The Newsletter

The Study
Asian migration studies

The Focus
Waste and social mobilisation

The Region
Economic and social effects of the pandemic
Environmental issues, social activism and policy challenges

Environmental change issues, both sudden shocks and gradual changes have been forcing states, communities and individuals to transform their ways of coping with these adversities. Recently, not only governmental and state-to-state international initiatives but also non-state interactions are joining the decision-making processes through their public discussions, demonstrations and official involvement in the actual processes of law-making with regard to these environmental change issues. This short Focus section pays attention to this multi-level involvement of our societies to the policy challenges and policy transformation processes of the local, national and international decision makers to face and bring more responsive as well as responsible solutions for our pending environmental change issues. Academic partnership, social activism, mass mobilisation and raising awareness about day to day adjustments to these ongoing environmental changes, as well as people’s understanding of already changing concepts of environmental and social changes, are some of the main issues raised in the articles of this 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.

In this issue I would like to start by expressing my extreme gratitude for everyone who contributed to this issue. I have been most impressed with everyone’s commitment to deliver, despite the demanding circumstances. It wasn’t easy, but together we managed to compile yet another fantastic issue. Many thanks!

We hope you will all join us in Kyoto next year for ICAS 12. Find details about submitting a proposal to the conference, and your titles to the Book Prize, on p.4 of this issue. On pp.5-9, IBP General Secretary Paul van der Velde, tells us the ‘Story of the IBP’. Read about its beginnings and how it grew into the largest book prize of its kind.

Three of our regional editors have contributed to this issue: The Asia Institute in Melbourne, NYU Shanghai and Fudan University, and the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. Find their articles on pp.40-47.

I would like to start by expressing my extreme gratitude for everyone who contributed to this issue. I have been most impressed with everyone’s commitment to deliver, despite the demanding circumstances. It wasn’t easy, but together we managed to compile yet another fantastic issue. Many thanks!

We hope you will all join us in Kyoto next year for ICAS 12. Find details about submitting a proposal to the conference, and your titles to the Book Prize, on p.4 of this issue.

On pp.5-9, IBP General Secretary Paul van der Velde, tells us the ‘Story of the IBP’. Read about its beginnings and how it grew into the largest book prize of its kind.

Three of our regional editors have contributed to this issue: The Asia Institute in Melbourne, NYU Shanghai and Fudan University, and the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. Find their articles on pp.40-47.
A midst the anxieties and grief brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, IIAS's mission of mediating a space for dialogue and generation of knowledge on, in and with Asia – is witnessing the disruption of many of its activities and plans. Many programmed events have either been cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Our sense of purpose and way of functioning as a global-local platform of engaged scholarship is being put to the test. Yet, with this hindsight we already have, I can say that the confinement period, if at first unsettling, is somehow turning into a meaningful experience for us. We, like so many other organisations all around the world, have had to choose but to brace ourselves and to reflect upon our mission and methods. To what extent can IIAS’s model of functioning withstand the challenges of navigating the present crisis and its future unfolding?

To ensure that the IIAS team would not turn into an assortment of scattered colleagues, left to work on their separate tasks in isolation, our first decision was to organise everyone into virtual ‘working groups’, with the aim to synchronise our actions and shape them into broader collective efforts. One of the underlying issues we sought to address was the extent to which our actions would respond to the emerging needs and aspirations of not only the staff, but also the resident and incoming fellows. To throw a lens on the interfaces and agencies at large, that might result from the COVID crisis.

National borders were closed and international mobility of personnel turned into an impossible quest for near-complete standstill. Yet, this new exploration of the local, at the expense of what had perhaps become an addictive dependence on the global, may paradoxically not necessarily mean the end to universally framed concerns and interests. On the contrary, thanks mainly to social and digital media, people and communities have become more ever receptive, more dependent on each other, a realisation reinforced by the fact that each and every region of the world has experienced the crisis almost simultaneously. An urge to return to a simpler approach to the basic elements of life has been coupled with an enhanced desire to transcend cultures and geographies around shared values and aspirations. The recent demonstrations across the world – from Tokyo to Santiago, from Delhi to London – against systemic racism, following the tragic killing of George Floyd in the United States, is an example of the emergence of this new collective consciousness.

I see this as pertinent to a shared desire for basic solidarity – between generations, between societies and segments of society – a sentiment born out of the threat of a socially blind virus. In terms of a human life, the idea is emerging of a common shared space that cannot be infringed upon for narrow economic or power gains, a basic realm that concentrates on the value of a dignified life in its multiple expressions. This idea is certainly compounded by the sentiment that COVID is just one of nature’s responses to human hubris, and that it is yet another warning against a global ecological crisis that is ahead of us. Economic and social disparities may appear less acceptable now, especially when the effects of the virus tend to reinforce them, with large swathes of society, in both the global North and South, left without jobs, education or healthcare. Observing the fact that service providers hitherto deemed subservient – nurses, cleaners, carers, farmers, postal workers, and so forth – enabled us to contemplate the idea that our lives under lockdown, is the kind of collective realisation that is bound to drastically alter our perceptions of the world, of the role of youth, of the futility of artificial structures, and the space of action and reflection that is needed to recalculate social relations at large.

Against these needs and aspirations arising from a new urgency, impinging upon both global and local actors, IIAS stands as a model of engaged scholarship. The institute has long taken steps that in the present context have become even more relevant: initiate and assist programmes that instil inclusive local ground while supporting meaningful interactions at the global level, and make a commitment to a sense of commonality in which differences are respected while we use them growing around reasoned thinking is sought after. IIA’s ‘touch’ is its capacity to reach out to human experiences, whatever their background, without the need to drastically alter our perceptions of the world, of the role of youth, of the futility of artificial structures, and the space of action and reflection that is needed to recalibrate social relations at large.

What now appears even more essential is IIAS’s combined sets of approaches: at the same time a research facilitator, a network builder, a pedagogical enabler, a cross-sector knowledge disseminator and a promoter of dialogue between cultures and communities. For instance, when put together, the IIA’s fellowships, in situ graduate schools, and publication and dissemination instruments, define IIA’s role as a facilitator of research. Likewise, the institution’s border-spanning initiatives link academic endeavours with other practices of knowledge in such a way that they enrich each other’s texture. Initiatives such as the pioneering pedagogical model developed by the programme ‘Humanities across Borders’ (HaB), or the direct civic interventions anchored by the institute-coordinated Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET).

Within the organisation, a number of post-COVID resolutions will be the IIA to further its mission and unique methodology. I see these as emerging from the following: from collaboration to mutualisation: allowing the other partners and projects to (reciprocally) use the platforms and networks we have created so as to deepen each other’s experience and mission, - Systematically anchoring activities in contexts, at regional, national, and local levels, based on respect for the diversity of conditions and an equal belief in trans-local trans-cultural understanding. - Moving beyond the narrowly individualistic, fragmented model of scholarship through processes of collective deliberation around themes that have the potential to produce transformative shared learning experiences, - Innovation through creative disruption by bringing into contact peoples, ideas and approaches otherwise unlikely to intersect; to support ‘experiential’ meeting formats that can instil new ideas, and encourage new consciousness or solutions.

Consciously choreograph these multiple innovations-disruptions to create conducive situations for new conviviality, new meanings, new understandings. One word can sum up IIA’s post-COVID method of action and resolve, rarely used for an academic institution: community, or the art of community formation and community nurturing. Concretely this means that we at IIA believe that people will still want to meet in person, rather than settle for virtual solutions. Meeting in person. And people will still want to engage with intellectuals, as they have always; that it is just another warning to avoid being locked into ‘unlock’ themselves. They will still travel, but for better reasons than to conform to a new norm; that the effects of the virus tend to reinforce the idea that people will want to meet again in person, that communities can travel without the need to be artificial structures, and the space of action and reflection that is needed to recalibrate social relations at large.

In the midst of the lockdown, we took the stand that people will want to meet again and that IIA’s unique ecology of knowledge exchange, built on multiple collaborations, and modified to foster a combination of physical and digital connectivity, will continue to thrive. We have no doubt that people will still want to enrich themselves by partaking in more than one exchange format because knowledge and its clarification occurs through dialogue and in conversation with each other, in moments when one least expects. To needs to be deeply appreciated.

Take the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS). During confinement, with no clear outlook as to when preparation work for ICAS 12 in Kyoto could resume, we, together with our partners at Kyoto Seika University, decided to stick to our original plan to hold the ICAS biennial conference on 24-27 August 2021. In the midst of the lockdown, we took the stand that people will want to meet again and that ICAS’s unique ecology of knowledge exchange, built on multiple collaborations, and modified to foster a combination of physical and digital connectivity, will continue to thrive. We have no doubt that people will still want to enrich themselves by partaking in more than one exchange format because knowledge and its clarification occurs through dialogue and in conversation with each other, in moments when one least expects. To needs to be deeply appreciated.
ICAS 12 – Call for Proposals

The 12th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12) will be held in Kyoto, the cultural heart of Japan, from 24-27 August 2021, in the iconic Kyoto International Conference Center. The city is famous for its world-heritage sites, temples, gardens, palaces and craft centers. Kyoto Seika University (SEIKA) will be the main host of ICAS 12. Delivering programmes to more than 3,500 students across five faculties – Art, Design, Manga, Popular Culture and Humanities – SEIKA promotes a spirit of independence and freedom through progressive, liberal and humanistic education.

Participate at ICAS 12 in Kyoto and enjoy a multitude of networking opportunities, possibilities to share your research, meet with publishers, and participate in cultural activities.

Deadline 1 October 2020
Full call for proposals and submissions portal at https://icas.asia/icas12-cfp

The ICAS Book Prize 2021 – Call for Submissions

The biennial ICAS Book Prize (IBP) was established by ICAS in 2003. The IBP is awarded to outstanding publications in the field of Asian Studies. It has created an international focus for publications on Asia, which has increased their worldwide visibility and recognition. For the current edition (IBP 2021), books in Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese are eligible.

For the English language edition we also welcome dissertations on Asia in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences. Please consult the rules for eligibility before submitting a title.

Deadline 1 October 2020*
Authors, make sure your publisher knows about this competition!

* Deadline may vary for some of the language editions
The ICAS Book Prize: A multilingual window on the world of Asian studies

Paul van der Velde

The International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS), founded in 1997, had its first gathering in Leiden (1998). During ICAS 2 in Berlin (2001) the ICAS Secretariat was officially founded, and since its creation it has been hosted and (partially) funded by the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden, the Netherlands). After the success of the first two meetings the ICAS Secretariat decided to move its conferences into Asia, and ICAS 3 took place in Singapore (2003), in cooperation with the National University of Singapore. As to further establish its brand and position in the field of Asian studies, ICAS launched two significant initiatives: the ICAS Publication Series in cooperation with Amsterdam University Press (AUP), primarily based on articles presented during ICAS, and of course, the ICAS Book Prize (IBP).

Turning the first page of the ICAS Book Prize

The main idea behind the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) was to create, by way of a global competition, an international focus for academic publications on Asia so as to increase their visibility worldwide, also beyond academic circles. As a result, the IBP was conceived as a general prize for academic publications on Asia, in both the humanities and social sciences. The IBP Reading Committee consists of scholars in diverse disciplines, focusing on various regions, working on and originating from different continents: a composition that reflects the transcending nature of ICAS.

The ICAS Secretariat approached a diverse group of participants of the first three ICAS meetings with the question if they would be willing to become a member of the IBP Reading Committee. Excellent remuneration was offered, including a return ticket to ICAS, free lodging for the duration of the meeting, plus of course they could keep all the submitted books. No wonder there were more than enough candidates to choose from. The first Reading Committee consisted of four members, a secretary and a chair. They originated from Asia, Australia, Europe and North America, and represented the broad fields of the humanities and social sciences in relation to Asia.

Right from the start, the IBP was designed to be different in nature than the (few) prizes in the field of Asian studies at that time. The existing prizes were limited to particular regions or disciplines, and often named after one of the professorial stars in the field. Access to and judgement of the prizes tended to occur in a rather closed circle of familiarity, and was mostly resistant to outside interference. There was clearly room for improvement and innovation.

With a Reading Committee in place we started promoting the IBP through various platforms, including the IIAS Newsletter. On page 42 of Issue 34 (2004), the IBP was announced to the world for the first time: “All scientific books published in 2003 and 2004 on Asian topics are eligible. Three prizes will be awarded: (1) best study in the humanities; (2) best study in the social sciences; and (3) best PhD dissertation.”

We reached out to a large number of (academic) publishers, who in general welcomed the new concept. In all we received 38 books (23 humanities and 15 social sciences) and five dissertations. The shortlists of three books per category were made public during a brief ceremony in the ICAS exhibition booth at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in Chicago on 1 April 2005. The Reading Committee met in Shanghai, one day before the opening of ICAS 5, for final deliberations during the so-called ‘decision dinner’. The first IBP Awards Presentation took place on 20 August 2005, in the Friendship Hall of the Shanghai Exhibition Center. At the end of the ICAS Opening Ceremony the IBP Secretary presented the jury report, which was based on citations provided by members of the Reading Committee. The IBP Awards Presentation would become a permanent feature of all future ICAS Opening Ceremonies. Shortly after the ceremony, the jury citations were put on the ICAS website in English (with a Chinese version found) and shared with multiple Asia studies outlets, such as H-Asia.

The winners of the first IBP were both present at the Awards Ceremony. They were Elizabeth C. Economy for her The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China’s Future (Cornell University Press, 2004) and Christopher Reed with his Outbareng in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937 (UBC Press, 2003). Sam Wong was the first winner of the IBP Best Dissertation Award with his thesis ‘Community participation of Mainland Chinese migrants in Hong Kong – rethinking agency, institutions and authority in social capital theory’. As a prize, his dissertation was published by AUP in the ICAS Publications Series: Exploring Unseen Social Capital in Community Participation. Everyday Lives of Poor Mainland Chinese Migrants in Hong Kong (available from http://oapen.org). It was no small wonder that three publications on China won prizes, since a substantial part of the submitted books were about this upcoming political and economic powerhouse. In a special section of the IIAS Newsletter 37 - “Publishing on Asia” – this was further contextualised and a rich tapestry of publications on all parts of Asia were highlighted (https://issuu.com/iias/docs/iias_nl_37).

The main idea behind the ICAS Book Prize (IBP) was to create, by way of a global competition, an international focus for academic publications on Asia so as to increase their visibility worldwide, also beyond academic circles. As a result, the IBP was conceived as a general prize for academic publications on Asia, in both the humanities and social sciences. The IBP Reading Committee consists of scholars in diverse disciplines, focusing on various regions, working on and originating from different continents: a composition that reflects the transcending nature of ICAS.

The ICAS Secretariat approached a diverse group of participants of the first three ICAS meetings with the question if they would be willing to become a member of the IBP Reading Committee. Excellent remuneration was offered, including a return ticket to ICAS, free lodging for the duration of the meeting, plus of course they could keep all the submitted books. No wonder there were more than enough candidates to choose from. The first Reading Committee consisted of four members, a secretary and a chair. They originated from Asia, Australia, Europe and North America, and represented the broad fields of the humanities and social sciences in relation to Asia.

The Reading Committee reviewed 80 books and 10 dissertations. The members of the Reading Committee were: Jennifer Holdaway, Christopher Reed (winner of the IBP 2005 Humanities), Paul van der Velde (Secretary), Anand Yang (Chair), and Guobin Yang. The prizes were awarded by Deputy Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Najib Tun Razak during the ICAS 5 Opening Ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on 2 August 2007. The winner of Best Book in the Humanities was Madeleine Zelin, with her The Merchants of Zigong (Columbia University Press, 2006); the winner of Best Book in the Social Sciences was Pel-Chia Lan and her Global Cinderellas. Migrant Domesticics and New Ice Rich Employers in Taiwan (Duke University Press, 2006).

Winner of Best Dissertation in Asian studies was Karen Laura Thornber, for her thesis Negotiating and Reconfiguring Japan and Japanese Literature in Polyjntertextual East Asian Contact Zones: Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan (Harvard University). For the first two editions of the IBP, the Reading Committee reached their final decisions during a dinner one day before the Awards Presentation. After IBP 2007, it was decided to expedite the decision-making process so that the shortlisted authors could be informed earlier in the year, so as to increase the likelihood that they could and would attend ICAS.
The 2009 winner of Best Book in the Humanities was Anthony Barbieri-Low, Artisans in Early Imperial China (University of Washington Press, 2007); the winner of Best Book in the Social Sciences was Anna E. Booth, Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007); Laurent Pordié was the winner of the Colleagues’ Choice Award, for the edited volume Tibetan Medicine in the Contemporary World: Global politics of medical knowledge and practice (Routledge, 2008); Best Dissertation in the Humanities was won by Birgit Abels for her thesis ‘Sounds of Articulating Identity: Tradition and Transition in the Music of Pulau’; and the winner of Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences was Iza Hussin with ‘The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites and Colonial Authority in the Malay World, 1850–1950’.

While the number of books submitted for this edition of the IBP had nearly one hundred, the dissertations were lagging with just 12 submissions, which were obviously only a fraction of all dissertations written on Asian in English. What could be done to increase that number for the next IBP? We thought the best way to tackle this situation was to put in place a special Reading Committee for Dissertations, consisting of peers of the young doctors. Whom better to ask than the IBP 2009 Best Dissertation winners: Birgit Abels (humanities) and Iza Hussin (social sciences). We invited them to scout for dissertations all over the world and use their growing academic networks to at least double the number of dissertation submissions for the following IBP in 2011.

The Accolades were to be awarded to any number of books and dissertations, and not just those which had made it onto the long/shortlists for the main prizes. In order to increase the number of publications. It included an alphabetical enumeration of all submissions so that the readers could check if they had truly received all books. The sharp increase in the number of books in 2013 made it necessary to create a more elaborated ‘Tool’, which now contained structured information to help the Reading Committees to better navigate the multitude of publications. It included an overview of not only titles, authors and publishers, but also the categorical division of books, regional distribution and the most important topics treated in the publications. The guide also included the procedural regulations, a timetable, and the rules for eligibility of submissions.

The fourth IBP Awards Presentation took place on 1 April 2011 in the Kalakaua Ballroom of the Hawai‘i Convention Center, during the Opening of ICAS 7; it was combined with the Ceremonies of the seventh Association for Asian Studies (AAS) regional book prize. President of Ceremonies was four-time IBP Books Reading Committee Chair, Anand Yang, not only one of the pillars of the IBP but also one of the promoters of the joint meeting of ICAS 7 and AAS in Honolulu, which took place from 30 March to 3 April 2011. No less than five thousand participants attended the meeting, making it the biggest ever held in the field of Asian studies. It was a clear signal to the authors that Asian studies was alive and kicking.

The public relations campaign around the combined meeting also had a positive impact on the number of books and dissertations submitted to the IBP. Book numbers doubled while the number of dissertations even tripled. The latter also implied that the newly created IBP Dissertations Reading Committee had done an excellent job. In all, 174 books were submitted by more than 40 publishers worldwide; 75 in the humanities and 99 in the social sciences. A trend that had already been noticeable in IBP 2009 became fully manifest during the fourth edition: whereas for the first IBP, 65 percent of the books had been in the humanities and 35 percent in the social sciences, it was completely the other way around for the fourth edition. This marked a clear shift in the field of research from traditional (orientalist) to contemporary Asian studies. This also became clear in the supplement of The Newsletter #5/6 ‘Asian Book Series as Global Currency’. Many of those featured series were contemporary in nature (https://issuu.com/iias/docs/issue_056_supplement).

This was not the only shift in focus. We also saw a clear change in geographical backgrounds of the authors. During the first IBP only 10 percent of the participating authors were of Asian descent; the fourth edition of the IBP saw a marked increase to 40 percent. Asian studies were clearly more and more being carried out by Asian scholars, yet their books (in English) continued to be predominantly published by Western publishers. Unsurprisingly, a third of the books submitted in 2013 were about East Asia, but Southeast Asia and South Asia also counted a large number of publications. Popular themes were art and culture, (post)colonial, gender and identity, history, international relations and politics, literature, media, Islam (a newcomer), literature, nationalism and state formation, sociology and religion and society. With such a wide diversity of excellent books we started thinking of ways to reward more books than only the main winners. This was successfully developed for the next IBP in 2013.

The IBP 2011 Reading Committee for Books consisted of Manuela Clotti, Derek Heng, Alex McKay, Khun Eng Kiah-Pearce, Paul van der Velden (Secretary), and Anand Yang (Chair). The Reading Committee for Dissertations consisted of Birgit Abels and Iza Hussin. For the Humanities, Stein Treimann won Best Book for his Vastnavam 1946. How the War Began (University of California Press, 2010), and Carmen Perez Gonzalez won Best Dissertation for her ‘A Comparative Visual Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Iranian Portrait Photography and Persian Painting’. The Reading Committees chose the following winners in the categories Social Sciences: Urdanay E. Bulag, Collaborative Nationalism: The Politics of Friendship on China’s Mongolian Frontier (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010) and Imran bin Tajoedeen for his thesis ‘Constructing and Reconstituting the Vernacular Heritage of Maritime Emporia in Nusantara: Historic Adaption and Contemporary Accents’. The public voted online for the winner of the Colleagues’ Choice Award. It went to Alexander Huang and his Chinese Shakespearean. Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange (Columbia University Press, 2009).

The fifth IBP Awards Ceremony took place during ICAS 8, in the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel on 25 June 2013. The IBP 2013 was sponsored by The Kingdom of the Netherlands represented by the Consulate General in Hong Kong and Macao; ICAS’ mother institution and co-host, The International Institute for Asian Studies; Amsterdam University Press; and the University of Macau. The members of the IBP 2013 Reading Committees in the Social Sciences were: Birgit Abels, Michel Baas, Sebastian Bersick, Annu Jalais, Alex McKay, Imran bin Tajoedeen and Paul van der Velden (Secretary). Together they awarded the following prizes: Best Book in the Humanities went to Julia F. Andrews and Kuiyol Shen, for their The Art of Modern China (University of California Press, 2012); Best Book in the Social Sciences was received by Miriam Khan and her Tehfati, Beyond the Postcard. Power, Place, and Everyday Life. (University of Washington Press, 2013); Best Dissertation in the Humanities was awarded to Birgit Tramm for her thesis ‘When Political Economies Meet: China, Spain and Japan in Manila, 1517-1641’. Roberto Benedetto won the Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences for his thesis ‘Bright Lights, Gray Globality. Mobility, Class, and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century Manila’, and the 2013 Colleagues’ Choice Award went to Fabrizio M. Ferrari, Guilty Males and Proud Females: Negotiating Gender in a Bengali Festival (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2011).
The IBP 2015, Adelaide

The New Asia Scholar

The focus section of The Newsletter #72 (Autumn 2015) was devoted to a phenomenon that we were calling ‘The New Asia Scholar’ (Harvard University Press, 2015). It was memorable to see agreements and sponsorships.

The Newsletter Secretary. I handed over those duties to Sonja Schweizer. The IBP was now shouldered with the Asian Library/Leiden University Sciences was awarded to Han F. Vermeulen, for his book ‘Navigating the Foreign (University of Washington Press, 2014); Best Book in the Social Sciences went to Jinghong Mckay, Aysun Uyar, and Paul van der Velde. They awarded Best Book in the Humanities to Lisa Hallman, for her ‘Navigating the Foreign Quarters: Everyday Life of the Swedish East India Company Employees in Canton and Macao 1730–1830’; and Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences to Goenka Bharat, for her ‘Place-making Through Print: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Sontal Architectural History’. And for the first time, the ICAS and/or sponsor a number of non-English language editions of the ICAS Book Prize. These were to be launched on time for the next IBP in 2017.

Another interesting, more logistical development, was the sheer number of books being sent to our offices for consideration. Publishers were sending us 6 copies of each submitted title, which we then forwarded to the Reading Committees. The IBP 2015 received approximately 1500 books!

Our offices turned into a warehouse of books! The biggest book prizes in the world. Another development, was the sheer number of books. The meeting realised the need for a change. Prospective...
The IBP Books and Dissertations Carousel

The IBP Books and Dissertations Carousel had been set in motion as an experiment during ICAS 9 in Adelaide, had matured at ICAS 10 in Chiang Mai, and had now come of age during ICAS 11 (15-19 July 2019) in Leiden. Eighty presentations took place during 15 sessions, nearly half by young doctors for whom the IBP Carousel was initiated in the first place: “to offer young doctors the opportunity to briefly present the significance of their work to an audience of interested scholars, publishers and potential employers, who in turn may question the candidates on their findings. This is also intended to be a relatively informal chance for presenters to meet others interested in their field of enquiring.” A number of presentations (in English) were about books written in languages other than English, and we hope that this platform will indeed see even more non-English language authors during future editions.

With another hat on, as IBP Publications Officer, and together with my assistant Mary Lynn van Dijk, we convened a panel at ICAS 11 on the three IAS Book series (“Global Asia”, “Asian Cities”, “Asian Heritages”), with the aim to look back on the 25 monographs and edited volumes published in these series in the past four years. The series editors took the lead in explaining how they work and what kind of manuscripts they want to include in their series. Tak-Wing Ngo (organiser of ICAS 8 in Macau and IIAS alumnus) said the following about his ‘Global Asia Series’ (although this could also apply to the IBP and ICAS book series generally): “The Series takes issue with the conventional practice of treating Asia as merely the empirical testing ground for universalized theories developed from Western experiences. Instead, it underlines the contributions of Asian knowledge, values, languages, and practices in making our modern world. The Series deliberately keeps a broad scope to include studies that focus on a wide range of topics and disciplines. Books published under the Series are unified not by a common theme or theoretical approach, but by a critical stance that highlights the autochthonous contributions of Asia to social sciences. In such, the Series as a whole addresses contemporary issues related to transnational interactions within the Asian region, as well as Asia’s projection into the world through the movement of goods, people, ideas, knowledge, ideologies, and so forth. Priorities are given to well-researched manuscripts that seek to develop new perspectives and theories about the ‘Asia’.

The IBP dinner was, with over 30 guests, a particularly generous affair this year as we had now added yet another shortlist winner to the group: a combined Spanish/Portuguese edition, organised by Sefpsis. Its Chair, Claudio Pinheiro, had performed in-depth research into the state of affairs of Asian studies in Latin America before establishing the Secretariat. His efforts resulted in no less than 66 publications submitted for their first IBP in 2019. With this new language edition successfully in place, I was motivated to add yet 2 more to the array: Japanese and Russian. ICAS 12 will take place in Kyoto, and so I invited Aysun Uyar Makibayashi from Doshisha University (and former IBP Reading Committee membe) to the 2019 dinner, in an attempt to convince her to join the team. (I can now announce that she agreed and there will indeed be a Japanese language edition of the IBP 2021). Another guest at the dinner was Alexey Maslow, Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (FES), and keynote speaker in the SASS-IAS Forum on the Belt and Road Initiative at ICAS 11. Alexey had been invited for the dinner after he had made clear his ambition to set up the Russian Edition of the IBP 2020. There are very strong Asian studies traditions going back centuries in both Russian and Japanese. It is only natural that they are also interested in the IBP, along with the excellent studies written in those languages, which should become part of the international discourse on Asian studies. In his editorial for The Newsletter #19 (Autumn 2019, p.3) ‘Reinventing the academic conference’, the director of IBP, Philippe Peycam, a supporter of the IBP’s multilingual approach, commented: “ICAS now runs an inclusive space in which different scholars from different stakeholders – from academic to cultural institutions, from citizen associations and regions – work hand-in-hand to promote scholarly knowledge in society.”

