The Study
Bàu Trúc: The oldest extant pottery village in Vietnam, and possibly Southeast Asia

ICAS 11
Embracing Leiden

The Network
IIAS Photo Contest Award
Beyond the nation? The transnational and its limits

In a context of increasing liberalization and expansion of cross-border flows of human, economic, and intellectual capital, scholarship has moved increasingly towards a questioning of the ‘nation’ as the dominant determinant of history, identity, politics, economics, culture, and social life. Across the academic disciplines, attention has turned to the transnational, focusing on cross-border flows and dynamics that go ‘beyond the nation’. The questioning of the claims of the nation-state might be the trend, but in scholarship or indeed in the structures and thoughts that organize and govern everyday life, leaving the nation behind is often easier said than done.

Ethan Mark

The Focus

Beyond the nation? The transnational and its limits

Guest editor: Ethan Mark

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In this edition of the Focus

The Newsletter is a free periodical published by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS). As well as serving as a forum for scholars to share research, commentary and opinion with colleagues in academia and beyond, The Newsletter is also a window into the Institute. Information about the programmes and activities of IIAS can be found in the Network pages of each issue of The Newsletter.

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) is a global Humanities and Social Sciences Institute and a knowledge exchange platform, based in Leiden, the Netherlands, with programmes that engage Asian and other international partners. IIAS takes a thematic and multi-sectoral approach to the study of Asia and actively involves scholars and experts from different disciplines and regions in its activities. Our current thematic research clusters are ‘Asian Heritages’, ‘Asian Cities’ and ‘Global Asia’.

In this issue

A number of pages in this issue are related to our biennial conference ICAS, which was this year bigger and better than ever! Find a brief (photographic) overview of ICAS 11 on pages 4-7, admire the winning photos of the ICAS photo contest on pages 50-51 (includes a link to all shortlisted photos) and on pages 48-49, enjoy a glimpse into the calligraphy workshops that took place during ICAS 11 at the IIAS offices.

Looking back at ‘Reading Leiden: An Experiential School’ (pp.46-47) is a report of the first Summer School of the Humanities across Borders programme that took place from 11-15 July in Leiden. It was organised for the researchers in the various HaBS projects in West Africa, Asia and South East Asia to experience and test the heuristic pedagogies encouraged by the HaBS programmes by ‘reading’ Leiden, focussing on the neighbourhood, storytelling and craft. IIAS research programmes, networks and other initiatives are described in brief on pages 59-55. Our latest announcements can be found on page 52, and information about the IIAS Fellowship programme can be found on page 53.
Reinventing the academic conference

Philippe Peycam

Two months have passed since the 11th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 11) in Leiden concluded. In the memory of most of the participants I met or talked to it was probably the best ICAS event we have ever organised. A number of novices can be invoked. One of them, which has been repeatedly pointed out, is the particularly smooth organisation, a mark of the outstanding professionalism displayed by the IAS-hosted ICAS team or ‘Secretariat’. It was also the extremely friendly and dedicated team of staff and volunteers, many of them students at Leiden University, who gave a human face to the whole organisation. It was also the beauty of the old city of Leiden and the experience of walking between venues, local cafés and cobblestone streets. Also, the perfect weather: not too cold, not too hot.

Behind this collection of factors, was a number of choices that were made, and the adherence to certain values that inhabited the minds of the organisers. They proved critical, for I consider to be a reinvention of the academic (area studies) conference model.

In the community

It was first the idea of fusing the conference, the university and the city of Leiden into one single experiential thrust. Therefore the entire trajectory of the entire event could take place simultaneously in different venues and spaces, contributed to blurring the lines between academic and public areas or ‘commons’, where citizens move freely.

Associated with this embeddedness is the fact that ICAS events have become platforms on which different modes of intellectual expression and exchanges are allowed; this, in addition to the usual panels enthroned in more prescriptive modes of communication. Of course, panels and roundtables are important, and they constituted the bulk of all the discussions that took place. But there were other modes of interaction: diverse activities and public areas or ‘commons’, where citizens move freely.

This embedding of the conference stresses the civic role of academic pursuit, and that of its designated institutions. ICAS now runs an inclusive space in which different social stakeholders – from academic to cultural institutions, from citizen associations to cities and regions – work hand-in-hand to promote scholarly knowledge in society. It was particularly refreshing to see the 444-year-old Leiden University engage with its societal and urban environments and closely work with the organising partners, IAS and the French Academic Network for Asian Studies (GISA), to serve the large community of scholars and practitioners of the world.

A horizontal model

ICAS 11 in Leiden was a diverse platform in which no group – regional, national, disciplinary – overshadowed another. There was a balanced proportion of participants from Asia, Europe, North America, but also Africa, Latin America, and Russia, representing a wide array of academic disciplines and other forms of knowledge, from visual arts to journalism, social activism, diplomacy and policymaking. The variety of thematically defined events, moreover, rather than disciplinary or regionally-bounded ones, facilitated exchanges between people with different focus or backgrounds.

The ‘horizontal’ model of academic exchange, inclusive of the diversity of actors, did not call for ‘keynote speeches’ or top-down interventions by a handful of pundits who would deliver across the whole event. This diversity of epistemological overarching coherence, what David Lowenthal describes as an elusive quest for the unity of knowledge. It just recognises that no single form of intellectual expression can claim exclusive ownership on knowledge-sharing.

Put together, these qualities contributed to making the ICAS 11 Leiden event a memorable experience for all its participants.

Asia and Europe, Asia in Europe.

One key question for the organisers was how to negotiate the ‘European’ character of ICAS 11 ahead of the new old region trap. With the motto ‘Asia and Europe. Asia in Europe’, our aim was to revisit the relation between the two constructed entities of Asia and Europe by acknowledging their existence while pointing to their own entanglement, hence the ‘in Europe’. The conference touched on multiple sites of human agency in which the two world regions are enmeshed: Transregional migrations, cultural intertwining as a result of past colonial and postcolonial connections, economic and political forms of integration, with for instance the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative.

What we sought to instil in the discussions is the need to problematise those reflexed notions that are Asian and Europe as well as those of the nation-states within them. An acute awareness to history was what allowed the organisers – IAS, Leiden University, and GISA Asia – not to shy away from past legacies. It was the opening speech by Judi Meanson, Dean of the Leiden University College ULC (LUC) in The Hague, who acknowledged the legacy of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia and the need for the youth in the Netherlands to learn about this chapter of their country’s history. Judi organised the ICAS 11 pre-event entitled ‘Asia and Europe: Histories of Entanglement’ including discussions on the experience of young Dutch with Asian backgrounds growing up in a European city environment. There was the Experiential School ‘Reading Leiden’ organised by the IAS Humanities across Borders programme in which young scholars from Asia and Africa dissected the city of Leiden and its multiple Asian and African connections, this with the collaboration of Leiden-based cultural organisations, reversing the trend of western/northern scholars doing their ‘field’ study in the south. Many other initiatives within ICAS contributed to this effort toward the decentering and recentering of Europe vis-à-vis Asia and the world.

All in all, these efforts to blur the lines appeared to have caught the imagination of the participants (as well as other citizens), individuals and institutions, who did not mistake ICAS-Leiden for a European conference on Asia. They saw ICAS 11 as a global knowledge sharing event, with the added value of being situated in one regional cultural setting. In this way, Europe’s relevance in Asia knowledge production was not only stripped of its old tinsels, but it found itself enhanced as a legitimate global centre of knowledge on and with Asia. This may be the enduring legacy of ICAS 11 Leiden.

Philippe Peycam

Director IIAS

Notes
1 The choice of appellations as broad and vague as ‘Europe’ and ‘Asia’ means, moreover, that a multiplicity of centres exist in each of the two regions. The European Alliance for Asian Studies, a platform representing institutions from different parts of Europe including GISA Asia and IAS, played a very active role in ICAS 11.
2 One of the pre-conference meetings organised by the Engaging with Vietnam network named its own event ‘Vietnam and Europe, Europe in Vietnam’, pointing to the hybrid character of both European and Vietnamese notions as a result of many connecting threads woven throughout history.
ICAS 11
Embracing Leiden

Paul van der Velde

The parade led the 2300 ICAS participants to the Hooglandse Kerk where they were welcomed by the sounds of the 17th century church organ, culminating in Beethoven’s Alle Menschen werden Brüder (Ode to Joy). In the church’s luminous atmosphere the opening ceremony played out, in which welcome words and the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) ceremony were interchanged by the musical composition Wind Flow between Asia and Europe in which musician and singer Enkhjargal Dandarvaanchig carried us to the steppes of Mongolia on the waves of his unbelievable tonal register. This special composition by Henri Tournier was one of the contributions of our co-organiser GIS Asie, the French Academic Network for Asian Studies, but certainly not the only one, because for the first time more than two hundred academics from the Francophone world participated at ICAS. We were also happy to welcome a fairly big delegation of Asia scholars from the Russian Federation. Likewise the presence of many colleagues from Africa and Latin America was new. This was partly a result of ICAS’s involvement in the organisation of conferences in those continents, with the University of Ghana, the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, during the past four years. This cooperation also resulted in the foundation of the Africa-Asia Book Prize and the addition of the Spanish/Portuguese edition of the IBP, which had a flying start with no less than 66 submissions. Embedded in a wide variety of cultural events the 950 sessions of ICAS 11 went smoothly, bringing together academics and professionals from 75 countries against the background of Leiden city, which, with the cooperation of the Mayor’s office, was turned into one great big conference space (ICAS 11 programme book: https://tinyurl.com/ICAS11programmebook). Steffen Rimner, president of the IIAS Alumni Association wrote: “I have talked with numerous colleagues all of whom told me just how impressed they were with the conviviality and the unique community brought together throughout the conference”. The conviviality was certainly enhanced by the 120 student volunteers who wisely spent part of their holiday assisting us in creating such a youthful and enthusiastic atmosphere.

When contemplating ICAS 11, I am reminded of Paul Gaugin’s D’où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous? (1897), which shows the embrace of the Pacific culture and people, not as the other but as the human. That’s the direction in which we are moving, no matter where we come from. Join us and find out what and who we are at the next edition of the International Convention of Asia Scholars in Kyoto in 2021.
Left: Setting up the ICAS 11 signage for the day.
Right: Film screening room and attendees.
Below left: Entrance lobby of the Kamerlingh Onnes building.
Below right: Discussions taking place in the ICAS 11 Academic Freedom Space.

“Through ICAS 11 I gained much more connection with scholars from worldwide [...] moreover, the awards winners during the Opening Ceremony motivated me to do my work the best to become like them in the coming future”

Su Sandy Htay
Top: Food market at Pieterskerkplein.
Above: Thomas Voorter and Sonja Zweegers of IIAS at the IIAS exhibition booth.
Far right: IIAS-SASS joint forum at ICAS 11.
Right: Paul van der Velde, ICAS Secretary with Aurèle Varrel, GIS Asia Director.
"I would like to say that you did a fantastic job with ICAS! It was the first conference I ever attended where I thought, "Wow! I am really getting my money’s worth!" I also really appreciated the student volunteers [...] always ready with a smile to direct me in the right direction. Thank you again for all of your hard work in making this ICAS a big success!"

Thomas Patton


Laboring pioneers and pioneers of labor export

The Study

The first batch of Filipino workers in Denmark arrived in the years 1960-1973 and thus prior to the formal institution of ‘labor export’ as a Philippine state policy in 1974. However, some of the Filipino Pioneers, as this generation calls themselves, were already facilitated by labor officials. Tracing their histories complicates and expands the dominant narrative of the emergence of the Philippines as a ‘labor brokering state’.

The Filipino Pioneers

Migration from the Philippines to Denmark has, schematically put, occurred in three major waves. The first arrivals between 1960-1973 – during the so-called ‘guest worker era’ of Europe – called themselves the Filipino Pioneers. This was before the Philippines government formally instituted labor export as a policy, which happened with the adoption of the Labor Code of 1974 under which the Overseas Employment Development Board (OEDB, today Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, POEA) was set up, but for some of the Filipino Pioneers their recruitment was indeed facilitated by labor officials.

I argue that the Labor Code of 1974 was not the beginning of state-managed labor export in the Philippines; rather it was the institutionalization and systematization of state practices that had been ongoing for decades. Furthermore, preparations and experiments with labor export that specifically led to the adoption of the Labor Code of 1974 predated the boost in demand for Filipino labor in the oil-producing countries in the Middle East – a demand which is often cited as the trigger of state-brokered labor export in the Philippines. In fact, until 1976, the OEDB placed more workers in Europe than in the oil-rich Arab countries. Even if the OEDB from 1976 onwards deployed significantly more workers to countries such as Saudi Arabia than to Europe, at the time of preparing and implementing the Labor Code of 1974, it was to countries such as Denmark that Philippine officials supplied labor. Like other ‘guest workers’ in Europe at the time, the Filipino Pioneers were recruited by the manufacturing industry, but primarily they were hired for service jobs. In the case of Denmark, particularly in Copenhagen hotels and Copenhagen Airport.

The second wave of migration from the Philippines to Denmark followed in a moderate but steady flow from the late 1970s to the 1990s. The post-1973 arrivals were largely employed in the same sector, often in the same workplaces, as the Pioneers. Most obtained their residence permits through marriage to Danish citizens or permanent residents, since nearly all other legal options became unavailable with the so-called ‘Immigration stop’ that was adopted in late 1973. The labor offered by the Philippines was still in demand worldwide, despite multiplying obstacles to legal migration.

The third wave of migrants from the Philippines to Denmark began in the late 1990s. The annual number of Philippine citizens entering Denmark rose remarkably from fewer than 200 to more than 2,000 by 2008. This mirrored a general trend in migration from the Philippines to Europe. Between 1999 and 2006 the official numbers of land-based deployed workers to Europe rose from around 15,000 to almost 60,000.1

Immigration stop and continued migration

In both Denmark and the Philippines, the year 1974 constitutes a monument in migration history. The Philippines government adopted the Labor Code that institutionalized labor export as a state policy and laid out the organizational foundations for state-brokering of labor migration. The Danish government conversely implemented new restrictions on immigration, from 1974 new work permits to third-country nationals were formally suspended, and so were work permits for relatives of migrants already employed in Denmark. Nonetheless, by the late 1970s, Denmark was still on the list of countries served by the OEDB. The immigration stop in Denmark and in many other European countries at this point in history – ending an era of active guest worker recruitment by private employers as well as states – was never a ‘stop’ but rather a reconfiguration of migration. Thus, Filipino officials remained active in Europe with ‘marketing missions’ of their new product: labor. As for the Philippine workers who kept arriving in Europe, including Denmark, the reconfiguration of migration through legal restrictions but continued recruitment rendered their laboring lives still more precarious.

Reconstructing the archive

The Filipino Pioneers migrated through a combination of individual initiative, targeted job postings, networks of local agents, systematic recruitment efforts of international hotel chains, chain migration dynamics, and facilitation from Philippine labor officials. One illustrative example of this is the group who became known as ‘The 49ers’. These 49 women were recruited directly in the Philippines at the request of the management of Hotel Scandicavia in Copenhagen – built as a joint venture between Scandinavian Airlines and the American-owned hotel chain Western International. The job interview sessions held in Manila were conducted by the HR manager of the Singaporean Shangri La Hotel – who was a former colleague of the American CEO, Mr. Ellis, who had been hired to run the Danish hotel. Some of the 49 women had been recommended for the job interview by relatives already working in Denmark, some had been tipped by local agents in their villages, and some were referred by the labor officials. When The 49ers left for Copenhagen with one-year contracts as chambermaids in November 1973 – shortly before the Danish immigration stop was adopted – they were accompanied by Ms. Garcia from the Department of Labor in the Philippines (in the group photo, fig. 1, taken prior to departure, Ms. Garcia is sitting next to the Danish staff manager, Axel Christiansen). Not many details of 1960s and 1970s state-managed labor export from the Philippines are provided in existing historical accounts, and many documents from this period have been lost or are inaccessible.

The Philippines Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and the Philippine International Labor Affairs Bureau (ILAB) testify that they either have no or cannot locate the original sources from the enterprise of deploying workers abroad from the time before the late 1990s. Former labor officials who worked with labor export in the 1970s cite a policy of keeping such files for only five years, and thus not really archiving them.

The primary source material found from the 1960s to the 1990s has been scarce and consists primarily of Annual Reports and other published papers from the DOLE/DOLE and the OEDB. Minutes from board meetings, records of training programs, reports from labor

This essay is based on my book Labor Pioneers. Economy, Labor, and Migration in Filipino-Danish Relations, 1950-2015; a story told from the margins about events that changed the global economy, local labor market structures, and urban geographies during the second half of the 20th century.

Through the lives of Filipinas recruited for chambermaid jobs in Copenhagen in the 1960s onwards, the emergence of transnational labor trading is traced. As a framework for understanding the economic, political, and social circuits that the Filipina chambermaids in Denmark became part of – and organized in response to – the architecture of international labor policies is unravelled along with local and transnational trade union strategies, association histories, and emergence of social and religious networks in Denmark, the Philippines, and in-between.

I focus here on the years surrounding the Philippine Labor Code of 1974; on the political visions, the pragmatic practices, and the bureaucratic logics that shaped the Philippine state’s experiences with labor brokerage to the world. The Labor Code of 1974 is widely known and referenced within migration studies, and at the same time its emergence and implementation are understudied and often misinterpreted. By asking questions from the margins of migration history – the recruitment of Filipinas for chambermaid jobs in Copenhagen in the 1960s and 1970s – new insights may be gained.

The Filipino Pioneers

Migration from the Philippines to Denmark was, in the broadest sense, a perfect distraction from confronting problems in the domestic economy, ... they “created the perfect distraction from confronting problems in the domestic economy”.

Fig. 1 (left): Group photo of ‘The 49ers’ prior to departure to Denmark, 1973 (photo by Christina Santos Madsen).
Fig. 2 (below): Filipinos and Danish chambermaids at Hotel Scandicavia, Copenhagen, 1972 (photo by Gitte Købke).
attacks stationed in Europe, or material from ‘marketing missions’ in Europe, for instance, have so far been impossible to locate. The ILAB might in fact have some files dating back to the 1960s, but not ‘organized and recorded’, and it has so far not been possible to gain access to the non-organized part of the archive.

Since the archives of private individuals, of state institutions and civil-society organizations in Denmark and the Philippines only hold fragmented pieces of the history of how labor export emerged as a state policy in the Philippines, much relies on secondary sources and not least oral history. A main part of the empirical material for my inquiry consists of formal interviews and informal conversations with a large number of informants in Denmark and their relatives still residing in the Philippines, trade unionists in Denmark who were engaged in organizing of Filipino workers, and (former) labor officials in the Philippines (primarily those involved in labor export in the 1970s).

Labor as stock, surplus, and export

Prior to the Labor Code of 1976, labor attacks were assigned to locations where Filipinos had for decades been deployed to serve as labor export agents. American military bases, bases in Guam, and the service industries in the Middle East, or material from the Overseas and Fee-charging Employment Agencies Unit was created. During the Vietnam War, Filipino construction workers and technicians were recruited to build and maintain the infrastructure of American military camps and bases in Guam, Thailand, and Vietnam. Among those who went to Vietnam as civilian workers during the war was the mother of Christina Santos Madsen, who later herself maintained the infrastructure of American military camps that were stationed in Bonn, where she also had responsibility for the Scandinavian countries.

State external training programs had also been put in place to facilitate ‘emigration’ within targeted professions. The ‘yearly output’ of this training was monitored by the Department of Labor, which had by then begun to speak about the workforce in terms of ‘stock’, ‘surplus’, and ‘exportation’, and in 1973 noted that foreign employers – including from Denmark – increasingly ‘preferred to hire through the public employment offices’.

Between 1970 and 1973 it was particularly the temporary overseas contract work that expanded, as opposed to prior overseas labor flows of which the majority had been permanent migration. The monthly newsletter Overseas Employment Trends was introduced to analyze the outflow. Many of those who left the Philippines as contract workers ended up re-contracting while abroad; so much so that temporarily became permanent emigrants.

The ties between Denmark and the Philippines were also strengthened during these years. In 1969 the Danish government decided to move its embassy from Stockholm to Stockholm to aid the country, including encouraging economic and medical aid. State external training programs were introduced and actively encouraged foreign workers to come to Denmark. ‘The Philippines sent a large contingent of women, so much so that soon one would encounter Filipinos in “practically every hotel”’.

What changed with the 1970s Labor Code was not the actual endeavor of state engagement in sending workers abroad, but the scale in numbers, the degree of institutionalization, and the political priority given not just to labor export but also to the Department of Labor as such, headed by the influential minister Blas F. Ople. One of President Ferdinand Marcos’s most loyal aides.

The man with the vision

The labor officials who were involved in OEDB in the first years of its existence unanimously point to Ople as the man with the vision of how prominent labor export could become in the Philippine economy. Indeed, Ople got to work on these prospects immediately after taking office in 1967. By 1970, the Philippine state had signed contracts with several African states – in Kenya. Gambia, Ethiopia. and Tanzania – to provide middle- and high-skilled workers for the educational sector, population programs, mining projects, etc., and between 1949 and 1971 Filipinos were deployed to at least 25 different countries, though 80 percent of them still went to Guam or Saigon. When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, many Filipino construction workers followed their employers to construction sites in the Middle East,” and thus the mass deployment of workers from the Philippines to this part of the world was also connected to events outside of domestic Philippine politics, rather than a mere cause or effect of the Labor Code of 1976.

By the summer of 1971, Labor Secretary Ople and his department had worked out an interim set of policies, rules, and regulations for a systematic overseas labor program. This prepared the ground for the first big jump in scale that occurred between 1971 and 1973, when the number of registered contract workers placed abroad went up from a few thousand annually to more than 10,000 in 1972 and more than 36,000 the following year (not counting those who migrated by their own efforts or through private agencies).

Manolo Abella, who worked in the Board of Investments and later Department of Labor in the Marcos administration, describes Labor Secretary Ople as “the one who really saw the larger picture and the looming opportunities in labor export.”

Margarethe Eriksen Ople the freedom to totally reorganize the Labor Department; Ople fired dozens of officials and instead recruited young people who had ‘the potential to make a difference’, and those who would later end up as leaders of the Labor Department. They were leftists, and some of them involved in the resistance against Marcos and Martial Law, but they seized an opportunity to contribute to creating decent jobs for their compatriots. However, most of these jobs would be overseas, and often not that decent.

One of the new recruits was Maria Alecsis Abrera-Mangahas, who became an officer in the Placement Department of the DOLE from its creation in 1971, and from 1978 Deputy Executive Director. ‘Ople was a visionary, I’ve never seen anyone like him before or after. So much was going on at that moment’, says Alecsis Abrera-Mangahas, forty years later. ‘He opened the minds of young people, brought us in and gave us senior positions, trusting our capacities. It was heady, intense, and exciting in those days’, she recalls. Abrera-Mangahas was from the outset what could be called a critical supporter of the ‘labor for migration’ strategy of the Philippine state: “We had to keep asking ourselves: Do we want to shape this thing, or do we want to let it shape itself in a way that we don’t want to stay in? But true enough, it morphed into a huge business.”

The labor officials transforming labor export policies, as a result of several factors, not least a gendered bias in research. For example, male workers have been more visible in the research on migration from the Philippines to the Arabian states than those recruited for the oil-producing Arab states from the mid-1970s – have been paid more than female workers, which is why we often don’t even look at them. In the book Labor Pioneers, these are the state’s successes that are mostly understudied, despite the fact that Europe was the destination of one in every four Filipino temporary migrants of the 1970s and 1980s.

