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# Internet in China

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# IIAS NEWSLETTER

International Institute for Asian Studies

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## An Indian Writer in Troubled Times

Geetanjali Shree is part of a new generation of Hindi writers that explores new directions by bringing postmodern eclecticism to themes and forms established by Hindi authors of the post-Independence generation. Although Shree has travelled widely and spent many writing hours outside of India, the main part of her work is firmly located in the subcontinent. Her novel *Mai* ('Mother', 1993) gained widespread appraisal, also because of the English translation by Nita Kumar. It is a very vivid and intimate portrait of an Indian middle-class family, composed of memories and emotional insights into the struggles and relationships of a mother with the children, and men and women in her family.

Interview >  
South Asia

By Thomas de Bruijn

Hindi writing has a special niche in Indian culture today, developing as a record of intellectual life in postmodern India. Among the younger generation of Hindi writers, Shree has established herself with a considerable production: a dissertation on Premchand (*Between two Worlds*, 1989), three novels, two volumes of short stories (*Anugunj* 'Echo', 1991, and *Vairagya* 'Asceticism', 1999), stage plays, and essays. In April 2003, Shree was invited by IIAS to contribute to a one-day seminar on 'Identity'. In this article, Shree answers questions on her literary work and her other publications with wit, humour, and sincerity.

Intimacy, directness, a detailed perception of personal emotions, in a changing and uncertain contemporary social context characterize all of Geetanjali Shree's writing. Her novel *Tirohit* (2001) focuses on lives and loves conducted on the roof that becomes a metaphor for an area of transgressions where a story of forbidden friendships and loves unfolds. (In traditional Indian neighbourhoods several houses are under one common roof spanning a vast area.) The novel reaches deep into the characters' inner thoughts and emotions in a manner that is rare in Hindi fiction.

A similar emotional insight, present in the many descriptions of scenes from everyday life in *Mai* and *Tirohit*, transpires in a paper Shree presented in October 2003 at the 'Food and Emotion' workshop held at SOAS, London. She describes various perceptions of the presence and absence

of food in her own environment and the emotional experiences it invoked:

'A train journey. I was going to the toilet when I saw a young dishevelled bearded young beggar sloppily eating with his hand from a *dibba*, the kind people use in the slums to carry water to the community toilets. A foul stench ran through my nostrils into my whole body (no exaggeration to create an effect here) and as my eyes followed the source of the stench I noticed a nauseating assortment of food in the *dibba*. The beggar took no notice of me, and kept eating with a detached concentration that I've wanted to have but never achieved in my life as a writer/thinker.'

In many of Shree's works, the narratives lines are more or less fragmented. In the novel *Hamara Shahar us Baras* ('Our City That Year', 1998), this technique serves to capture the effects of political violence and polarization between communities in a university town on a group of middle-class intellectuals. The novel echoes the threatening atmosphere after the demolition of a mosque in Ayodhya and reports the disruption of life and thoughts by the riots. When asked if this 'collage' style conveys the impression the events make on the 'narrator', rather than a moral judgement, Shree remarks:

GS: 'Yes, its not moral judgement the novel seeks but a more dispassionate picture of the ways the situation is impacting – no, not the narrator – but the educated middle class characters. The 'narrator' is pretty much deadpan and

continued on page 4 >

**Editorial** Recently, the United Kingdom's 'public flagellation' of one of the most highly respected traditional media organizations has proven wrong the theory that the media are powerful beyond control, or even powerful enough for their task. Curbing the media is not a specific trait of undemocratic states. Worse, a democratic government can deny the media's watchdog role and no public outcry will result. Power should impart responsibility, but it is mostly up to NGOs and the media to expose government or corporate corruption and power abuse. Leaving the watchdogs high and dry, academia primarily keeps to non-committal criticism on the media.

If both academia and politics criticize traditional media for their lack of knowledge and depth, the internet promised absolute anarchic horror for the cultural and political elite. In China, the internet enjoys vast popularity and is surrounded by varying political and economic fears and expectations, warranting a theme on the internet as a political forum in China, guest edited by Randolph Kluer. Subsequently, articles on endangered sites and the internet in Mongolia are featured in this issue.

The Chinese government has hardly been a staunch proponent of free public expression in the media. Its original preoccupation with people's minds now gradually yields to its growing interest in their pockets and purses. China is not unique in its policies nor are the results. Western democracies and corporations increasingly use the internet to gauge and influence opinion, mass consumption, and taste.

No one will claim that China's initial resistance and current close watch on the internet signal a struggle against modernity. Information and computing technology originates in the West, but its further development may well take place in the East. Things have changed. In the nineteenth-century resistance to new, Western technologies was interpreted as traditional, non-Western backwardness. Never mind that this confrontation was hardly unique for Asia. At the time in England, the railways and somewhat later the London underground met with adamant opposition. Its arguments could easily be discarded as traditionalist, backward, emotional, or if you would, Eastern. In Europe many a grandmother waved aside the refrigerator as a passing whim. Video recorders were as ludicrous in the late seventies, as was the idea of an office computer for every employee in the nineties... or mobiles, email, the internet.

Due to the present Asian dominance in physical sciences, the future development of internet technology is likely to occur there. The internet will partly determine what China will be in the near future and the other way around. As a medium, it will not become what early enthusiasts had hoped for, but the internet's role for public opinion and for keeping government in check make it a topic that demands academic attention. To conclude on a more personal note, I have much enjoyed producing the previous ten issues and, now leaving the job, I look forward to reading the July issue: David Takeo Hymans' first. — MS



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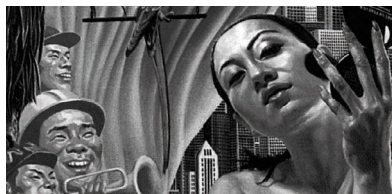
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**Erratum**

The editors apologize for their mistake in 'Whither North Korea', IIAS Newsletter 32, p.4. The last footnote should have referred to the then forthcoming and meanwhile released publication: Cumings, Bruce, *North Korea Another Country*, New York/London: The New Press (2004), pp.240, ISBN 1-56584-873-x.

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# Brains for Hire

## Education and Nation-building in Contemporary Azerbaijan

Forum >  
Central Asia

In an attempt to fill the post-Soviet ideological vacuum and to consolidate power, the leaders of newly independent Azerbaijan turned to 'Azerbaijanism', pan-Turkic ideology, the idea of Western style civil society, and the Azerbaijani past. The war with Armenia, the socio-economic crisis, and indoctrination through the public education system all heavily influenced the new nation's shaping identity.

By Irina Morozova

In 1993, G. Aliyev, a former member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, became the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan. After consolidating the branches of power, Aliyev installed his clan to administer the country. Just before his death in 2003, his son Ilham Aliyev was elected president. Azerbaijani leaders and policy makers sought a uniting national idea that would strengthen the position of the Aliyev clan throughout the country. They commissioned the nation's intellectuals and educators to develop themes addressing 'the united Azerbaijani nation' and 'the territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani lands'. Those who remained employed in public education after the dramatic budget cuts had little choice but to comply. By the beginning of the 1990s, fundamental research was hardly distinguishable from populist agitation, leaving the Azerbaijani public without tools to distinguish fact from fiction.

### The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Azerbaijani nationalism, which never seemed radical during the time of the USSR, broke out with renewed force after independence. The lost war against Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh (1988-1994) provoked ethnic hatred and a desire for revenge. Defeat in Nagorno-Karabakh sharpened the defensive feelings of the small Azerbaijani nation, suppressed and divided in former times by its great neighbours Russia and Iran.

Suffering from low morale, the Azerbaijani people demanded new, comforting, and encouraging national concepts. Not only historians considered it their duty to write on the glories of the Azerbaijani nation. Intellectuals, publicists, scientists, and journalists from all sorts of backgrounds came together to furnish proof that Nagorno-Karabakh had belonged to the Azerbaijani people from time immemorial. The idea of 'the great Azerbaijan state' possessing territory in contemporary

Iran, Armenia, and Georgia gained great currency.

The most popular theme within numerous branches of academia became the national liberation movement in Azerbaijan at the beginning of the twentieth century. Researchers went back in time to rediscover the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict at the beginning of the twentieth century, re-interpreting the recorded thoughts and actions of Azerbaijani leaders to draw parallels to the present. The entire history of Azerbaijan came to be viewed as a long struggle for independence and recognition.

For the last thirteen years, history classes in the schools and universities of Azerbaijan have been taught from this avowedly nationalistic perspective. Consequently, the younger generation has grown up determined to regain the occupied lands of Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>1</sup> So long as the key positions at the leading universities are occupied or controlled by Aliyev's clan, and intellectuals and educators are pressured to participate in the nation-building project, trustworthy research in the social and human sciences has little chance to appear.<sup>2</sup>

### Between pan-Turkism and westernization

In the early 1990s Azerbaijani nationalism came under the influence of pan-Turkic ideology. Appealing to the Turkic origins of the Azerbaijani people, private Turkish charitable organizations set up a network of educational centres promoting Turkey's interests in Central Eurasia. They successfully recruited Azerbaijani youth to schools based on the Turkish academic system, winning converts to pan-Turkic ideology. These attempts faced few obstacles from the government, which considers Turkey a close and reliable ally. Attempts to consolidate Azerbaijan's Turkic identity did not, however, receive the unanimous support of the country's political and intellectual elite; many preferred a more distinct national identity for Azerbaijan. By the end of the 1990s, pan-Turkism had lost much of its popularity, although Turkish-sponsored

schools and universities were allowed to continue their activities.

Alongside the pro-Turkish institutes, there exist a number of pro-Western private universities that claim to be bringing Western education to Azerbaijan. The orientation of these universities corresponds to the official state ideology pertaining to democracy, civil society, and human rights. At the beginning of the 1990s, many Azerbaijanis assumed that abandoning Soviet communist ideology and its accompanying system of education would immediately lead them to the same level of democratic development as in the West. This, however, did not happen. Innovations introduced in the Western-orientated institutes remained superficial: despite the new administration, examination system, and Western-style diplomas and degrees, no essential changes were made to the content of education. Lec-

turers at these institutes were often state university professors who, due to budget cuts in public education, agreed to part-time positions in the private sector. By the end of the 1990s Azerbaijani policy makers were making greater efforts to preserve the positive aspects of the Soviet educational system such as free access to education and resulting high literacy rates, and the high level of secondary education.<sup>3</sup>

### A new brand on the market

Periodically, presidential teams come out with new ideas. The concept of 'Azerbaijanism' was invented by G. Aliyev, and was partly based on an Azerbaijani interpretation of Americanism.<sup>4</sup> According to its main idea, there is no special Azeri identity in Azerbaijan that should be developed into the national paradigm. The Azeri, accounting for 70-80 per cent of the population, should observe the constitution and laws on equal terms with the other nationalities of contemporary Azerbaijan.<sup>5</sup> However positive the desire to maintain the legal structure and prevent the country from falling apart

along ethnic lines may seem, the main goal of this 'Azerbaijanism' is to strengthen presidential power across the territory of the Republic.

Pro-Turkish, pro-Western and pro-Soviet/Russian ideological streams in the education system have been tolerated by the former and current presidents of Azerbaijan – so long as they serve Aliyev's cult. Public and private schools do not succeed without the President's portrait in the director's cabinet. ◀

*Dr Irina Y. Morozova received her PhD in history from the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Lomonosov Moscow State University. At present she is a research fellow at IIAS. Her research interests include the modern history of Central and Inner Asia and post-Soviet societies in transition.*  
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### Notes >

- 1 During my field research in Baku in May 2003, I interviewed 100 Azerbaijani students, postgraduate students, and postdocs, aged 18 to 30. No less than 95 of them stated that they considered a military campaign to be the most probable solution to the Karabakh problem.
- 2 Practically every one of the 21 Azerbaijani doctors and professors I interviewed in Baku was unimpressed by contemporary Azerbaijani theoreticians in the social and human sciences.
- 3 Interview with Prof. Ramiz T. Humbatov of the Azerbaijan State Oil Academy, Baku, May 2003.
- 4 The central idea of Americanism can be described as the fulfilment of civil and military duties to the state and the president, respect for the US flag and anthem, and loyalty to American values such as freedom of speech, civil society, and free enterprise.
- 5 Interview with Prof. Parvin Gulam Darabadi, Department of International Relations of Baku State University, Baku, May 2003.

शायद छिप-छिप के अभी भी लोग मिलते हैं? शायद हों अभी भी ऐसी औरतें जो बच्चों को स्कूल-कॉलेज भेजकर, पति को काम पर रवाना करके निकल आती हैं अपने घर से छत पर और उतर जाती हैं किसी और के घर के सुनसान दरवाजे से पीछे को निकल रिकशा लेने? नाहक। छुप के। लेबरनम हाउस के बड़े फाटक से नहीं पीछे झाड़ियों को दबाकर, लाँघकर।

लाँघना एक ऐसी क्रिया जिसमें खुशी की छलछलाहट है। लाँघो तो तन अलग, दिल अलग फड़कता है। लाँघी जाती है दीवार, झाड़ी, छत, दहलीज़, सीमा, चन्द्रमा। लाँघते ही छूटती है खिलखिल हँसी बुरके के अन्दर से, जो दबाए न दबे डरे जाए पर चिटके।

वह हँसी बिटवा तुम कभी नहीं हँसोगे। वह हँसी हँसने के लिए बिटवा तुम्हें ल, डकी होना पड़ेगा। लड़की जो हमेशा नंगी होती है। इतनी नंगी कि उसे डेरों कप, डे चढ़ाने पड़ते हैं, परत-पे-परत, परतों-पे-परतें, और वे सारी बुरके से ढुक्नी प, डती हैं। वह नंगी लड़की जब हँसती है तब निकलती है वैसी प्यारी हँसी।

< Translation

Who knows today too, people meet in secret? Maybe there are still women, who pack off the kids to school and husband to office, and climb up from their house to the roof and down from there into another house and to its deserted back door and out, to get a rickshaw? Just so. In secret. Not from the front gate but at the back, pressing down the boundary wire and jumping over.

Jump over! An act full of thrill. Jump over and the body pulsates apart, and the heart apart. You can jump over walls, the bush, roof, thresholds, borders, the moon! The moment you jump, hee hee, tinkles of laughter escape from behind the veil, not to be repressed, terrified but spouting away.

That laughter Bitwa you will never laugh. To laugh that laugh Bitwa you will have to be a girl. A girl who is always naked. So so so naked that to cover her you have to dress her with layers and layers and more layers, and cover then all those layers with the veil. It's when that naked girl laughs that this lovely laughter bursts out!

From: Geetanjali Shree, *Tirohit*. New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan (2001), p.90-91. (Translation by Geetanjali Shree)

Tirohit

ized audience that regards Jhumpa Lahiri and Rushdie to be just as Indian as Premchand, Nirmal Varma, or Krishna Baldev Vaid. Nevertheless, even in its postmodern guise Hindi writing seems to hold on to the specific esthetical framework that it has developed.

ThdB: How do you see your work against this background; do you feel still bound or influenced by this tradition or did you venture out into new directions, leaving the literary past behind?

GS: 'I can only give a subjective answer: I do not feel constrained because of the connection with the so-called tradition of writing modern Indian fiction. First and foremost because I am a "true" writer/artist and freedom is what I live by! Or at least I have the illusion that I strive and reach for it. Secondly, modern Hindi literature really came up in a big way concomitant to the national movement and that gave it an origin of assertion and protest. It made it a great site for reaching out for freedom! Breaking against traditions! Creating new ones. Nothing was so sacrosanct that it must not be questioned. On the contrary. Sure, there was all that drive for writing to reform society but that's not the rigid unchangeable guideline for all writers. I would even venture to say that some of our greatest contemporaries don't fall into any such simple slot.'

ThdB: Not only did you choose Hindi instead of English, haven't you also taken a different stylistic path than the 'mainstream' Anglo-Indian authors have chosen?

GS: 'I don't see such a difference between my styles of writing and themes from Anglo-Indian writers. Our themes may be located in modern India or NRI [Non-Resident Indians] West, we are basically a generation of "modern and postmodern", eclectic, sensibility and that's our vantage point, whatever our geographical location or script. This is a generation questioning the whole notion of "purism", given its sinister political message in current India and the world, and celebrates and lives hybridity. I fear using the word.' (See box below ThdB.)

'Within this larger reality alone operate the differences there might be between different language writers. Personally, I do think a point should be made about the "sameness" of English and Hindi and other writing from India because the difference lies in the politics and power available to English over and above other languages, not in the worth and themes and styles and experimentations in either.'

ThdB: Does language, Hindi or English, matter in terms of the distance between you and your writing?

GS: 'For me and for many others it is a retrieval and reinvention in both because our colonial experience has given skewed connections to both languages. So I really feel this distance from both English and Hindi. Yet I do suspect the exploration is more fascinating in Hindi because of the "easier" terms available to succeed in English (a point that is not to be over-stressed). I am not suggesting I will succeed more easily in English but I can succeed with much less, given, for instance, world and language politics, and hype regarding images of the East. The challenge is that much less therefore. This is a point I consider very important.'

ThdB: The many changes in Indian society that transpire in your work have the effect of seriously limiting the openness and hybridity of the cultural discourse. What do you think is the future of the artist-cum-intellectual in India?

GS: 'I'll only repeat what I said about the breed of hybrid eclectic writers I belong to. That's massively related to the changes in my immediate and larger world society. I do not

continued from page 1 >

cannot differentiate on relevant, volatile, as opposed to bland, unimportant bits and 'narrates' both in the same voice creating the collage which is the novel, which the readers may pull out significant meanings from.'

'Our City, That Year' displays Shree's concerns about the impact of recent political developments in India on artistic freedom and intellectual life in general. The rise of Hindu nationalism threatens the secularist tolerance that gave post-Independence Indian cultural and intellectual life the opportunity to flourish. In an essay called 'Writing in Troubled Times: reflections of an Indian writer' Shree writes about these developments:

'The emergence of an ethos which is gradually gaining power enough to direct and control events like never before. Recent developments in India bear this out. Gujarat, the text book controversy, the Simla Institute episode, the painting of Saraswati by Hussain, the stalling of Bhupen Khakkar's exhibition for its explicit homosexuality, and just a few days ago an injunction that Indian girls may not wear the low-cut, waist revealing, hipster jeans in fashion today. An ethos more threatening because it is fast installing itself at the centre. Among the biggest casualty in this growing rigidity and narrowness are social relations. State-sponsored wedges are driven between religious communities, as, for instance between the Hindus and the Muslims and now the Christians too.'

In these 'troubled times' new Hindi writers have a special position in Indian culture. On the one hand they connect with a prestigious tradition in Indian writing. The rise of Hindi was an important medium in the struggle for freedom from colonial rule. Also, in the period after Independence, it reflected developments in modern Indian culture. Hindi writers of today write for a small but well-educated and global-

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Europe from Eurospan and in Australia from UNIREPS.



## About the hybrid By Geetanjali Shree

It's a concept which means a lot to my kind and indeed it is the space we work in, the space in fact which is most vibrant and full of experimentation, retrievals, and innovation. I fear using the term only when I think of the academic definitions of it. Because then I worry that it is linked to a Western-derived notion of identity as a bounded entity as opposed to a more free-flowing, multi-cultural, pluralistic entity that our society still knows and which I am talking about. I am not trying to blame the West; I am only saying that concomitant to the emergence of modern nation formations, a certain notion of the self emerged which, whether as 'pure' or 'hybrid', whatever it chose over the other, relied on the notion of a 'closed' identity. Perhaps it has also to do with the Enlightenment and its stress on the rational and the scientific. The 'Eastern' in me believes as much in the irrational, intuitive, ritualistic, 'constructed', richly make-believe world with all its open-endedness as does the artist/writer in me which does not fancy one bit a well-defined, neatly out-lined being! So niggle about definitions we can but hybridity and eclecticism both belong to and make very much my world. With the political imperative in today's 'fundamentalist' world, East and West, adding to their worth. <



know what to say about my future or any artist-intellectuals' future in this world. It's a mixed bag: there are enough instances of dwindling support for them in fields such as social sciences and literature, but there are also the new spaces created by the drive for respect and equality of different 'cultures' making for coverage in the media, the awards, the study of other languages and literatures.'

ThdB: Although it would do you no justice to call you a 'feminist writer', the women in your work are key figures, and you expose much of the inner life of Indian women through them. How do you construct the women in your work?

GS: 'Because I am a woman I have an inbuilt empathy for women. Naturally they creep into my work. But the challenge for me lies also in "imagining" other creatures sympathetically and I'll always try to do that. Provided that it doesn't change as I work along, my next novel is plot-centred around two men.' <

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Hamara shahar us baras

यही जगह है। हमारा शहर।

घबराकर जिस शहर में निकल गए थे वे तीन कि अपराध और अपराधी, घायल और मुर्दे, सबको निकाल लाएंगे। साफ-साफ देख लेंगे और जैसा साफ देख लेंगे वैसा ही साफ दिखा देंगे। शरद, श्रुति और हनीफ जिन्होंने ठान लिया था कि लिखेंगे। कि इस वक्त चुप नहीं रहा जा सकता। सबकुच खोलकर रख देना है। कि जो हवा चल रही है वह हवा नहीं, बवंडर है; जो हमें कहीं उखाड़ न दे।

बारिश हो रही है। ट्रेन से उतरकर श्रुति प्लेटफॉर्म पर खड़ी है। एक थरथराहट भरी बेचैनी उसके पैरों के नीचे से गुजरकर ट्रेन के साथ-साथ निकल जाती है। लोग गिरते-पड़ते, भीगते बाहर को सवारियाँ ढूँढ़ने दौड़ गये हैं। शहर के गाय और कुत्ते पानी टपकाते प्लेटफॉर्म पर सुस्ताने चले आए हैं। पानी पटरियों की तरफ रुक करके बह रहा है। वीराना है।

उस बरस एक बार सड़कों पर ऐसी ही नदियाँ बहने लगी थीं, पर वह बारिश नहीं थी, टकियों का पानी था, जो मुहल्लों के मुल्लों ने जहर के डर से खोलकर बहा दिया था। शरद दूर से उसे पहचानकर बढ़ा। वह खड़ी रही, अकेली, इंतजार करती। दोनों आमने-सामने आ गए हैं। उनके चेहरे उन्के शब्दों में उलझकर अजीब बंधी जकड़ी चुप्पी पैदा कर रहे हैं। वे सँभले कदमों से बाहर आ गए।

तीनों समझते थे कि सबकुच वहीं बाहर था, जो हमें इतना भयभीत और व्याकुल कर रहा था। उन्हीं का डर था, जो मुझमें भी भर गया था। मैं घबराने लगी। वे लिखने की कोशिश करते और बीच में छोड़ देते। अपने लिखे को खोखिला पाते और कहते, 'सब रटी-रटाई बातें हैं, जिनको लिखने से कुछ नहीं होगा'; क्योंकि वे हर तरफ नकारी जा रही हैं। सरकारी नारों की तरह बेमतलब हो चुकी हैं। तब मुझे लगा था कि कुछ तो करना ही पड़ेगा। कैसे भी हो, लिखना तो पड़ेगा। चाहे समझें या न समझें। और वे न सही, जिनमें से एक पेशेवर लेखिका थी और दो बुद्धजीवी, तो मैं ही सही, जो बस नकलकर्ता हो सकती थी।

उस वक्त में कुछ ऐसा नहीं था कि साफ दो टूक बात कही जाए। तभी मैं लिख सकी, जिसे न दो टूक कहने का तजुर्बा था, न हठ। नकल उतारने को अगर लिखना कहे तो मैं बस वही कर रही थी। वहीं कर सकती थी। इनके पीछे-पीछे रहकर जो टुकड़े उठ आए, उठा लूँ। जो, जहाँ मेरी नजर में पड़ जाए।

मेरी नजर के आगे वही घर है, वही फाटक, वही लैटरबॉक्स। उसका पल्ला खुल गया है और बारिश की सतत बूँदे उसे हिला रही हैं। श्रुति फाटक पर ठिठक गई है। उसकी चप्पले ही नहीं पैर भी, टखनों तक भीग गए हैं। शरद ने फाटक खोला। घर के सामने की खुली जगह में जंगली घास भर गई है।

वहाँ एक मधुमालती की लतर हुआ करती थी, जिसके नीचे गुलाबी मसूड़ों पर सफ़ेद दाँतों की कतार देखकर अजीब मतली-सी आई थी और मेरा कलम मेरे हाथ से छूटकर उसी के पास जा छिटका था। बाद में मैंने सोचा भी कि क्यों नहीं उन्हें देखकर मुझे मधुमालती के गुलाबी और सफ़ेद फूल याद आए? उल्टे मधुमालती के फूलों को देखकर हमेशा वही गुलाबी मसूड़े और सफ़ेद दाँत याद आ जाते और उबकाई-सी आती। न ही उन्हें देखकर वह सुंदर सेहतपूर्ण हँसी याद आई, जो पूरे चेहरे को खिला देती थी। वह

**This is the place. Our city.**

The city the three of them scrambled out in, in a panic, to nab the guilt and the guilty, the injured and the dead, all and all. To see clearly and so show clearly. Sharad, Shruiti, Hanif, who had decided they would write. For it was not a time to keep quiet. For it was a time to show it all out. For the wind that was blowing was no breeze but a typhoon. Which, who can tell, may uproot us all? Its raining. Shruiti gets off the train and stands on the platform.

It is raining. Shruiti steps from the train and stands on the platform. A restlessness vibrates under her as the train screeches past. People running helter skelter, drenched, competing to get transport. The town's cows, dogs, and goats showering raindrops, seeking shelter on the platform. The water flowing down on to the rails. Its grey, bleak.

That year similar rivulets flowed on the

roads once, but, that was not rain but water from overhead tanks which entire neighbourhoods had released for fear it was poisoned.

Sharad hurries up on seeing her. She stands, alone, expectant. They are now face to face. Their faces entangled in their words and forming tight bonded silences. They walk out with careful steps.

The three thought that everything was out there, which was terrifying and unsettling us so. It was their fears that got into me. They tried to write and abandoned it midway. Sick at the hollowness of their words, words which are repeated ad nauseum and will bring about nothing by being written; because they just go around uselessly. They ended up being meaningless like official slogans. That's when I felt something has to be done. Somehow something has to be written. With or without comprehension. And if they won't, one a professional writer and

two professional intellectuals, then I, a mere copier, will.

There was nothing such in that time which could be stated in neat. That is why I could write, who neither cared nor could be neat and clear. If copying is writing then I was writing. All I could do. Shadow them and pick up whatever bits and pieces I could. Wherever I spot any.

I spot again that house. That gate, that letterbox. Its flapped open and incessant rain makes it quiver. Shruiti stops at the gate. Her slippers and ankles too are soaked. Sharad pushes the gate open. The front yard full of weeds.

That's where the Madhumalti creeper used to be and seeing under its pink and white flowers the white teeth on pink dentures, puke had filled my throat and my pen had flown out of my hand. Later I asked myself why I didn't think of Madhumalti flowers on seeing the dentures? Why instead, whenever I saw Madhumalti flowers I always saw again those dentures and felt pukey. Nor, on seeing them, did I remember that wide merry laugh which shone up the entire face. They, the dentures, fallen on dust, torn away from the laughter, became some mere revolting shape, nothing to do with the person or personality they belonged to. Daddu always said, cage an identity within sharply marked outlines and it'll no longer be a person but some mere lifeless cut-out. That a person was the radiance flowing out of a body and spreading and lighting up the open, suffusing in its glow everything. Try closing the glow in a sharp defined shape that you can then see it clear then the light will just switch off and a lifeless cut-out remain. A cancerous piece of flesh.

But pieces are all I could pick up. The time was wrong, even had I the skills, to fill in blanks and find linkages. No leisure. Just, quick quick panic panic, copy copy. Even if a bit of here gets copied there, an irrelevance reported, a bit from there leaking here, never mind. When life itself was a 'collage', in which, like after a bomb explosion, bits fly all around and get stuck in absurd new unions, where was the respite from broken, incomplete pieces? Now ever heard of cauliflower bumper crop in a field of corpses? Then hear it now. There was in our city that year. And ever heard that such shining white tight fresh cauliflowers find no takers? That too in our city, in that year. Just such things, no head or tail and not up to me to join together like a jigsaw and make recognizable. Just pieces, the worth of which I could gauge not, nor wanted to. That was not my concern, only copying was. From the start, me, a copier. From the start? I don't know. For no one knew where the start was. But from where their panic got into me so that I flung out a hand and pulled up some paper and opened my pen in this air so smoky and dusty and resolved if not you then me I'll write that is copy whatever is said or shows that is what falls on my ears and in my eyes and if not with understanding even without just write. For it had to be written – about our town that year. Someone had to be witness. And who knows even the garbled speech of the idiot has sense in it. And who knows there shall be years other than that one? Like maybe this, in which Shruiti is standing and Sharad makes to pull her indoors.

From: Geetanjali Shree, *Hamara shahar us baras*. New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan (1998), p.7-8. Translation by Geetanjali Shree.

धूल में पड़े, हँसी की सारी सुंदरता को बेआबरू करते एक धिनौना आकार भर हो गए, चेहरे की सारी शक्तिशयत को भुलाते, उस इनसान के सारे अस्तित्व को गायब करते। दहू कहते थे कि पहचान नहीं, बेकार बेजान कट-आउट रह जाएगा, कि पहचान तो बाहर फूटती और फैलती और खुले में विचरती, हर चीज से लिपटती, घुलती, रोशनी है, जिसे किसी टुकड़े में बंद करोगे कि विशुद्ध अस्तित्व बनेगा तो बस बुझ जाएगी और मरा हुआ आकार रह जाएगा। मांस का धिनौना लोथ।

मगर मैं तो टुकड़े ही उठाती रही। वक्त नहीं था, सलाहियत की छोड़िए, कि बीच के हिस्से भरूँ, जोड़ती कड़ियाँ तलाशूँ। किसी भी चीज को इत्मीनान से करने का वक्त नहीं था। बस, डरते-डरते, जल्दी-जल्दी, इनकी काँपी करती गई थी। चाहे इधर का उधर लिखा जाए, गौर ज़रूरी कलम में खिंच आए, यहाँ का टुकड़ा वहाँ चस्पॉ कर जाऊँ। जब जीवन ही 'कोलाज' बन गया था, जिसमें बम के विस्फोट से जैसे, कतरे उछलते हैं और इस जगह के उस जगह जा चिपकते हैं, निहायत बेतुकी आकृतियाँ गढ़ते, तो अधूरे बिखरे टूटे से आखिर बचाव था ही कहाँ?

अब लाशों के खेत में गोभी की फ़सल सुने हो कभी?

तो सुन लो।

थी हमारे शहर में उस बरस।

और सुने हो कभी कि ऐसी सफ़ेद, तर्रोताज़ा, गठे जिस्मवाली गोभी कौड़ियों के दाम भी न बिके?