The IBP 2019 awards ceremony took place during the opening of ICAS 11, in Leiden’s Hooglandse Church, on 16 July 2019. More than 5000 people attended the ceremony, and all were presented the ICAS Book Prize 2019 publication at the end of the session. The booklet included all shortlists, winners, sponsors, organisers, reading committees of the IBP 2019. The English language Reading Committee for Books included Seth Jacobowitz, Rachel Leow, Thian Huang Ninh, Olga Sooudi, and Sonja Zeegers (Secretary). The prize for Best Book in the Humanities went to Howard Chiang, After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China (Columbia University Press, 2018); Best Book in the Social Sciences was awarded to Saraeta Amrute, Encoding Race, Encoding Class: Indian IT Workers in Berlin (Duke University Press, 2016). The members of the Reading Committee for Dissertations were Bart Luttikhuis, Alex McKay (Chair) and Anna Romanowicz. They awarded Best Dissertation in the Humanities to Leonor Veiga for her ‘The Third Avant-garde: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia Recalling Tradition’; and Best Dissertation in the Social Sciences to Aleksandra Lee for her ‘Modelling China: Business, Politics, and Material in China’s Museum Industry’. The Colleagues’ Choice Awards (respectively for Humanities and Social Sciences) went to Abdur-Razzaq Lubi, Sutan Puasa: Founder of Kuala Lumpur Malay Societies (2018) and Azmi Tayeb, Islamic Education in Indonesia and Malaysia: Shaping Minds, Saving Souls (Routledge, 2018). The Main Prize for the Chinese language edition was awarded to Feng-mao Li, Transforming ‘Sacred Religion’ into Daoism: Festival, Belief, and Culture in the Chinese Society of Malaysia (National Taiwan University Press, 2018), The French language Reading Committee recognised as Best Book, Michéla Perazzoli ’Serences and Marianne Bujard, The Qin and Han Dynasties: General History of China (221 BC-220 AD) (Les Belles Lettrres, 2017), Thomas Zimmer, Awakening from the Coma? A Literary Positioning of Today’s China (Tectum Wissenschaftsverlag, 2018) was the winner of the 2019 German language edition. Best Book in the Korean language was awarded to Joo-hoon Shim, From a Vassal to the Hegemon: The Birth and Rise of the State of Jin in Early China (Echokak Publishing, 2018). And for the first time, the Spanish/Portuguese edition presented its ICAS Book Prize; in fact it had two winners: Madalena Natsuko Hashimoto Cordaro, Japanese Erotica in Painting and Writing of the 17th to 19th centuries, 2 volumes (USP, 2017) and Óscar Figueres, The Preceding View: Visionary Power and Imagination in Ancient India (UNAM, 2017).
From the beginning the IBP has been a general book prize of a region and discipline transcending nature. From its seventh edition in 2017 it also became multilingual; by adding Japanese and Russian for the upcoming ninth edition in 2021, the ICAS Book Prize will be considering nine languages that have established research traditions in Asian studies. It is conceivable to add even more languages to the IBP without it imploding? I am of the opinion that because English is one of the official languages of India, Hindi or Tamil editions will be unlikely. Bahasa Indonesia, spoken throughout the Malay world, Saterthi as the biggest East African language, and Arabic spoken and read throughout the Islamic world, could be possible candidates.

The number of submissions for each language in 2019 varied from 20 to 100 (not taking into account the English edition with 400 submissions plus 150 dissertations). The various language editions together received a total of 75% submissions in 2019, and we expect that next time we will reach the one thousand mark.

Each language edition is organised and sponsored by an Asian studies institution, and has its own Reading Committee (normally of 4 academics). The scholars who have been a committee member in the past have experienced the horizon-widening experience of the IBP. They received and processed books from not only their own fields of study, but far beyond. Many of them have used the submitted books as pedagogical tools in their teachings on Asia. They work together with the other committee members, and somehow always seem to agree on who should be the winner. A detail that may change during the next few instalments of the IBP, is how they read the submissions. So far, publishers have always been asked to send hard copies of all submissions, but as we speak we have opened submissions for the IBP 2021 and have decided to include the option of e-books (at least for the English language edition).

The idea has been floating for a while, but during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis we have been made aware that many packages are not reaching their destination. For that reason, we deliberated with our Reading Committee members and gave them the choice. Some chose for e-books, also out of environmental considerations, others continue to prefer hard copies. We shall see how this develops in the future.

How the IBP will be further impacted by the de-globalising tendencies in the world today, no one can be sure about. However, we do predict that the new Russian language edition will attract a higher number of titles on Central Asia, the Japanese edition will likely introduce us to topics we have never even heard of before, more and more of the authors will originate from Asia and be published by Asia-located publishers, more Asian authors will write about Asian countries other than their own, more books on Asia will be written in a language other than English, etc. And the ICAS Book Prize will continue to boost and document all these developments through its original aim: to increase the global visibility of and interest in academic works on Asia.

Another way in which the IBP works to make Asian studies and its publications more visible and accessible is through the ICAS Book Fair. The last few ICAS meetings have seen between 30-40 publishers exhibit their wares and services, but this number could rise because of the increasing number of languages involved in the IBP. Closely connected to the IBP is the ICAS Books and Dissertations Carousel, in which authors present their recent work. It has witnessed a clear growth in the number of presentations of books not written in English, thus familiarising wider and wider audiences with works written in non-English languages. We have also seen how presentations of dissertations are increasingly impacted by developments in IT. Quoting the Chair of the IBP Dissertations Reading Committee, Alex Mackay: “What is also notable is that the form of a doctoral dissertation has lost the traditional boundaries of extensive text and relevant illustration. Many submissions incorporate video and other technological innovations of the last decades, once tentatively but now confidently deployed by a generation that has grown up with new tools of expression. That tendency, like ICAS itself, is likely to only grow”. So far, the IBP has only accepted dissertations written in English, but this does not exclude the possibility of dissertations in other languages in the future.

The Colleagues’ Choice Award was introduced in 2007, and has been included in every instalment of the IBP ever since. However, with the steep yearly rise in the number of votes we are no longer able to guarantee the validity of the polls, and so after the IBP in 2019 we decided to stop awarding this prize. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the Colleagues’ Choice Award has made the IBP more popular by highlighting books that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. Fortunately, we will of course continue to award Reading Committee Accolades to the submitted Books and Dissertations. The Accolades are an invaluable method to acknowledge a larger number of very deserving titles.

Why compete for the ICAS Book Prize?
Where will it get you? Well, Alex Mackay, one of the pillars of the IBP, wrote on that matter in The Newsletter (issues 76 and 83): “The best dissertations will have the primary merit of originality, along with scholastic qualities such as depth (and breath) of research, evidence of intellectual quality, clear and sophisticated arguments, good organisation and presentation of evidence leading to significant conclusions liable to be of interest to the discipline. They are considered theoretical and/or methodological frameworks, and of course it must include due acknowledgement of sources and proper presentation of bibliography, notes and associated scholastic apparatus. They will also have the minimum of typographical errors and the standard writing and use of English language will be of a good standard.” The criteria for the IBP Book Reading Committee were summarised as follows: “There are several criteria which determine what is good book: originality in the treatment of the topic; the depth of the research; opening up a new field of research, providing a definitive study on a certain topic; being well written or making clear arguments. [...] Inclusion on the [long]list is a significant achievement and means that the author belongs to the top tier of Asia scholars.” With these considerations in mind the Reading Committees start their yearlong reading process, which results in longlists, then shortlists. Being included on those lists is already a great honour and references to them frequently pop up on CV’s of scholars to enhance their resumes. The winners of the prizes are ultimately those that come closest to the criteria outlined above and for them it means a boost to their careers and a sense of achievement and recognition of their work.

The IBP has grown from just one of the book prizes in the field of Asian studies to the leading Book Prize in its field. Who could have dreamt that when we announced the ICAS Book Prize at the beginning of this century?
The Shanghai lilong
A new concept of home in China

Gregory Bracken

The lilong is an attractive, versatile, and socially vibrant house type that developed in Shanghai in the 19th century. It came to be seen as such a feature of the city that it is almost an icon as the Bund itself. Stylistically, it is a hybrid of Western architectural details and traditional Chinese spatial arrangements; but it is more than architecturally interesting. It is socially very important. Apart from generating a vibrant street life in the city, it was also instrumental in changing the concept of home [jia] in China. Traditionally, a home was something to be handed down through the family, from generation to generation, but the Shanghai lilong changed all that. Home-ownership came to assume a more Western attitude, where the house was seen more as a commodity than an heirloom, something that could be easily bought and sold.

China in the early 19th century was complacent. It had good reason to be. It was stable, it was rich, and it was producing some of the world’s most sought-after products – things like tea, silk, and porcelain. As a result, the country was gradually absorbing a substantial portion of the world’s supply of silver. The British (who had taken to tea more than most) were envious, not to mention out of pocket. Wanting to redress this financial imbalance, they decided on importing something lucrative of their own, notoriously deciding on opium. They fought two wars to do so (the First Opium War was from 1839 to 1842, and the Second from 1856 to 1856). These Wars led to a series of treaties, beginning with the ‘Treaty of Nanjing’ (Nanjing) on 29 August 1842. Known as the ‘unequal treaties’, they were foisted by Britain (and later, by others) onto an unwilling China and have rightly been seen as a low point in the country’s history ever since. Under the terms of the Treaty of Nanjing, China had to pay a massive indemnity of $21 million, it also had to cede the island of Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity (it was handed back in 1997 when it became a Special Administrative Region of China). The Treaty also stipulated that five ports were opened to foreign trade: namely Canton (Guangzhou), Amoy (Xiamen), Foochow (Fuzhou), Ningpo (Ningbo), and Shanghai. Henceforth known as “Treaty Ports”, these were the first in an ever-increasing series of settlements that spread themselves across China throughout the 19th and early 20th century, until the system was finally ended after 101 years with the signing of the ‘Sino-British Treaty for the Relinquishment of Extra-Territorial Rights in China’, on 11 January 1943.

Opium may have begun as illegal, but it was legalised on 8 November 1858 and remained legal in China until 1917. Jacques M. Downs tells us that China, quite naturally, saw the opium trade as an unmixed evil.1 It corrupted, it demoralized, and it drained national funds. The more the Chinese tried to stop it, the more it took hold because higher bribes meant greater incentives to subvert the law and make corrupt officials rich. The British government had always acknowledged China’s right to prohibit the drug, but, as Downs points out, the trade’s economic value outweighed its moral turpitude. Besides, British military and naval strength at the time enabled them to get away with whatever they wanted.

Bad and all as this was for China, it did have some long-term positive effects because wherever opium went, other goods soon followed. Downs highlights how this trade in opium led to other, more legitimate activities. The new conduits of trade also introduced something else into the country: modernisation. And this could be seen in the changing attitude to home-ownership that began to emerge in Shanghai with the lilong. Even missionaries played a role in

The Study

Architecturally interesting, socially important, and as much of an icon as the Bund itself

The Shanghai lilong flourished during the 19th and early 20th centuries, becoming the most common building type in the city up to World War II. Once the Communists took over in 1949 the lilong entered a decline. It was seen as a reminder of an era the Chinese would rather forget: the Treaty Port era (1842-1943). As a result, the lilong became increasingly run-down and dilapidated, as well as overcrowded and unsanitary due to the lack of development in the city from the 1950s to the 1970s. When capitalism was reintroduced from 1978 onwards, the lilong came under even more stress because of the increased space constraints in the city-centre and soaring land values, which meant that such a low-rise house type was no longer seen as economical or a good use of space. Vast swathes of them were demolished, to be replaced by high-rise offices, hotels, and apartment complexes, often with large shopping malls in their podiums. Perceptions began to change, however, in the first years of the 21st century when the architectural merit of this charming house type was once again beginning to be appreciated; they have been enjoying something of a revival ever since.

This paper looks at how the lilong came into existence in the first place. It also briefly explains the historical backdrop of the Treaty Port era, a time when Shanghai began to develop into the glittering global city it is today. It then goes on to examine what life was like in the lilong on a daily basis, taking Nelson I. Wu’s concept of ‘graduated privacy’ (which he used to explain the sequences of spaces in the traditional Chinese courtyard house or siheyuan) to show how this graduated system of space was mirrored in the layout and hierarchical arrangement of the streets and alleyways of the lilong, where it became what we could call a graduated urban privacy: it was this that was instrumental in allowing the lilong’s famous vitality to flourish.

Treaty Ports in China

China was forced to open itself to Western trade in the 19th century, primarily by Britain. At that time the country was still dominated by Confucianism, where society was divided into four basic classes: scholars, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants (in descending order of importance). Robert Nield saw the Western powers’ belief in trade as being as natural a human function as breathing; these powers believed that countries should be able to trade with whomsoever they pleased.2 China did not share this view. Chinese mandarins, the scholar-gentry elites who ruled the country for most of its history, saw trade and indeed any sort of commerce as vulgar, low-class, and unrefined, not the sort of activity appropriate for a cultivated Confucian gentleman [junzi].

Today. It then goes on to examine what life
By the early 20th century Shanghai had become synonymous with modernity; it had the country’s first tram, first stock exchange, and first nightclub. Not only did it have the largest population of any city in Asia (around three million by 1930), it had also the region’s tallest buildings, freest press, and most dazzling social life (as well as Asia’s most notorious gangsters, drugs, and gambling dens). All of which came to an end, however, on 8 December 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and annexed Shanghai’s foreign concessions, and the city found itself under one jurisdiction for the first time in a century (albeit Japanese rather than Chinese). 1942 saw the revocation of the Treaty Port system, and after World War II Shanghai went through a brief boom followed by a cataclysmic period of corruption and economic mismanagement before being taken over by the People’s Liberation Army on 24 April 1949. The People’s Republic of China was declared later that year, on 1 October, ending once and for all the revocation of the Treaty Port system, and making Shanghai the whole Treaty Port system). It was bigger, more modern, and an ever-expanding periphery, which was why many of the city’s residents, the fact that these houses were no longer regarded as something a family would own, but had to adapt to other more commercial uses, like shop houses, workshops and offices. The illong’s polyvalence may seem to point to a bright future, but this may not be the case for the city’s residents. What role can there be for this fascinating house type in the 21st century? But, as Rudyard Kipling said, that’s all!

The layout and use of the Shanghai Illong

Treaty Port policies were popular with Chinese looking for work, or fleeing from the upheavals that convulsed the country. In 1910, 1943 saw the demarcation of the Bund and the smarter parts of the city centre, but most ordinary Shanghai residents lived in the much humbler illongs. The Shanghai Illong was a fascinating house type in the Treaty Port era, both Western and Chinese, were known as sojourners, temporary residents who saw the city as a place to get rich before returning home. And this had an effect on their attitudes to the concept of home. The word for ‘home’ in Chinese is jia, which also denotes ‘house’ and family, so concepts that cannot be separated as they are in the West. The ideogram for jia consists of ten strokes and is said to represent a pig under a roof, which can mean a related group of people who eat out of one pot. This can be meant literally, as in the daily meal, or figuratively, by the sharing of family income (traditionally, from the raising of pigs). The family could therefore be seen not only as a group who consume together, but also as a basic economic unit of society by producing that commodity.

Shanghai as Treaty Port

Shanghai was, without doubt, the most important Treaty Port in China. It was bigger, it was richer, and it was more sophisticated than any other city in the country. It began life as a fishing village before growing into a small walled city, whose location at the mouth of the Yangtze made it ideal for trade. The British recognised this and within twenty years of becoming a Treaty Port, Shanghai became the world’s sixth-largest port. It became so rich and powerful in fact, that Shanghai’s leaders proposed turning it into an independent republic in 1862. This was unrealistic (besides, it would have contravened the terms of the Treaty Port system). Shanghai became a Treaty Port, and annexed Shanghai’s foreign concessions, which meant ‘sitting room’ and ‘alleyway-house itself’.

They are also sometimes known as lilong. There were also a French Concession, the original Chinese city, and an ever-expanding perimeter, which was why many of the city’s residents, the fact that these houses were no longer regarded as something a family would own, but had to adapt to other more commercial uses, like shop houses, workshops and offices. The illong’s polyvalence may seem to point to a bright future, but this may not be the case for the city’s residents. What role can there be for this fascinating house type in the 21st century? But, as Rudyard Kipling said, that’s all!

The Shanghai Illong: a new concept of home in China

A large proportion of Shanghai’s population in the Treaty Port era, both Western and Chinese, were known as sojourners, temporary residents who saw the city as a place to get rich before returning home. And this had an effect on their attitudes to the concept of home. The word for ‘home’ in Chinese is jia, which also denotes ‘house’ and family, so concepts that cannot be separated as they are in the West. The ideogram for jia consists of ten strokes and is said to represent a pig under a roof, which can mean a related group of people who eat out of one pot. This can be meant literally, as in the daily meal, or figuratively, by the sharing of family income (traditionally, from the raising of pigs). The family could therefore be seen not only as a group who consume together, but also as a basic economic unit of society by producing that commodity.

...Ilong came to be seen as a transferrable commodity rather than a permanent home.
Recent publications and new directions

Paradigmatic shifts

The field of migration studies has gone through various paradigmatic shifts over time, influenced by research findings as well as changes in the geopolitical, sociocultural and economic landscape across sending and receiving nations. Initially, the field was characterized by a deeply functionalist approach that sought to explain migration via various push and pull factors. The eventual goal here was not just ‘explaining’ but also ‘predicting’ migration. Migration was understood to describe a process from A to B with an eventual return home, which was conceptualized in terms of failure or success overseas. Questions of integration and assimilation initially also built upon this and especially in Europe this led to significant public debates. The 1990s introduced an important paradigmatic shift with its introduction of the concept of trans-nationalism. A growing number of migrants were observed to maintain multiple ties and connections between home and host country and these transnational lifestyles were made possible by the arrival of budget carriers and advances in telecommunications and media. As a result, migration studies had to refocus its attention on the multiplicity of migrant lives.

The introduction of the ‘new mobilities paradigm’ by Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006) confronted the field with new questions of how to understand the mobile trajectories of migrants across the globe. This new paradigm is not simply about asserting that the world is more mobile than ever, rather it also alerts us to the various kinds of mobility systems that regulate movement. Migration is not only about crossing borders but also about not-moving, waiting, and related constraints imposed by sending and receiving nation-states.

Migration industry and brokerage

The recent focus on the question of mobility itself has made scholars realize more than ever before that migration cannot solely be understood by focusing on either the sending or receiving side. While studies of transnationalism had already tried to unite both in its focus, the (commercialized) networks that facilitate migration – and which in fact made it possible to migrate in the first place – remained understudied. Meanwhile, the commercialization of migration pathways has opened up the opportunity to live and work in another country to an ever-widening group of migrants. This seems to stand in direct relation to the ongoing formalization and regulation of migration trajectories that make it almost impossible for low-skilled migrants to navigate without much difficulty and to their agents and brokers, and by doing so also try to find an answer to the question why certain destinations such as Singapore are so much more expensive to migrate to than those in the Middle East. Bringing together case studies focusing on internal migration in Indonesia, issues of legality and illegality among Myanmar migrants in Thailand, and the complexity of regulating and mediating migration from India, the volume is primarily set up to encourage future research on the topic.

A final set of papers appeared in a special section with questions related to internal migration (2019) and pays attention to the emerging category of student-migrant and the entanglement of the education and migration industries in the Asia Pacific region. While it may appear that this constitutes a separate type of industry altogether, the way skilled migration pathways are interlinked with various interests related to nation’s economies and industries.

The question of skill

The rapidly growing number of so-called student-migrants in Asia has not only zoomed in on the way skilled migration programs and international education ambitions speak to each other, but has also contributed to a renewed focus on questions related to skill in general. As is the case in Australia, Singapore and elsewhere, international students are often welcomed as ‘potential’ skilled migrants who may eventually stay on (either permanently or temporarily) after graduation. As such they have increasingly become integral to skilled migration programs. While in Australia this has led to critical questions about the skills of student-migrants possess upon completion of their degrees, such developments have also contributed to a more general inquiry into what ‘skill’ actually is and how skills are ranked in terms of high and low.

In light of such discussions, a recent (2020) special issue with the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS) addresses the social construction of the idea of skill. In it, Gracia Liu-Farrer, Brenda Yeoh and I ask who the arbitrating of skill are, how skill is constructed in the migration process and in turn, how it affects mobility. It brings together a set of questions and findings that are not only relevant to migration studies but also to broader questions of development and social change.
New directions

What these publications and the conversations show is not just that the question of mobility is integral to the study of migration, but that the field itself is constantly in motion as well. As Peidong Yang’s prior remarks also underline, with its focus on Chinese ‘foreign talent’ students in Singapore and Indian medical students in Lebanon, the migration pathways across the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly diverse. Asian nations like Japan, South Korea and China are increasingly mainly known for restricting immigration pathways. Yet, as we have seen, increasingly variously skilled migrants. Important factors of influence here are not just the desire for global competitiveness resulting in a talent race for the best and brightest – but also rapidly ageing societies and low fertility rates.

What these publications and the conversations show is not just that the question of mobility is integral to the study of migration, but that the field itself is constantly in motion as well. As Peidong Yang’s prior remarks also underline, with its focus on Chinese ‘foreign talent’ students in Singapore and Indian medical students in Lebanon, the migration pathways across the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly diverse. Asian nations like Japan, South Korea and China are increasingly mainly known for restricting immigration pathways. Yet, as we have seen, increasingly variously skilled migrants. Important factors of influence here are not just the desire for global competitiveness resulting in a talent race for the best and brightest – but also rapidly ageing societies and low fertility rates.

What these publications and the conversations show is not just that the question of mobility is integral to the study of migration, but that the field itself is constantly in motion as well. As Peidong Yang’s prior remarks also underline, with its focus on Chinese ‘foreign talent’ students in Singapore and Indian medical students in Lebanon, the migration pathways across the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly diverse. Asian nations like Japan, South Korea and China are increasingly mainly known for restricting immigration pathways. Yet, as we have seen, increasingly variously skilled migrants. Important factors of influence here are not just the desire for global competitiveness resulting in a talent race for the best and brightest – but also rapidly ageing societies and low fertility rates.

What these publications and the conversations show is not just that the question of mobility is integral to the study of migration, but that the field itself is constantly in motion as well. As Peidong Yang’s prior remarks also underline, with its focus on Chinese ‘foreign talent’ students in Singapore and Indian medical students in Lebanon, the migration pathways across the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly diverse. Asian nations like Japan, South Korea and China are increasingly mainly known for restricting immigration pathways. Yet, as we have seen, increasingly variously skilled migrants. Important factors of influence here are not just the desire for global competitiveness resulting in a talent race for the best and brightest – but also rapidly ageing societies and low fertility rates.

What these publications and the conversations show is not just that the question of mobility is integral to the study of migration, but that the field itself is constantly in motion as well. As Peidong Yang’s prior remarks also underline, with its focus on Chinese ‘foreign talent’ students in Singapore and Indian medical students in Lebanon, the migration pathways across the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly diverse. Asian nations like Japan, South Korea and China are increasingly mainly known for restricting immigration pathways. Yet, as we have seen, increasingly variously skilled migrants. Important factors of influence here are not just the desire for global competitiveness resulting in a talent race for the best and brightest – but also rapidly ageing societies and low fertility rates.
When the centenary of China’s 1919 May Fourth demonstrations drew near, China watchers turned their gaze towards the politics of remembrance in the People’s Republic of China. They noted the official emphasis on patriotism and the ‘spirit of youth’, thus leaving the May Fourth legacy of ‘Mr Science’ and ‘Mr Democracy’ all but buried. 

Official interpretations foregrounded what is now known as the May Fourth Incident, or the gathering of thousands of students at Tiananmen in Beijing in response to the transfer of Germany’s former rights in Shandong to Japan. Later, however, the term May Fourth also came to denote a range of cultural, political, social, and ideological advancements in the years before and after 1919. Seen through this lens, the movement spurred the reorganization of the Kuomintang, witnessed the rise of ‘isms’ – individualism, nationalism, liberalism, and feminism among them – and facilitated the adoption of the vernacular. Furthermore, it instigated student and workers’ movements and the expansion of the public sphere. Since the movement contained all these facets, it is not surprising that there are as many ‘May Fourths’ as there have been commemorations of May Fourth.

While the shifting meaning of May Fourth in the People’s Republic of China has been gaining attention, a less frequently asked question is: what did and does the movement mean for Chinese communities outside of mainland China? To answer this, we first need to revisit developments in scholarship. In an article written for May Fourth’s centenary, the historian Edward Wang pinpoints three main trends in Chinese scholarship on May Fourth since the 1990s. He terms these trends ‘individualization’, ‘localization’, and ‘memorialization’. The first trend, individualization, refers to research on renowned intellectuals associated with the movement, such as Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) or Lu Xun (1881-1936). Remarkably, their ranks now include previously denounced intellectual individuals such as Hu Shi (1891-1962), or critics of the movement, such as those around the journal Critical Review (學衡), including Wu Mi (1894-1978), Mai Guangdi (1890-1945), and Hu Xiansu (1894-1958). Renewed interest in the latter also relates to the so-called ‘Republican fever’ and scholarly trends such as ‘national studies’, as well as to the reassessment of ‘conservative’ critics of May Fourth as moderns and cosmopolitans. Secondly, localization denotes a change from the study of May Fourth in Beijing to cities and regions across China, but also to transnational connections with movements such as the March First Movement in Korea. A well-known study in this regard is Eric Manelis’s The Wilsonian Moment (2007), which links May Fourth with other national self-determination movements through the Paris Peace Conference. May Fourth has hence also become subjected to the so-called ‘transnational turn’ in academia. Finally, memorialization, or how May Fourth has been remembered, reveals the influence of the international turn to history and memory since Pierre Nora famously popularized the notion of lieux de mémoire (sites of memory). In recent publications on May Fourth, scholars interrogate existing ways of remembering the movement.

Memorialization, localization, and negotiation

As 2019 marked the centenary of China’s May Fourth demonstrations, in this piece, we reflect on how this event and the broader movement surrounding it were commemorated in Singapore and Hong Kong, with reference to Southeast Asia. We probe the question of how the movement’s ‘memorialization’ and ‘localization’ in these two settings were shaped by both their connection with China and the history of British colonialism. Politicians, intellectuals, and students negotiated the meaning of the movement congruent with a variety of agendas, whereas the commemorations also coincided with another anniversary in Singapore and occurred amidst political protests in Hong Kong.

Singapore and Hong Kong: local identities and connections

To explore how the localization and memorialization of May Fourth intersect in the May Fourth centenaries in Singapore and Hong Kong, the authors of this piece, together with Huang Jianli, held a panel discussion at the National Library in Singapore in November 2019. To some extent, we have all studied May Fourth from the angles that Edward Wang describes. Els van Dongen has investigated the re-evaluation of May Fourth ‘conservative’ in mainland China and transnational interactions involving debates on ‘radicalism’ and the meaning of May Fourth after 1989. David Kneale was an early exponent of the transnational perspective on May Fourth and analyzed its meaning in Singapore in his well-known monograph New Culture in a New World (2003). Finally, Huang Jianli has written extensively on questions of commemoration, historiography, and student activism in both China and Singapore.

Why Singapore and Hong Kong? One reason is that both witness a complex dynamic in terms of how they relate to mainland China. In his book, Kneale asked: What did a movement with nationalist traits come to signify among the Chinese diaspora? He has answered this by situating the movement between the oft designated twin themes of ‘nationalism’ and ‘enlightenment’, and that of ‘transnationalism’. However, both cities also manifest a strong sense of local identity shaped by both interactions with China and the history of British rule. Indeed, in May Fourth in Hong Kong (五月在香江) Chan Hok Yin has analyzed interpretations of May Fourth based on three historical perspectives: that of British colonialism, that of nationalism before British rule, and that of local identity. In spite of the vastly different trajectories of both cities, local identity has been shaped and discussed through and in response to this double connection of the changing relation with mainland China and the long shadow of British rule. What’s more, in both places ideological divisions have intersected with linguistic divisions, including but not limited to an English-educated versus a Chinese-educated elite.

Returning to the May Fourth period, what forms did the movement take in Singapore and Hong Kong? Although it is equally hard to define May Fourth outside China, large-scale protests also occurred in these places in the spring of 1919. Throughout May, Chinese residents of Singapore called for boycotts and strikes, and these calls amounted to violence on the night of 19 June 1919. The Straits Times reported that a mob “made bonfires in the middle of the roads, and with the air filled with piercing screams and shouts, scenes of wild confusion reigned”. Eventually the Governor called on the sailors of the docked warship Manchester to help patrol the city. By the early morning, the demonstration died out, but it had caused severe damage, had claimed four lives (two Chinese and two Indians), had seriously injured eight individuals, and had led to the arrest of over 130 participants. Similarly, in Hong Kong, students and journalists led rallies and demonstrations while business leaders called for a boycott of Japanese-made products. Nine students were arrested and fined. Their crime? They marched in the street holding umbrellas with 国货 (national products) written on top!

Nevertheless, as was the case in China, these 1919 protests in Singapore and Hong Kong can best be understood as part of a larger, multi-year movement that transcends temporary nationalist concerns. Community leaders were also motivated by a commitment to greater democracy, and by a desire to implement new intellectual trends and ideas. They sought to destroy the icons of the past and usher in a new era of science and enlightenment. But May Fourth in Singapore and Hong Kong had some
rather distinct elements as well. Intellectuals in Singapore used the movement to call for more local control over Singapore affairs. In return, the movement was an internal power struggle over the issue of what it meant to be Chinese in Singapore. The battle raged between some commentators repudiated some of the literary trends emerging in China, calling instead for greater artistic independence. Often, the struggles pitted the more recently arrived immigrants against the more long-settled Chinese residents within Singapore.

