit to Bhamo in 1876. Much neglected in previous research have been the group of young Karen missionaries, such as Bogay, who accompanied Cushing and stayed in the region to study Jinghpaw. Cushing and his team put the Gaui dialect of Jinghpaw into writing. They borrowed various elements from the Karen, Burmese, and Shan orthographies, all of which were Indic in origin. In 1877, Cushing translated into Jinghpaw a portion of the Baptist catechism, which Ann Judson had written in Burmese. He also collected 1500 Jinghpaw words and published a grammatical note in 1880. In 1879, another missionary named William Henry Roberts arrived in Bhamo; he stayed for thirty-four years among the Kachins. Roberts used Cushing’s orthography to publish a small spelling book in 1883, and translated the Gospel of Matthew into Jinghpaw in 1885. The use of Cushing’s orthography, however, did not gain traction, for reasons unclear to us (see fig. 1). The Baptist missionaries, it appears, decided to do away with the Cushing orthography and create a new one. Ola Hanson, a Swedish-American missionary, who had a good command of Swedish, English, German, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, arrived in Bhamo in 1890. Soon he created an original orthography for Jinghpaw using the Roman alphabet instead of the Indic scripts. Hanson chose the Roman alphabet perhaps because he found it easier to capture Jinghpaw sounds. While translating the New Testament (completed in 1911), he and his fiscal assistant, such as Damau Naw, enthusiastically promoted the use of the new orthography by publishing a spelling book (1892), a grammar book (1896), a dictionary (1896), and a reader (1908). Damau Naw, an assistant helping Hanson in literary work since 1883, became one of the earliest Jinghpaw writers, publishing a small booklet in Jinghpaw in 1906.

Jinghpaw vernacular media

In the 1910s, a variety of reading materials in Jinghpaw began to appear. In 1914, the Baptist church published the first periodical in the language, a bi-monthly (later a monthly) newsletter called the Jinghpaw Shi Laika [Jinghpaw News]. The British colonial government also found the Jinghpaw orthography to be useful, and so commissioned the church to produce school textbooks in Jinghpaw. In 1915, a Textbook Committee was organized under the Deputy Commissioner in Bhamo. Much of this work was actually carried out by J. Frank Ingram, a Baptist missionary and his assistant La Nau, who were also stationed in the same city. They published five series of readers in Jinghpaw for children and the first four grades. Textbooks for various subjects including geography (1918), arithmetic (1918), and basic science (1920) were also produced by the Baptist missionaries. A handbook on hygiene and public health (1933) was made available at the request of the government. In this period, the Baptist church, run by American missionaries and the British colonial government worked together to ‘civilize’ the natives; literacy campaigns were central to their civilizing project.

The Second World War interrupted publication activities; Jinghpaw Shi Laika, for example, discontinued in 1941. This did not, however, mean that there were no publications during the war time. In fact, Jinghpaw language materials were printed in India. The British and Foreign Bible Society in Calcutta, for example, printed the Jinghpaw Bible.

Jinghpaw media recovered after the war and grew rapidly after Burma’s independence in 1948. The most noteworthy event in the post-war period was the growth of secular media. By the late 1950s, Jinghpaw media had grown to publish independently of the church. In 1958 a secular newspaper, the Jinghpaw Prat [The Jinghpaw Times] was founded in Rangoon. This full-fledged weekly, full of catchy photos, covered a wide range of topics, from a beauty contest in Myitkyina to the latest world news like the Cuban missile crisis (see fig. 2). Although the Jinghpaw Prat was discontinued in 1963, this publication, which enjoyed broad readership, represented the Jinghpaw public sphere of the era more than any other.
The Jinghpaw secular media, however, did not survive the draconian measures towards the minority-language press imposed by Ne Win, who seized power in a coup in 1962. Although the public media were suppressed, Jinghpaw literacy classes were by then so well established that they were able to maintain their work through their ever-expanding church networks.

The churches had grown significantly in the 1950s in terms of their printing capacity. In 1957, the Kachin Baptist Convention established Hanson Memorial Press, equipping themselves with their own printing facilities. They purchased a used press in the US and had it shipped to Rangoon. A Bible school student with photography and printing skills, Lazing Gawng, was sent to Rangoon for practical training and he became the manager of the new press in Myitkyina. This enabled the resumption of the Jinghpaw Shi Zoka, the same as the pre-war periodical. In the 1960s, the press was led by Saboi Jum, one of the most prominent Jinghpaw intellectuals of the post-war era, who later exerted considerable influence on Kachin politics as the Secretary-General of the Kachin Baptist Convention.

The production capacity of Jinghpaw literature increased, and so did the readership. A good indication of readership growth was the opening of the bookstore ‘Laika Nau Ra’ in Myitkyina. This downtown store originally sold traditional medicine only, but it began to carry Jinghpaw-language publications in 1965 and it grew as a bookstore. Today the store offers the largest selection of Jinghpaw-language books, selling more than one hundred titles in Jinghpaw (see fig. 4).

Throughout the era of Kachin insurgency against the central government – since the founding of the Kachin Independence Army in 1961 to the ceasefire agreement in 1994 (brokered by Saboi Jum) – churches were practically the sole patron of Jinghpaw literature. The most prominent among these was the Kachin Baptist Convention, which continued its literacy campaigns through its childcare program, Sunday School, and ‘summer school’ (that is, during the annual school break) courses. The churches also produced newsletters, which they circulated by cleverly printing ‘limited circulation’ on the cover, thus allowing them to bypass the official censorship board of the central government.

Another way that Jinghpaw media bypassed the government interference was having a production site outside the country. In 1982, the Catholic Church began broadcasting in Jinghpaw from the Philippines through their Radio Veritas Asia program. Jinghpaw-language radio programs were particularly important in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Kachin language was widely spoken in Myitkyina.

As the case of the Radio Veritas program indicates, Jinghpaw media have been quick to adapt to new technologies. During the 1980s, young people in Myitkyina started making Jinghpaw-language movies with smuggled cameras. The showing and circulating of these movies was difficult because all the equipment, including a television and a VCR player, had to be carried around. Precisely because it was so difficult, when a showing did take place, people treated it as a festival.

In the 1990s, VCDs began to come into the country from China. VCDs became extremely popular because VCD players were affordable, the disks themselves were easily copied and transported, and survived high humidity. In much of the Kachin region, VCDs allowed ordeary people to see movies for the first time. In addition to pirated Hollywood blockbusters, Jinghpaw producers created original Jinghpaw videos, some of which proved very popular (see fig. 3).

In the early 2000s, the Chinese mobile phone network covered areas of Burma across from the Chinese border. As a result, affordable mobile phone services were available in the periphery of the country far earlier than the central regions. Chinese CDMA networks reached the Kachin areas near the Chinese border, including Myitkyina, by the early 2000s, a full decade before networks were made widely available in Yangon. Mobile phones were also useful for sending messages. Jinghpaw speakers had the advantage of being able to send short messages in their language using even a very basic mobile phone because, unlike the Burmese or Shan, Jinghpaw orthography does not require any special fonts.

The Jinghpaw secular media continues to thrive today despite the ongoing conflict. Looking back at its history, it would be difficult to exaggerate the role played by Protestant evangelism. The series of Jinghpaw Readers are still in use today in modified versions. Baptist churches continue to run summer schools. At the same time, digital technology has radically decentralized media production, allowing journalists, intellectuals, artists, and musicians to work and distribute their products more readily and widely. On YouTube are countless Jinghpaw-language videos ranging from reports on the controversial Myitsone dam to the stand-up comedy of a Baptist pastor.

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Palaung orthographies: writing and the politics of ethnicity in Shan State

During the British colonial period (1885-1948), various Palaung groups used the Shan script to write their languages. Since independence in 1948, these groups have come into more direct contact with the Burmese people and their language, through government and educational institutions. Since the 1960s, the influence of Burmese has become stronger, displacing the older role of the Shan language in Palaung intellectual life. As a result, recent efforts to create Palaung orthographies have followed Burmese models.

Takahiro Kojima

TO READ THIS CHANGE as 'assimilation' may be misleading. Rather, Palaung elites see themselves as making efforts to establish a ‘standardized’ orthography based on the national language, Burmese. Since the political changes in Myanmar in 2010, Palaung leaders have created Palaung textbooks in anticipation of increased local autonomy in education. Wide differences in orthographies for the same language and several orthographic traditions have posed a challenge to creating a single Palaung orthography. The difficulties in these efforts, together with the challenges posed by creating a standard Palaung language from among the varieties, highlight the evolving internal power dynamics of a diverse ethnic group in democratizing Burma.

The Palaung, who call themselves Ta’ang (also ‘Deang’ in China), are an Austronesian subgroup living in Shan State in Burma (Myanmar) and neighboring countries, and form several subgroups. Each subgroup has its own orthography in linguistic diversity. Most subgroups are Theravada Buddhists. When praying, many do in Shan, which they saw as more effective, virtuous, and nicer to listen to. Those praying in Palaung noted being looked down on for using a low-status language.

Palaung groups have made use of a variety of scripts to write their languages. In 1972, a standardized, official Palaung script was adopted in Palaung communities. However, in my fieldwork during 2011-2016 in areas of Shan State where the Palaung languages are spoken, Mandalay and Yangon, some people could not read a word, and others who could read did not want to use the Yon script. ‘Literacy in their local script tends to be higher.