सो भी हमारे ही शहर की बात, उसी बरस की बात।

ऐसी ही बातें थीं, जिनका न सिर, न पैर और मेरे बस का नहीं था कि टुकड़ों को जोड़-जाड़कर असल सूरत दिखाऊँ। बस, टुकड़े ही थे, जिनकी वक्त न मैं आँक सकती थी, न मुझे आँकना ही था। वह मेरा ठेका नहीं था। बस काँपी करना था।

शुरू से ही मैं नकलकर्ता रही हूँ।

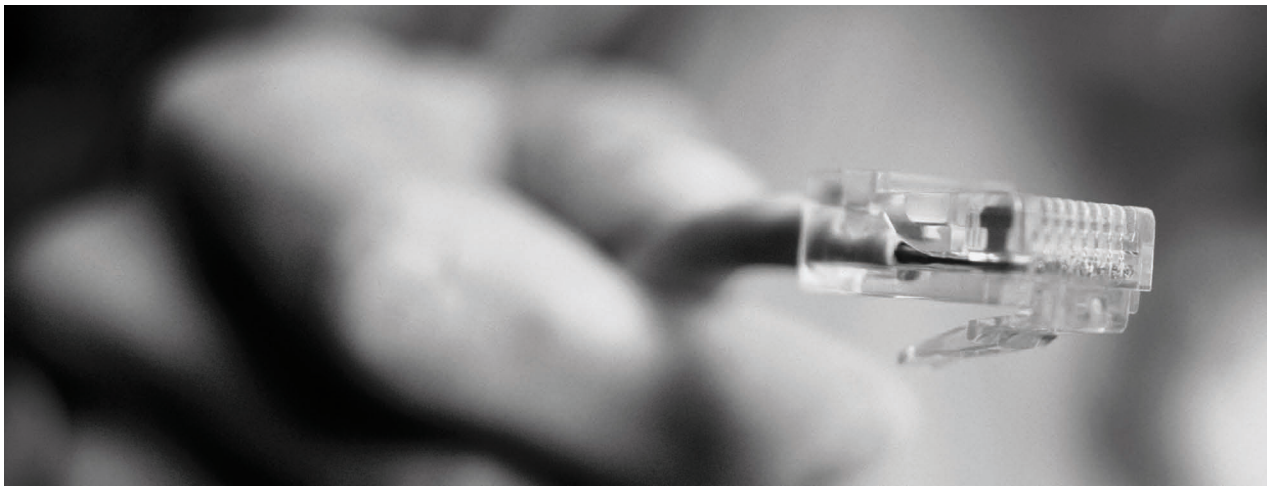
शुरू से, कि नहीं, पता नहीं; क्योंकि यह किसी को नहीं पता था कि शुरू कहाँ है। पर वहाँ से जहाँ से उनकी घबराहट से डरकर मैंने झपटकर कागज़ खींचा, कलम खोला और धूल धुएँ के मौसम में जुट गई कि तुम नहीं तो मैं ही लिखती हूँ, यानी तुम्हारी ही काँपी करती हूँ, जो बोलो, देखो, कहो, यानी जो-जो मैं पकड़ लूँ, और समझ के नहीं तो बिना समझे ही लिखती हूँ।

क्योंकि लिखना तो था ही उस बरस और शहर के बारे में।

किसी न किसी को तो गवाह बनना था।

और क्या मालूम नासमझ की अनर्गल वाणी में सार हो...क्या पता उस बरस के बाद बरस और भी हों...

जैसे शायद यह, जिसमें श्रुति खड़ी है और शरद उसे अंदर खींचकर दरवाज़े की साँकल और जंजीर लगा देता है।



# Internet in China

## The Internet in China: A Symposium

Introduction >  
China

China's first email, according to legend, was sent by professor QIAN Tianbai and was entitled 'Crossing the Great Wall to join the world'. Since that first email was sent on 20 September 1987, China has been using the internet in remarkable ways, making the Great Wall not just crossable, but rather meaningless.

By Randolph Kluver

The growth of China's internet has been astounding. With the number of internet users doubling every 18 months or so, China's 'virtual' presence on the development of the worldwide phenomenon is making itself felt. This can be seen in the proliferation of Chinese-language websites on servers worldwide and in the rising number of non-Chinese owned sites, including those of the American National Football League and the National Basketball Association, that now cater to Chinese surfers with Chinese-language sites. Furthermore and much to the consternation of internet freedom activists, computer hardware and software companies have begun to design their products with the recommendations of the Chinese government in mind (Walton, 2001). The Chinese delegation, moreover, was successful in marginalizing the concerns of non-governmental organizations at the UN-sponsored World Summit on the Information Society in 2003.

In many ways, the Chinese government's new influence on the development of the internet is surprising, perhaps the very opposite of what most politicians, journalists, and academics assumed would happen, namely that the internet would change China. From the inception of the online era, dramatic proclamations left little doubt that the internet would fundamentally and irrevocably transform Chinese society, economics, and politics. It has now become clear that the impact of the internet on China, the rest of Asia, and the world, is much more nuanced than the early advocates thought.

### Technological indeterminism

The worldwide growth of the internet has spawned speculation about what it will come to mean for individuals, corporations, organizations, and governments. A priori assumptions about the technological characteristics of the internet – such as it being decentralized, networked, and user driven – are the base for much of this speculation, which assumes a kind of technological determinism: the conviction that certain social and political implications

were inherent to the technology. Yet, contrary to the expectations of technological determinism, users around the world are interacting with, refining, and even changing the technology to suit their own purposes.

In China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and other Asian nations that have plunged headlong into the information age, we observe a reciprocal relationship behind the transformation of the internet and society. The internet creates new opportunities for social and individual change; but it can just as quickly become another instrument of control. Appropriated by governments, corporations, and perhaps most importantly, by teenagers, the internet today fulfils functions undreamed of a few years ago.



Courtesy of the Committee to Protect Journalists

Given its role in transforming economy and society, the internet – which in so many ways has come to define modern life – demands to be studied. Alongside scientific and technological research on the internet, a new academic discipline has developed in the social sciences and humanities, bridging the fields of law, literature, politics, communication and media, sociology and psychology, business, and others. The internet has spawned academic conferences, journals, book series and faculty appointments, and has added new dimensions to traditional disciplines.

This collection of articles examines just one aspect of the role of the internet in China: its role in forming political communities and political discourse. It has, of course, been the hope of countless editorials and news stories that by introducing the internet into China, the government was presenting the means for its own eventual slide into oblivion. By supplying Chinese with the possibility to gain access to

information, uncensored by their government, and the opportunity to publish information, to interact on significant issues, and to mobilize more effectively, the Chinese government was introducing the proverbial camel's nose under the tent that would eventually lead to the wholesale collapse of the Chinese state. A number of recent studies (and the essay by YANG Guobin in this issue) provide evidence that the Chinese population is indeed gaining a new element of empowerment in its relations with the government.

Rather than starting from the premises of technological determinism, or abstract speculation about how the technology will alter China, each of these authors begin by analysing realities on the ground. Most importantly, how do Chinese users use the internet? Only through understanding how the internet is actually being used, adapted, and integrated into the lives of its users can we begin to anticipate the changes that might occur.

### Sources on the Chinese internet

There are two primary sources of information on the internet in China. The China Internet Network Information Center's (CNNIC) semi-annual Survey Reports on the Internet in China are the most comprehensive, including among others, the number of online users, computer hosts, and domain names. While CNNIC data is the most commonly cited, private researchers often question its reliability. There are endless ways to define 'internet user', for example, and differing definitions and sampling methodologies yield different results. In January 2004 the CNNIC released its thirteenth semi-annual survey. Its findings were in line with expectations: in six months, the number of users had grown by approximately 12 million while the number of China-hosted websites had increased by 25 per cent, to 60 million.

A second source of data on Chinese internet use is the work of GUO Liang of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Guo, conducting research on internet use in China under the auspices of the World Internet Project, released a nuanced and in-depth report

funded by the Markle Foundation in 2003 (CASS Internet Report 2003). Unlike the CNNIC study, the CASS study is based on interviews with Chinese net users in twelve cities, and provides a richer account of how people actually use the internet, as well as their expectations of it. The report does not attempt to tally the total number of users in the country, but aims instead at a more in-depth understanding of internet users across China.

Guo's surveys reveal that most internet users, as well as non-users, believe the internet is providing greater access to political information and opportunities for expression. They also believe that the competitive market place for internet service providers has provided real benefits to consumers, including better access.

World opinion and journalistic coverage of the internet in China feeds upon the stereotype of the government limiting access to the net, through both censorship and the erecting of technological barriers. There is little doubt that the government is concerned with the internet's potential to create instability. Lokman TSUI's essay in this volume provides a clear picture of the controls the government has implemented in its attempts to limit potential political trouble. At the same time, Guo's and the CNNIC surveys, reveal that the Chinese government sees the internet as an indispensable tool for economic growth and modernization, and is actively encouraging internet development on a number of fronts.

### Political mobilization or marginalization?

The essays in this collection are organized around a point/counterpoint format. Yang Guobin takes the lead, demonstrating that the internet has done something quite remarkable in Chinese politics, in that it introduces an element of play, so that politics is no longer 'in command' but rather part and parcel of everyday discourse on the web. Yang's essay demonstrates that the internet has become part of the public sphere, both in allowing ordinary citizens to participate in political discussion, and in helping to redefine the nature of Chinese society, especially in citizens' relations to the state.

The subsequent essays are all written in response and while agreeing with Yang's central contention, qualify the potential of the net to be all that many hoped it would be. Lokman Tsui's essay focuses on the issue of state control, demonstrating that the Chinese government has developed a sophisticated approach that effectively precludes the ability of the internet to provide a space for active mobilization in opposition to

the Communist Party of China.

Ian Weber and LU Jia examine the commoditization of the internet in China, where corporations that control most of the content have no commercial incentive to provide platforms to criticize government policies. Weber and Lu argue that the Chinese government has, in significant ways, handed control of the internet to these corporations, and that international media conglomerates play a significant role in defining what the Chinese internet is becoming.

Finally, Jens Damm examines the internet's role within the larger social changes transforming China, where choice and liberty in a consumerist, postmodern society have contributed to social fragmentation rather than the enhanced public sphere envisioned by the internet's early enthusiasts. Damm also refocuses our attention on the internet's technological characteristics and finds that, in contrast to early expectations of decentralized technology leading to a decentralized nation, the 'code' of the internet is being rewritten in China in ways to maintain social and political stability, and economic growth.

It has become abundantly clear: the internet will impact on Chinese society and China will transform the internet. The Great Wall has become meaningless as a barrier to prevent foreign intrusion: the political, economic, and social forces that these essays bring to light may well shape the future of both China and the internet. <

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/chineseinternetresearch>

# Mingling Politics with Play

## The Virtual Chinese Public Sphere

Research >  
China

The internet is a virtual public sphere, but not the kind envisioned by Habermas. He considered the coffee shop and the English pub of eighteenth-century Europe as its exemplars, where equals meet to reason on issues of common concern, and ultimately, produce public opinion. It seems doubtful, though, that people patronized coffee shops mainly to reason with their peers. While politics may command serious attention, coffee shops, pubs and today, the internet, are venues for socializing, joking, bantering, having a good time. The fun part lures people back, while politics gets its fair share of attention along the way. In other words, one reason why the internet seems to be producing some very interesting politics in China is that it is a fun place to go. If it is a public sphere, it is one that mingles politics with play.

By Guobin YANG

The most likely places to find political action in the virtual sphere are bulletin boards and community forums, although weblogging is gaining ground. Today, close to one fifth of Chinese netizens make use of bulletin boards and community forums (CNNIC 2004). Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) may be run by individuals, small voluntary groups, commercial entities, or government agencies. A few years ago, many were simple, unsophisticated home pages. Now many BBS are portal sites complete with news, online magazines, newsletters, bulletin boards, virtual communities, and other network services.

A critical mass of users is essential for the web to thrive. China now has such a critical mass – about 80 million internet users as of December 2003 (CNNIC 2004). According to the CNNIC report, 32.2 per cent of respondents access the web primarily to ‘get entertained.’ The only goal that surpasses this one is to ‘get information’ (46.2 per cent).

Bulletin boards and community forums are fun places. There is a great deal of socializing as well as exchanging of information. To attract attention (internet users relish public notice as much as anyone else), netizens compete to post humorous, clever, and sensational messages. All the vicissitudes of life are on offer, from romantic tales and political jokes to intellectual debate, gossip, rumour, and photographs of street scenes. As in ‘real’ life, the virtual sphere never fails to surprise.

A specific kind of surprise that constantly pops up is protest and some wonder at its frequency in China’s highly monitored and controlled networks. One crucial feature of the virtual sphere might explain the frequency of online protest: at any given time, thousands of people are online, perhaps for political purposes, but most likely for fun. These netizens (or *wangmin* in Chinese) can slip into action as occasions arise, over a campus murder cover-up, a school house fire, a deadly accident at a coal mine, a corrupt official newly exposed. The more outrageous the incident, the more likely it is to arouse the virtual crowd, always lurking and always alert. Once aroused, the networked crowd can rapidly fill the web with queries, information exchanges, debate, protest, and organized activity, at times even achieving the power of public opinion. Large-scale social movements such as the one in 1989 excepted, there has rarely been such a constant stream of public talk in China as is found in the virtual realm. Let me mention only three of the more politicized cases.

### Politics in the virtual sphere

The first is the SUN Zhigang case. A college graduate, Sun died of a police beating on 20 March 2003 while in custody in Guangzhou. Lacking a temporary resident permit, Sun had been taken into custody three days earlier. News of his death, however, did not become public until 25 April, in a local newspaper. An outraged public quickly filled the web with debate and protest. As often happens, the protest went beyond Sun Zhigang’s death. Discussion ranged from curbing police brutality to calls for press freedom and legal reform. One widely circulated essay posted to www.wtzy.com made a frontal attack on China’s political system, as is clear from its title ‘The Death of Sun Zhigang and the Evils of the System’. Several legal scholars wrote to the National People’s Congress to demand a review of the two-decades old ‘Measures for Internment and Deportation of Urban Vagrants and Beggars’, the legal basis for taking Sun into custody. In an unprecedented turn of events, the State Council invalidated the ‘measures’ in June 2003. The example shows that a personal story can gain a wide audience on the net, become a political topic, and ultimately lead to an observable political outcome.

The second case concerns the February 2003 death of a young teacher named HUANG Jing, found dead in her school dorm in Xiangtan, Hunan province. Despite evidence to the contrary, public authorities initially ruled out murder. To push

for further police investigation, Huang’s mother published descriptions of her death on the internet. Two months later, a young man who had met Huang in a chat room set up a virtual memorial for her on www.netor.com. The virtual memorial gripped the public. Within five months, there were more than 210,000 visits to the memorial. An online petition was launched to request the Ministry of Public Security to investigate the case. A feminist scholar published an essay on a bulletin board arguing that Huang’s death was a typical case of date rape. Since ‘date rape’ is a new topic in China, the essay was an instant hit. Under public pressure, further police investigations and medical examinations were performed. While the case remains unresolved, online debates and petitions transformed it into an issue much greater than the initial catalyst. Again, a personal horror story gripped a wide audience, leading to the formation of a virtual community that pressured a government body into action.

The final example demonstrates that beyond providing space for debate, exposure, and protest, the virtual public sphere can support communities and citizen activism. Since the late 1990s, numerous environmental websites and green forums have appeared; many of these have evolved into informal web-based environmental organizations. With members

across China, these groups use the web to communicate, publicizing environmental issues and organizing offline activities. One such group is Han Hai Sha (lit. ‘Ocean of Sand’), which focuses on desertification issues. Its website www.desert.org.cn was launched in June 2002 complete with an electronic newsletter, a bulletin board, archives of documents on desertification issues, and current events. During the SARS crisis, its volunteers did a most remarkable thing. On 5 May 2003, they produced a special-issue electronic newsletter on SARS. Over the next month, they published 25 special issues on SARS, with essays by volunteers and other sources providing information, analyzing its causes, and offering strategies and solutions. An essay published in the tenth special issue, published on 18 May, was entitled ‘The Shortcomings of the System in the Shadow of SARS’. The outbreak, the essay argued, exposed the shortcomings of China’s political system; it proposed institutional changes to increase government transparency, public trust, and better information delivery to the public. In contrast to the two earlier examples, where a story of personal loss gained a wide net audience and broadened into criticisms of the state, this web action was initiated by a community site that was organized around a specific issue to start with. How did a community site come to voice such open criticism? Might criticism and debate spread to more mainstream venues?

The virtual public sphere is both segmented and linked, a reflection of the basic contradiction of our times. Bulletin boards, for example, are segmented into issues and topics and may evolve into semi-closed communities with informal hierarchies and barriers to newcomers. The result is the creation of multiple and partial virtual publics, a far cry from the Habermasian vision of the undivided and open public sphere. At the same time, however, these segmented spaces are often linked. A message posted to *Qiangguo Luntan* (Strong Nation Forum), run by *People’s Daily*, may be cross-posted to forums in www.cnd.org, a portal site run in North America with its own Chinese-language bulletin boards, and vice versa. As readers of bulletin board postings know, some messages are so widely circulated that they take on a life of their own. There are even specialized Chinese-language websites (such as www.zwlt.com, www.kdnet.net) that publish daily selections of popular postings collected from BBSs worldwide.

*Qiangguo Luntan* was set up hastily as a modest bulletin board in May 1999; it has since evolved into a part of an empire known as People’s Net, the expanded web presence of the *People’s Daily*. While *Qiangguo Luntan* is frequently sanitized of politically sensitive discussion, its daily postings often number in the thousands. Political debate is the staple of this forum, and it seems that its *banzhu* (host) finds it hard to keep up with deleting unwelcome postings. The existence of *Qiangguo Luntan* attests to a paradox of the internet. Unless a government wants to deny its citizens the web, it has to tolerate complaints and protest alongside more benign communication.

### Surviving in multiple fields of force

Will the virtual Chinese public sphere flourish or vanish? Modern societies consist of multiple social fields, some more powerful, independent, and institutionalized than others, but all related as if in a magnetic field of force (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). One way to understand the virtual Chinese public sphere – its current status as well as future fate – is to

position it where it belongs, in relation to other fields of force, including those of politics and the economy. According to Habermas, states and markets together created, and then ‘colonized’, the European public sphere. The public sphere was originally created to meet real social and cultural needs; over time, political and cultural hegemony undermined its political dimension, transforming the culture-debating public into a culture-consuming one.

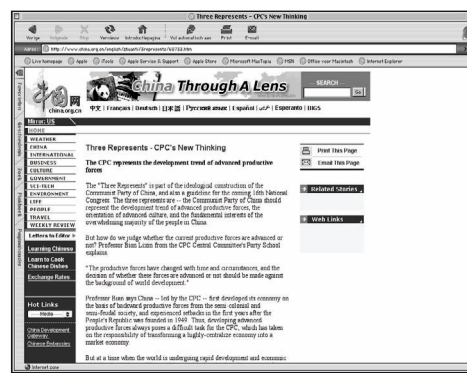
In China, as elsewhere, state and corporate behaviour influence the dynamics of the virtual public sphere. The state exerts political control; corporations manipulate the architecture of the technology, by, for example, installing filters on computer networks. Against these odds, hope remains for those publics intent on having their own virtual space. One reason for hope lies in the complexity of the relations between the state, business, and the virtual public sphere, characterized by shared interests as well as conflicts. Perhaps the primary common interest lies in the development of the internet as a technological field, whatever its end purpose. Without technological development, China cannot realize its century-long dream of joining the global society as a strong player.

The web inhabits a world with dynamic fields other than states and business corporations. Academia is turning to the web for educational purposes; journalists are experimenting with online journalism; aspiring authors have found new channels for publishing their works. These social groups, and many others, are now linked to their counterparts around the world and these ties have spawned their own internal dynamics. As has often happened in the history of modern societies, weaker parties tend to enter coalitions to resist or negotiate with dominant political and economic actors. In the final analysis, then, the condition and fate of the Chinese virtual public sphere depends as much on its internal dynamics of private pleasures and public concerns as on the changing political, social, and technological environment. ◀

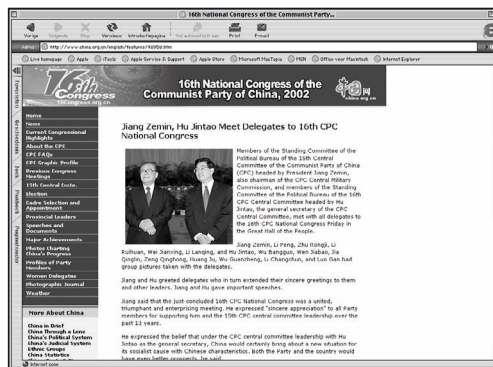
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Courtesy of www.china.org.cn



In China, as elsewhere, state and corporate behaviour influence the dynamics of the virtual public sphere.

The Taste of Information

# State Attempts to Control the Internet

Research >  
China

'Internet Essayist Arrested', 'China Blocks Blog Again', 'Crackdown deepens on the Internet': the headlines that most often reach us in the Western media concern censorship, detention of cyber dissidents and the blocking of websites. Many Western observers nonetheless remain optimistic on political freedoms following on the tails of social change. *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof (2003, p.19) wrote enthusiastically on his recent trip to Manchuria: 'I can't help feeling that when people get multiple choices in ordering a cup of coffee, it's only a matter of time before they demand choices in national politics.' Unfortunately the degree of choice in coffee has not spilled over to choice in politics and information. Information in the Peoples' Republic of China still comes in one flavour only, that of the Party-State.

By Lokman TSUI

At the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva last December, participants expressed 'a common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive, and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize, and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life'. According to this declaration, freedom of speech, information and communication are the means to a better quality of life. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), however, has followed its strict line in curbing these freedoms. Many believed a new situation would arise with the growth of commercial media, but as Chin-Chuan Lee (2003, p.12) argues: 'under no circumstances will the Party-State relinquish its editorial authority.' The internet, with its open and decentralized structure, poses new challenges to the Party-State's editorial authority yet again.

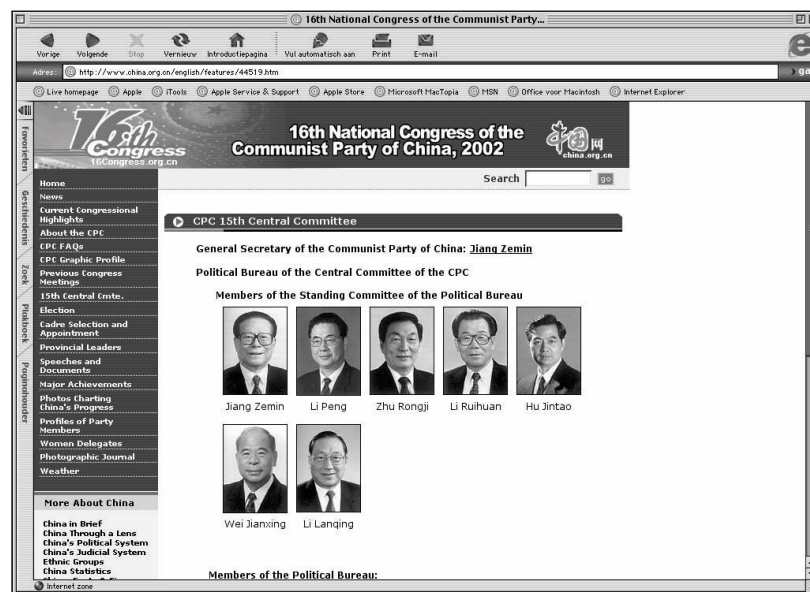
Over its decade-long relationship with the internet, China has made various attempts to gain political control over the medium. The first few attempts to regulate the internet focused on the development of a nationwide intranet. Control of the web was to be based on inclusion rather than exclusion, on regulating what people could see, instead of what they could not see. Thus the national intranet offered only those parts of the internet deemed desirable, a strategy opposite to offering the whole internet minus its censored sites. These intranets, however, never caught the public's interest, failed to draw a profit and died quietly. The government shifted its focus towards a policy of control based on exclusion.

The infrastructure of the Chinese internet consists of several key providers that carry the mass of traffic inside the country. Traffic to sites hosted outside China must pass through an international gateway maintained by China Telecom. This international gateway makes it possible to screen content and filter out websites based on a blacklist. Websites that are blocked include those of the Voice of America and Amnesty International, amongst many others. (Zittrain and Edelman, 2003)

As websites are relatively cost-effective ways for anybody to publish, China has taken steps to prevent them from becoming threats to stability. Hosting services based outside China that allow users to create personal homepages, such as Geocities, are typically blocked, as it would be impossible to hold an individual author responsible for the content. The latest development is weblogs, sometimes abbreviated to *blogs*: personal websites on a particular subject frequently updated with new information. On account of their low barriers for self-expression, the number of weblogs exploded; the government soon decided to block the most popular service that hosts them, Blogspot. Weblogs, from a technical perspective are not much of an innovation, but as this foremost social phenomenon continues to develop, it will be interesting to see how the regulation of these weblogs will take shape.

There are, however, more ways to censor a website than to just block it. A case in point is the Google search engine; it was first blocked in August 2002. Shortly thereafter, instead of being blocked, internet surfers attempting to access Google were redirected to Chinese search engines such as Openfind, Globepage or www.chinaren.com. After an uproar by Chinese *netizens* and the international media, Google is available again, though searches now produce modified results.

A more effective way for the government to control the flow of information is to offer content, in Chinese. The government closes demand with one hand and guarantees supply with the other, attacking the problem from both sides. This tactic has been deployed to counter the success of Google in China. It developed www.chinasearch.com to become the



Courtesy of www.china.org.cn

country's main search engine. Sina, one of the major portals in China, has already adopted Chinasearch, whose search results filter out links considered subversive or pornographic. Only approved news items can be published on news websites; the main online content providers thus avoid political news, syndicating these from official news publications such as *Xinhua*. They focus on relatively safe content instead, such as entertainment and sports news.

Among the non-web services offered by the internet, Usenet is practically banned in China, and illustrates the effectiveness of control based on inclusion. The alternative, the Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) are a very popular segment of the internet in China. These BBS services are regulated by moderators who screen incoming messages, removing those deemed offensive or off-topic. Software filters aid the moderators and automatically search for messages with sensitive keywords. In extreme cases, brute force is employed and the BBS can be shut down for years, as happened to the highly popular *Wei Ming* BBS of Peking University in 1996. The closure of such a high profile BBS served as a warning to others, leading to self-regulation among other BBS. Self-regulation is also prevalent among companies: over three hundred signed a voluntary pledge of adherence to the regulations. Likewise, the detention of cyber dissidents has intimidated individual users into exercising self-censorship. (Tsui 2003: 70-71). This discussion reminds us that China's attempts to control the flow of information are extensive and ongoing.

While most websites are accessible despite the blacklist, internet use rarely crosses Chinese borders. According to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences survey report (2003, p.32), Chinese users access websites located in China almost 80 per cent of the time. This does not include Chinese language websites from Hong Kong, Taiwan or Singapore, which together make up another 13 per cent. Western websites are thus accessed, at most, only 7 per cent of the time. This is a sobering figure in contrast to the sky-high expectations of many Western analysts. The flow of information is restricted not only by top down controls but also by bottom up factors, such as language barriers, disinterest in alternative media and diverse levels of self-regulation. (Mulvenon & Chase 2002: 49)

### Food for thought

The attempts of the Party-State to control the internet have been, thus far, reasonably successful. How much of its success, however, is due to bottom-up social factors rather than to top-down political control? Three issues come to mind. First, instead of focusing on attempts to control websites that barely appear on the radar of the average Chinese netizen, we might focus on the things that really interest the average user. What makes people spend 80 per cent of their time on Chinese websites? Second, instead of focusing on access to

information, how does the Party-State regulate freedom of and access to communication on the internet? The real impact of the internet might not lie in access to information, but in access to expressive communication, as represented by the BBS. Despite all attempts to control it, the internet is still freer than any other media. The issue then is whether, in the end, freedom of speech, information and communication will allow the Chinese to fulfill their potential and improve their quality of life. After all, freedom of speech, information and communication are not the end, but merely the means to a better quality of life. <

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## List of Definitions

BBS or bulletin board system (*dianzi gonggaoban*): a kind of database where users can log in and leave messages for others. These messages are often grouped according to topic. The BBS has become one of the most popular features of the Chinese internet and thousand of groups are offered by the big portals. The variety of topics characterizes the social changes which have taken place within the last decade in China.

Chat room (*liaotianshi*): a virtual space where users may communicate in real-time. As a result of the fragmentation of the interest groups, the possible anonymity of chat rooms and the lack of incentives for longer commitment, the discussions in many chat rooms tend to be superficial.

Netizen (*wangmin*): this term, which has been attributed to Howard Rheingold, refers to the 'citizen of the internet'. It is important to realize that in a narrow sense 'netizens' do not include users who come to the net for profane reasons such as making profits or who regard the internet as merely a service provided by others. An important feature of the netizen is his/her active engagement in creating a public sphere on the Net.

Weblogs (sometimes shortened to 'blog'): a website of personal or non-commercial origin that uses a dated log format and that is frequently updated with new information about a particular subject or range of subjects. The information can be written by the site owner, gleaned from other websites or other sources, or contributed by users. A weblog may consist of the recorded ideas of an individual (a sort of diary) or be a complex collaboration open to anyone. Most of the latter are moderated discussions. The rapid increase of the number of weblogs in China, spurred its government to block the most popular host for these weblogs. <



# Handing over China's Internet to the Corporations

Research >  
China

China's internet development, as the world's fastest growing online population and quickly maturing cyberspace, is built around two guiding principles: political control and economic progress. This situation reflects a longstanding dilemma. While the government desperately wants to control the flow of news and opinion, especially dissent, it also wants an open, modern, and efficient economy, including a state-of-the-art telecommunications and information infrastructure (China sites pledge, 2002). As such, authorities have implemented a range of strategies to guide China's media modernization, diversification, and commercialization. Although China's moves towards overt control, such as selective censorship of the news and increased monitoring of internet chat rooms, are well documented (editors note: see Tsui essay on the previous page), less well known are the solutions that are less draconian, but more effective. One key example of this is the promotion of self-regulation within the commercial sector using the 2002 'Public Pledge on Self-discipline for China's Internet Industry' as a mechanism for standardization and self-censorship.

By Ian Weber & LU Jia

Within the first six months the Pledge had been signed by over 300 internet news information service companies, including Renmin, Xinhua, Sina, Sohu, and NetEase. The Pledge's aims seem fairly benign as it seeks to aggressively promote internet use, prevent cyber crimes, foster healthy industry competition, and avoid intellectual property violations. Such an approach projects an image to the world of a more conscientious government embracing WTO reforms and promoting the commercial use of the internet. Other clauses in the Pledge, however, are not so innocent, given the government's extreme sensitivity to criticism and political challenges. Those companies signing the Pledge must refrain from 'posting or disseminating pernicious information that may jeopardize state security and disrupt social stability'. The prohibition also covers information considered illegal such as the spreading of 'superstition and obscenity' (China sites pledge, 2002). For example, any reference to the outlawed religious movement, Falungong, constitutes a breach of the Pledge. Signatories must also remove material deemed offensive and monitor content of foreign-based websites and block those containing unspecified harmful information or face expulsion from the group. These 'family rules' firmly place the responsibility on internet service providers for content posted on hosted websites. As such, the strategy is designed to give the internet room to develop commercially while placing corporations on notice not to push the envelope politically (China sites pledge, 2002).

This situation of 'controlled commodification' illustrates the fundamental contradiction of China's economic openness: the body that exerts the greatest influence over commercial media, in a market economy, is the state (Wong, 2001). However, allowing such self-regulation essentially means handing over control of the internet to large, multinational media corporations so long as they pledge their allegiance and operate within the hazy confines of the rule of law.

## Going online

Certainly the Hollywood adage that 'build it and they will come' holds true in China's internet development. As reported elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, recent internet research figures indicate there are now almost 80 million *netizens* online, an increase of 11.5 million compared to the first half of 2003 (CNNIC, 2003). China's internet population is second in the world to that of the United States. In addition, the report indicates that 30.9 million computers were connected to the internet (+20.1 per cent), with almost 60 million websites (+25.7 per cent) (Chinese Internet surfers, 2004).

Who are these internet consumers and what are they consuming? Official government research by CNNIC indicates that the internet user demographic is changing with technology adoption penetrating a younger audience. Whereas 91 per cent of all *netizens* in 1998 were aged 18-30 years, this percentage has since dropped to 51.3 per cent. The largest growth area is in *netizens* younger than 18 years, which has increased to 18.8 per cent. The survey indicates that most people use the internet to obtain information, including news, e-books, and daily life information. Leisure ranks second among users, before study, getting to know friends, research or sending and receiving emails. Shopping online or doing e-business only accounted for a meagre 0.4 per cent of internet usage (Chinese Internet surfers, 2004).

A visit to a local internet cafe (*wangba*) in Beijing or Shanghai provides a better insight than do government statistics into one of the main drivers of internet adoption in China: entertainment. One of the first things a visitor notices, is that each computer-filled room is dark and noisy, crowded with

Chinese teenage internet users make the most of their school lunch hour by spending time playing their favourite online games at an internet bar (*wangba*) in Shanghai, China.



Photograph: Michael Wolf

hundreds of young, male *netizens* celebrating their online freedom by playing war games, such as *Schroet Commando*. These games provide teenage users the space to navigate their way through a virtual battlefield, hunting down and killing enemy soldiers for around 3 yuan (30 Euro cents) an hour during lunch breaks or after school. One well-known story making the rounds is of a university student who spent all his time and money on virtual games. When asked by his parents to find a job, he replied that if there was a job where he could play games, he would.