Negotiating the meanings of May Fourth in 2019

While this brief detour to the May Fourth period already reflects the tensions between the commemoration and the contest for meaning between local and overseas Chinese, a 2007 article by Wang Yue and Gao Xiaojun reflects the complexity and challenges that the May Fourth Movement poses. The authors focus on the ways in which the May Fourth Movement, as a significant moment in Chinese history, has been negotiated and reinterpreted by different communities in different ways. They argue that the May Fourth Movement has been subject to multiple interpretations and adaptations, depending on the context and the actors involved.

In 2019, the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the Institute of Contemporary Chinese Thought (ICCT) in Singapore co-organized an international symposium titled 'The Awakening of a 1919 Hong Kong student boycotts and protests. Not surprisingly, there were student activists who created the umbrella in their contemporary art works. In one seal engraving, the artist depicted a police officer aiming at an activist. In another piece, the artist repurposed umbrella handles to create seal engravings. The caption read: “This set of seal engravings was inspired by Hu Shih’s article ‘Our Hopes for the Students’. It stresses that students should not be seduced by the student movement, and reminds the students not to be snared by politicians”.

In Singapore, the 2019 symposium took place on 4 May, the anniversary of the May Fourth Movement. The event included a panel discussion on the meaning of the movement in the form of sculpture, calligraphy, seal engraving, and short films. The event also featured a performance by a group of students, who created an interactive installation that explored the meaning of the movement through the use of multimedia. The installation included interactive screens that allowed visitors to explore different perspectives on the movement, including its historical context, its impact on Chinese culture, and its relevance in contemporary society.

In conclusion, the May Fourth Movement remains a significant event in Chinese history, and its legacy continues to be negotiated and adapted in different contexts. The challenges that the movement poses continue to be relevant in today’s world, as the need for creative and critical thinking remains as important as ever.
Urban energy infrastructure results from the mutual engagement of builders, residents and designers choosing and forming materials along ecological, economic or aesthetic guidelines. In light of recent climate change discussions, energy consumption is increasingly scrutinized. As a response, the Chinese government is continuously developing energy efficiency standards for the building industry. This includes promoting low carbon dioxide and sustainable construction through national and local insulation guidelines. Institutional changes are, however, only efficient if the practices and habits of individuals change too. In Chongqing, residents give little thought if the practices and habits of individuals change too. In Chongqing, residents give little thought if the practices and habits of individuals change too. In Chongqing, residents give little thought of the fact that the main concern of the subtropical architecture is mitigating the heat of the summer months. This is traceable in the architectural history of the region. At the beginning of the twentieth century, traditional wooden stilted houses [吊脚楼] regulated the hot summer temperatures by virtue of their location on hilly terrain, where cold air from the river would flow up through natural microclimatic air movements. High humidity was combated with bamboo walls to facilitate ventilation and summer sun radiation was minimized by constructing houses on terraces, thereby reducing the surface area of each individual dwelling. Between the 1950s and 1980s, characteristic socialist, sometimes Soviet-inspired, six-storey brick buildings, often arranged in work unit compounds (单位), came to dominate the built landscape. Cross-ventilation was achievable by having window or door openings on two opposite sides and through the use of open staircases as well as lattice-style openings above doors and windows. In the 1990s, high-rise buildings started to emerge, but even those maintained characteristics appropriate for passive climate control, such as air and light shafts. Due to the availability of state-subsidized and thus affordable electricity, many residents have installed air-conditioning to cool their apartments during the hot summer months. However, the predominant approach to architectural structure barely considers the cool and moist winter conditions. This neglect is embedded in the materiality of the buildings themselves: one of the features of the rapidly expanding cities in China since the 1990s has been the implicit state support of houses being built with cheap materials. Apropos thermal issues, the workings of the construction business impede the construction of solidly insulated and long-lasting housing infrastructures. In general, there is a lack of trust towards construction companies because, as an architect from Chongqing commented, “if something can be done with cheap materials, construction companies will do it, even if more ecologically

Urban energy landscapes. Another in what Castán Broto pointedly climatic region. I emphasize that architecture the thermal practices of urban residents in the subtropical regions. My research on attention has been paid to heating practices have been researched extensively in Asia, less only single glazed and there are many air-leak points in the façade. How then, do residents keep themselves warm during the cooler months? And how are everyday objects embedded in urban energy landscapes?

Ode to the ‘little sun’

Everyday thermal practice and energy infrastructure in Chongqing (China)

The ‘little sun’ [小太阳] is a small electronic infrared heater used to warm one’s body. Since the implementation of the ‘Great Heating Divide’ in the 1950s, apartments in cities in the southern subtropical part of China are built without connection to a central or district heating grid. The materiality of architecture reinforces the cold, as insulation is deficient, windows are often only single glazed and there are many air-leak points in the façade. How then, do residents keep themselves warm during the cooler months? And how are everyday objects embedded in urban energy landscapes?

Urban climate and material culture

Living below the ‘Heating Demarcation Line’

Chinese cities are known for their heavy air pollution, caused mainly by traffic and the burning of coal. Besides this pan-Chinese phenomenon, local urban climates vary greatly and are determined by topography, winds and seasonal variation, ranging from the arid continental climates in the northwest to the tropical regions in the southeast. Cities are also characterized by microclimates resulting from, among others, urban heat island effects, built structures and green areas.

Chongqing, the capital of an eponymous municipality under direct administration of the central government, has roughly 8 million inhabitants and is located on the shores of the Yangtze river, in a humid subtropical climate in Southwest China. Even if its extreme climate periods are short (July/August in summer and December/January in winter), citizens have developed various strategies to stay warm or keep cool accordingly. With temperatures ranging between 5°C and 10°C in the coldest months, Chongqing winters seem mild. However, most apartments have no heating appliances installed. This is a legacy from socialist times, when the government defined an arbitrary line separating the north of China from the south. District-supplied heating is only installed in urban apartment buildings in the north, in Chongqing, as in other cities south of the line, such as Wuhan, Chengdu or Shanghai, thermal responsibility for the winter period is left to residents.

Subtropical architecture in Chongqing

During the cooler months, indoor and outdoor temperatures are often much the same. The coldness of urban apartments in Chongqing stems from the fact that the main concern of the subtropical architecture is mitigating the heat of the summer months. This is traceable in the architectural history of the region. At the beginning of the twentieth
friendly materials such as triple-glazed windows are now available.” In all areas of urban development, the implementation of sustainable development goals seems more difficult on the ground than its proclamation in policy. Designs may meet the stipulated codes, but there is little control of the finished building. Another problem is that, for instance, thicker walls consume precious floor area in policy. Designs may meet the stipulated sustainable development goals seems more difficult on the ground than its proclamation in policy. Designs may meet the stipulated codes, but there is little control of the finished building. Another problem is that, for instance, thicker walls consume precious floor area. While it would be relatively easy, from a material-technical point of view, to apply insulation boards or vapour and air barriers to the interior surfaces of walls, constructors and tenants both prefer to have more floor space. These findings underline the fact that despite high-rise buildings all over the world looking alike from the outside, there are fundamental differences in their materiality and social use. While the thermal structure of buildings is defined by national policies and construction companies, the indoor thermal environment is very much dependent on the inhabitants’ agency, as they compensate for and adapt to the lack of insulation with their own flexible practices.

Thermal infrastructure and everyday material culture

Given that the structure of houses in Chongqing does not provide comfort in winter, I argue that we have to include residents’ everyday practices in response as part of thinking about thermal infrastructure and urban energy landscapes. The regulation of temperature, humidity, sunshine or air quality is related to the use of objects, materials or technologies. Some of my informants indicate that they employ devices such as air-conditioning machines in the heating mode, electric blankets or radiators to keep warm. Others prefer non-electrical practices such as drinking hot tea, dressing in quilted pajamas or using heat patches. This combination of objects, technologies and material culture for the production of comfortable and liveable spaces forms a “system of thermal-material culture.” Besides such thermal-material cultures depending on geographical climatic contexts, they are also shaped along intersections of socio-economic status, age and gender.

The ‘little sun’ is one of the objects employed to improve comfort. Through the infrared waves it emits, the device warms all parts of the body in the focus of its radiation. While it cannot be used to heat rooms or entire apartments, it serves well for warming the body. In shops, sales personnel put the device under the table to warm their legs while waiting for customers. Students use it when sitting at their desks. And people enjoy its heat radiation in apartments, too. One informant told me that his mother prefers her ‘little sun’ to the conventional radiator as it emits a reddish-yellow light that reminds her of the open fire in her rural childhood home. It is a warm glow but also the (often) round form of the heaters that have led to their nickname. Because Chongqing winters are damp and foggy and there is almost no sun, the ‘little sun’ is also kind of a substitute – filling in between the rare moments when the ‘real’ sun shows up.

Energy transition and social inequality

In the Chongqing winter, people keep themselves warm through the use of objects such as the ‘little sun’. We often neglect to properly consider how such use of everyday material culture complements thermal infrastructure. The construction of thermal comfort should not be conceived as a linear relation between a technology and its beneficiaries, such as a heating infrastructure being employed to warm apartments. Rather, when thinking about energy transition, I suggest that not only institutional improvements (such as greening measures, low-carbon transport options or carbon dioxide reduction guidelines) but also everyday practices should be considered. Through detailed studies of urban energy landscapes, the interrelatedness of thermal structures, thermal regimes and thermal practices becomes apparent. As Costas Broto writes, “[m]any of the factors that shape current energy systems, from electricity networks to the type of houses in which people live, have emerged over time as part of a historical process through which different features of energy systems become embedded in our societies and economies.”

In that sense, any sort of energy transition in Chongqing needs to address the particular socio-political context in which the architecture emerges. It is not sufficient simply to change the energy source or the building material; we have to consider how the materiality of the urban energy landscape is embedded in everyday rhythms. Access to state heating benefits for Chinese urban residents north and south of the Heating Demarcation Line has been unequal for its “futuristic district heating infrastructure in southern China, with all the necessary pipes and heat production plants, seems out of question in light of current energy transition aims. However, by improving structural insulation, electricity consumption could be significantly reduced – both in summer and in winter, as there would be no need for excessive air-conditioning or ‘little suns’ further. It would lessen socio-economic division within the south, as at present financial means decide access to different forms of heating. Well-off residents can afford to install electric underfloor heating, while less privileged people have to rely on quilted pajamas or small heating devices at best. In contemporary China, energy transition is related to fundamental questions of who has the right to access governmental heating infrastructure and how far keeping one’s body warm is a private issue.

Notes


Madlen Kobi, Institute for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture, Università della Svizzera Italiana, Mendrisio, Switzerland. madlen.kobi@usi.ch
Asian Studies in Pakistan

While most of the educational institutions in Pakistan offer graduate and undergraduate courses and specialisations focusing on Asia and Asian languages, only a few universities have dedicated departments or research centres to carry out Asia-specific research. There are even fewer institutes that offer an entire degree program with an inclusive Asia-wide curriculum or Asia-centric research clusters. This is not to say that there is a lack of knowledge on Asia in the academic sphere of Pakistan, but rather to argue that Asian expertise does not concentrate under one banner, hence, limiting the scope of ‘discursive’ and ‘non-discriminatory’ knowledge production on Asian Studies in Pakistan.

Apart from the educational institutes, there are multiple independent think tanks, policy and research centres as well as NGOs working on Asia-related research, such as The Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS), Center for Security and Research and Security Studies (CRSS), Pakistan China Institute (PCI), China Study Centre at Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), and Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS), to name a few. These institutes engage in diverse topics on Asia, covering politics, security, economy, culture, history or foreign affairs. However, the presence of such research institutes is more in Pakistan's Central and recently more centred on China rather than having an inclusive ‘Asian’ studies research approach.

Given this, I argue that the status of Asian Studies in Pakistan is asymmetric as some regions within the continent dominate the academic and policy-oriented research space. Pakistan, strategically located at the Arabian Sea and surrounded by India to the east, Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the southwest, and China to the northeast, is of much geopolitical significance at the Asian as well as global level. Moreover, its rich history and cultural tapestry have much to offer and share with other countries through research collaborations on Asian knowledge. In this article, I survey the major gatekeepers of Asian Studies research in Pakistan and trace out some possible factors and explanations for this Asian research asymmetry and the lack of an inclusive approach on Asian Studies in Pakistan.

The status of Asian Studies in Pakistan is quite fragmented. Although there are multiple educational, research and policy institutes working on various topics related to different countries and regions within Asia, there is a lack of a well-defined inclusive ‘Asian’ academic space that engages with all regions of the continent. As most of the scholarly work in the field of Asian Studies was sparked by the political need for understanding other societies for policy purposes, area-specific research clearly served utilitarian purposes, rather than scholarly goals. Be that as it may, there is also an academic need to reassert and recognize the gaps within Asian Studies in Pakistan by developing a more inclusive approach and engaging other under-represented Asian countries into the fold. Yet, with the existing de-globalised forms of knowledge production, we need to reconfigure our globalised theories of knowledge with the local and regional theory building processes. It is crucial to reform the Asian Studies narrative by including non-Western theories on Asia rather than heavily relying on the Euro-American centric accounts of Asian Studies. Additionally, Asian Studies should not only be confined to geographically defined regions but efforts should also be made to study Asia from a thematic, i.e., interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. In the case of Pakistan, this could be achieved by enhancing public funding to promote multidisciplinary and inclusive Asian research in colleges and universities, and by encouraging public–private partnerships and external funding initiatives among policy and research centres. Furthermore, we should continue to facilitate cross-border research collaborations and academic exchange programs for Asian Studies scholars in Pakistan, especially with regard to our neighbouring Asian countries, as they will enable us to advance and co-produce theoretically and methodologically rigorous knowledge on Asia. We would gain much more in academic and scientific ventures by mutual Asian knowledge gathering and sharing than confining this corpus of knowledge flow within our own borders.

Notes
2 The other three centres were: Area Study Centre for Europe (AICE) University of Karachi; Area Study Centre for the Middle East and Arab Countries, University of Balochistan, Quetta; Area Study Centre for Africa, North and South America, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.
3 ibid., note 1

Gul-i-Hina Shazad
Research Assistant, New Silk Road Project, IAS g.shahzad@cisr.nl

Asian Studies Institutes in Pakistan (1973 – to date)

When it comes to Asian Studies in Pakistan, who is at the forefront of the production of knowledge in Pakistan? Which universities partake in this endeavour and what research capacities do they use to disseminate their knowledge on Asia? Area Study centres came into existence in Pakistan in 1973, and were based on the National Education Policy of 1972-1980, following the Indo-Pak War and the separation of East-Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) in 1971. This renewed education policy catered to the political need to study foreign societies that were of utmost significance to the national interest of Pakistan. Moreover, in 1975, the Area Study Act No. XVII passed by the Parliament mandated the establishment of six Asia Study centres funded by the federal government. Of these six Centres, three had an Asian-oriented focus, namely, the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Punjab in Lahore; Centre for South-East Asian Studies at the University of Sind in Jamshoro; and the Area Study Centre (Russia, China, and Central Asia) at the University of Peshawar. These Area Study centres engaged in interdisciplinary research through teaching, research training, and organizing conferences, seminars, and assisting decision makers in Pakistan in designing more informed foreign policymaking.

The Centre for South Asian Studies is located at Pakistan’s oldest and largest university – the University of Punjab in Lahore – and started its research in 1973, with a focus on the socioeconomic and political developments in South Asia, covering India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Besides offering Master and Doctorate degrees in South Asian Studies, the Centre also publishes two biannual journals: the International Journal of South Asian Studies and the Journal of Indian Studies.

Moreover, the University of Punjab also hosts the Confucius Institute, which actively promotes Chinese culture and language. The research of the Far East and Southeast Asian Studies Centre at the University of Sind in Jamshoro, focuses on countries such as Japan, North Korea, South Korea, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Brunei, Thailand, Laos, and East Timor. The Centre publishes the Asia Pacific research journal annually. The Area Study Centre (Russia, China, and Central Asia) at the University of Peshawar caters to the research and academic needs of Peshawar, as well as of the whole province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Along with its biannual research journal Central Asia, the Centre actively offers training in Chinese, Russian, Pashto, and Uighur/ Uzbek languages. Moreover, the University of Peshawar started the China Study Centre in 2016 after the launch of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In addition to the above mentioned centres, there are some other academic institutes that provide Asian linguistic training, such as the National University of Modern Languages (NNUML), and the Gurmiani Centre for Languages and Literature at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). NNUML is the most prominent language institute, with multiple departments for Asian languages, such as Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Pashto, Punjabi, among others. Established in 1969, initially it served as a platform for language training for government personnel, but later upgraded to University status in 2000. It now teaches 47 oriental and occidental languages and offers degree programs in multiple campuses across Pakistan. The Gurmiani Centre for Languages and Literature at LUMS was founded in 2010 and specializes more on South Asian languages, such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Arabic.

Although all of these Asian study and research centres have been engaging quite actively over the past years in Pakistan, some defined regions but efforts should also be made to study Asia from a thematic, i.e., interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. In the case of Pakistan, this could be achieved by enhancing public funding to promote multidisciplinary and inclusive Asian research in colleges and universities, and by encouraging public–private partnerships and external funding initiatives among policy and research centres. Furthermore, we should continue to facilitate cross-border research collaborations and academic exchange programs for Asian Studies scholars in Pakistan, especially with regard to our neighbouring Asian countries, as they will enable us to advance and co-produce theoretically and methodologically rigorous knowledge on Asia. We would gain much more in academic and scientific ventures by mutual Asian knowledge gathering and sharing than confining this corpus of knowledge flow within our own borders.

Moving forward

Up until 2013, the number and regional distribution of Asia Studies Centres remained more or less the same. However, with the recent launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under China’s Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, there has been a surge in the number of research institutes on China, as we are witnessing the strengthening of the Sino-Pak inter-governmental ties. Consequently, many educational institutes have initiated China Study Centres, such as the China Study Centre at the University of Balochistan, University of Sargodha, Government College University in Lahore, COMSATS University, Bahria University, and the China Pakistan Management Initiative (CPMI) at LUMS University. This increase in China-related academic study and research avenues aptly aligns with political needs and the foreign policy trajectory of Pakistan. Sino-Pak bilateral relations have always been strong as both countries have supported each other over the years; however, with CPEC, China has become the most important international actor for Pakistan. Hence, thoroughly understanding Chinese politics, economy, culture, history and language, as well as developing collaborative research with China in various fields, is of vital significance for Pakistan moving forward.
Politics and identity in Chinese martial arts


Reviewed title
A History of Chinese Martial Arts

By following the historical survey it becomes obvious that martial arts are not limited to a certain moment in time. As a witness it may follow in the future.

In short, Lu’s work offers the many facts following in various sources, which were under US administration (pp.208). Other types of martial arts exchange between China and adjacent nations took place in the centuries before. For example, when the so-called Japanese pirates (wakus) invaded China, their Japanese sabres became a threat so that Chinese martial artists seemed to be eager to learn Japanese sabre techniques and to acquire Japanese sabres (p.151). On the other hand, Chinese fighting techniques exerted some influence on the Japanese samurai. The latter case is slightly outdated; however, the basic idea of a certain Chinese influence remains a fact. So there are strong reasons to explore these knowledge crossbred of nations, and for future research. Furthermore, it has become a rather international phenomenon.

Worth mentioning is a discussion of early Chinese schools of thought and their association with martial arts (p.30). Among them they say that martial arts are the teachings of Chinese military classics like Sun Tzu. Insightful comments are given on early Chinese martial arts and its context regarding to possible influences on martial arts ideologies. Later in the book Kang Gewu in the introduction mentions his philosophy (1644–1919) underlines that it was in this period that martial artists tried to ‘enrich the content of their martial arts’ by integrating them into traditional Chinese culture (p.160).

These considerations are definitely provoking further interest and research into the topic. At the same time they demonstrate that martial arts cannot be generally reduced to only a brutal and mindless physical activity. Two of the more recent developments presented in the last chapter include a centralisation of sportive martial arts in China and a large scale operation in order to classify martial arts legacies. This second campaign obviously resulted in a huge amount of collected source materials, and raises my hope that other publications on this worthwhile and captivating subject may follow in the future.

In short, A History of Chinese Martial Arts is a most welcome and interesting book, providing the combined insights of several specialists. It is recommended for all practitioners, teachers or researchers of China’s martial arts who will find it a helpful overview of the subject. The time has come.

Furthermore it will be insightful to students of Asian Studies in general to understand the impact of martial arts on Chinese culture and the knowledge that flows and flows back and forth between China and its neighbours.

S
ome readers may raise an eyebrow reading the term ‘Chinese martial arts’ as it is often entailing stereotypes of an infantile hobby, scooting actors in kung fu movies in ancient China, or for centuries Chinese martial arts, in the broadest sense of the word, were an important part of the culture of China and played roles in its politics and identity building. In spite of this English language scholarly treatments of their historical, cultural or political dimensions are still rare, which underscores the high relevance of any new publication in this particular field. Lu Zhouxiang’s mission in writing the book under review was to highlight and to prove exactly these aspects. Using a historical approach the first half of his project with developments during the Shang dynasty in the Bronze Age and follows the official chronology until the Qing dynasty. Subsequently the second half of the work covers the 20th Century until the most recent time. Lu’s enthusiasm for the subject matter shines through his easy to read, thoroughly referenced and widely illustrated work equipped with its own bibliography. A small drawback is the lack of Chinese characters in some cases, which makes reading the identification of some names and sources.

Real forte of Lu’s text are the numerous quotations of various historical sources like poems, songs, chronicles, etc. often translated in English. Lu notes, that it is the key for the reader to make reading the anyway interesting monograph enjoyable and even more entertaining. Right from the beginning Lu manages to successfully demonstrate the importance of martial arts as ritualistic and pragmatic facing situations and the socially and historically aristocratic respectively political circles. It becomes evident that the nobility’s circumscription of martial arts in the 20th century until demanded the appreciation of martial practices. Among other things they assisted in the "construction of the feudal paradigm of power" (p.7) or in diplomatic exchanges (p.20). His investigation of the roles martial arts played in those social mechanisms evinces the importance of academic engagement with Chinese martial arts. Folkloristic martial entertainment and pragmatic combat skills intermingled and mutually influenced each other under certain circumstances at times. Hence, Lu’s well-presented overviews of martial arts related novels and theatre shows through the history may be of special interest to readers with an interest in Chinese literature and drama. Not only the many key factors in the creation of what Lu labels ‘martial arts culture’ (p.48), they were also used as means for identity building and political messages in China (p.48). But they were also used as means of cultural legacies by these stamps.

In two or three cases the reviewer feels that a little more extended source criticism could improve the identification of some names and sources. In one or two cases the reviewer feels that a little more extended source criticism could improve the identification of some names and sources. In one example, in 1959 and 1975 China’s State Post Bureau issued stamps with martial arts sport motifs (p. 119). Sometimes, which in turn leads to different interpretations. When politics are involved, the martial arts were official legitimised to demonstrate the importance of academic approaches. Among other things they assisted in the identification of some names and sources. Therefore the main argument of this book is not meant as criticism, but it was merely a good starting point for readers without any knowledge of martial arts; yet, the lack of such an interpretation would perfectly be in line with the bureaucratic interpretation would perfectly be in line with the bureaucratic view of martial arts in the Qing Dynasty. This is certainly a most welcome and interesting book, as a witness it may follow in the future.

From the time of the Sinanthropus right into the 1990s the subject matter is presented chronologically over 10 chapters. Different authors are responsible for different chapters. While the chronological arrangement is simple and easy to follow, Lu’s overall discussion, the reviewer somehow sensed a missed opportunity. Lu does not refer to the many discussions that certain martial arts motifs are not as well known as the fiction of a certain Chinese influence remains a fact. This is certainly a real contribution to the understanding of Chinese traditional culture in the form of martial arts, politics, and identity in China and a large scale operation in order to classify martial arts legacies. This second campaign obviously resulted in a huge amount of collected source materials, and raises my hope that other publications on this worthwhile and captivating subject may follow in the future.

In short, Lu’s work offers a real contribution to the understanding of Chinese traditional culture in the form of martial arts, politics, and identity. Sinologists and students of sinology should better follow a path of “reform and modernisation” in the direction of a unified historical approach, he starts the first half of his project with developments during the Shang dynasty in the Bronze Age and follows the official chronology until the Qing dynasty.
Rewriting revolution

Horadvert: Kuala Lumpur
ISBN 9789832826932

Immanuel Kim’s Rewriting Revolution: Women, Sexuality and Memory in North Korean Fiction is a literary work that explores the complexities of gender and national identity in North Korea. Kim’s work challenges the orthodox view of women in North Korea and offers alternative perspectives on their lives and experiences.

In the introduction, Kim argues that North Korean literature is primarily the work of Kim Il Sung, and his work essentially focuses on North Korea’s politics, culture, and society. The book explores the place of women in North Korean revolutionary society and politics through the lens of the nation’s cultural production.

Kim’s work is essential in understanding the role of women in North Korea, as it provides a critical analysis of their experiences and possibilities. The book reasserts the need for authenticity and original realism in the production of the nation’s products. It is a valuable addition to the growing body of writing that truly uncovers and encounters in North Korean literature.

Capturing or co-opting women’s experiences is a crucial aspect in the rewriting of revolution. Women, who have been systematically marginalized and oppressed throughout their lives, have been subjected to various forms of domination, including political, economic, and social. This work provides a critical perspective on the role of women in North Korea, and how their experiences and possibilities can be captured and reimagined for the benefit of the nation.

The book is a significant contribution to the field of North Korean studies, offering new insights and perspectives on the role of women in the country. It is a valuable resource for scholars, students, and policymakers who are interested in understanding the complexities of gender and national identity in North Korea. The work is a testament to the importance of capturing the voices of women and their experiences in the rewriting of revolution.
T

his book concerns the encounter between western modes of image making and the artistic output by artists of the Mughal court between the 1580 and 1630. Mughal Natif’s goal is to reconsider this complex issue which has long fascinated scholars. Rather than see Mughal painting as a simple result of courtly interest in western modes of artistic depiction, she argues that Mughal contact with the west occurred on multiple levels. Her text probes these contacts giving Indian artists more agency than done in previous scholarship. Her goal is to present a balance between the role of the patron and the insight of artists. Before defining her own choice of the title and term Mughal occidentalis she details how previous scholars have used the term occidentalis. She also provides examples of how western art and its motifs have been employed throughout Islamic artistic production prior to the Mughal period. She sees in the Mughal case that the use of occidentalis is not pure copying but that these are cases of cross-cultural use. This book is a welcome addition to the many books on Mughal painting that have appeared in recent years. Here we see a more clearly defined link between Akbar’s policy of toleration and European elements in painting than has been suggested in previous works.

This volume opens with a detailed study of Akbar’s policy of sulh-i kull (peace with all) and its adoption by Akbar’s successor, Jahangir. This policy of tolerance is the key, Natif argues, to the Mughals’ acceptance of European and particularly, Jesuit presence at court. She suggests that Europeans, rather than seen as a wildy foreign element, were considered as part of the varied multi-cultural elite that the Mughals’ preferred. Sulh-i kull also replaces it with meaning that is specific to the Islamic world and relates to each other Mughal paintings often assumed to be poor or inaccurate copies of western art. Can her conclusions apply to all paintings which elements of Mughal occidentalis occur or are those examples limited to Renaissance prints were adapted in two different ways. One is the cutting of parts of a European print and incorporating them into a Mughal album page. The other is including articles found in European art work and including them into a Mughal painting. Here Natif focuses on two particular articles: globes and maps. She argues effectively that both these modes change the article’s original meaning – Christian most of the time – into an image associated with Mughal patronage. Often her explanations involve complex levels of understanding indicating a high level of intellectual engagement for patron and painter alike.