Creating a ‘united’ Palaung script

The Palaung saw a unifying script as a way to unite a Palaung language was a Miss Maclane, an American Christian missionary. As part of a larger phenomenon in colonial Burma, missionaries designed scripts for local languages. Maclane tried to introduce her script in 1912. As Buddhists, the Palaung were not receptive. In the following period, however, many Palaung intellectuals took up the impetus and created writing systems based on Burmese and Shan. These failed to spread to a larger proportion of the population. Nevertheless, the other scripts continued to be used locally. Six Palaung university students formed a committee and created standards. They feared that continuing differences in scripts could split the Palaung people into factions, which could lead to their eventual disappearance. This narrative stresses the importance of unity and the critical role shared orthography could play in promoting it.

Creating an official language for the official script

The script adopted in 1972 is still in use in formal education in northern Shan State and Mandalay. A crucial distinction to the spread of its use was that under the Ne Win regime (1962-1988), no language other than Burmese could be used in government schools. In the 1990s, education for high school graduates gained some momentum. Yet literacy levels in the standard script is still low. Among many Palaung groups, literacy in their local script tends to be higher.

Creating this dictionary

The word is the same among the Palaung and how various groups have coped with this diversity. On-going efforts to revise the script will have to address the continued practice of local communities using their local language and script. Indeed, the creation of an official script is tied to efforts to create a super-regional Palaung language, called (the language of the group). I suggest a reification of ethnic relations, both among the Palaung groups, and externally with the Shan and Burmese.

Racing monk who originally created it did not stop using it himself even after the 1972 conference. One young Palaung working on the promotion of the Shan language today, says, ‘People are aware of the linguistic and social realities which prevent the adoption of a common script. Older people, however, do not want to change the current system because of pride. Currently, the committee members could take suggestions from the people. That way it will be more likely that they will adopt it.’

Starting in 2011, greater autonomy in education has become possible for many Burmese minorities. Palaung have been able to teach their language in government schools after school hours. The new National League for Democracy government, headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, has raised hopes that teaching minority languages as part of the regular government curriculum will be possible. In 2014, members of local organizations, including the Ta’ang Student and Youth Union (TSYU) and the Ta’ang Women’s Organization (TWO), agreed to create a textbook to be used in government schools, with the goal of introduction in 2017. Members of the TSYU, which provides education about human rights and the rule of law, have made it a point to communicate only using Palaung languages in their organization rather than Burmese. They say that it was difficult at first, but that they used each other’s dialects over time. Based on their experience, they came to think it possible to create a standardized language, not just a script.

With the agreement of the Palaung Literature and Culture Committee, they have translated two books into each of the six Palaung languages. Among the advantages of the vocabulary of each language and choose the words common to the most. This list of common words will be the basis of the ‘official’ Palaung language. For example, the word [go] is the same among the Palaung languages, so it will become the official word. This is a straightforward example. Depending on the word, some subgroups may have very little input, even though they had greater control over their language in the past.

The biggest question now is whether the Racing, who are the largest group and already have their own script, will adopt the new official language. My conversations with Racing speakers suggest that while young people may be more used to the idea of a standard language and script, even people older than thirty prefer the Racing based script and the Racing language. One Racing monk in his forties explained that for political reasons, adopting a Burmese-based script in the Racing area would be difficult. The Shan State Army is powerful there, and there are only four government schools among the 104 Palaung villages.

The obstacles on the road to creating a standard script and language suggest the continued importance of small, local Palaung communities, their own connections, and their local writing systems. The response among younger generations has been flexibility. As one Racing speaker said, ‘If the Racing want to keep using their Yon script, they can study it in the monastery and learn the yuhtlohm in the government schools. We don’t want them to stop using the Yon script’.

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The Palaung (or Ta’ang), whose languages belong to the Austroasiatic family, live on mountain slopes and ridges in Shan State, adjacent Yunnan, and northern Thailand. In addition to the Burmese term ‘Palaung’ (perhaps itself connected to Blang and Bulang, names of another Austroasiatic group), insiders and outsiders have used a number of other names to refer to all or some of the Palaung. Besides the names Kojima outlines in his article in this Focus, the Burmese refer to the Samlong as ‘Shwe’ (Burmese for ‘gold’), and the Rucing as ‘Ngwe’ (Burmese for ‘silver’). These terms have their origins in the decorations on women’s clothing. The Rumai are sometimes called ‘Black Palaung’, as the cloth of the women’s dresses is mainly black. In terms of language, these three names also indicate varieties that are not immediately mutually intelligible.

Rachel Weymuth

Language variation

Many Palaung claim they all speak the same language, which they call Ta’ang, and that there is no variation. Such claims reflect ideology more than reality. For the past several years, I have conducted research on the various Palaung languages, making use of both published sources and conducting fieldwork with native speakers in Mandalay, Yangon, and Shan State. ‘Shwe’, Rumai, and Rucing each vary in lexicon and considerably in grammar, and within each group, there is substantial dialectal variation. Given how scattered the Palaung communities are throughout a mountainous area, this is not surprising. The Rucing in particular live at a significant distance from the other groups. To understand just how different the varieties of Palaung are, consider the following sentences, all of which mean, ‘this is not my house’, with the word for ‘house’ in bold letters:

Shwe: ‘Bottla nd’
Rumai: ‘Bottla nd’
Rucing: ‘Bottla nd’

In Rumai, the word ‘bottla’ also exists for house, similar to the other two languages, but speakers think of it as old-fashioned. To think in terms of grammar and structure, each of the sentences translates roughly as ‘this not be house my’. The way speakers make the sentence negative differs slightly in each language. In Shwe and Rucing, speakers put the negation before the verb (ka m’ and ka m’, respectively), but in Rumai, they add another negator after the verb, m`. The sound systems of the languages also differ. Rumai, for example, appears to have a falling tone, at least in some dialects. The other Palaung varieties, like most of the Austroasiatic languages generally, are not tonal.

Most Palaung are multilingual. Traditionally their second language was Shan, but since independence and the introduction of the public school system, Burmese has gained more ground. Multilingualism has led to the influence of the dominant languages into Palaung varieties.

Understanding language variation

Language variation among the Palaung reflects not only physical distance and geographical barriers, but differences in ecological niche and therefore social system. Social hierarchy and elevation are usually inverted in upland Southeast Asia: groups living in the plains or mountain valleys occupy very similar positions in terms of their economies (wet-rice based), religious systems (Buddhism), tending to have complex societies, which have a lower overall status. The geographical location of most Palaung settlements implies a low social status, lower than that of the Shan who live in the valleys and the plains of the mountains.

Edmund Leach, whose name in Burma Studies is associated with the connections between Kachin and Shan groups, had the insight that certain crops are closely associated with ritual and therefore religious orientation. He found that when Kachins, who are an upland people growing dry rice and other upland crops, took up wet-rice agriculture, as is the normal practice among the Shan, those Kachins quickly became embedded in the various rituals and Buddhist practices associated with that economic-ecological niche. Unlike the Kachin, the Palaung are largely Buddhist, but Leach’s insights into what happens among some Kachins may reveal a larger dynamic going on when members of upland societies shift their livelihoods to that of their low(er)-land neighbors.

Most lowland Burmese associate the Palaung with tea cultivation, and indeed, tea has raised the economic level of the Shwe and Rumai to as high as, and sometimes higher than, that of the surrounding Shan. Rucing live at altitudes low enough that they grow less tea, but are able to grow wet rice and more cash crops. The connection between economies, wealth, some kind of social variation and language merit further investigation.

Following the idea of the importance of cultural orientation and connections with Shan models, we find that in Taung Peng, one of the former Shan principalities whose capital is Nam Hsa, Samlong-speaking Palaung leaders (Burmese sawbwa) ruled for about two hundred years until shortly after the independence. The Shwe are highly Shanified and have the highest prestige among the Palaung groups. The Rumai and Rucing, in contrast, have never ruled over anyone else, and have only a headman in each village.

Creating a common Palaung identity

The three Palaung groups I have considered here differ in various ways: in their language, economic niche, where they live, and the level of prestige they have relative to their neighbors. As described elsewhere in this Focus, Palaung elites have tried to create a common script and language. They have also created a common Palaung flag. All of these markers fit in with Burma-wide practices of creating and maintaining an ethnic identity.

Ethnic groups ‘should’ have their own language and script, their own written history, a distinct dress, and numerous distinctive cultural practices. There is a widespread fear among ethnic elites in Burma that they are in danger of disappearing. One aspect of this concern is that a lack of unity will result in disappearance; this is quite similar to the rhetoric of the previous Burmese military government.

We may reflect on the question of the extent to which, historically, ‘the Palaung’ did or did not consider themselves to be connected at all. It is possible that in the ‘ethnicized’ and ‘ethnicizing’ environment of Myanmar today, elite groups feel the pressure to create content to ethnic categories that have been ascribed to them. As among other ethnic groups, Palaung elites, largely Shwe, speak of a struggle of autonomy against Burmese and Shan domination. As in other cases in Burma, it is not clear how far below the elite level these sentiments reach or are being acted upon. Whether these Palaung groups will achieve unity is unclear.

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1. I wish to thank in particular U Naya and all my many informants at Phaung Daw U Monastery in Mandalay, which kindly hosted me and helped me greatly.
PREVIOUS GENERATIONS of scholars wrote that uplanders simply mimicked the more cultured lowlanders when it suited them, but we now understand that uplanders were selective in their adaptations, internalizing and localizing new practices to fit their worldviews. We also find that the cultural exchange went both ways. For example, although we find many Tai words borrowed into Austroasiatic languages, there is a significant list of Austroasiatic words that were also borrowed into Tai languages.