Once considered the catalyst for democratic reform and a platform for civic engagement, today the internet has become the virtual playground of the young looking for entertainment. And lurking online are global media companies offering to quench that desire with a range of online games and value-added mobile phone services. In late September 2003, global media company Disney Corporation announced it had formed a partnership with Sohu.com, a leading Chinese company offering online media, communications, commerce, and mobile value-added services. The joint venture reflects recent moves by global media players to link with local providers as a way of accessing China's growing consumer market. In doing so, Disney leverages Sohu.com's China market expertise and consumer reach with its experience as a leading content provider across multiple business and technology lines, delivering online and wireless content and services to the growing online masses. The site features mobile phone content such as wallpapers, animated cards, logos and picture messages; online games and activities based on their brands Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh, and the Lion King; and movie content from Touchstone Pictures, Miramax, Hol-

llywood Pictures, ABC, and ESPN. The strategy is designed to access the growing younger online audience in China by meeting the 'demand for trustworthy, quality entertainment with educational values ... that are fun and entertaining for kids while simultaneously promoting valuable information skills' (Sohu.com brings magic, 2003).

Quake III Arena is an internet 'first person shoot-it-up' game. Companies or private individuals make the game available through the internet. The former charge for this service; the latter provide it for free. The popularity of the game inspired Chinese artist Feng Mengbo to work 'SHOT0010 Q', 75x100 cm, photo, 2003.



Courtesy of Feng Mengbo and ShanghaiART

## Not all fun and games

Will the Chinese government be able to reconcile the standardization of the internet under the auspices of controlled commodification with the promotion of national development (*guojia fazhan*) and nation building (*guojia jianshe*)? According to Wong (2001), controlled commodification is best understood within the political economy perspective, which requires a deeper understanding of the evolving government-media relationship within the material context of global capitalism. Given China's balancing act between opening up through the WTO agreement and its political sensitivities, the process of thinking globally and acting locally is vital to understanding the country's fundamental contradiction in relation to its information management strategy. On the one hand, the government uses the media to assist in nation building, or the bringing together of peoples by adopting common values and practices under the banner of national identity, and national development, in the form of socio-economic development or *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*. On the other, the government actively supports the development of a commercial media, which functions to sell audiences (consumers) to advertisers. As such, media organizations like Disney Corporation produce cultural commodities (content) – movies, games and mobile phone content – that is calculated to ensure maximum returns to capital. Simply put, these cultural commodities are for entertainment: to amuse, divert, and distract the online masses from the alienation or marginalization from the fast-paced change surrounding and enveloping their daily lives (Wong, 2001). Such cultural commodities are stamped with the 'sameness' for interchangeability across media platforms, which increases profitability within a vertically integrated business structure, and complies with the aims of the Pledge.

Within this platform of commodification, the four Cs – control, consumerism, content, and corporatization – play out in ways to benefit the government's vision of national and socio-economic development, which promotes consumption of 'approved' commodities. But while the Pledge establishes standardization of content, it does not adequately identify standards for content, despite claims by media corporations to the contrary. At this stage of controlled commodification, with the internet becoming a cyber arcade of entertainment instead of an important forum of free speech and a source of information, little is known of the long-term consequences to the value system of young Chinese in relation to national identity and the rise of civic society. <

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# Internet and the Fragmented Political Community

Research >  
China

Taking an optimistic view of the 'unlimited potential' of the role of the internet with regard to political changes, many political analysts, journalists, and politicians in the Western hemisphere assume that the internet offers the perfect tool for an increasingly sophisticated political discourse aimed at overthrowing the political system in authoritarian states, and that this process can only be slowed down by political control and harsh censorship (Chase/Mulvenon 2002:xi/xii). This view is, however, based on a very narrow concept of the structure of the internet, which survives from an early period in which internet use was restricted to an academic elite.

By Jens Damm

Ten years ago, Howard Rheingold (1993) described the internet as the perfect tool for a young and free netizen community. Focusing on the critical user able to publish at will and at negligible cost, he saw cyberspace as a home for 'virtual communities'. In this home, interested citizens could meet in chat rooms and BBS-newsgroups to form new and long-lasting relationships, thus defying the physical borders of the real world. The World Wide Web, email-lists, and newsgroups were seen as a space where, despite various control and censorship measures taken by governments, vast amounts of background information were offered with the aim of creating well-informed critical netizens. Lessig (1999:4) expressed this vision as follows: 'The space promised a kind of society that real space could never allow – freedom without anarchy, control without government, consensus without power. ... The claim now was that government could not regulate cyberspace, that cyberspace was essentially and unavoidably free.'

This utopian vision does not account for two significant issues: first, the process which transformed the internet into a profit-oriented business media, and second, the massive expansion of the internet worldwide, which made it much less a 'toy' for the highly educated academic US West Coast elite, and more an everyday media such as radio and TV. This very process also led to the trivialization and de-elitization, and thus depoliticization, of the internet.

Another important point concerns the technical and administrative structure of the Net, which has been described by Lessig (1999:6) as 'code'. The code of the internet is comparable with the law in society: the internet, the software, and the rules are created by various groups such as state organs, individuals, and companies. The code represents the combination and interaction of the software, hardware, and rules and etiquette of the internet. The structure of the code derives, therefore, from the power struggles between different groups. To quote Lessig (1999:6) 'We can build, or architect, or code cyberspace to protect values that we believe are fundamental, or we can build, or architect, or code cyberspace to allow those values to disappear.[...] Code is never found; it is only ever made, and only ever made by us'.

A more detailed analysis of some basic features of the internet in China reveals that the internet in China is not an ideal tool for establishing political discourses and political change, as certain structural features, such as the code underlying the internet, can preclude meaningful discourse.

It is not so much the increasing polit-

'One person starts surfing the net and the whole family gets healthier'. This Chinese approach towards the Internet was found in a billboard advertisement campaign in Beijing by the pharmaceutical company, Sanjiu.



ical control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the state organs, as frequently stated in Western publications, but rather the specific global development of the Net itself, and the larger societal and political developments in China that are shaping China's internet. Thus, the internet has become a heterogeneous medium, with only a small and fragmented political community, where the lack of a general open public sphere hinders communication between different groups. The underlying reasons for this are not only the specific code of the internet, but general developments in China, which by various means discourage open controversial political discourses, although these discourses do exist today within various intellectual circles.

## The user

First of all, it is unlikely that the vast majority of Chinese internet users are critical of the current regime: the average user is young, highly educated (more than 75 per cent have a senior high school degree or higher), belongs to the new urban middle class, and is without any doubt the beneficiary of the economic and, to some degree, political reforms which gained pace after Deng Xiaoping's historical southern trip (*nansun*) in 1992. Approximately 30 per cent of the population of the booming big cities such as Beijing or Shanghai is online, but the figure drops to about 2 per cent for the population of the poorer eastern provinces according to the latest figures, published by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) in 2004. These users have a highly pragmatic approach towards the government and the CCP. In their view political discourse aimed at overthrowing the current regime would probably lead to political instability (i.e. chaos or *luan*) and they there-

fore support the regime's efforts to establish the internet as part of a modern economy and society and to control 'sensitive issues'. For these users, the internet offers a variety of usage options, obtaining information an important one among these, as stated in the CNNIC reports. Political discussions are restricted to very specific topics to avoid conflict with the broader taboo topics as laid down by the Chinese government, but these users have on occasion played an essential role in political and societal discussions involving, for example, cases of corruption, and crimes such as murder and rape on a university campus.

## Postmodern society

There is a second reason to believe that the internet is unlikely to bring about rapid political change: the current use of the internet in China is congruent with the broad societal, political, and cultural transformations that have shaped China in the last decade. The Chinese middle class, which makes up the most important group of internet users, is part of a postmodern society, with a strong interest in personalized and individualized lifestyles. This group is now much less politicized than it was in the 1980s, when the reforms had just taken off. The current Chinese internet fits the picture of the apoliticized society that WANG Jing (1996:2-3) described: 'It is much more difficult [now] for mainland Chinese citizens to conclude which historical course would better empower the masses politically, culturally and materially'.

Chinese citizens could not choose between an elitist cultural agenda and an economic one, which would include 'the perpetuation of Chinese socialism (no matter how ideologically corrupt it turns out to be) as a challenge and alternative to Western liberalism.' The sec-

ond way, which was not chosen by the Chinese but forced on them from above, was nevertheless gradually accepted by the majority of the people including many intellectuals, probably because it resulted in their improved economic status and increased personal freedom.

The picture, however, is not so different in the West, where Cass Sunstein (2001) has referred to the isolation and emergence of narrow interest groups that preclude active social and political engagement in a postmodern society. He explored the risks posed by virtual worlds in his book, *Republic.com*, coining the term 'Daily Me' to denote the way in which technology could lead to a self-centred and selfish existence.

As in the West, most Chinese BBSs (and chat rooms) offered by the big portals such as Sohu or Netease are divided into very detailed personal interest groups. Formerly taboo topics such as homosexuality can now be openly discussed in various forums and groups, but in accordance with global trends, no real communication takes place here between different groups; on the contrary, users with similar views meet to reaffirm their own opinions, prejudices, and positions (Sunstein 2001:51-88). Most Chinese users access the BBS and chat rooms offered by the big portals such as Sohu or Netease. The choice of interest groups is limited for users, and there is, in particular, an absence of politically oriented groups. One well-known exception is *Qiangguo luntan* ('Strong Nation Forum') offered by Renminwang ('Peoples' Daily Online'), where controversial political discussions take place. Nevertheless, the name, 'Strong Nation Forum', provides an obvious clue as to the topics of discussion; not surprisingly, patriotic and nationalistic statements abound here, and where there is criticism of the CCP or the government then this is usually for being 'too soft' with regard to US or Taiwan policies.

## The code of the Net

Thirdly, the above-mentioned 'code' determines the roles that the internet can play: in China the internet is heavily influenced by governmental agencies and ministries (for example, the Ministry of Information Industry) as well as by national and international companies (for example, the most important web portals Sohu, Netease, and Sina). The common objective of all these organizations is to turn the internet into a tool for specific applications, such as technological modernization, education, and commerce. The user in such a model is regarded as a consumer; not as a highly motivated, politicized, and critical citizen. In China, the internet was not developed within independent academic circles, but by various government agencies and, often quarrelling, ministries. These ministries set incentives and provided the

basic infrastructure, but all other details were then dealt with by the domestic and international business community.

Western political scientists are still very interested in the ways the internet is used to spread subversive information, but they seldom deal with the question of whether Chinese users consider this information to be trustworthy, and little attention is given to the fact that in a postmodern, consumer-oriented society such as China, highly sophisticated chat rooms and web pages (multimedia) are in vogue (see, for example, Chase/Mulvenon 2002). The user's attention is drawn to the latest fashion, the latest vogue in brand names, and the latest gossip. With the onslaught of commercialization, the web increasingly resembles a virtual version of Tokyo's Ginza district, and a brief survey of the topics on offer within the best-known Chinese chat rooms provided by Sohu or Netease shows that the user is attracted not by politics, but by the personal interest groups which have resulted from today's fragmented lifestyles.\*

The internet may have an important role as a catalyst for the spreading of actual information, but in times of crisis the general usage patterns may change. For the time being, however, the internet has only a limited influence on emerging political discourses in China and has much more importance as a tool for lifestyle communications with a very personalized use. In addition, there is an increased use of the internet by the general population, which is also leading to the depoliticization of the Net, since even today the political discourses in China are largely restricted to intellectual circles. <

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## Note >

\* Ginza, Tokyo's most famous shopping district, has become a synonym for a highly commercialized culture.

# Everything is not Lost The Digital Archive for Chinese Studies (DACHS)

Report >  
China

Simply put, the Digital Archive for Chinese Studies '[...] aims at identifying, archiving and making accessible internet resources relevant for Chinese Studies, with special emphasis on social and political discourse as reflected by articulations on the Chinese internet' (mission statement). Simple as this statement reads, a lot of questions arise from it: What does *archiving and making accessible* mean? What are resources relevant for *Chinese Studies*? And where is *social and political discourse* reflected on the Chinese internet?

By Jennifer Gross & Hanno E. Lecher

Articulations reflecting the Chinese social and political discourse appear in all languages and, as the concept of national borders is alien to the internet, from all over the world, including China proper, Hong Kong and Macau, and Taiwan. The Digital Archive for Chinese Studies (DACHS) defines 'Chinese internet' in a very broad sense, to include material from overseas Chinese communities, Chinese foreign students and from scholars, institutions, and mass media covering the Chinese speaking region. It is the aim to cover a broad range of resources on varied topics, such as the reflection of the SARS epidemic on the internet, speeches from high-ranked Chinese politicians, historical documents from American or Russian archives, non-institutional websites created in China or elsewhere, and clippings from Chinese discussion boards.

## A human approach

Strategies of selection are crucial for the success of the project. After detecting outbursts of heated internet debates as much as possible of it has to be captured. To this end we rely on our 'information network', that is the judgement and knowledge of frequent internet users from all academic fields, various professions, and every nationality, who are (actively or passively) part of the discourse concerned. This human approach harbours many deficiencies, to be sure. Not only does the selection, downloading, and metadata creation process require a considerable amount of labour, identifying relevant resources in this fashion also involves a significant portion of chance, and in the end only a tiny fraction of the available resources can be covered.



Having said that, this approach will enable us to respond to current threads of discussion, to consciously select a broad range of different opinions on various current affairs, and to make full use of the background knowledge our informants provide, due to the fact that we will integrate the latter as commentary into the metadata for the resources. In addition to gathering resources in this fashion, we also aim to considerably extend our archive by integrating complete collections donated or sold to the Institute by private individuals, researchers, research groups, institutes, and other organizations.

As there is quite some variation in our focal material, we have developed three different approaches for getting hold of relevant resources. First of all we try to single out certain broad, long-term developments such as China's relationship with the WTO and the like. On these topics, we are actively searching and collecting a wide range of relevant material, making use of internet search engines, newsgroups, and mailing lists.

A second important focus are historical events that cause heated discussions on the internet, of which the debates concerning the 11 September terrorist attack are an obvious example. To capture as much of such outbreaks of public discussion as possible, we are setting up a list of relevant discussion boards, newspapers, and websites. These are checked whenever an important event occurs, so as to compile a set of snapshots, covering a time-span of a few weeks before and after this event. Third, certain fragments of public discourse may neither pertain to event related discussions nor to one of our special collection topics yet be considered of some relevance for current or later research. Essentially, the process of collecting this miscellaneous material, is slightly

## A shared technical effort

In order to provide the best possible access to the material it is necessary to create metadata. This process ranks among the most crucial and most time consuming parts of our working routine. For one these metadata offer an important means for access as they provide standardized information on author, title, subject, and so forth. Moreover, in view

The name of this Chinese website is 'Don't cry, my friend' (*pengyou bie ku*). The site hosts a nationwide 'Dating & Personal' service for gay and lesbian Chinese. Although the site tries to operate within the boundaries of national law, it might very well be closed down one day. The DACHS project can help to make sure that its contents will be still available when that day comes.

of the long-term preservation of digital resources metadata are highly significant in that they can carry all sorts of information on content as well as on technical and administrative data necessary for proper identification and future handling. At present, the library catalogue of the Institute of Chinese Studies in Heidelberg has been re-designed so as to accommodate the necessary metadata, including categories for rights management, history of origin, management history, file types, identifiers, and others.

The DACHS has been developed largely according to the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) framework, an ISO standard for long-term preservation of digital data. In the DACHS issues such as daily backup routines in three places in southern Germany, failure-proof IT systems, and virus checks based on hourly updated virus definitions are cared for in the best way possible.

Obviously, a comparatively small institute such as ours cannot satisfactorily cover the field on its own; hence preparations for international cooperation are now in progress. While it is necessary to distribute the effort, it is essential that the integrity of the whole is preserved. Together with the Institute of Chinese Studies at Leiden University, where currently large digital collections on the SARS epidemic, contemporary poetry, and the homosexual scene in China are being built up, DACHS is currently running the first testing phase for transnational cooperation. In close cooperation with the Leiden University Library possibilities of large digital resource management systems are also explored and will most probably be used for the whole project. <

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## Preserving Endangered Sites

Due to its worldwide proliferation over the past few years the internet has become an important scholarly resource in at least two aspects: it provides up-to-date information on recent developments, and it is a field to be studied in its own right as it reflects a lively public discourse unfiltered by traditional publishing processes and sometimes even uncensored by the state. However, articulations of public discourse on the internet are of a very elusive nature. The internet is an ever changing kaleidoscope of contents, and although it is thus capable of representing development and diversity of social discourse very well, articulations on the internet that have been made in the past are lost if we do not find ways to preserve these for the future. An important project that tries to address this problem is the Internet Archive. Since October 1996 large parts of the global internet are scanned every few months and stored for later research purposes. Useful as this may be important problems remain unresolved: (1) most of the websites are only captured very superficially, with parts located further down the tree not available, many pages being incomplete, and some file types being ignored altogether; (2) scans are performed at irregular intervals, without considering possible important changes or articulations that have appeared in between. For this reason many other initiatives using different approaches have come up over the past few years. Some of these projects, such as those started by various National Libraries are of a more holistic character and aim to preserve all online publications within their realm of responsibility. Others work on a smaller scale, focusing on special topics, and paying much attention to appropriate selection criteria. Currently maintained at the Institute of Chinese Studies in Heidelberg and with the Sinological Institute in Leiden as a new partner, the Digital Archive for Chinese Studies (DACHS) follows this approach in capturing articulations on the Chinese internet. <

# Mongolia: Who Bridges the Digital Divide?

Research >  
Central Asia

To appreciate the impact of information and computing technology (ICT) on Mongolia one must understand the extent of the country's remoteness. Landing at Buant Uhaa airport near Ulaanbaatar, one will have flown hundreds of miles over an empty mountainous landscape and seemingly endless space. The lifelines to the outside world are the mobile phone and the internet connection, other modes of transport being either slow or expensive.

By Margreet van Doodewaard

After Mongolia's peaceful transition from a centrally planned to a market oriented economy in the early 1990's, ICT was the second development to bring Mongolia out of its isolation. Information and computing technology is on the rise in Mongolia because it is the fast track to the outside world, socially as well as economically (206 out of 10,000 went online in 2002 against 126 in 2000).<sup>1</sup> Through ICT, or more precisely through access to the internet, the availability of the Mongolian font and mobile telecommunications, a host of new opportunities for social and economic development has been created.

## Rural Mongolia online?

Dalanzadgad is a small provincial capital of five thousand people in the vast, empty Gobi. The town provides services to nomadic herders, and enjoys some seasonal tourism. A survey in Dalanzadgad revealed that its residents use the internet to communicate and to access information on local news, health, markets, and the weather. The ability to write and send emails in one's own language to relatives and friends in Ulaanbaatar has had an incredible impact on Mongolia's rural communities. To be able to consult a doctor in the capital via email saves time and money. To be able to access information on market prices of cashmere gives rural herders a better negotiating position vis-à-vis middlemen. Rural schools accessing the internet through Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) can tap into new resources to improve education, bringing to both students and the community a broader understanding of the world in which they live.<sup>2</sup>

Even though the advantages are significant, local content on the web remains limited and, especially in rural areas, access is still slow and costly. Lack of capacity and skill hinders the sustainability of rural initiatives.

## ICT in the economy

Mongolia was quick to catch on to the significance of the digital revolution. The country's ICT industry was inaugurated in 1996 with Ulaanbaatar's first commercial internet service provider (ISP). Driven by the private sector, ICT quickly spread to rural towns; small ICT enterprises mushroomed. Many technologically savvy youngsters began their careers as programmers in restructuring state institutions and then opened their own small businesses. Another group of entrepreneurs started internet cafes. The disintegration of State Owned Enterprises and the ensuing loss of jobs further encouraged this development.

The private sector is the real driver behind ICT in Mongolia. There are numerous companies in software development,

internet services, and hardware retail trying to find their niche in the small national market. To survive they have to be creative and compete aggressively. This makes companies willing to take large risks, and to venture into markets normally considered unprofitable, such as thinly populated rural areas. Thus more and more provincial centres today have mobile telecom services and VSAT. With the merging of ICT and telecommunications and the further lowering of telecommunications costs, the mobile phone and its services will soon enter truly remote communities.

Today the ICT industry is a potential engine for growth in an isolated economy. The local market, however, is small and more or less saturated. Many entrepreneurs therefore seek export opportunities and a few companies have managed to find partners in Japan and Korea. Wanting in English and business experience but possessing great technical skill, creativity and versatility, Mongolian ICT companies are seeking every possible opportunity to increase their market share and profits.

## ICT and governance

The government recognizes the opportunity ICT represents, and sees itself as the patron of its development. The government's capacity to promote ICT in the country is, however, limited. This is mainly due to the lack of human and financial resources, and, perhaps, the remnants of Mongolia's political history. With a tendency to centralize rather than decentralize, to regulate rather than facilitate, and with a mild distrust of the private sector, the government is reluctant to accept policy advice from stakeholders, particularly those in the private sector. The government, however, recognizes the value of ICT for Mongolia to overcome its isolation; with economic growth in mind, it has not hampered access to ICT or the internet.

In the year 2000, the Mongolian parliament ratified Vision 2010, a policy statement developed together with the private sector, civil society, academia, and the donor community.<sup>3</sup> To implement Vision 2010, a national ICT committee was established, chaired by the prime minister and including representatives from national and international NGOs, academia, and the private sector. In January 2002 the government and the World Bank jointly organized an international donor meeting to mobilize resources for ICT. Recognizing its economic potential, the government established a 'National ICT Park', a technologically intelligent building providing housing and services to small IT companies. As Mongolia's economy is small, even a modest (export) sector will have considerable economic and social impact. Last but not least, the government hopes that a viable IT sector will provide jobs for young graduates.

In spite of Vision 2010, progress is slow. This is in part due

Mongolian designers at work for their company Interpress.



Claudia Kool

to the changing of the guard in 2000: Vision 2010 was developed by the previous government, and many of its civil servants departed with their expertise. Furthermore, stakeholders played a large part in drafting the document, but have been less involved in its implementation. So far Vision 2010 has led to the creation of a policy framework for the IT industry, and changes in education to include ICT awareness training and professional IT courses. National priorities, however, are set within financial and human resource constraints; much of what the government can do is determined by the donor community, which does not see ICT as a priority. Last but not least, the government has a tendency to focus on the T in ICT and gives priority to infrastructure. There is a belief that once the infrastructure is there, the rest will follow. As a result, ICT tends to get lost among the issues that clamour for attention. Nonetheless, ICT and the internet have broadened the horizons of Mongolian society. ◀

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## Author's note >

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.

## Notes >

- 1 ITU Internet Indicators 2000 and 2002; [www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics)
- 2 To implement practical ICT awareness courses, the Asian Development Bank, South Korea, and other donors have provided many rural secondary schools with computer labs, connected to the internet via VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal). Some of these schools have opened their classrooms to citizens. By paying a small fee rural Mongolians learnt how to use computers and access the internet. After school hours, the computer lab becomes an internet cafe, offering a place for the young to meet (and play computer games).
- 3 Vision 2010 aims to advance social development and improve Mongolians' quality of life by fostering the country's intellectual potential. Its platform includes: government involvement in the provision of ICT; the creation of a business environment integrated into the world economy; increased intellectual content and competitiveness for national products; the creation of a favourable environment for Mongolian citizens to communicate freely among themselves and with the world community regardless of location; and the promotion of equal involvement and participation in social relationships.

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# A New Approach to the Study of Islamic Activism

For decades, the study of Islamic activism has languished at the margins of social science theory. Excepting a handful of scholars, (particularly those who focused on the Iranian revolution), research on Islamic activism has not fully engaged the broader theoretical and conceptual developments that have emerged from the scholarship on social movements, revolutions, and contentious politics. This large body of comparative research on non-Islamic forms of collective action provides myriad tools for analysis and theoretical leverage over questions that interest students of Islamic activism, such as issues of recruitment, tactics and strategies, mobilization patterns, and state-movement interactions.

Research >  
General

By Quintan Wiktorowicz

Since the late 1990s, a number of Islamic movement specialists have begun to bridge the gap between the study of Islamic activism and social science theories of collective action (see Wiktorowicz 2004b). The underlying premise is that Islamic activism is not *sui generis*. Rather than emphasizing the specificity of Islam as a system of meaning, identity, and basis for collective action, these scholars point to movement commonalities rooted in process: how contention is organized, the way ideas are framed and propagated, how grievances are collectivized, and tactics and strategies formed in response to exogenous shifts in opportunities and constraints. By focusing on shared mechanisms of contention rather than the uniqueness of Islam, such an understanding avails itself of a broader array of concepts, theories, and empirical evidence.



*'while misery is ubiquitous, mobilization is not'*

In this new approach, scholars emphasize three sets of processes – resource mobilization, decision-making, and framing – operative in both Islamic and non-Islamic activism.

Although this theoretical development is primarily rooted in empirical studies of Islamic movements in the Middle East, it addresses the same generic research questions posed by those who study Islamism in Asia. As a result, while the following discussion draws on theoretically informed studies of Islamic activism in the Middle East, the approach itself holds lessons for scholarship on Asian Islamism.

## Resource mobilization

Many studies of Islamic activism emphasize the underlying grievances that engender collective action, including blocked social mobility, the lack of political freedom, economic despair, a sense of cultural vulnerability, and humiliation. The central argument is that, as Ted Gurr once famously put it, 'misery breeds revolt'.

The problem with such arguments is that while misery is ubiquitous, mobilization is not. Social movement theorists have attacked grievance-based explanations as incomplete: grievances are not irrelevant, but there is a missing intermediary set of variables necessary to translate grievances into actualized mobilization. In particular, movements need resources and mobilizing structures to collectivize what would otherwise remain individualized grievances. Money, communications technology, meeting places, social networks, and other resources are needed

to organize, direct, and mobilize contention. Without organizational capacity, individuals remain isolated from one another and unable to effectively launch collective endeavours. Differences in mobilization patterns are, in part, explained by the degree of resource availability and the types of resources and mobilizing structures utilized by particular groups. For Islamic activism, these include mosques, study circles, social networks, Islamic non-governmental organizations (NGOs), political parties, professional and student associations, and unions. All of these are utilized to recruit, organize, and launch contention.

Examples of resource mobilization abound. In the early 1990s, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) utilized a national network of mosques and community organizations in Algeria to organize for elections. The electoral success of the FIS in the face of regime repression was, at least in part, due to the party's access to enduring religious institutions. The Gama'a Islamiyya in Egypt commanded similar resources in the 1980s. In the city of Dairut alone, the movement controlled about 150 mosques. Access to the mosques was used to develop support, organize, and create contact points with the public. When the regime tried to repress the movement, it met dramatic resistance because 'after a decade of organizing social and political networks in Upper Egypt, the Islamists had the capacity to fight back' (Hafez and Wiktorowicz 2004: 78). More moderate Islamic groups in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen have utilized grassroots networks of NGOs and political parties to mobilize support. These institutions offer sources of patronage, outreach programmes to potential constituents, and forums for activism.

Resource mobilization is a process that transcends the specificity of ideology. Though ideology can limit the range of resource options by excluding some as contrary to movement beliefs, movement fortunes frequently ebb and flow with resource availability and institutional access. A focus on resource mobilization emphasizes *how* movements mobilize, rather than the ultimate goal of mobilization.

## Decision-making

Some earlier research on Islamic activism assumed the pre-eminence of belief in dictating behaviour. Although this assumption was never a universal norm, Orientalist influence often privileged the causal importance of ideas and Islam as a belief system.

To a large extent, the new emphasis on process challenges some earlier ontological assertions about the Islamic activist. Rather than viewing activists as guided by dogmatic adherence to ide-

ology, a number of recent studies adopt a loose rational actor model. From this perspective, Islamic activists are driven by tactical and strategic assessments of costs and risks. Choices reflect conscious evaluation of whether decisions help to achieve goals within a context of opportunities and constraints. While the approach tends to avoid the conceptual language of rational choice theory (preferences, utility maximization, etc.), it shares the emphasis on strategic decision-making.

This trend is most apparent in studies of violent groups. Perhaps as a reaction to caricatures of the 'irrational zealot', social scientists have highlighted the strategic logic of radicals. Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela (2000), for example, argue that Hamas strategically responds to changes in political context. Prior to the al-Aqsa intifada in 2000, the growing popularity of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process challenged the viability of Hamas. Strict intransigence towards peace eroded support from a population that sought an end to the economic and social hardships of occupation. In response, Hamas tactically adjusted its doctrine to accommodate the possibility of peace, framing it as a temporary pause in the jihad (this calculus, of course, changed with the al-Aqsa intifada). A rational actor model has also been used to examine an array of other radical groups, including the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria and al-Qaeda.

This is not to completely marginalize the role of Islamist ideology in decision-making. The universe of potential choices is circumscribed by the 'imaginable options' within particular world views. But the rationality of Islamist decision-making demonstrates that the process of choice is shared by many types of movements.

## Framing

Although the new approach to Islamic activism de-emphasizes ideology and belief as causal variables, it does not reject the role of ideas altogether. Instead, the focus is on how ideas are socially created, arranged, and disseminated. In other words, the emphasis is on the process of constructing discourse, and the resulting ideational packages. In the parlance of social movement theory, movements must 'frame' their arguments to persuade audiences and elicit support and participation.

Al-Qaeda, for example, is embroiled in a bitter 'frame dispute' with the Saudi ulama (religious scholars), where each asserts a particular interpretation and the right to sacred authority (Wiktorowicz 2004a). Al-Qaeda emphasizes the knowledge, character, and logic of its scholars while attacking its detractors using the same criteria. Al-Qaeda supporters are framed as honourable, independent, and scientific in their approach to interpreting Islam. Opponents, in contrast, are framed as 'sheikhs of authority' or 'palace lackeys' inextricably linked to corrupt Muslim governments. The framing strategy is designed to insert al-Qaeda as sole mediator between the sacred texts and religious practice.

In some instances, Islamists construct frames that meld religious and non-religious themes to reach broader audiences. Appeals to nationalism, tribal symbolism, and even human rights find themselves intertwined with religion in ideational packages. The eclectic nature of such frames demonstrates the strategic dimension of framing: content is frequently selected according to its potential persuasive effect rather than solely on the basis of ideology.

An approach to the study of Islamic activism that draws from social science theory erodes essentialist assumptions about Islamic exceptionalism. Drawing from a large empirical base of comparative research, it offers analytic tools for addressing key questions. And by emphasizing the dynamics of activism rather than the uniqueness of Islam as an organizing belief system, the approach opens possibilities for dialogue with students of non-Islamic contention, potentially bringing new insights.



*'Islamic activists are driven by tactical and strategic assessments of costs and risks'*

While the illustrations outlined above are derived from work on movements in the Middle East, they emphasize possible lines of inquiry for students of Islamic activism in Asia as well. The focus on resource mobilization, rational decision-making, and strategic framing is offered only as a starting point. The hope is that theoretically driven research rooted in empirical studies of Islamism in Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere will propel theory building in bolder directions. <

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Chemist's/Druggist in Chamba, also selling ammunition.

# The Introduction of Biomedicine into the Indo-Tibetan Himalayas

Research >  
Central Asia

While a modest academic literature exists on the introduction of biomedicine (popularly known as 'Western' medicine) into the metropolitan centres of India and China in the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries, little or no attention has been paid to the same historical process in the Himalayan lands.

By Alex McKay

Designed to fill this lacuna in our field, my current research is guided by the proposition that there were four main agents behind the spread of biomedicine in the Himalayan region: medical missionaries, private travellers, commercial representatives, and the colonial state – the British Imperial Government of India. Records of missionaries, travellers, and the colonial state are both abundant and revealing. Commercial records are, however, less easy to access, with pharmaceutical companies reluctant to open their archives to potential critics. Therefore, I would be pleased to hear from anyone with knowledge of the activities of Indian and other companies with commercial interests in the spread of biomedicine.

In the early years of the British presence in South Asia, European and indigenous medical systems were not necessarily incompatible. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, European medicine underwent something of a revolution: developments such as germ theory, the discovery of anaesthetics and systematic vaccination led to a radical departure from earlier understandings. This transformation was accompanied by an increasing sense of superiority among practitioners of biomedicine, with the consequent loss of interest in indigenous systems and remedies for disease.

The transmission of biomedicine to the peoples of the Himalayas began in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Missionaries began to place increasing emphasis on the use of medicine as a means to encourage conversion; colonial travellers and officials, in

their efforts to discover and map the remotest corners of the region, introduced, incidentally, knowledge of at least the basic features of the Western biomedical system. There were political imperatives: the need to attract indigenous supporters to the imperial system. On top of this, belief in the 'White Man's Burden' and his 'Christian duty' coalesced with the belief that scientific principles were universally applicable, and knowledge could – to both political and moral benefit – be transferred from the metropolis to the farthest reaches of the empire, and indeed the world.