Landscape as Mughal allegory for the virtuous city and ideal Mughal governance is another focus. Natif argues that around the 15th century there was made appreciation of sulh-i kull, preceding distance landscapes, akin to those found in Northern European painting, begin to be incorporated into paintings of a non-historical nature. These landscapes are not found in pages of the Akbarnama or other works from the Akbar time but in manuscripts such as the Kulliyat of Saidu or the Khamsa of Haami. Not only does she provide a reading of these landscapes, she parallel the rise of sulh-i kull they also exist to support the Mughal policy of al-jadid. Natif’s analysis, for these illustrations is brilliant, removing all the mystery from her observations extended to other Mughal paintings often assumed to be poor or inaccurate copies of western art. Can her conclusions apply to all paintings which elements of Mughal occidentalis occur or are those examples limited to Renaissance prints were adapted in two different ways. One is the cutting of parts of a European print and incorporating them into a Mughal album page. The other is including articles found in European art work and including them into a Mughal painting. Here Natif focuses on two particular articles: globes and maps. She argues effectively that both these modes change the article’s original meaning – Christian most of the time – into an image associated with Mughal patronage. Often her explanations involve complex levels of understanding indicating a high level of intellectual engagement for patron and painter alike.

Mughal occidentalis

Catherine B. Azher

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their endowment coercive powers as a way to consolidate their authority, sometimes to the point of defying the wish of the regime. Official ulama in Indonesia, by contrast, find themselves in a tenacious position to seek recognition for their authority in the post-authoritarian era, namely to break away from their ‘rubberstamp’ (stempel pemerintah) label and compete with other Islamic mass organisations. In Indonesia, official ulama have long been charged with the task of moderating the Islamic views of the former Barisan Nasional-led federal government, which constrains the authority of the official ulama. The United Malay National Organisation, the political patron of official ulama in Malaysia, had to take into account the religious sensitivities of Barisan Nasional’s Borneo component parties, lest it would squander the electoral vote bank it had long depended on. Despite the empowerment of ulama in the 1990s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997, these critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their

Catherine B. Azher, University of Minnesota, United States

The Newsletter No. 86 Summer 2020

Amiti Teguk, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their

Catherine B. Azher, University of Minnesota, United States

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their

Catherine B. Azher, University of Minnesota, United States

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their

Catherine B. Azher, University of Minnesota, United States

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their

Catherine B. Azher, University of Minnesota, United States

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their

Catherine B. Azher, University of Minnesota, United States

The Review

Two pivotal events led to the increased role of official ulama in the governing affairs of Indonesia and Malaysia: the wave of Islamic resurgence in the late 1970s and the Asian financial crisis in 1997. These critical junctures opened the door to a more competitive political environment, which ramped up participation of various civil society actors, including ulama and Islamic political activists, many of whom penetrated into the inner sanctum of the state in order to effect changes from within. Despite the empowerment of official ulama in both countries, especially after 1997, their objectives in exploiting the state apparatuses as a means to express their authority differ starkly. Official ulama in Indonesia use their
Buddhism illuminated

Like the Abrahamic religions of the West (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), Buddhism has employed art in many forms to convey its message to people. In the Theravada Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia (Burma/Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos), the well-known and visually arresting expressions of Buddhist teachings have been monumental or finely-crafted structures (e.g., pagodas, temples, and monasteries) that have over the centuries functioned as places of study, meditation and pilgrimage for devotees. These include the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon/Yangon, Burma, the temples and pagodas of Pagan/Bagan in central Burma, the Phra Phothi Chedi (pagoda) outside of Bangkok, Thailand, Wat Dal Suthep on a mountain outside of Chiang Mai, Thailand, and the Phra That Luang Chedi in Vientiane, Laos. Also playing a role in the propagation of Buddhist teachings have been famed Buddhist images such as the Maha Myat Muni image in Mandalay, Burma, and the Emerald Buddha located in the royal temple-palace complex in Bangkok, as well as colossal reclinig Buddha figures of which the most famous are found in Paga (Bago), Burma, and the palace in Bangkok. Any of these sacred places have been elaborately decorated with frescoes and paintings illustrating the life of Gautama Buddha or the Buddhist festivals and ceremonies, especially those sponsored by the royal family. As in the European illuminated manuscripts, rarely, if ever, is effort made to place these scenes in their original (Indian) context; instead, episodes of sacred history, including their human participants and physical surroundings, are placed in Burmese or Thai settings and often give us a vivid picture of what life was like – at least on alts levels – in pre-colonial mainland Southeast Asia.


The work under review here, San San May and Jana Inguma’s Buddhism Illuminated: Manuscript Art from Southeast Asia, represents

Although such large and splendid Buddhist structures and images are difficult for the visitor to miss, the Theravada countries of Southeast Asia also possess a much less known art form that is very similar to the illuminated manuscripts of medieval Europe. Like their western counterparts, they present intimate and condensed visual ‘lessons’ in bright and appealing colors, highly stylized (there is little room for innovation) and directed toward helping the viewer to make his or her own progress on the road to nibbana (nirvana). Usually combining miniature pictures with sacred text or at least an explanation, they encompass depictions of the Cosmos in Hindu-Buddhist terms, the Birth Tales, the lives of Gotama Buddha and his disciples and scenes of Buddhist festivals and ceremonies, especially those sponsored by the royal family. As in the European illuminated manuscripts, rarely, if ever, is effort made to place these scenes in their original (Indian) context; instead, episodes of sacred history, including their human participants and physical surroundings, are placed in Burmese or Thai settings and often give us a vivid picture of what life was like – at least on alts levels – in pre-colonial mainland Southeast Asia.


The work under review here, San San May and Jana Inguma’s Buddhism Illuminated: Manuscript Art from Southeast Asia, represents

Although such large and splendid Buddhist structures and images are difficult for the visitor to miss, the Theravada countries of Southeast Asia also possess a much less known art form that is very similar to the illuminated manuscripts of medieval Europe. Like their western counterparts, they present intimate and condensed visual ‘lessons’ in bright and appealing colors, highly stylized (there is little room for innovation) and directed toward helping the viewer to make his or her own progress on the road to nibbana (nirvana). Usually combining miniature pictures with sacred text or at least an explanation, they encompass depictions of the Cosmos in Hindu-Buddhist terms, the Birth Tales, the lives of Gotama Buddha and his disciples and scenes of Buddhist festivals and ceremonies, especially those sponsored by the royal family. As in the European illuminated manuscripts, rarely, if ever, is effort made to place these scenes in their original (Indian) context; instead, episodes of sacred history, including their human participants and physical surroundings, are placed in Burmese or Thai settings and often give us a vivid picture of what life was like – at least on alts levels – in pre-colonial mainland Southeast Asia.


The work under review here, San San May and Jana Inguma’s Buddhism Illuminated: Manuscript Art from Southeast Asia, represents

A major development in the study of Buddhist illuminated manuscripts not only because it includes a much larger selection of this genre, but also since it includes works from central and northern Thailand and the Tai-speaking Shan States as well as central Burma. Its great merit lies in the fact that the editors have not only created a beautifully illustrated volume in the coffee table book mode (given its size and heftiness, this is hardly the book one would choose as travel reading), but also have presented it in a form in which the illuminations are grouped together to depict and explain (Theravada) Buddhism’s basic doctrines: lavishly illustrated chapters are devoted to the Buddha, his teachings (Dhamma), the Buddhist monkhood (the sangha), cause and effect (karma, much more widely known as karma), and the supremely important work of making in daily life through donations to Buddhist monks and holy places and the performance of good deeds (punna). For western readers interested in Buddhism, Buddhism Illuminated provides a compelling combination of pleasing-to-view pictures and clearly-written text that is necessarily missing from prose-only books – with perhaps only a few illustrations of pagodas or Buddha images – that attempt to explain the religion in abstract terms.

For example, on page 11, the authors provide a 19th century Burmese illumination of the legend of Taphussa and Bhallika, two Men merchants who meet the Buddha just after his Enlightenment, giving him offerings of fruit. Here the editors explain that the Buddha bestows on them eight hairs from the top of his head, which after many adventures are devoted to the Buddha, his teachings (Dhamma), the Buddhist monkhood (the sangha), causes and effect (karma, much more widely known as karma), and the supreme importance of making in daily life through donations to Buddhist monks and holy places the performance of good works (punna). For western readers interested in Buddhism, Buddhism Illuminated provides a compelling combination of pleasing-to-view pictures and clearly-written text that is necessarily missing from prose-only books – with perhaps only a few illustrations of pagodas or Buddha images – that attempt to explain the religion in abstract terms.

For example, on page 11, the authors provide a 19th century Burmese illumination of the legend of Taphussa and Bhallika, two Men merchants who meet the Buddha just after his Enlightenment, giving him offerings of fruit. Here the editors explain that the Buddha bestows on them eight hairs from the top of his head, which after many adventures are devoted to the Buddha, his teachings (Dhamma), the Buddhist monkhood (the sangha), causes and effect (karma, much more widely known as karma), and the supreme importance of making in daily life through donations to Buddhist monks and holy places the performance of good works (punna). For western readers interested in Buddhism, Buddhism Illuminated provides a compelling combination of pleasing-to-view pictures and clearly-written text that is necessarily missing from prose-only books – with perhaps only a few illustrations of pagodas or Buddha images – that attempt to explain the religion in abstract terms.

For example, on page 11, the authors provide a 19th century Burmese illumination of the legend of Taphussa and Bhallika, two Men merchants who meet the Buddha just after his Enlightenment, giving him offerings of fruit. Here the editors explain that the Buddha bestows on them eight hairs from the top of his head, which after many adventures are devoted to the Buddha, his teachings (Dhamma), the Buddhist monkhood (the sangha), causes and effect (karma, much more widely known as karma), and the supreme importance of making in daily life through donations to Buddhist monks and holy places the performance of good works (punna). For western readers interested in Buddhism, Buddhism Illuminated provides a compelling combination of pleasing-to-view pictures and clearly-written text that is necessarily missing from prose-only books – with perhaps only a few illustrations of pagodas or Buddha images – that attempt to explain the religion in abstract terms.

For example, on page 11, the authors provide a 19th century Burmese illumination of the legend of Taphussa and Bhallika, two Men merchants who meet the Buddha just after his Enlightenment, giving him offerings of fruit. Here the editors explain that the Buddha bestows on them eight hairs from the top of his head, which after many adventures are devoted to the Buddha, his teachings (Dhamma), the Buddhist monkhood (the sangha), causes and effect (karma, much more widely known as karma), and the supreme importance of making in daily life through donations to Buddhist monks and holy places the performance of good works (punna). For western readers interested in Buddhism, Buddhism Illuminated provides a compelling combination of pleasing-to-view pictures and clearly-written text that is necessarily missing from prose-only books – with perhaps only a few illustrations of pagodas or Buddha images – that attempt to explain the religion in abstract terms.
In the dynamic history of China, the period from 800 to 1400 is conventionally recognized as a transitional age of political disunity and intrusive interstate relations, bracketed by the mighty Tang (618-907) and Ming (1368-1644) empires. It was also a time when ‘barbarian’ incursions from the north intensified again as the Khitan, Jurchen, Tangut, and Mongol successively occupied parts or all of China. On the other hand, this period also saw the birth of major cultural movements, including the flourishing of visual and material sources that significantly deepened our understanding of the vitality and prosperity of the time, as well as the specific multi-state and multicultural contexts. Consisting of in-depth case studies of various forms of sources, this volume, which originates from the grand Conference on Middle Period China held at Harvard in 2014, represents a collective effort of scholars devoted to the examination of visual and material cultures, we are now able to grasp the “social world in which educated men found meaning and placed themselves among others, and that they carefully preserved” (p.240). Thanks to the development of woodblock printing and neo-Confucian academies, this world further expanded the audience for handwritten documents and fossilized smilies. The two essays in the last section turn to the aspects of cultural contact and material exchange of the period. Inspired by the motif of ‘hybridity’, two late Tang local funerary models of Li Jie (1190-1267) and Liu Ji (1192-1267) exemplify the effects of foreign notions of goods of calligraphy, Patricia Buckley Ebrey focuses on some 28 gold-collars (possibly of Song Zhi Xu (1130-1210) to show the Southern Song literati’s interest in antiquities and collecting of artifacts. From these examples, the readers are able to grasp the “social world in which educated men found meaning and placed themselves among others, and that they carefully preserved” (p.240). Thanks to the development of woodblock printing and neo-Confucian academies, this world further expanded the audience for handwritten documents and fossilized smilies.

The eight essays contained in the volume are divided into four pairs – ‘Making Art in Functional Societies’, ‘Visualizing the Real’, ‘Appraising the Written Word’, and ‘Cross-Cultural Transfers’. Relying on a meticulous study of funerary art, architecture, and literature, Hanan and Shanshi, Deng Fei tackles “made these [...tombs] and ‘how were they made?’” and ‘Henan and Shanxi’, Deng Fei tackles “who made these [...tombs]” and “how were they made?” in another approach. In this way, and with the approach to the study of Buddhist cosmology and the transformation of cosmological constructs in physical form, is a complex aspect of mediating and understanding the development of visual and material cultures of China from 800 to 1400, extending our understanding of the cultural and economic dynamism during the period. Full with intriguing observations and thought-provoking syntheses, it is bound to become an essential reading for anyone who wishes to inspire future researchers on the perennial topic in Chinese and Asian history.

Notes
2 In this volume, ‘South Song’ refers to the state that elevated the Wangs to the position of rulers, including the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) and the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). The Southern Song dynasty refers to the period under the control of the Southern Song, a southern dynasty that governed part of modern China from 1127 to 1279, after the fall of the Northern Song dynasty. The Yuan dynasty, which began in 1271 and ended in 1368, is considered to be the first non-Han Chinese dynasty to rule China, and it is often referred to as the Mongol or Yuan dynasty. In this volume, ‘the South’ refers to the area of modern China that was under the control of the Southern Song dynasty, which is located in the southern part of the country. The Northern Song dynasty, which ruled from 960 to 1127, was located in the northern part of modern China. The Southern Song dynasty was succeeded by the Yuan dynasty in 1279, which ruled until 1368. Therefore, the Southern Song dynasty is considered to be a transitional period between the Northern Song and Yuan dynasties, and it is often referred to as the ‘Middle Period’.
3 Fan Jeremy Zhang sets out to examine the transformative power of the man known as the ‘man of the art of visual and material cultures’, he aims to show the interactions and exchanges among different groups of people from different periods (p.133).

Visual and material cultures in middle period China

Hsing Lin

The Newsletter No. 86 Summer 2020

The Review

Visual and material cultures in middle period China

Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Chen Tan (eds), 2017.


As they embark upon their practice, until such a time as they perceive the cosmological form and comprehend the spiritual as they embark upon their practice, until such a time as they perceive the cosmological form and comprehend the spiritual...
SUNSHINE ACROSS THE SEA?

Niels Mulder

Taking by the book’s title, I expected to review a comparative study. The book’s subject, however, is Filipino migration to Japan in contemporary times, and the complex issues it entails. This is the entanglement that is hinted at in the idea of ‘thinking beyond the state’ as, until recently, studies of migration were held hostage by the role of the state and its policies in the process. With the shift to transnational approaches, however, other actors, such as the migrants themselves, migrant organizations and networks, came to the fore. Consequently, in the post-war collection contributions, migrant agency receives its due.

The editor/contributor, Johanna Zulueta, introduces the subject material with lucid, albeit very condensed, observations on the complexities of migration. At the same time she provides the reader with historical data about the movement of people between Japan and the Philippines. In this regard, we are informed that, as of December 2016, Filipinos – almost a quarter million of them – rank as the third largest group of migrants next to Chinese and Korean nationals. In contrast to this stood the then mere 17,021 Japanese nationals in the Philippines. With their focus, the authors of the chapters that follow present us with a wide range of pressing issues these migrants are facing. In doing so, the limits of state-centric discourses become obvious, and by ‘thinking beyond it’, the various authors problematize contemporary migration processes. Substantially, their contributions have been thematically divided into three main perspectives: to Policies; Agency in Structure; Communities and Integration. The challenge is consistent with the review of immigration policy in contemporary Japan, the policy failure of the Japan–Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement regarding the healthcare workers’ migration scheme, which notes the low passing rate of Filipino nurses in the national licensure examinations; the issues and concerns of Filipino domestic workers; and the importance of reaching human security for migrants. From the very titles, it is already obvious that all these contributions can recommend no more than utopian policy solutions.

The part on agency highlights migrants’ experiences regarding staying in or leaving Japan; issues of child upbringing and citizenship of the offspring of mixed marriages; the perspectives of Japanese-Filipino youth, while noting the importance of Japanese nationality as cultural capital; and how Filipino rap music by Japanese-Filipino youth can serve as a strategy for visibility and acceptance. The last part relates the role of Migrant Support Organizations in the process of migrant integration through social bonding, bridging and linking; and the inflow of and its consequences for Filipinos working as entertainers in the big city, highlighting the role of the Japanese Migrant Center in facilitating communication with other, often undocumented, Filipino migrants, the locals, and the government.

Whereas the editor claimed that Japan–Philippines migration is well and alive as an object of interdisciplinary study, she also points to subjects that have so far eluded attention, such as aging Filipino migrants, Filipino entrepreneurs and highly skilled migrants in Japan, Japanese educational migrants and Japan’s retirement migration to the Philippines. As the latter drew my attention as missing, I inquired about the role of the Japan–Philippines Authoritative Fund in the着手 effort in attracting Japanese retirees. The result is not world-shaking, as the Philippine Republic of the Philippines, despite the existing number of 22,223 Japanese retirees had already availed themselves of the privileged Special Resident Status allocated to them (March 2019). Be this as it may, I still quote Professor Mina Roces’s prefatory observation, “This is a very important seminar that will be a major contribution to the robust field of Filipino migration studies. In addition, the research is complemented with concrete policy-making and underscore the need for transnational approaches to migration that, as the book’s title suggests, ‘think beyond the state’” (p.117).
Lesser Dragons: Minority Peoples of China

ISBN: 9780824869816

Revisiting the fairy tale, the woodcutter story

Justine Guilhard

Elusive Belonging: Marriage Immigrants and ‘Multiculturalism’ in Rural South Korea

ISBN: 9780824834345

The Newsletter No. 86 Summer 2020

25

The Review
newbooks.asia is the go-to Asian studies book review website, administered by IIAS. The site lists the newest titles in the field of Asian studies and makes them available for review. Find a selection of new titles on page 28. All reviews are posted online, whilst a lucky few also make it into The Newsletter. Browse a selection of the latest reviews below.

‘An engaging ethnography contributing to the discussion of biopower, governance, as well as bodily experience in critical medical anthropology’
– Ruijiao Tian
New York: Berghahn ISBN 9781595337949
https://newbooks.asia/review/chinese-medicine-singapore

‘Fascinating cetacean journeys from migration to capture, dismemberment, use and memorial with all points in between in early modern Japan’
– Robert Winstanley-Chesters
Jakobina Arch. 2018. Bringing Whales Ashore: Oceans and Environment of Early Modern Japan
https://newbooks.asia/review/whales-ashore

‘Holst’s book is fascinating, though his analyses are not always easily accessible’
– Hans Schenk
Tore Holst. 2018. The Affective Negotiation of Slum Tourism: City Walks in Delhi
Abingdon and New York: Routledge ISBN 978113872999
https://newbooks.asia/review/slum-tourism-delhi

‘Postcolonial Biology explores the embodied implications of colonial and postcolonial imaginations of the good life’
– Kiran Keshavamurthy
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press ISBN 9780816698363
https://newbooks.asia/review/postcolonial-biology

‘This is a captivating ethnography and history on the impact of rural medical Tsang amchi on the peripheries of Tibetan society’
– Ivette Vargas-O’Ryan
Theresia Hofer. 2018. Medicine and Memory in Tibet: Amchi Physicians in an Age of Reform
https://newbooks.asia/review/medicine-memory-tibet

‘A good introduction to see the bigger picture behind current events in China’
– Pablo Ignacio Ampuero Ruiz
https://newbooks.asia/review/china-21st-century

‘This volume brings together novel possibilities of reconsidering the inter-workings of culture and politics as being performative in nature’
– Urmia Bhattacharyya
Dev Nath Pathak and Sasanka Perera (eds.) 2018. Culture and Politics in South Asia: Performativity in Communication
Abingdon and New York: Routledge ISBN 978131581010467
https://newbooks.asia/review/performative-communication

‘The book intends to provide documentation on the state of iconography, aesthetics, patronage, and artists’
– Kristoffel Lieten
New Delhi: Oxford University Press ISBN 9780191059420
https://newbooks.asia/review/indian-art

Now available to read online
‘An interesting contribution to the debate about the effect of religion on politics’
– Sirojuddin Arif

Piety and Public Opinion: Understanding Indonesian Islam
New York: Oxford University Press
ISBN 9780190697808
https://newbooks.asia/review/piety-public-opinion

‘The book will make us think in a different way about how we study cities, as well as how we live in them’
– Nuno Grancho

Anne Rademacher. 2018.
Building Green: Environmental Architects and the Struggle for Sustainability in Mumbai
Oakland, CA: University of California Press
ISBN 9780520296008
https://newbooks.asia/review/building-green-mumbai

‘Amsler’s book convincingly contributes to both religious history and gender studies by linking the Jesuits’ conduct with Chinese women’s religiosity’
– Aliz Horvath

Nadine Amsler. 2018.
Jesuits and Matriarchs: Domestic Worship in Early Modern China
Seattle: University of Washington Press
ISBN 9780295743806
https://newbooks.asia/review/jesuits-matriarchs

‘Sarkar’s work is tour de force that will undoubtedly serve as the new scholarly authority for understanding the development of royal goddess traditions’
– Caleb Simmons

Heroic Shaktism: The Cult of Durgā in Ancient Indian Kingship
London: The British Academy
ISBN 9780190725670
https://newbooks.asia/review/heroic-shaktism

‘The collection is transformative, giving the reader little kaleidoscopic pieces from various perspectives, places, and times that explore water, humans, poetry, commerce, collecting, traveling, building, and more’
– Courtney Work

Living with Water: Peoples, Lives and Livelihoods in Asia and Beyond
Delhi: Primus Books
ISBN 9789384092917
https://newbooks.asia/review/living-water

‘This book is a useful reference guide for those who want to know more on how Delhi made the transition from a pre-colonial to a post-colonial city’
– Hans Schenk

Pilar Maria Guerrieri. 2018.
Negotiating Cultures, Delhi’s Architecture and Planning from 1912 to 1992
New Delhi: Oxford University Press
ISBN 9780190804980
https://newbooks.asia/review/negotiating-cultures-delhi

‘The book, like the Ganges, is stately, somewhat meandering, but fascinating and nourishing, and well worth a visit’
– Peter Admirand

River of Life, River of Death: The Ganges and India’s Future
Oxford: Oxford University Press
ISBN 9780198786177
https://newbooks.asia/review/saving-ganga

‘This research opens new and necessary debates to the historiography about Colonial Latin America’
– Jorge Majoaro

Eva Maria Mehl. 2016.
Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
ISBN 9781107091200
https://newbooks.asia/review/spanish-pacific

‘The digitization of business in China is an important topic. This edited volume, however, fails to deliver’
– Sacha Cady

Young-Chan Kim and Pi-Chi Chen (eds). 2018.
The Digitization of Business in China: Exploring the Transformation from Manufacturing to a Digital Service Hub
London: Palgrave Macmillan
ISBN 9783319790473
https://newbooks.asia/review/digitization-china

‘Presenting a wide range of perspectives and insights by leading and emerging scholars, [the book] is an essential and up-to-date resource for scholars and graduate students of contemporary Africa–China relations’
– Yi Sun

Chris Alden and Daniel Large (eds). 2018.
New Directions in Africa–China Studies
Aldingon and New York: Routledge
ISBN 9781138714632
https://newbooks.asia/review/new-directions-africa-china-studies
Visit newbooks.asia to browse the newest titles in the field of Asian studies. If you would like to review any of the available titles, of which you will find a selection below, please submit a review request through the website or send an email to our editor at newbooksasia@iias.nl

Contesting the Iranian Revolution: The Green Uprisings

Cambridge University Press
ISBN 9781108567060
https://newbooks.asia/publication/contesting-iranian-revolution

Drunk Japan: Law and Alcohol in Japanese Society

Mark D. West. 2020.
Oxford University Press
ISBN 9780190070847
https://newbooks.asia/publication/alcohol-japanese-society

Reading The Muslim On Celluloid: Bollywood, Representation And Politics

Primus Books
ISBN 9789389850871
https://newbooks.asia/publication/muslim_celluloid

The Making of Macau’s Fusion Cuisine: From Family Table to World Stage

Hong Kong University Press
ISBN 9786028526246
https://newbooks.asia/publication/macau-cuisine

The Impossibility of Mapping (Urban Asia)
World Scientific Publishing
ISBN 9789811211928
https://newbooks.asia/publication/mapping-urban-asia

Erica Vogel. 2020.
Migrant Conversions: Transforming Connections Between Peru and South Korea
University of California Press
ISBN 9780520341173
https://newbooks.asia/publication/migrant-conversions

These Islands Are Ours: The Social Construction of Territorial Disputes in Northeast Asia
Stanford University Press
ISBN 9781503611894
https://newbooks.asia/publication/territorial-disputes

Taiwan in Dynamic Transition: Nation Building and Democratization
University of Washington Press
ISBN 9780295745677
https://newbooks.asia/publication/taiwan-dynamic-transition

Global Perspectives on Violence against Women and Girls
Zed Books
ISBN 9781788599411
https://newbooks.asia/publication/violence-against-women-girls

A Sense of Viidu The (Re)creation of Home by the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Australia
Palgrave Macmillan
ISBN 9783030546888
https://newbooks.asia/publication/viidu

Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown
University of Hawai‘i Press
ISBN 9780824882555
https://newbooks.asia/publication/divorce-south-korea

Conflict and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: New Geopolitical Realities
Routledge
ISBN 9781138365566
https://newbooks.asia/publication/indo-pacific-geopolitical

Radiant Infrastructures: Media, Environment, and Cultures of Uncertainty
Duke University Press
ISBN 9781478008064
https://newbooks.asia/publication/radiant-infrastructures

A Secular Need: Islamic Law and State Governance in Contemporary India
University of Washington Press
ISBN 9780295746988
https://newbooks.asia/publication/secular-need

A Sense of Viidu: The (Re)creation of Home by the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Australia
Palgrave Macmillan
ISBN 9783030546888
https://newbooks.asia/publication/viidu

Global Perspectives on Violence against Women and Girls
Zed Books
ISBN 9781788599411
https://newbooks.asia/publication/violence-against-women-girls

Divorce in South Korea: Doing Gender and the Dynamics of Relationship Breakdown
University of Hawai‘i Press
ISBN 9780824882555
https://newbooks.asia/publication/divorce-south-korea

Conflict and Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: New Geopolitical Realities
Routledge
ISBN 9781138365566
https://newbooks.asia/publication/indo-pacific-geopolitical

Radiant Infrastructures: Media, Environment, and Cultures of Uncertainty
Duke University Press
ISBN 9781478008064
https://newbooks.asia/publication/radiant-infrastructures

A Secular Need: Islamic Law and State Governance in Contemporary India
University of Washington Press
ISBN 9780295746988
https://newbooks.asia/publication/secular-need
Environmental changes can be gradual or sudden. Sudden events usually take the form of natural disasters, climatic conditions, and related infrastructural accidents. Natural disasters can range from geophysical disasters (avalanches, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions) to hydrological disasters (floods, landslides, and tsunamis), and meteorological disasters (storms, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires). The 2011 Great Eastern Japan Triple Disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown) is an example of just how quickly our lives can be devastated by a sudden natural occurrence.

Gradual environmental events include the catastrophic impacts of general climate change (the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions pose the largest threat for all communities), shifting weather patterns, ecosystem degradation, particularly for rural areas by the coast, deteriorations of water and air quality, and loss of biodiversity, often in vulnerable locations such as coastal, low-lying and agrarian land. Rising sea-levels (particularly in rural areas by the coast), deterioration of water and air quality, and loss of biodiversity (plants and animals). This list is not exhaustive yet covers many issues facing the world's population in general, in particular those vulnerable communities and social groups who lack resources and support from government and civil society initiatives. Uncontrolled urbanization is another problem. With increasing numbers of migrant communities from rural areas packing into city centres and fringes, the new city surroundings present new risks. Sudden and gradual environmental events are a threat to people's daily lives and their basic human needs, such as clean air, (drinkable) water, food, shelter, sanitation, heating, among others, that provide a secure living environment. In most cases, immediate or mid-term responses by service providers, namely local governments, governmental agencies, and national governments, are too slow or insufficient, so that people are forced to try and create their own protective measures and coping mechanisms.