Documenting the Palaung language
Perhaps one of the most important areas of ongoing discovery is the depth of diversity within upland groups. Although Milne writes of ‘the Palaung’, she was well aware of the internal diversity of this group who speak several related languages with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility. Besides her ethnography, Milne also produced major works on the language. Her Elementary Palaung Grammar, printed in Oxford, came out in 1921, followed in 1931 by A Dictionary of English-Palaung and Palaung-English, published in Rangoon. The language she describes is the Palaung as found in Nam Hsan in northern Shan State, whose language the Palaungs call Samlong. As Milne describes in her ethnography, Nam Hsan was the center of Palaung social, economic and political life, with its monasteries, tea plantations and sawbwa’s residence. The last Palaung sawbwa, Kham Pang Cin, represented the Shan states at the Panglong Conference in 1947, where General Aung San and the leaders of the Shans, Kachins and the Shan states at the Panglong Conference in 1947, where General Aung San and the leaders of the Shans, Kachins and the Shan states at the Panglong Conference in 1947, where General Aung San and the leaders of the Shans, Kachins and economic and political position of Nam Hsan provides compelling reasons to place importance on the Samlong language. It also happens that Samlong preserves an older sound system and word structure, while Ruma and the others have undergone a series of sound changes, differentiating them from Samlong. At the same time, aspects of the Samlong sound system gave it an ‘older’ feel, so it is perhaps not surprising that the variety has the status it does.

Milne therefore decided to produce a dictionary based on research on Samlong. Yet she comments, “at the same time, my previous studies among the Ruma were not wasted, as although the pronunciation and even many of the words are different in the various clans – none of which have a written language – yet the construction of all these dialects is the same, and the words, even when they differ, suggest a common origin”. Luckily, Milne included this Rumai material in her dictionary, giving us a glimpse of the diversity of languages she came into contact with during her time with the Palaung. At the back of her Palaung-English dictionary, she adds a section of words from non-Samlong languages, including Rumai, but also languages such as Kyesaw, Kammaw, Tiorai, Omachtaw, Kwawawaw, Hupawaw, Pangnim, and Ho-mau. To give a taste of the diversity she encountered, let us look at the word for ‘day’ (in her own notation), in Samlong /tɔŋ/, in Rumai /tɔŋ/, Ho-Mau /tɔŋ/, Kyma /tɔŋ/, Hupawaw /tɔŋ/, and Kyesaw /tɔŋ/. This information was certainly not wasted, as it provided material for linguists to begin systematic work on reconstructing the ancestor of all the current Palaung languages. Linguistic reconstruction is a comparative process that identifies the regular patterns of sound change in the history of a group of related languages. Through these patterns, linguists can show how the contemporary languages have diverged from the parent language, and propose structural relationships among those languages.

Literacy, diversity and diglossia
Milne offered her work as a first attempt to reduce the Palaung language to writing and analyze it. Hers was not, however, the only effort. As Kojima describes in greater detail, Palaungs themselves had started to write their language using Burmese, Shan and Yon scripts, often in conjunction with Buddhist ritual texts. From the outset of such efforts, the Nam Hsan Palaung have been concerned with standardizing the written language as a strategy for Palaung cultural and political survival within the stronger Shan and Burmese worlds. These efforts at standardization form part of a movement to establish an inclusive Ta’ang identity, one that can take part in the changes and opportunities in contemporary Myanmar. In present-day Myanmar, ethnic groups must assert internal coherence and cohesion, while demonstrating inclusiveness, in order to engage with state institutions.

As part of these efforts to create inclusivity, when the Ta’ang Committee for Literature and Culture published the first Burmese-Palaung dictionary (more accurately Burmese-Ta’ang dictionary) in 2012, they included equivalents in three Palaung languages – Samlong, Rumai and Ruma – for each Burmese entry. The dictionary gives the Palaung words in the Burmese-based Samlong script, which gives some sense of the phonological differences between each. At the same time, however, the script obscures some important differences because it was designed for the Samlong language. The main entries for Samlong were done by native speaker members of the Committee, and the list of words was sent to a similar Rumai literary group in Nam Hkam, who use a similar orthography to represent a language with a slightly different phonological system. The Rumai data was collected by a Nam Hsan scholar, because the literate Ruching use different orthography, similar to the Lonna script. While the dictionary is an important resource, it is important to consider the work done to produce such a dictionary. Here we should recall that the ‘reduction’ of a language to writing, mentioned by Milne in her introduction, is just that: reducing the variety in a real spoken language to an idealized sound system, often preferring words from a dominant dialect or variety. There is also a lexicon of Rumai, glossed in Burmese and English, which calls itself a “Ta’ang dictionary”. This work also calls to a larger Ta’ang identity being constructed in literary terms, but using the orthography to represent features in the Rumai language that do not exist in Samlong. Despite the historical and linguistic logic that supports Samlong claims to legitimacy as a unifying language, the Rumai have also been developing educational materials, and moving to standardize their variety of the language. I recently heard a Samlong-speaking language planner express consternation
at the Rumai efforts, saying they will only make it harder for T`ang literacy to take root in society. Rumai music, however, is popular among young Palaung people, suggesting a possible source of prestige and legitimacy among the upcoming generation of speakers.

A further hurdle facing literacy efforts is that the Samlong language is itself undergoing significant changes. Spoken language is constantly in the natural processes of change. Even as the written language preserves older pronunciations, the language of young people changes. Today, some sounds are being lost. For example, the first syllable of two-syllable words are being reduced, and final consonants are also being lost, or changing. A young speaker of Samlong may pronounce the word kygn (to chat together) as kgn. Similarly, a word like k`brm (to be hungry) might be reduced to kbrm. There are also words that only have a simple k`-syllable, such as k`am (egg). A young writer may pronounce the first syllable the same, and will have a difficult time knowing how to spell the words correctly. When the spoken language diverges from the idealized forms in the written language — or more accurately perhaps, when a written language is based on a form of the language which is much more conservative than that of the majority of speakers — a situation of diglossia, can arise. In situations of diglossia, the difference between written and spoken language is so great that people learning to read and write the language in effect learn another language. Such is the classic case between written Arabic and the spoken varieties.

Changing lingua franca

In the process of studying Palaung, I have been involved in many conversations that move freely between Palaung, Burmese and Shan. These are the pillars of the typical Palaung linguistic repertoire. Many Palaung people are able to use more than one Palaung variety, in addition to Burmese, Shan, Chinese, and even Jinchuang. This type of multilingualism is common among upland groups that find themselves embedded in webs of political, economic and religious influence and opportunity. The Palaung are just one example of the dynamism of multilingualism. When we talk of an area such as the Shan state as being multilingual, we are often talking of a situation where many languages are spoken by groups living in close proximity to each other. More interesting than this, is the fact that local people use more than one language in daily life, making language use choices based on their networks of communication. Without the dynamism implied here, the value of the diversity is often overlooked; worse, with a lack of understanding of dynamic multilingualism, diversity is often seen as a hindrance to social organization.

The social context for these decisions is changing quickly. These changes have to do with increased opportunities for formal education, economic development, the attraction of cities and new connections to regional, national and global communities. Young Palaung commonly speak of two points of change in their language use. The first has to do with their preference for using Burmese with speakers of other Palaung languages. The current generation has usually been educated in Burmese, and tend to have less experience in working out linguistic differences between themselves and speakers of other Palaung varieties. They therefore tend to prefer Burmese as a common language.

The second is the concurrent decline of Shan as a lingua franca among the younger generation. I have observed that with the increased exposure to Burmese, there seems to be an inverse correlation with exposure to Shan. There are many Shan borrowings in Palaung, but competence in the language seems to be in decline. This could be a matter of convenience, but it also likely reflects changing ideas of language prestige. For young Palaung, Burmese is the language of economic opportunity. More and more, they hear of T`ang — together with its written form — as a source of cultural pride.

A calendar and ethnic categories

Early in my study of Rumai, a young speaker taught me the saying, “the Palaung people (khri r`daeg) all eat sour bamboo shoots”. The word khri means ‘descendants’ or ‘relatives’, and represents the idea that there is a large group of people that share a common history, and if we follow from the reference to bamboo shoots, a common social and cultural background. The common folk classification of Palaung sub-groups includes thirteen types of Palaung. For someone who is starting to learn about T`ang and Palaung, the explanation may be a look through a calendar with pictures of traditional Palaung clothing, each with the name of a subgroup. It is probably no coincidence that the number of Palaung subgroups perfectly matches the number of pages in a calendar, plus the cover. The Shan do a similar thing throughout Southeast Asia and in Myanmar in particular; traditional dress often marks ethnic groups, and is considered to be especially useful as a visual cue when criteria such as language are so complex. Societies perceive and express internal diversity in a number of ways — language, dress, ritual, kinship, political and economic relations with other groups, and residential patterns, among others. The Palaung sub-group names on the calendar do not correspond, for the most part, with the language varieties known from linguistic research. The calendar highlights the differences in local and international classification schemes based on different criteria and interests.

The principles involved in linguistic classification offers insights into history. Initial efforts to classify Palaung languages provided a picture of how Palaung subgroups were related. Sound changes may relate to movements of people, language contact, or shifting economic or political conditions. The diversity of the Palaung languages has been a focus of the few, but major, efforts to describe the language. This diversity has also featured greatly in evolving ideas about how to create a unified T`ang community in contemporary Myanmar; that is, a community that can respond as a group to political and economic opportunities.

The more we learn about the Palaungs and their languages, the more complex the linguistic picture becomes, as does the political project of standardization. We also get a better picture of the depth of diversity within ethnic categories that may or may not be officially recognized. The trade-offs between standardization on the one hand and maintaining diversity on the other are delicate, yet critical matters not only for the Palaung, but for other ethnic groups of Myanmar and the region. Elites may try to push forward standardization in a rush to create unity, but in their efforts, alienate and create ill will among those whose languages are left aside.