There was an almost total absence of state public health structures in the Himalayan region at the beginning of the twentieth century. Indigenous medicine consisted of several strands of belief and practice, with elite textual, shamanic, 'village-level' and household practitioners providing medical treatment, generally within a religious theoretical framework. Medicine, however, lacked state and professional organization and a system of verification. While not without efficacy, particularly for conditions that included psychological aspects, the Himalayan world was largely defenceless against epidemics, child mortality was high, and certain serious conditions were virtually endemic.

Biomedicine in its early twentieth-century form offered a variety of treatments that were to radically alter the Himalayan medical landscape, not the least of which were surgery (particularly for cataracts) and vaccination against smallpox. As was the case elsewhere, the new medical system did not meet with immediate acceptance. Nor did it,

while eventually becoming hegemonic at state and local elite levels, entirely displace indigenous systems of medical practice. Elements of biomedicine were adopted at various speeds: some were adapted for use within local systems, while others were resisted. The subject demands, therefore, consideration of the process of adoption and interaction with indigenous systems and practices.

Within its general survey of the process by which biomedicine came to predominate in the Indo-Tibetan Himalayas, this project focuses on five particular regions: Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan, Darjeeling and district, and Chamba district in the western Himalayas. Each of these regions existed in a slightly different constitutional relationship to the Government of India, and by analysing them separately, the effects of the different relationships with the Indian state on the development of medical systems can be discerned.

## Imperial stepping stones

In Chamba district, for example, missionaries were the prime agents in introducing biomedicine and in establishing its predominance. Christian missionaries were forbidden to enter Tibet, where the Imperial government's Indian Medical Service officers were the primary agents in spreading biomedical practices. In both cases, the project succeeded by obtaining the consent and support of indigenous elite classes. By persuading elites of the benefits of biomedicine, the new system was made available to all classes within indigenous society; indeed the lower classes may well have benefited disproportionately.

Particularly in the Tibetan Buddhist world, the religious framework of indigenous medical practice translated into manifestations of cultural resistance. Political resistance, of the type noted in India, was largely absent due to the lack of national consciousness among Himalayan Buddhists, as was resistance based on notions of purity and pollution. The greatest resistance seems to have been to modernity in general, with biomedicine being an aspect of that modernity. Resistance to biomedicine was thus an active policy based on a specific world view, and while its use spread among indigenous elites over time, in 1950 there were still no indigenous practitioners of biomedicine in Tibet or Bhutan and only a handful in Sikkim.

In the postcolonial era, Chamba and Darjeeling districts, old stepping stones for the imperial project of introducing biomedicine into the Himalayas, came under full control of the newly independent Indian government; their medical services became part of those of the new state. Whereas Sikkim was brought into the new system in the 1970s after the Indian take-over, Bhutan, retaining its independence, formulated a different model for developing its medical system. Bhutan granted concessions to indigenous medical systems, for example clinics offering local and biomedical treatments under the same roof.

## Biomedicine in exile

Of particular interest is the history of the interaction between Tibetan medicine and biomedicine in the period after 1959, when the Dalai Lama and approximately 100,000 of his followers

went into exile in India. Biomedical treatment was made available to the exile community under the Indian state, and by the 1970s biomedical facilities were established within the Tibetan exile community, initially under private philanthropic initiatives and subsequently under exile government control. Tibetan medicine, patronized and promoted by the exile government, was made available alongside biomedical treatment.

The preservation and promotion of Tibetan medicine has been part of the wider political project of preserving Tibetan culture in exile. Exposed to the wider world, however, the problematic elements of the project can be discerned. One obvious difficulty, which may, of course, be applied to all such terms, is defining 'Tibetan medicine'. Historically, numerous medical practices existed within Tibet's regions; as these were not systemized under central authority, they varied considerably in form and practice. The form chosen for preservation and promotion has been Tibetan Buddhist culture's elite textually based system, and not, for example, women's' knowledge of local cures.

Alongside practical problems such as guaranteeing the supply of traditional herbs in Indian exile, difficulties remain in the promotion of Tibetan medicine as a scientific system. The identity of Tibetan medicine is also challenged by the extent of its interaction with biomedicine; as it enjoys considerable popularity among westerners, Indians, and Chinese, its survival as a separate system may well depend on outside patronage. Among the exile community, the resort to biomedicine is common, while practitioners of Tibetan medicine, incorporating aspects of biomedical practice (such as the taking of blood pressure), place less emphasis on both 'traditional' practices (such as pulse-taking) and on religious aspects that once provided a clear framework to their medical initiatives.

Many patients resort to both systems, often simultaneously. Numerous factors affect their choice, including ease of access, cost, ideas of efficacy, and issues of personal and ethnic identity. The modern construction of Tibetan medicine as a state authorized system is an ongoing process, subject to negotiation, and affected by global political and economic factors; its final status remains unknown. It is, however, important to study both the history and the ongoing issues of medical interaction, not only in Asia's capitals and centres, but among all its peoples. By examining the process through which biomedicine was introduced into the Indo-Tibetan Himalayas, we may shed light on both colonial and postcolonial political structures and social processes. ◀

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# The Power of the Stars

## Astrology and Divination in the Traditional Indian Society

Research >  
South Asia

Love of astrology and divination is not a trait peculiar to Indian culture. What distinguishes India is the large-scale survival of such practices. Sanskrit astrological texts bear testimony to the profound and illustrious culture of Indian divination traditions in ancient times. Regarded as an obscure subject in the general field of ancient science, astrology is, incorrectly, relegated to the margins, while it should, instead, be considered in relation to other ancient 'scientific' disciplines.

By Audrius Beinorius

Astrology is India's richest and most vital tradition: some 100,000 manuscripts covering various aspects of Indian astral sciences (lit. *jyotiṣaśāstra*) exist worldwide. Since the end of the nineteenth century, classical philologists and historians of Indian religion and science, such as H. Kern, A. Weber, and H.-G. Thibaut, have made efforts to preserve and publish long-neglected Sanskrit astrological texts, emphasizing their autonomous value. Arguably, only science historians have ever bothered to look at astrological practice, yet even they have limited their interest to contemporary mathematics or astronomy, and clearly remain a long way from putting astrology in its proper social or intellectual context (Pingree 1997). The importance of medieval astrological texts in understanding the history of culture and ideas is more fully appreciated today, mainly due to David Pingree's historical studies and his immense project, *Census of the Exact Sciences in Sanskrit*.

Yet, many questions arise: how can we explain astrology's large-scale survival and even its persistent proliferation? What was its role in traditional society and within ancient bodies of knowledge? Why did and does astrology appeal to educated Indians? This paper briefly discusses these questions, emphasizing some methodological and hermeneutical considerations.

For a long period the notion of 'pseudo-sciences' has hindered historical and contextual investigation into phenomena like astrology and other forms of divination. According to Richard Lemay, we cannot 'understand medieval attitudes toward astrology by

applying to this science our contemporary paradigm (to use Kuhn's convenient term)' as this '...seems to foreclose in advance all avenues leading to the medieval mind, to its structural framework, and to the contents of its own different paradigm' (Lemay 1987:58). Only a hermeneutical approach can lay bare the key concepts that supported ancient science. Such an approach can also reveal the overall structure of ideas constructed with these concepts, the local modes of cultural transmission of knowledge, methods of social control, and the nature of the cultural norms, that shaped the traditional epistemic field.

In the traditional Indian context, astrology formed an indispensable and intimate part of traditional science and cosmology. It appealed to educated Indians precisely because it was a rational system, or could be made to look like one. With reference to Greek civilization, G. Sarton once remarked that Greek astrology was the fruit of Greek rationalism, and received some kind of justification from the notion of cosmos, which is so arranged that no part is independent of the other parts and the whole.

The same can be said about the Indian cultural context. Acceptance of astrology as a learned and scientific study was a common attitude, if not the norm, hence the greatest Indian astronomers (Varāhamihira, Brahmagupta) were also astrologers. Both origin and subject matter of astrology were considered to be divine and astrology fascinated many of the greatest minds because it provided a total vision of reality, uniting the macrocosm with the human microcosm. It was due to the interest in prediction

and control as well as to the belief that divination could be socially beneficial, that divination developed as a body of social and psychological knowledge.

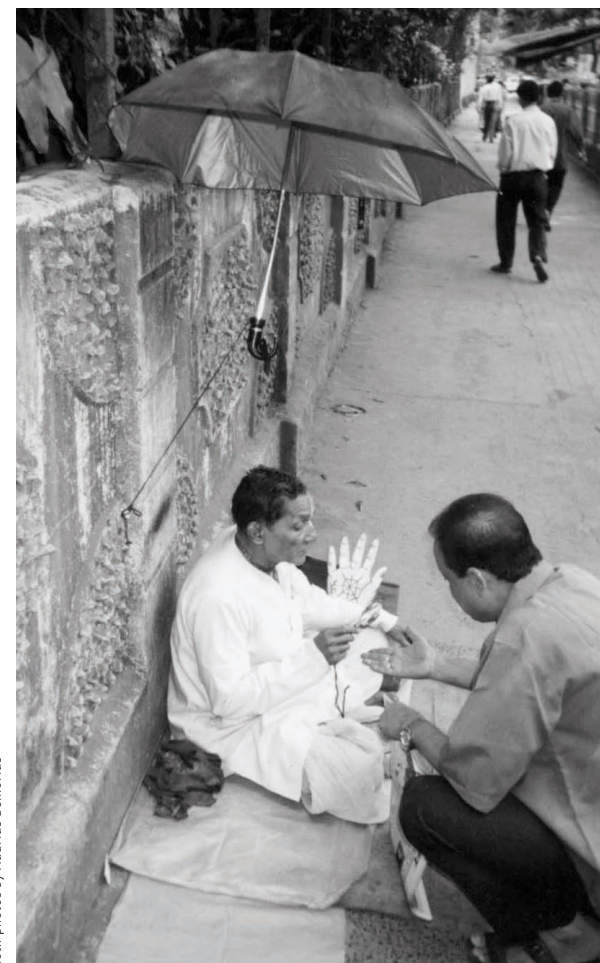
### Ancient applied science

In very ancient times, Indian rulers acquired their legitimacy by claiming a divine connection, for example descent from the Sun, Moon, or Jupiter. Hence the very first task for astrologers in the past was to establish such divine sanction for the rulers. The *Yājñavalkya smṛiti* (1:307) holds that the rise and fall of kings depends on the influence of planets, therefore a king should rely on his astrologers. Most of the royal charters issued by ancient and medieval Indian rulers bear dates with astronomical details, which were no doubt supplied by the court astrologer. It is not by chance that this tradition was also actively cultivated by the patronage of the powerful Mahārājas.

One may wonder why astrology was, and still is, so widely used. Perhaps because it provides a tangible, visible template for predicting one's fate. Traditionally it is thought that a person's karma has caused him to be born at a time when the horoscope would lead to his fortunate or unfortunate condition. Hindus believe that heavenly bodies – the planets (*graha*), constellations (*rāśi*), and asterisms (*nakṣatra*) – have a divine influence on the earth and on individual people. These planetary effects are commonly considered as the fruits of karma.

In the words of Judy F. Pugh, 'These celestial forces begin to influence the person from the time of conception and birth. Hindu astrology offers schematizations of the influence of planets on the developing embryo and stresses the importance of birth time as the key point through which karma is made visible and hence future actions and circumstances are made known' (Pugh 1986:135). In that sense, astrology as an applied science reflects popular understanding of the manifestations of fate in the experiences of everyday life, and justifies itself as inspiring a healthy religious and social attitude. Karma teachings serve as a means of legitimizing the application of astrology in religious and social practices.

Like most ancient Indian disciplines, astrology is traditionally believed to consist of eternally valid knowledge with eternally fixed contents and unchanging rules. Astrologers were always referring to ancient divine revelation of astrological knowledge, and they indulged in a free improvisation on certain themes. Like the other Indian *śāstras* (traditional disciplines), astrology was preserved within families of practitioners, and members of each such family would remain faithful over many generations to a particular group of texts and would generally not be interested in educating outsiders or in making innovations in their traditional learning.



Street astrologer and palmist at work, Chennai.

Both photos by Audrius Beinorius

### Different knowledge structures

Generally speaking, rather than taking astrology's irrationality as given, it is more fruitful to consider how grounds for belief in prediction and divination in the ancient world differed from our own and the way in which their different ordering of knowledge might be related to a different social, cultural, and even political context. As T.S. Barton has rightly pointed out, 'Ancient astrology offers a contrasting case to our organization of knowledge, illustrating the artificial, historically specific nature of boundaries between knowledge and pseudo-knowledge, intellectual discipline and technical craft, science, and mysticism' (Barton 1994:30). It seems that if and where historical astrology is human-centred, this will not pertain to astronomical or mathematical science, but rather to psychology and social science. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that much in India that currently goes under the name of Indian astrological scholarship in fact merely serves as a vehicle for the propagation of nationalist ideas on the one hand or of escapist and utopian notions on the other. The revival of so called 'traditional Indian medicine' is a case in point.

As Gyan Prakash has shown, in late-nineteenth-century British India, the Hindu intelligentsia began to canonize a body of contemporary scientific knowledge, in particular ancient Indian texts and traditions (Prakash 1999:88). The definition of classical texts as scientific was crucial in this process because this gave justification to their status as the embodiment of eternal and universal laws. The Western-educated intelligentsia felt impelled to reinterpret classical astrological texts and by casting the texts in the language of the Western scientific discourse, they construed a body of indigenous scientific traditions consistent with Western science. As a result, we often find that current astrological concepts are uncritically projected into earlier times, in accordance with the notion that no actual evolution can have taken place. It is for this reason that the claim of astrological practice to be 'scientific' is

still very strong in its contemporary Indian context.

In my opinion, unless one examines the basic Indian astrological treatises in their fullest social and intellectual contexts, as far as practically possible, it is impossible to give a reasonable and accurate answer to the question what traditional Indians think of astrology. The vast-scale text-critical and hermeneutical examinations of those treatises that I propose, are significant for the study of ancient Indian culture and also for understanding contemporary religious practices and beliefs. <

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Pandit Dr Ashish Bhattacharya (Calcutta) representing a more sophisticated astrological tradition, validating itself by the use of ancient astrological texts and nourished mainly by the *guru-śiṣya* (teacher-disciple) system.

# Sexual Discrimination in South India

Research >  
South Asia

In India's patriarchal society boys are favoured and girls are seen as a burden to their families. The nation's gender discrimination has many different guises, the most extreme of which is infanticide of girls and sex-selective abortion of female foetuses, even if the main manifestation of discrimination is negligence towards girls (in terms of care and alimentation). Notwithstanding its long history in India, infanticide is not merely an ancient practice that has survived into the present day. It is becoming more widespread. Sex-selective abortion, or foeticide, has a much shorter history, simply because prior to modern medical techniques, available for the last quarter of century, it was not possible to identify the sex of a foetus. Why is it then that gender discrimination, even in its most extreme forms, proliferates in certain regions of South India?

By *Stéphanie Vella*

As difficult a question as this may be, the first elements of an answer can be found by combining a spatial analysis of sexual discrimination in South India, at different levels, with the results from a field study. Whereas the spatial analysis denotes significant variations in behaviour, particularly in Tamil Nadu, the field study enables us to obtain greater precision regarding both infanticide and sex-selective abortion of girls in that state. The skewed female-male ratio, as reflected in the demographic statistics of the population, is a silent witness to these practices. Sex ratios (the number of women per 1,000 men) are not merely telling of the violent ways in which unwanted daughters are disposed of, they can also give us a quantified idea of the status of women in a society. The sex ratios of a population as a whole are the complex product of sex ratio at birth, different mortality according to sex, and migration. The child sex ratio (CSR, the same female-male ratio but for children of 0-6 years) is a much more valuable indicator of the situation of girls as it is not susceptible to migratory mechanisms.

Since 1901, the sex ratio of the Indian population as a whole has been steadily diminishing (that is to say, the number of women per 1,000 men declined) and so has the child sex ratio. These developments have been far more pronounced in certain regions, such as in the north of the country. This declining sex ratio exposes specific discriminatory socio-cultural practices, which are firmly rooted in the Indian patriarchal context. These ratios were statistically recorded, but were often difficult to feature during the first censuses, especially because the lower numbers of females then was only explained by miscounting of girls: girls were sometimes not registered because they were not considered as a part of family.

## Select-a-sex

The discriminatory socio-cultural practices of infanticide and foeticide (sex-selective abortion) of girls, both of which lead to a reduced female-male ratio to this day, have known a substantially different historical development. Infanticide as an ancient discriminatory practice in North India, not only continues to be practised there, but has recently even spread to the South. Female foeticide has a much shorter history but has been on a steady rise for the last thirty years.

There are several techniques that make female foeticide possible, namely sexing embryos and – more recently, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis – amniocentesis, and ultrasound scanning. This last method, which remains the most affordable, is constantly being improved: it is now possible to identify the sex of an embryo at between 13 and

14 weeks of pregnancy by means of a trans-vaginal scan. Ever since India adopted new medical technologies to determine the sex of the unborn child, nothing has really taken place to arrest the rapid progression of female foeticide. The only legal action lies in a law named 'The Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Regulation and Prevention of Misuse Act' that was adopted in 1994 and amended in 2003, but this law is not implemented. The difficulty in controlling these techniques lies in the fact that their propagation has mainly occurred within private infrastructures. As these are often not registered by the state, it is very difficult to establish regulations for them.

Negligence towards girls is even more widespread than the extreme forms of gender discriminative behaviour, such as infanticide and sex-selective abortion mentioned above. Negligence in terms of care and/or alimentation expresses how parents are sex-selective in investing in their children. Their behaviour corresponds to the specific value that these parents attach to the gender of their child. Gender seems to be defined extremely early in comparison with the West: the sex of the child to be born is a crucial issue for the future of the family. The sex of a child can become a crucial dimension of demographic choices, especially in a patriarchal society, in a context where dowry is the norm, where social pressures force parents to pay for many ceremonies during the course of their daughter's life (puberty, pregnancy, marriage, grandchildren's birth, festivals and so forth), and where women often suffer a difficult destiny.

## Man-made

If we now consider the local variation in the child sex ratio, as presented in a digitized map of South India, it becomes evident that sexual discrimination varies greatly within the region (see explanation with map). Two large

regions in Tamil Nadu, near Madurai and Salem-Dharmapuri respectively, characterized by an abnormally low proportion of girls, have been identified as showing the most pronounced sexual discrimination. The number of girls per 1,000 boys was already exceptionally low at 858 in 1991. This figure dropped even further to 826 in 2001, giving the area the lowest CSR of South India. Without doubt the absolute peak of discrimination against young girls in South India is reached in Salem district. If we examine local child sex ratios in 1991 in some places of the district, sex ratios registered even below 660. Seen at the micro level, in numerous villages in Salem with more than 2,000 inhabitants, there were twice as many boys as there were girls. With the exception of Salem district, all Indian districts with CSR < 900 were located in the North of India in 1991. Ten years later, however, Salem had been joined by other Tamil districts, indicating that sexual discrimination in this state is increasing.

A close correspondence exists between districts with unbalanced child sex ratios, and districts where infanticide is recorded. This practice is one of the major causes of excessive and unnatural female mortality. In 1999, infanticide was behind 16 per cent of female infant mortality in Tamil Nadu and behind an astonishing 64 per cent of this rate in Salem (DANIDA Tamil Nadu Area Health Care Project, Phase III, 1999).

Today, compared with other Indian states, Tamil Nadu has a low fertility rate. The decline of the state's fertility rate was as recent as it was rapid. With its fertility rate of 2.1 in 1999, Tamil Nadu ranked second lowest after Kerala. Although lagging behind Kerala in some respects, Tamil Nadu is quite advanced in other social aspects as is indicated by its high literacy rate among girls, the high sex ratio of the population as a whole, the high level of partic-

ipation of women in work, and the low infant mortality rate. In view of these results, it is difficult to understand why discrimination in this state is so predominant.

The two areas outlined on the map have some particularities which can partially explain this phenomenon. If we look at the Salem-Dharmapuri area, we notice that these two districts are dry areas. Irrigation is scarce, but agriculture is thriving; and industry, urbanization, and literacy were very late to develop. Dharmapuri is infamous as being the most backward district of Tamil Nadu, especially in respect of health care, which is very poorly provided for (in terms of maternal and infant mortality). In order to understand the emergence of practices of sexual discrimination, we will now look more thoroughly at their socio-cultural roots.

## Of rich and poor

In 2000, a micro-local study in a village consisting of five hamlets was conducted in Salem district, in an attempt to understand the context of sexual discrimination through the experience of the women, the traditions, and the rites and kinship systems of the local castes. The village belongs to the historical region of Kongu Nadu, which is a very dry agricultural area irrigated by wells, where textile industry and lorry transport activities are also found. It was chosen for its location in a very sensitive zone in terms of the figures presented above. Some 40 to 50 years ago, outside the tribal hilly places of Nilgiris (Todas), infanticide in Tamil Nadu was most probably almost unknown. My fieldwork in the Salem area supports the idea of a top-down diffusion model of infanticide: a specific upper caste of agricultural landed people may have pioneered infanticide, later transmitting this practice to other lower groups. The reason this caste took on family planning as early as it did was simply to avoid the division of land. Such top-down diffusion could also be observed in North India, where landed castes discriminated against girls before lower castes adopted the same practice. In the mid-1960s, the agricultural revolution brought about changes in the rules of land ownership. In effect, the landed classes grew wealthier and were thus in the position to buy new land and, also, to diversify into other activities, such as the transport sector.

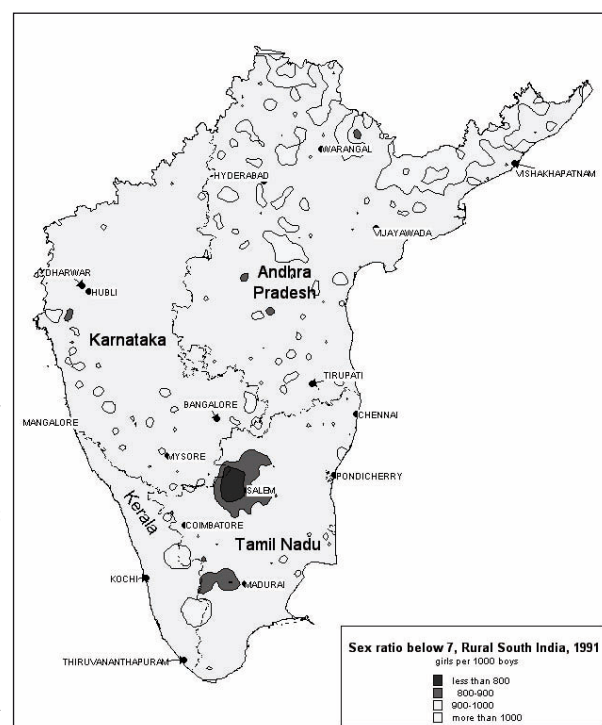
One hypothesis would be that these developments taking place all over India facilitated the appearance of the dowry in South India, in imitation of customs in North India, and that infanticide was a later consequence. The disappearance of the bride price and the marked increase of the dowry thus directly correspond to rapid wealth acquisition among certain small farmers and the pressure exerted on women in the marriage market. Inter-marriages gave way to marriages outside the family, based on economic choices, and the size of the dowry increased very rapidly. Due to the increased pressure of the dowry and also to decreasing female participation and pay in agriculture as a result of the India Agricultural Revolution, the position of women is deteriorating. It seems that infanticide made its appearance subsequent to these upheavals. In short, the accumulation of property can be seen to harm the status of women. The fact that excessive female mortality appears more frequently among the wealthy classes, lends support to this socio-economic explanation.

## Private clinics

Excessive female mortality is also closely linked to the medical, penal, and political evolution in Tamil Nadu, namely the development of private abortion clinics in the Salem area in the 1990s, which completely escaped application of the law. In effect, sex-selective abortion is available throughout the state today, owing to the multiplication of private clinics and ultrasound scan equipment. The reproductive practices of women have been subject to the strong impact of the transfer of technology, which they encounter when frequenting hospitals, dispensaries, and clinics for family planning, monitoring of pregnancies, and childbirth itself. As a result, there is a marked transition from infanticide to sex-selective abortion, as the number of deliveries and patients in private clinics is rapidly increasing. Nonetheless, organizations working in the field have found that infanticide is far from disappearing.

The above examination of the social and spatial contours of the phenomenon shows that the complex dynamics of sexual discrimination have their roots in the specificity of a regional cultural area, in the structural economic changes which mark rural India, and in the mechanisms of the diffusion of social change. Only an analysis integrating demography, economics, space, and anthropology can give a coherent impression of the increasing hold of sexual discrimination, which is taking ever graver forms in contemporary Tamil Nadu. <

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Map of Child Sex Ratio in 1991 in South India

The map represents the child sex ratio (CSR) for all villages in South India. In view of the very large number of village units (69,700), an aggregation has been carried out. Then a spatial interpolation and a contouring of the homogeneous statistical regions has taken place. On the whole the CSR is between 900 and 1,000, but considerable geographical variations are evident when reading this map. Firstly, few regions have a CSR > 1,000, except in Kerala which has two pockets advantageous for girls, and in Andhra Pradesh, notably in the tribal regions on the borders to Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh as in Karnataka, a few micro-regions have a disadvantageous CSR for girls. As the map shows, local variations of the CSR are very high, particularly for districts in Tamil Nadu.



# The Atoms of Meaning

Research >  
General

Most linguists do not regard semantics (the systematic study of meaning) as a central part of their discipline. This is both strange and sad, because meaning is the link between language and communication, between language and culture, and between language and cognition. Lately, however, meaning-based approaches have been making a comeback within the broad movements known as cognitive linguistics and functional linguistics. This article concentrates on the leading meaning-based theory of language, the natural semantic metalanguage or NSM theory originated by Anna Wierzbicka.

By Cliff Goddard

When we try to state the meaning of a word, there is a very real danger of getting 'tangled up' in other words. Most dictionaries fall into this trap because they do not observe a seemingly obvious principle: to explain the meaning of a word, one has to use other words that are simpler and easier to understand. Otherwise the definitions become circular, obscure, and inaccurate. We can see this in the Oxford Dictionary, when it defines *sad* as 'sorrowful, mournful, showing or causing sorrow', then *sorrow* as 'mental distress caused by the loss of good or occurrence of evil', and *distress* 'severe pressure of pain, sorrow, etc. anguish'.

Resorting to complex technical descriptors does not alleviate the problem, because in the end these too have to be understood in terms of ordinary language meanings. When we step across a language barrier another problem comes up, which is the potentially distorting effect of using words from one language/culture (typically English) to analyse the meanings of another language/culture.

## Finding the atoms

According to Anna Wierzbicka and colleagues, the way out of these difficulties is to identify the simplest meanings expressed in languages, and then to use these to decode more complex meanings. Since simpler meanings are more likely to be shared across cultures, we may be able to reduce ethnocentrism in the process. For 30 years, Wierzbicka has been pursuing the ultimate vocabulary of simple indefinable concepts: semantic primes.

To get a sense of what semantic primes are like, compare *say* and *ask*. How could one paraphrase *say* in a context like 'Mary said something to me'? An expression like *verbally express* would be no good since the terms *verbally* and *express* are more complex and difficult to understand than *say* itself. We might consider something like 'Mary did something because she wanted me to know something', but this could fit many other actions apart from *saying*. Because it appears to resist paraphrase in simpler terms, *say* is a good candidate for the status of semantic prime.

It is a different story with *ask*, as in 'Mary asked me where Max was'. We can immediately make a start at a paraphrase: 'Mary said something to me because she wanted to know something, and because of this she wanted me to say something'. Though this rough paraphrase is not perfect, it is clear that the meaning of *ask* can be broken down into simpler terms, including *say*, *want*, and *know*.

I do not want to give the impression that identifying semantic primes is a simple matter. It is not. For every proposed prime – and there are about 60 of them – there is a long and sometimes complicated history of argumentation

and investigation. Well-established primes include nominal meanings like *I* and *you*, *someone*, and *something*, evaluative and descriptive meanings like *good* and *bad*, *big* and *small*, verbal meanings like *do* and *happen*, *know*, *think*, *want* and *say*, spatial and temporal meanings like *here* and *now*, *before* and *after*, *above* and *below*, and logical concepts like *because*, *if* and *not*.

## Lexical universals

Research indicates that semantic primes exist as words or word-like elements (including affixes) in all languages. As one can see from the map, the languages that have been studied from this point of view come from many parts of the world, from many different cultural zones, and from many different language families.

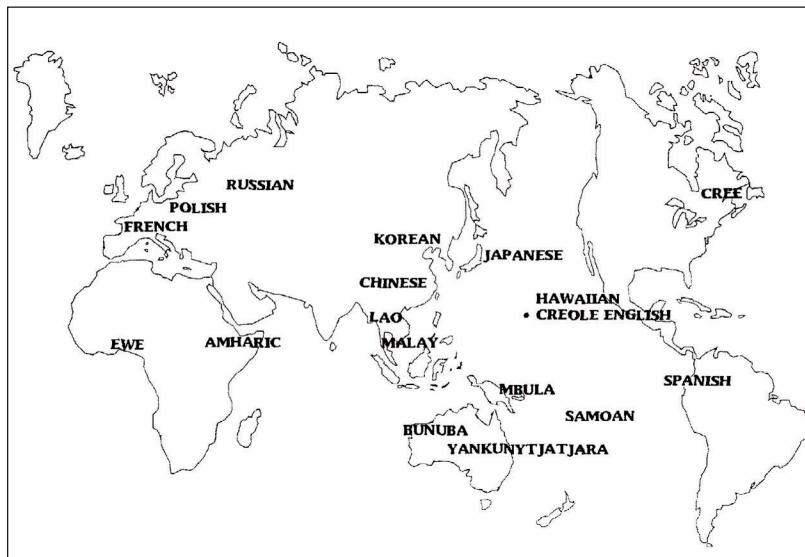
Some tricky technical issues can arise in identifying primes across languages. There is no requirement that the exponent of a prime be simple in form. For example, in English the prime *a long time* is expressed by a fixed phrase (most languages have a single word for it). More importantly, there is the problem of polysemy: the phenomenon whereby a single word can have several related meanings. Like other common words, exponents of semantic primes are often polysemous, and they can be polysemous in different ways in different languages. For example, in Yankunyjtjajara the exponent of *say* is *wangkanyi*, which can also be used (in a different meaning) about birds singing and about the wind blowing. Careful language-internal analysis is necessary before claims about semantic primes can be established.

Semantic primes are not isolated concepts. They combine according to certain grammatical patterns that appear to be universal, in the sense that they 'work' in all the world's languages. This opens up the way for a new meaning-based theory of universal grammar (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002), though it is not possible to delve more deeply into it here.

## Using semantic primes to crack the code

If only 60 concepts are simple and universal, then all other word meanings are complex and, potentially, language-specific. This includes ordinary words that seem basic from a monolingual perspective, like the English *go*, *hit*, *drink*, *break*, *hot*, *tree*, and *rock*. All these words lack exact equivalents in some other languages. Even more interesting are words for emotions, relationships, values, speech-acts, daily activities, and so on: concepts which people use to think about and make sense of their lives. For example, emotion terms that are often regarded (by English speakers) as basic, such as *angry*, *sad*, and *happy*, vary in meaning across languages.

One of the main theoretical and practical challenges for linguistic semantics is to explicate such subtle but important differences in the conceptual structures



Map: Sample of languages other than English studied in the NSM framework

of the world's languages. I will give a highly abbreviated example (cf. Goddard 2001) of the technique of explication of semantic primes, using one of the cultural key words of the Malay (Bahasa Melayu) language: *sabar*.

## Sabar: a Malay cultural value

*Sabar* (verbal form *besabar*, abstract noun *kesabaran*) clearly means something both broader and more important than its conventional translation *patient*. Certainly one can *sabar menunggu* 'patiently wait', but the injunction to *sabar* can also be addressed to someone who is annoyed, agitated, grieving or distressed and in these contexts the English *patient* does not fit at all, e.g. *Janganlah marah! Sabar!* 'Don't be mad! Calm down!'; *Sabar, jangan menangis kuat sangat* 'Be calm, don't cry so loud'. *Kesabaran* is an important Islamic virtue (*sabar* itself is an Arabic loan word). On the Islamic view, misfortunes and suffering should be seen as tests from God; if we can sustain our *kesabaran*, this will show we are *beriman* 'faithful'. This helps explain why characteristic Malay advice in difficult situations is to *bersabar* 'endure it, forbear'. The old Malay tradition (*adat*)

also strongly favours staying calm in troubling situations, since it is only by staying calm that one can follow the traditional counsel to exercise caution in all matters, resist impulsive behaviour, and preserve harmonious social relations.