Environmental concerns are top on the list of any local, national or international agenda due to the increasing scale and frequency of these issues. Our daily lives, behaviours and actions are all somehow intertwined with the environment in its larger sense. Sustainability discussions have been putting more emphasis on the environment, environmental protection, and environmental governance, within its three-legged frame (economy and society being the other two legs). The governance mechanisms involved are no longer taking place on just a state-to-state platform, but rather, other interstate and non-state initiatives have been taking the lead while addressing, questioning, raising awareness, and taking action vis-à-vis these rising issues of sustainability and environment. Most of the non-state actors, namely communities, civil society initiatives, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and non-profit organizations (NPOs), raise their voices in an attempt to influence and amend public policies concerning the environment, for the attainment of sustainability on local, national, and international levels, with the goal of a more ecologically fair society for today’s and future generations. Their motivation to act and become involved is often because they have been first-hand witnesses and victims of environmental degradation or disasters.
The following session hosted three papers on the betterment of organic farming conditions in rural areas and local markets while connecting them to larger markets; reactions and response capacities of central and local authorities to disaster preparation and resilience in Southeast Asian countries; and central governments’ role in promoting nationwide environmental policies on climate change. The final session of the series presented its audience a variety of topics, including energy politics at the national level; environmental activism and social mobilization with the use of social network services (SNS); cultural sensitivities and attitudes while practicing voluntary activism; and legal aspects of protecting the environment through learning mechanisms of the political culture.

This short Focus section of The Newsletter comprises four of the papers presented during the ICAS 11 sessions on environmental change, social activism and policy challenges. The first piece, written by Nguyen, focuses on the learning practices of people on their way to becoming environmental citizens in Vietnam. Bottom-up approaches, ranging from small size SNS activities to large scale, highly-participated and even internationally acclaimed protests to protect the natural environment in Vietnam, are scrutinized alongside various interesting and engaging case studies. People have practiced, learned, and emerged as active participants of the culture of opposition and criticism of local and central governments. In the meantime, an already evolving political structure in Vietnam has also started to transform the way the government responds to its people.

The article by Schelte looks at public awareness about waste and waste production in Indonesia by focusing on cultural traits, perceptions, and transformations within society, from an anthropological point of view. She outlines the rationalist approaches to waste management practices in the country and how moral reasonings and communal initiatives are shaped by cultural environment and personal perceptions, while awareness for environmental changes and challenges is increasing. She underlines the importance of joining all efforts not only on an individual or community basis, but also at commercial and transregional levels, in order to cope with environmental challenges.

The third piece is co-written by Chico-Morales and Domenech. It discusses the university-level collaborations between South Korea, Spain and Mongolia, that are creating an intellectual and research environment for those stakeholders concerned with environmental degradation and urbanization in Mongolia. Environmental shifts have already started to force people to adapt cultural habits, such as living in their traditional tents, known as Ger. The university initiative presents a transnational and multidisciplinary approach to mobilize communities within the academia to look at issues of environmental change and find solutions for both people and policymakers at local and central government levels.

The last article is by this author, Uyar Makibayashi. It challenges our existing policymaking agendas by redefining the concept of migration from the perspective of environmental change. Underlining the growing significance of environmental change within migration discussions, it is plausible that policymakers on all levels need to find better solutions to the environmental issues faced by increasing numbers of migrating groups and emerging migrant communities, both in their sending and receiving countries.

Towards better communication and sustainable governance

As can be seen in the following articles, there is much potential in social network services and other digital media for communicating the details of environmental issues (the dangers and threats of both sudden events and gradual changes) and presenting the options of how to take action, ranging from online social activism to gatherings of the masses. New policy agendas emerge, to be presented to local and central governments, to help them change their policies to be more humane and environmentally friendly.

There is no fixed or absolute way in which to mobilize and activate these non-state actors and civil voices, because there exist a multitude of political cultures, regimes, and institutions in different countries and regions. In all truth, the bottom-up movements to challenge and amend environmental policies, and the top-down initiatives by local and central, as well as international governance mechanisms, to hear, invite, integrate, and realize these challenges and recommendations from the public, are both relatively new constructions. The fast speed of communications through the internet and social network services, as well as cheaper and faster modes of transport for people to mobilize, gather and communicate with other participating actors of policymaking, have transformed the way we plan, discuss, and implement our politics. Though there are still many hurdles to people’s free participation and involvement in politics, adjusting ourselves to the still transforming phenomena is crucial. More people-based approaches in which we are more receptive, more participatory, more active in taking initiatives to change and protect our livelihoods and environment are being accomplished in a growing number of instances. The next step is for our political cultures and governance mechanisms to strive for just and fair (both for ourselves and for our environment) legal frameworks, and more sustainable solutions for the inevitable sudden and gradual environmental changes.

Agust Uyar Makibayashi, Associate Professor, Faculty of Global and Regional Studies, Doshisha University, Kyoto ouygar@mail.doshisha.ac.jp
From cyberspace to the streets: Emerging environmental paradigm of justice and citizenship in Vietnam

Quang Dung Nguyen

Vietnam’s state-society relations in the arena of environmental governance have changed remarkably since online forums and social networks have become popular in promoting the more vibrant and active participation of civil society. Moving from the background to the forefront of the political scene, and from community level to a nationwide scale, environmental activism, one of the most vocal branches of Vietnam’s civil society, addresses environmental concerns as matters of justice. Intellectuals, scientists, tech-savvy netizens, urban youths, and others, have used social media to generate critical environmental discourse and social mobilization and have then translated such online activism into other forms of advocacy. All these people have come together virtually for discussions and to sign petitions, and physically in the streets to join protests, which primarily involve demands for ecological justice, environmental justice, and more civic participation in decision-making processes. The emergence of elite and grassroots environmental activism has forced the state to rethink its environmental policies and to consider citizens’ basic rights to environmental decision-making and environmental citizenship.

What does environmental citizenship mean in Vietnam?

On social media, Vietnamese nationals share their collective understandings with regard to the sustainability of development and nature conservation. Such sentiments are circulated across the country, engendering nationwide environmental activism. Those people joining the movement are environmental citizens. Environmental citizenship refers to the rights and responsibilities towards the livability of citizens’ ecological space, and the “responsibility of those who occupy too much of that space to reduce their ecological footprint”. Prominently incorporated into policy making processes in many societies worldwide, environmental citizenship is “a means of promoting the goals of sustainability and environmental protection and integrating environmental concerns into the modes of political engagement”. However, environmental citizenship in Vietnam during the past decade has been primarily manifested through environmental activism by groups of Vietnamese citizens, mostly the grassroots, challenging the state’s monopoly in environmental politics. Such manifestations range from micro-acts of online participation (such as reposting images or posts/critical viewpoints from activists, ‘liking’ posts, posting comments and Facebook Live videos, signing petitions) to participation in physical protest events. Environmental citizenship in contemporary Vietnam has three modes of activism: 1. Activism for environmental justice, regarding all issues of environmental politics that involve fair/unfair distribution of power, benefits among humans, people’s vulnerability to ecological disasters, their exposure to environmental risks, and the lack of civic engagement in environmental politics over their immediate environment; 2. Activism for ecological justice, regarding justice for nature, nature conservation or moral relationship with nature. 3. Activism for both environmental justice and ecological justice.

In the following sections, typical environmental movements are discussed in an analytical framework to provide more insights into these modes of activism.

Nation-wide environmentalism, starting with intellectuals

The first symbolic environmental activism that showcased the emergence of environmental citizenship via social media was the anti-Bauxite mining movement in 2009, against the government’s ‘Master Plan’ for “The exploration, mining, processing, and use of bauxite reserves” across the country. The Plan involved building seven different factories to process bauxite-alumina and alumina for mine clusters in five provinces of central highland areas. In response to such a mass project, widespread opposition with environmental concerns emerged, starting with the country’s intellectuals. During the first half of 2009, diverse individual and informal networks of prominent intellectuals, bloggers, domestic reporters, government scientists, and former politicians – including General Vo Nguyen Giap, Vietnam’s most popular military leader – joined a highly controversial public debate over the imminent harms the mining project might cause to environmental sustainability and local livelihoods. They created a critical public advocacy against the state’s hegemonic decision – mostly through workshops, seminars, articles, online discussions, and online petitions. The widespread reach of the anti-bauxite advocacy started from online reports about the workshops attended by the economists, environmentalists, experts on mining technology, and scholars of cultural and social studies from universities and institutions. These activists raised their opposition of the bauxite project, drawing special concerns from the mainstream press. Environmental debates by these activists were based on technical and demographic data, especially cost-benefit analyses with evaluation of possible harms to land resources, employment, deforestation, loss of local traditional livelihoods and hundreds of millions of tons of red mud discharge. Many popular newspapers then followed to bring the ‘bauxite debate’ into the spotlight, instigating a massive concern for environmental risks of the project. Revolutionary hero General Vo Nguyen Giap, aged 98, sent the government a short letter, and then the most widely known and accomplished Vietnamese intellectuals sent a petition with 135 signatures. These elite activists then launched the Bauxite Vietnam website, the formal blog site for the petition. The website has become a platform for a few democratic voices to inspire many others to speak up and practice more on environmental citizenship and was still a point of departure for online environmentalism years later, instigating more public awareness about environmental issues in the country.

The anti-Bauxite Mining movement demonstrated how the popularity of the Internet has facilitated the much wider production and circulation of environmental knowledge and environmental concerns. For the first time in Vietnam, digital networks could mobilize collective sentiments and actions for environmental and ecological justice. The movement could mobilize...
Individuals from diverse groups (intellectuals, members of parliament, environmental activists, pro-democracy activists, high-ranking officials, and many others) and it marked the emergence of the quest for environmental citizenship in the state’s decision-making process.

The government’s response included arrests of high-profile bloggers during May and June of 2009. In addition, in July 2009, it imposed strict censorship on scientific research and scholarly works, while intimidating the leaders of the Baustite Vietnam website until early 2010. Although the movement could not suspend the project, it posed a “considerable challenge to the party-state on the ground of concern to environmental justice.”

During the years following the baustite mining controversy, a growing population of environmental activists, especially mostly urban youth, has been exposed to diverse critical environmental discourses on digital platforms, especially Facebook. As young individuals have put in huge amounts of energy to practice their environmental citizenship, they co-created an environmental movement and citizen journalists. The #SaveSonDoong movement that emerged years later shows the urgency for our conservation in pursuit of ecological justice.

#SaveSonDoong: a hashtag of ecological justice

Son Doong cave in Quang Binh province is the world’s largest cave, and has only been accessible since 2013. Just a very limited number of tourists are allowed to visit the cave, and only through eco-tours organized by tour companies. In early 2015, the mainstream news reported that the Quang Binh provincial authority planned to allow the Sun Group – news reported that the Quang Binh provincial and only through eco-tours organized by tour accessible since 2013. Just a very limited is the world’s largest cave, and has only been cable car would mean that the country – Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho. The organizers applied new technology to bring to life the science lessons of the world’s most pristine ecosystem. At the events, guests could explore the Son Doong Cave virtually and learn more about the initiative to save it.

Then, on 9 April 2019, a representative of the Quang Binh provincial authority declared that the province would not approve proposals to construct cable cars and there would be no construction in the core zone of the National Park. This marked the tremendous success of the more than four-year campaign by young environmentalists. The #SaveSonDoong movement by tech-savvy urban youths utilized the power of online social networks to mobilize the public into taking action for ecological justice. It demonstrates the young citizens’ desire to have their voices heard by the state. Online mobilization and event organization substantially contributed to raising public awareness of civic engagement in environmental politics (aka environmental citizenship) and social awareness of nature conservation and the human moral relationship with nature, among young Vietnamese people.

Fish need clean water, citizens need transparency

In early April 2016, fishermen from coastal villages of the Vung Ang port region encountered an alarming number of dead fish. Close to 70 tons of dead fish washed up along 125 miles of the coastline of Ha Tinh, Quang Tri, Quang Binh, and Truoc Gian Hae. Locals suspected that the fish had been killed by chemicals discharged by the Formosa Ha Tinh Steel Plant, a subsidiary of Formosa Plastics Group, located in the Vung Ang Special Economic Zone. Amid rising accusations against the Taiwanese company, the mainstream press focused on the steel plant’s wastewater treatment after three local divers found a hidden underwater pipeline leading from the plant to the ocean, releasing a black and yellow discharge. Online public activism soared by the end of April, with the hashtag #toichonca or #ichoosefish becoming
Quang Dung Nguyen, Dept. of Anthropology, USH - Vietnam National University (VNU) Hanoi, researching on, among others, environmental citizenship, social media, civil society and environmental movements in Vietnam. In his journalism, his recent publications include “Complementarity of Environmental Discourses, Humans and Nature: Adaptive Local Knowledge in a Protected Forest in Northern Thailand”, Environmental Development 30:89-102; https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2019.03.001.


3 The Prime Minister’s Decision 167 is an extension of Decision 17/2017/QD-TTg for bauxite exploration and mining across the country, from 2007 to 2015 and from 2016 to 2025. (Governmental Portal, 2007).

4 The Vietnamese environmental movement, which needs more civic engagement.

5 Environmental activism in Vietnam offers profound implications for the role of social media in broadening the scope of civic society, facilitating civic engagement in environmental politics and generating critical discourses of environmental and ecological justice to the masses. Online activism expands the reach of attitudes and actions that engender environmental citizenship. Through social media, environmental issues in Vietnam have been turned into justice issues, which are “embodied with such divisive issues as national security, Sino-Viet relations and, not least of all, the relations of the communist party to the Vietnamese people”, see Morris, L., 2013. The Vietnamese Bauxite Mining Controversy: the Emergence of a New Oppositional Politics, PhD Thesis, UC Berkeley, p.1; https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3fg3s9c7.


7 Vietnamese environmental civil society organizations, such as Green Hanoi, founded on 30 March 2017. She was released on 17 October 2018 from US First Lady Melania Trump in March 2017. For a TEDx talk in Ho Chi Minh on 2 June 2018; https://tinyurl.com/VI-BloggerMother.

8 Vietnamese environmentalism and political activism earned her an International Women of Courage Award from the US Department of State on March 30, 2017. She was released on 17 October 2018 from US prison for her free speech.

9 ‘Green Trees’ is a non-profit civil society environmental protection organization in Vietnam, founded in 2007 and received funding from the US Embassy in Hanoi in March 2015, to protect trees in Hanoi from being felled massively as part of the project to accomplish the replacement of the “green trees’ implemented by city authorities;


Waste and social mobilisation
Anthropological explorations beyond Asia and Europe

Waste, especially plastic and toxic waste, is a man-made disaster rooted in the historical relations between humans, materials, and environments. The global waste trade is a multi-billion-dollar industry in which Western countries relocate their waste to the Global South, turning the land, oceans, and atmosphere into dumping grounds. This waste problem challenges the notions of growth, modernisation, and human-nonhuman relations. There is a need for global solutions that overcome binary frames of representation such as ‘Asia’ and ‘Europe’. An inclusive approach, as well as engagement in mutual transformations, requires increased global environmental awareness and transregional collaboration. However, awareness does not automatically translate into action. Furthermore, emerging global environmental regimes tend to ignore local diversities in waste practices, related worldviews, and ways in which people are mobilised to think about and act on waste solutions. Waste is always embedded in social, gendered, and political asymmetries and economic contestation. Furthermore, it is tied to peculiar moral sensibilities. Differences in context, thought, and practice, as well as socio-environmental relations and frictions, should thus be acknowledged as bases of mobilisation and collaboration.

In order to illustrate such differences, I will present an example of locally specific waste-related social mobilisation. The central question here is: what are the main driving forces for bottom-up, communal recycling initiatives in rural and urban Java? This study is based on field research in Java in 2017 and 2018, partly conducted together with my colleague Vissia Ita Yulianto.

Rationalist approaches

Recently, the Indonesian media has regularly reported on the government’s efforts to return containers of toxic waste and trash to their countries of origin, including the United States, Australia, and several European countries. This may change the hitherto widespread public, scholarly and media discourse in Indonesia, which focusses on the ‘bad’ behaviour of the Indonesian people. For example, one 2015 study identified Indonesia as the second-largest contributor to plastic waste in the oceans (after China). Indonesians have been blasted for improperly discarding their garbage, gut burning waste, burying it in underground, and dumping it into rivers that carry it to the sea, as behaviours that really only became problematic after the introduction of new, non-degradable materials. Packaging, clothing, furniture, toys, and many more everyday items that are readily discarded once they are no longer needed, are now made of or contain plastic. When we talked to people in Yogyakarta, Bantul, and Gunung Kidul about the effects of their habits and the fact that environmental degradation is rapidly increasing in Indonesia, or when we mentioned the immediate danger of toxic fumes from burning plastic, the usual answer was “tidak apa-apa” (It doesn’t matter), “there is still enough land”, or “it is just practical to burn the rubbish”. Some people blamed the government for not providing better facilities or complained that they would have to pay a small fee for public garbage disposal. A majority of Javanese perceived other everyday problems to be more important.

As with other external projects that are often based on education, information-based arguments that rely on numbers, and which transfer the responsibility to the, allegedly, ‘uneducated’ people, are not effective. Western recycling practices, propagated as modernising projects and means of development, do not concern them. Even though environmental and waste-related education has recently become integrated in school and pre-school curricula, and even though public institutions such as universities prohibit (for instance) plastic bottles for drinking water, these efforts have yet to significantly affect public indifference. The Javanese continue to buy ‘modern’ or ‘practical’ things that are made of or wrapped in plastic, without caring about their disposal. As such, the dissemination of information on the detrimental effects of waste will not necessarily generate a less consumptive lifestyle.

Considering waste is a problem that accompanies consumer capitalism and economic growth, this study finds that neither an environmental or a rationalist approach is very helpful if one tries to understand waste behaviour and attitudes in Java. Moral and unexpected social collaborations that bring different political cultures together. However, our impression also corresponds clearly with a study by Tanu and Parker in Surabaya, which found that students join environmentalist activities not so much due to their environmental awareness but because of the fun of socialising and doing things together. As there is a need for locally owned and community-driven solutions, a noteworthy initiative in dealing with waste is the bank sampah (waste/garbage bank), a community bank system. It began in 2008 and was developed to address the crisis of waste produced by local communities in Yogyakarta. Sorted garbage (papers, plastics, and metals) is deposited at certain collection points, it is then weighed, and a credit is subsequently recorded. This system relies on locals sorting their garbage and ‘banking’ it. Once a year, often before Idul Fitri, the celebratory feast at the end of the fasting month (when people need money), the recorded credit is paid out. The money comes from the sale of waste, sold by the bank sampah to entrepreneurs (pengepul) who take it to big factories. After all, the waste trade is good business and many people can make a living from it.

Bank sampah are usually managed by local activists, and practical work is most often performed by female volunteers. Stressing the economic advantage of waste separation, the bank sampah system has also been endorsed by religious organisations, by Unilever and Shell Indonesia as a means of demonstrating ‘corporate social responsibility’ (critics would rather say ‘greenwashing’), and by the Indonesian government as the currently best way of dealing with waste. By November 2017, there were more than 5,000 bank sampah in Indonesia. The chairman of a middle-size bank sampah explained that people are mainly motivated to take their waste to the bank not for
environmental reasons, but for economic gains and social factors. These programmes are connected to the gotong royong system, which strengthens social solidarity, binds people together, and regulates the common social life. An abstraction of nature (alam) is not an issue, he says. Obviously, people manage waste when it is in their social interest to do so.

At the same time, it should be acknowledged that in many parts of Indonesia there is a severe lack of public waste infrastructure. In spite of the Zero Waste rhetoric that promotes a sustainable, resource efficient circular economy, and despite the government having incorporated waste disposal into its national climate change strategy, implementation is still lacking. The government does not provide sufficient and appropriate facilities for household waste, let alone solid waste and sewage from mines, factories, and agricultural industries, as well as other hazardous and toxic substances such as medical and electronic waste.

It could thus be asked whether the main responsibility for waste organisation or, even better, zero-waste consumption is the individual, a household, a kampung, a city, a sector of production or a country. Nonetheless, the bottom-up communal initiatives that are the focus of this article (and the related moral reasoning) are crucial for changing everyday perceptions.

Interestingly, once again, the social embeddedness of the bank sampah is crucial for its efficiency. I observed cases where volunteers lost their enthusiasm after a while and the bank had to close down. The most social integral are those that are closely tied to the established communal structures, such as arisan (a saving, credit, and lottery bank) such as the bank sampah, which was founded by activists and mass-mediated popular culture were used to create jackets, water bottles were transformed into skirts, and drinking straws were put together to become the wings of birds and angels. Each group displayed its own creative style, with some combining fantastic costumes with Islamic headscarves and others imitating sexy pop-culture celebrities. References to a shared image of the global environmental movement (‘Save the water’) and mass-mediated popular culture were mixed with references to local mythology. A final performance in the public square was accompanied by music and slogans that pushed spectators to become active in the struggle against waste, and to work together for a clean environment.

This event was joyful, full of humour, surprise, and admiration for the various costumes and creations. There were no heavy moralistic lessons or rationalised threats, but rather inspiring pleas for joint efforts and a spirit of communal engagement. The carnival communicated with a new visual language by translating indifferences about waste into the language of art activism and positive forces. Strategic, aesthetic, and social goals were combined, and the passion of the initiators and actors came to the forefront even beyond the embodied and sensory experiences.

This case corresponds with the aspect that was emphasised by the most of our informants as we have already seen in the case of bank sampah, the main motivation to sort waste and properly dispose of it is not the fear that ‘nature’ could be destroyed, but the natural environment could become polluted or food and water might become toxic. It is gotong royong, the idea of joint efforts within the immediate community. In short, the main driving force for bottom-up communal recycle initiatives in rural and urban Java is the social environment. Therefore, one should not expect that the described communal initiatives will have an immediate effect on consumption and waste habits. Indeed, it can sometimes be observed that participants in clean-ups or similar events use small plastic cups for drinking water and do not care at all about waste. Nevertheless, new ideas are introduced and everyday perceptions are challenged due to the overwhelming visibility of the rubbish at certain loci, the fear of disease, the worry that visitors and tourists might dislike it, the general perception of pollution, and, most importantly, the increasing social and moral emphasis on proper waste disposal.

All in all, the current initiatives remind us that waste is not just producing and reflecting the social and symbolic order—as we learned from Mary Douglas, who suggested that the classification of things as waste reflects the structuring capacities of cultures. There is also a potential for change. Civic movements can bring disparate social groups together in joint practical activities and, step by step, reorient people towards improved awareness and care.

Conclusion

No matter if a global political ecology subscribes to the notions of Anthropocene, Capitalocene, or Plasticocene (referring to interactions of micro plastic debris throughout the ecosystem), there is no doubt that waste and pollution affect all humans and non-humans alike. While globalised environmentalist discourses emphasise a new feeling of entanglement with nature as a tantative path to transforming the waste problem, our fieldwork among both urban and rural citizens in Java revealed that an abstract notion of ‘or relation to’ nature is not considered crucial by most actors. At the same time, rationalist arguments do not impress the majority of people either. Individuals are more immediately affected by their social environment. Collective problem solving at the neighbourhood level— including ‘grassroots’ groups, bottom-up initiatives such as community-based ‘waste banks’, communal ‘clean-up’ and ‘recycle fashion’ street carnivals that address various social, economic, and emotional aspects—reflect the mobilisation of the local social and moral world. These initiatives and events bring different social groups together in joint practices and joyful performances, and they combine discursive empowerment and performative enactment.

If we wish to both understand and actively respond to environmental and waste-related problems in transregional collaboration, the most important thing is to think through the differences in thoughts and practices. Waste is always tied to morally complex, peculiar situations and sensibilities. The much-needed reduction of waste can only be achieved once we engage in both mutual understanding and in transformative ways of world-making. Social mobilisation, with the goal to change consumer-conscience, can take many paths. However, we must remember that neither morally responsible individuals nor collective solutions can resolve waste problems so long as the industry continues to produce detrimental materials, and so long as the waste is an economic category of global significance.

Judith Schlehe, Professor of sociocultural anthropology, University of Fribourg. She has published widely on the topics of religious dynamics, cultural politics, globalisation and transnational issues, gender, the anthropology of disaster, and new transnational collaborative and reciprocal research methods. Her main expertise is on Indonesia and Southeast Asia, j.schlehe@ethnos.unifr.ch

Notes

4 Tan, S. 2014. ‘Put your family’ and friends: developing pro-environmental behaviour among high school students in Indonesia, the Philippines and the Moluy World 14(360):303-329.
5 Another option is to donate the credit, which can then be used for social and humanitarian activities.
Human activities and climate change are having negative impacts on the lives of people all over the world, and so it is essential for policies and actions to move us towards a more sustainable development. Responses in search of new global solutions include the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promoted by the United Nations. The Agenda 2030 and the SDGs were built on previous experiences with the Millennium Development Goals and address, in a multi-dimensional way, a set of goals and targets that promote the eradication of social and economic inequality, the effects of climate change, and environmentally sustainable development. The Agenda 2030 proposes an international commitment by all countries from the South to the North, from the East to the West.

Universities play an important role as driving agents and integrators of SDGs, and their involvement in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is crucial in coping with the problems of today’s world. The University of Málaga (UMA) in Spain, and the Incheon National University (INU) in South Korea, are responding to the needs of the globalized reality through a twinning alliance, whereby both universities have representative offices in the other partner university. Collaboration is promoted in the academic and research fields, but also in the field of cultural and institutional exchange and promotion for a better understanding between Spain and Korea. The project that has been ongoing for the past 10 years was consolidated with an alliance that works as a whole despite the distance between the countries. The alliance works as a single platform, based on the bonds of trust between the networks of each party. UMA and INU act as cultural and institutional facilitators to support and encourage new projects (http://uma.es/oficinapuentecorea).

In such a favorable context, the opportunity arises to link the experiences and influences of Spain and Korea, represented by the UMA and the INU respectively, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals with the aim of providing new global and integrating solutions to economic inequality, and environmental and social problems. UMA has extensive experience in technical cooperation and institutional relations with Latin America, while INU has an established network of universities and projects around the Asian continent. In this framework both universities agreed in 2018 to launch a joint international cooperation program based on the experiences and resources of both. Specifically, two triangular university development cooperation projects were designed and implemented in Colombia and Mongolia. The project in Colombia was developed in Bogota through the close relationship between UMA and the National University of Colombia as part of the Ibero-American Network of Korean Studies. The objectives of the project were “to give voice and space to all parts of the armed conflict in Colombia to build memory and, consequently, to build ties that help achieve peace in the country”. In general, the project consisted of interviews with victims of the conflict and the later creation of a short documentary piece. The project in Mongolia was developed through the close relationship of INU with the Mongolian University of Life Sciences. The objectives, context and work of the project are detailed in the following section.

**South Korean international cooperation in Mongolia**

One of the main agents of the SDGs is Official Development Assistance (ODA). ODA is defined as the allocation of resources from official organizations (both multi or bilateral) to developing countries in order to facilitate and promote sustainable economic and social progress. The members of the Development Association Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) sets out broad lines and objectives to ensure that aid is implemented in a transparent and efficient way to maximize the priorities of the developing countries.

An interesting case of an ODA donor country is South Korea; it is a successful example of a former recipient country that is nowadays one of the big donors of ODA. After the Korean civil war and the division into North and South Korea in 1953, the South

---

**The Green Ger Village Master Plan**

University cooperation and achieving the SDGs

In Mongolia, climate change has resulted in infrequent rains, desertification of the steppes, and degradation of the forests, which is in turn creating a lack of access to food and other resources for Mongolia’s nomad society. In the face of these hardships, during the 1990s, nomads started to migrate from the countryside to urban areas and to install, without any government planning, their traditional ger (yurts) in the areas surrounding the main cities. One of these cities was Darkhan, located in northern Mongolia. The lack of urban planning and social infrastructure in the ger districts has caused a slew of public health and environmental problems. In this context, an International Cooperation for Development alliance emerged between the University of Malaga (Spain), Incheon National University (South Korea) and the Mongolian University of Life Sciences (Mongolia) in order to provide solutions for the public health problems in Darkhan city. The following article aims to highlight the synergies that flourish when working through university partnerships in development cooperation projects, as an alternative to individual and traditional solutions.
Korean government received a big volume of ODA resources from the United States and Japan. South Korea is in fact considered to be the country that has benefited most from international aid. The government allocated the received ODA to economic and social infrastructures, transforming the agriculture-based economy into a technology-intensive, production-oriented economy. Nowadays, South Korea is the 13th economic power in the world and plays a crucial role in Asian politics. It enjoys a strategic geopolitical situation that, together with its diplomatic connections, allows it to have important partners in both the Western and the United States. Korea has been a part of the OECD-DAC since 2010, bringing new points of view to the international arena, providing a representation of the traditional providers of ODA. Knowing both sides of development, South Korea has been a 36-year old experience in its own country through offices represented in 45 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, through whose projects are carried out in the fields of education, health, infrastructure or production, among others. The diplomatic offices are present in their own country through offices opened in some Korean universities with the aim of creating cooperation between them and society through education and research. South Korea formulated a Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) in 2010, a document with the clear objective of improving the effectiveness of Official Development Assistance in Mongolia. The CPS is a direct and bilateral agreement with a country reviewed every 3-5 years and the objective of a “volume of ODA, priority areas, medium-term allocation terms and implementation strategies based on Korea’s development policy and national development plans”.