The creation of dictionaries is essential to the standardization and codification of any language that has aspirations for official use or as a medium of instruction and writing. A dictionary can be a vital source of information about a language, a culture, a people’s history and their knowledge systems. At the same time, a dictionary is emblematic of the political need to reduce diversity in order to engage with official institutions. Minh’s Palaung and Burmese-T`ang dictionaries demonstrate these dynamics. Future dictionaries — be they of a standardized and unified T`ang or of spoken varieties — will highlight the rich diversity of the languages themselves, but will also reflect the difficult decisions made to create them.

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We think of Burma as a country of great linguistic and ethnic diversity. The government today classifies the population into 135 ‘national races’, most of which they place under eight larger overarching categories. The Ethnologue website (www.ethnologue.com), which provides information about languages across the globe, says that there are 117 living languages in the country. This discrepancy points to both differences in classification schemes, but also perhaps highlights an expectation – common at least in the English-speaking world – that language and ethnicity should be nearly co-equal. Since the colonial era, indigenous ways of making sense of identity and community, which may or may not have been based on language, have been overtaken by a practice that the British introduced: equating language first with race, and later, as the idea of race evolved, with ethnic group.

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Hierarchy and contact: re-evaluating the Burmese dialects

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teeth century, and is the origin of such forms as ‘Rangoon’, which in current pronunciation is Yangon. On the other hand, the word for temple or school, written ကျား (kyaung) in Standard Burmese and Rakhaing, but [klj] in Tavoyan. The presence of the ‘Y’ sound in Tavoyan suggests that it preserves a sound that existed in the oldest stages of Burmese, which was first written in the eleventh century AD.

Imagine this kind of change throughout the sound systems, together with differences in vocabulary and a few in syntax (or ‘grammar’). Differences in vocabulary can reflect borrowings from other languages. The Standard Burmese word လောင်း (lar) comes from Bengali lungi, while the Rakhaing word လောင်း is from Malay songi. Other words are simply made up of different native components: ‘boy’ in Standard Burmese is ကြီး (kym), literally ‘animal • little’, compared with Tavoyan k’yy, literally ‘male • little’. Tavoyan စို နှင့် မိုး တွေ့ အော် (thaing yi) also makes an exception as a girl’s name in Standard Burmese. The calque is another mode of more subtle borrowing in which native elements replicate a model from another language. ‘Chili’ in Burmese is သင်္ခြား (thaing yi), literally ‘pepper • fruit’, but Intha စိုတစ် (thaing yi), literally ‘spicy • fruit’, replicates Shan မိုးတစ် (pyai), ‘fruit • spicy’.

Differences in syntax are less numerous. They may include the example of how questions are asked in Intha. For example, ပြောက်ရင် (pra ngi) for ‘what are you doing?’ In Burmese, this would be ပြောက်လုံး (pra ngyi). The final လုံး here indicates a relative question (that is, involving who, what, where, when, who), and may be dropped off in very casual speech in some circumstances. In Intha, however, it appears to be normal to leave it off or even replace it with the သာ, apparently from Shan. The other dialects follow Standard Burmese in this regard.

Changing names, changing identifications?

Dealing with the names of languages, peoples, and what we call ‘ethnonymy’ today is in general highly problematic. The exact content of a term, or the people and situations in which a term is used, can change radically over time. People themselves change names and reinterpret them. One such example in English is the term ‘Dutch’, which refers to the language of the Netherlands but is cognate with the name Germans have for themselves and their language, Deutsch. When dealing with Burmese dialect speakers, we see similar shifts and changes. In Burmese English, today the official name of the country, language and people is မြန်မာ, written မြန်မား. The form အမေရှား, the origin of such terms as Burme and Burmese in English and အမျိုးမျိုး in Burmese English, is from the same root, though a particular sound change. According to interviews I conducted in 2016, Rakhaings call themselves ကျား (kyaung) and their language ကျား (kyaung), literally ‘Rakhaing • language’. Marma call themselves မဟာမာ and their language မဟာမာ. We have already seen how the sound change from ကျား has affected Standard Burmese, so the connection between Marma and Myanmar is immediate and intriguing.

In the nineteenth century, British officials such as Hamilton found that terms like Rakhaing and Nyoopi referred only to local parts of Arakan, and that the people of Arakan used Mroin to refer to themselves. They also used the terms Mroin-grí and Mroin-á. Today, however, they refer only to the Baruas, the Burmese-speaking Buddhist population of what is now Bangladesh.

Tavoyans tend to call themselves သာ, the same as the Standard Burmese name of the ethnic majority, and their language မာနာ (mīn), although sometimes (particularly for ideological reasons), some call themselves မာနာ and their language မာနာ. Inthas call themselves သာဝန် and their language သာဝန်. British sources also use ‘Dawe’ for Intha. Whether this was a local appellation or some kind of classification confusion remains to be investigated. British scholars tried to draw connections between the various dialect speakers. Such variation in names seems to index as much emerging categories as historical and political developments (the rise of nationalism, the political benefits of being an ethnic group), and emerging schemes of knowledge. These last include developing linguistic classifications, and government technologies of governance, starting with British practices and evolving over time, through to the most recent government census of 2014. A final element is no doubt people’s own lived experiences, in which earlier pre-colonial practices, such as having multiple or shifting identities, was possible and normal. One way to understand the shift in the meaning of Mroin-grí is to note that, in what is now Bangladesh, Rakhaings are a Buddhist community with close ties to the highly institutionalized and prestigious Burmese Buddhism. If Buddhist practices were less organized or institutionalized among the Baruas, they would seek training and ordination in Rakhaing institutions, where they would become exposed to the language and thus in a sense ‘become’ a kind of Rakhaing.

Positioning Burmese and its dialects hierarchically

In whatever ways the speakers of these Burmese dialects evaluate themselves, they appear to be at or near the top of the local language hierarchy. Whatever the names for themselves and their languages, dialect speakers tend to have the same status as Burmans in the language ecology. My observation comes out of a body of scholarship on multi-lingualism and language contact. In situations where there is multi-lingualism – people regularly speaking many languages – the overall trend is that who speaks what language, or who does and does not learn a specific language, reflects where speech communities fall on a hierarchy. A corollary of ‘learning up’ is that speakers of lower-placed languages can replicate both matter (usually thought of as ‘borrowings’) and patterns (or ‘syntax’) by reanalyzing native words or forms and using them in the same way as the model language.

Said another way, people tend to learn the languages higher up on the hierarchy and not the other way. Inside Burma, the generally accepted pattern is that one speaks, the lower one is on the hierarchy. Slightly confusing, higher status languages live in lower altitudes – the lowlands and in mountain valleys – and lower status languages speakers live in higher altitudes – the uplands, highlands, and mountains. An example from the Kachin world would be a Mra or Lhuavo speaker, who in earlier pre-colonial practices would not learn Mroin or Burmese and possibly Shan or Chinese. Jinghpaw and Shan speakers would not learn Mroin unless they had family connections. But more rarely learning instead the English and such economically useful languages as Korean or Japanese. Parallels outside of Burma are many, such as Eastern Europeans who learn many western European languages for work and educational purposes but not vice versa.

This trend of speaking and replicating up is a general pattern, and there are important exceptions. The kind of multi-lingualism mentioned here is long-term and stable, and not simply a language shift. Certain populations will learn languages lower on the hierarchy, such as Chinese and other traders who learn many languages to facilitate business. Absolute numbers can make a crucial difference: in some parts of lower Burma, where the Moir are the local majority, some Burmese do in fact learn Moir. Based on what we have observed, in the dialects of Baruas, a Muslim-majority country, the Burmali language stands above Marma and Rakhaing, yet within local Buddhist communities, Rakhaing and Marma are at the bottom. Following this observation, Intha lacks the sound /f/, which represents the influence of Burmese Buddhism, with its great prestige and institutional complexity. The Burmese government in fact indirectly supports Buddhism in Bangladesh, by facilitating movements from there through the monastic study.

Absolute numbers may also help explain the phonological situation in some of the Burmese dialects. Historically, apparently Shan learned Intha but not the other way around, and speakers of Karen languages around Tavoyan learn Tavoyan but not the other way around. When large numbers of speakers speak a higher-status language, they may take with them certain speech habits. If the higher-status language is spoken by a fairly small number of people, the surrounding speech habits may work much monolingually. Following this observation, Intha lacks the sound /f/, having instead /v/, which represents the influence of Shan.

If we look at Tavoyan the lack of the sound /f/ in a Tavoyan sentence corresponds with Standard Burmese, the two are quite close once we understand how older sounds in each variety have shifted in the past. We can offer direct insights into historical and social processes. Linguistic data thus is a form of historical evidence.

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References

1 Numbers throughout are from the Ethnologue website, www.ethnologue.com.

2 In August 2016, I interviewed Danu and Taung’yo speakers near Pindaya in Shan State. Both groups seem to have a distinct sense of identity.

3 Following convention, forms between brackets <> represent transliterations from another alphabet (here Burmese), while forms between slashes / represent sounds.


Below: Women on Tractor, Lis Lale. Image reproduced under a creative common license courtesy of fabulosvils on flickr.

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Ondřej Klimeš. 2015. The Uyghur Discourse

The Salvific Worlds of Kallas
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Amita M. Sanyal. 2016. The Salvific Worlds of Kallas: Religions of the Himalayan Sacred Geography

The Return of the Smallholder
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The Limit of Political Compromise & Technocracy
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Mongolian Film Music
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IIAS Announcements

2017 will be the Leiden Asia Year

All the 2017 Asia-related activities of the University will be brought together on www.leidenasiayear.nl. Additions will be made to the programme over the coming months.

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY, home to IAS, will be dedicating 2017 to Asia. Throughout the ‘Leiden Asia Year’, the university will be organising symposia, conferences, lectures and exhibitions, all on the theme of Asia, in close collaboration with the municipality of Leiden, its museums and other Leiden-based organisations. The Leiden Asia Year was announced by Rector Magnificus Professor Carol Stolker on 5 September 2015, on the occasion of the Opening of the Academic Year.