In my view, the meaning of *sabar* can be spelled out in semantic primes as follows:

X was *sabar* [at that time] =  
at that time X felt something bad  
because of this X could have thought:  
I don't want this  
I want to do something now  
X did not think like this  
because X didn't want to think  
anything like this  
it is good if a person can be like this

The wording of the component 'felt something bad' is intentionally vague, so as to be compatible with anything from mild irritation to great suffering. The key idea is that a *sabar* person could have formed an immediate impulsive intention: 'I don't want this, I want to do something now', but did not, because he or she 'did not want to think anything like this'. Being *sabar* is having a certain mental discipline. The

final component adds a strong moral endorsement: 'it is good if a person can be like this'.

Using the same technique of explication, the meaning of English *patient* can be unpacked and compared point by point with that of *sabar*. Both concepts, furthermore, can be culturally contextualized by a new approach to cultural description that employs semantic primes as a notation, namely, the theory of cultural scripts.

Just as a small number of chemical elements can generate an enormous number of complex substances, it seems that the enormous diversity of meanings encoded in the words and grammar of the world's languages are the product of a small number of semantic elements combined in manifold ways. Just as the discovery of the chemical elements and of their combinatorial properties opened new vistas for chemistry, the comprehensive description of the atoms of meaning can be expected to open new vistas for the study of language, thought, and culture. <

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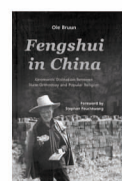
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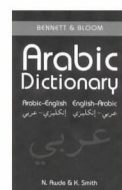


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# Poet of Word and Presence

## An Interview with Ashok Vajpeyi

Interview >  
South Asia

Ashok Vajpeyi, a well-known Hindi poet, literary critic, and founder of several cultural institutions, has become a regular guest at the Department of Indian Studies, Jagiellonian University, Cracow. The visits, initially limited to giving regular academic lectures, eventually inspired Ashok Vajpeyi and myself to work together on translations from Polish poetry into Hindi and from Hindi poetry into Polish. This rather adventurous idea created, within the university surroundings, a unique opportunity to combine theory and practice of literature or, in other words, to bring together two different aspects of human creativity: the artistic and the academic. During his most recent visit I interviewed Ashok Vajpeyi on his views about the place and role of poetry in contemporary India. Notwithstanding that we focused on the individual work of a Hindi poet within the context of Indian culture, the interview also reveals the universal aspects of experiences of men, of human thought, sensitivity, sensuality, and spirituality.

By Renata Czekalska

How would you describe the importance of poetic work in your country? Is poetry in India as vastly read as it is written?

AV: India is a multilingual country – one of the largest in the world. Poetry is written and spoken in most languages. But while it is quite vastly read and appreciated in Bengali, Malayalam, Oriya, Urdu, and Kannada, my own language Hindi, in spite of having a poetry comparable to the best being written anywhere in the world, does not have a substantial reading public for significant poetry. Fortunately, this circumstance has not made Hindi poetry hermetic and exclusive: it remains open, wide-ranging, and undeniably varied. From a prayer...to an abuse...to a scream, Hindi poetry speaks in many enriching and humanly intense, formally innovative, and refreshing voices. Northern India has been the main site of cultural invasions, political battles and turmoil, and devastating expeditions: a very unstable site historically. Its instability aside, the fact that, in the twentieth century, most creative writing started being written in Khaṛibolī, thus superseding other dialects which have millions of daily speakers and users, seems to have caused a ceaseless uprooting. The somewhat late formation of a reading middle class seems to have contributed as well. Most other Indian languages have had a more stable and less ravaged milieu. The largest number of illiterates in India comes from the 'Hindi belt', which is also, economically, the most backward and, numerically, the largest.

RC: You are sometimes called a classical poet. Can you suggest why?

AV: I can only point out some obvious reasons. Firstly, unlike perhaps any other contemporary in Hindi, I've tried to reinvent the use of classical images in poetry, reworking them in new contexts, which is a way of reviving racial memory. Secondly, I've sometimes tried to supersede time and reach out to the timeless. Thirdly, and more specifically, I've attempted to revivify the great Indian tradition of erotica in poetry. At other times, I've brought forgotten classical words, images, and concepts back into contemporary poetry. At a time when most poetry tends to doubt and question, I've dared to write poetry which also celebrates life and living, love and longing.

RC: After publishing *Thocī-sī jagah*, you were labelled a 'love poet'. Did you mind such a label? Apart from love, what other themes would you consider to be most important in your poetry?

AV: I do not mind. Love is a very inclusive, all-encompassing theme. While the main body of Hindi poetry engaged itself with social reality, I chose the marginalized areas of love, eroticism, and the geography of the inner and personal. But I've also written a lot about death and absence, arts and artists, home, family and neighbourhood, social reality, and nature. If *Thocī-sī jagah* is a 'Book of Love', *Jo nahin hai* is a 'Book of Death', *Ujjālā ek mandīr banātā hai* a 'Book of Arts', and *Purakhom kī parchī mein dhūp*, a 'Book of Home'. Soon to follow would be a 'Book of the World'. For me reality in all aspects, times, and resonances exists simultaneously. I am perhaps also a poet of wonder and mystery, and certainly a poet of 'word and presence'.

RC: In your poems you refer to your

mother as a deeply religious person, so most probably you have received a proper Hindu upbringing. Would you say that Hinduism has influenced your poetry in any sense?

AV: Yes, I remain very much the son of a very religious but unhappy mother. I did receive, largely from her and my grandparents, an initiation into liberal, complex, and pluralistic Hinduism. It was a proper Hindu upbringing, but not rigid or exclusivist. We were also exposed to liberalism, and the human openness of Islam, Christianity, and Jainism. I am a non-believing Hindu: it is possible to be so since Hinduism does not insist on belief. I lost belief early in life, writing a poem on the loss of gods when I was only eighteen. I have never thought of myself as a Hindu poet but I suppose I am.

In many ways, it ought to be remembered, Hinduism is more a way of life, a way of looking at and coping with reality, rather than merely a religion. Also, the Indian tradition, rich and complex as it is, has been shaped not only by Hinduism but also by Buddhism, Islam and so forth. A normal Indian heritage, therefore, is not exclusively Hindu. However, political forces and indeed mass movements have unfortunately emerged in the last two decades or so, which aggressively assert a Hinduism that is highly exclusivist, intolerant, and frozen in a medieval mindset. Imitating the Nazis in various ways, this type of Hinduism suppresses the innate pluralism of Hinduism and endows it with an aggressiveness that it inherently lacks: a religion ready to avenge assaults, real or imagined, made on it centuries ago.

It is because of this association that no self-respecting writer in India would call her- or himself a Hindu writer. All



Ashok Vajpeyi

Courtesy of Ashok Vajpeyi

great spiritual traditions have an innate universalism in their insights and wisdom. Dante, Milton, Eliot are both Christian and universal poets at the same time. So am I – a Hindu and a universalist, if you like.

I've used many concepts of Hinduism in my poetry, such as rebirth, no beginning – no end, and life-after-death. This is not so much to affirm them as to use them to explore the reality and life of our time, our innermost anxieties and aspirations, and create resonances. Hinduism is not homocentric: it believes in the unity of all beings; it posits a nature without evil; there is no original sin but play and 'lila'; it has many gods; it locates the sacred and the divine in the earthly and worldly. Many of these ideas, I guess, have been of recourse in my poetry. All my life, through poetry, I've longed for spirituality without God, for rehabilitation in a secular world, for a notion of the sacred. I've been fascinated by notions of infinity and eternity, some of which come from the Hindu traditions. Its irrepressible pluralism and spirit of accommodation also inspire me in many ways. But as a poet and public man I've struggled for a long time against the restrictive, vulgar and, in essence and spirit, non-Hindu Hindutva, which has become remarkably dominant in politics in India today.

RC: How would you describe the influence of current politics on Hindi literature?

AV: Politics is a great force in our time and has influenced Hindi poetry deeply in many ways, some of them positive. It has brought, for instance, a sense of the real social issues and concerns, and a clash of values to the realm of poetry. It has emphasized the social role and responsibility of both the poet and poetry. It has created a sense of togetherness, of participation, of being part of a larger whole, and it has certainly expanded the geography of human sympathy and solidarity in poetry. Negatively, however, politics has usurped the place of religion and spirituality, relegated issues of personal and inner reality to the margins, and created a false sense of power, social importance, and impact. It has encouraged, unfortunately, a poetics of statement, of exclusion, and tried to drown resonances and intimations of heritage. Significantly, political influence of any consequence is largely Marxist and leftist. The rightist politics in India has hardly provoked any significant creativity, given its innate aridity.

RC: Do you think that in present times poetry should become engaged in political issues and, if so, does such an engagement, in your opinion, bring any practical results?

### < Translation

आओ,  
जैसे अँधेरा आता है अँधेरे के पास  
जैसे जल मिलता है जल से  
जैसे रोशनी घुलती है रोशनी में ।

आओ,  
मुझे पहनो  
जैसे वृक्ष पहनता है  
छाल को  
जैसे पगडण्डी पहनती है  
हरी घास को ।

मुझे लो  
जैसे अँधेरा लेता है जड़ों को  
जैसे पानी लेता है चन्द्रमा को  
जैसे अनन्त लेता है समय को ।

### Come

Come  
as darkness comes to darkness  
as water meets water  
as light dissolves in light.

Come,  
put me on,  
as the tree wears its bark,  
as the pathway wears  
its green grass.

Take me  
as darkness takes the roots  
as water takes the moon  
as eternity takes time.

(Translated by the poet)

### चिड़ियाँ आएँगी

चिड़ियाँ आएँगी  
हमारा बचपन  
धूप की तरह अपने पंखों पर  
लिये हुए ।

किसी प्राचीन शताब्दी के  
अँधेरे सचन वन से  
उड़कर चिड़ियाँ आएँगी,  
और साये की तरह  
हम पर पड़े अजब वस्तु के तिनके  
बीनकर बनाएँगी घोंसले ।

चिड़ियाँ लाएँगी  
पीछे छूट गए सपने,  
पूरखों के किस्से,  
भूले-बिसरे छन्द,  
और सब-कुछ  
हमारे बरामदे में छोड़कर  
उड़ जाएँगी ।

चिड़ियाँ न जाने कहीं से आएँगी  
चिड़ियाँ न जाने कहीं जाएँगी !

नीम और अमरुद के वृक्षों की शाखाओं पर  
342 / तिनका तिनका

### Birds will Arrive

Birds will arrive on the wing  
carrying our childhood  
like sun light.

Birds will arrive  
from the pitch-dark jungles  
of some ancient century  
gathering up these straws  
of strange times  
cast over us like shadows,  
will weave their nests.

Birds will bring  
dreams left behind  
ancestral tales  
verses  
half-forgotten  
leave them all  
on our veranda  
and fly off.

### < Translation

Birds will arrive  
Who knows from where  
will go off  
who knows, where?

Perched on branches  
in the midst of green leaves  
Neem berries  
plumping fruit  
birds will chorus  
the songs of our childhood  
of our living  
and our dying

Birds are unending  
they arrive out of infinity  
go off into infinity

(Translated by Arhene Zide & Teji Grover)

AV: Even if it brings forth no practical results, poetry in our time cannot escape engaging in politics. But since both the Left and the Right in the twentieth century have often deserted their own values and visions in practice, and have betrayed mankind in some deep and damaging sense, it is now imperative that poetry roots itself in the politics of elsewhere. It should adhere to the values of freedom, equality, justice, and liberty, so as to intelligently and courageously avoid riding the bandwagon. Politics seems to have left no social space where it could be interrogated. Poetry should become such a space: open, vulnerable, self-critical, morally tough, intellectually rigorous, emotionally strong, and deep-rooted. Poetry's politics, if such a thing exists, consist today in rehabilitating the notions of the social and the individual in public space, from where the present-day politics of globalization seem to have banished them. <

**Dr Renata Czekalska** specializes in modern Hindi literature and lectures at the Department of Indian Studies, Institute of Oriental Philology, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland. She also translates works of Hindi writers into Polish, and Polish poetry into Hindi.  
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**Ashok Vajpeyi** is an Indian poet, essayist, literary critic, and translator of poetry, who writes in Hindi. He was the founder and first Vice Chancellor (1997–2002) of Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University in New Delhi, and is author of 21 poetry books (10 collections and 11 volumes of selected poems). In 1994 he received the Sahitya Akademi Award; his poems have been translated into several Indian languages as well as into English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Hungarian, Norwegian, Arabic, and Polish.  
ashok\_vajpeyi@yahoo.com

देह को प्रकट करती है देह ही

जैसे वृक्ष के पास  
पत्तियाँ, छाल, तना, जड़ें हैं  
वैसे ही उसके पास है  
उसकी अपनी धूप, अपनी आभा—  
सूर्य उसे प्रकट-भर कर देता है।

देह की दीप्ति भी इसी तरह जागती है  
प्रिय-स्पर्श से,  
देह एक वृक्ष है  
दीप्ति की प्रतीक्षा में—

देह को प्रकट करती है देह ही।

Does a Falling Leaf know

< Translation

Does a falling leaf know it's going to die?  
In simplistic times, does a difficult word know  
that entering an abstruse poem will be its end?  
Wandering in the ruins of a rāga,  
does a note recognise its own fading away?

What doesn't exist has many names  
fading, absence, end, closure,  
mortality, death  
But everyone remembers its existence  
no one

experiences it's not-being.  
Not-being is not possible at all in language or poetry  
Placing your foot outside of time  
is stepping out of language.

(Translated by Arhene Zide & Teji Grover)

Note >

1 Lila is a Hindu concept of a 'divine game' (in which God creates freely and for no reason, as a form of play) understood as the origin of this world.

# The Wonder that is India

## A Farewell Seminar for Dirk Kolff

Professor Dirk Kolff has left his mark most emphatically on the social history of medieval and early modern South Asia. In due respect of his interest in the genesis of pre-modern social and ethnical groups, the speakers at the 'Social Dynamics in Mughal India' seminar re-examined and discussed the changing role and status of four social categories: Sufis, warriors, merchants, and peasants. All speakers agreed that one of Kolff's most significant contributions to the field of South Asian Studies has been his insistence on the open, fluid, and highly conscriptive nature of such categories, which today appear rather closed, rigid, and ascriptive.

Report >  
South Asia

8 October 2003,  
Leiden,  
the Netherlands

By Jos Gommans

Several historians of South Asia who have been influenced by Kolff's scholarship were invited by convenor Jos Gommans. Simon Digby, a leading figure in Indo-Islamic studies, praised the remarkable continuity of medieval Indian studies at Leiden, a field becoming exceedingly rare in present-day academics. Digby proposed using Sufi hagiographical works and eastern Hindi *premakhyanas* to demonstrate and illustrate the fourteenth-century provincialization of the Delhi Sultanate. Sufis were highly instrumental in bolstering the Muslim diaspora radiating from Delhi, eastward into Awadh and southward into the Deccan, not only in their religious capacity but also as peasants, landholders, craftsmen, and soldiers. Linguistic evidence of the southern branch of this diaspora is provided by the spread of 'proto-Urdu' or 'coarse Hindustani' dialects, which closely reflected the form of speech then current in Delhi. By contrast, the eastern provinces developed a distinct dialect of 'eastern Hindi', which appears to have been purged of Persian and Arabic loan-words.

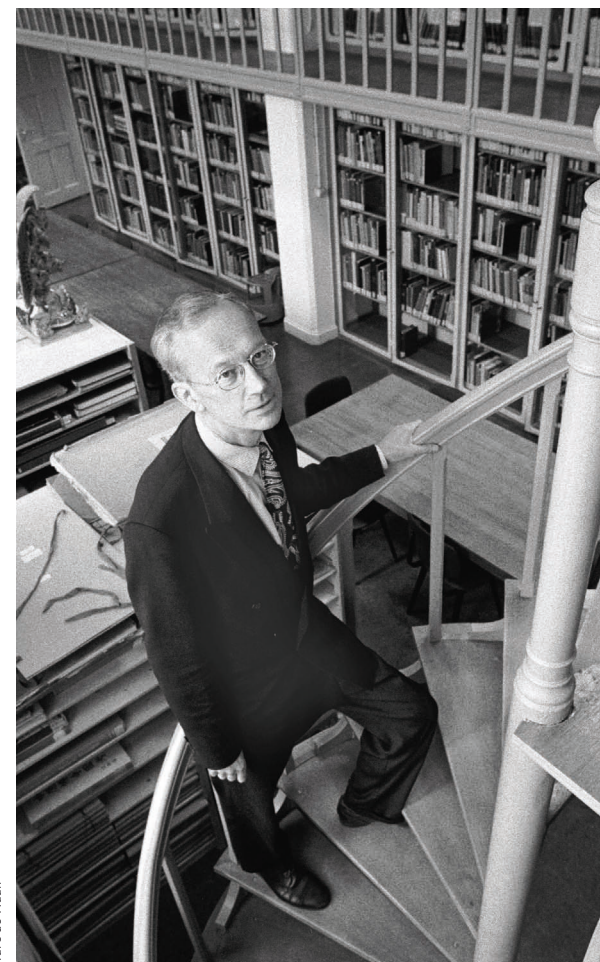
Digby's lecture clearly underlined the importance of studying and re-evaluating the much-neglected hagiographical and literary Sufi sources of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, not only to gain a better understanding of the mentality and world view of Sufi authors but, also, of the making and unmaking of the medieval sultanates of South Asia.

John Richards of Duke University, sought to refine Kolff's famous concept of the military labour market by suggesting

three sub-categories of armed men, consisting of seasonal peasant soldiers, armed retainers serving the local gentry, and full-time professional soldiers. According to Richards, these local and regional men were much more reliable sources of imperial soldiery than the broadly undifferentiated military labour market that operated across the Indo-Gangetic plain. Compared to other areas such as Tokugawa Japan or early modern England and France, the constant confrontations of the Mughal state with sharp-edged rural resistance, rooted in a common martial ethos widely shared by both peasant-cultivators and rural aristocrats, suggests that the militarized society of North India under the Mughals was an outlier in world historical terms and, consequently, that state building and administrative consolidation in early modern India faced unusually difficult obstacles. It was only in the nineteenth century that the British colonial regime succeeded where the Mughals had ultimately failed. In conclusion, Richards suggested that we reconsider Kolff's observations, and assemble and analyse the hundreds of discrete accounts of endless minor wars occurring between 1757 and 1857, which still lie buried in district gazetteers, regimental histories, and military dispatches and have yet to be examined. Only through such research will we be able to correct the current impression that British conquest was somehow benign and bloodless.

Reprising the seminar's theme by taking a fresh look at India's maritime merchants as a social category, Om Prakash of the Delhi School of Economics proposed three sub-categories in 'his' social group: the maritime merchant engaged in coastal and high-seas trade, the broker and the intermediary merchant providing goods to and buying goods from the maritime merchant, and the money merchant. There was a certain amount of overlap, particularly between the first two categories. The intermediary and the money merchants were almost exclusively Hindu, with the Bania merchants dominating the latter two groups. It was not so much the greed of state officials but the value system of the Banias itself that prescribed a relatively frugal lifestyle, when compared to the more opulent behaviour of influential Muslim merchants and shipowners like Mulla Abdul Ghafur at Surat. Although Muslims were more visible as high-seas maritime merchants, there were significant regional variations; commercial involvement of state officials and army commanders also varied regionally. For example, the composition of the maritime trading community on the Coromandel coast, which included a fair number of so-called portfolio capitalists involved in coastal and high-seas trade, was very different from that in Gujarat, which lacked the substantive role of 'official' merchants in maritime trade, not counting the involvement of members of royalty in running a pilgrim service to the Red Sea.

Seventeenth-century Bengal was different yet again; its trade with Southeast Asia was entirely dominated by primarily Muslim state officials. This goes to show that, in all these



Dirk Kolff in the Kern Institute's library

Marc de Haan

regional cases, indigenous explanations for the eighteenth-century decline of Indian commercial participation may be as important as the, in this respect, often overrated influence of the European Companies. Even in the context of growing European dominance, Indian merchants continued to show a great deal of adaptability and resilience.

It needs to be said that Kolff's work, in particular his *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy*, goes well beyond the Mughal and early modern fields. To demonstrate this point, Walter Hauser of the University of Virginia compared Kolff's Purabi armed peasants with his own study of twentieth-century militant peasant activism in the very same region, nowadays called western Bihar. In his concluding remarks, Dirk Kolff expanded on Hauser's observation by highlighting the continuity from the medieval into the modern. As will be shown in his forthcoming monograph, Kolff may have retired but his ongoing fascination with the wonder that is India will continue. <

- Gommans, Jos and Om Prakash (eds), *Circumambulations in South Asian History: Essays in Honour of Dirk H.A. Kolff*, Leiden: Brill (2003), pp.370, ISBN 90 04 13155 8

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Information >

Dirk Kolff became Emeritus Professor of Leiden University on 1 March 2003. The above seminar to celebrate Kolff's contribution to the field of South Asian Studies received financial support from the IAS and CNWS (Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies). During the seminar, Kolff was presented with a Festschrift containing essays by Jan Heesterman, Hans van Santen, Simon Digby, Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, Dietmar Rothermund, and many other friends, former colleagues, and students. At the end of 2004 the papers of the seminar, together with a contribution by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, will be published in a special theme issue in the Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.

# Changing Definitions of Ethnic Boundaries on Mauritius

Research >  
South West Asia

A mosque, a Tamil temple, China Town, and window shopping *en français*: it does not require a trip around the world to encounter such variety, but a five-minute walk through the centre of Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius. The bustling centre of the capital reflects the ethnic diversity of the small Indian Ocean Island, located 800 kilometres east of Madagascar. Almost four hundred years of European colonization has given the island its ethnically diverse population of 1.2 million, a population that its successive rulers have classified by birthplace, race, economic position, and most recently, ethnicity.



A Tamil temple in Port Louis.

By Tijo Salverda

This article examines the correlation, over time, of socio-economic and political status on the one hand and ethnicity on the other, and analyses the impact of historical trends in Mauritian society on the (fading) importance of language and religion in defining ethnicity. I do this by focusing on the changing definitions of ethnic boundaries, the social demarcations that mark the differences between ethnicities. These boundaries, flexible and changing over time, illustrate what is most important in distinguishing ethnic communities from one another.

Mauritius was uninhabited until 1598 when the Dutch settled on the island, which became a hub between their colonies in southern Africa and the Indonesian archipelago. The Dutch brought in the first slaves to labour on sugarcane plantations. The development of the island, however, took off with the French, who replaced the Dutch after the latter abandoned the island in 1710. The French built up the sugarcane industry, importing for their plantations large numbers of slaves, mainly from Madagascar and other parts of Africa. The heritage of the French period still has a strong presence in Mauritian society: the descendants of the French colonizers are the current Franco-Mauritians, a small but economically powerful group. The

descendants of the slaves are found in today's Creole community; the French lexicon *Kreol*, the language most used in everyday life, evolved during the period of French rule.

In 1810, the British captured Mauritius from the French, and stayed until 1968 when the island gained its independence. The British were content to administer the island; as the well-organized French planters elite was seen as an asset, no attempt was made to replace them, an important reason why the influence of French culture still prevails. Many of the Britons who settled on Mauritius eventually assimilated into the Franco-Mauritian community.

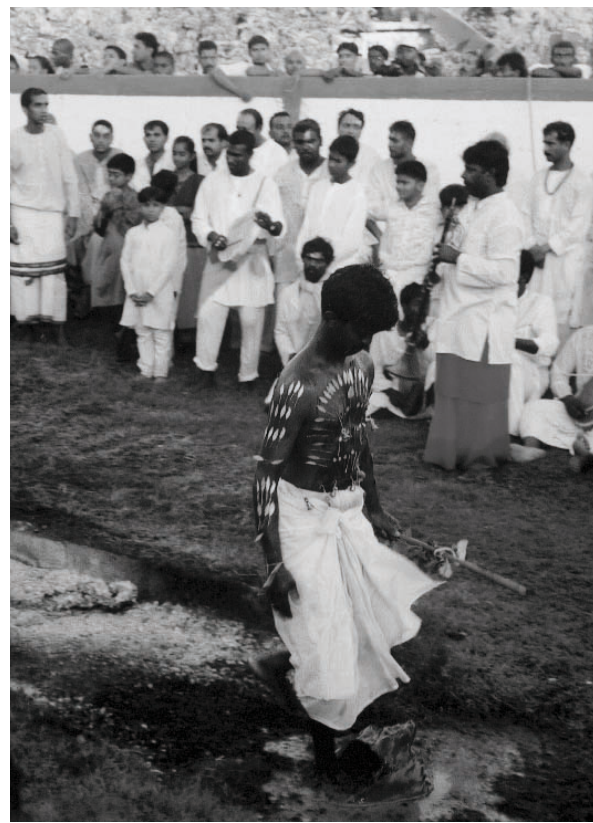
The British period was nevertheless an important chapter in Mauritian history. After 1835, when slavery was formally abolished, large numbers of indentured labourers were brought in from British India. The descendants of these Indian labourers are divided into a large Hindu community and a smaller Muslim community, and make up the majority of the current Mauritian population.

Although official ethnic classification was abandoned in 1982, large parts of the Mauritian population still define themselves and each other by their ethnic background. The classifications most used in every day life are based on categories from the last ethnic census of 1972, which divided the population into Hindus (52 per cent), Creoles (25 per cent), Muslims (16 per cent), Sino-Mauritians, whose ancestors came as free men from China during the British period (3 per cent), and Franco-Mauritians (2 per cent).<sup>1</sup>

## Fault lines

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mauritius was a colonial society, strongly class based, and reliant on its sugarcane plantation industry.

A Tamil during the fire walking, which is part of the Tamil New Year's celebrations (1 January 2001) and is attended by many Mauritians from outside the Tamil community.



Although all sectors employed people of different ethnicities, the division of labour generally followed ethnicity. Occupation and class therefore strengthened ethnic boundaries. Franco-Mauritians, owning all the large plantations and sugarcane refining factories, were at the top of the socio-economic pyramid. The Creoles, having left their work in the sugarcane fields after the abolition of slavery, mainly worked as civil servants and artisans, either in sugarcane refining factories or elsewhere. Sino-Mauritians worked in the retail sector and owned most of the small shops on the island, whereas Hindus and Muslims were over-represented in the agricultural sector, working as labourers.

Over and above class and occupation, religion, place of origin, and language reinforced the confines of ethnicity. The Creoles, Franco-Mauritians and part of the Sino-Mauritian community were Christian, mainly Catholics. Franco-Mauritians spoke French, Creoles and significant parts of other communities spoke Kreol, and parts of the mainly rural Hindu community spoke Bhojpur, a variant of Hindi.

The 1930s witnessed significant changes in Mauritian society, causing ethnic boundaries to correlate more with political boundaries. Politics became an activity not only for the benefit of the elite, but also for the Mauritian majority, consisting mainly of poor Hindus, Creoles, and Muslims. Politicians' interest in the poor at first disregarded their ethnic background, but this changed quickly. The increased attention for the plight of the masses engendered a new kind of politics that emphasized and exaggerated ethnic sentiment. Hindu politicians, for one, hoped to gain power by mobilizing the

Hindu community; they emphasized the economically inferior status of plantation labourers, but ignored similarities between Hindu and Creole workers. The emancipation of the majority and increased interaction between different communities in national politics induced that ethnic differences were stressed more.

In the years preceding 1968, tension between the communities grew over the issue of independence, ultimately leading to violent clashes. Mainly Hindus supported the political party favouring independence; large parts of the Franco-Mauritian, Creole, and Muslim communities, fearing Hindu domination in an independent Mauritius, did not. While the battle was won in favour of independence and violent confrontations between ethnic communities were temporarily, the new rulers inherited a society divided along ethnic lines.

## Diversification

Thirty-five years of independence have removed the sharp edges from ethnic boundaries defined as political boundaries. Although Hindu dominated politics and the public sector, the government has been making efforts to better reflect the composition of the population in public sector employment. The 1960s' exaggeration of ethnic sentiment is a thing of the past, though certain political parties, usually the marginal ones, occasionally play the ethnic card to gain support. A clear and hopeful sign that contemporary politics play less on ethnic sentiments can be seen in the person of the current Franco-Mauritian Prime Minister, Paul Bérenger. The fact that he is the first non-Hindu prime minister since independence signifies a break with the past. The decreasing importance of eth-

nic differences within politics indicates a preference for fruitful interaction.

Mauritius' changing economy represents another break with the past. Interaction between ethnic communities has evolved as Mauritius' low-income, agriculturally based economy developed into a middle-income, diversified one. In contrast to the sugarcane industry and its historically rooted overlap of occupation and ethnicity, tourism, textiles, and offshore banking employ multi-ethnic work forces. Due to increased interaction between different communities at work, the awareness of each others' ethnic habits has gradually risen.

Even though there are still a considerable number of mono-ethnic work forces, occupation is less important in defining ethnic boundaries than it was in the 1930s. Undeniably, class still correlates with ethnicity: Franco-Mauritians and Sino-Mauritians are still over-represented in the private sector, while poverty is most striking in the Creole, Muslim, and Hindu communities. Nonetheless, educational levels have risen, and all ethnic communities today are themselves socio-economically stratified.

Less clearly linked to historical change, but of great importance to the interaction between ethnicities, is the Kreol language. Kreol was already in frequent use in the 1930s, but nowadays almost all Mauritians, apart from the Franco-Mauritians who stick to French, use Kreol in everyday life. Kreol is used to overcome ethnic differences and unite Mauritians; hence the prime minister will always address the nation in Kreol.<sup>2</sup>

The evolving definition of ethnic boundaries shows that the correlation between ethnicity and socio-economic and political status has decreased, due to the diversification of the economy and the independence of Mauritius. Nowadays, differences between ethnic communities are primarily emphasized by religion and origin, aspects that belong to the core of ethnic identity and have a more private character than occupation and political colour. By the same token that ethnic boundaries become more fluid, the importance of a shared language (Kreol) to enhance communication once more illustrates the increased interaction between communities. <

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A Hindu temple in Mauritius' north

All photos by Tijo Salverda

## Notes >

- 1 The figures are approximates and thus do not add up to 100 per cent, while the classifications are simplifications of reality. Most ethnicities have sub-classifications, known to its members but not always to the members of other ethnicities. They are therefore not used in this article.
- 2 English is the hardly used official language of Mauritius. French is the language of the media and is often used in formal situations.

# Le Malaise Créole

Research >  
South West Asia

Before its independence in 1968, the island of Mauritius in the South West Indian Ocean region experienced three centuries of subsequent colonization by the Dutch, French, and English. During this period, it developed into a plural society where people of diverse origins and faiths coexisted. Nowadays it is inhabited by a mixture of Christians, Hindus, and Muslims of Indian, African, Chinese, and European descent.

By Rosabelle Boswell

This article examines the situation of the people known as Creoles, primarily the descendents of African and Malagasy slaves who currently live in Mauritius. It focuses specifically on a local sociocultural phenomenon branded *le malaise Créole* (the Creole predicament) and discusses its impact on the Creole population. Mauritians associate the phenomenon with the lowest social and economic expressions of a particular segment of the Creole population, known as the *ti-Kreol*. The poverty and marginalization of the *ti-Kreol* partly results from racial stereotyping by the wealthier classes, Creoles and

experience creolization: the acquisition of locally forged, social and political characteristics that ease interethnic communication and provide a measure of social flexibility and meaning. However, there are no indigenes in Mauritius and the dominant ethos hails a plural rather than Creole society. Thus, as a means to demonstrate their intrinsic cultures, ethnic groups are encouraged to proclaim and maintain their roots. In such a context, creolization and Creole-ness is perceived and often treated as an aberration. At the same time, it is possible to argue that the maintenance of plurality and difference is also a product of local need, a means of achieving a sense of place and belong-

Organisation Fraternel, called on the government on behalf of the descendants of slaves, to obtain political and financial compensation for the imposition of slavery on their ancestors and for their experiences of racial discrimination over the past 160 years. Those who are intent to foster Mauritian nationhood argue that Creoles are the 'true' Mauritians, harking back to the eighteenth-century understanding of Creoles as 'locally' born. The political nature of the term Creole suggests several things. First, that the category is still in the process of ethnogenesis and that existing interpretations of Creole-ness and Creole identity are being reviewed; second, that Mauritians are moving away from strictly cultural definitions of group identity; and third, that the Creole category is culturally open.