The CPS between Mongolia and Korea includes the development of the following areas: improving vocational training programs and Higher education environment, strengthening health and education systems, increasing access to water and sanitation facilities, improving the system of electronic payment, the logistics system for the management of logistics, and transport infrastructure. Specifically, the CPS refers to the need to increase access to improved sources of water and sanitation services and school meals, especially in the ger district.

Environmental and health problems in Darkhan ger districts

The deterioration of the environment in Darkhan, as in the rest of the country, is caused by climate change and human activities. Rainfall shortages, desertification and extreme cold are causing difficulties for the local population and groundwater contamination. 

Unsustainable human activities such as mining, herding, and building around the city river have led to the pollution of local water bodies. The water, soil and air of Darkhan are unsuitable for human consumption.

UNICEF reported in 2017 that Mongolia is suffering from pollution causing diseases, increasing access to water and sanitation facilities, improving the system of electronic payment, the logistics system for the management of logistics, and transport infrastructure. Specifically, the CPS refers to the need to increase access to improved sources of water and sanitation services and school meals, especially in the ger district.

In the first stage of the project, in 2017, delegations from INU and MULS conducted local fieldwork. They interviewed the local population to explore the perceptions of their environmental and social situation and to define their socioeconomic needs. In the next stage of the project, in 2017 and 2018, the three university partners worked together in the following ways:

- repair the district roads called ‘model streets’ under the Public Participation Program, which will be reproduced in the future in other areas of the district;
- conducted fieldwork/interviews with regard to local perceptions of the environmental and social situation;
- collaborated with the urban landscape management;
- professional training courses about the environment, provided by UMA-INU professors;
- conduct research into energy alternatives and solutions for the lack of basic public services.

Results from the collaboration

Although the Green Ger Village Master Plan is at an early stage, we can draw some conclusions and results of the collaboration.

Firstly, the joint participation of UMA, INU and MULS has established an institutional relationship through SMEs of a MoU agreement for the exchange of professors and students between the parties. Volunteers and professors from UMA on INU participated in three different periods of fieldwork between 2017 and 2018.

Additionally, there has been joint participation at international congresses and conferences held at MULS, UMA and INU, with researchers from the participating universities and external researchers. The Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (KA170) granted a series of scholarships within the framework of the Plan, with which three students from MULS studied at UMA during the academic year 2019-2020, and two students from UMA studied at MULS during the same period. In addition, two professors from each university carried out teaching missions and short research stays at the partner universities. Lastly, two doctoral theses are being carried out within the framework of the project, planned for completion by the end of 2020. The first one is being written by a MULS research professor who is conducting her doctoral thesis at Incheon National University in the field of public participation and waste management of the Green Ger Village Master Plan. The second thesis is by a researcher from the University of Malaga on the decision-making process and its application to the

Green Ger Village Master Plan through system dynamics. The results of these investigations are expected to be fully incorporated into the Green Ger Village Master Plan.

In conclusion, we state that the implementation of the Green Ger Village Master Plan will be successful thanks to the synergy created by the three partner universities and the national and local parties. Guided by the SDGs, the improvement of public health in ger districts will bring enormous benefits to the local population. Finally, we conclude that the creation of such collaborative projects contributes to the construction of a critical, participatory, and caring citizenship, while promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding between students and lecturers from different regions.

L. Haddad in Mongolia cultivating cattle or animal feed that is more resilient to climate changes, using plants that do not need irrigation. Image courtesy of Asian Development Bank on Flickr. Reproduced under Creative Commons License.

Notes
A part of the panel sessions presented at ICAS 11 on ‘Environmental Issues, Social Activism and Policy Challenges’, this study looks at the multiple dimensions of the causal relationship between migration and environmental change (environmental change can be the reason for migration, but it can also be caused by migration); the study aims to link the ‘environmental issues’ and ‘policy challenges’ of these panel sessions in order to set a new framework with which to consider the causal relationship between environmental change and migration and how they affect each other during people’s movements from one place to another. One result from this short survey, would be that these two processes, especially in East Asia, are on the verge of securitization (a situation in which they are pushed out of the arena of regular politics into becoming a matter of security). Clearly, regional responses for sustainable adaptation practices and better inclusion of immigrants in host communities are needed.

Recent dynamics of international migration

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 3.4% of the world’s population in 2018 (about 258 million people) live outside their country of birth, This percentage rose from about 2.7% in the early 2000s. Top destinations (host/receiving countries) have consistently included the USA, Germany, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UK, and UAE, while top origins (home/sending countries) are India, Mexico, Russia, China, Bangladesh and the Philippines, in terms of the total number of people in the migration lane. If we consider internal migration, it is even more striking in terms of environmental change: of the 68.5 million internally displaced people (due to conflicts and disasters), 18.8 million in 135 countries were displaced because of sudden environmental disasters (2017 data).2

Migration as a process is complicated enough as there are many reasons, push and pull factors, flows of emigration and immigration, difficulties in defining categories, and various dimensions while settling the migrant groups in their host countries, and potential outcomes in the host countries. This study aims to combine and present the causal relationship among all these segments of the whole migration process, in a comprehensive framework (table 1). As can be seen in this framework, environmental change issues are of course involved in the migration process from the very beginning. The framework starts with an initial separation of ‘internal’ and ‘external/international’ migration by focusing on the main drivers. Environmental degradation, economic necessities and hardships, conflicts/wars, political/social pressures and identity crisis in the home countries, might be some of the reasons for people to leave their original birth places, both internally and internationally. Categories and dimensions of migrants could be endless, so too could the outcomes of migration in terms of policy or governance, but this study attempts to cover as many facets as possible in the figure. It is crucial to differentiate between categories such as legal/regular vs. irregular/legal/ undocumented, permanent vs. temporary/ seasonal, or voluntary vs. forced migration. Migrants and refugees should also be approached differently as their push and pull factors are entirely dissimilar. Governance policies within and between the host and home countries depend on whether these countries have sufficient economic, political, and sociocultural capacity to send and, more importantly, to welcome migrant groups. Most migrants experience a force to leave their home countries due to economic, political and/or security related issues, however, there is a small number of migrant communities of High-skilled experts and students who leave their home countries with none of these concerns, but who migrate voluntarily for career or educational aspirations. The duration of migration (short or long-term) also affects the nature, documentation, and outcome of migration flows. This overview hopefully helps to grasp the difficulties faced when drawing an overarching migration framework covering legal, economic, political, sociocultural, and environmental phases.

Table 1: Migration (internal and international)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal and External/ International drivers</th>
<th>Emigration Push factors</th>
<th>Immigration Pull factors</th>
<th>Mixing categories</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Environmental degradation</td>
<td>• Economic reasons</td>
<td>• Economy</td>
<td>• Legal vs irregular (and documented)</td>
<td>• Men and women</td>
<td>• Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economy</td>
<td>• Population rise</td>
<td>• Betterment of lifestyles</td>
<td>• Permanent vs seasonal/temporary</td>
<td>• Old and young</td>
<td>• Economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conflict/war</td>
<td>• Threat to one’s life</td>
<td>• Family/initiatives</td>
<td>• Volunteering or forced (human trafficking vs migrant smuggling)</td>
<td>• Home and family freebies</td>
<td>• Demographic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political/religious pressure</td>
<td>• Conflict/war</td>
<td>• Culture/religion</td>
<td>• Migrant vs refugees and deportees</td>
<td>• Home (sending) and host (receiving)</td>
<td>• Environmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identity/culture</td>
<td>• Environmental degradation</td>
<td>• Environment</td>
<td>• Developing vs developed countries</td>
<td>• Jobs and migration</td>
<td>• Social/cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Threat from government</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Immigrants vs global migrants (highly skilled vs manual labor)</td>
<td>• Images of sending and receiving societies</td>
<td>• Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disasters</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Short vs long-term stay</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by the author

Fig. 1: Earthquake-stricken coast in Otsuchi Town, Iwate Prefecture, Japan (Photo taken by the author, 25 June 2011).
to leave their habitual homes, or to choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within their country or abroad. IOM’s definition garners various aspects of the migration framework in table 1. We can reframe this framework from an environmental point of view, to produce a more environment-oriented migration scheme, as can be seen in table 2. This table shows that migration-driven causes of migration can, to start, be divided into two big groups: migration as a result of environmental degradation, natural disasters, and industrial accidents (as a result of an environmental event), and migration happening as a result of gradual changes within the environmental conditions of our homelands such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, rise of sea-levels, infrastructural changes, and land grabbing. The highest frequency of natural disasters show the most common incidences we encounter. Depending on the sudden or gradual character of the environmental change, oil, ash and pull factors, categories, and dimensions lead in different directions. The response and adaptation of the countries to migration are different. The growing occurrence of natural disasters is a major concern globally. Particularly in the Asia-Pacific region (fig.1). The earthquake and tsunami in Japan, and even affected areas (mainly Southeast Asia and Japan) play a role in the environmental change facing security-related issues in Asia. Governance of both migration and environmental changes faces security-related questions such as “how to cope with sudden events and slow-moving shocks?” The question is to respond and adapt appropriately, both in the immediate and as well the long run. Human security concept more broadly can mean this: includes Southeast Asia) play a role in the processes of environmental and migration changes. From an environmental point of view, Asia experiences the highest frequency of natural disasters (around 150 disasters in 2017) compared to the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Oceania. According to the environmental conditions, the environmental disaster rate is also compared. Asia has 37% of all global natural disasters in the years 1998-2007, and even 44% during the following decade (2008-2017). The growing occurrence of environmental disasters is a crucial fact of our times. Compared to Asia, in the decade 2008-2017, in the Americas (32%), Africa 20%, Europe 11%, and Oceania 4%, of the global natural disasters. However, during that same decade, the percentage of people affected by the disasters was about 80% in Asia, with only 11% in the Americas and 9% in Africa. Natural disasters are one of the main causes of forced migration, leading environmental refugees to flee to other areas of their own country, or even into other countries in search of safety. The main disasters occurring in East Asia between 2008-2017 were floods (38%), storms (24%), earthquakes (12%), epidemics (10%) and extreme temperatures (3%).1 On 11 March 2011, the Tohoku Earthquake (9.0 magnitude) and the subsequent tsunami devastated the eastern prefectures (Tohoku region) of Japan, and even affected areas further away throughout the entire Pacific region (fig.2). The earthquake and tsunami triggered the man-made disasters of a nuclear meltdown, hydrogen explosions, and radioactive contamination in the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima Prefecture, leading to the loss of 10,000 lives, a further 7300 people missing, and 150,000 people displaced and forced to live in temporary shelters.2 The impact of these natural disasters on international migration security. Here, the concept of international security means both protecting people against the risks of environmental hazards and threats to people’s environmental security means both protecting people from man-made damages and threats. This is extremely crucial, understanding of international security brings us to the recent framework of migration and environmental migration flows. As shown in the above example, lives and livelihoods are threatened by the risks associated with sudden or gradual environmental changes.3

Conclusion
This short overview looks at the qualitative and quantitative of the migration processes in East Asia with an attempt to frame the migration agenda with a focus on environmental change. The recent migration trends in regional and international migration and environmental changes have a cause and effect relation since the environment has become one of the main drivers of (inter)nation migration in recent years. Sudden and gradual environmental changes have led to increased threats to human security, leading to the even higher levels of securitization of the international migration flows.4 East Asia presents a noticeable trend in international migration (with all its dimensions) with the occurrences of natural disasters (both sudden and gradual) have also increased dramatically in recent years.5 This has led to the visible instance of the need to understand the population pressures inside the migration processes, as increased risks of substantial environmental changes in the receiving areas and societies.6 Governing mechanisms of international migration also lead to further securitization of environmental changes and threats, since they necessitate multiactor and multi-level involvement. Governmental and non-governmental international migration regimes form the new level of management that can be more feasible platforms to communicate these migration governance regimes and environmental change agendas, and to recognize as well as put emphasis on the environmental aspects, drivers, and outcomes of the migration trends.7

Table 2: Environmental migration (international and internal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sudden disasters</th>
<th>Gradual changes</th>
<th>Path factors</th>
<th>Pull factors</th>
<th>Mixturing categories</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental change</td>
<td>- Climate change</td>
<td>- Threat to one’s life</td>
<td>- Immediate vs gradual</td>
<td>- Men and women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural disasters</td>
<td>- Ecosystem degradation</td>
<td>- Conflict</td>
<td>- Old and young</td>
<td>- Internal displacement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial accidents</td>
<td>- Infrastructure</td>
<td>- Betrayal of livelihoods</td>
<td>- Irregular vs legal</td>
<td>- Long-term stay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land grabbing</td>
<td>- Long-term stay</td>
<td>- Governmental policies</td>
<td>- Temporary displacement</td>
<td>- Short-term stay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

Compiled by the author

Environmental issues, social activism and policy challenges

The Focus

Agus Yuger Mulikobaghi
Associate Professor, Faculty of Global and Regional Studies, Dongguk University, Seoul, South Korea.
aguyangmulikobaghi@gmail.com
For News from Australia and the Pacific, we ask contributors to reflect on their own research interests and the broader academic field in Australia and the Pacific of which it is a part. We focus on current, recent or upcoming projects, books, articles, conferences and teaching, while identifying related interests and activities of fellow academics in the field. Our preferred style is subjective and conversational. Rather than offering fully-fledged research reports, our contributions give insight into the motivations behind and directions of various types of conversations between Asia and the region. In the current edition, we are ‘rethinking the Philippines: networks and media of empowerment’.

Articles are edited by Edwin Jurriëns edwin.jurriens@unimelb.edu.au and Andy Fuller fuller.ao@unimelb.edu.au, from the Asia Institute in Melbourne https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/asia-institute

Rethinking the Philippines

Filipino family life at a distance in a digital era

Earvin Charles Cabalquinto

I

n one of the many bustling spaces of the university, a petite woman, wearing cleaning gloves and an earphone, was seen cleaning windows, mopping the floor or assisting students and university staff in some other way. After several encounters in the building hallway, I eventually met her. She is Maria, a 59-year-old cleaner, who was born in the Philippines, and one of my informants during my research project in Australia on transnational family life and mobile media.

Maria moved to Australia in the late 1980s through a de-facto visa with her Australian husband. She does not have any children and had a hysterectomy. Whilst living in Australia, she has been supporting her six siblings and their families in Cagayan de Oro, Philippines. She does this through constant communication, money transfers on a monthly basis, and the occasional shipment of consumer goods. For Maria, smartphones play a vital role in sustaining her relationships to her left-behind family members. As she said during one of our conversations: “Of course, it is very important. I can contact them in an instant. Unlike before, when I had to write letters. When there was no mobile phones yet, it’s quite difficult to communicate at a distance.”

Maria is one of the millions of Filipinos who have embarked on an overseas journey for diverse reasons. Cross-border mobility among Filipinos is fundamental in coping with the changing demands and policies of a global economy. According to a 2019 report released by the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), 2.5 million Filipino workers were deployed overseas in 2016. As transnational family life becomes mainstream in Philippine society, a diverse range of digital communication technologies serve as conduits for the flow of money, consumer items and expressions of affection.

According to the 2018 census released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 232,288 Philippine migrants in Australia in 2016. Historically, the first wave of Filipino migrants, who were called “Manlaban,” came from Eastern Australia and Queensland to work as pearl divers, wharf labourers, and seamen in the pearling industry. To date, Filipinos work across various professional and skill-based industries, such as hospitality, aged care services and education. The Filipino migrant community is in the top ten migrant communities in Australia.

A family life on the move

My research focuses on how migrant Filipinos in Melbourne, and their left-behind family members in the Philippines, use digital communication technologies to forge and maintain family life at a distance. I have examined my data through a critical mediated mobilities lens, emphasizing how mobile device use is engendered and undermined by the intertwining of social structures and technological infrastructures. It is through this approach that I have uncovered the emergence of communicative benefits and tensions in a transnational and digital household.

Mobile device use has brought positive experiences to members of the transnational Filipino family. For instance, Rachelle, a 28-year-old sales manager in Melbourne, and her left-behind siblings in the Philippines, utilised a messaging application to exchange intimate, playful and often random texts and visuals. The constant flow of personalised content primarily contributed to making each of them feel connected and valued. In some cases, a social media channel and a photograph were used in the planning, coordinating and completion of a family-based business project. As I presented elsewhere, Cherry, a 45-year-old accountant in the Philippines, used Facebook to update her overseas husband about the making of a Jeepney, an iconic public transport in the Philippines. Cherry was taking photographs, uploading them to Facebook, and tagging the husband. It was through such practices that Cherry and her husband shared this activity. However, both intimate connections and negative tensions can be enabled through mobile device use. As showcased in a previous publication, Efren, a 38-year-old chef in Melbourne, posted a photo of a newly-arrived pair of shoes on Facebook. This photo generated a comment from his left-behind mother, reminding him to prioritise his financial obligations before buying material items. Little did his mother know, it was his wife who bought the shoes. The lack of a context of a Facebook post allowed for misinterpretation in this case. In this regard, for transnational family members, sustaining ties through networked platforms often warrants strategies. In Efren’s case, the solution was to be mindful when posting content on social media.

Overseas Filipinos and their left-behind family members often struggle with poor technological infrastructures to sustain transnational linkages. The widespread use of digital communication technologies can thus reinforce the pre-existing social inequalities in Philippine society. In a report released by Speedtest Global Index, the Philippines’ 2019 average internet speed of 19.51 Mbps was much slower than the global average of 57.91 Mbps. Nevertheless, transnational families have to manage the pains of physical separation through the use of mobile devices, money transfers and the continuous flows of care packages. In this regard, as care support becomes more family-based and networked, the Philippine government can escape from its responsibility in prioritising the social welfare of its citizens. This point is of high importance especially when the plight of Filipino migrant is symptomatic of the lack of stable job opportunities, free access to public services and provision of social welfare programs in the Philippines.

In conclusion, dispersed Filipino family members rely heavily on communication technologies to forge and maintain transnational ties. Yet, communication at a distance also comes with challenges and issues. In this vein, there is a need to further re-think the kind of support that should be given to Filipinos who serve as the lifeblood of the nation. One must start by critically reflecting upon how a digital family life can become a crucial site to critique the uneven effects of a globalising economy and thus map out ways of improving the lives of those who have been displaced and marginalised in a mobile society.

Earvin Charles Cabalquinto, Lecturer, School of Communication and Creative Arts (SCCA) at Deakin University earvin.cabalquinto@deakin.edu.au

Notes

3 Cabalquinto, E.C. 2019. ‘They could picture me, or i could picture them: Displaying family life beyond borders through mobile photography’, Information, Communication and Society, DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2019.1602663
Reshaping the Philippines in Australia: the Philippine Studies Network in Australia (PINAS)

Reagan Mapiquez

Filipinos are the fifth largest migrant group in Australia with around 236,000 residents. In 2017, 10,000 student visas from the Philippines were granted, an increase of 108% from the 2017-2018 program year. Historically, prior to Australia's birth in 1901 as a modern nation, this second largest archipelago in the world was already linked to the world's largest island. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Philippines, as ‘Manila’ arrived in the island-continent and intermarried with Indigenous Australians. Today, there is an active community with established relationships with Australia for 70 years, longer than most of the ASEAN countries.

The Philippines has also become an important site for examining modern, democratic, and public spheres. The specter of the communist revolution is brought up to whitewash the atrocities of the earlier authoritarian order, and more disturbingly, to justify the return of dictatorial rule, this time under the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte. My doctoral research project, which began in 2018, is about how the communist revolution is imagined in films and literary works from the Philippines and how it has affected the toppling of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the 1986 EDSA People Power. Some of these works are films set in the Martial Law era. For many Filipinos who lived through this period, the memory of the dictatorship is still intertwined with the memory of the revolutionary movement. Marcos invoked and magnified the threat of communism to justify the declaration of the Martial Law in 1972. The repressive conditions under authoritarian rule compelled a lot of Filipinos to join the revolution, which did not only embody the most radical form of anti-dictatorship resistance, but also offered a comprehensive agenda for the transformation of Philippine society.

For Filipinos like me, born during the post-authoritarian period of democratisation and living through the present in which the revolution continues to rage on, Martial Law film and forms of "imagined memory". They enable us to imagine and remember the experiences of state violence, as well as of radical political involvement – during the Martial Law period. One prominent example is the commercially successful and critically acclaimed melo-drama Dekada ’70 (The 1970s, 2002), This film, produced by a female commercial filmmaker, depicts the experiences of middle-class family in the titular milieu. In the film, the eldest daughter simultaneously join the communist armed movement, bringing to the fore the deep-seated contradictions that have long incubated in the family. At the centre of the film’s narrative is the political awakening of the mother, who not only begins to understand her son’s involvement, but also gradually liberates herself from the constraints of the social role she performs inside and outside the family.

A visible commonality between Dekada ’70 and other recent films on the revolution is their examination of the position of gender and sexuality in an individual’s radicalisation. Such thematic concern relates to contemporary identity-based advocacies and social movement practices that prompt a nuanced, if not rethinking of, the class-oriented anti-dictatorship politics associated with the revolutionary movement. The independent films Barber’s Tales (2013) and Liviy (2018) explore the lives and experiences of non-male characters. Some of the themes of empowerment are depicted as contingent upon, and linked to, their involvement in the communist movement. In other recent films like Mut (The Affair, 2010) and LHs (Wayward, 2015), the experiences of gay men and other non-conforming community members are highlighted, challenging the macho stereotypes associated with the popularised figure of the NPA guerrilla depicted in some post-EDSA action films. Apart from relating stories of courage shown by these revolutionary characters who have been fighting against the government without the guerrilla zones, these films offer critical reflections on the communist movement’s own painful contestations, often locked in with the violence of the dictatorship, which continues to be the subject of systematic historical revisionism, but to also make use of the power of fiction cinema to examine the relevance and persistence of the revolutionary vision, especially in light of contemporaneous concerns such as identity politics. They produce fictionalised versions of the present, crossing the public sphere, nationalism, identity, by, while dialoguing with, the socio-political sensibilities of the present. And indeed it is the Philippines in the Asia-Pacific Region that shared features, and gradual transition, to authoritarian rule that urgently demand the surfacing of such radical memory practices.

Notes
The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening lives around the world, and the measures to contain it are badly affecting economies and livelihoods. The various countries in Southeast Asia are using a multitude of coping strategies, some more effective than others, while grappling with the socio-economic costs of the pandemic.

How is COVID-19 affecting the ASEAN economy?

Jayan Menon

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a human tragedy. By early May 2020, about 3.5 million infections and 250,000 deaths had been reported worldwide, and about 35,000 infections and 1,600 deaths in ASEAN. Measures introduced to deal with the pandemic could save lives but are having wide-ranging economic effects and inducing economic contagion.

The IMF predicts that world output will contract by 3 per cent this year, with growth in most ASEAN countries either flat or negative. There is, however, significant variation in projected growth across ASEAN this year, ranging from -0.7 per cent in Thailand to 2.7 per cent in Vietnam. In contrast, the Asian Development Board (ADB) sees it growing by about the same.

This variation in rates across countries, as well as between forecasters, suggests two things. Greater focus is needed on the transmission mechanisms of the economic contagion and in critiquing how assessments of the economic impacts are made. This will enable a more informed evaluation of the assessments, as the numbers keep changing, and a better understanding of the underlying processes to gauge the impacts of an uncertain and evolving shock.

Economic transmission mechanisms

The effects of COVID-19 are hitting ASEAN economies at a time when other risk factors, such as a global growth slowdown, were already taking place. COVID-19 is disrupting tourism and travel, supply chains and labour supply. Uncertainty is driving negative sentiment. This all affects trade, investment and output, which in turn affects growth. Tourism and business travel, as well as export-oriented industries, especially airlines and hotels, were the first to be affected. And the conditions are worsening as more countries go into shutdown.

The supply disruptions emanating mostly from China will reverberate throughout the value chain and disrupt production. Since China is the regional hub and accounts for 12 per cent of global trade in parts and components, the cost of the disruption in the short run will be high. The negative effects of quarantine arrangements on labour supply could also be high depending on duration and sector. Manufacturing has been hit harder than service industries, where telecommuting and other technological aids limit the fall in productivity. All these disruptions will lead to sharp declines in domestic demand. And their impact on economic growth will further propagate these disruptions. This compounding effect can magnify and extend short-run effects into the long run. The highest economic cost could come from the so-called intangibles. The effects of negative sentiment about growth and general uncertainty — which is already affecting financial markets — will feed into reduced investment, consumption and growth beyond the short run. Rolling cascades around the world now appear inevitable, despite the stimulus measures being contemplated.

The contraction is not only likely to be greater than the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, an economic depression is on the cards. Even in a best case scenario, there will be sharp increases in unemployment and poverty. Some degree of decoupling from China, or de-globalisation in general, may also be a permanent reminder of this pandemic.

Among ASEAN countries, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are heavily integrated in regional supply chains and will be the most affected by a reduction in demand for the goods produced within them. Indonesia and the Philippines have been increasing supply chain engagement and will not be immune either. Vietnam is the only new ASEAN member integrated into supply chains with China and is already suffering severe supply disruptions. Given time, supply-side adjustments will alter trade and investment patterns. The main adjustment will involve relocating certain activities along the supply chain from China to ASEAN countries. Although the pandemic will disrupt the relocation phase, ASEAN countries can benefit from the new investments, mitigating overall negative impacts. Vietnam and Malaysia could be major beneficiaries. Tourism contributed almost $900 billion to the ASEAN economy in 2019. Thailand and Malaysia will be most affected in ASEAN by the drop-off in tourist arrivals. Although intra-ASEAN tourism flows have been growing, spearheaded by Malaysia, the main sources of tourist arrivals are the ‘Plus Three countries’ — China, Korea and Japan — and all are contracting severely.
Indonesia faces tremendous challenges in its handling of the public health emergency

Siwage Dharma Negara

Indonesia recorded its first instance of COVID-19 – two cases of infection – on 2 March. Slightly more than a month later, on 13 April, President Joko Widodo declared COVID-19 a national disaster. That day, the number of COVID-19 cases had jumped to over 5,000 with almost 400 fatalities. On 5 May, Indonesia reported a total of 11,587 COVID-19 cases with 864 deaths. As of writing, the country has the highest number of COVID-19 fatalities in South-east Asia, with a death rate of around 8 per cent of total confirmed cases. Many commentators believe that the figures are significantly understated as the official data does not include deaths of patients suspected to have had coronavirus, but who were not tested. In fact, with only 200 tests per 1 million people, Indonesia has the lowest testing rate in the region. The Indonesian Doctors Association (IDAI) has projected that the death toll from COVID-19 is likely to be double the official figures.

Line of command

This reveals the country’s extreme lack of hard and soft health infrastructure to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. The lack of reliable data and information is a huge challenge for the government. Initially, the government’s response to the crisis was very slow due to a lack of information, and its unpreparedness. This was exacerbated by an underestimation of the magnitude of the epidemic. Like many other governments, it does not have a coherent institutional response. Overall, we see a lack of clarity in protocols in responding to the epidemic, such as the line of command, in other words, who is in charge of doing what. The result is a series of blunders in the country’s handling of the epidemic. Nevertheless, we also see that the government learning from and fixing its previous mistakes. After declaring a public health emergency on 31 March, Jokowi instructed the implementation of stricter large-scale social and physical distancing measures within the community. Jokowi has also asked the regional heads to coordinate their policies with the central and local governments. He specifically instructed the regional government not to implement a lockdown policy without coordinating with the central government. It is noteworthy that Jokowi has resisted the demand to lock-down the country, citing concern about the serious social and economic implications of such a measure. While several countries have done so, lockdown is viewed as problematic in an economy with a large informal sector like Indonesia. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, of 126.5 million people working in Indonesia, 71 million (55 per cent) work in the informal sector. Many of these people cannot afford to stay at home as they live on a day-to-day basis, for example, ojek (motorcycle taxi) drivers, street cart operators, and informal carpark attendants. However, as the number of infected people and fatalities increases, the government is forced to take stricter measures to control people’s movement.