The Leiden Asia Year has been prompted by the upcoming opening of The Asian Library in 2017. As announced in an earlier issue of The Newsletter, this new facility is currently being built on top of the main building of the Leiden University Libraries, and will bring together under one roof some of the foremost collections in the world, from and about Asia. The Asian Library is one of IAS’s most valued partners in Leiden, as it is the Official Sponsor of the International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS) Book Prize.

IIAS will be organising and participating in a number of activities taking place in Leiden during the Leiden Asia Year. The first that has already been scheduled is the symposium ‘Collecting Asia’, to take place on 17 March 2017. This symposium aims to describe the history of Asian-Leiden connections and to showcase the written (digital) sources and the wealth of material culture present at Leiden University. It will also look at current heritage practices taking place on the Asian continent. Additional events for which dates have been set include the seminar ‘Reflections on India and China in April, to be convened by IIA’s visiting professor Pralay Kanungo, who currently holds the Indian Council for Cultural Relations Chair for the Study of Contemporary India at IAS/IAS (Leiden University Institute for Area Studies); and an afternoon meeting in Leiden, on 12 October, to introduce the academic community to the biennial International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS; co-organised by IAS), whose 11th edition will potentially be organised in Leiden in the summer of 2019 (ICAS 10 will take place in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 20-23 July 2016; www.icas-asia). Plans for other activities are still being developed, and will possibly include a Winter School for PhD students about food and food waste in Asia, to be organised together with Leiden University.

The full-day Grand Opening of The Asian Library is scheduled for 14 September 2017. Different events are being organised for the week of 11 to 17 September. These include a ‘Mapping Asia’ exhibition, an international symposium on the history of cartography featuring old Asian maps, a symposium and exhibition on Asian cuisine and culinary activities, smaller pop-up exhibitions and a range of lectures.

The film hall of The Asian Library will be used for showing short films during the CinemAsia Film Festival.

The considerable efforts involved in the construction of the Asian Library demonstrate how a focus on Asia, going back to almost the beginning of the University in 1575, is as alive today as it ever was. Dutch trading endeavours in the East from the beginning of the 17th century, fortunately, went hand in hand with scientific explorations of Asia’s rich biodiversity driven by the Hortus botanicus Leiden, and later with the systematical study of Asian cultures and societies. Today, this is reflected by the many collections from Asia, including unique manuscripts, rare printed books, letters and other archival materials, as well as by a strong focus on Asia in research and education, not only in the Humanities with its renowned Asian language and cultures programmes, but also in such areas as Law and the (Social) Sciences. Significantly, Leiden is, in addition to IAS, home to a number of other institutes focusing on Asia, including the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the National Museum of Ethnology, and the Siesibod Japam Museum.

The mind envisioned through creativity: Chinese outsider art at the Outsider Art Museum

Guo Haiping strives to raise awareness and interest for the outsider art genre in China. This awareness is giving a voice to a group of people struggling to find their place in society. The artwork being displayed in the Outsider Art Museum is of great significance for both artists and their families, as well as a sign of recognition of their work in the international art world.

Hans Looijen, director of The Dolhuys,
Museum of the Mind & Outsider Art Museum

Prof. Jeroen de Kloet, Director of the Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies, University of Amsterdam

IIAS lecture in the museum

24 November 2016 - 5 June 2017 Outsider Art Museum (OAM), located in the Hermitage Amsterdam. OAM is run by The Dolhuys, Museum of the Mind, situated in Haarlem, a mere 15 minutes from downtown Amsterdam www.outsiderartmuseum.nl; www.hetdolhuys.nl

Above: Current construction of the Asia library at the Leiden University Libraries (Oct 2016)

RECENTLY THE FIRST OUTSIDER ART MUSEUM (OAM) in the Netherlands opened its doors in the Hermitage Amsterdam. This museum shows leading art works by outsider artists from all over the world. Finally there is a permanent podium for ‘invisible’ artists who are not represented in the art world and who create works by following their inner voice. Creativity is at the core of the Outsider Art Museum. When entering the Outsider Art Museum in the Hermitage Amsterdam one is welcomed by art that looks different than anything you encounter in other galleries or museums. Bright colors, edge-to-edge filled drawings and three-dimensional fantasy figures. Passionate and unique expressions give way to the artists’ inner world; their dreams, fears, fascinations and preferences are on display. Looking at the paintings we can see a glimpse of the soul of the artist. Although this is the case for many artists, the fact that these creators do not follow the conformist art rules, gives them free rein.

Notable are the similar themes that emerge in outsider art, regardless of geography and cultural backgrounds. Dreams, fears, nightmares, religion as hope, overwhelming forces and systems with which the artists try to make sense of the world around them, can be detected. Are they in contact with each other? Do they know each other’s work? Not at all. They follow their own voice, and remarkably use a similar expressive language.

Chinese outsider art
This fall the OAM is participating in the first Sino-Dutch exchange exhibition of outsider art. This extraordinary exhibition features multiple artworks by Chinese outsider artists, as well as new pieces from the Dutch outsider art collection. The audience will have the unique opportunity to compare and admire outsider art from these two very different countries.

This international exchange is a joint project of The Dolhuys and the Chinese Federation for Disabled People, with Guo Haiping as curator for the Chinese artwork;
Thanks to four years of EU-funded research exchanges in combination with a series of supporting activities, the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) has developed into one of the most significant and dynamic urban research networks in the world to focus on Asian cities. Growing from its core membership in China, India, Western Europe and the USA, UKNA now includes additional partners in Southeast Asia and ‘Greater China’. Hopefully, a number of other universities in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia will be able to join the UKNA network in the near future as well.

Gien San Tan, IIAS/UKNA

Mike Douglass and UKNA: Envisioning human flourishing in resilient Asian cities

Rituparna Roy

DO YOU LIVE IN AN ASIAN CITY? If yes, then how would you describe it? Is it a Mega City? A Smart City? Eco City? Is it Resilient? Flourishing? Progressive? Is it a Metropolis or a Globoplis? Do all the adjectives above sound similar to you? First assume they are not important criteria separate the definitions – and lived realities – of one from the other. Curious about those criteria? Then the person you must meet is Prof. Mike Douglass – who has engaged with both the theory and practice of urban planning in Asia for more than four decades. Mike Douglass is Professor and Leader of the Asian Urbanisms Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (one of UKNA’s partner institutes), and Professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (National University of Singapore).

In his insightful lecture, Douglass emphasized that it is no longer enough, or even advisable, for Asian cities of the 21st century to be ‘mega’ – what they need instead is ‘resilience’ to tackle the onslaughts of climate change, and the understanding to put ‘human flourishing’ at the heart of the urbanization enterprise.

One of the biggest challenges facing Asian cities today is natural disasters like flooding and earthquakes – and their management. It is even more challenging when it is a ‘compound disaster’, an example would be Japan in 2011 where an earthquake led to a tsunami, which in turn led to a nuclear disaster with long-term devatations. What is most crucial to prevent such tragedies from happening is ‘disaster preparedness’, but unfortunately most Asian cities (including Jakarta, Manila, Phnom Penh, Shanghai, Beijing, Delhi, Mumbai, Colombo, Dhaka and Karachi) are ‘critically unprepared’ in this respect.

When we talk of a 21st century city, the vision that is usually conjured up is that of skyscrapers and New Towns, Malls and Superhighways, with some ‘Mega project’ or other always under construction. In effect, what they have led to is the corporatization of cities; and that, in turn, has resulted in increasing disparities in well-being among citizens and decreasing participatory governance. It has also led to the disappearance of the ‘city’ as we know it. As Saskia Sassen rightly pointed out in her 2015 Guardian article, ‘Who owns our cities?’. “We are witnessing large scale corporate buying of whole pieces of cities. [...]. They raise the density of the city, but they actually de-urbanise it – density is not enough to have a city. If the current, large-scale buying continues, we will lose this type of city-making that has given our cities their cosmopolitanism. One that alters the historic meaning of the city. Such a transformation has deep and significant implications for equity, democracy and rights.”

There’s no gaining the fact that there has been a concerted effort in the last few decades in many Asian cities towards sustainable development. In the recent vogue of ‘Eco Cities’ and ‘Smart Cities’ – the former aiming to live in harmony with, and without damaging the environment; and the latter being basically ‘wired’ cities, seeking to address public issues via ICT-based solutions. The noble intentions notwithstanding, what is missing in the whole enterprise – according to Douglass – is conviviality. Smart Cities are smart and efficient (at least in theory), but they are also automated and anonymous. They lack a sense of community – which is a basic human need. “In human happiness”, as Lisa Peattie reminds us, “creative activity and a sense of community count for at least as much and maybe more than material standard of living.” What is thus required is the conception of cities as Convivial Spaces – surrounded by human scale architecture, with open public spaces, making use of local cultural practice and with scope for vernacular place-making, that is inclusive and allows for spontaneity.

In short, Douglass thinks that the need of the hour is a different model: not merely ‘Sustainable’, but ‘Liveable’ (rather than ‘Economic Growth’) as their core objective. In order to achieve this, Douglass is emphatic that Asian cities should NOT follow the UN ‘Sustainable Development’ model, where Economy, Environment and Society are separate entities that interact at only one point; instead, what should be nurtured is a more holistic approach, where the Economy is seen as embedded in Society, and human Society is seen as an organic part of Nature.

UKNA and the bridging of theory and practice

Many of the problems of urbanization in Asia actually stem from the fact that there is a huge gap between theory and practice when it comes to urban planning. And it is precisely in this respect that Prof. Douglass considers the work of UKNA to be very important and ‘groundbreaking’. It brings together both scholars and practitioners in collaborative research on cities in Asia.