## Findings and interpretations

Ethnography revealed that in each of the five geographically distinct sites of my research (Centre-de-Flacq, Karina, Roche Bois, Chamarel, and Le Morne village) those ethnic groups able to lay claim to distinct cultural origins and a 'singular' homeland and, thus, groups with a potent fiction of homogeneity, are socially valued the most. Groups that possess 'mobile' cultural resources such as caste, race, or religion use these to refer to particular geographical and spiritual homelands in life rituals, to strengthen and maintain the community, its cultural integrity, and the political constitution of the group. The dominant cultural paradigm does not allow for the accommodation of 'creole' identity. Until very recently Creole identity has not been publicly articulated (in the form of pilgrimages, and ethnic and religious symbols). As a result, Mauritians in general argue that Creoles 'suffer' a lack of identity, which finds expression in the phenomenon of *le malaise Créole*.

However, *le malaise Créole* is a complex phenomenon that is differently expressed in each location. This view challenges the dominant, primordial view that the phenomenon is the result of the lazy, spendthrift nature of Creoles, who have not been resourceful enough to make use of the opportunities that they have been granted since independence in 1968. My findings also challenge the pro-Creole and minority view that *le malaise Créole* would be the experience of victimization through racial and cultural domination. By and large, *le malaise Créole* can be seen as a condition of hybridity in a society that has devalued such hybridity. Its manifestation is symptomatic of the experience of cultural and social oppression. To appear more homogeneous and to deal with the painful memories of the past, the Creoles have adopted diverse strategies. Many Creoles have accepted orthodox Christianity, adopted European standards of fashion, and accumulated material goods to symbolize their aspirations to middle-class status. Under the conviction that light skin is socially advantageous, many Creoles chose

partners with a light skin as they aspire to have children with a fair complexion. In other words, some have attempted to 'escape' the past. However, it is presently apparent that some Creoles are beginning to re-engage with the past and are rekindling positive memories of endurance and survival.

The Creole population is far from homogenous and consists of groups such as the Rodriguais (from Rodrigues Island), the Ilois (from the Chagos archipelago) and the Kreol Morisyen (from Mauritius). There are various ways in which the Creoles deal with their past and its impact on their identity. Both the Ilois and Rodriguais maintain and appeal to traditions and culture that they perceive to be uniquely theirs. By positively valuing their 'roots', they give a meaning to their background, while affirming their homogeneity. The Ilois for example established their place in the discourse on origins and memory making in Mauritius by the strong reference to their forced displacement from the Chagos archipelago and the loss of their ancestral graves.

Class differences determine the extent to which appeals to traditions and roots are successful. For the poverty-stricken residents of the River Camp (a settlement on the edge of Roche Bois), their lack of material resources and social power limits their ability to travel home and to therefore acquire cultural goods necessary for the demonstration of culture. However, it is not only the display of tangible cultural goods that assists in authentication of culture and identity. The Kreol Morisyen in Karina, like the Kreol Morisyen in Chamarel and Le Morne utilize the stories from the past (in other words intangible culture) to achieve a sense of shared history and identity. These stories confer a measure of solidarity among the residents and encourage outsiders to perceive them as belonging to a homogeneous group. However, as Mauritian society becomes more heterogeneous, efforts to indicate homogeneity via shared history are being challenged in all three

sites. In these communities, many are now involved in achieving personal economic gain and therefore identify themselves more with class than with ethnicity or history.

Not until Mauritians take account of the reality of hybridization will phenomena such as *le malaise Créole* begin to dissipate. In Mauritian society, however, such attempts are few and far between. Both the state and cultural organizations explicitly emphasize the plurality of society and the need to preserve ethnic identity. These policies stress the individuality of ethnic groups, rather than pointing out the shared traditions and practices. By emphasizing ethnic group identity, interethnic communication and networks also tend to be ignored, thus neglecting how vital interethnicity is to survival and development. Moreover, with regard to Creoles, little attempt has been made by the state to consider and recognize their cultural and social contributions to the making of Mauritian society. Similar to African diaspora communities elsewhere, groups such as the Creoles can make a positive contribution to society's diversity and creativity. Not only do they create vibrant, new traditions and customs by drawing on their local circumstances, their contribution to diversity also lies in challenging fundamentalist and exclusivist tendencies, of the present-day civilizing mission type. The recognition and consideration of the effects of *le malaise Créole* on Creoles in Mauritius is necessary for the achievement of meaningful equality and social justice in the country. <

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## Creoles in Mauritius

Today's approximately 200,000 Creoles in Mauritius are the descendants of African and Malagasy slaves that arrived on the island over a period of 300 years. As slaves they experienced Dutch, French, and British rule. Today the Creoles are considered a people of mixed heritage and they share physical and cultural traits with Mauritians of Indian, Chinese, and European descent. In addition, some Creoles in Mauritius have come from neighbouring islands. Those resident on the island fall into three major categories: Kreol Morisyen (Mauritian Creoles), Rodriguais (from the island of Rodrigues), and Ilois (exiles from the Chagos Archipelago).

Off-late, the Creole population has set up various political and cultural pressure groups to articulate their concerns. Some of these are: The Mauritian Movement for African Creoles (MMKA), The Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture (NMCAC), Rodrigues Peoples Organization (OPR), and Chagos Refugee Group (CRG). Since independence in 1968, Mauritius has developed from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a middle-income diversified economy. Historically, Creoles have been employed in the sugar cane industry, which is still grown on about 90 per cent of the cultivated land area. All the same, this industry is facing competition from tourism development, offshore investment, and manufacture. The changing economy is affecting the Creoles in various ways and, in some instances, intensifies their marginalization.



Both photos by Rosabelle Boswell

Legions de Marie: Children's group at a religious service for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.



Retaining tradition, Ravanne players at a Creole cultural festival.

non-Creoles alike. In many postcolonial states today, dominant paradigms on culture and identity emphasize the boundaries of identity, thereby ignoring that social change and globalization make these boundaries between human groups rather fluid. Such views on culture and identity facilitate specific claims to cultural preservation and empowerment, while dismissing or delimiting the rights and cultural resources of all hybrids in society. By and large, *le malaise Créole* can be seen as a condition of hybridity in a society that has devalued such hybridity. The manifestation of *le malaise Créole* is symptomatic of the experience of cultural and social oppression.

The descendants of the Afro-Malagasy in particular acquired diverse social and cultural characteristics, resulting from their experiences of slavery, which had culturally fragmenting and in many instances annihilating impacts. In part, this allowed them to

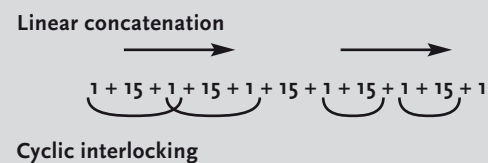
ing in a complex and changing society.

The local population currently acknowledges the Creoles as descendants of African and Malagasy slaves. However, social and linguistic definitions indicate that the Creole category consists of a wider variety of people of mixed heritage. From a historical perspective, an eighteenth-century Creole was someone born on the island of Mauritius; in the early part of the twentieth century, a Creole was someone of mixed racial and/or cultural descent. Today, Creoles are largely defined as the Negroid population on the island and the term denotes a political category rather than a specifically ethnic one, which means that it is a category open to varying definitions. Some Mauritians (including Creoles) emphasize the hybridity of Creoles. Others associate Creoles with slavery and African roots, stressing the need for political and economic compensation. In 2002 for example, a pro-Creole organization,



Courtesy of Kern Institute

+ fifteen + one structure, where the last beat always coincides with the first beat of the following cycle. The total number of beats in a pattern thus remains constant (sixteen), whereas the 'seventeenth' beat occupies an axial or transitory position; it assumes the dual function of concluding and opening two successive cycles.



Two modes of perceiving cyclic progression in time patterns of 17 beats

# Beating Time

## Concepts of Rhythm in the Nāṭyaśāstra

Research >  
South Asia

The Nāṭyaśāstra occupies a unique position in Sanskrit literature as the earliest extant source on drama, dance, and music. Alongside its value as a historical document, this encyclopaedic work has left its mark on the subsequent development of the performing arts in South Asia. It thus contains clues that shed light on hitherto unexplained aspects of the performing arts, past and present.

By Narinder Mohkamsing

Traditionally ascribed to the legendary sage Bharata and dating from around the beginning of the common era, the Nāṭyaśāstra covers almost all aspects of dramaturgy, including such subsidiary themes as the origin of drama, stagecraft, ritual preliminaries, and poetics. Several editions and translations are available, though hardly any meet the standards of modern scholarship. Given its intrinsic value, and the necessity of reliable editions, it is imperative that new efforts be made to publish a truly critical, fully indexed, and newly translated edition. With the proper approach and determination, this should be possible, for its individual chapters as well as for the work as a whole.

Ever since the (re)discovery of the Nāṭyaśāstra in 1865, attention has focused on its theatrical and literary chapters; those on music and musical instruments have drawn little attention. To make matters worse, the entire section on music (chapters 28-33) is the most difficult part of the work, within which the *tāla* chapter is generally considered the most impenetrable. Focusing on the latter chapter, which treats *tāla* or rhythmic organization, my study addresses one of the most challenging issues of contemporary music, viz. the origin of the notion of cyclicity, or the cyclic progression of time (Mohkamsing 2003).

### Musicological relevance

Because of its antiquity and obscurity, the Nāṭyaśāstra is usually considered of no or little value to understanding

contemporary performing arts. This applies particularly to music, which has passed through numerous phases of remarkable change and development, especially in the last three to four hundred years. Despite the hiatus of two millennia, some remarkable parallels can be drawn between ancient and modern musicological notions of time and action. Notable in this regard is the similarity between the notion of cyclicity so clearly observed in contemporary Indian music, and the rudiments of a comparable mode of progression in early musical compositions such as the *āsārīta*-songs ('extended' songs).<sup>1</sup> As will be seen below, the cyclic procedures present in these *āsārītas* are described in the Nāṭyaśāstra.

The presence and origin of the idea of cyclicity of time, both in ancient and in modern Indian music, has yet to be satisfactorily explained. Usually, however, the origin of this idea is traced back to the doctrine of cosmic cycles, which measures the periodic creation and destruction of the universe in units such as *yuga* (age), *kalpa* (aeon), and *manvantara* (fourteen aeons). According to the cosmology of the Epics and Purāṇās, these processes continually repeat themselves in fixed patterns (Bäumer 1992:40 f.). Since this doctrine appears to have developed in post-Vedic periods, but before the Nāṭyaśāstra, it may safely be assumed to have influenced the music theory of the latter.

The basic idea of repetition is present in the Nāṭyaśāstra, in such notions as *nivṛtti*, *upavartana*, and *parivartana*. Most of these terms, however, refer specifically to repetitions of parts of a

pattern, involving variation of tempo through acceleration or deceleration and do not explain the phenomenon of cyclicity from a musical and rhythmical point of view.

### Passing on the rhythm

Evidence proving the presence of cyclicity in ancient Indian music is concealed in the nature of a beat called *sannipāta* in ancient rhythmic theory. The study of its role and position in the *āsārīta*-songs has unearthed hidden clues that ultimately reveal the cyclic procedures in ancient music. The *Sannipāta* is the strongest beat in *tāla* cheironomy. It usually occurs at the beginning of a basic *tāla*-pattern, but when the pattern is expanded, the *sannipāta* moves to its end. This seems to imply a transposition of accent, but closer analysis reveals that it is only a matter of perception and sensation: the beginning and end of successive patterns coincide on the punctuation of *sannipāta*.

The 'short' *āsārīta*-song is described as a composition of seventeen beats, where the last (or seventeenth) beat has to be a *sannipāta*. In reality, the song has only sixteen beats and under 'ordinary' circumstances the sixteenth beat carries the accentuated *sannipāta*. Here the enigmatic description of the *āsārīta* as having seventeen beats is particularly meaningful. The last *sannipāta* appears to be 'extra-structural' as it falls outside the actual structure, coinciding with the first beat of the following rhythmic pattern. The song thus has a sixteen + one beat structure. Once the song progresses, its beats assume a one

As a strong concluding beat, the *sannipāta* carries the main accent and is responsible for creating the sensation of cadence and cyclicity. By shifting the point of conclusion from the sixteenth to the seventeenth beat (the first of the following pattern), the cadence or rhythm is extended to the following cycle. The interlocking of the initial and final beats of successive patterns creates the typical flow or continuity of a cyclic procedure.

The function of the *sannipāta* proves that the ancient compositions described in the Nāṭyaśāstra were performed in a cyclic manner. Notably, the characteristic nature of the *sannipāta* resembles that of *sam* in modern Hindustani music.<sup>2</sup>

One may conclude, at least from a musicological point of view, that the Nāṭyaśāstra is the first source to explain rhythmic cyclicity in Indian music. Even though this is not done explicitly, the description of certain songs shows that the author was familiar with the idea of cyclic procedures. It therefore seems plausible that elements of the older cosmic notion of cyclicity found their way into the Nāṭyaśāstra, and thus also into the subsequent tradition of the performing arts in South Asia. ◀

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### Notes >

- 1 The name *āsārīta*, or 'extended' (song) itself indicates that with the employment of new techniques such as cyclic repetition, the given melodies were 'extended' or 'expanded' as desired.
- 2 *Sam* is the first and most important beat in a rhythmic cycle and figures as the pivotal beat in creating the sensation of cyclicity by exploiting (i.e. by easing and building) the tension between beginning and finality, expectation and fulfilment.

# Hinduism, Values and Management

Research >  
South Asia

Global corporations and governments appreciate the importance of an ethical public appearance. Thus values and ethics for business and government have become important components of management training. The movement for management values originated in the United States, it quickly spread to Europe, and India can hardly be said to lag behind. Indian initiatives in this field receive financial support from enterprises such as the Tata Group, the ONGC (Natural Oil and Gas), and the BPCL (Bharat Petroleum).

By Victor A. van Bijlert

The upsurge of interest in management values can be traced back to political demands for a smaller state. Social scientists have observed that the old welfare state is giving way to the night-watchman state where social security, health insurance, and public utilities are privatized. Thus economic life is slipping away from parliamentary control and regulation. This freedom has some economic advantages, but it does not preclude irresponsibility and downright fraud.

The slipping away of public control mechanisms seems to encourage managerial misbehaviour. Promoters of business ethics in the United States and Europe have understood that the growing private sector requires clear formulations of ethically acceptable corporate behaviour. Thus 'values in business', 'values-based management', 'ethical entrepreneurship', and so forth, have entered the market of management teaching.

## Hindu values and business

Concern for ethical corporate behaviour was first expressed in India in the early 1980s. The then Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, informally urged Swami Yuktananda, a monk and follower of the Shri Ramakrishna movement, to promote Indian values for the moral improvement of Indian management. Indian values, it was claimed, derived from the inclusivist (Hindu) Vedanta philosophy. Vedantic Hinduism (like Christianity in the Western world) in the 1980s came to be regarded as a cultural resource for Indian managers. It was thought that values awareness would prevent corruption. Less corruption in the end meant less financial loss.

The target groups for values training were managers of private and public sector enterprises, high-ranking state civil servants, and executives of the Indian Administrative Service. Promoting values in Indian government, however, inevitably has political implications.

In the 1990s, the Hindu conservative Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power at the national level. This boosted efforts to promote Hindu values in management. Professors working at institutes of management in Calcutta, Lucknow, and Ahmedabad began to lecture on Indian (read Hindu) ethics for management and developed special training courses for Indian managers. While the number of courses is steadily increasing, the serious scholarly literature on the subject remains small.

## Today Hindu communalism is euphemistically rebaptized 'Hindu nationalism'.

One scholar with an international reputation has held undisputed sway over the field since the 1990s: S.K. Chakraborty (Management Centre for Human Values, Calcutta). Author of about twenty books, Chakraborty practically initiated the Hindu values movement in management literature. Other notable contributors to this literature are the genuinely concerned author R.C. Sekhar (T.A. Pai Management Institute, Manipal) and Arindam Choudhury, the author of a recent best-seller.

Serious authors like S.K. Chakraborty address financial and political corruption, entrepreneurial irresponsibility, 'creative' accounting, and fraudulent practices in the stock markets and commercial banking. These real problems require

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[www.williamradice.com](http://www.williamradice.com)

criticism and analysis from an ethical perspective. The values that inspire this criticism are based on modern Hindu thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi. These figures had a great impact on modern India, not least due to their involvement in early Hindu nationalism and the freedom struggle. Their actions provide instances of exemplary values and ethical behaviour and prove that 'typical Indian corruption' is neither typical nor Indian.

## It is unavoidable to be drawn into sharp political confrontations when dealing with contemporary Hindu ethics.

The promotion of religion as the fundamental source of ethical behaviour is based on two sociological observations: (a) the great world religions of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism have large followings, and are more universal in aim and intent than political or social ideologies; (b) unlike ideologies, world religions address (or claim to address) issues of ultimate human concern such as life, death, good, evil, and the hereafter. Thus, Hinduism (the religion of about 85 per cent of Indians) provides fundamental Indian values. One may question the need to turn to world religions to seek ultimate values. But so long as religions provide values to millions around the world, academics have reason to study their impact on values discourse. Indian intellectuals who regard themselves as secular and (often) leftist balk at the use of religious texts as sources for values, especially the use of Hindu texts as sources for ethics in business and politics. Their apprehension is not groundless.

### Hindutva and management

The influence of Hindu communalism on Indian public life grew during the BJP's rise to power. Today Hindu communalism is euphemistically rebaptized 'Hindu nationalism'. Even some Western scholars have adopted this term. The protagonists of this 'nationalism' often call it Hindutva, which translates as 'Hinduness' or 'Hindudom'. It regards only Hindus as true Indians; Islam and Christianity are foreign to what it calls the 'Indian ethos'. Therefore Hindu 'nationalists' demand a Hindu *rashtra*, a purely 'Hindu India' and brand all those who criticize or oppose this programme – communists, socialists, members of the Congress party, liberals, secular intellectuals and anybody who has independence of mind – 'pseudo-secular' or 'un-Indian'. They criticize previous Congress governments for pandering to 'minorities' to gain or keep votes. As Hindu communalists promote themselves as the sole interpreters and inheritors of Hinduism, it is unavoidable to be drawn into sharp political confrontations when dealing with contemporary Hindu ethics.

What is at stake? The main issue for Indian/Hindu values in management is how one defines the concept of managerial leadership, in other words, how an executive should give direction to an organization. Broadly speaking, there are two positions among writers on Hindu values and management: some prefer a hierarchical approach to leadership, others a more egalitarian one. This dividing line has socio-political implications. The advocates of hierarchy in management prefer authoritarianism in politics; the egalitarians on the whole support democracy.

The most famous and influential representative of the first approach is S.K. Chakraborty. In his courses on values for managers he presents a leadership model that builds upon hierarchy, strict obedience to a boss or leader, rituals, and punishment for those who disobey this leader. In some of

his courses and articles Chakraborty has argued for abolishing the present secular constitution and parliamentary democracy, and replacing them with a Hindu constitution and rule by a few wise gentlemen.

R.C. Sekhar, in contrast, stresses the coaching model of management and a 'flat', i.e. non-hierarchical, form of organization. Non-hierarchical managerial behaviour is also advocated by Peter Pruzan of the Copenhagen Business School in his many lectures in India. Pruzan's source of inspiration is Shri Sathya Sai Baba. Arindam Choudhury in his best-selling book *Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch* wants Indian managers to act with self-confidence and a sense of initiative. One of Choudhury's Hindu role models is Swami Vivekananda. However, the vocal supporters of egalitarianism and democracy are outnumbered by those who tacitly support hierarchy and authoritarianism.

### Challenges for the future

The scholarly debate in India on values in management is not isolated from the wider socio-political context. Announcements for courses on Indian values in institutes of management invariably mention government executives along with private sector managers as participants. The Management Centre for Human Values, Calcutta (founded by S.K. Chakraborty) has taught courses on Indian values for top executives of the Indian Administrative Service where values in management are treated as a derivative of Indian / Hindu social values. S.K. Chakraborty argues that a manager is 'man' first and manager second. The debate raises issues with serious implications for the future of India.

According to some Western observers, India (following China) will emerge as an economic superpower. Abdul Kalam, President of India, has outlined a dream to 'ignite' the minds of youth through widespread education with the aim to build a technologically advanced nation. In order to realize this dream, government institutions and businesses must work in a socially and economically progressive environment. This requires universal basic education fostering independence of mind, rationality, problem solving, and initiative. In short, a democratic egalitarian temperament is essential to growth in every respect.

It is estimated that over 90 per cent of India's work force is barely educated and works in the informal sector. The greatest challenge for the future will be the full mobilization of this work force on a socially just and economically responsible basis. Serious debate on values is indispensable. Indian executives in government and business must reflect on the ultimate ideals that ought to guide the future of India: will the country be transformed into a more democratic and economically equitable society that enables all of its citizens – irrespective of gender, status or religious background – to fully develop their talents and creativity? Rational and democratically minded authors on Hindu values can contribute to the dissemination and public internalization of these ideals. The literature on Hindu ethics and values requires input from a more varied range of authors, and should seriously reflect on issues such as democracy and the civil rights embodied in the Indian constitution, for these form the basis for a better future. ◀

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# Local Protectionism

## The Bottleneck of China's Economic Development

Research  
China

More and more foreign companies have been entering China since the country became a formal member of the WTO in December 2001. Local protectionism, however, exists in many places and on different levels. Sabotaging both the efforts to establish and consolidate market order and the fight against fake and shoddy products, local protectionism is becoming the main cause for the weakening international competitiveness of Chinese enterprises.

By HOU Yu

Regional protectionism has long been blamed for economic inefficiencies and investment disincentives in China. Although the term generally refers to the differential way in which local governments treat local and non-local products and enterprises, the practice differs from place to place. In some cases, local governments allow small, polluting firms to churn out resource-depleting, copycat, or low quality goods. In other instances, local governments issue laws and regulations that discriminate against non-local products and enterprises. This generally results in the proliferation of low-technology factories, especially those producing household appliances such as TVs, refrigerators, and recorders. As the provinces all have similar industrial structures, their protected industries do not complement each other. The result, rather, is wasted resources, competition between regions and, on a global level, uncompetitiveness.

Local governments everywhere have incentives to protect local industries. They rely on these industries for tax revenue and also care about maintaining local employment, which is important for social stability and, in democratic states, for electoral success. Local governments thus often find it prudent to erect trade barriers to protect local industries from inter-regional competition. The problem is similar to protectionism in international trade; it should, however, be easier to ensure smooth inter-regional trade as national governments retain authority over their local counterparts. In the United States, for example, the constitution prohibits interstate tariffs. This has greatly facilitated the inter-regional trade of goods and services and has led to regional specialization in industrial production.

### Policy discrepancies

In the period of China's economic transition, an unfortunate combination of economic policies on central and local level is the primary cause of local protectionism. Prior to 1978, China had a highly centralized fiscal system. All tax revenue first went to the central government. Its planning commission had the authority to determine the expenditures of local governments and allocated revenue from the central pool accordingly. This system removed tax revenue and expenditure from the hands of local government, and provided few incentives for local protection or local production.

Since the 1980s, China has implemented numerous fiscal reforms. The 'tax contract' system (*shuizheng baogan zhi*) and 'tax assignment' system (*fenshui zhi*) gave local governments more autonomy in fiscal matters. At the same time, greater local autonomy in the provision of scientific and technological infrastructure has enabled local gov-

ernments to invest in their own projects, determine the allocation of resources and engage in foreign trade. The increase in the number of rural township enterprises has strengthened the power of local governments. Before 1979 the central government's tax revenue accounted for 70 per cent of the total, with the remaining 30 per cent going to local governments. Since the reforms, this ratio has reversed.

In the early 1980s, the policy of 'let some people and some regions prosper before others' created another kind of regional protectionism. Due to its implementation, a growing wealth gap has sprung up between the regions. China's southeastern coastal areas, such as Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, and Guangdong, have become fairly well off due to rapid economic growth while the provinces of China's midwest, such as Henan, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, and Guizhou, remain poor.

The benefits of maintaining local employment are obvious and universal; as mentioned earlier, local governments are concerned with employment in their respective regions of governance. It is widely acknowledged that there exists an enormous amount of surplus labour within Chinese state-owned enterprises of all types. To ensure social stability, both local and central governments are compelled to maintain employment of these workers. Most state-owned enterprises are administered by local governments and remain important political constituents for local government officials.

Local governments thus do their utmost to develop local economies, in order to increase their financial revenue and benefit local people. The result is regional protectionism that prioritizes local-benefit-oriented economic development. The regions compete with each other in pursuing their interests, thereby consolidating the larger struc-

ture in which the interests of local bureaucracies and local businessmen coincide.

### Local protectionism and WTO rules

'In a country without a united market', stated an executive working for a foreign-invested automobile company in Shanghai, 'the biggest headache is to sell our products from one city to another'. The company's cars sell well in the south, but are barred from entry in some northern markets. Envious of the company's substantial investments in the south, and fearing the threat its entry would pose to local automobile makers, officials refused to grant license plates to cars the company tries to sell in the north.

As regional protectionism results in more tax revenue being retained at the local level, the central government has experienced shortfalls. Furthermore, regional protectionism has led to the fragmentation of larger markets and the atomisation of local markets, which goes against the WTO rules.

In order to lure foreign investment,

China has offered preferential measures for regions and types of investors; concessions have been offered in enterprise income tax and import tariffs. The principle of international treatment, however, dictates that FIEs (Foreign Investment Enterprises) should neither be discriminated against nor treated favourably. To honour its commitments to the WTO, China must adopt unified policies for the whole nation and must not favour one region or enterprise over another.

Regional protectionism – by protecting the backward, inflating trade costs, blocking the equitable allocation of resources, and hindering the formation of large-scale economies – is becoming the main cause for the weakening international competitiveness of Chinese enterprises. The Chinese government is increasingly aware of these problems, as two final examples show.

At the 2002 China Mayor Forum, the mayor of Fuzhou announced a bold policy to help foreign companies sell their goods in the city, regardless of where they locate their headquarters. Chongqing, the largest industrial city in the West, decided early in 2002 to abolish its time-honoured policy of levying additional fees on the sales of cars made in other provinces. Although this decision will result in Chongqing losing tens of millions of yuan, it would, according

to Chongqing's vice mayor, force local automakers to learn how to compete. 'It is a live-or-die question. The mission is not easy, but we have no choice.'<sup>1</sup> ◀

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### Note >

- 1 People's Daily online, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn> 26 March 2002.

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# Countering Purism

## The Revitalization of Moluccan Languages

Research>  
Southeast Asia

In minority indigenous communities where languages are endangered, people are adopting more dominant or prestigious languages, introduced through colonization, trade, and evangelization, as a national language, or as a language of wider communication. Among the remaining speakers of the endangered language, levels of fluency vary considerably. As knowledge and use diminish among younger speakers, linguists commonly observe widespread grammatical restructuring and the emergence of new varieties. These processes may lead to a 'language shift cycle'.

By Margaret Florey

The language shift cycle begins with extensive variation flourishing in the endangered language. Variation is evident in the lexicon, with greater use of loanwords from the encroaching language. More significant is the grammatical restructuring which commonly accompanies language shift. Speakers of various ages and levels of fluency reanalyse the grammatical features of the indigenous language in different ways, resulting in different grammars of the language existing side-by-side in one community. Such lexical and grammatical variation commonly triggers reactions among older people who wish to maintain a 'pure' or more conservative form of the language. These puristic attitudes may result in older fluent speakers restricting their use of the language with non-fluent speakers. Decreased transmission and lack of access to a fluent speaker model lead to imperfect learning among younger speakers, which then gives rise to greater variation. And so begins a cycle in which the drive for purism is itself implicated in language obsolescence.

The challenge for linguists wishing to respond to the voiced desires of communities to maintain or renew endangered languages, lies with developing tools to intervene in the language shift cycle. For a start, this means countering puristic attitudes by working with community members to increase linguistic tolerance and compromise. Ultimately, the goal is to support language revitalization by rebuilding an environment where varieties of the lan-

guage are again spoken across generations. An innovative training programme being developed among speakers of Moluccan languages and their descendents, both in the eastern Indonesian homeland and in the Dutch diaspora, hopes to meet this challenge.

A high level of linguistic diversity characterizes the 14 Central Moluccan Islands in eastern Indonesia: no less than 42 Austronesian languages are spoken in the region. The greatest diversity is found on Seram Island with 21 extant languages and Ambon Island with six. Language endangerment in the Central Moluccan Islands is attributable to a cluster of factors: a long history of contact with non-indigenous peoples, colonization, intensive trade, and conversion to non-indigenous religions. These factors have all contributed to the widespread use of the contact language Ambonese Malay. It is furthermore well documented that languages in Christian villages in Maluku are becoming obsolescent more rapidly than languages spoken in villages that have converted to Islam. In the postcolonial era, the national language, Indonesian, has impacted on the linguistic ecology through its status as the language of education, media, and government. Against this background, a recent analysis of linguistic vitality among Austronesian languages (Florey forthcoming) shows that Maluku has the highest level of language endangerment in Indonesia. Six languages are known to have become extinct in recent times, and seven of the 19 seriously endangered languages have fewer than 50 speakers.

Although endangered languages are

spoken by very few people in Maluku, speakers remain among Moluccan residents in the Netherlands. In 1950, when many Moluccans were unwilling to join the newly formed Republic of Indonesia against which they had fought, some 12,500 soldiers and their families accepted an opportunity to demobilize in the Netherlands. The vast majority of them continue to live in exile, and among the 50,000 Dutch Moluccans there may be speakers of as many as ten Central Moluccan languages (Florey and Van Engelenhoven 2001).

It is within this framework of high linguistic diversity, serious endangerment, and poor documentation that a project is being undertaken to document four previously undescribed Central Moluccan languages. Research team members Florey, Ewing, Litamahuputy, and Musgrave are working in both the Indonesian homeland and in the Dutch diaspora with speakers of languages indigenous to Amahai and Soahuku villages (Seram Island), Aboru (Haruku Island), Tulehu (Ambon Island), and Allang (Ambon Island).

Models for working with community members are being developed, for example, in the network of Aboriginal Language Centres in Australia, and in the Master-Apprentice scheme established by Hinton for indigenous Californian languages (Hinton and Hale 2001). These models aim to empower communities through training programmes that facilitate community ownership of language activities.

In the Netherlands, the past decade has witnessed a revival of interest in ethnolinguistic identity and *bahasa*



Haruku teachers Daan Saija (left) and Robert Akihary (right) teaching in workshop level 1

Both photos by Margaret Florey

*tanah* (indigenous languages) among second- and third-generation Dutch Moluccans. Aspirations for language use range from incorporating a few words into speech as markers of identity to writing songs, poetry, and literature in *bahasa tanah*, and in some cases, to becoming speakers of ancestral languages. Elderly first generation Dutch Moluccans, encouraged by this interest, wish to share their residual knowledge of *bahasa tanah*. However, community members have been uncertain about how to teach and learn the languages, and have seen their efforts frustrated by a lack of materials.

The research team responded to community aspirations for language awareness and renewal activities by offering a series of *bahasa tanah* workshops in three language groups: Koako (Amahai/Soahuku), Haruku, and Allang. The training philosophy aims to demystify linguistics and linguistic fieldwork and empower individuals and communities to undertake language documentation, which they can use for either revitalization or maintenance of the language at the grassroots level. Furthermore, it aims to counter the perceived need for the involvement of professionals in all language activities and to confront the issue of language variation and change in order to counter puristic attitudes and intervene in the language shift cycle.