In the case of Denmark, women from the outset made up the majority of migrants from the Philippines to Denmark, and they were first and foremost recruited for a particularly hidden service sector, namely household job. In the 1970s, women were allowed to go unnoticed. In the book Labor Pioneers, these are the state’s successes that are mostly understudied, despite the fact that Europe was the destination of one in every four Filipino temporary migrants of the 1970s and 1980s.

In Europe, from the 1960s onwards, Filipinos were recruited for a particularly hidden service sector, namely household job. In the 1970s, women were allowed to go unnoticed. In the book Labor Pioneers, these are the state’s successes that are mostly understudied, despite the fact that Europe was the destination of one in every four Filipino temporary migrants of the 1970s and 1980s.
Hong Kong Studies in the future continuous tense

On 16 June 2019, Hong Kong caught the world’s attention when reportedly two million people took to the streets to force, among others, the Chief Executive to officially shelf the extradition bill that, as widely believed by Hong Kong people, would jeopardize the ‘one country, two systems’ framework of the Special Administrative Region. Four days before the history-making rally, the government tried pushing through the immensely controversial bill despite heated opposition. Had it not been for the lockdown of the Legislative Council building due to crowds of angry protestors who were brutally dispersed by countless rounds of tear gas and rubber bullets, the bill would have been passed, and the title of this essay might have arguably become Hong Kong Studies in the past tense.

A perfect storm

According to Albert Chen, Cheng Chan Lan (Yee Professor in Constitutional Law at the University of Hong Kong, the attempt to push through the extradition bill that involves a rendition arrangement between Hong Kong and Mainland China, “generated a ‘perfect storm’ in Hong Kong that was completely unnecessary and avoidable.” While I agree that this ‘perfect storm’ was avoidable, I would also argue that more controversies will evolve as Hong Kong has been hopelessly bound by the unprecedented confluence of neoliberal capitalism and state capitalism in the age of China. The conflicts as well as collusion between two capitalisms have generated a persistent storm in the Special Administrative Region. The recent US-China trade dispute, which is not just about trade, may usher in a new era of ‘one world two systems’ global order, and Hong Kong, an inseparable part of China and its window to the world, would be trapped in the eye of the storm. That said, this essay focuses on Hong Kong Studies rather than the extradition saga — and how that will end is still anyone’s guess.

Hong Kong’s increasingly marginalized, minor position, especially after the Umbrella Movement and the subsequent (inaction of Carrie Lam as the new Chief Executive in 2017, has become a predicament as well as condition for the Special Administrative Region. Given the decline, he inaugurated the new Hong Kong administration on the final day of his three-day visit, to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the resumption of Chinese sovereignty, President Xi Jinping addressed the Hong Kong people. (The Times, 2017) It is pertinent for Hong Kong Studies to become a mere part of Guangdong–Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area Studies, it is pertinent for Hong Kong Studies to respond to the Greater Bay Area blueprint.

The Study

Hong Kong–Mainland integration

Whether the plurality of Hong Kong culture and society will disappear or not is a topic that should ask as Beijing and Hong Kong become more proactive in incorporating the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong into the Mainland. Hong Kong was a political concept of the United Nations of Chinese; its own right, edging out from the shadows of China Studies after the Umbrella Movement in 2014. To set the record straight, the Hong Kong Studies Programme, an academic programme that offers B.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. curricula at the University of Hong Kong, was launched in 2013 (not to mention those Hong Kong Studies-related research programmes and centres, such as the Hong Kong Cultural Studies project of The Chinese University of Hong Kong launched in 1993, over the past few decades; more details are available in the study linked below). Some Early Moments in Hong Kong Studies, her keynote address delivered at the First Annual Meeting of the Society for Hong Kong Studies, the desire to understand the distinctive culture of this former British colony seems to still be haunted by the spectre of Orientalism, which continues to shed illuminating light on politically engaged analyses of the changes and social challenges that confront the world today, with far-reaching theoretical implications for related areas. Grossberg believed that culture can be an effective mediator, universal and specific at once, and the new generation of scholars must foster an “open-minded and progressive vanguard of intellectual and political movements to come.” In the Hong Kong context, progressive vanguards cannot but take a step further to consider the “impossibility of Hong Kong Studies in relation to the ‘one world two systems’ global order. It is in this sense that the future continuity of Hong Kong has to be understood.

Imagining a future

As perceptively noted by Arij Dirlik in ‘The Rise of China and the End of the World as We Know It’, the PRC is a rising power in search of a paradigm that may provide an identity not by Hong Kong, but also by others. Its paradigm appeals to others by offering a new international standard of cultural values, and respect only. Because Hong Kong is the place where the impact of the rise of China is most felt, this offers a proactive conceptual and policy platform. The roles of Hong Kong Studies within emerging formations of global modernity with Chinese characteristics would be inevitable. What has made Hong Kong distinctive in the world is not only its role in global capitalism, which is in a sense not genuinely different from other global cities, but also its distinguishing humanities-related aspects. For this reason, the study of the socio-cultural values of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China carries long-term significance for Hong Kong Studies as well as the world. Future research on the inheritance and transmission of Hong Kong culture and its values, as well as the identities and formations of global modernity in the Mainland, is pertinent to the future development of the discipline, which will also contribute a vital dimension to related fields such as China Studies and Asian Studies.

As such, Hong Kong Studies can and will continue to shed illuminating light on politically engaged analyses of the changes and social challenges that confront the world today, with far-reaching theoretical implications for related areas. Grossberg believed that culture can be an effective mediator, universal and specific at once, and the new generation of scholars must foster an “open-minded and progressive vanguard of intellectual and political movements to come.” In the Hong Kong context, progressive vanguards cannot but take a step further to consider the “impossibility of Hong Kong Studies in relation to the ‘one world two systems’ global order. It is in this sense that the future continuity of Hong Kong has to be understood.

Notes

3. crushes anti-extradition bill on 4 September 2019, there is still no obvious end in sight. Given the highly volatile situation, the difficulty faced by critics is that their works will almost always be outdated before publication. Without a crystal ball, it is not possible to speculate how the worst chaos in Hong Kong’s history will end, and it is beyond the scope of this short essay to examine the civil unrest in detail. That said, I decided to keep the original version and just added this postscript, which is not intended to be a review of developments that have occurred since the essay was written, but rather a footnote to underpin the importance of Hong Kong as well as its vulnerable situation in the new global order.
4. Yiu-Wei Chu is Inaugural Professor and Director of the Hong Kong Studies Programme at The University of Hong Kong. His research focuses on postcolonialism, globalization and Hong Kong culture. Latest publications include Hong Kong Cantasop: A Connie Mating (2017), Hong Kong Culture and Society in the New Millennium: Hong Kong as Method (ed) (2017), Found in Transition: Hong Kong Studies in the Age of China (2018), Hong Kong Keywords (ed; in Chinese) (2019) 見解香港之字典.
5. Back in the 1990s, people might have thought Hong Kong would be able to change China; in the 2000s, China has changed Hong Kong (but not by Hong Kong), if not become, the world, Hong Kong must rethink its future in this special context. Inspired by Lawrence Grossberg’s Cultural Studies in the Future Tense, which offers “a modest proposal for future formations of cultural studies”, I would use this essay as a prolegomenon to explore the future work of Hong Kong Studies. For the future of Cultural Studies, Grossberg highlighted the importance of going beyond the established Eurocentric border. Hong Kong Studies, trapped in the ‘perfect storm’ mentioned above, must be inscribed between Eurocentric and Sinocentric borders.

Postscript

Since the writing of this essay in early July 2019, a series of traumatic events have happened in Hong Kong during the summer of protests. At certain junctures people were deeply worried that the uniqueness of the Special Administrative Region would vanish. Despite Carrie Lam’s formal withdrawal of the extradition bill on 9 September 2019, there is still no obvious end in sight. Given the highly volatile situation, the difficulty faced by critics is that their works will almost always be outdated before publication. Without a crystal ball, it is not possible to speculate how the worst chaos in Hong Kong’s history will end, and it is beyond the scope of this short essay to examine the civil unrest in detail. That said, I decided to keep the original version and just added this postscript, which is not intended to be a review of developments that have occurred since the essay was written, but rather a footnote to underpin the importance of Hong Kong as well as its vulnerable situation in the new global order.

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The Olympics: a matter of international communication

The Olympic Games are considered to be the foremost international sports competition, with more than 200 nations participating. For the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic Games, an estimated 20 million overseas tourists will visit Japan and thousands will attend Olympic events, with an already confirmed US$3 billion in domestic sponsorship revenue, 3.5 million tickets already sold, and an expected total additional revenue of US$5.6 billion. To maximise opportunities for economic growth and internationalisation, Japan is preparing to provide the best visitor experience to guests from all over the world, including specialist sports and general assistance interpretation services, ensuring that everyone can communicate and enjoy their visit, no matter the language they speak.

According to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics organising committee, more than 35,000 volunteers and professional interpreters will be on site to offer language assistance, and the Nara Institute of Science and Technology researchers are working on a tag-free interpretation system and app to instantaneously translate the games.

Whether performed entirely by humans or mediated by AI technologies, interpretation will play a major role in a variety of Olympic settings, with interpreters drilling their skills to connect visitors and residents and save them from the potential chaos of language barriers.

Interpreting the past and the future of the Tokyo Olympics

The practice theory turn in social research has produced abundant studies of the world as being populated by ‘practices’: routine actions and behaviours that are meaningful to people in their localities and composed of different elements, such as bodily and mental activities, material artefacts, personal knowledge, emotions, skills, and so on. There is a wide set of scholarly literature on the history of interpreting, including economic histories of organisations, work, and markets as practices in the Western World, but there is hardly any study on interpreting practices in the Japanese context, that is, on the ways in which work can be investigated as an interconnected flux of experiences, competence, materiality, and emotionality. My work aims at partially filling this gap and investigates the innovation in the language industry in Japan, with a focus on the profession of interpreting, exploring dynamics, performances, and organisations of mediated communication services in terms of expertise and market relations.

When I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo, I had just developed a socio-historical perspective on the genealogy of the language industry in Japan; as I was particularly interested in how the professional practices of interpreting emerged, was perpetuated, and changed in the context of the neoliberal Japanese market and society.

In view of regressions. Now an integral part of international society and economy, interpreting was only recognised as a profession after the Second World War, when the Nuremberg Trials (1945-1946) in Germany and the Tokyo Military Tribunal for the Far East (1946-1948) in Japan were held, both of which involved war criminals in the presence of the Allies. A number of interpreters, found mainly amongst multilingual diplomatic and army personnel, were appointed to translate in real-time the trial proceedings to eleven different country representatives and to hundreds of legal professionals and spectators, getting to grips with a technique never used before, that of ‘simultaneous interpretation’.

The technique was made possible by technological innovations, with interpreters working in isolated ‘booths’ and connected through a cable system of headphones and microphones. The tribunals enforced professional norms of neutral, accurate rendition and of invisible positioning, so that the interpreter’s role was shaped as that of an interlocutor ensuring trust and communication between all parties without any intrusion. Institutionalised by the First United Nations General Assembly in 1946, interpreting became part of international multi-linguistic proceedings, and recognised as a stable entity. Through the involvement of local practitioners, interpreting was then officially made a profession by a process of circulation and integration that set up its codes of practice, ethical norms, associations, and training.

However, it was at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics that interpreting in Japan gained real nationwide recognition through a government decision to appoint interpreters, and captured the interest of public and media alike as a way of representing Japan as an internationalised and cosmopolitan presence worldwide by multilingual individuals. Whilst I was in Japan connecting with interpreters, journalists, and organisations for data collection, I met two retired professionals who had worked at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In her interview, one of the informants, 76-year-old ‘Mariko’ recalled: ‘Japan’s government and the Olympic organising committee had appointed junior and senior university students with knowledge of English. Almost nobody was able to speak English at the time (laughs) and they had very hard time recruiting interpreters. During and after the Olympics everybody got interested in interpreting, people wondered how it was possible to do it, what magic sticks led behind interpretation’. Mariko was an exception, having picked up English in her childhood thanks to her father, who spoke it and pushed her to learn it. When I conducted my interviewing, one of the informants, 75-year-old ‘Mizue’ stated instead: ‘They appointed me to work for the Olympics and the Paralympics. We did training for one year, and a teacher came from the US – the training was every Saturday, sometimes held at the Japanese Red Cross. We took a lot of conversation classes, to practice spoken English and get a chance to do some basic interpreting, because we seldom had chances to speak with native people. It was also a very informative experience, a lot of cultural information provided about countries and sports. I remember that I also was in charge of the “international club”, and assisted and translated for many people who were visiting Japan from overseas for the event’.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics celebrated Japan’s re-emergence and progress on the world stage as an open, economically progressive, and technologically advanced country. The event also braced for another kind of competition: for the hearts and minds of people, a cultural and ideological one. Japan intended to capitalise on its role as host of the most prestigious global sporting event to reposition itself as a ‘new’ Japan, one that integrated its history, culture, and traditions with the modern and global. The Olympics helped Japan to create new waves (and awes) of demand in the Japanese labour market and society.

Few events bring the world together like the Olympic Games. With preparations for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in full swing, Japan is also bracing for another kind of competition: securing interpreters for the games. Ever since its election, Japan has been taking advantage of its role as host of the most prestigious global sport event to reshape its multilingual communication and international interaction industry, and in providing increased access to language services and facilitate interactions between Japanese and foreign sportspeople, dignitaries, officials, and tourists.

Notes

1. https://tinyurl.com/togbudget
2. https://tinyurl.com/togbudget
3. Nicolini, ibid.
5. Nicolini, ibid.
11. Nicolini, ibid.
15. Nicolini, ibid.
17. Nicolini, ibid.
18. Nicolini, ibid.
Bàu Trúc: The oldest extant pottery village in Vietnam, and possibly Southeast Asia

Palei Hamu Craok – mostly referred to by its Vietnamese name Bàu Trúc – is a small village in the town of Phước Dân (Ninh Phước District, Ninh Thuận province, Central Vietnam), internationally known for its production of pottery. The sale of traditional ceramics, including agricultural products, cookware, and even children’s toys, brings busloads of tourists to the village every year. Little is known about the traditional methods of the production process, how locals understand the genres of production, and the belief systems that have been integral to the process for the past several hundred years.

Bàu Trúc is a short motorcycle ride from Phan Rang-Tháp Chàm city, in Central Vietnam, just 9 KM to the south, off National Highway 1A. It would be easy to miss it were it not for the occasional tourist bus. Today, the settlement lies in two of Phước Dân town’s quarters: the 7th and the 12th Quarter. As per statistical measures in 2018, enough people (nearly 3000) reside in the 7th Quarter town’s quarters: the 7th and the 12th Quarter. The characteristics of the area are very similar to many other Cham villages and towns in Ninh Thuận province. There are few large old-growth trees, while rice fields are plentiful, with thanks to irrigation networks. Such settlements are associated with matrilinealism and families living close to one another are generally from the same kinship network. After death, remains are interred in an old grave site, known as a kut. Currently, there are 13 clan groups and each clan has 50 to 60 families. Families tend to own land collectively, sharing rights and obligations, and are thus also responsible for the standard upkeep of the ancestral grave sites and shrines associated with their clan. Houses are built according to customary regulations (a dat) regarding the positioning of the buildings. Within a single family complex, there may be several structures, including a song ye (customary house), one or two song mayau (two-story houses), a song tua (guest house), one or two song gar (one-story, horizontal house), and a song ging (kitchen). Each development also contains a well to the east and a vegetable garden in the southeast. From 2005 through the present, however, such traditionally oriented housing developments have begun to disappear. New houses tend to follow Vietnamese adaptations of European modernist architecture.

Spirit of the place: a divine inspiration for pottery

Although the origins of Palei Hamu Craok are shrouded in history, contemporary residents generally have a common understanding of their past. Most trace their lineages to an ancestral deity: Po Klaong Can, Po Klaong Can was a mandarin of Po Klaong Gara – a king of the Champa civilization who ruled the vicinity from 1151-1205 CE. Po Klaong Can helped the villagers of the area to run out enemy armies and brought them to settle in a new area: Hamu Craok. He also showed them a clay pit and taught them about pottery. Consequentially, locals deified him as ‘the God of Pottery’ and built a temple for him. They built the temple (Danakâ Po Klaong Can) in the center of the village field (tambok min). In 1967, they moved it from the old village [palei kal] to a new location 2 km east of the new settlement (f. 1964). In 2014, the new temple was damaged by weather and the community raised funds to reconstruct the structure. The current building (10×8m) is supported by three trusses, which stretch across two rooms, with the main temple door facing east. The inner sanctum (3x8m) includes the main shrine, which features a stone linga-yoni altar (0.5m tall) with the face of Po Klaong Can on the linga aspect. A second smaller stone altar (0.1m tall), just to the left, features the god’s wife, Nai Hai Halang Tabang Mîh (‘Po Nà’ colloquially). On the right-hand side of the entrance to the temple a small nandin statue represents the steed of Shiva. These statues were repurposed from a 9th-century temple burned by a ‘Jawa army’ in nearby Phước Hậu commune. However, they only came into the current residents’ possession in 1967.

Traditional Cham pottery methods, inspired by Po Klaong Can’s teachings, have consistently been dependent on natural forces, relying upon the proper balance of wind, sun, and rain. Hence, the popular belief that weather events and spiritual forces connected to the weather have a direct impact on successful production. Divine forces in Cham religions have the power to punish or bless an individual, family, or whole community. Thus, some potters even make small offerings of rice wine, eggs, betel nuts, fruit, rice cakes, and other gifts for daily offerings at household shrines. They also prepare more complex, lavish gifts of rice, cakes, soup, bread, fruit, rice wine, eggs, chickens, flowers, and goats to offer at the temple four times annually for ‘The Opening of the Temple’ (Páh mbàng yäng) in the first month of the Cham calendar, the ‘Fire-god Ceremony’ [Yuer yang] during the fourth month of the Cham calendar, the Katê ceremony during the seventh month of
Traditional Cham pottery methods [...] have been dependent on natural balance of wind, sun, and rain.

The Cham calendar, and the ‘Godness Ritual’ [Ca-mrub] during the ninth month of the Cham calendar. While these four holidays are performed at many similar shrines and temple sites, for Palai Hamu Craok their meaning is localized: the goal of preserving the sacred knowledge of pottery production is a central aim to each. The religious rituals additionally serve as a reminder that younger generations must uphold the profession, remaining grateful to the minds and hands that came before them.

The Newsletter

Above: Artisans work the clay predominantly by hand. They use only the most simple tools.

traditional methods, such as a big bamboo loop used to curve the glossy raw clay [kaduk], a small cloth used to smooth the surface of the clay when wet [tanaik], and a comb used to create wave patterns [tanaik]. The tools are used variously in four stages. The first is creating the primory form [pading goak], wherein the clay is shaped into a ‘pumpkin’ [kadiuk] and then set upon a clay ‘mound’ [tauk jaka]. Starting at the base of the kadiuk, the potter uses their hands to create the circular ceramic piece [20-30cm high]. Next, the potter expands the shape, connecting the wall and working the sides upwards. They use the kadiuk all the way around their hand and gently touch it to water before rubbing the body of the piece over and over, to roll across the mouth of the piece, creating a ball-shaped or cupped mouth, with a standing rib, around the whole outside of the piece. In the third stage, decorative motifs are added [nap buing hao]. The potter might use another piece of clay, possibly an edge or area of a piece that was broken off, and add it to the piece as a new motif.

Notes


From colonial enforcers to the oligarch’s soldiers

Under Spanish rule, Philippine military forces wielded despotic power over society on behalf of foreign overlords. Armed service overseas served Spanish colonial, rather than domestic proto-national, concerns. The mercenary character of Philippine troops disengaged them from indigenous communities. Subalterns viewed soldiers with deep suspicion, whereas soldiers themselves remained reliant on the privileges granted by alien political elites. American rule developed, but did not fundamentally alter, this coercive structure. Filipinos Scout and Constabulary units projected power through society more effectively than their Spanish-era predecessors, yet they remained an internal army geared toward domestic repression.1 American policymakers handed off this revamped security apparatus to their Filipino charges as they indigenous the colonial state. Oligarchic elites directed army units towards external defense during the Commonwealth era (1935-1942), while retaining the Constabulary for internal security. However, social upheavals generated under Japanese occupation precipitated an embedded agrarian insurgency that necessitated a military shift towards counterinsurgency. Special operations coupled with civic action programs aimed at winning hearts and minds made the AFP a more visible presence in postwar Philippine society. Soldiers protected oligarchs from leftist movements and derived substantial benefits from continuing American assistance. President Ferdinand Marcos spent his first term in office (1965-1969) cultivating military support for his creeping authoritarian takeover, including state support to key units and senior commanders. Having tasted power, the AFP supported the imposition of martial law in 1972 as a means to expand its prerogatives and influence.

Praetorian politicization and network expansion

As the most autonomous element of the Marcos regime, the Philippine defense establishment derived lasting benefits from authoritarian rule. Increased budgets, weapons procurements, illicit rackets, and the formation of militias enriched and empowered the military to a point where it could no longer be controlled. The AFP maintained separate linkages with the United States, an imperial benefactor that could provide vast quantities of supranational patronage. Marcos managed to evade his kin and cronies with huge wealth while keeping most of them loyal. He could not, however, prevent senior military officials from carving out autonomous means to enrich. Defending these means ultimately came before defending the regime.

Authoritative rule promised extensive socioeconomic development, but only ended up exposing resource-rich provinces to a new layer of plunderers. Regime predation was particularly virulent in the Visayas and eastern Mindanao. These cronies-run zones became epicenters of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army (CPP-NPA) insurgency. Consequently, cronies allowed military units to partake in their fiefdoms’ illicit economies in exchange for praetorian protection. Marcos’s corruption of the military ultimately expanded praetorian political networks beyond his control. While an officer’s commission brought great social prestige to men of humble means, it seldom led to great wealth. This changed under martial law. Budgetary increases and slush funds obtained from the United States in return for sending civic action troops to Vietnam garnered the loyalty of senior officers. Personnel expanded exponentially. The AFP grew from a force of 35 thousand in the late 1960s to over 113 thousand in 1976.2 Military liaison officers inserted into corporations became the main points of contact for foreign investors. They received percentages and kickbacks in exchange for facilitating contracts. Personnel expansion and provincial counterinsurgency allowed the AFP to embed its predatory practices across the archipelago. Insurgencies put a premium on military protection and corporations regularly paid off commanders to provide security. Senior officers also engaged in smuggling, extortion, and black market weapons sales. Ending hostilities would only cut into profit margins. As a result, counterinsurgencies became institutionalized. Giving the military a vested interest in seeing conflicts continue made them very difficult to end. Civilians in insurgent zones were subjected to strategic hamlet programs, sexual violence, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Militia units of the Civilian Home Defense Forces committed some of the worst abuses. These praetorians worked in tandem with local commanders, providing a force multiplier and plausible deniability for atrocities brought to light by church and human rights groups. Most infractions were initially confined to fringe areas. In the mid-1970s, 85% of the military’s combat troops were based in Muslim regions. After 1980, the CPP-NPA insurgency gained traction as some operations ran much of the Visayas and eastern Mindanao into the ground. This compelled Marcos to widen the swath of territory subject to military repression. By 1984, 50% of the AFP was deployed to Christian areas of Mindanao, including most of its special forces.3 More and more Filipinos were exposed to AFP brutality and criminality over time.

AFP linkages with the United States predated and circumvented the Marcos regime. From 1950 to 1976, 16 thousand Filipino servicemen received training in American military schools and academies. This consolidated transnational connections between the two defense establishments and gave Washington valuable intelligence on Philippine military developments. American strategic priorities for the AFP shifted as the 1970s progressed. A gradual rapprochement with the People’s Republic of China altered the AFP’s remit from external defense to internal security. Vietnam-era surplus weaponry, most of it designed for counterinsurgency, was sold in increasing quantities to the Philippines. These newfound capabilities helped contain Muslim separatist aspirations, but they also raised civilian casualties. Furthermore, escalating state violence against leftist groups only increased popular support for the CPP-NPA.