In his words: “There are not many places like it. Interdisciplinary, for one thing. It takes on contemporary issues, not just historical and others. Then there are many, like Paul himself [Paul Rabe, Co-ordinator of UKNA], who like ‘practice’. So, it’s unique. And it’s providing a realm that no other institution is filling. If I look, for example... most Area Studies, if it is in India, it’s about India; if it’s in China, it’s about China. So, they are all very regionally restricted. They are often just pure Humanities, or Social Sciences, and don’t get into any kind of real role actually. And they are not trying to build institutions in other parts of the world. Like UKNA, with double Masters Degrees. So, I think it really needs support. And it’s unfortunate that all of the indicators have to be quantified. Because its impact is much more vast. It is a good idea.”
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- Hai Hong Nguyen
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- Jörg Wachsmann, Bui The Cuong, and Dang Thi Viet Phuong
  Vietnamese Civic Organizations: Supporters of or Obstacles to Further Democratization? Results from an Empirical Survey

- Thiem Hai Bui
  The Influence of Social Media in Vietnam’s Elite Politics

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The Small Grants Program was inaugurated in August 2015. Applications may be submitted to our online application database every year from August 1 to September 15 and March 1 to April 15 of the following year. Full-time faculty may apply for Research Grants, Lecture Series Grants, and Library Acquisition Grants. Full-time faculty and graduate students may apply for Mobility Grants. For further information, please visit our website: http://www.cafk.org/
**Call for applications**

**see [http://iias.asia/summerschool2017](http://iias.asia/summerschool2017)**

**THIS CONFERENCE is the first of a two-part conference.**

*In comparison: Korea and Vietnam in history*, an initiative directed by IAS, and jointly organized by Seoul National University, Asia Centre (Seoul), Vietnam National University (Hanoi), International Institute for Asian Studies (Leiden), Leiden University (Leiden) and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris). The second part, focusing on the contemporary Korean and Vietnamese conditions from 1945 onward, will be held in Korea in the following year.

*Vietnam and Korea as ‘longue durée’* will focus on these two major regional nations and societies in Asia, as great kingdoms in the pre-modern period they developed, sometimes within and sometimes outside of the Sinic ‘tributary’ system, strong political organizations and original civilizations. The vicissitudes of the modern and contemporary periods, first with the experience of colonial subjugation, then inter-national warfare and civil conflicts resulting in division of the two countries’ trajectories. Today, Vietnam and Korea continue to stand at the edge of the two great ideological systems that shaped the twentieth century, socialism and capitalism, yet in a divergent ways – Vietnam being reunified and having entered post-communist pro-capitalist State authoritarianism while Korea remains divided between two models of statehood and governance.

This conference is conceived as an exploratory exercise to identify points of connections in which scholars of Vietnam and Korea could confront their work and engage their paradigms. As an ongoing project historically grounded in contemporary perspective situated within the larger Asia-global spectrum, as well as for practical sake, the conference will focus on two conventionally agreed historiographies of the countries: their ‘pre-modern’ and ‘colonial’ periods. An underlying question the conference aims to address is how the Korean and Vietnamese states and their civil societies, concepts that shaped during the tributary system, became formulated during the modernisation period.

Info and registration: [www.iias.asia/vietnamkorea](http://www.iias.asia/vietnamkorea)

Proposals are no longer being accepted for the conference.

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**Call for applications**

**‘Weaving Knowledge’: Summer School on Lanna weaving & dyeing**

6-23 July 2017; Chiang Mai, Thailand

Sponsored by the Center for Science & Society, Columbia University (USA), Chiang Mai University, IAS, and the Dorothy Borg Foundation.

Co-convener: Nusara Tisngkate, Pamela H. Smith, Anupama Mamiidipudi

THIS TWO-WEEK WORKSHOP aims to engage both the theory and practice of craft knowledge by requiring participants to learn the Lanna techniques of weaving alongside expert weavers, while engaging with the scholarly challenge of making embodied craft knowledge explicit. As the students are trained in crafts by practitioners in a weaving workshop near Chiang Mai, they will discuss concepts such as tact expertise and technological literacy, pedagogy in sensory and material knowledge, innovation and sustainability in traditional technological cultures, with the practitioners, as well as invited scholars and activists in history, anthropology, and sociology from around the world. Set in the rural environment around Chiang Mai, this workshop will bring together three conveners: one historian of science and technology, one weaving/craft expert, and one scholar of development practice in craft, to guide the group of doctoral candidates in reflexive practice – both of weaving and writing.

For more information, see [http://iias.asia/summerschool2017](http://iias.asia/summerschool2017)

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**International MA Double Degree ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia & Europe’**

**IN MARCH AND APRIL THIS YEAR, the final official documents were signed for the establishment of an international Double Degree MA programme in ‘Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe’ initiated by IAS and built upon a series of workshops and conferences organised since 2010, this Double Degree programme involves the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies, the Department of Anthropology of the College of Liberal Arts (National Taiwan University), the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning, College of Engineering (National Taiwan University), and the Graduate School of International Studies (Yonsei University).

Concretely, the Double Degree programme consists of an independent one-year MA course at Leiden University, which, upon completion, is recognised as part of an independent two-year MA programme at one of the Asian partner universities. In this way, students from National Taiwan University and Yonsei University can spend the second year of their two to three year MA studies at Leiden University. Vice versa, graduates of the Leiden University MA programme can choose to do a consecutive second year of heritage studies at one of the three partner institutions in Asia. Upon successful completion of the Double Degree programme, students will have obtained two separate MA degrees, one from their home university and one from the partner institution in Asia. A call for the Double Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, issued by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IAS).

The institutions involved in the Double Degree programme consider Asia as a fertile source of both theoretical and methodological insights in the highly contested area of heritage. Since colonial times, European-based concepts and technical approaches to conservation have dominated the understanding of heritage in Asia, in most cases through the top-down imposition of ideas and practices. This year, the programme focuses on the political and heritage studies in the post-colonial context and in the construction of the heritage, the programme includes the exciting focus on the construction of heritage in the context of the construction of national identity.

The programme focuses on the political and heritage studies in the post-colonial context and the construction of the heritage, and it also forms part of the wider ambition of IAS to study heritage as a means of rethinking relations between Asia and Europe in terms of mutual respect and exchange. The Double Degree is an initiative of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IAS) at Leiden University, which for some years has been promoting the field of critical heritage studies through courses, workshops, conferences, and publications. It also forms part of IAS’s attempt to spread the knowledge of heritage in Asia by establishing a platform for continuing dialogues between universities located in Asia and beyond.

For further information, please contact:

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Dr Jin-Fu Liu, Department of Anthropology of the College of Liberal Arts, National Taiwan University (anthro@ntu.edu.tw).

Prof. Lileng Huang, Graduate Institute of Planning and College of Engineering, National Taiwan University (illeng@ntu.edu.tw).

Dr Kim Souk Woo, Graduate School of International Studies, Yonsei University, South Korea (kassy@yonsei.ac.kr).

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**Dynamic borderlands: livelihoods, communities, & flows**

**5th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network**

12-14 December 2016; Kathmandu, Nepal

**THE 5TH ASIAN BORDERLANDS CONFERENCE in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 12-14 December 2016, is organised by Social Science Baha, the Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN) and the International Institute for Asian Studies (IAS).**

Placing special emphasis on borders and cross-border flows of people and objects that have not been highlighted in previous conferences, conference panels will address questions such as: What new borderland flows, corridors and paths are (or have been) taking shape, and what impacts do they have on livelihoods and communities; How can we use these Asian case studies to rethink social theories of various kinds? Anyone interested in the theme is welcome to attend. Registration is required.

Information and registration: [www.asianborderlands.net](http://www.asianborderlands.net)
IIAS Research and Projects

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 world through the movement of goods, 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 various 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 form of 'south-south' and 'east-west' dialogue models. In principle, any research dealing with Asian global interactions is of interest.

Asian Borderslands Research Network (www.asianborderslands.net)
The Asia in an Initiative for Research on the Study of and Teaching on Asia at 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 mobilisation and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. The ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner. Next conference: Dynamic Borders: Livelihoods, Communities and Health, 14-16 December 2016. Coordinator: Eric de Maaker (maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)
The EPA-research programme is 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 Transformation of China’s Oil Industry: company strategies, embedded projects, and relations with institutions and stakeholders in resource-rich countries (2013-2017). Information on current research projects and outcomes will be regularly posted on the website. EPA 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 Asia, Africa 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 Social Sciences (KNAW), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and IAS.

Coordinators: M. Aminineh, Programme Director EPA-IAAS (m.p.aminineh@iias.nl or m.p.aminineh@ias.nl), Y. Guang, Programme Director EPA-IWASA/CASS
Website: www.iias.nl/research/energy-programme-asia-epa

IIAS Centre for Regulation and Governance in Asia is engaged in innovative and comparative research on the politics of governance and regulation in Asia. The Centre has a particular focus on emerging markets of knowledge. 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. Coordinator: Tak-Wing Ngo

Asian Cities

WITH A SPECIAL EYE on contemporary developments, the Asian Cities cluster aims to explore the longstanding Asian urban ‘traditions’, by exploring the origins of urbanism and urban culture in different parts of Asia and linking the various elements of cities and societie, from ancient to modern (colonial and post-colonial) times. Through an international knowledge-network of experts, cities and research institutions 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, IAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities by transcending beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
Consisting of over 100 researchers with affiliations at 17 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, seeking to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies.