On 21 April, Jokowi announced the government’s decision to forbid idul fitri mudlik to curb the spread of COVID-19 ahead of Ramadan. Traditionally, during Ramadan, some 20 million people from Greater Jakarta, the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia, travel to their hometowns to celebrate idul fitri. If enforced effectively, this travel ban will avoid further spread of COVID-19 on Java, an island of 171 million people, where many regions have far worse healthcare systems that are unable to cope with the expected numbers. The government also instructed the administration to make travel back to hometowns impossible by ensuring transport systems are not available to transport people from traveling back to their hometown, the government wants to prepare assistance to support their incomes. In view of this, Jokowi has announced various social safety-net programmes to help the poor and most vulnerable groups. This includes expanding the cash transfer programme through the Program Kemiskinan Berbasis Kurban (Kurban Hope Programme) by providing cash transfers to support around 10 million poor families. Besides, the government will also expand the food card programme (kartu sembako) to help around 20 million to get their food staples.

To help the informal workers, laid-off workers, and people who work in small-micro businesses that have been affected by the pandemic, the government has implemented a new pre-employment card programme in April. It aims to support around 5.6 million jobseekers in the form of training for up to six months. Also, the government has decided to provide free electricity for 24 hours to low-income households and to give a 50 per cent discount on tariffs for 7 million middle-income households. In addition, the government has also announced an increase in the minimum wage rate. In the next three months, the government has also increased the minimum wage rate by 8-21 per cent across the country, starting from 1 July.

The next issue to tackle is how to distribute the assistance promised by the government. The country lacks a good governance and monitoring system for implementing social-assistance programmes. The risk of corruption or cooptation remains high and needs close monitoring with the government, especially the police, need to ensure public order during the lockdown. The government needs to prepare social safety nets for the poor and the vulnerable. As of 31 March, the national COVID-19 special task force has distributed around 19,000 people from the greater Jakarta area travelled to West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java, 24 million low-income people are losing their jobs and they are facing a crisis of food, especially in Jakarta, central Java, and East Java, as a result of the pandemic’s impact on supply chains.

Assessing the assessments

In measuring the impacts of COVID-19, it is important to separate its marginal impact from observed outcomes. This is because the impact may vary depending on the cause of the disruption. This requires an analytical framework that can measure deviations from a baseline scenario, which incorporates pre-existing trends. A model-based analysis, rather than casual empiricism, is required to reduce the problem. In other words, it is explicitly modelled and what is assumed, and what those assumptions are, need to be considered in understanding different outcomes. Before even the outbreak, risks of a global growth slowdown were rising. The restructuring of regional supply chains had started, driven initially by rising wages in China and accelerated by the US-China trade war. While COVID-19 may further hasten the process of a global slowdown in China, Indonesia is only partly responsible for what may happen. It would be misleading to attribute all of the current disruption to COVID-19. Had the trade war not preceded it, COVID-19 may have resulted in greater disruption to supply chains. Any assessment of impacts must recognise that the spread of COVID-19 is unpredictable, and so too the response by governments. It is difficult to estimate the impacts of a shock that is uncertain in itself. This reiterates the need for rigorous modelling and robust policy analytics. The current trend points to risks rising, often accelerating, as with previous epidemics and uncertainty. There is a need for caution in assessing, and regular recalibration in producing assessments.

Notes

1 https://tinyurl.com/EAF030320
2 https://tinyurl.com/EAP030408
3 https://tinyurl.com/EAF030420
4 https://tinyurl.com/Statista2010-2019
5 https://tinyurl.com/FAPF2019-20
6 https://tinyurl.com/MBIboost
7 https://tinyurl.com/wts2019ch8
8 https://tinyurl.com/wts2019ch8
9 https://tinyurl.com/blockheadpandil
COVID-19 in Malaysia: impact on the poor

Serina Rahman

In Malaysia’s battle to contain COVID-19, a multifaceted approach has been implemented to contain the spread of the virus by keeping most people at home. The MCO prevents travel beyond a 10km from one’s residence. In the first three phases of the MCO (18 March–28 April 2020), only one member of the family was able to leave the house in an emergency or to buy groceries, food or medicines, with only one person allowed in a car at a time. In the following phases, these restrictions are being eased, with two people from the same family allowed to travel together, but distance restrictions remain in place with a few exceptions. Roadblocks have been set up along many major roads across the country, manned by police and the army, requiring travellers to explain one’s reasons for being on the road.

Only businesses or services deemed essential have been allowed to operate, such as banks, selected restaurants, pharmacies and supermarkets. Those that open on a scheduled basis are often told to take no-pay leave. In some cases, jobs are simply terminated. Some industries and factories have also been forced to close for at least part of the MCO duration, if not throughout the entire period. Some companies have since totally closed down, leaving countless daily-paid and part-time workers suddenly unemployed. There is little avenue for recourse when they are terminated as a result of MCO restrictions.

There is little understanding of the impacts of these harsh, albeit necessary, restrictions on the poor. Most jobs held by Malaysia’s bottom 40% (B40) require their physical presence and cannot be done from home. Roadside food stalls and pop-up morning markets, often a mainstay of the poorest population’s income, have been ordered shut. These shops also normally enable the poor to purchase food and other necessities at lower prices than in the supermarkets. Rural farmers and fishermen who continue to work find that there are no buyers, as factories, restaurants and markets are closed. Stopping work is not an option when the farmers extended their crops as they live hand-to-mouth on a daily basis. In times of pandemic, when perhaps others in the family have lost their jobs, it is the only hope that they might be able to scrape together some income with which to buy non-agricultural necessities such as diapers and milk powder.

In the deep interior and highlands, indigenous tribes would ordinarily be able to survive, as their existence is usually isolated and they rely on wild foods. Many forests that have been a lifeline for generations have been logged and cleared for plantations, industrial development, building sites, and forest medicines that could cure illnesses are gone. At the same time, rubber and oil palm prices have fallen to all-time lows.

These are the few trades that the indigenous people now depend on. Their limited ability to buy provisions is further reduced by targeted aid that NGOs may have banked into their accounts is inaccessible as most are on at least half salaries.

While the urban poor are close to banking facilities and convenience stores, they too suffer. Many depend on migrant workers to bring job or menial labour; many have since lost jobs. Those still employed but dependent on public transport, face long waits for crowded buses and trains. Those without their own vehicles are stranded as taxis are beyond their limited budget. The urban poor depend on ready-made food sources of food or space for home gardens. They are entirely dependent on store-bought sources and are not able to save any money due to high costs of cash. While myriad permutations of government aid were given out before and during the pandemic, most aid often ends up in the black market.

A 2018 study by the Khazanah Research Institute reported that on average, B40 households only had RM7.30 in post-expenses disposable income every month.

Serina Rahman is a Visiting Fellow in the Malaysia Studies Programme at ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute.

Mahtab Abdullah and Tharik面临 the pandemic's impact on the lives of millions in Malaysia and the world, the S

ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

Serina Rahman

Panic precedes, accompanies, or follows grave political, economic, cultural, and public health crises. Reading about and living through the COVID-19 health crisis in neighbouring and faraway countries, the people of Myanmar simply could not imagine that the virus had not been detected in the country until February and March 2020. They felt that it would only be a matter of days before it too would be detected, and thus their panic was months in the making. Myanmar eventually announced the first two cases on 23 March. Interim reports of COVID-19 health crisis in Myanmar出现了 in early March, and it had targeted a range of people from China, and their returnees from foreign countries such as Thailand, to healthcare providers or frontline workers at hospitals and quarantine facilities, to even domestic returnees or travellers from COVID-19-infected places. The S

ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.

Serina Rahman

Mahtab Abdullah and Tharik

Different manifestations of panic

Panic can develop even before a crisis materializes, only to grow once it occurs. In the evening of 12 March, rumour spread in Myanmar—the epicentre of the outbreak in Myanmar, a most unfortunate form of panic-induced discrimination. Discrimination has also been seen in cities such as Mandalay and Yangon. Some landlords have evicted healthcare providers and others who were working to keep the virus at bay. The “patients who have tested positive are humans, too. They have been infected accidentally and we should be kind to them”.

Is this the end of the world?

All these instances of vigilism and discrimination are serious social problems that will be tackled. Some would say they are temporary and will go away once the crisis is over. But some discrimination may linger, because massacres, shamers, vigilantes, and discriminators in Myanmar or elsewhere may now feel emboldened to act. The pandemic may be like under the pretense of promoting public health.
Following chronological order, five essays outline the broad picture of transcultural exchange in the premodern Eurasian continent through the lens of objects. Each essay highlights a particular artifact; these objects are the witnesses, products, and agents of the cross-cultural interaction happening at varied levels and diverse forms, such as trade, tribute, and pilgrimage. By tracing the movement of things, we interrogate the routes and networks that meshed together cultures in different parts of Eurasia. A diachronic survey shows that while the early transcultural connections were mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adapted and adapted in the local contexts. Objects are the embodiments of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transversal scale. Artifacts discussed in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronzes, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of the current era of globalization.

Fan ZHANG is a Professor of Practice at Tuke University; Global Perspectives on Teaching Fellow, New York University Shanghai (2018-2019)

Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

Yanlong GUO

The bronze mirror has long been viewed as a quintessentially "Chinese" object. However, the earliest mirrors discovered in the Central Plain are likely to have been imported exotica. This article draws on new evidence to the transregional retrieved from Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. It argues that the style of the Anyang mirrors originated from the northwest borderland. Recent archaeological discoveries from the Inner Asian frontier further suggest that these geometric mirrors were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE.

Later literary sources, such as the seventh-century fiction Record of an Ancient Mirror (Gu qing zhuan) often described the invention of the Chinese mirror to the legendary Yellow Emperor in antiquity. However, actual mirrors made of bronze did not emerge in the Central Plain until the Late Shang period during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. So far, only six mirrors (fig. 1-6) have been unearthed from three tombs at the Late Shang capital Anyang, from which more than two thousand bronze vessels have been unearthed. Fu Hao, the female general and consort of King Wu Ding (c. 13th-12th centuries BCE), was mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adapted and adapted in the local contexts. Objects are the embodiments of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transversal scale. Artifacts discussed in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronzes, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of the current era of globalization.

Fan ZHANG is a Professor of Practice at Tuke University; Global Perspectives on Teaching Fellow, New York University Shanghai (2018-2019)

Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

Yanlong GUO

The bronze mirror has long been viewed as a quintessentially "Chinese" object. However, the earliest mirrors discovered in the Central Plain are likely to have been imported exotica. This article draws on new evidence to the transregional retrieved from Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. It argues that the style of the Anyang mirrors originated from the northwest borderland. Recent archaeological discoveries from the Inner Asian frontier further suggest that these geometric mirrors were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE.

Later literary sources, such as the seventh-century fiction Record of an Ancient Mirror (Gu qing zhuan) often described the invention of the Chinese mirror to the legendary Yellow Emperor in antiquity. However, actual mirrors made of bronze did not emerge in the Central Plain until the Late Shang period during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. So far, only six mirrors (fig. 1-6) have been unearthed from three tombs at the Late Shang capital Anyang, from which more than two thousand bronze vessels have been unearthed. Fu Hao, the female general and consort of King Wu Ding (c. 13th-12th centuries BCE), was mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adapted and adapted in the local contexts. Objects are the embodiments of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transversal scale. Artifacts discussed in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronzes, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of the current era of globalization.

Fan ZHANG is a Professor of Practice at Tuke University; Global Perspectives on Teaching Fellow, New York University Shanghai (2018-2019)

Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

Yanlong GUO

The bronze mirror has long been viewed as a quintessentially "Chinese" object. However, the earliest mirrors discovered in the Central Plain are likely to have been imported exotica. This article draws on new evidence to the transregional retrieved from Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. It argues that the style of the Anyang mirrors originated from the northwest borderland. Recent archaeological discoveries from the Inner Asian frontier further suggest that these geometric mirrors were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE.

Later literary sources, such as the seventh-century fiction Record of an Ancient Mirror (Gu qing zhuan) often described the invention of the Chinese mirror to the legendary Yellow Emperor in antiquity. However, actual mirrors made of bronze did not emerge in the Central Plain until the Late Shang period during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. So far, only six mirrors (fig. 1-6) have been unearthed from three tombs at the Late Shang capital Anyang, from which more than two thousand bronze vessels have been unearthed. Fu Hao, the female general and consort of King Wu Ding (c. 13th-12th centuries BCE), was mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adapted and adapted in the local contexts. Objects are the embodiments of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transversal scale. Artifacts discussed in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronzes, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of the current era of globalization.

Fan ZHANG is a Professor of Practice at Tuke University; Global Perspectives on Teaching Fellow, New York University Shanghai (2018-2019)

Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

Yanlong GUO

The bronze mirror has long been viewed as a quintessentially "Chinese" object. However, the earliest mirrors discovered in the Central Plain are likely to have been imported exotica. This article draws on new evidence to the transregional retrieved from Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. It argues that the style of the Anyang mirrors originated from the northwest borderland. Recent archaeological discoveries from the Inner Asian frontier further suggest that these geometric mirrors were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE.

Later literary sources, such as the seventh-century fiction Record of an Ancient Mirror (Gu qing zhuan) often described the invention of the Chinese mirror to the legendary Yellow Emperor in antiquity. However, actual mirrors made of bronze did not emerge in the Central Plain until the Late Shang period during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. So far, only six mirrors (fig. 1-6) have been unearthed from three tombs at the Late Shang capital Anyang, from which more than two thousand bronze vessels have been unearthed. Fu Hao, the female general and consort of King Wu Ding (c. 13th-12th centuries BCE), was mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adapted and adapted in the local contexts. Objects are the embodiments of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transversal scale. Artifacts discussed in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronzes, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of the current era of globalization.

Fan ZHANG is a Professor of Practice at Tuke University; Global Perspectives on Teaching Fellow, New York University Shanghai (2018-2019)

Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

Yanlong GUO

The bronze mirror has long been viewed as a quintessentially "Chinese" object. However, the earliest mirrors discovered in the Central Plain are likely to have been imported exotica. This article draws on new evidence to the transregional retrieved from Anyang, the last capital of the Shang dynasty. It argues that the style of the Anyang mirrors originated from the northwest borderland. Recent archaeological discoveries from the Inner Asian frontier further suggest that these geometric mirrors were embedded in the network of cross-cultural circulations between the Central Plain and its northern and western neighbors during the late second millennium BCE.

Later literary sources, such as the seventh-century fiction Record of an Ancient Mirror (Gu qing zhuan) often described the invention of the Chinese mirror to the legendary Yellow Emperor in antiquity. However, actual mirrors made of bronze did not emerge in the Central Plain until the Late Shang period during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE. So far, only six mirrors (fig. 1-6) have been unearthed from three tombs at the Late Shang capital Anyang, from which more than two thousand bronze vessels have been unearthed. Fu Hao, the female general and consort of King Wu Ding (c. 13th-12th centuries BCE), was mainly made via the land routes, later history saw the growing significance of the maritime network. Attention is also paid to the local response to foreign imports by studying how objects from afar were adapted and adapted in the local contexts. Objects are the embodiments of social relations, and the objects moving across borders are the testimony of social relations at a transversal scale. Artifacts discussed in the following essays were produced during different time periods, in various locations, and from a wide range of materials, such as glass, stone, porcelain, bronzes, and other precious and semi-precious metals. What links them together is their role as a cultural mediator. We hope that, from the perspective of things, our readers can embrace the connectivity of the ancient world, which is no less intricate than that of the current era of globalization.

Fan ZHANG is a Professor of Practice at Tuke University; Global Perspectives on Teaching Fellow, New York University Shanghai (2018-2019)

Interregional transmissions of bronze mirrors with geometric decorations in early China

Yanlong GUO
Tracing the exotic: Sasanian glassware in Inner Mongolia

Maliya AIHAITI

From 2010 to 2019, a group of burials dated to the late fifth and early sixth centuries were excavated at Yihemur, Inner Mongolia. This excavation yielded a number of exotic objects, including a sapphire blue glass bowl from Tomb 1 and a gilded necklet inlaid with pieces of glass from Tomb 3. Our compositional analysis of the excavated glass products using the non-invasive Thermal Scientific Niton XL3t GOLD+XRF Analyser. The three samples we analyzed were the sapphire blue glass bowl from M1 and two light blue glass shards on the necklet from M3. The test showed that the proportion of potassium oxide (K2O) ranges from 2.39-2.88% in the blue-glass bowl, and is about 2% in the light blue glass shards of the gilded necklet. According to the study by Robert H. Brill at the Corning Glass Museum, ancient glass that contains potassium oxide between 2% and 4% belongs to Sasanian plant-ash glass. The three samples we tested all fall into this category. Sasanian plant-ash glassware was also found in Pingcheng, the Northern Wei capital and modern-day city of Datong, Shanxi Province. The blue glass bottle with a bulbous cap (fig.2), excavated from Qilicun M20 Tomb, contains a proportion of 3.26% potassium oxide, suggesting it is Sasanian plant-ash glass. In addition to archaeological findings from China, the Korean Peninsula unearthed Sasanian plant-ash glass as well. The glass bowl and ewer (fig.3) recovered from the fifth century Hwangnam Daechong Mausoleum located in the city of Gyeongju (Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea) have long been identified as either Roman glassware or local production due to stylistic features. But the recent compositional analysis by Korean scholars revealed that both the glass bowl and the ewer are Sasanian plant-ash glass, since they contain 3.9% K2O. The discoveries of Sasanian plant-ash glass in Northern China and Korea is likely related to commercial and diplomatic exchanges during the Northern Wei Dynasty. Wei Shu, the dynastic history of the Northern Wei, mentions that merchants from Yuezhi brought glassware and the technique of making glass to Pingcheng. In the middle of the 5th century, the Goguryeo Kingdom sent envoys to the Northern Wei court for the first time followed by more frequent tributary missions. It is possible that Sasanian glassware discovered in China and Korea was brought by Central Asian merchants to the Northern Wei court at Pingcheng and then transmitted to Inner Mongolia and the Korean peninsula.

Notes

Fig.1: Glass bowl from the M1 Tomb (a), gilded necklet (b) and its inlaid glass shards (c, d, e, f) from the M3 Tomb, Yihemur—Nur, Zhengxiangbai Banner, Inner Mongolia. Fig.2: Glass bottle and its bulbous cap, Qilicun M20 Tomb, Datong, Inner Mongolia. Fig.3: Glass ewer and glass bowl, Hwangnam Daechong Mausoleum, Gyeongju, Gyeongsangbuk-do, South Korea.
In 2016, the Guangdong Provincial Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology conducted a series of archaeological excavations and surveys on Shangchuan Island. The island (fig. 1), measuring 156.7 square kilometers, is one of the largest islands in the Pearl River Delta. It lies on the southern side of Guangzhou Bay, about 9 kilometers off the south coast of Guangdong Province. Shangchuan Island is rich in natural harbors and has served as an important navigation mark for the maritime routes since the Song dynasty. Cultural remains on the island can be traced as far back as the pre-Qin period. Our excavation carried out in 2016 was centered on Dazhou Bay; it unearthed a large number of blue-and-white porcelain pieces, the majority of which are export porcelain related to Portuguese trading activities along China’s southeast coast during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE).

These pottery sherds are fragments of bowls or plates. Features of the glaze and the paste, as well as the production technique, indicate that these ceramics are produced in Jingdezhen. Some of the sherds are inscribed with Chinese characters, including Da Ming Nian Zao 大明年造 [Produced during the years of the Great Ming] and Jia Jing Nian Zhi 嘉靖年製 [Made during the Jiajing reign], helping to date these remains to the 16th century. Most sherds are decorated with traditional Chinese patterns, such as flowers, clouds, and phoenixes. Intriguingly, one piece of blue-and-white porcelain is painted with the Order of Christ Cross (fig. 2), the emblem of the historical Portuguese Order of Christ, thus testifying to the Portuguese and Catholic presence on the island. The discovery suggests that Shangchuan Island served as a transitional trading post for the Chinese-Portuguese trade before the Portuguese took Macao as their major settlement in 1557. After controlling the Malacca Strait, the Portuguese sailed through Southeast Asia to China with the help of the monsoon wind, seeking to establish connections with the Ming court. The Portuguese delegation paid their first official visit to China in 1517, followed by increasing trading and construction activities along the coast.

The blue-and-white porcelains were retrieved from a site near a chapel attached to St. Francis Xavier’s cemetery, St. Francis Xavier, a Catholic missionary known for his extensive travels in Asia, arrived at Shangchuan Island in 1552, but died soon later in the same year. After St. Francis Xavier’s visit, Shangchuan Island not only acted as a Chinese-Portuguese trading stronghold, but also became a bridge for the religious and cultural exchanges. The large quantity of recovered blue-and-white porcelain, and the Christ Cross found on the sherds, is an embodiment of the trading and religious network connecting the East and the West. In 1639, the Jesuits in Macau built a tomb for the saint to mark the original burial site after the body was taken to Goa, the then capital of Portuguese India. From 1700 to 1842, Catholic activities on Shangchuan Island were largely restricted or even banned, and priests were expelled. After 1844, French Catholicism arrived on the island and continued St. Francis Xavier’s mission. The current chapel was sponsored by Bishop Gullemin between 1867 and 1869. Another Catholic Church in the Sunday Village south of St. Francis Xavier’s chapel and a hilltop commercial monument showcase the later wave of Catholic presence.

Nian Zhi 嘉靖年 [Made during the Jiajing] and the inscription on the cross on the cross. Courtesy of HUANG Chao.

**Blue-and-white porcelain on Shangchuan Island: Chinese-Portuguese trade during the Ming dynasty**

**Transnational exchange of metallic commodities during the Era of the Canton Trade**

During the decades preceding the Qing emperor’s forced opening to the West in 1842, Canton (Guangzhou) was the only port open for foreign trade. The Sino-Western relations had mainly evolved around trades through Canton from 1700 to 1842, a period known as the ‘Era of the Canton Trade’. The Canton Trade focuses mainly on the trade of tea, porcelain, and silk, yet the commercial exchange of precious and semi-precious metallic items has been largely ignored. During the 18th and 19th centuries, large quantities of manufactured goods made of silver, gold, tutenag, paktong, lead, tin, as well as the raw materials, were exported from Canton to Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Based on archival records, including journals and logbooks, and archaeological discoveries from shipwrecks, this essay examines the overlooked metallic items that embodied the commercial vitality and momentum of the transnational trade.

In 1689, the Qing court lifted the ban on maritime trade, reinstating commercial exchanges with the outside world. Canton, located at the southeast tip of China’s coastal line, gradually grew into one of the most important port cities of the 18th and 19th centuries, an era that witnessed the emergence of the transnational trading networks. The flourishing maritime trade left a rich body of materials that offers scholars the opportunity to look into every aspect of the Canton Trade, ranging from studies on companies and merchants to that of trading routes. The trading commodities have long been the subject to extensive research. However, most studies are concentrated on tea, silk, and porcelain. Metallic objects are largely ignored. In the second half of the 20th century, H.A. Crosby Forbes and his colleagues raised the awareness of export metallic artifacts through their breakthrough research into what was then termed ‘Chinese export silver’. Nevertheless, metallic commodities other than silver have yet to be studied systematically.

When conducting my post-doctoral project ‘Trading Metals in Canton’, in collaboration with Professor Paul A. Von Dyke, a renowned expert on the Canton Trade, I started to pay attention to the trade of gold with Spanish silver coins. Gold ingots were recovered from a number of shipwrecks, including the ‘Nanking Cargo’ in Amsterdam. These ingots are impressed with marks, such as guanji 元器 [that denotes the maker’s name, and numerals such as shiliang 7两 that stands for weight and value]. Besides gold and silver, objects made of tutenag and paktong also constitute a significant portion of export metallic commodities. Tutenag is now widely accepted as ballast cargoes or kentledge that were used to improve the ship’s stability while sailing at sea. Commodities made of these metals were much smaller in scale. Pure copper was often imported from Japan to Canton by the European traders. Metallic commodities, though not a common topic of research, did play a significant role in the exchanges between China and the West.

The current essay hopes that this short essay can stimulate more interest in the transnational exchange of metallic commodities.

**Fig. 1 (above):** A pair of candlesticks in the fluted pillar style, made of Chinese paktong but probably manufactured in Britain, ca. the late 19th century. Courtesy of HUANG Chao.

**Fig. 4:** Transnational exchange of metallic commodities during the Era of the Canton Trade.

**Notes**


HUANG Chao is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Sino-Foreign Relation History, Jinan University.

huangchao@jnu.edu.cn
I remember, as a teenager, reluctantly accompanying my mother to the weekly market in our neighbourhood in East Delhi every Thursday. In the evening, the usual shopping street would be taken over by street vendors selling clothes, artificial jewellery, utensils and miscellaneous household items and vegetables. The residents would tick items off their weekly shopping list. My mother would insist that we take our jute bags along to make it easier to bring home a weak-worth of vegetables. To be sure, we weren’t the only ones to stock-up for a week, and I would spot one or two, if not more, people dragging trolley bags or suitcases across the market.

Almost every neighbourhood in Delhi has a similar weekly market that acts as a one-stop shopping destination for the residents of nearby colonies. In the course of our fieldwork for the Neighbourhood Museum Project in 2014-15 and subsequent years, we developed the approach of reading the city and its people through neighbourhoods and sites such as weekly markets. While we were unable to make it easier to bring home a week-worth of vegetables. To be sure, we weren’t the only ones to stock-up for a week, and I would spot one or two, if not more, people dragging trolley bags or suitcases across the market.

All cities and towns contain fragments of ecological and historic landscapes that are intimately linked to spaces of human residential and livelihood settlements. When the city or town is explored from the perspective of the people, a more humanistic understanding of the local emerges. The following articles are reflections from two ‘Humanities across Borders (HaB)’-supported projects – ‘Delhi Memory Archive’ and ‘From Forest to Town: Transformation of the Commons’ – both carried out by the Centre for Community Knowledge (CCK) at Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD). Although from two different perspectives, their shared attempt is to explore the various ways in which meanings and identities are associated with the neighbourhoods that make up a city or a town. These have been enriched by exchanges with other HaB projects. We warmly invite other scholars and practitioners to share with us their experience and understanding of ‘neighbourhood’ across all dynamic socio-cultural realities.

Above: Imitation of Stayfree sanitary pads sold at the Saturday Market. Photo by Shorbori Purkayastha.

Left: Vendor measuring spices in paper bags made of old newspaper. Photo by Shorbori Purkayastha.

Sensing the layers: notes from a weekly market

Meha Murail

Retelling the neighbourhood

Almost every neighbourhood in Delhi has a similar weekly market that acts as a one-stop shopping destination for the residents of nearby colonies. In the course of our fieldwork for the Neighbourhood Museum Project in 2014-15 and subsequent years, we developed the approach of reading the city and its people through neighbourhoods and sites such as weekly markets. While the site of my childhood memory is from a different neighbourhood, the Shadipur Shani Bazaar (Shadipur Saturday Market) is used in this article as a similar example, to explore how local voices and perceptions, however small and commonplace, are important in understanding the complexities and multi-layered realities of a place.

More than the products sold there

The Shadipur Shani Bazaar is a large weekly informal market in XYZ block of Shadi-Khampur neighbourhood in West Delhi, India. This weekly market is best known for its unstitched and stitched fabrics. Among its many customers are high-end boutique owners from West Delhi, who buy fabric and embellishments to accessorise their products. While some residents say that the market started around 1995-97, others remember its beginnings as a small cloth market in the late 1970s, to be discontinued and set-up again in the 90s. Today, this weekly market, like others, also has vendors selling food, spices, toys and knick-knacks. But it is much more than the products sold there. It is also a site where various interconnections between the city, neighbourhoods and its people are visible at the micro-level. These interconnections could be that of economic co-dependence between vendors and residents or of the power dynamics between genders in the market space.

An interesting way of observing these interconnections and relationships between people and place is through narratives and local walkabouts. In our walkabout, we noticed an exchange of money and a payment-slip between vendors and a group of men. During an interview with the market pradhan [organiser], we were told that each vendor selling at the weekly market is required to make a token payment, ranging from Rs 10-50 depending on the size of the stall. The pradhan uses a portion of the money collected to pay off the police while the rest goes to the local Madrasa [Islamic educational institution].