The praetorian network

Civilian politicians hoping to remain in power have to accommodate extraconstitutional praetorian interests.
In addition to facilitating predatory enrichment, counterinsurgency campaigns created deep divisions between senior and junior ranks. Recent graduates from the prestigious Philippine Military Academy were not always welcomed by their more senior colleagues, and the use of force against civilians turned violent. They faced recognizable conditions in combat zones as well-connected communist guerrillas sought to access their own pockets. Having experienced severe deprivation, junior officers felt entitled to demands that would allow them to secure their own positions in the Philippine society. By 1985, the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) had emerged to issue an open challenge to the Marcos regime. Made up of junior officers with common complaints about the support of defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Constabulary chief Fidel Ramos. The Enrile and Ramos network, which had formed in the mid-1970s, was a key to institutionalize counterinsurgencies that provided rents, weapons, and plunder.

The AFP managed to reconstruct most of its power by 1986. The military armed and encouraged antigovernment groups to fragment the regime that corroded state institutions into a praetorian network power. The AFP commanders transferred vigilantes and a communist victory would mean losing the bases had drawn sharp drawn sharp national political groups who claimed that the Philippines was now in neo-colonial American oppression, a charge not so much as a political weapon as a conservative alternative to fighting the War on Terror as a pretext to reconstruc...
The military's role in Indonesia's democracy

After the political reforms in the late 1990s, the Indonesian military notably started to redefine its role in non-defense-related activities. Some active generals began to express their aspirations to participate in the non-military realm of politics, which generally involves less transparency, accountability and oversight than the military institution. The question arises, to what extent can the Indonesian democratic system control the undermilitary features displayed by the military and its officers?

The Study

Military and politics

Can the Indonesian democratic system keep the undemocratic military in check?

S
dexclusively in the national level and respect human rights in conflict areas.

and social life, nor to assure that TNI carry out roles of the military, were neither able to curb

The reforms, which dismantled active political

activities unless they retire from active service. However, this requirement does not stop TNI political aspirations, since

right cases in Papua in which the military

there are no internal or external instruments to control such ambitions. The situation is

in the highlands where many

Indigenous Papuans. As I observed during

endure for the majority of indigenous Papuans,

earlier, the TNI and its security approach

The military's presence in West Papua has drawn a public backlash from

Papuans since the area became part of Indonesia in 1969 have drawn a public backlash from

Papuans. The

rights cases in Papua in which the military

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Papua as the remaining battlefield

Another military reform agenda concerns the military's presence in West Papua. Over

years, the TNI and its security approach

have created more problems than solutions, particularly related to the human rights of

military reform agenda as it does not avert the reemergence of

The military

continue to act with impunity in Papua.

shooting in 2014. All of which reflect how the

military continues to act with impunity in Papua.

relevant political controls to contain the

political aspirations of senior military officers jeopardizes democratic principles.5

soldiers will most likely show no political will to resume the stalled military reform, as, in its second term, he still relies heavily on retired generals. And Indonesian democracy will

still strive not to avert the reemergence of the New Order, but to force the military, an

underdemocratic institution, to follow democratic rules and principles.

Notes


4. Hipolitus Yolisandry Ringgi Wangge researcher at the Marthinus Academy Jakarta, conducted fieldwork in December 2018 to August 2019 in Papua. hipolitusringgi@gmail.com

5. Hipolitus Yolisandry Ringgi Wangge

6. The Study


The Newsletter
No. 84  Autumn 2019

The intimate domestic labor of female service has long been a defining feature of upper-middle and upper-class households; what has changed are the transnational and national dimensions, the social and bureaucratic ritualizations, and the political-economic import of that labor.

Joining the Philippines, Indonesia has become one of the main domestic labor supply states globally, particularly since the 2004 passage of the ‘National Law on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers Overseas,’ which created large-scale labor emigration as part of the country’s development plans. While the framework of state-sanctioned labor export is broad, the reality is fairly narrow: until 2010, between 60–80 per cent of all emigrating laborers were Indonesian women in domestic service (p. 5). This phenomenon is marked by its intimate dimensions – madam-maid relationships and close cohabitation – but, as Olivia Killias’s anthropological study shows us, it is also part of a large scale, transnational, and bureaucratic process. It is the process and infrastructure of care migration that Killias carefully studies. Hardly can work be a woman’s issue, it is also assumed that a service (p. 5). This phenomenon is marked by its intimate dimensions – madam-maid relationships and close cohabitation – but, as Olivia Killias’s anthropological study shows us, it is also part of a large scale, transnational, and bureaucratic process. It is the process and infrastructure of care migration that Killias carefully studies. Hardly can work be a woman’s issue, it is also assumed that a

Southeast Asian workers enjoying their day off by playing frisbee, Hong Kong. Image reproduced under a Creative Commons Licence courtesy ‘Istelheteho’ on Wikipedia.

Nicole Cuilijnij Abasiz

The Review

Follow the Maid

Reviewed title:
Follow the Maid: Domestic Worker Migration in and from Indonesia

Copenhagen: NIAS Press
ISBN 978-87-7694-227-7

A component of contemporary ‘ workaround that Saskia Sassen has called “the return of the serving classes,” (Sassen 2000: 510) though in Southeast Asia I struggle to locate an era from which they ‘returned’. The intimate domestic labor of female service has long been a defining feature of upper-middle and upper-class households; what has changed are the transnational and national dimensions, the social and bureaucratic ritualizations, and the political-economic import of that labor.

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Note:
1 That proportion has since decreased due to an Indonesian moratorium on sending domestic workers to Saudi Arabia, one of the largest global markets, and an attempt by the Indonesian government to reduce non-domestic labor emigration. However, they have placed renewed focus on it, in which the ‘pre-modern,’ ‘slave-like’ arrangement is said to shape contemporary 'legacy of 'pre-modern,' 'slave-like' arrangement is said to shape contemporary

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Joining the Philippines, Indonesia has become one of the main domestic labor supply states globally, particularly since the 2004 passage of the ‘National Law on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers Overseas,’ which created large-scale labor emigration as part of the country’s development plans. While the framework of state-sanctioned labor export is broad, the reality is fairly narrow: until 2010, between 60–80 per cent of all emigrating laborers were Indonesian women in domestic service (p. 5). This phenomenon is marked by its intimate dimensions – madam-maid relationships and close cohabitation – but, as Olivia Killias’s anthropological study shows us, it is also part of a large scale, transnational, and bureaucratic process. It is the process and infrastructure of care migration that Killias carefully studies. Hardly can work be a woman’s issue, it is also assumed that a
Mongolia's critical placement, in the enveloping grip of Russia and China, has long been a source of discord and challenge, as much intellectual as military or political. The attraction of the Soviet Union followed that country's revolution to those who wished to develop Mongolia as a more modern and progressive nation, in part because of its influence on China and Russia. Seeking to prove themselves in 21st-century discussions concerning science and technology, in financial investment and mining, Mongolia again finds itself as a quiet but important player in the Asian political landscape. But this policy somewhat, of course, beside its significance on the world stage at key moments over the last eight centuries, and it is upon a deeper understanding of this significance that the essays in How Mongolia Matters are focused.

How Mongolia Matters, in fact, is a Festschrift for Morris Rossabi, who has contributed greatly to scholarship geared towards exploring Mongolia's history through recourse to original documents and to painstaking multi-perspective research. In his introduction, Rossabi bemoans the mythology which 'enshrouds' Mongolia's historical scholarship, and rightly claims that 'the overturning of these myths is essential if an accurate portrayal of the role of the Mongols and Inner Asians in history is to be produced' (p. 20). The 10 essays which make up this book, indeed, seek to overturn some of these myths through focusing on specific aspects of Mongolia's history, from (roughly) the Chinghizid period to its current democratic post-Soviet incarnation. They range in theme from the Tumu Incident of 1449, in which the Qirats captured the Ming Emperor (in Chapter 1 by Johan Elverskog), to post-Soviet Mongolia as a nuclear-free zone (in Chapter 10 by Jargalsaikhan Enkhsookh), from the Mongols' efforts to prevent a rider's legendary horse, Chinghis Khan, from flying the flag (in Chapter 8 by Pamela Kyle Crossley) to the influence of the Mongols upon jurisprudence and legal systems (in Chapter 6 by Bettina Binge). The breadth and depth of the scholarly heritage here is such that this volume could provide an interested reader with a good overview of the contribution of the Mongols to the development of Asian and Eurasian societies.

Two papers in particular caught my eye. The first, by David Gilmour, analyses the Manchu, Mongol, and Tibetan translation of, in Millward's most abstract clarification (p. 25), 'not so much...what the ancient Chinese meant as what the Qing Court meant when it used the Chinese term huairou yuanren (懷柔遠人) during the Qianlong period. As someone who works with these three languages, but not with Chinese, I was struck by Millward's insightful and creative use of these translations to explore the way in which the Qing translators rendered the already ambiguous idea of huairou yuanren in equally ambiguous terms, employing 'similar ambiguities between soft and hard, specifically between induced or spontaneous to achieving the accommodation of these people [the Mongols, Tibetans and Manchus] from farthest away' (p. 31). While I would quibble that perhaps, for the Qing, the Manchu language during the Qianlong was not especially distinguishable from geographical or religiously, as Millward is suggesting, his point about the powerful effects of translation is well made. If support is needed for the value and suitability of New Qing History, and for the focusing on the documentary, historiographical and linguistic study of the Qing from the viewpoint of sources in languages other than Chinese, and from actors other than the Han, then this short article offers precisely that.

The second essay which I wish to discuss is Yulia Ochir's 'Modern Origins of Chinggis Khan Worship', which revisits the theories concerning of Chinggis Khan's place during the turbulent decades of the 20th century is to be understood. Though she modestly refers to 'the minor but tangible evidence' (p. 154) which she has unearthed in support of the fact that, in Inner Mongolia during the 1990s, Inner Mongolian Chinggis Khan, and that ordinary Mongolians were more focus on Tibetan Buddhism than on Chinggis Khan. Ochir's promotion of the 800th anniversary of Chinggis Khan in 1962—catalyzed by his own experience, whilst hospitalized in China, of preparations for that country's own impending commemoration of Chinggis Khan's birth, which was likewise focused on image management. In his promotion of the form of postcards, stamps and public celebrations, more research is needed to determine the extent of how the image was promoted and manipulated on both sides of the Mongol–China border during this period. In his introduction, Millward argues that imagery was developed and manipulated in recent years. Certainly, in my own realm of modern Mongolian literature, there is great thematic and stylistic variation to be explored in literary works about Chinggis Khan written after 1990, and this is clearly replicated in the use of his image in advertising the arts and culture and, of course, in politics. Kanagawa's contribution, then, is a most welcome stimulus to further study of this important aspect of the social and political machinations which form the hub around which this collection revolves—a subject which continues to be ambiguous, if only slightly, outside the box' (p. 69). Would that the full potential of these ideas, their far from even ambiguous idea of huairou yuanren (懷柔遠人), could be appreciated.

The examination of the American–Thai relationship during the Cold War mainly focuses on the military forces, but points of discussion which are not clearly presented in this book. Sino-Thai relations became much clearer after 1978, following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. The critical moment of the Cambodian–Vietnamese War led Thailand to come out of its Cold War isolation. However, for its 'deep analytical insight spanning out in persuasive, accessible prose and always favoring an approach that looks, if only slightly, outside the box' (p. 69). Would that the full potential of these ideas, their far from ambiguous idea of huairou yuanren (懷柔遠人), could be appreciated.

This book shines a useful light on Thailand's foreign relations since the end of the second World War. Benjamin Zawacki creates a great contribution to the study of Thailand's triangular relationship with the United States and China, examining the way in which Thailand could situate itself among greater powers. The book presents a succinct and well-informed analysis and investigation on Thailand's efforts to maintain, balance and bandwagon positions with greater powers. The author argues that at the end of the Cold War the United States became a choice for Thailand to strengthen its relationship with, China has risen in power during the 21st century and, as a result, the relationship with China has also been a fundamental concern of Thailand.

In earlier stage from the commencement of the Vietnam War in the 1950s, Thailand's relationship with Washington was close, particularly in terms of helping to maintain regional peace and security. However, after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, Thai allies shifted their foreign policy behavior towards China. The United States seemed to disregard the increasing power vacuum in its relationship with Thailand. The re-emergence of China's engagement with Thai diplomatic relations has been generally welcomed among Thais. This has provided a new mechanism of economic cooperation between the two countries.

The book has been divided into two parts, consisting of 10 chapters. Zawacki chronologically examines the evolution of Thailand shifting positions between the United States and China over the course of time. Thailand was selected by Zawacki as a single case study, and has presented as a well-written piece of work, adopting a content analysis approach. The deeply rhetorical descriptions illustrate the challenging positions that Thailand has had since the end of the Second World War.

The author focuses in the first part of the book examining the historical events of Thai diplomacy and its relationship with the United States and China, from the early post-war period in 1945 up to Thailand's election in 2001 in which Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was victorious. In the second part, the author examines Thailand's triangular relationship with the United States and China from 2001 to 2014.

This new book on examining the historical events of Thai diplomacy, relations with the United States and China, and the strategic implications for Thailand and the Asia-Pacific region has presented his own work. In conclusion, to support is needed for the value and suitability of New Qing History, and for the focusing on the documentary, historiographical and linguistic study of the Qing from the viewpoint of sources in languages other than Chinese, and from actors other than the Han, then this short article offers precisely that.

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A Friendly Disposition and Orderly Demeanour
Sources and Resources on the Japanese Treaty Ports

Ian Rapley

In the second part, Zawacki scrutinizes major characteristics of the triangular relationship between Thailand, the United States and China, from Thaksin’s period to the military government in 2006. During Prime Minister Thaksin’s term (2001–2006), Thailand received strong support from the US and China, from Thaksin’s professional life in the UK’s Foreign & Commonwealth Office took him far beyond the subject of his doctoral research, but his fascination with the site of modern Japan (at least in the English language) than their importance in the second half of the 19th century might suggest. In the UK, the figures best known for their work on the subject have tended to occupy positions outside conventional university research posts (such as Hoare, that other great British scholar-diplomat, Hugh Cortazzi, or the writer Pat Barr, for example) and much of the higher profile work on them has tended to be more pedagogical in approach than usual research monographs (e.g. John Dower’s at MIT Visualizing Culture), or has focused on making available primary material (Fred Nottehelfer’s Japan Through American Eyes, Routledge, 2000). This is, again, not to denigrate the value of the material that has been produced – quite the opposite: it is to argue that the discipline as a whole has tended to overlook research on a subject of considerable importance and interest. Indeed, these volumes suggest to me that, in the wake of global and transnational turns, the time is right to place the history of the treaty ports back into the heart of the field. The extensive introduction lays out the history of Hoare’s research and the making of the collection, as well as a brief history of the ports’ establishment and lifespan. I think it notable, however, that relatively little space is devoted to consideration of the analytic significance of the material and the subject: for example, why are the treaty ports important, what are the pressing questions about them and their inhabitants, and what does this body of material as a whole tell us? Perhaps, after a lifetime working on the topic, the answers to these questions are so self-evident as to not require consideration, but I would suggest that they are the sort of things that we should be considering more explicitly as we continue to research the treaty ports of Japan.

in economic cooperation, including defense – offering the benefit of cheaper weapons. Even though their relationship was that of the United States in military cooperation continued, China–Thailand military ties progressively improved. As China–Vietnam hegemony had expanded over the United States in the Straits of Malacca, Indian Ocean and South China Sea, China and Thailand took a new opportunity to extend its alliance. The strategic cooperation therefore led Thailand to have discussions about economic diplomacy with China. Thailand has, indeed, changed its position much over the last decade, focusing on the shift in triangular relations. These shift pathways, however, tend to focus on the way in which Thailand deals with two great powers – the United States and China – in its economic diplomacy. The author’s work is richly descriptive and provides great fluency and timing in an elegant and original work. I highly recommended this book as an example for in progress: Douglas Howland, Simon Partner, and Steven Livings among others, have recently produced work on the ways in which they were administered. The treaty ports were a complex topic, and admit multiple perspectives, as revealed by the different approaches in this collection and the more recent researchers’ work. On the one hand, states and China in terms of economic competitiveness, both bilaterally and regionally. The 2008 financial crisis that emerged in the United States Limited the opportunity to drive the idea of a free trade area in the Asia Pacific region. The opportunity of economic growth in Asia was given to China. Thailand seemed that the construction and layout of the ports merits examination and interpretation. The ports were also home to a wide range of inhabitants: representatives of the Western Powers, of course, but also Japanese and other Asians (notably a large number of Chinese labourers, something highlighted by an essay in Volume One by Hoare himself, as well as more recent work by Eric Hobsbawm). What is more, the Western residents comprised a mix, too: diplomats, traders, soldiers, sailors, missionaries, and, increasingly, ‘globetrotters’ passing through. In handling this mix, new models such as Mary-Louise Pratt’s idea of the ‘contact zone’ and the school of ‘new diplomatic history’ seem ideally placed to bring new insights to bear on the topic. Reading this collection, then, is a reminder of the significance of the treaty ports, the value of the study of the ports, and the potential for applying new insights and methods.

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Cardiff University, United Kingdom


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While Thailand enjoyed itself with Beijing’s economic ties, Thai–US relations visibly
India, Modernity, and the Great Divergence

Reviewed title: India, Modernity, and the Great Divergence: Mysore and Gujarat (17th to 19th C.)
Leiden: Brill. ISBN 978004330788

Kaveh Yazdani's India, Modernity, and the Great Divergence: Mysore and Gujarat is a thorough account of the social, political, economic, and technological innovations in Mysore and Gujarat during the period of inquiry. From the breadth of material and sources covered by the author it is a remarkable resource for examining the processes through which Mysore and Gujarat developed during this critical moment of the colonial encounter.

Kaveh Yazdani's book covers a wide range of materials largely because of his approach to periodization (to which I will return and devote the bulk of this review); however, this approach at times becomes burdensome for the reader because of the book's organization. The book is very large by contemporary monograph standards, an imposing 669 pages. This is divided into only an introduction and four chapters, one of which is the epilogue. The material on Mysore and Gujarat is divided into two massive chapters that make up the bulk of the book, 266 and 194 pages respectively. These chapters are subdivided into sections with further subsections and conclusions, but the overall argument and narrative are too easily lost amongst the many details and directions. Readers who are familiar with some of Yazdani's other publications should not expect the same succinct argumentation, but for the reader willing to put in the time and effort there are many things they will discover of great value throughout its pages.

India, Modernity, and the Great Divergence takes as its primary premise that historical periodization is flawed. This critique resonates with almost anyone who is working on historical issues, especially through a World History lens. Particularly, Yazdani's topic aligns with the periodization of modernity, which is at the center of his study. For the author, the rise of modernity is not a process that unfolds over a long period of time over several 'historical stages and encompassed a number of core regions within Afro-Eurasia and beyond the 16th century, also the Americas' (p. 23). He explains following the work of Sanjay Subramaniam that modernity slowly develops over a long process of transition. He continues by defining modernity:

To give a very condensed and abbreviated definition, it can be suggested that, in a very broad outline, modernity radically transformed the economic, social, political, judicial, military, epistemological, cognitive and techno-scientific structures of society, as well as the basis of energy consumption. Significantly, human social relations and the relationship between humans and nature, humans and society and humans and God/Gods were transformed in a way unknown to 'pre-modern' humans (p. 23).

With this definition Yazdani attempts to provide a 'holistic' approach to modernity that will help us to understand the long process of transformation better than a 're-periodization' that either emphasizes socio-economic, political or epistemological facets (p. 23). Basing his approach on a definition of modernity he deems to be 'holistic', the author sees modernity everywhere and far before most people date early modernity. Therefore, Yazdani creates a new periodization scheme in which modernity is contrasted to the ancient. "Indeed, modernity undergirds the old and substitutes ancient forms with new ones, despite the continuity of an array of persistent traditional elements" (p. 23). In this new periodization scheme that he proposes, modernity is pushed back in time to a new early modernity that could be called 'nascent or budding modernity' between the 10th and 15th centuries (see p. 35 fn. 88 and 89 for other scholars who have taken similar approaches). Next comes 'mid-modernity' that existed from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, which led to 'late modernity'.

While admiring Yazdani's attempt to rethink periodization, he ultimately undermines his own broader point about the transitionary process of modernity and a holistic approach by reifying periodization. Periodization can be a helpful heuristic to help historians think through broader trends, but periodization cannot be so rigidly defined. Especially if one considers the multiple and manifold processes of change that develop at different places and at different times and in different forms for each of these aspects that Yazdani identifies in his definition of modernity and in this study. Certainly, if one looks hard enough there will be some elements associated with modernity that extend farther than the 10th century; however, the author rigidly fixes the earliest form of modernity in the 10th century. I am of the opinion that tracing back the advent of modernity to a period before the 10th century seriously undermines its analytical utility (p. 35 fn. 88). Logically, then Yazdani is falling into the same traps as those he critiques who do not sufficiently acknowledge the significance of the era preceding 1500 in the formation of modernity (p. 36). So, why fix a date at all?

Why not allow for the ambiguity that exists in the development of any of the ideas, economic structures, and technological advances that are discussed? The rigidity of the dating mechanism employed throughout this book's chapter becomes even more perplexing for this reader when in the conclusion to the chapter the author states: "I am afraid that I admire the attempt by Yazdani to rethink periodization because it is always fraught with reductionist flaws for which he critiqued other scholars, just with different dates in brackets (i.e. the discussion in the epilogue regarding the transition from ‘mid-modernity’ to ‘late modernity’ closely resembles other writings that have called the same period ‘early modernity’)."

To conclude this review, however, I must say that I admire the attempt by Yazdani to rethink periodization because it is always fraught with reductionist flaws for which he critiqued other scholars, just with different dates in brackets (i.e. the discussion in the epilogue regarding the transition from ‘mid-modernity’ to ‘late modernity’ closely resembles other writings that have called the same period ‘early modernity’).

Thai in Vitro

Reviewed title: Thai In Vitro: Gender, Culture and Assisted Reproduction
Andrea Whittaker. 2015.

Thai in Vitro was born in 1987, less than a decade after the first success had been made in the United States. The technology and its rapid expansion in Thailand has been portrayed as a sign of modernity and Thai excellence. Thai in vitro is a study of assisted reproduction in Thailand but yet so much more. Like an onion, the authors skillfully peel away the layers of gender, culture, kinship, class, spirituality and even nationalism that are involved in the quest to fulfill the wish for children. Throughout the nine chapters of this book, the reader clearly hears the voices of the men and women in treatment as well as the practitioners, including doctors, nurses and technical staff. It is these voices that guide us through a journey of assisted reproduction in Thailand.