Between April 2012 and April 2016, the staff exchanges within the UKNA network were funded by a grant awarded by the EU. The success of the UKNA network has encouraged the network’s partners to carry on with their joint effort and plans are underway to expand the network and broaden its research agenda. See page 48 of this issue of The Newsletter for more information.

Coordinator: Paul Rabé (p.rabé@iias.nl)
Website: www.ukna.asia

Asian Heritages

THE ASIAN HERITAGES CLUSTER focuses on the uses of culture and cultural heritage practices in Asia. It addresses the diversity of definitions associated with heritage and their implications for social agency. In particular, it explores the notion of heritage as it evolved from an originally European concept primarily associated with architecture and monumental archaeology in order to incorporate a broader diversity of cultural forms and values. This includes the contested assertions of ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ heritages, and the importance of cultural heritage in defining one’s own identity or identities vis-à-vis those of others. It aims to engage with the concepts of ‘authenticity’, ‘national heritage’ and ‘shared heritage’ and issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage. Attention is also given to the engagements of heritages with downward patterns of cultural heritage, where the indigenous peoples draw upon local cultures/heritages, languages, religious practices, crafts and art forms, as well as material vernacular heritage.

International Graduate Double Degree Programme in Critical Heritage Studies
Over the last few years, IAS has been intensively engaged with the Leiden University in Asia Studies and targeted Asian partners, in the development of an international Double Degree programme for graduate students in the field of Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe. To date, the Asian partners involved have been two departments of National Taiwan University and one department of Yonsei University in South Korea, with other possible Asian partner institutes being explored. The programme offers selected students the opportunity to follow a full year study at one of the partner institutes with full credits and a double degree. The curriculum at Leiden University is supported by the IAS Asian Heritage research cluster and benefits from the contributions of Professor Michael Hermsen, coordinator of the programme and Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative of IAS.
Contact: Elena Paskaleva (e.p.paskaleva@hum.leidenuniv.nl) or Willem Vogelsang (w.e.vogelsang@ias.nl)
Website: www.iias.nl/critical-heritage-studies

Indian Medical Heritage Research Network
The Indian Medical Heritage Research Network wants to stimulate social-cultural and social-historical research on Indian medical traditions such as Ayurveda, Unaniitt, Siddha, Yoga and Sowa Rigpa. An additional interest is the international influence 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 collating research findings and other information about India's medical heritage covering diverse perspectives, interests and backgrounds.
Website: www.iias.nl/indianmedicine
Coordinator: Maarten Bode (m.bode@uva.nl)

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

Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World

A four year programme supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) at Leiden University has recently been awarded a four-year grant by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, New York, to facilitate a collaborative platform of commonly Asian, African, East Asian, and North American universities and their local social and cultural partners, for the co-creation of a new humanistic pedagogical model. This follows the successful completion in 2016 of a three-year project (Reframing Asian Studies in a Global Context), supported by the same foundation, to rethink the scholarly practice of area (Asia) studies in today’s global postcolonial context. IAS is grateful to the Mellon Foundation and Leiden University for their continued support.

The new programme titled ‘Humanities across Borders: Asia and Africa in the World’ calls for expanding the scope of the humanities by mobilising knowledge-practices that have largely remained unrepresented in contemporary academia. It will connect a global network of individuals and institutions capable of generating such knowledge-practices and develop alternative pedagogies for teaching, research, and dissemination across disciplinary, national, and institutional borders. The aim is to contribute to the realignment of the social role and mission of institutions of higher learning with regard to the humanistic values that inspired their establishment in the first place.

The objectives of this four-year initiative are: (1) the establishment of a trans-regional consortium of scholars, educators, and institutions committed to innovations in research and education; (2) the establishment of innovative knowledge-practices in four regions – Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and West Africa – to benefit from their comparative potential; (3) the encouragement of university-society linkages and, where possible, their institutionalization in the form of trans-disciplinary centres for testing curricula and pedagogies in partner institutions; (4) the development of a curricular matrix responsive to forms of humanistic knowledge-practices across borders.

Dr Philippe Peccei will direct the overall coordination of this programme. Dr Aart Kwaal will function as its Academic Director and Titia van der Maas will serve as the Programme Coordinator.

In the terms of reference of this new initiative, IAS will continue working with IIAS under this exciting new initiative and look forward to keeping you informed on the progress of this programme through the IAS Newsletter and website.
Along with the research fellows who are attached to one of the IIAS research programmes, the Institute yearly host 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.

**CURRENT FELLows**

**Mehdi Aminieh**
Co-ordinator
*Energy Programme Asia (EPA)*
Domestic and geopolitical challenges to energy security for China and the European Union
1 Sept 2007 – 31 Mar 2007

**Alessandro Battistini**
The ‘Hepaticine Anonymous’, an original[1]? commentary to Ánandavardhana’s Devīśataka (edition and translation)
15 Oct 2016 – 15 Apr 2017

**Somdev Vasudeva**
Sālokānta’s Logic of Aesthetics
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Mar 2017

**Debjani Bhattacharyya**
Hydrologics: Property, law and the urban environment in the Bengal delta.
5 Oct 2016 – 31 Mar 2017

**Lung-hsing Chu**
Meeting in Nagasaki: Rethinking the urbane environment in the late Edo Peri
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

**Prajay Kanungo**
Visiting Professor, India Studies Chair (ECCR)
Indian politics
1 Sept 2013 - 30 June 2017

**Neena Talwar Kanungo**
The arrival of digital democracy in India: Social media and political parties
1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017

**Adam Kแนว**
The kingdom of the imagination: Thailand in world cinema
1 Sept 2016 – 30 June 2017

**Mahmood Kooria**
Malabah in Zanzibar: Asian-African Interactions in the circulation of legal texts across the Indian Ocean
1 Sept 2016 – 28 Feb 2017

**Radu Leca**
Myriad Countries: The Outside World on Historical Maps of Japan
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

**Carola Erika Lorea**
Folklore, religion and diaspora: the migration of oral traditions across and beyond the East Bengal border
1 Sept 2016 – 30 June 2017

**Giacomo Mantovan**
The World on Historical Maps of Japan
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jul 2017

**Sayana Namsaraeva**
Nestled Subjects on the China-Russia-Mongolia border
1 June 2016 – 30 Nov 2016

**Yu QIU**
The Politics of China’s cultural heritage on display: Yin Xu Archaeological Park in the making
1 Sept 2015 – 31 Aug 2016

**Sebastian Schwecke**
Informal monetary markets
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jan 2018

**Yu QIU**
Complicit intimacy: a study of Nigerian-Chinese internet/business partnerships in South China
1 July 2016 – 31 Dec 2016

**Steffen Rimmer**
The Asian origins of global drug control
1 July 2016 – 31 May 2017

**Bal Gopal Shrestha**
Religiosity among the Nepalese Diaspora
1 Jan 2015 – 31 Dec 2017

**Slavena Stancheva**
Informal monetary markets
1 Oct 2016 – 31 Jan 2018

**Emilia Roza Sulek**
The ‘caterpillar fungus boom’ and its socio-economic consequences for Tibetan pastoral society in Golok, Qinghai Province, China
1 Aug 2016 – 31 Dec 2016

**Mayuko Tanabe**
The socio-cultural impact of Japanese-Moroccan cooperation in the fishing industry
1 Jan 2016 – 31 Dec 2016

**Shu-il WANG**
The Politics of China’s cultural heritage on display: Yin Xu Archaeological Park in the making
1 Sept 2015 – 31 Aug 2017

**WHAT ATTRACTED ME to Leiden University and to IIAS were, above all, two major qualities. First, Leiden has shown great interest in scholarship on multiple registers of Asia’s relations with the wider world. The work of my colleagues here explores the local, national, regional and global aspects of historical change. Second, Leiden’s commitment to inter-disciplinarity is as conspicuous as it is gratifying. The energetic pace of international and inter-disciplinary research in conjunction is especially close to my heart. In Leiden, many understand that one country’s perspective just won’t do. The burgeoning internationalization reflected by IIAS extends beyond its walls. I see it also at the Institute of History and the new spate of teachers and scholars in International Studies at the campus in Den Haag. Little wonder, then, that the Times Higher Education ranked Leiden’s Arts and Humanities faculty at the top of European continental universities in 2015.”

Before my arrival from Japan this summer, I was fortunate to have received an international education. I took my B.A. at the University of Konstanz, continued at Yale University, did language studies in China, Taiwan and Japan and received my Ph.D. in international history at Harvard University in 2014. Since then, I have held fellowships at Yale and Oxford and taught at Columbia in an appointment at the university’s only global teaching program. At IAS, I am finishing my first book for Harvard University Press. Based on multi-lingual, archival research in eleven countries, the book recounts the origins of global drug control in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It ranges from the Opium Wars to the League of Nations to explore how social, ideological, economic and political forces created a global regime of oversight that cut straight into the financial interests of all great empires. The results were deep and wide-ranging, from transnational movements to multi-imperial cooperation, the non-governmental foundations of global governance, state compliance in international law and defining features of international public health crises.

In my past research and teaching, I have been fascinated by the Pacific Rim (or “Trans-Pacific” relations) as a largely neglected macro-region. Classic world maps bring the Atlantic Ocean center stage, whereas the Pacific finds itself awkwardly cut in two. Yet, Pearl Harbor is in Hawaii, North Korea projects its nuclear power across the Pacific and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) means what it says. Beyond these examples, the Pacific Rim has historically played a critical role in international society and global politics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Migration, trade, ideas, culture and political tendencies have “flowed” across these waters despite the vast distances involved. Shouldn’t we try to understand why?