Three workshops were held at the Moluks Historisch Museum, Utrecht, in September 2003. The goal of level 1 *Getting to know bahasa tanah* and level 2 *Developing community programs for bahasa tanah* was to teach participants how they can work with language teachers to learn more about their ancestral languages, and to develop language programmes in their communities. Widespread linguistic variation will be encountered in communities undergoing rapid language shift, and trainee linguists and community language workers will need tools to work with it. Thus at level 3 *Learning about language change*, the workshop focused on cross-linguistic comparison and, through a process of discovery, awareness developed of the extent of variation in speech communities. Through 50 years of living in the Dutch diaspora, many Moluccan speakers and their descendents have maintained strong links to their villages of origin. Activities commonly take place within *kumpulan*: 'gathering' groups organized around village-level communities. At the same time, the belief has persisted that Moluccan languages, be it with some lexical differences, are essentially the same, and that differences between Moluccan groups primarily lie in the socio-political realm.

Among the participants who took part in all three workshops, we observed the socio-political boundaries between ethnolinguistic groups begin to break down. At level 3, as students discussed and planned future language activities, they began to see the larger cross-linguistic group as a broader base for language maintenance activities.

Confronting language variation and change appears to have challenged a long-standing belief system and aided in establishing a more informed and secure sociolinguistic identity based on an understanding that ancestral languages are related yet different. A promising start towards an approach that fosters a higher level of linguistic tolerance has already been made. These are important developments from the perspectives both of language revitalization and of capacity building in endangered language communities. In fieldwork practice, particularly in the documentation of endangered languages, greater tolerance and compromise may be attained if linguists play a greater role in educating and training communities about language variation so as to create awareness about the issues, and about change and variation as the norm in every speech community. ◀

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Maluku Endangered Languages Project  
www.arts.monash.edu.au/ling/maluku



Students in the Bahasa Koako group in workshop level 2 practising a song they have written in their language. Seated: Sergio Risamasu (back to camera) and Marcus Tamaela (facing camera); standing left to right: Mr L. Manusama, Frida Pasanea, Heidi Holle, Djak Tamaela, and Atef Sitanala

# Malaysia and Islamic Modernity

Report >  
Southeast Asia

8-10 July 2003  
Essen, Germany

Due to its growing economic prosperity since the 1970s, Malaysia is often appreciated as a well-functioning model for economic development. As part of an ambitious encompassing modernization project, Islam, or more precisely a certain kind of Islamic vision has been firmly connected to a vision of the formation of a modern Asian society. It was by setting into operation Islam as a cultural force in service of the economy that Malaysia countered the potential disruption that results from rapid national change and paved the way for its sustained economic growth. This affinity between religion and creating modern society in Malaysia was discussed during the workshop 'Asian Modernity and Islam: The Case of Malaysia'.

By Sigrid Nökel & Georg Stauth

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir has been one of the key players defining the relationship between modernity and Islam. In the public opening lecture of the workshop, Omar Farouk Bajunid (Hiroshima) addressed the characteristics of Mahathirism, relating the former prime minister's biography to the political ideology that shaped postcolonial Malaysia. In the early 1970s, Mahathir began criticizing the cultural dependency and colonial residue of the 'Look West' perspective. His 'Look East' campaign was designed to bestow recognition to the Malays and to Islam. Although he had to rely on 'Malayness' in shaping Malay nationalism, Mahathir stressed the need for competitiveness within global capitalism. However, he always gave way to political protection of Malay communities and Malay traditions in the economic sphere and in cultural discourse. Finally, he was a ruthless self-made man, which in a way contradicted his call for the upholding of Islamic values.

Impressed by the Japanese model, which combined rapid economic growth with the preservation of tradition and communal values, Mahathir attempted to mould a coherent social ideology and a rather strict religious-political programme through a new discourse on Islam and Islamic modernity. As Mahathir's perception of an Islamic state depended on a utopian view of the Japanese path towards capitalism, his campaigns to 'act Islamic' really meant to 'act Japanese'.

The Petronas Twin  
Towers in Kuala  
Lumpur



Freek Colombijn

Throughout the Mahathir period, culture, i.e. 'Islam' was seen as instrumental to economic and political needs and to plans for national development. According to Farouk, the instrumentalization of Islam in his various campaigns was restrained from within by the democratic constitution of the country on the one hand and by Islamic networks 'looking Middle East' on the other. Outside the nation, Mahathir's efforts to strengthen political relations with oil-rich Muslim countries facilitated the formation of Islamic networks. As an undesired consequence, these networks ultimately achieved their own cultural and political logic and restrained Mahathir's instrumentalization of Islam. Furthermore, his strategic cooperation with global capitalist players contributed to contradict his Islamic values campaign and thus limited Mahathir's authority of intervention. Islam, since the beginning of Mahathirism, became an operating attitude of the Malay majority in a state that is otherwise characterized by cultural and ethnical plurality (with the Chinese population forming a significant and economically successful minority). It became the cultural top-to-bottom force attracting people's minds to personal as well as societal change and to hard work. In short, Mahathirism developed a Malaysian Islam offering an alternative vision of Islam and modernity that hardly goes beyond pragmatically oriented state-politics.

This is not to say that the sociological and intellectual trends in Malaysian discourse from the 1960s to the 1980s suffered from an intellectual and academic drought in Malaysia as is commonly suggested, says Georg Stauth (Essen), as prove academic figures like S. Hussein Alatas and S. Naguib al-Attas as well as younger politicians and intellectuals like Anwar Ibrahim and Chandra Muzaffar. Their intellectual influence on Mahathirism and its success is exemplified by key concepts in Malaysian discourse: the 'Max Weber-Thesis on Southeast Asia', 'Progressive Islam', and of the 'Lazy Native' colonial idea critically developed by S. Husain Alatas. However, with respect to the increasing importance of religious thought since the 1970s the impact of the works of S. Naguib al-Attas was most important. In particular al-Attas' approach to 'Islamization' of knowledge, antagonistic to the idea of Progressive Islam, had a great impact on religious and intellectual debate in Southeast Asia. Corresponding to Western discourse of the 'hermeneutics of authenticity' and 'soft' and 'green' science, al-Attas' perceptions of Malay Sufism and alternative forms of construction of knowledge were considered a serious attempt to construct a 'de-westernized' world of Southeast Asian scholarship. He also had a decisive impact on the Islamic campus and 'think-tank' culture particularly in the times of the close personal and political alliance between Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim in the 1990s.

Mahathir's functional instrumentalization of these ideas had an important impact on the role of Islam as a constructive force, argued Stauth. By re-creating these ideas as elements of social engineering, thus deepening the tensions between religious thought and everyday life, Mahathir determined the conditions for connecting Islam with bureaucratic rationalization and capitalist attitudes.

Focusing on Islam as the central issue of reconstructing Malaysian society comes with the main difficulty that it would include only one segment of the pluricultural Malaysian society and exclude or neglect the cultural attitudes of other ethnic and religious minorities.\* Farish Noor (Berlin) stressed that while Islam may have been used in service of the economy, the impact of Mahathir's cultural policies on minority groups, which included forcefully imposing Islamic regulations, was no less real. In recent years, the dominating party-union UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) increasingly losing ground to the PAS (Parti Islam se Malaysia), which is second-in-line. Noor's comparative analysis of the development of these two most important parties brought to light their interrelations as well as the reasons for UMNO's shrinking credibility and concurrently, the rising popularity of the ulama-led PAS, as evidenced in recent elections. According to Noor, the success of the PAS led opposition is an unintended effect of governmental politics and its controlled creation of Islamic knowledge. While one can hardly speak of a loss of state control, the success of PAS and



Putrajaya Mosque

its more open attitude towards non-Islamic minorities represents the emergence of an autonomous Islamic discourse, challenging the official line. Most important, the contradiction between the state-based forms of micro-management of Islam on the one hand, and the normative Islam (which concerns how individuals perceive the world and how they position themselves in it in moral terms) could evolve into a new turn of total Islam (i.e. the reformulation of law and politics from below): a discursive condition which would escape full control by the state.

Although germs of political opposition can be found among Islamists, Malaysia today is commonly believed to be remarkably stable. From the angle of the relationship between Islam, state, and, culture we can identify a productive, though tenuous, interplay between different layers of Islamic intellectualism. One may ask, if this can be sustained in the future beyond any hegemonic intervention by the state and Islamic intellectualism could flourish similarly in a civil society independent from state authoritarianism. Looking from a different angle, one could ask whether Malaysia represents a new model of 'Asian Islam'. Paradoxically, while throughout Mahathir's period Islam was tentatively instrumentalized for economic and social development campaigns (epitomized in slogans like 'Look East' and 'Act Japanese'), this model is also a condition, now, of all tendencies of Islam reflecting it as a force of its own. <

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*Dr Sigrid Nökel is a fellow at the KWI in Essen and a member of the above mentioned study group. Her dissertation 'Die Töchter der Gastarbeiter und der Islam. Zur Soziologie alltagsweltlicher Anerkennungspolitiken. Eine Fallstudie' (transcript, Bielefeld 2002), was a sociological study of the everyday politics of recognition and contained case studies concerning the daughters of migratory workers and Islam. Her research interests include social theory; Muslims in Europe and European Islam.*

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## Note >

\* Apart from Farish Noor, several others at the workshop: Claudia Derichs (Duisburg), Helmut Lukas (Wien), Alexander Horstmann (Münster), and Bernhard Trautner (Bremen/Bonn) also emphasized the exclusivist 'nature' of the Mahathirist political system and its manipulations of political discourse.

## Islam Study Group

*Islamic Culture – Modern Society: The Positioning of Islam in the Perspective of Comparative Interaction is the name and study subject of an international Study Group established at the 'Kulturwissenschaften Institut' (Institut of Advanced Studies in the Humanities) in Essen, Germany. The study group scrutinizes the effects of modernity on religious thought and ways of life in contemporary Islam, in three geographical areas. First, Malaysia as a paradigm of intertwining Islamic culture and 'Asian values', where Islam has become an important means of social engineering. Second, Europe as a space where Islam has become a challenge to national social engineering in the transition to post-nationality. Third, Egypt, where tendencies towards Islamic modernization prosper alongside non-political ones leaning on Sufism and popular religion. The study group compares these three cases and addresses current debates on the roots of monotheism and the breakthroughs leading to modernity and to the currently dominant visions of 'Modernity', 'Europe', and 'the West'.*

## Agenda >

A follow-up on the above conference will take place in Essen on 21-23 July 2004. Entitled 'Islamic institutions, communities, personalities: reinterpreting pluralism, secularity, and modernity', the conference will highlight comparative issues of Islam in different regional environments.

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# Cautious Optimism

Report >  
Southeast Asia

26-27 September  
2003  
Canberra, Australia

'Things aren't as bad as they could have been. Indonesia is going forward, perhaps only a bit too slowly.' This appraisal by the Australian economist Hal Hill aptly summed up two days of heated discussion about the Indonesian economy during the twenty-first 'Indonesia Update'. Yet there was also alarm, expressed by Indonesian and foreign experts alike, with respect to increasing corruption and lack of genuine reform in Indonesia today.

By J. Thomas Lindblad

The conference theme, 'Business in the Reformasi Era', immediately directed attention to the pressing question of how a businessman should respond to the present reshaping of politics and economics in Indonesia. Most contributions addressed the climate for investment and economic recovery from a bird's-eye view, whereas only a few papers reflected a view at a micro level of business or from inside the individual enterprise. Special attention was given to legal reform, privatization and, of course, corruption. General consensus evolved about the existence of a circle of causation in Indonesia, which could either remain vicious or become virtuous. In the positive outcome scenario, less corruption in the legal system will enable the dispersal of debt-ridden assets now held by the Indonesian state, and in turn this will restore business confidence and thus trigger new investment.

The alarm signal was sounded early on when keynote speaker Andrew MacIntyre stated that, 'there is one thing worse than organized corruption and that is disorganized corruption.' The rules of the game change as politics and

economics are reshaped, in particular as a consequence of the far-reaching decentralization that has taken place in Indonesia in the last couple of years. MacIntyre's tune later returned in presentations of two in-depth studies of corruption. Merly Khouw had found no statistical relationship between more bribery and higher efficiency. Interestingly, 75 per cent of responding businessmen claimed to be against giving bribes, whereas only 15 per cent said they would refuse them. In their systematic analysis of bankruptcies since 1998, Marie-Christine Schröder and Keven Sidharta found that corruption has already crept into the implementation of the new legislation on bankruptcy. Their finding needs to be linked with the difficulties that the IBRA (Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency) reported in selling off assets seized from debt-ridden private companies. This is mainly due to the fact that it is difficult to have the original owners declared bankrupt. According to Felix Salim, the current book value of IBRA-held assets corresponds to a mere quarter of their original stated value when the crisis struck in 1997. Their current undervaluation clearly implies an enormous burden on the

public budget in Indonesia in terms of debt servicing. In addition it offers ample opportunities for original owners to buy back their assets through straw men at fire sale prices.

The link between institutional reform and macroeconomic prospects was stressed by co-convenor Chatib Basri in his general survey of the economy. Basri expected a continuation of the current rate of economic growth, about 3.5 per cent per year, but foresaw that much still had to be accomplished in the vein of institutional reform before a full recovery could be staged. In his opinion, a reformulation of industrial policy should now be given highest priority. This was not taken up in the subsequent discussion, however, which focused on the repercussions that the IMF's departure from Indonesia as of 1 January 2004 would have on the Indonesian economy.

Total private investment is slowly increasing in Indonesia but foreign direct investment has already been in decline for several years. This is clearly a reason for alarm and the climate for foreign investment was a recurrent theme throughout the conference. In her general survey of the political situation, human rights activist Sidney Jones, for instance, highlighted sources of uncertainty about the near future in Indonesia today, ranging from clashes between military and police in Aceh and Papua to the ambivalence among many Indonesian Muslims about the worldwide campaign against terrorism. However, as several speakers emphasized, the foreign investment climate depends above all on attitudes and policies adopted by the Indonesian government.

Things will remain uncertain as long as there is no clear consensus within the political elite about the desirability of foreign investment and the presence of expatriates. Even optimistic observers conceded that Indonesia is likely to remain a high-risk environment for foreign companies. The most urgent priority at this point is a return of the Chinese Indonesian capital that left the country when the crisis struck in 1997. In addition, it should be mentioned that foreign business, in particular, seems to have been totally unprepared for the militant trade unionism that has emerged in Indonesia since 1998.

There is traditionally a strong bias in favour of broad developments when reviewing the current situation and future outlook in the Indonesian economy. In this respect the Indonesia Update of 2003 offered a welcome opportunity to consider recent trends from a micro point of view as well. Two concrete examples may help us appreciate the benefits of this different standpoint. In her careful analysis of top conglomerates in Indonesia, the Japanese

economist Yuri Sato noted a dramatic decline in corporate ownership and a concomitant increase in management by either the government or foreign firms. However, this development had no clear-cut repercussions for management performance. In another study, on furniture manufacturing in Jepara (Central Java), Henry Sandee and Peter van Diermen contended that the role of foreign buyers is crucial for the performance of small- and medium-size firms; a type of business which, they argued, possesses considerable potential. Such evidence from the grass-roots level of small-scale furniture makers in the Javanese countryside substantiated cautious optimism, albeit beset by understandable concerns. <

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## Information >

The 'Indonesia Update' is organized annually by the Indonesia Project of the Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. The first 'Update' took place in 1982. The twenty-first one, in 2003, had as its theme 'Business in the Reformasi Era: New Challenges, Old Problems' and drew an unprecedented large crowd. It was jointly convened by the economic historian Pierre van der Eng (ANU) and the economist Chatib Basri (University of Indonesia, Jakarta). A publication of the proceedings is expected in early 2004. Next year's 'Update' will be on natural resources and the physical environment in Indonesia. Information on the activities of the Indonesia Project may be found on:

<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/economics/ip>

# Religious Networks Between the Middle East and Southeast Asia

In recent years there has been a growing interest in the study of diasporas, overseas communities, and transnational networks among scholars working in a number of fields. Connections and relationships between the Middle East and Southeast Asia have existed for many centuries. Studying the historical and contemporary relationships between these two important areas of the Muslim world calls for contributions from a wide variety of perspectives, ranging from the historical and anthropological to the political and philosophical.

Report >  
General

24-26 October 2003  
Cairo, Egypt

By Michael Feener

Transregional Islamic networks and issues related to them were discussed at the IIAS workshop 'Religious Networks between the Middle East and Southeast Asia', precisely with such multidisciplinary in mind. The topics addressed included the migration and diaspora of Arabs from Hadhramawt and translation studies, as well as Arabic and Malay publishing in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

A number of presentations contributed insights gained from a strong focus on textual sources for the modern history of religious networks between the two regions. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Shouk discussed some of the complex dynamics among different groups of Arabs in the Dutch East Indies as elaborated in an Arabic manuscript from Java, while Jajat Burhanuddin's presentation outlined some of the major developments of Indonesian publishing that

were influenced by increased travel and communications between Egypt and Indonesia during the early twentieth century. Textual approaches also characterized the papers presented by Nico Kaptein on fatwa literature and Michael Feener on Hadith studies, both of which explored issues relating to evolving understandings of religious authority among Muslims in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, connected by rapidly changing and expanding networks in the modern period. The relation of such intellectual exchanges to the institutional history of organizations like the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama were also discussed by Hassan Hanafi in his presentation. Throughout the workshop, textual and historical studies of this type were complemented by others that dealt with contemporary aspects of transregional Muslim religious networks. Based on rich ethnographic and life-history research, Mona Abaza explored new styles of religious

authority being cultivated in the burgeoning Muslim culture of upper-class Indonesians of Hadhrami descent. Haji Maaruf Saleh focused on the contemporary Muslim communities of Singapore, which have long been an important node in the networks connecting Southeast Asia and the Middle East. In recent years, globalization of Muslim women's networks in cyberspace has extended the networks to far beyond these two regions alone. Discussing this expansion of Muslim women's networks into cyberspace, Hoda Rouhana significantly broadened the frame of discussion. Most remarkably, this workshop went beyond simply discussing Islamic networks, contributing itself to the construction of expanded global networks of scholars from various disciplines studying the complex and continually changing relationships between Southeast Asia and the Middle East. <

An Indonesian student studying in Saudi Arabia, visiting the tomb of Shayk Ahmad al-Badawi, in Tanta, Egypt in 2002.



Michael Laffan

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## Information >

The above workshop was sponsored by the IIAS in conjunction with the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies at the American University in Cairo (AUC), and was convened by Mona Abaza (AUC) and Nico Kaptein (Leiden University).



Tin-winners in Ron Phibun district, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand 2001

Courtesy of the author

# For the Love of Tin The VOC in Ligor

Research >  
Southeast Asia

The Southern Thai province of Nakhon Si Thammarat is heir to one of the oldest port city-states of Southeast Asia. In the early days, Dutch and other European traders knew the province by the name 'Ligor'. For more than a century, from around 1640 until 1756, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) ran a small office in the flourishing entrepôt, the collecting station for the region's tin.

By Supaporn Ariyasajiskul

It is commonly believed that Nakhon Si Thammarat was already annexed to the kingdom of Ayutthaya (or Siam) to the north when the Dutch East India Company arrived to trade in the region in the early seventeenth century. Yet, control from the capital was weak. Classified as one of eight tributary kingdoms ruled by its own princes (Mueng Phaya-Mahanakhon), Nakhon Si Thammarat was granted authority to police the Malay Peninsula on behalf of Ayutthaya. The Dutch records show that at the time of the VOC's entrance, Ligor still enjoyed considerable autonomy in governance, trade, and foreign relations.

During the first three decades of the seventeenth century, the VOC had direct contact with the ruler of Ligor, annually purchasing 600-700 *bahar* of black pepper (approximately 250,000 pounds; 1 *bahar* = 375 pounds). In the best of years, the purchase could be up to 1,000-1,200 *bahar* (375,000-450,000 pounds). In 1612 the Company concluded a contract with the so-called in the Dutch records 'king of Ligor', who granted it exclusive rights to construct housing and to trade anywhere in the region, exempt from tolls and taxes. The Company was additionally allowed to build a stone warehouse in Sangora (Songkhla) to store Chinese goods intercepted at sea.

The honeymoon period between Ligor and the VOC ended in the 1630s. Behind this was a temporary but sharp decline in the European demand for pepper and the outbreak of war between King Prasathong of Siam and his vassal states on the Peninsula, which refused to recognize his legitimacy on the Siamese throne. According to the Dutch records, the Company sided with Siam, cautiously providing military aid to King Prasathong. Ligor and the other Thai-Malay vassal states were eventually subdued and severely punished. The Dutch records also describe how Ligor was completely destroyed. The pepper plantation was demolished and the 'king' and his wife, trapped in their ammunition-laden

palace, died when the palace was blown up.\*

The political situation changed with the dismemberment of Nakhon Si Thammarat. The provinces of 'Bordelong' (Phattalung), Sangora (Songkhla) and Tsaija (Chaiya) were henceforth ruled by governors and other high-ranking officers sent directly from the capital. The victory of Ayutthaya over Ligor in 1632 was thus a historical turning point, leading to a more complicated triangular relationship between Siam, Ligor, and the VOC. It also opened new trading opportunities for the Company.

Tin in Ligor was known to be very pure and of high quality. Tin production is estimated to have been 700-1,000 *bahar* (248,000-354,000 pounds) per annum in the mid-seventeenth century. The Company expected to secure at least 400 *bahar* of tin per year.

This target, however, could not be realized without the *tra* or seal of approval to trade tin in Ligor, and without Ayutthaya's support. The Dutch Company managed to obtain exclusive rights in 1660 by concluding a contract with King Narai of Ayutthaya. These exclusive rights allowed it to secure quotas for export and purchase tin in Ligor at less than 'market' prices. These preferential trading rights were, however, not absolute. VOC officers in Ayutthaya and Ligor had to battle continuously, both locally and in the capital, to secure their tin supply and export quotas. As a whole, the period running from 1670 to 1700 was the VOC's most successful one. In peak years, tin export from Ligor reached 1,400 *bahar* and the Company then realized profits of up to 100 per cent.

The tin affair became more complicated and less favourable to the Company in the eighteenth century. Of all the competitors, the Chinese through their networks were the best organized, and wrested control of the tin trade everywhere, and particularly on the black market. The Dutch Company in the meantime received permission to arrest tin smugglers in Ligor and to confiscate contraband. Its new role as the Ligor 'tin police' restored its tin exports between 1726 and 1735.

The trade policy launched by Ayutthaya in the reign of King Boromkot

was a blow to the Company; its exclusive rights to trade tin in Ligor, which it had enjoyed for almost a century, were lifted in 1734. As a result, it could obtain only very limited amounts of tin each year. After long negotiations, and due to the improvement in the relationship with the Royal Court in Ayutthaya, the exclusive rights were restored in the contract of 1754. It was, however, too late for the VOC to regain its position in Ligor. Ayutthaya lost control over the tin trade there. With no further prospects in sight, the Governor General and the Council in Batavia decided to close the office in Ligor for good, reporting the decision to the Board of Directors in the Republic on 31 December 1756. <

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Note >

\* The status of the rulers of Ligor seems to have been quite ambivalent. Ayutthaya saw Ligor as a vassal state, but the Dutch records seem to suggest greater autonomy. Until 1632, the VOC records always refer to the ruler of Ligor as 'king'.

Information >

The above article is a summary of the paper on 'The Siamese throne, the Company and the so-called tin-monopoly at Ligor; the limits of negotiating power and preferential trading rights' presented at the second TANAP (Towards A New Age of Partnership) workshop 'Asia in the Age of Partnership', Bangkok, Thailand, 24-26 October 2002. The full article will soon be published in *Itinerario*, the journal of the Institute for the History of European Expansion (IGEER).



# Southeast Asian 'Living Theatre'

Report >  
Southeast Asia

10-14 November  
2003  
Bangkok, Thailand

International arts promoters and not a few scholars are heavily invested in the dichotomy between the traditional and the contemporary. Books, exhibits, and performances on 'sacred/classical/indigenous' art and 'innovative/cutting-edge/postmodern' art are marketed to consumers around the world each year. Such labels, however, poorly fit much recent Southeast Asian theatre, which muddles received categories.

By Matthew Isaac Cohen

The new and the old, the foreign and the local, the urban and the rural: all of these apparent dichotomies have long existed in dynamic relation in Southeast Asian theatre. Today's living theatre is traditional and contemporary, a restoration of the past and alive to the present, locally rooted and globally aware. In the course of two days of academic presentations on theatre and dance flowing into three days of practical workshops on contemporary dance, Burmese marionette puppetry, theatre games, Balinese traditional dance, object animation, tableaux, and Thai traditional dance-theatre and rod puppetry, the SPAFA seminar-workshop on

Balinese *topeng* performed by I Wayan Dibia

Southeast Asian Performing Arts vividly brought these complexities to life.

Tradition-based contemporary performance

Nicanor G. Tiongson, in his presentation, described a recent revival of *sarswela*. A musical theatre popular in the Philippines at the turn of the century, traditional *sarswela* was a cheery cultural defence of class privilege, produced by the middle class for a predominately lower-class audience. The award-winning entry in the 1998 Centennial Literary Prize *sarswela* competition, Mario O'Hara's *Palasyo ni Valentin* (The Palace of Valentin), is a subversion of the ideology and form of traditional *sarswela*. *Palasyo* is a memo-

ry play set in a decrepit theatre in the city of Intramuros. Brutality, murder, suicide, deception, and revolution are explored through the ghostly recollection of pre-independence *sarswela* theatre. *Palasyo* rejects a linear plot, stereotypically 'good' and 'bad' characters, and pat moral messages in order to explore class conflict and the vicissitudes of history and character. No easy pleasure or reassurance is to be had. *Palasyo* uses songs, *sarswela* acting, and even excerpts of *sarswela* plays. But is *Palasyo sarswela*?

In her presentation on Thai comic performance, Wankwan Polachan described the Talok Café, and then led participants to this well-known feature of Bangkok nightlife. The Talok Café is a comedy and

Students and professional actor-dancers in a Khon workshop



All photos courtesy of SEAMEO-SPAFA

music club, as well as an eating establishment, frequented primarily by migrants from rural Thailand. Comedy troupes presenting comic skits and sketches with an emphasis on physical humour and bawdy word play alternate with attractive male and female singers performing Thai pop music. The atmosphere is chic and urban, but the slapstick humour and conventions of audience-performer interaction are traditional and rural. Guests socialize with the singers, and present garlands of money as tokens of appreciation. Some of the comedy troupe leaders are long time Bangkok residents and have become nationally recognized stars through their Talok Café performances, television appearances, and VCDs but their humour remains rooted in rural ways. The comedians, however, are now faced with a dilemma. They are running out of jokes and losing touch with recent rural developments. Some performers are educating themselves on rural migrants' urban concerns to better relate to their audiences. The Café now stands at a crossroads. Will it transform into an urban venue? Or will it disappear?

The internationally famous Singaporean theatre maker Ong Keng Sen presented an overview of his intercultural productions and Flying Circus workshops. Ong's work shows that Southeast Asian practitioners best known for their groundbreaking work are often vitally concerned with the traditional arts of their countries of origin, and of other countries in the region. One of his recent projects on Cambodian court dance and drama resulted in the reconstruction of core repertory items, as well as a powerful piece of reminiscence theatre performed by and devised together with former court dancers: *The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields* (2001). The Flying Circus Project was conceived in the same spirit. The 'antithesis of the museum', Flying Circus brings together traditional and non-traditional artists into a space for exchange and exploration, leading to moments both silly and sublime. Ong Keng Sen has been criticized by scholars for his 'Made in Singapore' cultural imperialism and entrepreneurship – criticism he has cannily incorporated into his work. Should Ong

Ken Sen be seen within a history of Singaporean Chinese cultural brokers and impresarios, or does his work demand appreciation according to non-local standards?

Zulkifli Bin Mohamad presented a possible solution to some classificatory problems in his discussion of the political economy of Malaysian performance. A new mode of practice is emerging in Southeast Asia, which Zulkifli calls 'tradition-based contemporary dance and theatre'. Artists from both traditional and modern backgrounds are reinterpreting time-honoured disciplines as the basis for new performances, accessible to non-traditional audiences in national and international venues. Tradition is not merely appropriated by these practitioners, but is transformed in the process. Traditional and new audiences equally appreciate many of these artists. Some are as adept in performing folksy comic turns as in discoursing on critical theory. Tradition-based contemporary performance is a particularly critical cultural intervention in Malaysia, where government and religious authorities have colluded to end old patterns of sponsorship for *wayang kulit*, social dance, and ritual drama.

### Border crossings

A number of papers and presentations explored the historical and contemporary dimensions of Southeast Asia as a lively crossroads where global artistic practices inter-articulate in exciting and often surprising ways. Southeast Asia's shadow puppet theatres have long ignored what Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof called 'the often artificial boundaries between nations', with performers and puppets travelling overseas for economic, religious, and political ends. As I discussed in my own paper, popular theatre in the Indonesian archipelago has seen the active participation of artists from India, China, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and many other countries for hundreds of years. Singapore's Chinese Opera Institute, under Chua Soo Pong's direction, not only teaches and performs staples of the Teochew operatic repertoire; it has also reinterpreted 'The Golden Deer' episode

of the Ramayana as bilingual Chinese opera. As Pawit Mahasarinand demonstrated, twentieth-century European and American spoken drama in Thai translation has provided a mode for exploring subjects customarily considered taboo in Thai society.

Many issues brought up at the seminar-workshop demand further exploration, including the reinvention of tradition, the politics and aesthetics of Southeast Asian intercultural theatre, copyright and other legal issues involved in the consumption of artistic property across national borders. Virtual and real routes connect the theatres of insular and mainland Southeast Asia. Some are new, others old. The theatre of Southeast Asia will continue

to live as long as it flows across borders, representing the past and imagining the future. <

*Dr Matthew Isaac Cohen is a lecturer in theatre studies at the University of Glasgow, where he teaches anthropology of theatre, performance studies, puppet theory, and Indonesian theatre. He was an IIAS fellow in the research programme 'Performing Arts of Asia: Tradition and Innovation' in 1998-2000. He is currently completing a book on the Komedi Stambol and has written extensively on wayang kulit and other forms of Indonesian theatre. He is also a practicing dhalang and convenes the Glasgow performance ensemble Gamelan Naga Mas (www.nagamas.co.uk). M.Cohen@tfs.arts.gla.ac.uk*

Tradition-based contemporary dance demonstrated by Zulkifli Bin Mohamad

## What is SPAFA?

The Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) was founded in 1978 under the aegis of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), and is hosted by the Government of Thailand. Its mandate is to 'promote professional competence, awareness, and preservation of cultural heritage' in ASEAN member states. Its activities over the past 25 years have included training courses in methods and techniques of archaeology, cultural administration, library science, and arts documentation; seminars on tourism, archaeology, and the theatre; and practical workshops in the arts. The organization is active in exchange programmes and consultancy, and has carried out field research on Southeast Asian ethnic music, epigraphy, and arts education. The publication wing puts out a journal and books on archaeology and the arts.

www.seameo-spafa.org



### Information >

The seminar and workshop on Southeast Asian Performing Arts, organized by the Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SPAFA) and Bangkok University, brought together Southeast Asian academics and practitioners of drama, dance, and puppetry, and Thai theatre professionals, young and old, to discuss, act out, and evaluate issues engaging theatre in Southeast Asia today. Publication of the proceedings of the seminar in both English and Thai is anticipated.

# Myth and the Disciplines

Report >  
General

12 December 2003  
Leiden,  
the Netherlands

How is it possible that we are able to understand text originating from all sorts of 'foreign' cultures? How can we construct and accept a general definition of myth and mythology that can be applied in analysing specific local contexts and narrative systems? And are myth and modernity incompatible? These were the central questions posed at the lively one-day conference 'Myth: Theory and the Disciplines'.

By Thera Giezen

This article will mostly delve into the theoretical and interdisciplinary approaches of myth as discussed in the first section of the conference. First, however, I will touch upon the second part dealing with in-depth area studies. In their area studies Cosimo Zene and Elizabeth Gunner reconstructed marginality and power tension as expressed in the mythical narrative of the Indian low-caste Dalit and in the mythical figure of the Zulu goddess Nomkaubulwana respectively. In turn, YE Shuxian presented a fascinating reconstruction of the old Chinese goddess worship, based not only on the meaning, but also on the outer shape of Chinese characters. The varied nature of these area studies is the living proof of the complex if not treacherous relationship between theory and empirical data. Be it as it may that comparative research gives us interesting insights into what people all over the world share, there are several possible dangers in constructing general theories on the basis of large corpuses of texts. Details of the individual myths may disappear; or too much attention may be paid to similarities as a result of which differences may be overlooked; it is also possible that focusing on the overall structures of myths causes a neglect of philological aspects.