Childlessness (chapter 2) in Thailand is a state of incompleteness. Upon marriage, couples are expected to have children as soon as possible. Children are not only desired in Thai society. They cement the relationship between the parents and carry on the family name. The inability to have children is most often blamed on women who are perceived as not trying hard enough or even being bad people whose karma is not good enough for a child to want to be born. The pressure to have children...
Cochin forests and the British techno-ecological imperialism in India


Why and how the book should have done more

The main story emerges through five short chapters, the most important of which outline 1) colonial forest policies in Cochin, 2) the creation of the tram, and 3) the aggressive tactics through which the British maintained control of the area forests through 1903, despite local resistance. The data for these sections is rich and Joseph pulls out important strings that resonates through the later story of rapacious colonial enterprises globally. Unfortunately, the nugget of data he mines regarding the Cochin forests – how British practices of forest exploitation are not sufficiently connected to those elsewhere in the tropics. In the two chapters, on 1) historiography and theoretical positions, and 2) colonial policy antecedents, are thin and Joseph merely present the scope of scholarship on environmental history and colonial interventions in the new ‘developing’ world. Despite claiming to take a ‘global world systems’ theoretical approach (pp. 31-38), this entails little more than noting the importance of the British Empire as an ‘exceptional global ecological moment in world history, and the transformation of natural systems into legible colonial spaces’ (p. 27). It is a slim volume and beyond deepening the theoretical and historical context mentioned above, the presentation would have benefited from at least two more chapters. The first would discuss the British railroad project in India, which had strong implications for the Cochin tram and also for colonial extractivist projects globally. The second would deepen the discussion about British forestry in India to include a discussion of British colonial forestry in other colonial regions and colonial forestry practices in general. These are key issues. For an experienced reader, the volume more successful constructs a world that is not adequately situates that contribution in the larger field of scholarship critiquing colonial extraction and gives an incomplete picture. Critique, theoretical and intellectual shortcomings

The only glaring concern with the overall treatment is the author’s insistence that the pre-colonial doctors had a ‘sacral healing outlook’ that evolved in an ‘eco-sensitive’, through which the ‘administration of the forest wealth did not collide with the interests of the people’ (p. 37). This is unfortunate. There is scant evidence provided for his conclusion that the pre-colonial doctors claimed the same vision in this to text. It is in fact unlikely that all people benefited equally from the pre-colonial state. The evidence provided in this volume is quite clearly (although not explicitly noted by the author) that colonial policies mirrored contemporary ones in which wealth is redefined and its extraction and conservation areas are more important as archival material than                                  actual practice. The conclusions in the introduction and World Bank documents reveal similar policies for conservation and caretaking in colonial contexts. It is clear that previous states were any more less or more rapacious than current ones – although suggesting as much is a common legitimizing trope. The writings this out in colonial histories that vilify the pre- colonial states to justify their interests into forest policy. While it is possible that early laws were actually unfair of the unknowable power of the colonial powers, the new regulations reasserts control over the interestingly dubbed Anthropocene – but, there is no evidence to suggest that pre-colonial records show conservation and caretaking of the population are any more true than the colonial documents claiming the same. It is not likely that pre-colonial states took as much as they could, and left much behind. Despite the author’s contributions to our understanding of forest exploitation, it is clear that previous states, is a useful addition to our growing arsenal of data against colonial abuses and the environmental destruction caused by state formations, present and past.

Andrea Whittaker, The Review

The Newsletter No. 84 Autumn 2019

Courtney Work

Erasmus University, The Netherlands

Courtney Work
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Peter Admirand

Reviewed title: The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China
New York: Columbia University Press
ISBN 9780231705046

How much, if any, the children, too, can be blamed, is obviously a complicated and messy question, though human rights lawyers and leaders generally focus on rehabilitating such children, most pronounced, for example, in Ishmael Beah’s bestseller, A Long Way Gone (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007). At what point, though, do child victims-turned-perpetrators become responsible for the choices they make as adults? And, how can those persecuted by totalitarian regimes grow up to then support the same regimes that caused their families so much suffering? Such accounts for the divided, or fractionalized identities and memories, that play a big part in Yang’s text.

You reap what you sow
Mao unleashed the furere of the Red Guards through his support of youth gangs in the 1960s (Yang also credits municipal and party leaders, p. 30), and used them until they were becoming too threatening of his own rule and aims. Once Mao expressed his disaffection, as Yang writes: ‘The Red Guard movement was crushed in various failed uprisings. The rest those that learned this, were themselves crushed in various failed uprisings. The rest that once corrupted and sent them to prison, came to a dramatic end on July 28, 1968’ (p. 93). Then followed the zhailing (sent-down youth) movement, where urban kids in the millions, many who were (once) devoted Red Guards, were sent down to live in the countryside with the peasants, to learn true communist ideology. It also minimized their urban impact and relieved pressure on urban unemployment. For most of these youth, hard lessons were learned, and with it, a sense of disillusionment. Many sought return (legally or illegally) back to the cities, and years later come to regret their lost years of education while the next generation seemed more prepared and employable. With time, they also looked back at this period with rose-tinted nostalgia: an example of the fractionalized memories Yang highlights.

Many of the contemporary Chinese communist leaders also experienced hardship during that time, like current President Xi Jinping. His family had members persecuted during the Cultural Revolution, yet he later responded to such suffering, not with rebellion or serving as a witness to stop others’ suffering, sadly, but by climbing up the power ladders and now enforcing (andadding to) the ideology of the Party. Such pricincles, as they are often called, support these regimes, according to Yang, in ‘part because they have an emotional attachment to the culture in which they had come of age’ and because of their sense of entitlement (p. 179). It is a very important question, though greater depth, and perhaps, an interdisciplinary approach, is needed in trying to answer it.

Likewise, the cult of Mao has seesawed among various generations, declining after his death in the 1970s, but with Mao’s return in the 1990s (p. 168). The same sad spectacle also occurs in the former Soviet Union, with many wishing for return of Stalin – even among those whose families were once persecuted by Stalin. Such fractionalized memories, even within the same family, add to the cruelty, and confusion. For some of the once-zealous zhailing, they became more open to protesting injustice, a process they had learned as Red Guards supporting the Communist Party, and provided grounds for failed protests movements like the Democracy Wall Movement. Most accepted a greater need for economic development and economic freedom (with a concurrent call for social freedom and human rights) – a mantra of China’s economic growth today. The 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, so it goes, failed, but the lessons were education and economic growth were the keys to success in any economy. The Chinese, especially the princines, came to learn.

If we return to fear: are the children really worse? Or were they turned to evil by the communist leaders; and tragically, those that learned this, were themselves crushed into false fulfillments. The next either learned from these failures and so keep quiet; turn to nostalgia and try not to think of past horrors; or become versions of those that once corrupted and sent them down, whether into the countryside or into violence. If victims become perpetrators, what hope remains for justice?

Peter Admirand
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The Dutch architect and urban planner Thomas Karsten lived and worked in the Dutch East Indies from 1914 until his death in a Japanese detention camp near Bandung in 1945. Trained at the Polytechnic School of Delft he started his career as an architect in the mid-Javanese town of Semarang. Soon, however, his interest extended to the young field of town planning. In this capacity he advised many governments of the rapidly expanding towns and cities in the colony, and moreover he became a thriving force behind the institutionalization of management of urban planning. His writings – in periodicals, reports, and diaries – together with several Indonesian and Dutch secondary sources form the basis of this book on Karsten, the first extensive, holistic study of the man and his multifaceted life and work as Joost Coté and Hugh O’Neill conclude (p. 325). Indeed, the ten essays in the sizeable book cover a wide range of aspects of Karsten’s life and are presented to the reader in a definitely positive setting. Pauline van Roosmalen writes on his role in defining and establishing town planning in the Dutch colony and Helen ibbitson Jessup on his detailed involvement in Javanese architecture. The remaining eight essays are written by Coté (Chapter 4), O’Neill (Chapter 3) and one by the two authors together. They cover his architectural oeuvre, his multifaceted character, and his influence on a number of other architects and urban planners. The book is a comprehensive documentation, brought together, and presented to, hopefully, many readers in this book. Quality as Karsten’s hallmark can be seen as a denominator of the essays by the four authors, though it is varied, and perhaps disguised, under the banner of modernity. This term and its derivatives pervade the biography, and are used by the authors in every conceivable context to suit Karsten’s actions and thoughts. As such should modernity lead to enlightenment, characterise the mindset of the new Indonesian urban middle classes, shape their new houses with their conveniences in an improved urban Kampung, and in newly planned neighbourhoods, and form the future harmonious mix of Indonesians and Dutch. Modernity as an analytical tool is a concept that is difficult to digest, but the authors could have done more to clarify their assessments and observations of the broad spectre of Karsten’s mindset. However, they do offer a possible key and justification for their abundant choice for the term “modern”. Van Roosmalen notes in the context of Karsten’s 1919 expansion plan for Semarang that America was seen as exemplifying modernity, “above all, rational”, in O’Neill words in The Architect at Work (p. 147) and the Institutionalization of Modernity: The Deutscher Werkbund (translated). Moreover, it is a book on a certain remarkable man at work in the Dutch East Indies. Apart from the considerations of what “modern Karsten tick”, important decades of architectural and planning history of the Dutch colony and independent Indonesia have been documented, brought together, and presented to, hopefully, many readers in this book.

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Notes
1 However, one has to add that these urban plans are not only centred on the construction of a modern component of social housing, as in Europe.
2 This report has unfortunately not been included in this book. However, it has been published in an English translation, in: W. P. Werthem et al. (eds) 1958. The Indonesian Town, Studies in Urban Sociology, The Hague and London: W. van Hoeve Ltd, pp. 1-76.
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Beyond the nation? The transnational and its limits

Ethan Mark

Nationalism, as Benedict Anderson famously argued in his landmark 1983 *Imagined Communities*, has proven a most tenacious modern animal—however invented, imagined, or constructed it may be. Issuing a word of caution to a long line of scholars who had prematurely and naively predicted its demise—in particular those to the political left, who were the most numerous and hopeful among them—Anderson declared, “the reality is quite plain: the ‘end of the era of nationalism’, so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time”.

Yet in the period since Anderson issued his declaration, as the tensions of the Cold War cooled and were superseded by idealistic visions of a globalized ‘world without boundaries’—in a context of increasing liberalization and expansion of cross-border flows of human, economic, and intellectual capital—scholarship in the liberal arts and social sciences has moved increasingly towards a questioning of the nation and the nation-state as the dominant frame and determinant of history, identity, politics, economics, culture, and social life.

Across the academic disciplines, attention has turned to the transnational, the regional and the global, focusing on cross-border flows and dynamics that go ‘beyond the nation’.

The transnational and the national remain intertwined

The effort has yielded considerable breakthroughs in terms of broadened and redefined academic understandings with regard to issues such as Eurocentrism and processes of social inclusion and exclusion, nation- and empire-building, colonization and decolonization, along with more general notions of society, culture and identity formation, with impacts both intellectual and political. Still, in a conversation on the subject among leading historians published in the *American Historical Review* in 2006, for example, it was observed that transnational history “is in danger of becoming merely a buzzword among historians, more a label than a practice, more expansive in its meaning than precise in its application, more a fashion of the moment than a durable approach to the serious study of history”. The questioning and transcendence of the claims of the nation-state might be the trend in many (if not all) of the humanities and social sciences, but whether in scholarship or indeed in the structures and thoughts that organize and govern everyday life, leaving the nation behind is often easier said than done.

Continued overleaf on page 30
The contributors to this Focus

Seeking to unravel such apparent paradoxes, graduate students and faculty from the eight universities that together comprise the Consortium of Asian and African Studies or CIASS (Leiden, INALCO, SOAS, the National University of Singapore, Hongkong University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Shanghai International Studies University, and Columbia University) gathered in Leiden in the autumn of 2017 for the conference Beyond the Nation?: The Transnational and its Limits. The conference was supported by the Leiden Asia Centre and the International Institute for Asian Studies. In their presentations and discussions, they asked: Across the humanities and the social sciences (as well as the wider world), how and why has the transnational been understood, imagined and pursued—and how and why might this be done in the future? Within a historical as well as contemporary world still largely bound by the institutions and interests of the nation-state, to what extent can the nation be transcended—and to what extent is this desirable? The selected papers that follow in this Focus engage such questions through a variety of thematic, disciplinary, and locational lenses.

In a special, updated and shortened version of his keynote lecture ‘Identities in the transnational lifeworld: individuals, community and nation’, Prashad surveys an increasingly global diversity of transnational actors who nurture roots in two or more national spaces, whether complex of variables that determine the push and pull of transnational flows: the roles of multi- and international organizations and NGOs versus those of national states, the ‘top-down’ of government policies versus the ‘bottom-up’ of civil society. Conversely, he calls for greater attention to the role of transnational forces in fostering nationalism, not only among the relatively privileged populations of the global north but also among the ‘subalterns’ of the global south.

In ‘Translating culture to transcend the nation’, Masato Kata probes the ironies and limits of the transcultural as reflected in the activities and rhetoric of Tenrikyō—a Japanese religious movement that reckoned with a problematic wartime history of national affiliation by ostensibly distancing itself from the nation—as practiced in a postwar France involving a growing interest in things Japanese. ‘The ambiguity surrounding Tenrikyō’s cultural identity in relation to Japan’, he argues, ‘means there is a discursive vacuum in which social actors can interpret the relationship between Tenrikyō and Japanese culture’ in diverse ways.

In ‘The Eurasian origins of pinyin’, Ulug Kuzuoglu unveils a transnational narrative of the making of the modern Chinese national script stretching from the Ottoman Empire to the Soviet Union, thereby affirming the innovative potentials of a transnational approach to histories hitherto hidden within national boundaries. Highlighting a complex competition and co-optation not only of linguistic and technological agendas but also of politics and worldviews, Kuzuoglu’s multilingual and multidisciplinary research seeks to unravel the history of Chinese scripts as a cross-border history of information and communications.

In ‘The rise of the capital state and neo-nationalism’, Alexander Svetlich analyses and compares populist reactions to neoliberal reforms in three Asian cases not normally compared in conventional scholarship: Australia, Korea, and Japan. Nor are Japan and Korea conventionally the first nation states that would come to mind in scholarly considerations of populism, but Svetlich finds strong reasons for assessing them via an ‘old’ analytical framework that would indeed seem to carry renewed regional and global relevance.

In ‘Encountering Chinese dialect opera among the twentieth century Southeast Asian diaspora’, Beiju Zhang reveals an ambivalent interplay of the national and the transnational as highlighted in the historical rise and fall of a local Chinese performing art form that thrived precisely through the crossing of state borders between China and Southeast Asia, even as its main audience comprised emigrants with roots in the same Chinese subregion. In the context of the Cold War and the processes of postcolonial nation-building that together reshaped the global and regional order in the second half of the twentieth century, however, state agendas, ‘identifications, and loyalty demands were redefined and intensified. Adaptation to such developments brought new opportunities but also an eventual displacement and undemurring of the Teochew opera’s original appeals and identity, and

In ‘Revisiting the Calcutta Improvement Trust in early 20th century Calcutta’, Tanio Chakravarty surveys the transnational and its limits as revealed in ideas and debates surrounding issues of city planning in late colonial British India. In the approaches of civil engineer E.P. Richards and sociologist Patrick Geddes, she thereby highlights the field of urban planning in this specific time and place as a terrain characterized by globally shared interests in health, and the reduction of poverty and overcrowding that had potential to transcend the conventional colonial/capitalized boundary. Yet when it came time for putting ideas into practice, such boundaries inevitably returned with a vengeance, as it were the “imperatives of the imperial economy” that prevailed, “downsizing[ing] planning schemes into an undervalued and extractive model that saw people as subjects and not citizens”.

Finally in ‘Strange intimacies: reading for migration and prostitution in Kang Young-sook’s Rina and Oh Jung-hee’s Chinatown’, Joo Kyung Lee explores how the themes of migration and prostitution converge in two works of modern Korean literature, thereby participating in what she calls a “post-nationalist discourse of displacement” that simultaneously highlights the role of nationality, race, gender and class in both constraining and compelling mobility. While the narrative pattern of interaction between them may be irregular, Lee nevertheless observes a “paradoxical relationship between migration and prostitution, which renders movement erotic and prostitution migratory”. Drawing upon Giorgio Agamben and Michel Foucault, she thereby seeks to interrogate why literary representation so often reduces female bodies in movement to prostitution bodies, and highlights the irony of the contemporary migrant body as the body upon which “the most regulatory power is invested” even as it is not subject to the biopolitics of any single nation.
I t was an engaging conversation. Raghuvir told of his grandfather who migrated from India to Surinam in the 19th century as an indentured labourer. The family continued to follow the Indian tradition and his father gave Indian names to his children, later received Hindu epics and the Hindi language. Though Raghuvir had never been to India, he loved Indian festivals, culture and cinema, and boasted of having a large collection of Hindi CDs. Demonstrating his talent, he sang a line from a popular Hindi song. Then he referred to Surinam, his land of birth, as his Desh (nation/Motherland) and community, expressing a deep emotional connection. Decades ago, he had migrated to the Netherlands in search of better opportunities, and had become a Dutch citizen.

With this Dutch narrative I hope to set the context, to reflect on the contemporary transnational lifeworld, and to understand how in this globalised world, identities of individual, community and nation undergo transformations through a range of activities, which involve networks of individuals and communities, transcending national borders.

Transnational lifeworld

The transnational lifeworld is complex. Transnationalism provides the key to understanding how between places are initiated, evolved and sustained and how links between places are standing how changes occur not only in the spheres of family and kinship but also in the realms of citizenship and transformation of social identities. These cultural difference, ethnic segregation, access to cultural resources of migrants, nation-state nationalism. Some scholars observed that the connection between the nation and the state plays the crucial role of the transnational lifeworld. For some other scholars, kinship and group solidarity should be treated as given conditions of transnationalism, as they would be controlled either by the state or by migrants; the state plays the crucial role of nation-state migration regimes and border politics.

The state-transnationalism relationship

Transnationalism has been often been equated with spontaneous cross-border mobility and practices that take place independently of the nation-state. Immigrants, non-state actors like global NGOs, transnational corporations, networks of migrants, grassroots movements and transnational entrepreneurs. Transnationalism from below, it is argued, acts as a ‘counter-hegemonic’ movement enabling migrants to become autonomous communities, without being controlled either by the host or the home state.

Factoring in subaltern sites and people

Thus, nation-states do contribute to the shaping of transnationalism. Today, from Europe to the United States, the rise of right-wing populism and the backlash against immigrants have led to the introduction of assimilation-oriented policies. This has come as a sequel to the increased securitization of migration since 9/11, which has already restricted migration options. Moreover, in Europe, ‘transnational nationalism’ is propagated by a variety of transnational networks of nationalist parties, movements and individuals focusing on racial, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant agendas. Although dissimilar in ideology and agenda, various right-wing nationalist forces do attempt to form a transnational alliance and a common platform. These political developments give a clear signal that the connection between the nation and transnationalism must be examined seriously. Further, major discourses on transnationalism primarily focus on the first world metropoles as the ‘agonising homes’, ignoring how the global social and economic forces shape the lives of a large number of subalterns in the global South. The erased of these subalterns from the dominant discourses do not mean that they are outside the orbit of transnationality. Despite being citizens of a nation-state, they barely enjoy citizens’ rights due to their inaccessibility to basic resources. With the onset of neoliberalism, forces of global capital further push them to the margins, accentuating their precariousness. Moreover, when a poor person from Bangladesh or a Rohingya from Myanmar crosses the border, being pushed out either by poverty or religious persecution, they face no less hostility and persecution in the land of arrival. This leaves no option for the subalterns of the South but to put up resistance against such unequal and oppressive globalism. Thus, a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of contemporary transnationalism must factor in subaltern sites and people.

The transnational lifeworld, carrying multiple meanings and identities involving multiple sites, actors and social relationships, manifests how identities are being shaped in multicultural Britain. The multi-faceted structure, character and experience of the transnational lifeworld demonstrate that individuals, communities and states play a critical role in constructing transnational identities and in sustaining this complex lifeworld. This complex interplay was evident when 50,000 Indian-Americans thronged into Houston stadium on a Sunday morning in September 2017 to participate in the ‘Howdy, Modi!’ event to greet the Indian Prime Minister in the presence of President Donald Trump. The Indian diaspora is the largest in the world and is the most recent surge in the demand for dual citizenship and right to vote in Europe, for example, the recent surge in the demand for dual citizenship and right to vote in Europe, ‘transnational nationalism’ is emerging context, the transnational lifeworld needs deeper reflection.

Notes

Tenrikyō’s cultural strategy in France

It is against this historical background that this article proceeds to analyse Tenrikyō’s cultural activities in France in the postwar period. In the early 1970s, the religious organisations founded two legally separate organisations involving a ‘religious’ association (Tenrikyō Mission Centre in Paris, or Tenrikyō Paris Union) and a ‘cultural’ association (Association Culturelle Franco-Japonaise de Tenri, or Tenri Nichi-Futsu Bankei Kyōkai) in and near the French capital. The founding of the cultural association, which was intended to help gain visibility and legitimacy of the religious group (and its name ‘Tenri’) through the promotion of cultural exchange between France and Japan, coincided with a period of growing interest in the Japanese language and (and later with the popularity of Japanese popular culture such as anime and manga) in France. Aside from its main activity of a Japanese language school, the cultural association has promoted various kinds of cultural activities, including one-off events as well as continuous ones such as courses in calligraphy, flower arrangement, and tea ceremonies. As far as the relationship with the religious tradition is concerned, the cultural association conducts no formal activity of proselytisation as per the French legal regulation concerning non-religious associations.

Negotiating the boundary between Tenrikyō and France

France may wonder how followers of the movement Tenrikyō have been involved in Tenrikyō’s propagation in France make sense of the use of cultural resources associated with Japan in light of the culturally dissociated doctrinal discourses and practices in the postwar period. The ambiguity surrounding Tenrikyō’s cultural identity in relation to Japan means there is a discursive vacuum in which social actors can interpret the relationship between Tenrikyō and Japanese culture. There are indeed diverse manners in which those followers understand the roles of cultural activities. Notable in this respect is that these followers—almost all of whom are Japanese nationals—understand the term ‘culture’ in a universalistic or abstracted sense, discursively detaching the meanings of culture associated with Japan. In one case, which is by no means fully representative of followers involved in Tenrikyō’s propagation in a French setting, the abstract postulation of ‘culture’ has paradoxically led to the re-particularisation of the otherwise culturally dissociated doctrinal discourse. In this sense, Tenrikyō in France has been able to transcend the nation through culture in terms of responding to the popularity of Japanese culture as well as in a sense of discursive negotiation, provided that the abstract postulation of ‘culture’ avoids the particularisation of the meaning. When abstracted, the term ‘culture’ has multiple implications for a religion that seeks to expand transnationally, and in this sense the case of Tenrikyō can provide insights into the ways in and the extent to which a religion can transcend the nation by translating the culture that is associated with the nation in which it developed.

Notes


2. In this article, I follow the convention of using discrimational courts for Japanese words including names of religions except where religious organisations concerned use unmalformed ones as English proper nouns.

3. In Tenrikyō’s official doctrine, Miki Nakayama’s death is referred to as the “Shrine of God” (Tenrikyō’s cosmology and contemporary sources).

4. For a more comprehensive overview of Tenrikyō’s cultural activities see the author’s article “Tenrikyō: "Physical withdrawal" as she is believed to still be alive as the ‘Shrine of God’” (Globalization of Japanese New Religions).


7. For a more detailed explanation of the use of culture in the process of cultural translation, see Tenrikyō’s official doctrine, Miki Nakayama’s death is referred to as the “Shrine of God” (Globalization of Japanese New Religions).

8. For a comprehensive overview of Tenrikyō’s cultural activities, see the author’s article “Tenrikyō: ‘Physical withdrawal’ as she is believed to still be alive as the ‘Shrine of God’” (Globalization of Japanese New Religions).

9. For a more comprehensive overview of Tenrikyō’s cultural activities, see the author’s article “Tenrikyō: ‘Physical withdrawal’ as she is believed to still be alive as the ‘Shrine of God’” (Globalization of Japanese New Religions).
In 1931, Chinese and Russian revolutionaries in the Soviet Union joined hands to devise the Chinese Latin Alphabet (Latinxua sinwenz, CLA), the mother of contemporary pinyin. While the significance of the CLA in the history of Chinese language and script reforms is beyond doubt, its exact kinship to pinyin remains murky, for the CLA was markedly different from pinyin not only in its ideological make-up, but also in its letter-composition. Yuyan 言语 [language], for instance, was written as yjuan in the CLA in the 1930s; or Ladinghua 拉丁化 [Latinization] was written as latinxua. The ‘y’ of pinyin, in other words, was originally written with a ‘j’; ‘h’ was written with an ‘x’; and ‘y’ or ‘ü’ with a ‘y’. Trivial as it may seem, an archaeology of these letters offers a history unlike the ones written before.