Along similar lines, my publications include “Beyond the Call of Duty: Cosmopolitan Education and the Origins of Asian-American Women’s Medicine,” in Asia Pacific in the Age of Globalization, a contribution to the Palgrave Macmillan Transnational History Series, and an article on the Chinese-American-Cuban-Peruvian connections in the “coolie trade”, to appear in the November issue of the Journal of Global History. During my stay at IIAS, I will give talks in Leiden, the UK and possibly Japan. Leiden’s intellectual vitality, collegiality and openness have made my stay a great pleasure. Beyond my stay at IAS, I do hope to find a job in academia that will bring the world, preferably resonating with the themes outlined above.

**Gonda Fellowships for Indologists**
FOR PROMISING YOUNG INDOLOGISTS at the post-doctorate level, it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation, to spend three to six months doing research at IAS. Please send your application to the J. Gonda Foundation by the appropriate deadline below. The J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) supports the scholarly study of Sanskrit, other Indian languages and literature, and Indian cultural history. In addition to enabling Indologists to spend time at IAS, the foundation offers funding for projects or publications in Indology of both researchers and scientific publishers, as well as PhD grants.

Application form: www.knaw.nl/en/awards/subsidies/gonda-fund
Application deadline: 1 April and 1 October every year

**ASC-IIAS Fellowship Programme**
A joint fellowship offered by the African Studies Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies

**This fellowship is intended for researchers specialising in Asian-African interactions. It aims to attract researchers whose work is informed by current theoretical debates in the social sciences and humanities, on global connectivities 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 formal assessment of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations.**

**Application deadline:** 15 March and 15 September each year.
For more information and application form, go to: www.ias.nl/page/asc-iiias-fellowship-programme

**Steffen Rimmer**
Macro-region gone: missing the Pacific Rim

**The Newsletter**
| No. 75 | Autumn 2016 |
Emilia Roza Sulek
Caterpillar fungus boom in Tibet

ARE THERE TIBETAN pastoralists who thrive in China's new economy, and do the stories about the 'ecological resettlement' (see pages 4-5 in this issue) tell the whole truth about Tibet's pastoral society? I wrote my dissertation about such economically successful pastoralists and came to the IIAS to transform it into a book manuscript. In my book, I analyze a regional economic boom based upon the trade in caterpillar fungus, an expensive medicinal resource endemic to the Tibetan plateau. This trade witnessed a gradual rise in popularity after the economic reforms of the 1980s, and in the early 2000s it grew to such a size that it became referred to a 'gold rush'. Wild harvesting and sale of caterpillar fungus became the main source of income for the pastoral communities in regions such as Golok where I conducted my research. This research revealed that the pastoralists not only earn their income from caterpillar fungus, but also use profits to transform their lives and environments in novel ways. In my book, I analyze the complex character of this transformation, ranging from changes in pastoral production to infrastructural investments. The pastoralists, as pictured in this study, appear as active agents of change who use their new-found prosperity to accomplish their own goals. They demonstrate human agency and skills often neglected in studies devoted to Tibetan pastoral societies of China.

IIAS FELLOWSHIPS
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.

Asian Heritages
This cluster focuses on the politics of culture and cultural heritages in Asia. It addresses a variety of definitions associated with cultural heritage and their implications for social agency. In general, the cluster engages with a broad range of concepts and issues related to culture and cultural heritage, and their importance in defining one’s identity vis-à-vis those of others.

Global Asia
The Global Asia cluster 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
The Power and Pleasure of Possessions in Korean Painted Screens

The exhibition The Power and Pleasure of Possessions in Korean Painted Screens explores the genre of Korean still-life painting known as chaekgeori (loosely translated as ‘books and things’). Chaekgeori (Check-ah-ree. 책거리) was one of the most prolific art forms of Korea's Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), and it continues to be used today. It often depicts books and other material commodities as symbolic embodiments of knowledge, power, and social reform. For the first time in the United States, more than twenty screen paintings dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the Joseon dynasty are on view at the Charles B. Wang Center at Stony Brook University in New York.

The exhibition also showcases how this artistic genre has evolved and moved into the twenty-first century. Seven contemporary artists featured in the exhibition are Stephanie S. Lee, Seongmin Ahn, Kyoungtack Hong, Patrick Hughes, Sungja, Young-Shik Kim, and Airan Kang. Initially intended as a means to maintain and promote the distinguished Confucian lifestyle of Joseon Korea against an influx of ideas and technology from abroad, King Jeongjo (1775–1800), r 1776-1800) encouraged court painters to emphasize books as symbols of ideas, inaccessible to sheer quantity and our preconceived notion of their value, yet they simultaneously invite and forbid access to transcendental value or meaning. Books are in the background of our lives, much like in Hong's painting, serving as props for the viewer's eye, yet they simultaneously invite and forbid access.

The exhibition makes similar (yet also differing) commentaries on these themes, using a genre created and promoted expressly to transcend the tangible originals among Korea's artisans and other elites. In the process, the value of physical books actually increased and became highly sought after. The desire for books and other commodities in Korea set in motion a significant social and cultural shift toward materialism that has continued into the twenty-first century. One can say that chaekgeori paintings not only have the ability to teach and inspire, but they also possess the power to shape the values of a society.

One masterpiece in the exhibit serves as a great example of this. The piece in question is a six-panel screen with a distinct rhythmic balance in its composition, depicting a full stack of books and luxurious objects (fig. 1). Chinese curiosities from the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) flooded the homes of the upper classes of Korea during this period, and this is reflected in this screen. Books mingle with scholarly objects (such as imported Chinese ceramics, brushes, paper, eyeglasses, and the like), all competing for prominence of place and the attention of the viewer. Each section elegantly displays scholarly accoutrements and printed collectibles, often in the shape of or featuring images of auspicious symbols. These images together signify the hope for academic achievement, social advancement, longevity, the birth of many sons, and happiness. The screen also utilizes European linear perspective, trompe l’oeil, and shading effects to create the illusion of three-dimensional space.

The flexible yet timeless themes chaekgeori emphasizes and the numerous possibilities and techniques it can utilize have ensured the genre's ongoing popularity, now stretching for more than two centuries. No other genre or medium in Korean art, in both literati and folk painting, has so engaged and documented the image of books and collectable commodities, and the changes in how we view and value them over time. And when the genre transitioned into folk-style painting, new and unexpected visual elements emerged. Folk-style chaekgeori expanded the range of subjects beyond books to express surrealistic dreams and more. For example, an unusual feature of this particular late nineteenth-century screen (fig. 2) is its depiction of clouds and a dragon. The dragon symbolizes the desire for many sons, the wish to educate them, and the hope to have them improve their social status through education. The surrealistic depictions of such earthly desires is a testament to the incredible imagination inherent in folk-style chaekgeori. The exhibition also showcases how this artistic genre has been utilized by today's artists. For example, in Airan Kang's Digital Book Project installation, books glow, catching the viewer's eye, yet they simultaneously invite and forbid access as embodiments of ideas (fig. 3). This aspect of her work can be directly compared to the representation of books in chaekgeori paintings, where books are symbols of ideas, inaccessible objects that ultimately surpass their original, physical meaning and being. In our increasingly paperless and digitized society, Kang depicts books as still holding an inner light, an artistic decision which seems to be an argument against the practice of valuing books solely as material commodities.

In his library series, Kyoungtack Hong paints still-lifes filled to the brim with books, birds, and plants. The results are often surrealistic with materialistic overtones. Whereas in traditional chaekgeori paintings objects take on a privileged aura, in Hong’s paintings the materials of old—Chinese ceramics, fabrics, lacquered boxes—yield to plastics, mass-produced disposable, and impersonal objects. In his Library 3 (fig. 4), thousands of books serve as space defining objects, backgrounds, and pedestals for hundreds of mass-produced toys. These toys, due to sheer quantity and our preconceived notion of their value, are ultimately of little importance. On the left side of the painting, three skulls enter the pictorial space. Symbolizing death, they are a stark contrast to the durable plasticity of the toys, as if to forecast an impending doomsday. On the right side, the Virgin Mary acts as a quintessential (yet also ironic) representation of Western religion, ethics, and humanity. Through these juxtapositions, Hong reminds his viewers that there is more to life than the ownership of uncountable objects, especially when said objects are so empty of any transcendental value or meaning. Books are in the background of our lives, much like in Hong's painting, serving as props for materialism. Using chaekgeori, Hong is able to astutely critique this state of affairs. The other modern artists featured in the exhibition make similar (yet also differing) commentaries on these themes, using a genre created and promoted expressly to combat against materialism.

The significance of any work of art consists largely in the work's ability to carry and communicate embodied meaning. And when it comes to documenting, engaging, and commenting on the culture of consumption, no other genre or medium in Korean art can compare to chaekgeori. By drawing on a long artistic lineage and making comparisons to the traditional form and objectives of chaekgeori with contemporary examples, The Power and Pleasure of Possessions in Korean Painted Screens facilitates a better understanding of the intellectual curiosity and the desire to own commodities that animated Korean society then and that continue to animate us now—and how these powerful urges continue to be portrayed in art.

Jinyoung Jin (Director of Cultural Programs, The Charles B. Wang Center).

Fig. 1: Chaekgeori, the Scholar’s Accumulations. Late eighteenth to early nineteenth-century Korea. Six-panel screen, ink and color on paper. 60"H x 37"W. The Leeson, Samsung Museum of Art.

Fig. 2: Chaekgeori, the Scholar’s Accumulations. Late nineteenth-century Korea. Seven-panel screen, ink & color on paper. 42.9"H x 162.5"W. The Chosun Museum.

Fig. 3: Airan Kang, Digital Book Project: The Luminous Poem, 2011. Custom electronics, LEDs, and revis. Dimension varies.

Fig. 4: Kyoungtack Hong, Library 3, 1995-2001. Oil on canvas. 71"H x 89.5"W.