In conversation, a local vendor stated that the market’s space management and for handling disputes at the market, provides access to the colony parks and streets where the vendors man their shops between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Since the streets are narrow, he also ensures that residents move their cars out every Saturday morning to make space for the stalls. Visual observations such as these put together with narratives from people’s memory and their experience of a place helped us understand the broader framework of how spaces within a city are managed and organised. Similarly, other sensorial observations or experiences, such as sounds, smells, touch and taste, also become interesting tools in exploring the concepts of space, community, gender, identity and class aspirations, among others. These sensorial experiences are, however, not always independent of each other. It is when layered together that they reveal a holistic picture of the place and its people. To gain a meaningful and locally embedded understanding of a neighbourhood, it is important to go beyond the simplistic or literal meaning of the senses. For example, when we feel a texture or touch a person, the full experience of ‘touch’ is more than just a physical feeling.

Visuals of class aspirations

After a close look at a stall selling cosmetic products, one might very well spot a copy of some well-known brand. With brand imitation of everyday products such as sanitary napkins or make-up products, sold at low prices, this market primarily, but not exclusively, caters to customers from the middleclass who aspire to lead a certain lifestyle, as a marker of upward class mobility. In conversation, a local vendor stated that the daily soaps on TV also influence the demand for certain cosmetics. Female customers often ask for products sported by their favourite television actors. This makes the low-cost
weekly street markets a significant destination for imitation products. These products create distribution channels and earn the town econ- 

omic presence in society and also create local job opportunities.

Smells like home?

Filling the streets of the neighbourhood with mouth-watering aromas are food stalls selling meat, fish and vegetable chaat (savory snacks of fruits and vegetables) that vendors and customers alike visit these stalls to relate. Local businesses and vendors prefer to save money and bring along their own food and water, some opt for the tiffin (boxed) service (lunch box with chowmi dish) or rajaow chhaw (kidney bean and rice dish) prepared at local stalls. The latter are generally migrants in search of work in the big city, without access to home-cooked meals. While studying a marketplace, such experiences and interactions provide an informal market and from where they come.

When asked whether there had been any visible changes in the town’s landscape, a significant share of the town’s populace, a resident of Shadipura told us, “You now get sambar (a type of South Indian rice flour) packets and other South Indian vegetables... we get a packet of mixed cut vegetables for sambar at Rs 30...”. As the neighbourhood is now a confluence of people from South India, especially Kerala, the market introduces new products and stagers them to the linking of Jabalpur-Itarsi section (March 1870) on the Bombay-Calcutta railway line in the Narmada valley. Long- 

distance commuters made the town emerge from the multiplicity of the town’s population. A fair share of small-scale vendors and from where they come.

The growing urbanisation in India has witnessed an exponential increase in census towns over the past few decades. Amidst the country’s rapidly changing forest and farm landscapes, the rising townships are important sites of understanding everyday social mobilities at a local and microscopic level. The understanding of place-specific narratives in such settlements presents us with the opportunity to assemble a public- 
centric, multi-dimensional account of mobilities that draws upon the archives of orality and memory. A pool of local narratives can sometimes “lose lesser-known stories of a place and have the possibility of disturbing meta-narratives with their access to alternative strands of knowledge.”

Beginning in 2017, the research project “From Forest to Town: Narratives of Transformation of the Commons’ aimed to look at the lived experiences of the local residents in one such town through the first-hand oral narratives. The narratives were placed within an arena of tension and struggles of several local communities and the interconnection of their socio-cultural heritage. They are as much marked by a sense of resilience as by conflict. As private and public memories come together, a non-linear narrative can undo the popular discourses associated with such unofficially) was a resettlement 

Adapting to market demand

The community narratives of another notified township Pipariya Kahaar samaj, provide further insights in the matter. The samaj traces their early caste- 

bound occupation as water porters, herders, farmers and riverbed farmers. As the professions became obsolete, they resorted to becoming domestic assistance and helpers as well as undertaking odd labour such as cattle herding. As vegetable sellers, caretakers and domestic helpers, they continue to interact with the public and personal spaces of the town and thus become a part of the informal network of the local. The nature of their mobility, marked itself as a somewhat familiar sight in the streets of the town. As the market and the Barauaas have built cement houses and set up small scale house-run-shops of their own. Unlike the Bada Ghat, this town has become a community heavily dependent on their artisanal skills for a livelihood. The Basods’ retail and food services are now grounded in a larger perspective. The Basods’ retail and food services are now grounded in a larger perspective. The Basods’ retail and food services are now grounded in a larger perspective.

Social mobility denied

The narratives supplement the fact that disadvantaged communities such as Basods and Barauaas are continually denied a move upwards on the social pyramid. The transformation from the inside. Yet, it is rather telling that outside their habitations, most of the mobility of both community and individual is not noticed. The demand for bamboo products was never noticed. At this juncture, community 

Kumar Unnayan

Kumar Unnayan, Senior Research Assistant at the Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi

For Further Reading

1 Officially known as Maulana Abul Kalam Axum, an activist and student leader, who was arrested during the Emergency in 1975-77 and was forced to flee to the United Arab Emirates


The community narratives of another notified township Pipariya Kahaar samaj, provide further insights in the matter. The samaj traces their early caste- bound occupation as water porters, herders, farmers and riverbed farmers. As the professions became obsolete, they resorted to becoming domestic assistance and helpers as well as undertaking odd labour such as cattle herding. As vegetable sellers, caretakers and domestic helpers, they continue to interact with the public and personal spaces of the town and thus become a part of the informal network of the local. The nature of their mobility, marked itself as a somewhat familiar sight in the streets of the town. As the market and the Barauaas have built cement houses and set up small scale house-run-shops of their own. Unlike the Bada Ghat, this town has become a community heavily dependent on their artisanal skills for a livelihood. The Basods’ retail and food services are now grounded in a larger perspective. The Basods’ retail and food services are now grounded in a larger perspective. The Basods’ retail and food services are now grounded in a larger perspective.

Social mobility denied

The narratives supplement the fact that disadvantaged communities such as Basods and Barauaas are continually denied a move upwards on the social pyramid. The transformation from the inside. Yet, it is rather telling that outside their habitations, most of the mobility of both community and individual is not noticed. The demand for bamboo products was never noticed. At this juncture, community 

Kumar Unnayan, Senior Research Assistant at the Centre for Community Knowledge, Ambedkar University Delhi

For Further Reading

1 Officially known as Maulana Abul Kalam Axum, an activist and student leader, who was arrested during the Emergency in 1975-77 and was forced to flee to the United Arab Emirates

When the meaning is not shut down. Language and word in the Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali

**Rocco Cestola**

The goal then is not only the comparison of one idea with another but the unravelling of new philosophical paradigms, a critical and analytical evaluation of conceptual paradigms in South Asian linguistic and philosophical theories. I am committed to highlighting points of contact but also differences so that the dialogue can be an enriching experience.
Textiles in Motion & Transit

Conference postponed Call for proposals closed

There will be no new call for proposals. All individual presentation proposals that have been accepted for presentation will remain in the programme.

This three-day international conference will explore the lives of textiles – their displacements and transformations – within the Asia-Pacific region as well as between the region and the rest of the world.

Venue: Leiden, the Netherlands
Date: This conference has been postponed due the Covid-19 pandemic. New dates will be announced in September/October 2020.
Organisers: International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands. Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands.
Registration: Registration and registration fee payment will reopen once the new conference dates have been announced.

Above: Detail of an embroidered panel with lines of multi-coloured inter-connecting diamonds of various sizes. Hazara, Afghanistan. Courtesy of the Textile Research Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands.

Announcements

ICAS 12 - Crafting a Global Future

Call for proposals

The 12th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12) will be held in Kyoto, the cultural heart of Japan, from 26-27 August 2021. Kyoto Seika University (SEIKA) will be the main host of ICAS 12. Participants at ICAS 12 in Kyoto and enjoy a multitude of networking opportunities, possibilities to share your research, meet with publishers, and participate in cultural activities.

ICAS 12 Full call for proposals and submissions portal at: https://www.iias.asia/events/call-for-proposals
Deadline: 1 October 2020

The new IIAS webinars

‘Greetings from Jakarta’, ‘Greetings from Kansas’, ‘Greetings from Finland’. These were just some of the messages that popped up in the chat box during our first webinar by IIAS fellow Joppan George.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns of the IIAS office forced us to quickly rethink the format of our existing lunch lectures, in which our fellows and other scholars ‘used to’ present their work at our institute in Leiden. The idea to continue our lectures, to stay connected to our network and our fellows, soon evolved into the launching of our new online lecture series. And we are thrilled that the webinars have thus far been received with great enthusiasm by our speakers and participants.

The first lecture by Joppan was soon followed by talks from our IIAS fellows Pravet Chopra, Rocco Cestola and Gul-i-Hina Shahzad; these webinars alternated with those from the IASI/UNICA Asian Cities Presentation Series, by Marian Sabiri and Creighton Connolly. Browse our Youtube channel, and make sure to subscribe so you don’t miss any future episodes: https://tinyurl.com/IASiAYoutube

The IAS lunch lectures at our Leiden office were available to only a local audience, but now everyone with an internet connection has the opportunity to join in. All webinars are announced in our online events calendar at https://www.iias.nl/events. Joining is easy; just register and we will send you the login details. You are just an easy click away to learn, meet and exchange.

Call for applications

Cultural Precarities: Reading Independent Art Collectives and Cultural Networks in Asia Joint IIAS/LASALLE In Situ Graduate School (ISGS)

Venue: KUNCI, Study Forum and Collective, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Dates: 8-13 March 2021
Organisation: This in-situ Graduate School is jointly organised by the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden, the Netherlands and LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, and hosted by the UNCI Study Forum and Collective in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
Conveners: Venka Purushothaman (LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore), Dev Nath Pathak (South Asian University, India), Chen Yun (Curator and Researcher, China), Suryaatmudini (KUNCI, Indonesia).
The conveners will organise a series of studies in practice, using the environment of the city of Yogyakarta and its rural surroundings where many Indonesian networks and collectives are located. Participants will be exposed to a range of artists, local art spaces and sites of cultural engagement to test their methods and practices, enabling them to undertake a critique of their personal research projects in this field. The conveners and participants will function as co-learners to develop new paradigms to appreciate the developing field.

Call for applications: https://www.iias.asia/events/call-for-proposals
Deadline: 1 July 2020
For additional details about applications, registration fee and financial support consult the relevant sections on our website.

The organizers reserve the right to modify the dates and general conditions of the ISGS should its logistics and safety of the participants be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Borderland Futures: Technologies, Zones, Co-existences

Conference postponed Call for proposals closed

There will be no new call for proposals. All individual presentation, panel and round-table proposals that have been accepted for presentation will remain in the programme.

The 7th Asian Borderland Research Network (ABRN) conference focuses on three key themes – technologies, zones, co-existences – that aim to generate broader debate and intellectual engagement with borderland futures. Panels and papers will offer critical reflections on these key themes both theoretically and empirically.

Venue: Reconciliation & Coexistence in Contact Zone (RCZC) Research Center, Chung-Ang University, Seoul, South Korea
Dates: 21-26 June 2021. These are new dates as the conference was postponed due the Covid-19 pandemic.
Organisers: Reconciliation & Coexistence in Contact Zone (RCZC) Research Center, Seoul, South Korea. International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands. Asian Borderlands Research Network (ABRN).
Registration: Registration is required for all conference participants, including individual papers presenters, panel participants and observers. Students and scholars affiliated with the Reconciliation & Coexistence in Contact Zone (RCZC) Research Center are eligible for a waiver of the registration fee.

Conference website https://asianborderlands.net

Call for submissions

The ICAS Book Prize 2021 is open for submissions! Read more about the ICAS Book Prize on pages 4-9 of this issue.

The ICAS Book Prize 2021

Follow the submission guidelines at: https://asianborderlands.net
Deadline: 1 October 2020
Deadline may vary for the language of the submission.

The new ICAS 12 webinars

T he ICAS Book Prize 2021
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

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 ‘local 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.

Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET)
SEANNET is about research, teaching and dissemination of knowledge on Asia through the prism of the neighbourhood. The programme is supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, NY (2017-2020). Through case study sites in six selected cities in Southeast Asia (Monday, Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Manila, Surabaya), SEANNET seeks to engage the humanistic social sciences in a dialogue with urban stakeholders as co-contributors of alternative knowledge about cities. This is done through a combination of participatory field research, in-situ roundtables, workshops, conferences, publications and new forms of pedagogy developed in collaboration with local institutions of learning. SEANNET’s second ambition is to help shape and empower a community of early-career scholars and practitioners working on and from Southeast Asia. SEANNET’s research teams comprise international and local scholars, students from local universities, and civil society representatives, all working together with the neighbourhood residents.

The Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD)
The Forum on Health, Environment and Development (FORHEAD) is an interdisciplinary network that brings together natural, medical and social scientists to explore the implications of environmental and social change for public health in China and beyond.

The Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA)
The Urban Knowledge Network Asia (UKNA) is an inclusive network that brings together concerned scholars and practitioners engaged in collaborative research and events on cities in Asia. It seeks to influence policy by contributing insights that put people at the centre of urban governance and development strategies. The UKNA Secretariat is at IIAS, but the network comprises universities and planning institutions across China, India, Southeast Asia and Europe. Its current flagship project is the Southeast Asia Neighbourhoods Network (SEANNET).

Double Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe
Initiated by IIAS, this programme involves Leiden University in the Netherlands, two Institutes at National Taiwan University in Taiwan and one at Yonsei University in South Korea. Discussions with other possible partners in Asia are ongoing. The programme offers selected students the opportunity to follow a full year study at one of the partner institutes with full credits and a double degree. The curriculum at Leiden University benefits from the contributions of Prof Michael Herzfeld (Harvard) as a guest teacher and the Senior Advisor to the Critical Heritage Studies Initiative of IIAS.
The Network

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, Borderlands Futures: Technologies, Zones, Co-existences, will take place in Seoul, South Korea, 24-26 June 2021.

Follow the stories on the Humanities across Borders Blog

www.iias.asia/hab
Clusters: 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. It’s devoted to study, discuss, and share knowledge on the intricate connections and entanglements between Africa and Asian world regions. Its 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. The network facilitates the development of research and educational infrastructures in Africa 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 African and Asian studies—something that would benefit Asian, African and Western scholars alike.

Follow the stories on the Humanities across Borders Blog

www.iias.asia/hab
Clusters: Global Asia; Asian Heritages

International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS)

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

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

Website: www.icas.asia
ICAS/ICASsecretariat:
Paul van der Velde icas@iias.nl

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.iias.asia/programmes/leiden-centre-indian-ocean-studies
Clusters: Global Asia

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

The new joint research programme between IIAS-EPA 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 geopolitical level in the following countries: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Hungary, the West Balkans and Russia.

Follow the stories on the Humanities across Borders Blog

www.iias.asia/hab
Clusters: Global Asia; Global Asia

Energy Programme Asia (EPA)

The new joint research programme between IIAS-EPA 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 geopolitical level in the following countries: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Hungary, the West Balkans and Russia.

Follow the stories on the Humanities across Borders Blog

www.iias.asia/hab
Clusters: Global Asia; Global Asia
Can art be a form of historical truth?

EXHIBITION
Forgotten Faces: Visual Presentation of Trauma and Mass Killing in Asia

DATE
25 Aug – 12 Dec 2020

LOCATION
Charles B. Wang Center, Stony Brook University, New York

More on the exhibition’s website, including the virtual exhibition launched because of the current pandemic and the center’s temporary closure: https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/wang/exhibitions/index.php

In 2020, the world is experiencing the reality of mass death in a way we have never before. For many people, the Holocaust and other mass killings are either part of a heavy, dark past or are events that took place in distant countries. They are out of sight, out of mind, from our daily lives. But the coronavirus (Covid-19) has changed this. The pandemic has struck nearly every country around the globe, from advanced economies to vulnerable populations. The current omnipresent fear can serve as a reminder of forgotten civilian deaths and sufferings that we never cared for or knew about.

In the twentieth century, even within recent memory, mass killings and genocides have occurred in many Asian countries, especially as colonial empires began to collapse after World War II and as Cold War tensions escalated. These include Taiwan’s 2.28 massacre (1947); South Korea’s Jeju massacre (1948); China’s Great Leap Forward and the resulting famine (1958–1962); the Indonesian mass killings (1965–1966); the Bangladesh genocide (1971); and Cambodia’s killing fields (1975–1979). Cultural representations that convey victims’ experiences of these traumatic events are quite rare, especially in the West. In contrast to the massive visual representations and remembrances of the Holocaust, many of the aforementioned tragedies are disappearing into the fog of time, leaving little to no mark in history or wider global public memory.

Stony Brook University’s Charles B. Wang Center presents Forgotten Faces: Visual Presentation of Trauma and Mass Killing in Asia, an exhibition that will run from 25 August through 12 December 2020. It features artists Kim Hak (Cambodia), Kumi Yamashita (Japan), Federico Borella (Italy), Lim Ok-Sang (South Korea), Neh Suntag (South Korea), Choi Byung-soo (South Korea), Jung Min-gi (South Korea), Lee Yunyop (South Korea), Yi Seung-jun (South Korea) and Gary Byung-seok Kam (South Korea), Tenzing Rigdol (Tibet), Tung Min-Chin (Taiwan), and Joe Sacco (United States). Forgotten Faces traces the cultural phenomenon of mass killings and political trauma in Asia.

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge army began its brutal rule over Cambodia, which would last for almost four years. During this brief period, it would kill a quarter of Cambodia’s population. Although forty-five years have passed, little can escape the all-seeing lens of the photographer, as Cambodian photographer Kim Hak demonstrates with his series Alive. Kim looks for survivors of the genocide scattered around the world and illuminates the pain of those victimized by state violence. His evocative photographs capture victims’ personal belongings, items they risked their very lives to protect against Khmer Rouge’s destructive vision for a utopian Cambodia under communism. These trivial items hold immense historical and emotional weight – death, fear, anxiety, confusion, and a struggle for life and survival: English-language books and family photos that risk exposing an individual’s identity, small Buddha statues that could be hidden in one’s palm, a kettle used to cook a stolen chicken, among others. Each of these pieces memorialize the two million souls murdered in Pol Pot’s march toward ideological purity. (Fig. 1)
War seems almost inevitable in our increasingly fragmented, dehumanized world. Yet Kumi Yamashita rescues traces of humanity in art that challenges this status quo. In her work, she shows how art can shift our focus to overlooked and most vulnerable victims of war: children. She indicates how war tramples over the innocent in the reckless pursuit of glory and power (Fig. 2).

Italian photographer Federico Borella sheds light on this different kind of tragedy, one of environmental and societal disaster in Tamil Nadu, India. A five-degree increase in temperature does not sound like much, but it can have extraordinary effects on climate and, accordingly, agriculture. Farmers in this region face ever worsening conditions and droughts that are devastating their livelihoods and their communities. A combination of low farm yields, falling agricultural prices, limited labor, lack of government support, and difficulties repaying large debts have led to an astonishingly high rate of suicide, a rate that continues to rise. Borella eschews violent or graphic content, instead vividly capturing the despair of widows whose farmer husbands have taken their own lives. This is a slow catastrophe, a mass killing brought on by a globalized society that values profit above all else. Borella reveals the awful negligence caused by rapid industrialization and environmental degradation in his photography (Fig. 3).

It is difficult to address and eliminate these problems. These contemporary conditions are accelerating more indiscriminate genocides of peoples and cultures. Enormous protests eventually resulted in the impeachment and ouster of South Korean president Park Geun-hye, Six Korean artists — Lim Ok-Sang, Noh SunTag, Choi Byungseo, Jung Min-gi, Yi Seung-jun and Gary Byung-sek Kam — use their art as an outlet to process this kind of communal trauma, a trauma that can lead to larger political action and social justice. Lim Ok-Sang’s mural-like painting, Tide of Candles II (2017), depicts the nonviolent candlelight vigils that were held every week in Seoul over a six-month period. The painting, consisting of fifty-five canvases, contains the pain of millions of rally participants. (Fig. 4) Choi Byungseo seamlessly blends absurdity with the Sewol ferry tragedy in his Made in Korea Blade (2017). (Fig. 5) His sculpture of a child teetering on the edge of an enlarged razor blade bitterly criticizes the South Korean government for its focus on commerce and trade at the expense of its underfunded welfare system. The cheerful posture and gestures of the girl belie the piece’s darker meaning. Jung Min-gi portrays deep scars, terrible sorrows, betrayal, anger, and despair by casting powerful images on canvas with extraordinary technical virtuosity using ink, paint, and free-motion quilting. His four-meter-long A Country Where Mothers Mourn (2020) depicts the faces of the forgotten victims. (Fig. 6)

The Oscar-nominated documentary In the Absence (2018) is also part of the exhibit. Directed by Y Seungjun and produced by Gary Byung-sek Kam, it asks devastating questions about the absence of any rescue operations or first responders in the Sewol ferry incident, set against images of the ferry disappearing beneath the waves. However, the Sewol ferry incident cannot be regarded solely as a Korean event. It should be considered part of a global phenomenon of vulnerable peoples falling victim to larger forces in modern society. As capital, goods, trade, and information zip back and forth across borders and oceans, governments around the world are hollowing out their social safety nets and social services, increasing the fragility of all our lives as our communities wither. This individualized instability makes it much harder to collectively tackle these problems and meet the basic needs of citizens, invest in our societies, and provide for current and future generations. This increases the chances of mass killings, whether through capitalistic negligence or through the slow rotting of rights and necessary services.

Taiwanese artist Tung Min-Chin’s sculptures defy the impossibility of representation of real massacres and posttraumatically expression of trauma. Tung, in his art, creates a complementary and contradictory sense of witnessing. On the one hand, his work bears witness to the physical reality of a historical event; on the other hand, it shows the inner psychological reality of the event’s aftermath. In his The Birth of a New Hero II (2008), Tung expresses his mastery of woodcarving, revealing a figure trapped inside the wood. The smoothly polished pieces distill fear, becoming a visual metaphor of the broader problem of representing mass killings, as well as the deforming effects of pain on representation. (Fig. 7)

These works are not limited to any country or people. They are facets of a larger story, one we are all part of. The visual records of the wounded and the dead cannot be contained in just words, and perhaps not even in images. Through this exhibition, I hope that many forgotten massacres, those that have taken place in the past and those that are ongoing, will be remembered, and we take the opportunity to aspire to a better, more just world. There is no exception to human rights. Jinyoung A. Jin, Director of Cultural Programs at the Charles B. Wang Center and curator of this exhibit jinyoung.jin@stonybrook.edu
The Adspace

A Journal on Contemporary China Studies
Editor: Tak-Wing Ngo
University of Macau

Publishing timely and in-depth analyses of major developments in contemporary China and overseas Chinese communities

Special issue on rural urbanization (vol. 34, no. 2)
Guest edited by Elena Meyer-Clement and Jesper Willaing Zeuthen

- Introduction
  China’s rural urbanization and the state: Putting the countryside first
  Elena Meyer-Clement and Jesper Willaing Zeuthen

- Articles
  Local alliances in rural urbanization: Land transfer in contemporary China
  Ray Yap
  Rural urbanization under Xi Jinping: From rapid community building to steady urbanization?
  Elena Meyer-Clement
  Rescaling China’s rural–urban frontier: Exception as norm in the access to development
  Jesper Willaing Zeuthen
  Leveraging land values for rural development in China after the Sichuan earthquake
  Jessica Wilczak
  The pursuit of new citizenship by peri-urban residents in China: Status, rights, and individual choice
  Dong Wang and Flemming Christiansen
  From authoritarian development to totalitarian urban reordering: The Daxing forced evictions case
  Eva Pils

Years of Progressive Publishing
Editor-in-Chief: Kevin Hewison
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and University of Macau

RECENT SPECIAL ISSUES
The Politics of Caste in India’s New Land Wars, 50(5), 2020
Legacies of the Cold War in East and Southeast Asia, 50(4), 2020
Marxist Perspectives on East Asia in the Global Economy, 50(2), 2020
Two Decades of Reformasi in Indonesia: An Illiberal Turn?, 49(5), 2019
Precarious Work, Precarious Lives: The Nature and Experience of Precarity in Asia, 49(4), 2019
Checkpoint Politics in Cross-border Exchanges, 49(2), 2019
Party-State Governance and Rule in Laos, 48(5), 2018
Crisis, Populism and Right-wing Politics in Asia, 48(4), 2018
Who Governs and How? Non-State Actors and Transnational Governance in Southeast Asia, 48(3), 2018
Malaysia and China in a Changing Region: Essays in Honour of Professor Lee Poh Ping, 47(5), 2017
Interpreting Communal Violence in Myanmar, 47(3), 2017
Military, Monarchy and Repression: Assessing Thailand’s Authoritarian Turn, 46(3), 2016

From the National University of Singapore Press
LIFE UNDER THE PALMS
The Sublime World of the Anti-colonialist Jacob Haafner
Paul van der Velde
Translated by Liesbeth Bennink

“This book introduces you not to a sterile statue, but to a sensational soul.”
-Mario Molengraaf

“A vibrant and deliberately concise biography...van der Velde paints a unique image of the late 18th century colonial world, through the medium of Haafner’s stories.”
Ruben Mostaert, De Leeswolf

ISBN: 9789813250826 • Paperback • US$22 • 176pp / 229 x 152mm
• Translated from the Dutch • 24 b/w images

From the National University of Singapore Press
JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY ASIA
Years of Progressive Publishing
Editor-in-Chief: Kevin Hewison
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and University of Macau

Recent special issues
The Politics of Caste in India’s New Land Wars, 50(5), 2020
Legacies of the Cold War in East and Southeast Asia, 50(4), 2020
Marxist Perspectives on East Asia in the Global Economy, 50(2), 2020
Two Decades of Reformasi in Indonesia: An Illiberal Turn?, 49(5), 2019
Precarious Work, Precarious Lives: The Nature and Experience of Precarity in Asia, 49(4), 2019
Checkpoint Politics in Cross-border Exchanges, 49(2), 2019
Party-State Governance and Rule in Laos, 48(5), 2018
Crisis, Populism and Right-wing Politics in Asia, 48(4), 2018
Who Governs and How? Non-State Actors and Transnational Governance in Southeast Asia, 48(3), 2018
Malaysia and China in a Changing Region: Essays in Honour of Professor Lee Poh Ping, 47(5), 2017
Interpreting Communal Violence in Myanmar, 47(3), 2017
Military, Monarchy and Repression: Assessing Thailand’s Authoritarian Turn, 46(3), 2016

Connect with IIAS
Publish your article in The Newsletter
Submit your book manuscript
Write a review for newbooks.asia
Apply for our fellowship programme
Take part in our worldwide events
Subscribe to our mailing list

The Newsletter is distributed throughout the world every four months. Simply subscribe on our website to receive your free personal copy in the post, or by email. The digital version of all current and past issues are also freely available to read on our website.

The Sublime World of the Anti-colonialist Jacob Haafner
Paul van der Velde
Translated by Liesbeth Bennink

“This book introduces you not to a sterile statue, but to a sensational soul.”
-Mario Molengraaf

“A vibrant and deliberately concise biography...van der Velde paints a unique image of the late 18th century colonial world, through the medium of Haafner’s stories.”
Ruben Mostaert, De Leeswolf

ISBN: 9789813250826 • Paperback • US$22 • 176pp / 229 x 152mm
• Translated from the Dutch • 24 b/w images

Connect with IIAS
Publish your article in The Newsletter
Submit your book manuscript
Write a review for newbooks.asia
Apply for our fellowship programme
Take part in our worldwide events
Subscribe to our mailing list

The Newsletter is distributed throughout the world every four months. Simply subscribe on our website to receive your free personal copy in the post, or by email. The digital version of all current and past issues are also freely available to read on our website.

The Sublime World of the Anti-colonialist Jacob Haafner
Paul van der Velde
Translated by Liesbeth Bennink

“This book introduces you not to a sterile statue, but to a sensational soul.”
-Mario Molengraaf

“A vibrant and deliberately concise biography...van der Velde paints a unique image of the late 18th century colonial world, through the medium of Haafner’s stories.”
Ruben Mostaert, De Leeswolf

ISBN: 9789813250826 • Paperback • US$22 • 176pp / 229 x 152mm
• Translated from the Dutch • 24 b/w images