During the following decades, intellectuals from the Ottoman, Russian, and Iranian Empires were in conversation with each other regarding the future of the script, and for them, even more pressing than telegraphic communication (with Morse code) was the question of typography. The industrialization of the printing press in the nineteenth century, exemplified by the global dissemination of the movable metal type, imposed a similar epistemology of ‘separate letters’ for typesetting. Because of the number of glyphs and the various ways of combining letters, an Arabic-lettered type case had more than 700 letters, i.e., variant types; and depending on the kind of calligraphy used for printing (e.g., ta’liq), the type case could surpass 2000. The reformers used the exorbitant size of type cases to justify their call for separate letters, which, they argued, would increase efficiency and optimize labor not only in typesetting, but also in reading. In the eyes of the reformers, who were surrounded by Latin, Cyrillic, Greek, Armenian, and Georgian alphabets, the future of a productive knowledge economy lay in separate letters.

The first proposals for a new alphabet in the Muslim world were not based on the Latin alphabet (fig.1). Some argued for a reformed Arabic script written in separate letters, while others proposed the use of Armenian letters or a combination of Cyrillic and Iranian letters. It was only in 1910s, in the aftermath of the Russian imperial reforms of 1905 and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, that the Latin alphabet emerged as a serious contender to other script proposals. The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Great War in 1918 strengthened the position of the Latin alphabet even further, as many reformers saw it as the embodiment of material and mental progress during national reconstruction. Amid incessant debates in the post-imperial Russian and Ottoman space, the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan was the first to officially Latinize its Arabic script in 1924.
Neo-nationalism as a counter-movement against marketization

A critical political economic perspective can be particularly useful to understand the neo-nationalist phenomenon. More specifically, the rise of neo-nationalism points to the contemporary relevance of Karl Polanyi’s intellectual arsenal, crystallized in his magnum opus The Great Transformation.1 One of the significant insights in this dimension is that of the ‘double movement’ demonstrating the antagonistic relationship between the drive towards the ‘utopian’ free market and the inevitable societal ‘counter-movement’. Polanyi famously argued that societies would demand social protection against the process of marketization. Neo-nationalism can thus be interpreted as a renewed Polanyian moment whereby pro-market restructuring of the state under the auspices of neoliberal globalization generates genuine grievances exploited by populist nationalists. And although Polanyi focused on the industrial Global North only, his insights are well applicable in the Asian context.

Arguably, three sets of inter-connected factors must be considered to appreciate this transformation-protection dynamic in full: institutional change, social demand, and political supply. At the structural level, national states often pursue pro-market reconfiguration to facilitate expanded commodification, manifested in such broad processes as political liberalization and dismantling of public services; an increase in corporate power at the expense of labour; and financialization and transnationalization processes at the level of subjective legitimacy, sections of the working and middle classes perceive these changes as a threat to their socio-economic standing, generating resentment at the political establishment for ‘leaving them behind’. In turn, at the societal level, certain liberal reforms breed ground for Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party. US Judge magazine, 1896. Image in the public domain on Wikipedia.

Empirical referents

To give the first illustration from the Asia-Pacific region, the structural changes in the national economy and state formed a fertile breeding ground for Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party’s (ONP) vision of a homogeneous Australia. As in other advanced industrial nations, Australia had undergone a radical restructuring of the economy and state, the process underpinned by the ideology of ‘core nationalism’.2 Australia’s ‘neoliberalism’. The transformation began back in the 1970s under Gough Whitlam’s Labor government and gained momentum in the 1980s. The subsequent advancement of policies and practices to deregulate welfare, labour, and finance under the Hawke-Keating (1983-91) neoliberal governments signaled a break with the tradition of the ‘Australian Settlement’. The pro-market re-regulation and ensuing declining capacity to fulfill the social contract towards working and middle class Australians translated into increased public grievance, real deprivation and status anxiety, as well as disillusionment with ‘politics as usual’.3 In the absence of meaningful alternatives, the ONP offered a simple populist message to harness fears of material and social displacement: give a voice to ‘ordinary people’ or ‘the little man’ so that every ‘blake would have a fair go’. On the vertical axis of identity construction, the ONP drew the boundaries of Australia to exclude the elites who failed to protect the people from economic and social dislocations. ‘The Australian way of life’. Yet, although the ONP relied on ethno-migrant cleavage to mobilize voters against the Aboriginal, Muslim, Asian ‘Others’, the people’s racial sensibilities did not exist in a vacuum.4 Rather, they became especially acute and were available to be politicized in the time of anxiety over social welfare sustainability, job insecurity and redistribution stemming from the structural changes in the country’s political economy. In a solution resembling other neo-nationalist forces, the ONP offered a chauvinist vision of ‘Fortress Australia’ as a response to these changes.

In South Korea, although no institutionalized populist nationalism emerged, left-wing ‘progressive’ parties such as the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and its successor the Unified Progress Party (UPP) displayed some elements of it. Rooted in the democratic and labour upsurges of the late 1980s, and the formation of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), DLP was established in 2000 and gained 13 per cent of the vote at the 2004 general election, capitalizing on the post-1997 (Asian Financial Crisis) reforms and the new proportional representation law. DLP represented the marginalized ‘endless’ workers, farmers, and the urban poor – and opposed the ruling conservative Grand National Party’s policies, from privatization of public utilities to hostility towards North Korea.5 Although the DLP and UPP lacked the elements of populism and radicalism most commonly associated with European neo-nationalist parties, the two outsider challengers nonetheless; they mounted a third alternative to the liberal-conservative system of the Park Geun-hye’s South Korea’s post-democratization period. Thus, analytically they represent a nascent form of Polanyian ‘counter-movement’ against the encroachment of the market. Both parties dissolved or were banned by 2010,6 yet the political void was filled by the 2008 and 2017 ‘candlelight protests’. The former was sparked as a reaction to the government’s decision to reopen South Korea’s beef market to the US, and originated in the critique of neoliberalism within the Korean leftist circles. The trigger for the more recent massive protests was the ‘Choi Soon-sil gate’ of 2016-2017, which culminated in the ousting of president Park Geun-hye, accused of embezzlement and collusion with the country’s biggest chaebols. Yet while the protests may have had a lot to do with the specifics of Park’s regime, grievances had accumulated over the years. From a comparative perspective, although Koreans appear to have lost patience with their political system in line with the political alienation trend elsewhere, their response presents a more progressive civic movement of the Polanyian ‘double-movement’ dynamics.

Finally, the radical right in Japan is multi-layered and appears to be distinct from Western counterparts in two aspects: a staunch emphasis on historical revisionism, as demonstrated by the multiple instances of glorifying the pre-war Japanese Empire; and nativist sentiments against close neighbours (most notably Korea) rather than migrants. However, as the sociologist Michael Pusey has argued, economic restructuring creates a “defensive need for ‘communities of memory’ in which social resistances to commodification congealed in revived memories and imaginary constructions of shared experience.”7 With the overall neoliberal consensus in the incumbent and past governments, acts such as the restoration of the National Foundation Day or the Prime Minister’s worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine make intuitive sense. These symbolic appeals to national greatness serve as a psychological coping strategy for citizens who hope for improved socio-economic standing, especially those who lack other markers of social status, such as education or occupation.

Notes

2 Economic rationalism preserves that “economies, markets and money offer the only reliable means of setting values on anything” and “always deliver better outcomes than states and bureaucrats.” Pusey, M. 1996. ‘Economic Rationalism and the Contest for Civil Society’, Thesis Eleven 13:10-22.
8 Ibid. Pusey, 1996, p.79.
Chinese dialect opera among the twentieth century Southeast Asian diaspora

Belzio Zhang

From the early twentieth century, Chinese dialect opera (方文戏) troupes followed the movement of Chinese immigrants to the various ports and cities of Southeast Asia, a region that was oftentimes referred to by the Chinese as ‘the South Seas’ (南洋). The travelling of the Teochew opera (the dialect opera mostly patronised by Teochew immigrants in Bangkok, Malaya and Singapore) and its films, from hometown Shantou to the Teochew diaspora in Southeast Asia, reveals the dynamics of Sino-Southeast Asian interactions, channelled through long-existing native-place ties. In the Cold War era, Teochew opera practitioners endeavoured to maintain their old native-place ties by designing new routes of travelling in order to circumvent tensions that had made Sino-Southeast Asian interactions almost impossible. However, in the ensuing period of nation building, Teochew opera faced more difficult struggles in choosing between the ‘national’ and the ‘diasporic’, because of its ‘unwelcome’ historical linkages with homeland China.

Pre-war demographic patterns and diasporic routes

Following in the footsteps of fellow countrymen, Teochew opera troupes left their home villages and embarked on long journeys to Southeast Asia. Their tour routes involved a complex web of travel, underpinned by the distinct demographic patterns pertaining to the Teochew immigration in Southeast Asia. Bangkok was generally the first stop in Southeast Asia for Teochew immigrants and their opera troupes, who mostly originated from the region Chaoshan (潮州), from the region Chaoshan (潮州), part of Guangdong, encompassing three areas: Chaozhou (潮州), from here the Teochew opera troupes were transported into the hinterland as well as the larger region of Southeast Asia. Teochew settlements expanded further into the interior thanks to the completion of Thailand’s northern and southern railways. The improvement of transportation also made it easier for people’s ritual and entertainment needs. Teochew opera troupes left their countrymen, Teochew opera troupes left their settlements in Southeast Asia. Such a sizeable Teochew diaspora in Bangkok made their tours and performances—a daily supplement for people's ritual and entertainment needs. They were particularly successful, judging from the enthusiastic responses from the Hong Kong audience. The migration overviewed was up to a ‘febrile craving’ for Teochew opera, which brought about the new business in the entertainment market of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Two CCP (Chinese Communist Party) endorsed left-wing film producers in Hong Kong (New Union and the Great Wall) began to collaborate with the Mainland troupes, making seven Teochew opera films in all, between 1960 and 1966.1

The choice of Hong Kong as the first diasporic travelling-out was based on deliberate political and cultural considerations. Post-war Hong Kong was where East and West intersected, prospering economically and culturally as a result. As a British colony, Hong Kong was a gateway through which the PRC could disseminate its socialist propaganda to non-communist countries through the operations of Hong Kong’s left-wing filmmakers. In order to pave a smooth road for the circulation of left-wing opera films in Southeast Asia, different flexible strategies were developed so as to cover up the true identity of the film producers, or put in another way, to direct people’s attention away from the ideological underpinning in order to pass the film censorship. The initial Hong Kong (filmmakers)—Mainland cooperation opened up such a lucrative market that many non-left-wing, and sometimes purport right-wing supporters, such as the Shaw Brothers, began to form transnational cooperations between Hong Kong studios and Southeast Asian theatres. These Teochew opera practitioners and filmmakers were contingents of the Shantou—Hong Kong—Southeast Asian operatic nexus. Their role as ‘cultural entrepreneurs’, moving between the PRC and the Southeast Asian market, was far more than that of mere intermediaries; they created their own cultural ventures by infusing the commercial dynamics that could only be bred in Hong Kong’s post-war society. So in the cultural arena, the political impasse of the 1950s and the 1960s was more imagined than real.

Reaching out in the Cold War era

The Cold War cast a shadow over the established travelling patterns. Communications and interactions along the Sino-Southeast Asian migrant corridor became especially unstable due to the geopolitics in Asia. The Teochew opera, which had relied on the transnational tours, became entrapped in national/colonial frameworks that imposed their own political agendas onto the art form. In the opera’s place of origin Chaoshan潮州, top-down nationwide reform was enforced to turn the traditional folk practice into a diplomatic tool, and nation building were the priority of many Southeast Asian countries. Projects for national identity construction took on a more centralized, and exploring ways in which to use transnational opera tours to serve the national interest became popular. Singapore’s nation building in the 1970s and 1980s struggled to balance the de-territorialised migrant history with the formation of a unified national identity. Chinese street opera (performed by troupes of Teochew, Cantonese, Hokkien and Hainanese opera) had integrated versions of tradition, sub-ethnic ‘Chineseness’ and a de-territorialised diasporic identity that thus become an embarrassing existential manifestation on the path to Singapore’s nation building and modernisation. The heritage-making of Chinese street opera brought about a more profound result of displacement. Specifically, the displacement took place both literally and metaphorically. In a literal sense, the physical displacement of the street opera performances from their original religious sites to designated spaces of the modern HDB (Housing and Development Board), Hong Lim Park, and lastly to indoor theatres. Partly as a result of, or parallel to, such a physical transformation, the displacement of the opera’s ‘Chineseness’ has a more far-reaching impact in a metaphorical sense, whereby identity and language are reconstructed, and the medium of the opera becomes a tool for nation building. Rooted in the sub-ethnic dialect culture, Chinese street opera found itself uncomfortable in nationalising their own cultural heritage undergirded by the official ideology of multiculturalism and pragmatism. Such an irreconcilable gap between the traditional dialect culture and modern state ideologies determined the transient nature of Chinese operatic heritage-making, and it was eventually doomed to fail. For opera practitioners, there was a more pressing consideration of Cold War politics that drove the opera as a diasporic livelihood and a de-territorialised living tradition. Unlike the state, which saw the heritage-making of Chinese opera as a tool for nation building, opera practitioners saw diasporic performances as disciples of their own identity, where they came from, who they were/are and why they hold on to it. Their memories of the distant homeland and the places during their diasporic travelling were all contrary to what had been enforced upon them—a national belonging and identity that only restricted their diasporic mobility and endangered their livelihoods.2

Notes

1. Chaoshan潮州 is the contraction of the names of its two administrative areas (潮陽 and 蕉門). It is a region defined by its culture and linguistic uniqueness in the eastern part of Guangdong Province, encompassing three main cities: Shantou潮州, Chaoshan潮州 and Chaoxian潮州. Chaoshan潮州 is the origin of the Teochew dialect that is most spoken by native populations of Chaoshan and overseas Teochew Chinese in both the PRC and Southeast Asian countries, Singapore and Malaysia.

2. ‘Su Li Guang’乳燕迎春 was produced by New Union in 1960. In 1961, New Union continued with ‘Gao Qian’乳燕迎春 and another left-wing film drama ‘Chaozhou opera college in Shantou’ (潮州）. Two other films, ‘Ruyan 乳燕迎春’ and ‘Yingchun’婴春 were also produced in that year. ‘Shantou opera college in Shantou’ (潮州） was produced by ‘Shantou opera college in Shantou’, ‘Ruyan 乳燕迎春’ and ‘Yingchun’婴春 were made in the same period, and were particularly successful. ‘Ruyan 乳燕迎春’ was one of the most famous Teochew opera film producer, Great Wall Movie Enterprises, made ‘Shantou opera college in Shantou’、‘Ruyan 乳燕迎春’ and ‘Yingchun’婴春 in 1961.

E
even though Calcutta ceased to be the
capital of the British Indian Empire in
1911, it still continued to be an
important administrative centre of
the British Raj. Its divergent colonial
development and migration that in turn led
to changes in configurations of urban space
and forces of economic growth. The
conceptions of urban governance and the provision
of urban services. As a colonial city, Calcutta
continued to be the very ‘other’ of the Western
cities, but the exigencies of health and
improvement pushed the civic planners working
in Calcutta to transcend the boundaries of
nation and embrace the transnational.

E.P. Richards and slum repair
In 1911, the Government of Bengal created
the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) to improve
conditions in Calcutta. It was created as an
independent entity, headed by a British Indian
Civil Service official – Cecil Henry Bompas. Its
objectives were to open up congested areas,
construct or alter roads, provide ventilation
through open spaces, construct new buildings,
acquire land for urban development, and
rehabilitate displaced communities. The
immediate cause was a pandemic that spread
from the interior of China in 1899 to the ports
of Asia and Africa, killing an estimated seven
million people by 1919. A civil engineer named
E.P. Richards was given the task to create
the working constitution of the CIT.

Richards had moved to British India in
1908 and became the executive engineer of
Madras Main Drainage. In September 1912,
Richards became chief engineer of the CIT. He
drew extensively from various town
planning projects in Europe and America for his
report on Calcutta, which he finished and
published in 1919. He included a sociological
analysis of the areas, and observed
childhood sanitation and habits, whilst the
municipal authority would remove obstructive
buildings in a judicious and inexpensive manner
in order to open up congested spaces. Richards
visited the city of Birmingham in 1912-1913 to
gain first-hand knowledge of the experiment.
He was received by Dr. John Robertson, the
Health Officer of the city. Accompanied
by Robertson, Richards inspected a considerable
area of ‘reformed’ courts and slums. According
to Richards, the effect of removing obstructive
buildings; opening up one or both ends of
courts to the nearest street; enforcing
sanitation of the property; paving the surfaces of
gardens and open spaces; providing excellent and
curious washhouses and up-to-date
water closets; and planting trees and putting
light ornamental railings and gates to prevent
improvisation of vehicular traffic to the paving,
was most striking and pleasing and produced a
highly satisfactory living environment. Richards
was especially impressed by the healthy,
bright and clean appearance of the children
and women, and by the freshness of air and
abundance of light in the reformed areas.7
Another way in which Richards sought
to ease demographic pressure and bring
cleanliness, health and order to Calcutta was to
create good communication channels to the
suburbs. Richards drew inspiration from the
garden city movement and was in favour of
setting apart definite areas for suburban
development as done in Milan and Genoa.8 He
was aware that compared with those of Western
cities, slums in Calcutta were very many times
more extensive. Overcrowding in Calcutta slums
was much greater than European slums. Slums
in Calcutta had the highest recorded mortality
for tuberculosis and infant mortality and the
highest infantile death rate in the world.

Richards determined the reason behind
the origin of Calcutta slums was mostly twofold:
Firstly, there was a lack of efficient byelaws
and their rigid enforcement both in the past
and present. Secondly, the lack of main roads
for rapid transit to external areas, and lack
of suburban land preparation, forced people
of meagre incomes to crowd within the slums
of Calcutta.9

Patrick Geddes and folk planning
While Richards was drawing upon more
concrete examples of town planning schemes
from the Western world, Patrick Geddes, a
Scottish sociologist and town planner, who
produced several reports on Indian towns,
believed that town planning was actually
‘folk planning’. In 1918, he undertook a survey
for CIT and forwarded a planning scheme
for a particular neighbourhood (Barra Bazaar)
in Calcutta. While Richards tried to create what
he believed to be a ‘more satisfactory urban
environment’ within his Western-conceived
social cultural framework, Geddes was particularly
critical of programmes that ignored the needs of
people, which had destroyed the housing and social life
of the urban community, especially the urban
poor. He believed that the plans for a future
city could only be drawn after unravelling
the dominant social pattern of a community.

To tackle the decay of urban settlements,
Geddes proposed a holistic method called
‘conservative surgery’, which proposed
minimum demolition and disruption to achieve
maximum improvement in the city. But Geddes
was no isolationist. Keeping in line with the
‘Okuitu Tower’ that he established in Edinburgh
in 1902 (in which a visitor started with familiar
scenes of his own city and finished with the
global viewpoint of a citizen of the world),
Geddes proposed a holistic form of planning
that connected the city, the nation and the
international.

After the First World War, Geddes
aware that large scale demolition would lead
to business losses and dislocation for the
entire labouring population.11 While Geddes
ever expressed caution about demolition,
he was practical enough to realize that in some
areas there was no alternatives. He offered for
demolition of certain areas did not mean that
he abandoned his pet method of conservative
surgery. He believed that residential areas
could be improved by demolishing individual
unsanitary houses instead of whole blocks.
The spaces created could be converted into
small open areas and parks, and provide
much needed space to the local residents. Geddes
wanted more investment in the existing
housing stock. Too often, he urged, buildings
were judged on superficial grounds, “so that
dirty whitewash, broken plaster, and bad
smell are enough to evoke a cry for
demolition; for only these only can easily
be done of clearing up the slums, brightening, and
economical repair”.12 He suggested that, in its own
way, the Calcutta Municipalities could take a
similar initiative and grant loans to citizens for repairing their
houses. Geddes felt that investment in
housing would enable citizens to assist the
very poor to invest in housing so that, socially at least,
they could expect returns in the form of
a satisfied and prosperous working class.

Neither Richards nor Geddes was ignorant
of the problem of overcrowding and
urban poverty. In early twentieth
century Calcutta. Although both these town planners
put forward very different methods to tackle the
problem of urban congestion, both
emphasized the importance of maintaining
a healthy workforce within the boundaries
of the city as an integral task of governing
the city. Both sets of plans were
premised on the idea that the residents
of the city would provide enough
profit and the need to regulate life in its
most beneficial state.

Imperatives of the imperial economy
downsized planning schemes into an under-
developed and extractive model that saw
people as subjects and not citizens. Although
the Trust was initiated in 1911, Its operations
continued well into the 1920s and 30s. Led by
colonial bureaucrats and civil engineers, the
Trust sought to undertake large scale land
acquisitions and road development projects.
Once slums were cleared and roads were built,
the increased value of the surrounding land,
which made it impossible to rehouse the poor
population in the same area. The operations of
the Trust led to commodification of urban land
and the creation of ‘agents’, i.e., as beings who can generate
wealth if they are looked after properly.
However, requests for land acquired by these
townplanners could be successfully
applied for the CIT. Herein lie the
anxieties of colonial governmentalities—the need to
make profit and the need to regulate life in its
most beneficial state.

Beyond the nation? The
transnational and its limits
Revisiting the Calcutta Improvement
Trust in early 20th century Calcutta
Tania Chakravarty

Notes
1 Home, R. 2016. ‘British colonial civic
improvement in the early twentieth
century: E. P. Richards in Madras,
Calcutta, and Singapore’, Planning
History, 3(1), pp. 29-46, DOI: 10.12998
2 Richards, E. P. 2014. ‘The Condition,
Improvement and Town Planning of the
City of Calcutta and Its Suburban Areas:
The Richards Report, Routledge, p.328,
3 Ibid., pp.328-331.
4 Geddes, P. 1915. Barra Bazaar Improvement:
A Report by Patrick Geddes, p.33.
5 For further discussion on colonial
governmentality see Legg, S. 2007.
6 Imperialism of Colonies—Beyond
Governmentalities. Blackwell Publishing.

What does it mean to have a body, to be in movement and to be female at the same time? I approach two works of modern Korean literature, Kang Young-sook’s Rino (2013) and Oh Jung-hee’s Chinatown (1979) with this question. These works demonstrate that the trajectories of migration and prostitution often intrude upon one another. While such convergences and divergences may not form a regular pattern, I observe that such irregularities can be traced back to one question, one that deals with conceptualizations of the female (migrant) body.

In Kang’s novel, we follow Rino’s unidirectional journey from her birth country to her final destination, country ‘P’, via a third country, a trip which greatly resembles that of North Korean defectors, although the novel resists any identification. This journey involves presenting herself as a “body in movement”, leading an existence of “bare life”. In this or her story, we peek into the unnamed narrator’s analeptic story of her youth in a certain unidentified Chinatown (presumed to be Incheon, Korea), where different forms of migration come together – domestic migration (such as the narrator’s family), Chinese immigrants, and US soldiers and military prostitutes/comfort women. In both narratives, themes of migration and prostitution make inadvertent encounters. There exists a perverse relationship between migration and prostitution, which renders movement erotic and prostitution migratory.

In this paper, I study this relationship and question why female bodies in movement are often ‘reduced down’ to or represented as prostituted bodies, and how such intersections occur in literary representations, while also taking into account the ethics of representation, E.P. Richards and slum repair.

Notable in the two works is the ways in which representation complicates and obfuscates a clear understanding of migration and prostitution as central themes to the narratives. There are elements of voyeurism and reverse-voyeurism (not-telling and disidentifying) that resist a rather traditional understanding of migration and prostitution in their representations. In Chinatown, the nature of the space, in its seekng immobility as an urban settlement, resists an evident understanding of mobility and mobilization. While people are in complete movement, they are simultaneously under a sedentary guise, as they are considered to be constantly building houses. But the very idea of building new houses is a sign of migration and of an inflow of population into the city. Among the currents of movement are foreigners and the military prostitutes – the former of whom are largely characterized as Chinese immigrants, with the sporadic apporation of Americans (soldiers) – and more importantly, the latter of whom individually occupy rooms and small parts of houses otherwise occupied by families, as the narrator observes. Moreover, there are complexities attached to that very figure of the military prostitute, in how she is commodified, utilized, prostituted, yet further self-prostitutes and ultimately reclaims the experience. These are comparable to the protagonist Rina, in the way she is trafficked and commodified in the beginning of the novel and how, increasingly, she prostitutes herself, allowing herself to be’s agency in the prostitutional schema readily legible in the lives of female individuals such as herself.

Similarly in Rino, the protagonist’s journey of prostitution resists clear cut definitions of prostitution and migration. There is something repetitive in her futile migration, as she is forced back to her origin numerous times and has to embark on the same journey again; movement becomes a fundamentally flawed concept for Rino. Her movement cannot be traced according to the common understanding that the longer one travels the farther one is away from the place of origin. Moreover, Rino cannot travel directly to country ‘P’ and has to enter through a third country; her world is one of selective mobility, wherein people can move and/or be mobilized according to nationality, race, gender and class. Nevertheless, her immobility is, intriguingly, precisely what causes this movement, thereby granting a peculiar form of migratory liberty.

Bodies and motion

This very kind of selective immobility and entry are a direct result of the practice of national sovereignty (if we can give it so much credit), and consequently a migrant has an anxious relationship with sovereignty. In the introduction to his book Homo Sacer, Agamben questions how “the realm of bare life – which is originally situated at the center of the political system” begins to coincide with the political realm, and ... [the tw] enter into a zone of irreducible indistinguishability and ‘originate’ the sovereign power as ‘the production of a biopolitical body.’ Indeed, the migrant body becomes an unimaginable object here: a bare life, yes, because during migration the migrant is considered only as a body and nothing more, and no other wish to utilize the body then to mobilize. The migrant body is imagined with no will to labor nor to entertainment, because migration is of utmost importance (unless labor is forced or necessary). The migrant body is one that is not subject to a singular national politics, precisely as it is untraceable. At the same time, the migrant body is the ultimate biopolitical object; drawing first attention, it is the body upon which the most regulative power is invested, and the most manipulative too. A body in biopolitical reprieve is not lay already underway, because bodies are treated and consumed as commodities, passed around in the limits of sovereign power.

Rino’s body, on top of this, is a female body, hence it makes it the ideal subject for commodification. And how better to commodify a woman other than as a prostitute? Rino’s forced and willful participation in the prostitutional schema provides evidence that as a female migrant body, she is only translated and immaterial in her migratory presence, but also that the prostitutional schema is readily legible: the trajectory of commodification and prostitution was already prefigured, which is perhaps why Rino is unprepared at how she was duped into prostitution. It is, despite not having lived through such experiences previously, Rino may carry (or may have carried) with her knowledge of the very movement (while no real human identity can be so flimsy or transitory for that matter). Such transience and ephemerality of the encounter can, eventually, be traced back to the very movement of the migrant, and the narrative of her departure and arrival, and their everyday lives, becomes difficult. The migrant’s identity becomes more complex than the very movement (while no real human identity can be so flimsy or transitory for that matter). Such representation is deftly filled in the figure of the prostitute, who repeats a transitory pleasure. Then, what does it signify for the diffuse identities, who are never removed and implanted into the realm of the transient? How do we – everyone engaged in this exercise of literature and lives, and how are they represented in these works of literature? How do we read them?

Representational quality of the female migrant

Indeed, this paper is an effort to read for these experiences, and especially the less visible migrants in global histories of migration. I argue that both works participate in a postcolonial discourse of displacement and migration. Here, what determines the legibility of certain narratives? What can we say about narratives such as these that resist legibility? The two works I read put this paradox into question precisely by avoiding identification of the ‘other’, and rather, there seem to be elements of voyeurism and reverse-voyeurism; can voyeurism be a safe space in these works? I attempt to answer these questions through a literary analysis of Kang’s Rino and Oh’s Chinatown, through analyzing the representational quality of these literary works, and moreover through an incessant conversation with our understanding of migration and prostitution today.

Joo Kyung Lee

Notes


3. ibid., p.6, emphasis in the original.

The 2019 Indonesian elections. Between the opinion polls and the polling booth.

Hui Yew-Foong

On 17 April 2019, 158 million Indonesian voters went to the polls to elect their president and vice-president, as well as four different levels of legislative representatives. This proved to be one of the most challenging elections in Indonesian history, as it was the first time that Indonesia held the presidential and legislative elections simultaneously. As expected, the presidential election overshadowed the legislative elections.

The 2019 presidential election was seen as a replay of the 2014 presidential election because the same presidential candidates, namely, Joko Widodo (popularly known as Jokowi) and Prabowo Subianto, were facing off against each other again. What was different were the vice-presidential candidates. Under pressure from his coalition, Jokowi had selected the 76-year-old conservative Muslim cleric Ma'ruf Amin (hereafter Ma'ruf), who was chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) and former supreme leader of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia. This was seen as a tactical move by Jokowi to combat the image that he was anti-ulama (Islamic scholar) and not religious enough. On the other hand, Prabowo picked Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno (hereafter Sandiaga), former deputy governor of Jakarta. As one of Indonesia’s most successful young entrepreneurs, the then 49-year-old Sandiaga was seen as having strong appeal to the Jakarta elite as a populist reformer, with his track record.

After the nominations for presidential candidates were formally announced on 10 August 2018, no less than 39 surveys conducted by 20 different institutions were conducted to find out how the electorate would vote. Most of the more reliable surveys found Jokowi-Ma’ruf’s support rate to be between 50 and 60 per cent, while Prabowo-Sandiaga’s support rate tended to range from 30 to 40 per cent, thus giving Jokowi-Ma’ruf a lead of about 20 per cent. Opinion polls conducted about a month before the election by most reputable pollsters, such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Charta Politika, Inda Barometer and Lingkaran Survei Indonesia (LSI) Denny JA, all pointed to a comfortable win of 18-20 per cent for the Jokowi-Ma’ruf pair.

The surveys also suggested a ‘coattail effect’ on the electability of political parties. The parties of the presidential candidates, the Indonesian Democratic Party—Struggle (PDI-P) and the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), were expected to benefit from the popularity of the presidential candidates and lead the pack. The Golkar Party, National Awakening Party (PKB), Democratic Party (PD), Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), National Democratic Party...
A pair was more likely to attract rural voters and may not be represented in the new parliament. It is unlikely to meet the threshold and therefore the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) – seemed to favor the Prabowo-Sandiaga pair. The other hand, the People's Conscience Party (Hanura) and the new political parties other than PSI and PSI – seem to favor the Jokowi-Ma'ruf pair. Given this concern, Jokowi had emphasized that in his second term, his administration will focus more on human capital quality. Jokowi’s administration will continue to spend 20% of its annual budget on education. This spending will complement the expansion of a number of social policies such as conditional cash transfer for poor households through the Family Hope Programme (PKH); the Health Care and Social Security Agency (BPJS Kesehatan); and the pre-employment card (Kartu Paker). Though these programmes may seem populist in nature they are critical in supporting lower income households and the unemployed. However, implementation challenges such as financing, targeting, and monitoring remain complex. Specifically, improving the targeting mechanism and inter-jurisdictional coordination are the biggest challenge for effective service delivery. President Jokowi also plans to reduce the regional inequality by “building from the peripheries (Vilages)”, and spending generously on infrastructure to improve connectivity across the national-wide land, sea and air areas. However, not all things are moving smoothly. For instance, his flagship toll (sea highway) project may face financing difficulties given a wide imbalance between the supply and demand of ships needed to transport goods between Java and the outer islands. Jokowi’s proposed plan to shift the capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan is also challenging. He hopes that capital relocation will boost development outside Java and thus promote regional equality. However, considering the current infrastructure bottlenecks, attracting investors to the outer islands such as Kalimantan might be wishful thinking. The recent major blackout across West Java and Greater Jakarta might make investors think twice about the state of infrastructure in the country, especially on the outer islands.

Finally, all government spending components (infrastructure, education, social programmes and subsidies) will eventually have to face the reality of a weak financing capacity. The country’s persistent weak tax revenue is a structural issue which will constrain the implementation of various government policies and programmes going forward. Maintaining macroeconomic stability amidst growing global uncertainties will be high on the agenda. Jokowi administration will maintain an expansionary fiscal policy to counter the slowing growth momentum. Though Jokowi’s persistent willingness is likely to carry on, dragging the overall fiscal balance down as his administration continues with gradual tax policy reforms. On state spending, there will hardly be any significant changes to the existing expenditure priorities such as infrastructure, education, health and various social safety-nets programmes. Considering the complexity of regional and multilateral trade agreements, Indonesia will prioritize bilateral trade and investment deals that are considered beneficial to its domestic economy. One case in point is China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Jokowi’s administration has been keen to join BRI as it is perceived to be an opportunity to support his infrastructure ambitions. While there are no official BRI projects in Indonesia to date, there has been a significant increase in Chinese FDI since 2016.

However, China’s Investment to Indonesia has declined by 29% to $2 billion in 2018 because of US-China trade tensions. Indonesia will have to look for other alternative sources to compensate for China’s FDI dip. In conclusion, success in attracting FDI will depend partly on the progress of Indonesia’s deregulation process and policy reform. However, policy reform at the sector and sub-national level will be more difficult. There are still too many problematic local regulations and hinder investment. While Jokowi’s administration has tried to scrap some of the old regulations, the Constitutional Court has ruled that the central government cannot annul regional bylaws. The Court’s decision will adversely affect the deregulation process. Indonesia needs to reform its outdated labour regulatory regime in order to ensure the development in digital economy and new types of Industries. However, a strong political will and far-reaching reforms are needed to align the interests of the central government and the outer islands, and it remains to be seen if Jokowi can surmount all his second term challenges.
The implications of a Ma’ruf Amin vice-presidency in Indonesia

Norshahril Saat

Religions are equal and no one religion can claim to be the only correct one. Liberalism was defined as the use of reason to describe the Qur’an and Sunnah. Secularism was described as the separation of worldly affairs from religious affairs. The fatwa neither offered examples to better govern Indonesia nor did it take a position on an Islamic state. Under Ma’ruf’s leadership MUI also reaffirmed its 1980 position on the Ahmadjaya sect not being part of Islam. This position was used by radicals to persecute Ahmadjaya followers. Similarly, MUI issued a fatwa questioning the legitimacy of Shi’as, and did not correct a fatwa from the East Java chapter of MUI that declared Shi’as deviant. Again, MUI’s problematic claim has allowed groups to harm followers of the sect in what is famously known as the Sampoeng Shia problem in East Java.1

As MUI leader, Ma’ruf lobbied legislators in the DPR (House of Representatives) to pressure the government to conform to his Islamic agenda. A 2012 interview with Ma’ruf indicated that MUI’s role was to give inputs to legislators and the government. He opined that the way Indonesians live and participate as citizens are guided by shariah. He also believed that MUI had a role in advising the constitutional court.2 His influence extended beyond MUI. For example, MUI had a role in advising the constitutional court. The most prominent example was his role in the 2016 protests against then-Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok). In a campaign speech, Ahok observed that Muslims should not be deceived by religious leaders who had interpreted verse 5:1 of Al-Maidah, Ahok eventually lost the Jakarta gubernatorial elections in 2017 and was jailed for blasphemy. Ma’ruf served as a key witness in the court case testifying that Ahok had indeed committed blasphemy.

What will a Ma’ruf vice-presidency look like for the next five years? Ma’ruf dresses traditionally in a sarong (a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist) and skull cap, but his views on economic, social and cultural policies are not known. He is a champion of the Islamic economy and finance, and is an advocate for the National Syariah Board in MUI. This institution oversees shariah banking and finance, and advises banks offering Islamic transactions. It is a legal requirement for shariah banks to host advisors from the National Syariah Board. These shariah advisors may decide if bank transactions meet Islamic requirements and whether they contain riba (interests), which is forbidden in Islam.3

Many MUI leaders, including Ma’ruf, have also called for ‘moral’ entertainment. They have been actively pressuring the DPR to pass the anti-pornography law. In 2012, MUI expressed displeasure when American pop artist Lady Gaga was scheduled to hold a concert in Jakarta. MUI also lobbied for legislation on halal consumption to be finalised in 2014, towards the end of the SBY administration. There was a tussle between MUI (a quasi-state institution) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs over who had the authority to issue the lucrative halal labels. It was decided that the ministry had authority over licensing while MUI could only perform an advisory role with a panel of experts who determined if products met Islamic guidelines. Lastly, Ma’ruf was also in favour of shariah tourism, not to mention the building of Shariah hotels and shariah spas to meet the demands of the conservative middle class.4 According to Ma’ruf, shariah tourism catered for the consumption requirements of Muslims. One could see this as an encouraging tour operators to engage MUI’s services such as appointing shariah advisors and applying for halal certification, all of which would incur fees to MUI’s gain.

While Ma’ruf will probably revisit his Islamic economics and foreign policy, with his involvement in objections to the plight of the Palestinians suggested. However, any fears that Ma’ruf will change Jokowi’s governing style is unfounded given the limited powers of the vice-president. Ma’ruf was once a Waspada member under the Soeharto government, yet his influence was limited. Ma’ruf’s involvement in mass rallies, for example in the Ahok case, was more of him capitalising on such platforms, riding on the unhappiness of a few groups rather than him being the mobilizer. Where Ma’ruf differs from Jokowi, he will have to defend his ideas before the broad spectrum of Indonesian society. He cannot be too conservative in front of the progressive camp, and those from Muhammadiyah, NU’s rival, who also form part of Jokowi’s presidential advisors. Early signs are that Ma’ruf will seek to be conciliatory rather than push his conservative views. Also, in a speech made in Singapore, he downplayed his conservative beliefs and appealed to audiences with the use of moderation policies as an Islamic-Ma’ruf. Whatever agenda Ma’ruf has in mind, he will have to contend with the checks and balances of a diverse parliamentary society.

Notes
2 The argument was derived from ‘yuphils’. 3 Ibid. note 1, pp.95-101.
5 From Ma’ruf’s opening speech during the 25th anniversary celebration of LIPOMU (Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs, and Cosmetics Indonesia Council of Ulama), in which he touched on syariah tourism.
The most eye-catching feature on the mid-16th century general map of China in Luo Hongxian’s influential atlas Guangyu tu is a long black strip north of China labelled shamo 沙漠: the Gobi Desert (fig.1). Visually, the desert very clearly separates China from the northern barbarians, depicting a seemingly impenetrable border. For decades, Luo Hongxian’s vision of the desert shaped the way Chinese mapmakers portrayed the Gobi Desert, emphasizing this natural border.

Later adaptations of the map, however, while keeping the shape of the desert depicted on the Guangyu tu, changed the symbol used for the desert: some mapmakers used little dots as a symbol for the sandy desert, and others just left the strip white with black contours. Maps depicting the desert in such a way were made throughout the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912), well into the 19th century.

Not all borders on Chinese maps appear as prominent as the Gobi Desert. In this section, four scholars will introduce different aspects of mapping borders and borderlands in Ming and Qing China. Sometimes, borders are even curiously missing, as Mario Coms discusses in his contribution. Qin Ying describes how in late 19th and early 20th century Yunnan, changes in the political situation resulted in officials having to quickly adapt to new circumstances. Gu Songjie introduces a mapping project that aimed to deepen knowledge of the northeastern borderlands in the 18th century. And as the Gobi Desert is a natural and not a political border, Stephen Davies looks at the border between land and sea on Chinese maritime maps.

Qing China’s Kangxi (1661–1722), Yongzheng (1722–1735), and Qianlong (1735–1796) emperors each produced large atlases of the empire they ruled, entitled Huanghai quanlan (皇輿全覽) [Overview Maps of Imperial Territories]. Different editions were produced during each of these reigns, some in the form of atlases, some in the form of large multi-sheet maps.

Maps without borders?
The Kangxi atlas covers Qing controlled territories and adjacent tributary lands such as Korea and Tibet. To this, the Yongzheng map (see QingMaps.org) adds all of the Russian Empire up to Ilgaa and Asia Minor, whereas the Qianlong map expands this scope even further to include the northern subcontinent and the Arabian Peninsula. This raises the question of how the Qing depicted its borders on these “Overview Maps of Imperial Territories”.

A quick look shows that no borders are depicted in the north, including in areas where the successive maps expanded their scope; there is no trace of a border between the Qing and Russian empires, for example, despite the existence of two border treaties, Nerchinsk (1689) and Kukhtskha (1727). Another example is the apparent absence of the Qing–Korean border. In contrast, in the southwest of Qing territories, dotted lines trace the border that Yunnan province shared with what is now Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. Similarly, only on the Kangxi and Yongzheng maps, dotted lines surround unmapped blank pockets in Guizhou province that constituted tribal lands. Thus, it seems external borders in the southwest are clearly indicated, whereas legally confirmed borders in the north and northwest did not find their way onto these large multi-sheet maps. How can we explain this paradox?

Space versus territory
A closer look reveals that borders internal to the Qing are emphasized and exaggerated. One such border is the Willow Palisades, long since in disrepair by the time these atlases were produced, which separated Mongols from Manchus and runs from the Great Wall northeast of Beijing all the way around Mukden (Shenyang) and Kirin (Jilin), with one stretch branching off towards the undepicted border with Korea. On the other hand, there is the Great Wall itself, most of it built as a defensive structure during the late Ming precisely in order to keep the Manchu at bay. Like the Willow Palisades, this border is greatly exaggerated, giving the false impression that it formed one uninterrupted and uniform wall from east to west (fig.2). With this, Qing court maps stress one of the hallmarks of Qing rule: the interrupted and uniform wall from east to west (fig.2). With this, Qing court maps stress one of the hallmarks of Qing rule: the separate administration, territorially defined, of Manchu, Mongols, and Han (later also including the Tibetans and the mostly Muslim population in the ‘western regions’ 西域).

The absence of legally defined external borders combined with a strong emphasis on internal borders can be understood by considering the difference between imperial territory and its prerequisite, imperial space. Taken as a whole, these maps communicate Qing space and therefore leave open the possibility of further expansion and conquest, particularly in the direction of the court’s northwest-oriented gaze. On the other hand, it was imperative for this minority-rulled empire to distinguish between the Manchu, Mongol and Han territories it effectively controlled. Beyond this, Tibetan and Korean tributary lands were also covered under the imperial umbrella, but these lands are mostly separated by river systems so that no border needed to be drawn. In the southwest, where the dotted line delineates Yunnan, we are in fact also dealing with an internal border of sorts, separating the province from more tributary lands (left blank in this case).

The fact that provinces are also separated by a dotted line where no natural border is present confirms this thesis. In short, whereas these court maps as a whole communicate a universal and therefore a theoretically borderless imperial space, they clearly distinguish among the imperial territories, including tributary states that made up and defined the Qing order. In other words, it is not at the edge but at the very center of these maps that we find ourselves at the borders of Qing cartography.
In 1899, the government office Huidian guan (Office of Collected Statutes) ordered every province to collect and make maps of their territory. As a result, a year later, a special office for making maps was established, and in 1896, all provinces made a second announcement, specifying the technical regulations for the project. The resulting atlas that combined the surveys from all provinces was titled Daqing huidian yutu (Chart of the Great Qing by the Huidian Office).

Every province exceeded the given time limit of one year, most of them finishing within three to five years. Some of the maps were printed, while some were manuscript drafts when the provinces sent the maps to the Huidian guan. The quality of the maps varied from slightly updated old maps to excellent new surveys. On the Yunnan quansheng yutu (Complete Maps of Yunnan Province), the atlas of Yunnan Province made for the Daqing huidian yutu, for example, only the regions around the capital of Yunnan used new surveying techniques, while other parts of the province continued to use old mapping material, only updating the legends, and adding a grid with latitude and longitude. This situation of the mapping of Yunnan province is partly representative of other regions in China at that time.

Today, at least four manuscript sets of the Huidian guan yutu are extant. Two of them are kept in Beijing, one in Chengdu, and one in Kunming. As the border between China and French Annam was disputed and undergoing changes during the time when the maps had to be sent to the Huidian guan, studying these maps and other maps of Yunnan related to them, reveals how late Qing central and local government officials carefully edited information about borders. In 1896, the previous governor of Yunnan and Guizhou, Song Fan (1857-1905), presented the maps to the emperor. From his memorial to the throne, we learn that there were indeed officials in Yunnan province who compiled the maps. Material from every county arrived in the provincial capital, Kunming, where a committee combined the information from all around Yunnan and corrected errors.

After the completion of the maps in 1899, the political situation changed at the border between China and French Annam, and a year later, Mengwu 姜吾 and Wude 勃德 (today in northern Laos), were signed over to French Annam in a treaty after the Sino-Japanese war. As the office for compiling the Daqing huidian yutu urged the province to quickly send the documents in 1896, the compilers of the Yunnan province atlas only had time to add notes to each instance of Mengwu and Wude appearing in the atlas in each of the four editions, explaining the disputed nature. The governor of Yunnan also sent another copy of the atlas to the Guangxu emperor (1875–1908), and two further copies were archived in the local government – a standard administrative procedure. This is why we have four similar drafts of the Yunnan quansheng yutu today. The Daqing huidian yutu also influenced new local gazetteers. While the map material in Yuan Ye’s Xu Yunnan tongzhi (1874–1899) Yunnan tongzhi gao (Complete Map of Yunnan Province) and the 1899 Yunnan tongzhi gao (Complete Map of Yunnan Province) was still based on surveys of the Kangxi and Qianlong periods, Tang Jiông’s (1829–1909) Xu Yunnan tongzhi gao (Complete Map of Yunnan Province), printed in 1899 and 1901, already uses the new mapping style of the Daqing huidian yutu (fig.3). In his gazetteers, Tang Jiông provides clear written descriptions about the situation of the French-Chinese border at Mengwu and Wude, thus accomplishing what the compilers of the Yunnan quansheng yutu had not been able to do due to time constraints. His two editions of the Xu Yunnan tongzhi gao were produced in Sichuan, and so one set of the Yunnan quansheng yutu is now collected in Chengdu. The manuscripts of the Yunnan quansheng yutu are important documents as they preserve the original outline of the maps presented to the central government. Their editing history shows us that late Qing mapmakers paid great attention to changing borders and that they and compilers of gazetteers reacted quickly to new political situations.

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Notes
1. Fu, B.C. 2016. ‘Mapping maritime power and control: a study of the late nineteenth century Qiling yangtou ju (a coastal map of the seven provinces)’, Late Imperial China 37(2):98.
In 1775, the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1735–1796) read through the Old Manchu Archives (滿文老檔 Manwen laodang) and discovered that they mentioned many places in Manchuria, but he could not find a map that showed the location of these places. As he considered it important to have a map of the homeland of his ancestors, and in order to preserve the Manchu identity, he initiated a mapping project of this region, resulting in the Territorial Map of Military Deeds in Shengjing, Jilin, and Heilongjiang (地圖). Qianlong’s goal for this Map of Military Deeds was to commemorate his ancestors and to display the military achievements of the conquest in China’s northeast before the Manchus had established Beijing as the capital of the Qing in 1644.

To make the map, Qianlong ordered officials to check the Old Manchu Archives, the Gazetteer of Shengjing (盛京志 Shengjing zhi), the Venerable Records (Shizu 实錄), and the military achievements of the Manchu people: “… All the achievements that happened at this place”.1 The note next to Sarhū Mountain, for example, reads: “In the third month of the fourth year Tianning 天命 [April/May 1619], 470,000 Ming soldiers came to attack from different directions and so Emperor Taizu 太祖 [Nurhaci, 1559–1626] gathered 60,000 soldiers in this place”.2

The editors combined 2,313 place names – of which over 700 appeared on a map for the first time – with 144 annotations in both Manchu and Chinese. It took them two years to complete the map project and in May 1778, the Map Bureau (圖頁房 Yutu fang) requested compensation for the work. By that time, Šuhede had already passed away, so Agūi had become the minister in charge of the project. Two months later, in July 1778, Agūi, together with other ministers presented the map to the emperor. The Map of Military Deeds was handed over to the Hall of Military Excellence (武英殿 Wuying dian) for publication in March 1779 and was subsequently printed.

This map made by the Qing government added more than a third of place names compared to previous maps. This way, the north-eastern borders became much better known and the map is a valuable document for studying Qing dynasty knowledge of the borders and the place names of the people at the north-eastern border.

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Notes
1 First Historical Archives of China, memorial 05-08-030-000007-0033, 1778.
2 idem.
The European Alliance for Asian Studies is a co-operative platform of European Institutions specialising in the study of Asia. The aim of the Alliance, established in 1993, is to bring together the various competences and expertise on Asia and Asian Studies found in Europe, strengthening this rich and unique tapestry of academic endeavour found in this region. The Alliance, moreover, facilitates a multi-level cooperation channel between its members, while it sets out to raise public awareness on the scholarly excellence they offer to the benefit of their constituencies and national and transnational environments.

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The contact address for the Alliance is the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden. Please contact dr. Willem Vogelsang, w.vogelsang@iias.nl for further information.

The above-first page from Fuglerig Sænmbel’s treatise on Tonkin dated 1629, digitalised as a part of Orientalia Polonica project.

Understanding Asia: a view from the Polish perspective
Kamila Junik-Łuniewska

Asian Studies as a separate field of study was introduced at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in 2013. Assuming five years as the necessary time span for a student to complete the BA and then Masters, 2019 saw the first generation of alumni specializing in various topics concerning Asia. Jagiellonian University’s engagement with Asia and also the tradition of Asia-related (and Asia-centred) studies in Poland both go far beyond these mentioned years. However, the last years were crucial in developing a methodology of both teaching about and researching Asia in Poland, in which the Institute of the Middle and Far East, the youngest unit of the Faculty of International and Political Studies and a new member of the European Alliance for Asian Studies, has a leading role.

The aim of this article is to introduce the main ways in which Asia has been approached in an innovative and interdisciplinary manner at the Institute of the Middle and Far East. How do we — its faculty – teach to understand the complexity of Asian contexts in order to equip the students with certain knowledge and skills, useful also in the rising business and economic environment in Poland and abroad. The emphasis will be put on the interdepartmental and international cooperation and projects both already conducted and planned for the nearest future.

“We teach how to comprehend the world”:
Asian Studies in Kraków

Although the Jagiellonian University (JU) has a long history of 656 years, the Faculty of International and Political Studies was brought to life in the year 2000. Its founding mission was to disseminate the achievements of the theoretical thought and research applied in the humanities and social sciences. The actions taken were aimed at ensuring the highest quality of scientific research (especially of interdisciplinary nature) and didactic effects – under the motto “We teach how to comprehend the world”. The studies developed in the fields of International Studies, Political Science as well as Area Studies focused on dynamically changing relations between cultural, political, economic, and social factors in the Western world, but also — what is most important here — in the Non-Western Civilisations (i.e., Asia, Africa, South America, and the post-Soviet region). During almost 20 years of its existence, it has grown into 16 separate fields of study, connected both in Polish and English, and in cooperation with international institutions. Among the subjects offered, the most popular are: American Studies, Latin American Studies, International Migrations, Political Science, Russian Studies, European Studies, Cultural Studies, and Asian Studies.

Initially, Asian Studies were a specialty within the field of Cultural Studies, and concentrated mainly on the Middle and Far East. The two modules were organized at The Chair of the Middle and Far East – established around the same time as the Faculty. Its founder, the late Professor Andrzej Kapluzewski, himself a diplomat and an erudite, saw the urgent need and importance for Asian-centred research in the globalizing world – but not only in the shape of studies on the region, but also as an in-depth multidisciplinary research. His dream and vision have been expanded

Below: First page from Fuglerig Sænmbel’s treatise on Tonkin dated 1629, digitalised as a part of Orientalia Polonica project.
by his successors: Professor Adam Jelonek, who managed to transform the Chair into the Chair of Asian Studies, and Professor Kocieński, who developed a separate Asian Studies programme taught since 2013. This indicates that the future of our Asian Studies lies in the combination of methodological approaches. They grew out of experience of almost 30 years of teaching, studying and rethinking Asia. What distinguishes Asian studies from Cultural Studies is primarily a strong emphasis on the regional specificity of Asian studies as compared with studies on social, political and economic phenomena in a given region. The uniqueness of the region is evidenced by its inter-disciplinary approach, and justified, above all, by the multilevel character of the cultural-historical, philosophical, cultural and religious contexts. The distinctive feature of the studies is the concept of mastering the language, characteristic for the region or country concerned, at a practical level. Students who develop interest in language and culture as such have the opportunity to participate in advanced courses in business language or culture courses.

The teaching program was prepared based on several innovative solutions, the most significant being a change in the Orientalist perception of Asia in exchange for focusing on regional studies. In a wide space of the model studies of the Faculty of Oriental languages (Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Hindi, but also others) which can be found, but also classes related to the multifaceted specificity of the region, which can cover several levels of the region (local, national, regional, international), society, politics, security, and economy. For this – in a very short span of time – our Asian Studies program has already been honored (twice) with the prestigious Polish distinction “Studies with a Future.” The study program also aims at teaching academic and foreign language knowledge, by developing specific skills and competences to analyse social, political and economic cultural phenomena of the given region/country. It enables meetings with diplomats, practitioners and representatives of public administration and business, but also gives the opportunity to participate in work-related practice courses as well as for academic seminars, as well as for seminars in the fields of business or culture. Furthermore, the courses shall be taught by academics who are experts from the field of Bangladeshi Studies and from the area of Asian studies and economy. To make the knowledge and understanding of Bangladesh and South Asia more broadly available to students, to the wider academic community, and to the general public, a Bangladeshi Lecture Series will be organized. Within the Series, scholars and experts from the field of Bangladesh Studies – from Bangladesh and other countries – will present their lectures on Bangladesh issues.

International cooperation: Europe and beyond

The Institute of the Middle and Far East actively cooperates with many institutions all over the world on the basis of international agreements signed at the faculty as well as at the university level. Its students and employees take part in both Polish and foreign research projects. It also participates in the European Erasmus Mundus Program, which maintains wide international contacts with universities in China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and other countries in Asia, as well as many countries in Europe, the Middle East, Indonesia, Israel, Syria, Algeria and Kuwait, successfully running a Visiting Professors’ Program. In 2019, when I was in Krakow, I had the opportunity to mention two most advanced collaborations with Asian institutions, namely with the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and with Kobe Foreign Studies University in Japan. The Institute of the Middle and Far East has had an intensive cooperation with Kobe University, which is a top-rated institution of Higher Education in Japan. Both Kobe University (KU) and the Institute have also exchanged students. The cooperation has been ongoing at the level of teaching staff thanks to the Erasmus+ Program as well as on the basis of the mutual agreement signed in 2017 (which was extended in June 2019). During the 2018/2019 academic year KU sent professors to give lectures on Japan and provide consultation at the Institute within the framework of the ‘Kobe Lectures Series’. Contemporary Japan in Global Perspective’. The lectures comprise topics such as ‘Poland-Japan relations through the lens of cultural identity’, ‘Language and literature of Japan’, ‘Japanese contemporary culture’, ‘Question of atomic energy in Japan: political and economic aspects’ and ‘Multiple modernities in contemporary Japan: focusing on the case of Japan and its meaning to the world modernization’, to mention but a few. The Institute of the Middle and Far East includes in its structure the first and the largest Model Confucius Institute in Poland. It was co-established by the Beijing Foreign Studies University and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow in 2006 as the first Confucius Institute in Poland. From its inception it has been very active in teaching about China and promoting Chinese culture in various ways. It conducts Chinese language courses at different levels for students and the general public of every age. This means business in China is crucial for the children in fact. In 2013, the Confucius Institute has developed an impressive cooperation with a few universities (i.e., the Institute of the Middle and Far East with Chinese classes, but also facilitating the possibility to make Chinese compulsory in one of them). Several books, including the first all-level Chinese language textbooks in Polish have been published under the Confucius Institute’s auspices.

Besides the Jagiellonian University, the Institute also collaborates with other universities in Korea, Taiwan and India. The list could be longer. It is important to note that most of these universities offer Chinese studies at the level of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes. In this light, the tradition of Chinese studies in the Jagiellonian University can be traced back to the mid-19th century. As a result of this tradition, the forgotten intellectual achievements of Polish researchers and orientalists has been restored and included in the contemporary discussion, not only in Poland, but also abroad, on the occasion of various international conferences, etc. The project – planned for continuation in the coming years – also enabled the integration of the representatives of the Jagiellonian Asian-oriented research units. It has also strengthened the international dimension of the research conducted at the University, which is evidenced by the significant number of international publications, conference papers and research projects that have been initiated and continued by the students and staff of the Institute.

To add to the students’ linguistic and cultural background, the courses also provide opportunities for students to get involved in a cultural and social life on campus by organizing study trips, courses, conferences, and courses on local culture. In the case of Japan and its meaning to the world modernization, it is extremely important for students to get involved in the cultural and social life of this country by participating in the projects that are organized by the Institute. Future prospects

The change of approach in Asia-oriented research, which was the foundation stone of the Institute of the Middle and Far East almost 20 years ago, happened in a response to changing realities of the world, growing importance of Asian countries and cultures, and increased role of Asian researchers and professionals in various sectors of administration and economy. To borrow from the motto of the Faculty of the Institute of the Middle and Far East, “We teach how to comprehend the world”, the main focus here is to “Teach how to comprehend Asia” in its complexity, and also be able to deliver an in-depth research and study programme on Asia, maintaining the political, social, cultural, and economic contexts, as well as the historical and traditional background. In this light, the Orientalia Polonica Journal is co-owned by representative countries, which were published between 2010-2018. All the selected source texts have also been digitized and are accessible on the platform of the Jagiellonian Digital Library available under a separate tab: Projects – Orientalia Polonica.

As a result, the forgotten intellectual achievement of Polish researchers and orientalists has been restored and included in the contemporary discussion, not only in Poland, but also abroad, on the occasion of various international conferences, etc. The project – planned for continuation in the coming years – also enabled the integration of the representatives of the Jagiellonian Asian-oriented research units. It has also strengthened the international dimension of the research conducted at the University, which is evidenced by the significant number of international publications, conference papers and research projects that have been initiated and continued by the students and staff of the Institute.
Looking back at ‘Reading Leiden: An Experiential School’
11-15 July 2019, Leiden

In the period of 11-15 July 2019, the Humanities across Borders’ programme organised its first summer school, Reading Leiden: An Experiential School, for the researchers associated with its projects in parts of West Africa, Asia and South East Asia. The aim of the school was to collectively experience and test the heuristic pedagogies encouraged by the programme. The school was both an experiential and experimental exercise in learning through in-situ immersion. The participants were divided into three groups through which they had to filter their experience of ‘reading’ Leiden. These were: Neighbourhood, Storytelling and Craft. For each day, a theme was identified and the activities of the day were organised accordingly.

Walks, lectures and workshops
On 11 July 2019 Laura Plezier and Willem Vogelsang guided the group through eighteen sites around Leiden, recalling their history, stories and design. The theme of the day was “town and gown”, focussing on the transition of Leiden from its industrial background to a city wherein a university has come to play a central role. The sites visited included the Beestenmarkt, Lakenhal, Brug, Marrekier, Hartebrugkerk, old Brill offices (publisher) and the Bakkerij, Hooglandse Kerkgracht, Hooglandse Church, houses of the Pilgrims, the Burcht, Korenbrug, Stadhuis, Politiebureau, Van der Werf park, house of Jan Steen, Pieterskerk en Hofje van Lannooy, Academie Gebouw, Hortus botanicus, Groenestein, and some more as we came across them. The walk was peppered with personal anecdotes and details that helped the researchers ‘read’ Leiden.

For most participants the tension between Leiden’s Catholic past and transition to a Protestant space in the seventeenth century, also reflected in which churches (Protestant or Catholic) were allowed to be built or who could access facilities like almshouses and orphanages, were surprising. Such differences highlighted how these can also cross cultures and boundaries of space. Rather than the seeing them from the ‘western’ gaze, the key was in experiencing Leiden through the researcher’s own gaze. This perspective was encouraged throughout the school and was a liberating experience for many.

Su Sandy, an MA student from Myanmar: “I came to notice that things and words in our daily life have their own stories and we can learn about the history and the communities behind them”. While at the eleventh century Burcht of Leiden (fortress), Laura encouraged us to imagine it not as we see it in 2019, but to locate ourselves around 1650 when it was turned into a theme park and a labyrinth. To experience the same place as a defence structure, a theme park with statues and a labyrinth, or a pub where now two majestic trees grow, helped us to understand and experience how a city interacts with the built structures and the different meanings a place can have at different periods of time.

The walk around Leiden was followed by a lecture by Paul Rabé (coordinator of IBA’s Urban Knowledge Network Asia – UKNA), who located the growth of Leiden as a university town, and helped us to recognise the tensions that emerge in spaces where such transitions take place. Thomas Voorter, SAS, led the following session with a discussion on the dynamics of creating narratives through the online Hall ‘Accession Card’ (the Hall digital repository in the making). Day 1 ended with a brief by Maria Zwanenburg, an independent repository in the making). Day 1 ended with a discussion on the dynamics of creating narratives through the online Hall ‘Accession Card’ (the Hall digital repository in the making). Day 1 ended with a brief by Maria Zwanenburg, an independent indigo practitioner and artist, about what to expect on the second day and how craft is an embodied practice. The focus of day 2 was ‘craft practice’.

On 12 July, the second day, the researchers went to the Museum de Lakenhal. While on the first day the information was more historical, the tour of the space that once ensured the quality of the woolen cloth produced in Leiden, gave the researchers a deeper sense of craft practices. Jori Zijlmons, the textile curator, patiently explained the processes through which the quality was ensured before the cloth went to market and the importance of the guild in the trade network. Through her explanation, we could also de-sanitise the many paintings that adorn the Museum, where the dyers and weavers all look squeaky clean and happy, and child labour is portrayed in very subtle forms.

This tour was followed by a mad dash through the rain for a lecture by Maikel Kuijpers, who as an archaeologist looks at the production of craft in the Bronze Age. His documentary ‘The Future is Handmade’ shows how craft is actually “a way of exploring and understanding the material world” and as Maria reflected, “craft is a different type of knowledge [perhaps] different from academic knowledge but knowledge nonetheless”. The lecture brought out a range of reflections for many of the researchers who come from spaces where traditional crafts still play a major role. At Taiwan National University of Arts, the course Blue across Borders was introduced in 2017 (supported by HaB) with the aim of bringing a shift in the perception of art and craft, and to take the students out of the classroom. Through a blend of classroom teaching, workshops and working through the process of dye making and dyeing, indigo is used to explore and understand the world through its many layers.

In continuation of the theme, the other visits – Museum Leids Wevershuis and a craft brewery Pronck - brought different types of realisations. Win Win Soe from Myanmar found it revealing that in her country handicraft does not find much space in terms of exposure or preservation even though it is found in all corners, whilst in Leiden, currently mainly a university town, crafts (specifically weaving and indigo dyeing) are being preserved through the efforts of individuals (often volunteers) as sites of memory and cultural heritage after they were mostly lost in the 1970s.

On the second field visit of the day to Pronck, we were exposed to yet another revival of a craft, which had become lost in the twentieth century Netherlands with industrialisation: beer production. Benjamin Wegman, a former tax lawyer turned brewer, explained the brewing process of the seven flavours of Pronck beer. Mesha Murail (research assistant, Centre for Community Knowledge, Delhi), shared the following words: “Craft was an area that I had very little knowledge and understanding of. When we were told that we would be looking at ‘craft’ as a methodology, the first thing that came to mind was that we would be looking at ‘traditional’ practices. This understanding of craft came from the way craft is perceived in India, as a practice that is ‘traditional’ and dying out. However, after our visits to the Weavershuis and Pronck brewery in Leiden, a different meaning of craft started to take form. The discussions and presentations during and after the visit made us realise that craft has more to do with techniques, ideas and scale than just history. For instance, the brewery that we visited sold ‘crafted beer’, but had no link to the traditional forms of making beer. From the equipment used to the factory itself, everything was ‘modern’. But since there was a certain time investment and thought put into the kind of ingredients and resources sourced for the production of beer, the people working at the factory saw it as craft rather than factory production”.

The second day ended with a briefing by Surajit Sarkar (Associate Professor and Coordinator at the Centre for Community Knowledge (CCK), Ambedkar University, Delhi) about the theme of ‘storytelling’. He guided the group in how in one can read a place and what to observe or take note of.

The third day started with an exploration of the Saturday market in the city centre. During the previous days the researchers had experienced the craft, culture and history of
Leiden, but the Saturday market was a riot of experiences – sensorial, business practices, politics, and culture. The market, with its diversity of people, products, and traditions, offered a unique opportunity to understand the work of the Aalmoeshuis.

The Saturday market was a vibrant hub of activity, with the hustle and bustle of the crowd, the smell of fresh flowers, and the sounds of haggling and negotiation. The market was a reflection of the city’s diversity, with people from different cultural backgrounds interacting and trading. It was a place where the city’s history, traditions, and contemporary practices coexisted.

The market experience was followed by a guided tour of Leiden, which included a visit to the Aalmoeshuis. The tour was led by Aarti Kawlra, Academic Director of the Humanities Across Borders School. The tour was an opportunity to understand the purpose and history of the almshouse, which was established in 1379 to provide housing and care for the elderly and the indigent.

The Aalmoeshuis is a significant example of Renaissance architecture, with its distinctive facade and intricate design. The building has undergone several transformations over the centuries, and it is now a museum that highlights the history of the almshouse and its role in the city’s development.

The guided tour was an opportunity to learn about the history of the building and its significance in the context of civic life. The tour also included a visit to the museum’s collection of historical artifacts, which provided additional insights into the daily lives of the residents of the almshouse.

The tour concluded with a visit to the Museum Leids Wevers Huis, which is a former weavers’ house that has been restored and transformed into a museum. The museum is dedicated to the history of weavers and the textile industry in Leiden, and it features exhibits on the history of weaving and the production of textiles.

The museum tour was an opportunity to learn about the history of the textile industry in Leiden, which played a significant role in the city’s economic development. The museum’s exhibits provided insights into the techniques and tools used by weavers, and the challenges they faced in their work.

The experience of visiting the Aalmoeshuis and the Museum Leids Wevers Huis was a valuable opportunity to learn about the history and culture of Leiden. The guided tour and museum visit provided a deeper understanding of the city’s past and its impact on its present-day character. The experience also highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

As the group left the museum, they were left with a sense of awe and respect for the history and culture of Leiden. The city’s rich heritage and vibrant cultural life offer a unique opportunity for visitors to explore and learn about the city’s past and present.

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Cara had designed the workshop in such a way that it was both a cultural journey and the opportunity to experience the subtle working of the brush itself. It was limited to a maximum of 15 participants per workshop because Cara wanted to be able to give her attention to all the participants while they were trying out the brush themselves. Before the participants set to work, Cara introduced the Four Treasures of Chinese Calligraphy (brush, ink, inkstone and paper), while touching upon its long history and lasting significance and role in contemporary Chinese society.

A Chinese brush, made of different types of animal hair, is round and pointy and typically has a flat part to rub the ink on paper. The type of paper also has a significant impact. Rice paper, for example, absorbs the ink much more strongly than ordinary drawing paper, which has a strong effect on the interaction between brush and paper. Other objects used include paperweights to hold down the paper, brush rests, and brush washers (used to dilute the ink on the brush if it gets too thick), and water droppers to gently add water when grinding the ink stick on the inkstone.

The quality of the ink, in terms of width and consistency, is one of the most crucial aspects of calligraphy. The ink consists of soot and a binder (glue) and comes in ink sticks, which are rubbed with water on an inkstone until the calligrapher is satisfied with the consistency of the liquid ink. The inkstone itself contains no ink. It is fixed in many shapes, sometimes beautifully decorated, and typically have a flat part to rub the ink on and a reservoir for the liquid ink. The quality of the ink, how much ink the calligrapher allows the brush to absorb, and how much he lets flow on the paper all affect the result.

Not surprisingly, as Cara explained, Chinese calligraphy is regarded as one of the highest forms of art in China. A good piece of calligraphy, most importantly, conveys emotion; the state of mind of the calligrapher is crucial, the result personal and unique. After the workshop, Cara told me the story of the ‘Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion’ (or Lanting Xu) by Wang Xizhi (303-385), who is regarded as the greatest calligrapher in Chinese history. In 353, Wang invited a large group of literary friends to his Orchid Pavilion. They sat down alongside a stream and held a drinking contest. Wine was sent floating down the stream and the nearest person to where it stopped had to compose a poem, or drink three cups of wine. By the end of the day, they had produced 37 poem and Wang wrote his famous Preface on the spot. Because the text contained some errors, he decided to rewrite it a few days later, but no matter how hard he tried, he was unable to capture the atmosphere from that day by the stream. Dissatisfied with his new work, he decided to stick with the original text. Cherished as a masterpiece, it was buried with the Emperor in his mausoleum. Today, only copies remain, errors and all.
The Network
The Newsletter
No. 84  Autumn 2019

The participants at work in the IIAS conference room.
Below: Cara explains the strokes of the character ‘yong’ to the participants.

Participants
The participants had different motives for joining the workshop. Most of them already had some experience and wished to learn more, for example, about the difference between Japanese and Chinese calligraphy. For others, it was a new experience, as it was for our very own Newsletter designer, Paul Oram, who also attended the workshop. With his affinity and love for graphic design, he didn’t have to think twice when he saw that this workshop was being offered. In the space of just two hours, it was, of course, impossible to do full justice to all aspects of Chinese calligraphy, let alone the enormous history and culture that goes along with it. However, based on the feedback I received, I can safely conclude that the introduction was widely appreciated, and indeed a great success.

This workshop was a highlight for me during my week at Leiden, and I feel truly blessed to have had this opportunity. Thank you so much Cara for that wonderful teaching, of the skill, and its philosophy, all within the span of an hour!

The way that the workshop was organised, with all the authentic material, the brushes, the ink sticks and ink stones, and Cara shared with us her very special ink stone which was a gift from her father … It all added to us appreciating how it is an art in itself, with so much of tradition, skill and philosophy in it. Form the carefully thought out strokes for beginners’ practice to the character that we learnt, ‘eternity’, it felt very surreal, and resonated at a deep level.

– Sonali Mishra, University of Delhi.

Cara Yuan
Cara Yuan is a professional artist, photographer and calligraphy teacher. She was born and raised in China. Her father is an artist, specialised in Chinese painting, her grandfather a Chinese calligrapher. She started Chinese calligraphy at a very young age, exhibiting her work in China and Japan before her 20th birthday. In 1998, Cara moved to the Netherlands to study at the Amsterdam University of the Arts to become a teacher. Cara’s work as an artist (Chinese water-based ink techniques, abstract painting and photography) is characterised by a mix of Eastern and Western influences. Visit her website at: www.carayuan.nl

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form, practised by many, and not just in the ‘scholar’s studio’. To illustrate this, Cara showed a photo of people working on a piece of calligraphy, using a huge brush and water, on the tiles of a park in Beijing.

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IIAS Report
I
organised several panels and workshops. Its members were
of the European Alliance for Asian Studies. Also present were delegates
most of them were of course busy managing
members of the IIAS staff could attend, as
and we were good to go. Throughout the ICAS
of the partners in the IIAS Cultural Programme),
bit to eat while standing or sitting in the garden
atmosphere cheerful, and having a drink and a
pleasant and quiet meeting place for quite a
week, the garden had already served as a
building, which dates to the early seventeenth
century, had been stopped for the duration
of ICAS. Our garden had been adorned with
beautiful plants and (small) trees, on loan from
the IIAS garden

The reception was attended by participants
the annual Dussera procession, one of the many festivals
to gather on the steps of Adham Khan’s Tomb (Dehli, India)
Delhi and IIAS. As the sun starts to set, local residents start
to the Mehrauli Neighbourhood Museum, part of the Urban
them and the professionalism involved.
enormous amount of work done by the ICAS
to the ICAS Cultural Programme (e.g., organising the two calligraphy
experience. Contributing to the ICAS Cultural
programmes:

I hope you enjoy the pictures. The shortlisted photos can be found here:
https://tinyurl.com/2019IIASphotocontest

Winners in the category “IIAS events and activities”

IIAS 11 marked the conclusion of the
25th year of existence of the International Institute for Asian Studies, one of the
co-organisers of ICAS 11 and the home-base of the ICAS Team. On 17 July, we welcomed
guests to a sunlit reception in the garden
of our stately house along the Rampenburger
canal in the centre of Leiden. It served a
double function, being both the venue for the
Award Ceremony of the 2019 IIAS Photo Contest and for the member meeting of the
European Alliance for Asian Studies.

Fortunately, the renovation works of our
building, which dates to the early seventeenth
century, had been stopped for the duration
of ICAS. Our garden had been adorned with
beautiful plants and (small) trees, on loan from
the Leiden University Botanical Gardens (one of the partners in the IIAS Cultural Programme),
and we were good to go. Throughout the ICAS
week, the garden had already served as a
pleasant and quiet meeting place for quite a
few participants. The weather was glorious, the
atmosphere cheerful, and having a drink and a
bite to eat while standing or sitting in the garden
with old and new friends was truly wonderful.

The reception was attended by participants
of the ICAS programme and others who were
curious to see the nerve centre of ICAS and IIAS as well as members of the IIAS board and
Academic Committee. Ironically, only a few
members of the IIAS staff could attend, as
most of them were of course busy managing
the conference. Also present were delegates of the European Alliance for Asian Studies.
Established in 1997, the Alliance brings
together universities and academic institutions
from throughout Europe. Its members were
prominent in the ICAS 11, and they organised several panels and workshops.

With its secretariat co-managed by IIAS and
IIAS in Denmark, the reception served as a
meeting place to discuss new developments
concerning Asian Studies in Europe.

IIAS Photo Contest 2019

The reception was also the venue for the
Award Ceremony of the IIAS Photo Contest
2019. Earlier this year, we launched a photo
competition to involve our contacts in our
birthday festivities in a creative way, just as
we did on the occasion of our 20th anniversary
in 2013. For the competition, we had invited
photographs based on two themes. The first
focused on “25 years of IIAS”, asking for photos
of IIAS-related events and activities. The second
theme related to the special motto of ICAS 11,
namely “Asia and Europe: Asia in Europe.”

Nearly 230 photographs were submitted, and the final selection was made by a jury of three.
The six best photos, three per category, along
with twenty-one further photos on the jury’s joint
shortlist were displayed inside the IIAS offices. There was also a continuous slide show with
all the entries on the big screen TV in the IIAS
conference room. The winners were announced
in a speech given by IIAS Deputy Director Willem
Vogelsang; three of them were present at the
reception and could be congratulated in person.
Space here is limited, with room only to print
during the ICAS period.

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Space here is limited, with room only to print
the winning pictures on these pages. However,
we have published the 21 shortlisted photos
on our website. Most of these pictures fall into
the category “Asia and Europe: Asia in Europe.”

While this ICAS theme dealt with various
contemporary social and geo-political aspects
of the centuries-long contacts between Europe
and Asia, the photo competition concentrated on
the visual evidence of these contacts. The call for
photographs formulated it as follows: “Asia and
Europe have a long history of mutual exchange
and influence, reflected both in past relics
and contemporary phenomena, including art,
knowledge, philosophy and religion, diplomatic
ties, trade and industry, and diaspora. Let your
imagination roam free!” It yielded a wide variety
of interesting and fun pictures.

It was a real pleasure to receive and view
so many marvellous and interesting images.
I would like to thank everyone for sending in
their photographs, and for the joy they brought.
I would also like to take the opportunity here,
to again thank my colleagues who sacrificed
precious time in their busy work schedule
around the organisation of ICAS, especially Elke
Idzenga, who was part of the core ICAS Team,
and Kafkia Hooistra. As members of the jury, they
went through all the entries and descriptions with
great attention. Thanks also to Thomas Voorter
for the IT support and Annesmarie van Leeuwen
for organising the reception!

This was my first ICAS, and I am very happy
to have had the opportunity to share in the experience. Contributing to the ICAS Cultural
Programme (e.g., organising the two calligraphy
workshops taking place at IIAS, see next page),
I have gained a better appreciation of the
enormous amount of work done by the ICAS
team and the professionalism involved.

The best part, however, was to get a taste of
the “ICAS vibe” first hand. It was so wonderful
to see so many people from so many different
places connect — some of them during the reception at IIAS.
I hope you enjoy the pictures. The shortlisted photos can be found here:
https://tinyurl.com/2019IIASphotocontest

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The Newsletter No. 84  Autumn 2019

Winners in the category ‘Asia and Europe. Asia in Europe’

Above: Jukka Aukia
Local boy playing with billiard balls in a Whistler sports bar in downtown Shanghai, 2016

Right: Emmanuelle Peyvel,
Honeymoon in Bana, Vietnam
This photo was taken in Bana’s hill station, in the center of Vietnam. First established by the French settlers, the original buildings are long gone. The station was entirely rebuilt as a French village imitation by Vingroup, a Vietnamese joint stock company. The village has its own cable car station, castle and cathedral. Associated with French romanticism, the station is a popular backdrop for honeymoon photos.

Above: William Peterson,
Boys and girls at the Voyadores Festival in Naga City, Bicol, Philippines, in 2017.
At the Voyadores Festival, which runs in conjunction with the massive Penafria Festival, Asia’s largest Marian religious event, boys and girls engage in ‘street dancing’ in competitive teams. In this dance, the boys play the part of the ‘voyadores’, who row small boats tethered to a barge that returns the sacred effigy of Mother Mary, known locally as ‘Ina’, to her permanent year-round home in a basilica upriver.
IIAS/Rijksmuseum Annual Lecture: The Kingdom of Śrīvijaya

We warmly invite our readers to this year’s IIAS/Rijksmuseum Annual Lecture by Professor Emeritus Pierre-Yves Manguin of the École française d’Extrême-Orient.

The Lecture

A century after its ‘discovery’ by George Cœdès, what is the current state of knowledge about this powerful Malay maritime polity? How can such a prestigious kingdom in its time remain so elusive for archaeologists and historians today? Its origins, the location of its political centre in Southeast Sumatra, its territorial extent, the nature of its political and cultural influence have all been the subject of heated debates since 1918. Research carried out during the last three decades has settled many issues, but still leaves numerous riddles unanswered.

The Speaker

Pierre-Yves Manguin is an emeritus professor at the École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO, French School of Asian Studies). His research focuses on the history and archaeology of coastal states, trade networks, and ships of Southeast Asia. He has led archaeological work in Indonesia (South Sumatra and West Java) and Vietnam (Mekong Delta) and published on themes related to maritime history and archaeology of Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.

Registration

Admission is free, but please register using the web form provided on our website (www.iias.asia/events) or send an email to a.van.leeuwen@iias.nl

IIAS/RIJKSMUSEUM ANNUAL LECTURE: THE KINGDOM OF ŚRĪVIJAYA

19 October 2019
9:30-16:30
Venue: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

UKNA symposium: Ambivalent Infrastructures

Large critical infrastructure projects are expanding at great speed across Asia. This symposium brings together scholars and policymakers to interpret their functions, meanings and wide-ranging implications for cities and their hinterlands and to contribute fresh thinking about what the boom in these projects tells us about Asian city-making, nation building, and the place of cities and their residents in the global political economy. The symposium of the Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) is jointly organised by:

- Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), Center for Community Knowledge and School of Global Affairs (CCK and SGA), India
- Government of Nagaland
- Hong Kong University (HKU), Faculty of Architecture (HKU)

The Call for papers is closed, but we welcome attendees. If you are interested in attending this conference as a listener, please send an email to Mrs Xiaolan Lin at x.lin@iias.nl.

IIAS Masterclass on the progress in Śrīvijaya studies

In conjunction with the IIAS/Rijksmuseum Annual Lecture (19 October) Professor Emeritus Pierre-Yves Manguin of the École française d’Extrême-Orient will give a masterclass, Between myth and history: the hierarchy of sources for Śrīvijaya, for students, taking place in Leiden on Thursday 17 October. Using data gathered for the study of the elusive polity of Śrīvijaya, this masterclass will discuss the issues of the hierarchy of sources for the ancient history of Indonesia. It will make a case for an approach combining textual, archaeological, and ethnographic sources and methodologies.

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

The Award

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

Criteria

- The master’s thesis should be in the broad field of Asian Studies, in the humanities or social sciences
- The thesis must have been written at a Dutch university
- Only master’s theses which have been graded with an 8 or higher are eligible
- The thesis must have been evaluated in the period 1 Nov 2018 - 31 Oct 2019
- Both students and their supervisors can apply

Submission

Please submit four hard copies of the master’s thesis and a cover letter including the grade awarded and your contact details.

Submissions should be sent to: Secretariat International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS)
P.O. Box 9500
2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands

Application deadline: 1 November 2019
For further information email: iias@iias.nl
The Newsletter
No. 84  Autumn 2019

IIAS Fellowship Programme
In the spotlight

The International Institute for Asian Studies annually hosts a large number of visiting researchers (affiliated fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations. Meet our fellows at www.iias.asia/fellows

M y research in Leiden centres on the Sanskrit literature of Kashmir, 8th-12th centuries’ (defended in November 2017 at University Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3). During my stay in Leiden as a Gonda fellow with IIAS, I have been working on a critical edition of the Samayamātraṇī that I am preparing on the basis of the Śāradā manuscript (preserved in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute) and of manuscripts of the Stein Collection (Oxford’s Bodleian Library), also considering the readings of the two existing editions of the text.
I have spent most of my time here in the Asian Library, which somehow has become my second home in Leiden, or maybe, even my first. With the rich Indological collection, inherited from the Kern Institute, its extended opening hours, and its unobstructed view of the gorgeous, lively skies of the Netherlands, the Asian Library is indeed an ideal place for an Indologist to take up residence, even on Sundays, if one’s in the mood. After my fellowship in Leiden, I will be spending six months at the University of Hamburg as a fellow of the Cluster of Excellence ‘Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Studies’, where I will work on my new project on Śāradā manuscripts. I was already looking forward to reading Sanskrit with Professor Ioas in Hamburg. Now that he is the Numata Visiting Professor at Leiden University, I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in his reading rooms – kindly organised here in Leiden by Professor Silk. I am also very pleased that I was in Leiden during the meeting of the ‘Skandapurāṇa project’; it was a precious opportunity for me to spend a few hours with Professor Bisschop, Professor Yokochi and Professor Bakker to see how they are working on the edition of this text.

Beside my research, I also practice Bharatanatyam. On 12 September, I was very happy to be able to share my love for this Indian classical dance by presenting a dance piece during the “444 Years of Humanities Festivities” in the Leiden Stadsgehoorzaal theatre (“City Auditorium”). The very rich museums of the Netherlands, the beauty of the city of Leiden, its contagious joie de vivre, and its many cats were all very precious to me and I am already looking forward to coming back! I would like to thank the staff members of IIAS, my colleagues, my friends in Leiden and all the nice people I have met and who have made my stay so pleasant.

Iris Farkhondeh
University Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, France
Editing a Sanskrit satire in sunny Leiden

IIAS Fellowship possibilities and requirements

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

Combine your IIAS fellowship with two extra months of research in Paris
When applying for an IIAS Fellowship, you have the option of simultaneously submitting an application for an additional two months of research at the Collège d’études mandatées of the Fondation Maison des sciences de l’homme (CEM-FMSH), in Paris, France, immediately after your stay in Leiden.
Application deadlines: 1 March & 1 October

Apply for a Gonda fellowship
For promising young Indologists at the post-doctorate level it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS.
Application deadlines: 1 April & 1 October

Information and application forms: www.iias.asia/fellowships

The Network
**IIAS Research, Networks, and Initiatives**

IIAS research and other initiatives are carried out within a number of thematic, partially overlapping research clusters in phase with contemporary Asian currents and built around the notion of social agency. In addition, IIAS remains open to other potentially significant topics. More information: [www.iias.asia](http://www.iias.asia)

### IIAS research clusters

**Asian Cities**

This cluster deals with cities and urban cultures with their issues of flows and fluxes, ideas and goods, and cosmopolitanism and connectivity at their core, framing the existence of vibrant ‘civil societies’ and political micro-cultures. Through an international knowledge network, IIAS aims to create a platform for scholars and urban practitioners focusing on Asian cities ‘in context’ and beyond traditional western norms of knowledge.

**Asian Heritages**

This cluster focuses on the uses of culture and cultural heritage practices in Asia. In particular, it addresses a variety of definitions associated with cultural heritage and their implications for social agency. The cluster engages with a broad range of related concepts and issues, including the contested assertions of ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’, concepts such as ‘authenticity’, ‘national heritage’ and ‘shared heritage’, and, in general, with issues pertaining to the political economy of heritage.

**Global Asia**

Asia has a long history of transnational linkages with other parts of the world, thereby shaping the global order, as much as the world at large continues to shape Asia. The Global Asia Cluster addresses contemporary issues related to Asia’s projection into the world as well as trans-national interactions within the Asian region itself. In addition IIAS aims to help develop a more evenly balanced field of Asian Studies by collaborating in trans-regional capacity building initiatives and by working on new types of methodological approaches that encourage synergies and interactions between disciplines, regions and practices.
Humanities across Borders: Asia & Africa in the World

Co-funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (New York, USA) this new IIAS programme (2017-2020) for global collaboration on humanistic education is carried out by a consortium of twenty-three leading institutes in Asia, West Africa, Europe and the United States, and their local partners in Asia and Africa. Its goal is to mobilise the development of a global consortium of universities and their local partners interested in fostering humanities-grounded education. Its substantive vision is that of an inclusive and expanded humanities. To this end, the program will initiate methodological interventions in teaching and research to surpass narrow disciplinary, institutional and ideological agendas. The programme facilitates border-crossing meetings, workshops and other collaborative pedagogical formats in its partner geographies. Jointly conducted, these events aim to shape a curricular matrix and framework for humanistic education across borders.

Follow the stories on the Humanities across Borders Blog: humanitiesacrossborders.org/blog

www.icas.asia/energynetwork
Cluster: Global Asia; Asian Heritages

Africa-Asia, A New Axis of Knowledge

Africa-Asia, A New Axis of Knowledge is an inclusive transnational platform that convenes scholars, artists, intellectuals, and educators from Africa, Asia, Europe, and beyond to study, discuss, and share knowledge on the intricate connections and entanglements between the African and Asian world regions. Our aim is to contribute to the long-term establishment of an autonomous, intellectual and academic community of individuals and institutions between two of the world’s most vibrant continents. We aspire to facilitate the development of research and educational infrastructures in African and Asian universities, capable of delivering foundational knowledge in the two regions about one another’s cultures and societies. This exchange, we believe, is a prerequisite for a sustainable and balanced socio-economic progress of the two continents. It is also an opportunity to move beyond the Western-originated fields of Asian and African area studies—something that would benefit African, Asian and Western scholars alike.

www.africaasia.org
Cluster: Global Asia

Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN)

This network focuses particularly on the border regions between South Asia, Central/East and Southeast Asia. The concerns are varied, ranging from migratory movements, transformations in cultural, linguistic and religious practices, to ethnic mobilisation and conflict, marginalisation, and environmental concerns. ABRN organises a conference in one of these border regions every two years in co-operation with a local partner.

The 7th ABRN conference, Borderland Futures: Technologies, Zones, Co-existences, will take place in Seoul, South Korea, 5-27 June 2020.

www.asianborderlands.net
Coordinator: Erik de Maaker
maaker@fsw.leidenuniv.nl
Cluster: Global Asia

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

The new joint research programme between IIAS-ERA and the Institute of World Politics and Economy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing is entitled The Political Economy of the Belt & Road Initiative and its Reflections. It aims to investigate the policy, policy tools, and impacts of China’s Belt and Road Initiative. By focusing on China’s involvement with governments, local institutions, and local stakeholders, it aims to examine the subsequent responses to China’s activities from the local to the global-political level in the following countries: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Hungary, the West Balkans, and Russia.

The first research-oriented meeting with scholars from China and the Netherlands took place during ICAS 11, Leiden, July 2019. The next international conference will be held at the CASS-Institute of World Economy and Politics, Beijing, China, in 2020.

www.icas.asia/programmes/energy-programme-asia
Coordinator: M. Amineh
m.p.amineh@uva.nl; m.p.amineh@icas.nl
Cluster: Global Asia

International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)

With its biennial conferences, International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) is the largest global forum for academics and civil society exchange on Asia. Founded in 1997 at the initiative of IIAS, ICAS serves as a platform for scholars, social and cultural leaders, and institutions focusing on issues critical to Asia, and, by implication, the rest of the world.

The ICAS biennial conferences are organised in cooperation with local universities, cities and institutions, and attended by scholars and other experts, institutions and publishers from 60 countries. ICAS also organises the biennial ‘ICAS Book Prize’ (IBP), which awards the most prestigious prizes in the field of Asian Studies for books and PhD theses in English, Korean, Chinese, French and German (more language editions are planned for the future).

Ten conventions have been held since 1997 (Leiden, Berlin, Singapore, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Daegu, Hongkou, Macao, Adelaide, Chang Mai and Leiden).

ICAS 12 will be held in Kyoto, Japan, 24-27 August 2021.

Website: www.icas-asia.org
RAS/ICAS secretariat: Paul van der Velde
paulvdv@icas.org

International Convent of Asia Scholars

The Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies

The Leiden Centre for Indian Ocean Studies brings together people and methods to study the ‘Indian Ocean World’, aiming to co-organize conferences, workshops and academic exchanges with institutions from the region. Together with IIAS, the Centre facilitates an inclusive and global platform bringing together scholars and institutions working on connections and comparisons across the axis of human interaction with an interest in scholarship that cuts across borders of places, periods and disciplines.

www.icas.asia/programmes/leiden-centre-indian-ocean-studies
Cluster: Global Asia

The New Silk Road. China’s Belt and Road Initiative in Context

The International Institute for Asian Studies has recently started a new project of interdisciplinary research aimed at the study of the Belt and Road Initiative of the Chinese government, with special attention given to the impact of the ‘New Silk Road’ on countries, regions and peoples outside of China.

www.icas.asia/programmes/new-silkroad
Cluster: Global Asia
With its many museums, libraries, and philharmonic concert halls, the Kulturforum near Potsdamer Platz is one of Germany’s leading sites of art, culture, and learning and is exceptional for the enormous diversity of the arts showcased there. From 5 September 2019 to 26 January 2020, Kulturforum will present the group exhibition ‘Micro Era - Media Art from China’. Invited by the Nationalgalerie, the two artists Cao Fei (1978) and Lu Yang (1984) asked the artists Fang Di (1987) and Zhang Peili (1957) for a dialogue. The exhibition is curated by Anna-Catharina Gebbers with co-curators Victor Wang and Yang Bielen, and curatorial advisor Pi Li.

‘Micro Era’ is tied in with the 2001 group exhibition ‘Living in Time’, the first exhibition of contemporary Chinese artists from China (https://www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/living-in-time.html), which showed how contemporary Chinese artists have responded to the economic, political, ideological but also technological changes in China since the 1980s. This approach is now continued with ‘Micro Era’.

**Installations and single-channel videos**

From documentary film images, and the adopted use of classical film language to the aesthetics of Japanese Anime, the works of this exhibition focus on and explore the relationships between mind, body and technology – with installations and single-channel videos ranging from the 1980s to the present. Historically, within the Euro-American context, video art is often regarded as a democratising art form – through the rapid circulation of information and global events by fast-access technologies. Cao Fei, Fang Di, Lu Yang, and Zhang Peili scrutinise the seductive thesis of this democratisation by reflecting in their visual language the mass production of goods as well as how images and virtual subjectivities are produced and consumed, and how we understand our world through imaging technology. At the same time, in the cross-generational exhibition with documentary, narrative and installation references and the expansion into virtual space, the central directions in the development of media art in China are presented.

**The artists**

Cao Fei (born in 1978 in Guangzhou, living in Beijing, China) combines in her films and installations social comments, pop-cultural aesthetics as well as references to surrealism and documentary film. Her works reflect the rapid, chaotic changes that are taking place in today’s Chinese society. For ‘Micro Era’ Cao Fei presents her works ‘Asia One’ (2018) and ‘11.11’ (2018) for the first time in Germany. The multimedia installation, which is about the logistics sector, conveys the hyper-real vision of a near future and shows the effects of accelerated economic growth, technological developments and globalization on society. Cao Fei wished to see the young multimedia artist Fang Di as a dialogue partner on her exhibition area. Fang Di’s works (1987, Shenzhen, China) are adapted use of classical film language to the aesthetics as well as references to surrealism and documentary film. Her works combine various visual languages in order to critically examine these interconnections. Fang Di’s first large-scale institutional presentation in Europe so far is based on his work experience in Papua New Guinea for a Belt and Road Initiative company (which has been pooling China’s interests and objectives to build up and expand intercontinental trade and infrastructure networks between the People’s Republic of China and over 60 other African, Asian and European countries since 2013). His activities in the South Pacific Island Nation allowed him, analogous to embedded journalism, an intimate documentation of the current social situation.

Lu Yang (1988, Shanghai, China) interweaves virtual and physical architectures in her installations. The artist lures the viewer into the halls of images of an augmented reality and manipulated emotions symbolically represented by transcranial magnetic stimulation. With knowledgeable references to traditional Buddhism, techno religions, cyber feminism and Japanese subcultures, her works circle around gender stereotypes, beliefs in science and post-human ways of life. For ‘Micro Era’, Lu Yang has embedded the largest ever presentation of her works in an installation reminding us of the labyrinthine constructions of Comic Cons. She asked her former professor Zhang Peili for an exhibition dialogue.

Zhang Peili (1957, Hangzhou, China) is a pioneer of multimedia art and crucial to the development of the Chinese avant-garde and the emergence and spread of Chinese video art. His early work is often associated with the socio-political events that occurred during the heyday of the ‘85s New Wave movement, which led to the fact that the nations of xingwei yishu 影視藝術 [video art] and yingshang yishu 影像藝術 [video art] were canonicized in China. For ‘Micro Era’ Zhang Peili presents pioneering video art pieces such as ‘Opposite Space’ (1995).