The eternal problem of definitions reappeared at various moments during the conference and in the final debate chaired by Reimar Schefold, Mark Geller, and Boudewijn Walraven. A crucial question is, whether it is possible to use general concepts thought up in one culture and apply them to local contexts of other cultures. The concept of myth itself is a Western construction based on Western – especially Classical Greek – mythology. It would be wrong to take for granted that this and other concepts are universal. Sometimes Western scholars would call a certain story 'myth', whereas the society in which the story is told uses another name or does not have an equivalent for the Western word 'myth' at all. If this is so, then what is the sense of using general concepts such as 'myth' and 'mythology'? To what extent can we do without definitions? Should we reconsider the existing definitions, taking into account the terms and practises found in non-Western societies? Such questions show the importance of an ongoing dialogue between theoretical work, intercultural approaches, and in-depth area studies.

## Killing myths

But even if myth can be applied outside of the West, there also exists an ongoing tension between myth on the one hand and science in general on the other. Is it possible at all to have a science of myth? One aspect of myth, usually taken for granted in Western approaches, is that the society in which a myth is told, ascribes some kind of truth to the text, but that the analyst considered this to be untrue. This means that by acknowledging that a certain narrative is a myth, it ceases to be a myth, because it is no longer considered to be true. In the end, this even entails the question whether mythology as a concept actually exists outside hegemonic North Atlantic science. As a countermeasure against the rupture between the study of myth on the one hand and the narration of myth on the other, 'fusion' has been suggested (Wim van Binsbergen). By becoming part of the living environment in which a myth is told, the researcher will no longer be an outsider who reads the text literally and kills the myth in the process. Instead, as an insider, he will come to see myth as, for example, narrative playing an important role in the construction of identity in the society concerned. On the other hand, one could argue that being an outsider is not necessarily negative and has even certain advantages (Bakhtin 1986:7).

## The modern myth

Myth is in a difficult relationship not merely to science but in fact to modernity as a whole. Myth and modernity might even be seen to be mutually exclusive. This hypothesis was raised during the conference. During the nineteenth century, most studies discarded myths as 'primitive' ways to explain the physical world, vowing that modern science ought replace them. The twentieth century by contrast, witnessed many attempts to reconcile myth and modern science by detaching mythology from the physical world. Today, it is suggested that myths can be reintroduced into the world of physical phenomena by interpreting them on the level of playful interaction (Robert Segal). Play is something in-between truth and falsehood. Play is make-believe. In a playful performance, people know perfectly well what is real and what is not, what can happen in reality and what cannot, but



Statue of Kṛṣṇa (Krishna) as Govardhana-Krishna, supporting Mount Govardhana, a famous hill near Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh, India. According to myth, Krishna lifted this mount with one arm and supported it for seven days to provide the cowherds (stick-carrying lower figures) and their animals with shelter from a rain-storm that God Indra sent. Relief from Mathurā, sixth century AD.

Courtesy of Kern Institute



Uende (the sky) used to be near the earth. Whenever the people were hungry, they cut a piece from the sky and ate it. But one day, a blind man lit a torch hoping he could see the sky then. The torch burnt Uende who fled away. Since then, the sky is far removed from the people. (Myth from Mossi, Upper-Volta).

Mineke Schipper, Het Zwaarte Paradys: Afrikaanse Schepingsmythen [The Black Paradise: African Creation Myths], Maastricht: Corrie Zelen (1980), p. 123

in the world of play, they temporarily suspend this reality and replace it by another. The same attitude towards reality and its suspension in play is adopted when people create, listen to, or read myths.

Today, myths are revived, reinterpreted, and used in political debates about leadership or in campaigns against AIDS, for example in South Africa. The Western world also has its modern myths, as in the cult of celebrities that can take on mythical proportions. Worshipped by their fans, celebrities become larger-than-life icons. As saviours of the world, they are the heroes of modern Western myths. Paradoxically, modernity or more specifically, the largely unquestioned believe in the possibility of objectivity, rationalism and scientific 'analysability' of the world around us, is itself a modern myth.

The twenty-first century may be an age of seemingly unlimited scientific progress and technological possibilities, but myths are still very much alive, influencing our way of perceiving ourselves and others as well as our own and each others myths. Hence the importance of looking into our own hidden mythologies. Indeed, myths will always be among us, yet while we will always live with myths, we are not always equally aware of their impact. <

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## Information >

The above conference was organized by Daniela Merolla and Mineke Schipper and supported by the Dutch Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), the IIAS and the Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies (CNWS). The participants were Wim van Binsbergen, Mark J. Geller, Liz Gunner, Daniela Merolla, Reimar Schefold, Mineke Schipper, Robert Segal, Boudewijn Walraven, Michael Witzel, YE Shuxian, Cosimo Zene. Abstracts of the lectures can be found on: [www.leidenuniv.nl/let/nieuws/\\_files/Abstract.doc](http://www.leidenuniv.nl/let/nieuws/_files/Abstract.doc)

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# The Emergence of a National Economy

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Review >  
Southeast Asia

Written for non-economists, this textbook on the economic history of Indonesia fills a considerable gap in the literature. Collectively authored by a group of distinguished historians, its sections on currency, industry, labour costs, and maritime transport are much more stimulating than one might expect from an ordinary textbook. Students will undoubtedly welcome its publication.

By William G. Clarence-Smith

The authors stress the political background to economic phenomena, and present as their guiding theme the emergence and consolidation of an Indonesian 'national economy'. Howard Dick insists that the aim is not to supply a 'meta-narrative', but a 'consistent perspective'. This is somewhat disingenuous, as the story of the birth and development of the Indonesian state almost inevitably becomes a structuring principle. To be sure, authors stress the late centralization of the state, but this makes early parts of the text read even more like Hamlet without the prince. Practical problems result, as the Malayan peninsula and northern Borneo, arbitrarily hacked away by colonial partition, remain indissolubly linked to the Indonesian economy. In particular, the role of Singapore as the real economic capital of the region surfaces again and again through the book.

Vincent Houben covers both the pre-1800 period and nineteenth-century Java, but could easily have omitted the former. The fifteenth-century Melaka state was hardly 'free trading' as sultans

forced all entrepôt commerce in the Straits to go through their capital. Nor did Spanish galleons head for Japan. Houben uncritically swallows Anthony Reid's dubious notion of a seventeenth-century crisis, though he does question Reid's inflated urban figures in an appendix. Houben is on more familiar ground when treating nineteenth-century Java, though a *kongsi* was much more than a Chinese tax farming syndicate, the road and bridge system was actually quite impressive, and Western plantations were hardly models of efficiency.

Thomas Lindblad tackles the 'Outer Islands' in the nineteenth century, and the whole colony up to the Great Depression. The first of these topics is not his speciality. Unaware of the Hadhrami Arab dominance of inter-island square-rig shipping, he fails to cite the late Frank Broeze's pioneering article, and all too readily swallows Campo's rose-colored views on the role of the KPM (Koninklijke Pakketvaart Maatschappij) steamer monopoly. He skates over the forced cultivation of coffee in West Sumatra and North Sulawesi, incorrectly alleging that individual

Indonesians did not gain from it. While Lindblad is on firmer ground in the latter chapter, he, like Houben, overstates the efficacy of the 'modern' sector.

Howard Dick notes that GDP per head at constant prices peaked in 1929 and 1941, and attained similar levels again only in the mid-1970s. To be sure, the twin disasters of the Japanese invasion and ill-judged Dutch attempts at re-conquest were partly responsible, but Dick's attempts to salvage progressive features from the period 1950-57 carry little conviction. Even before 1957, Indonesia missed out on a period of extraordinary growth in the world economy, probably witnessing a decline in the share of manufacturing in GDP. Sukarno's closure of the country indeed led to 'wasted years'.

In contrast, the thirty years' climb in real GDP per head from 1967 to 1997 was impressive. It goes a long way to explain why Indonesians put up with Suharto's dictatorship for so long, and why some remain nostalgic for those heady decades. THEE Kian-Wie, however, rightly stresses the growing protectionism and corruption that followed the retirement of the first generation of economic technocrats. This prepared the way for the 1997 collapse, which was much more than a merely conjunctural crisis. Writing in 2001, THEE fears for the potential impact of the new regime's decentralization, though so far it has turned out better than many expected.

Certain themes are treated too light-

ly in the book, partly reflecting weaknesses in the existing literature. There is almost nothing on breeding and selling livestock, even though buffaloes, cattle, and horses ploughed and trampled fields, pulled carts, carried packs, drew coaches, and powered new urban transport systems. 'Foreign Orientals' are all too often reduced to 'Chinese', with none of Peter Post's subtle distinctions between different South Chinese diasporas. There is likewise too little coverage of the involvement of Japanese, Hadhrami and Syrian Arabs, Indians of all types, and Armenians.

Given that Indonesia contains the largest number of Muslims in the world, the most unfortunate absence is that of Islam. Symptomatic of this bias is Howard Dick's failure to even mention the Darul Islam guerrillas after 1948. Alternative Islamic approaches to politics and economics, such as banking and state structures, do not figure, and there is no sense of how Islam may have promoted or retarded economic development. For Ahmad Hasan of Persis, himself brought up in Singapore by a Tamil Muslim father, the emerging Indonesian nation of the 1920s was quite simply *haram*, a position echoed in recent fundamentalist calls for an Islamic Caliphate of Nusantara.

The decision to leave controversial points to appendices at the end of chapters seems unwarranted and becomes irritating when appendix 3A is mysteriously omitted. Another shortcoming is that, for a good textbook, the maps

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are too small and few. Nevertheless, this book fills a definite gap in the literature, and will undoubtedly be of great utility to students and teachers alike. <

Dick, Howard, Vincent J. H. Houben, J. Thomas Lindblad, and Thee Kian-Wie, *The emergence of a national economy; an economic history of Indonesia, 1800-2000*, Leiden, KITLV Press (2002), pp. xvii and 286, ISBN 90-6718-192-7

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# Recalling Malaya's Communist Menace: Fact and Fiction on Chin Peng

Review >  
Southeast Asia

Whether today's spectre of Islamic terrorism in Southeast Asia should be compared with fears of communist menace in the region from the end of World War II until the 1970s could lead to endless debate. The times and politics would seem very different, and the world views of Islamic extremists and 'godless' communists are at different ends of the spectrum. Yet if there is one lesson for today's assessment of Islamic militancy, it would be the danger of stereotypes and simplistic explanations, judging by *My Side of History*, the memoirs of Chin Peng, leader of communist guerrillas who fought British and Commonwealth forces in Malaya in the late 1940s and 1950s.

By Andrew Symon

Chin Peng co-authored his story with Singapore-based writers and publishers Ian Ward, who was formerly the Southeast Asia correspondent for the London newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, and Ward's wife Norma Mirafior. One of the last of the region's old revolutionary leaders, Chin Peng still lives in southern Thailand, now aged 79.

Back in the 1940s and 1950s, Chin Peng, secretary of the Communist Party of Malaya, and his followers, mostly ethnic Chinese, were painted as bloodthirsty communist terrorists, alien revolutionaries directed by the Soviet Union and China who were unrepresentative of the local communities.

Chin Peng being received by China's Mao Zedong in March 1965.



Courtesy Ian Ward

## In Pursuit of Chin Peng

Author Ian Ward's quest for Chin Peng's story began more than three decades ago. It first led not to the general secretary of the Communist Party of Malaya, but to the writer's capture at gunpoint by guerrillas in north-west Malaysia. In 1972, the Singapore-based Southeast Asia correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph*, Ward had set out driving in the Sungai Siput area north of the town of Ipoh hoping to be able to find a way to Chin Peng, who was assumed to be somewhere in the jungle across the border in Thailand, while he was in fact in Beijing. A small band of guerrillas pulled Ward over, took him to a cemetery, took his money and car, and left him there bound with wire.

It was another 30 years before the pursuit met with success. Ward and his wife Norma Mirafior managed to meet Chin Peng as a result of help from the late professor Michael Leifer of the London School of Economics. Through Leifer, they were able to contact a relative of Chin Peng living outside of the region, who was able to arrange a meeting with him in southern Thailand in late 2000. After several more visits, trust was established. Then followed more than 30 meetings in southern Thailand, during which his story was tape-recorded, and earlier transcriptions corrected. Ward and Mirafior also made visits to archives in the United Kingdom and Australia, where official papers of the time were copied and collected to provide documented support for Chin Peng's history along with those from his own archives.

Ward, a one-time war correspondent, covering stories from Vietnam to Bangladesh, says that while he has always been deeply suspicious of official lines and propaganda, the project opened his mind to the communist position half a century ago. 'I now believe that if I had been a working class Chinese in the 1930s, I would certainly have been at least sympathetic to the Communist Party of Malaya. I can understand what motivated them. The world doesn't yet appreciate how appalling colonialism could be.' Ward says that, today, the communists should be more correctly seen as nationalists rather than simply Chinese extremists as painted by the British. According to Ward, Chin Peng was a communist ideologue in those days: 'But he was not personally a brutal man. He could be a tough leader, but not a cruel leader, not vicious.'

The reception of the book by British and Australian military veterans is mixed. Some are calling on the book to be boycotted, saying that no money should go to Chin Peng through the book's sales. Ward says all funds entitled to Chin Peng are going at his request to a foundation for care of some 200 aged and disabled former guerrillas now living in four villages in southern Thailand. Other veterans have welcomed the book as shedding new light on the events of the times. <

In the early 1950s, at the height of what was called the 'Emergency', which ran from 1948-1960, there were a hundred thousand soldiers and police hunting several thousand communist fighters in the Malayan jungles and a reward of Malaysian dollars 250,000 for Chin Peng's capture. The London *Daily Mail* described Chin Peng in 1955 as a man 'notorious for his ruthlessness and calculated ferocity' (quoted from: Chin Peng 2003:368). He had spread 'death, destruction, and misery in a vain attempt to gain political power by force of arms'. Yet Chin Peng, or Ong Boon Hua, argues that the British stereotyped them in this way to justify the British presence in Malaya. Ultimately though, their threat, he argues, finally forced the British to grant independence to Malaya in 1957, as the price for Malay and moderate local Chinese support against the communists, and against guarantees that British strategic and commercial interests would continue to be protected. 'The declassified documents of the Emergency years prove how the British manipulated language and information lest the rest of the world got to believe the Communist Party of Malaysia was a legitimate nationalist group seeking the end of colonialism' (p.515).

In 1954, the commissioner general of the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia, Malcolm McDonald, advised the foreign office in London that 'no one can be allowed to depict the Malayan war as a spontaneous nationalist uprising.' (p.357) Rather, Britain should 'affirm that the Malayan insurgents are primarily an alien force acting under alien instructions.' In fact, Chin Peng says there was no assistance or orders from Beijing or Moscow at the height of the fighting in the 1940s and 1950s. However, after 1961, there was Chinese policy direction and financial support for the remnants of the guerrilla groups, whose numbers and vigour were briefly renewed with the success of the communists in Indo-China in the early and mid-1970s. A thousand or so continued to fight sporadically from southern Thailand until a peace accord was finally reached in 1989, brokered by the Malaysian and Thai prime ministers, Mahathir Mohammad and Chavalit Youngchaiydh.

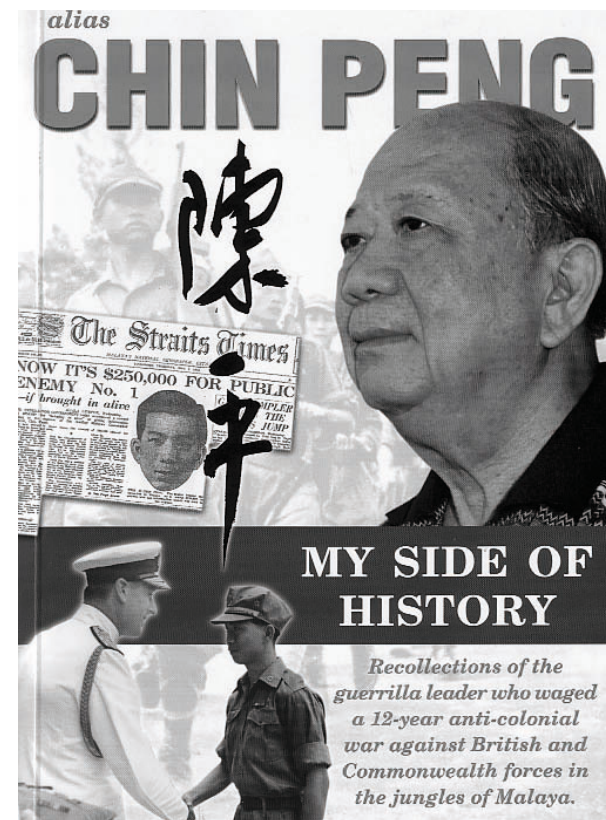
### A sense of emergency

Chin Peng says in his memoirs that his concern was always for Malaya. He was attracted to communism through the writings of Mao Zedong in response to what he saw as exploitative, often heavy-handed British rule. To illustrate this, he points to the fact that workers, originally brought from the subcontinent to work on rubber plantations, were deported back to India in the 1930s when the Depression made their labour no longer profitable for planters. Communist Party members also faced banishment from Malaya. For Malayan Chinese sent to China before Mao came to power in 1949, this meant, Chin Peng says, death or prison by the Kuomintang nationalist government. By the early 1960s, there were 20,000 banished Malayan Chinese communists and their families in China.

His recollection of an arrogant and racist colonial regime clashes with the common picture, at least in the West, of the British in Malaya as essentially decent and generally beneficial, if somewhat eccentric rulers, inclined to play sport out in the noonday sun.

Foreshadowing his later resistance to British colonialism, as a teenager Chin Peng decided to fight against the Japanese from the jungles along with other communists, in alliance with the British. As a result, one British officer characterized him as courageous, reliable, and likeable. In 1946, Lord Louis Mountbatten awarded him campaign medals in recognition of his contribution and in 1947 he would have been awarded an Order of the British Empire if it were not for the fact that the Malayan Communist Party decided to pursue armed revolution.

During this armed revolution, claims Chin Peng, neither the party central committee nor the politburo ever adopted a programme that targeted civilians. Surly, there were unauthorized excesses committed by communist guerrillas, but not to the extent reported by the authorities. However, he does argue the British planters were legitimate targets, with



Courtesy of Media Masters

their histories of exploiting workers and hiring thugs to break up strikes on their plantations. 'In post-war Malaya they were armed; they surrounded themselves with paid thugs; they drove in armoured cars.'

The British themselves, he writes, were guilty of using 'terror' tactics to retain their hold on Malaya. 'To contain the Emergency, the British burned villages, cut rations, and shot civilians' so as to break lines of support to the guerrilla camps in the jungle (p.511). A peace could have been achieved as early as 1955, he says, if the British and then leaders of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman and Singapore's David Marshall, had not demanded that the communist fighters capitulate and surrender but, rather, had allowed them to hand over or destroy their weapons in an agreed way and then resume normal life with normal political freedoms: which was broadly the outcome of the 1989 accords. However, in the 1950s, there was a dominant fear that this would result in the re-emergence of a radical and destabilizing leftist organization, given that the guerrillas were still young or just about middle-aged men and women. A decade and a half later Chin Peng was still portrayed as a threat. Writing in *The War of the Running Dogs*, published in 1971, Noel Barber said, 'Chin Peng still lurks north of the border, taking refuge not only in neutrality but in the thought that if Mao Zedong had to wait thirty years in the "Chinese Jungle" before achieving victory, he can do the same...'

Today, Chin Peng wants to spend the last years of his life in Malaysia; a request that has so far been refused by the Malaysian government. He is now a stateless alien granted residency by the Thai government. The strong sales of the book in Malaysia and Singapore – 17,000 in the two months after its launch in September – and direct feedback to Ward shows there still remains a great deal of respect and admiration for Chin Peng and his convictions, despite the way he and his followers had been portrayed in earlier days. Chin Peng now describes himself as a socialist who eschews violence. Times have changed. But, he says, in his youth, he had 'to be a liberation fighter...If you had lived in a Malayan rural population centre...and observed how dismissive the British colonials were of our lot in the 1930s, you would find it easier to understand how the attraction of a Communist Party of Malaysia could take hold' (p.510). Which suggests that careful study of the reasons for the today's attraction of extremist Islam in the region – and how this might be reduced – is as vital as police measures to prevent terrorist acts. <

- Peng, Chin, *My Side of History* (as told to Ian Ward and Norma Mirafior), Singapore: Media Masters (2003), pp.527, incl. photographs, ISBN 981-04-8693-6

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# Min Yǒng-hwan: A Political Biography

Review >  
Korea

Famous during his lifetime, Min Yǒng-hwan (1861-1905) is most remembered in Korean historiography for his death. A former diplomat, Min found it difficult to stomach the forced handover of Korea's foreign relations to Japan in 1905. Along with many other courtiers, he tried in vain to put pressure on Emperor Kojong to take action against this unlawful protectorate treaty, forced upon the Korean government by the Japanese envoy Itō Hirobumi. Realizing the inappropriateness of sending memorials to the throne, Min opted for more forceful action, and committed suicide in protest of the treaty.

By Koen De Ceuster

This biography is the first book-length study in a Western language of this icon of Korean resistance to Japanese encroachment. Contrary to what one might expect, Michael Finch does not concentrate on Min's suicide, but rather on his political career in the run-up to his suicide. He justifies this choice by referring to the existing distortion in standard political histories of pre-annexation Korea in favour of radical reform factions. Considered to run against the tide of the times, conservative forces in Korea's political landscape have consistently been underrepresented in scholarly research.

The standard reading of Korea's pre-annexation political history roughly discerns three contesting political forces. Most research interest has gone to the progressive reformists, who during the 1880s and 1890s unsuccessfully sought dominance in Korean politics. Diametrically opposed to these progressive forces were the neo-Confucian diehard conservatives living mostly in (self-) imposed domestic exile. The political middle ground (and power) was held by the embedded courtier clique, which

was allegedly completely preoccupied with holding on to power. This clique consisted of the 'Min cronies', who were mainly relatives of the queen. Indeed, Min Yǒng-hwan was himself a nephew of Queen Myǒngsǒng.

By focusing on Min Yǒng-hwan, Michael Finch demonstrates how an overly rigid application of this standard interpretation fails to do justice to the political stance of individual actors who were not hampered by any, apparently impermeable, political boundaries. Min Yǒng-hwan admittedly shared the reformers' sense of crisis. When confronted with the West, he realized the dire straits Korea was in, and he became a promoter of domestic change. However, not unlike his contemporary Yi Wan-yong, portrayed in traditional Korean historiography as the arch-traitor, his upbringing and social background made him stop short of radical institutional changes. Reform was his trade, not revolution. His motivation, above all, was a deeply ingrained loyalty to the monarch.<sup>1</sup>

Though commendable for putting the spotlight on this forgotten politician and diplomat, and interesting for Finch's depiction of how Min's reform

ideas changed following his exposure to Russia, the United States, and Europe in the course of his diplomatic missions, this monograph suffers from a number of weaknesses. Admittedly, the subject himself, Min Yǒng-hwan, does not make things easy on any biographer. Min did not leave many documents behind. He never kept a diary from which one could have glimpsed his personal musings on the political peripeties of his day. As it is, this biography is a thorough analysis of the *Min Ch'ungjǒnggong yugo* ('The posthumous works of Prince Min'), a compilation edited and published by the National History Compilation Committee in 1971. Organized in five sections, this compilation records Min Yǒng-hwan's memorials addressed to the throne between 1877 and 1905, a long political essay written around the time of the Tonghak rebellion (1894), two dull and dry 'diaries' of his diplomatic missions to the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II (1896) and to the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Queen Victoria in London (June 1897), and a compilation of various writings about Min in the aftermath of his suicide.<sup>2</sup> The two diaries consist of hardly more than agenda entries, list-

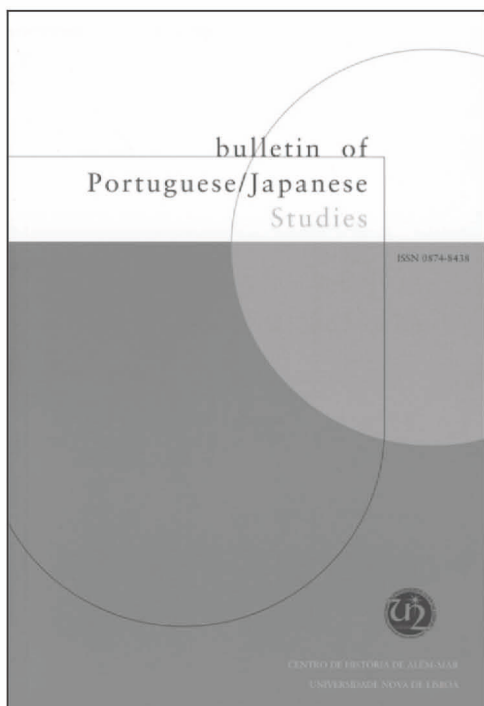


Min Yǒng-hwan in official Chosŏn court attire. The photograph was taken in St. Petersburg during Min's mission to Russia in 1896.

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ing who he had met, but utterly silent on the content on the discussions, let alone on his own thoughts.

Given the scarcity of materials related to Min Yǒng-hwan, Michael Finch has succeeded in painting a credible picture of this unfortunate diplomat. Regrettably, the packaging is not very appealing: Finch has produced a dissertation rather than a book. He goes out of his way to show he knows the tricks of the trade of a professional historian, debating the dating and authorship of documents, and corroborating details with collateral evidence. All attention is so focused on the 1971 compilation of documents that we see Min Yǒng-hwan clearly – albeit in a not very lively fashion – but the historical background remains rather vague.

Only documents authored by Min himself attract the author's research zeal. Once Min stops writing, Finch's interest peters out. When he turns to the posthumous accounts in the compilation, he is disinterested in showing who wrote these documents, and offers only a sketchy analysis of the texts. So, do not expect a climax at the end. Min's suicide is treated as just another

episode of his life, seemingly unrelated, certainly unexplained. In fact, after reading this biography, you are none the wiser as to why someone like Min Yǒng-hwan eventually took his own life in protest at the signing of the protectorate treaty. Despite having an eminently political motivation, Min's suicide is not treated as an integral part of this political biography.

Regardless of this unfortunate finale, this book does serve an important purpose in reminding us that we have been too gullible in imposing our own political preference for radical reform when analysing pre-colonial Korean history. Michael Finch has made a relevant contribution to getting the historical balance more even.

- Finch, Michael, *Min Yǒng-hwan. A Political Biography*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press (2003), pp. xii + 256, ISBN 0-8248-2520-9

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#### Notes >

- 1 On Yi Wan-yong, see Koen De Ceuster's book review of Yun, Tök-han, *Yi Wan-yong Pyǒngjǒn. Aeguk kwa maegukŏi tu ōlgul* ('A bibliography of Yi Wan-yong: The two faces of patriotism and treachery') Seoul: Chungsim (1999), in: *The Review of Korean Studies*, 5:2 (December 2002), pp.334-340.
- 2 The Tonghak rebellion was a formidable peasant uprising that threatened to unseat the central government in Seoul. To quell the uprising, the Korean court called in Chinese troops, which provoked a Japanese intervention, resulting in a Japanese-inspired palace coup, and setting off the Sino-Japanese war (1894-95). The exact dating of Min's document is relevant in so far as it explains Min's changing attitudes towards the major regional powers.

# From Négritude to Coolitude

Review >  
General

**Define me pray:  
What is a coolie?  
One caught by his neck  
And thrown over deck?  
I am Lascar, Malabar,  
Madras tamarind from the bazaar  
Telegu to tell all to you...**

By Clare Anderson

**Coolitude: An Anthology of the Indian Labour Diaspora** aims to conceptualize the nineteenth-century dissemination of Indian labour in new and productive ways. Coolitude is a politically and intellectually ambitious book, and those with no knowledge of postcolonial theory will find it a challenging read, especially as there is no index to aid navigation of its complex ideas. Paralleling the ideas of 'Négritude' and Créolité pioneered by African and Caribbean intellectuals in the 1950s and 1960s, this book deploys the concept of 'coolitude' to describe and encapsulate the distinctive characteristics of the streams of indentured Indian migrants that shaped modern nations such as Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana, Fiji, and influenced others like Guadeloupe, Martinique, East and South Africa. In doing so, it emphasizes their shared history.

Marina Carter is perhaps the best-known historian of indentured immigrants in Mauritius, and has long wrestled with the epistemological problems of subaltern invisibility. Khal Torabully, descendant of a Lascar community (of Indian Ocean seafarers), is an acclaimed poet and film-maker based in France. The result of their collaboration is a collection of many previously unpublished texts, poems, and sketches that explore Indian plantation experiences and deconstruct traditional depictions of indentured migrants across the British Empire.

Given its authorship, it is perhaps no surprise that *Coolitude* is a fundamentally postmodern work. It combines empirical research with artistic immersion into what Carter and Torabully describe as 'the world of the vanished coolie'. The authors deconstruct representations of indentured labourers, seeking to move beyond both contemporary notions and historical reappraisals of their socio-economic 'otherness'. Historical imaginings of the experiences of indentured labourers are thus central to their efforts to redefine and re-appropriate the ways in which indentured immi-

grants coped with life on the plantation and produced meaningful forms of self and collective identity. Towards these ends, the authors explore the distortions and silences of the archives and early colonial literature, and assess the work of contemporary writers like V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie.

In this imaginative redefinition of the experiences of indentured labourers, the voyage across the sea (*kala pani*, or 'black water') is given special significance. It is described as a decisive experience that left an indelible stamp on the 'landscape' of coolitude, a place for the destruction and creation of identities. Moreover, the authors argue, this sea voyage encapsulates the essence of all migratory journeys, and the struggles, disappointments, and hopes of the coolie are those of universal human experience. In their evaluation of life on the plantation, Carter and Torabully go on to untangle the ways in which indentured migrants were 'thrice victimized': by nineteenth-century contemporaries who described them as pariahs among free men, by early literary accounts which rendered them exotic, and by historians who recast them as little more than slaves. By contrast, the authors explore ways in which Indians attempted to resist conditions on the plantation. These themes will be familiar to those who know the authors' earlier work, particularly Carter's nuanced reinter-

pretations of a system that other historians have uncritically presented as 'a new system of slavery'.

A new departure, particularly for Carter, is the exploration of 'indenture heritage': the experiences of the descendants of migrants and their feelings of social stigma. It is a pity that this is not examined more in-depth; the authors could have used the twentieth-century literary texts that they draw on elsewhere, as well as the recent work of anthropologists and others. Nevertheless, the interdisciplinary musings of *Coolitude* will appeal to historians and literary theorists of the Indian diaspora, as well as those interested in slavery and other systems of unfree labour. <

- Carter, Marina and Khal Torabully, *Coolitude: An Anthology of the Indian Labour Diaspora*, London: Anthem South Asian Studies (2002), pp.243, ISBN 1-84331-006-6

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- Dhawan, R.K. (ed.), *Writers of the Indian Diaspora*, New Delhi: Prestige (2001).
- Torabully, Khal, *Chair Corail, Fragments Coolies*, Guadeloupe: Ibis Rouge Edns (1999).

**Dr Clare Anderson** is senior lecturer in the School of Historical Studies, University of Leicester. Her work and publications are on nineteenth-century incarceration and convict transportation across South Asia and the Indian Ocean. She currently holds a three-year Economic and Social Research Council research fellowship for the project *British Penal Settlements in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, 1773-1906*.  
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Hill Coolies landing at the Mauritius



Taken from the book under review

## Speaking Peace Women's Voices from Kashmir

Review >  
South Asia

**Kashmir has followed a model of 'development' that has bred a generation of children who ask for AK 47 guns as birthday gifts. This is but the logical fall-out of the military presence and a level of violence that has already claimed some 70,000 lives, left 4,000 missing and a million displaced, and bequeathed a 'widow population' of more than 15,000. *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* is a collection of essays depicting the world and the lives of the women of Kashmir, torn apart by politics, militancy, and war-like violence.**

By Biswamoy Pati

Lack of proper health care, education, irrigation, and industry; the legacy of Partition, human rights violations, displacement, and resurgent conflict, these are among the daunting problems that plague the state of Jammu and Kashmir, to which Urvashi Butalia draws attention in her introduction. The essays of this book illustrate the way violence has disrupted the lives of common people and affected women, irrespective of their religious identities.

Pamela Bhagat's essay focuses on women's health issues in the Kargil district. For women who face under-nourishment at home and have to depend on women's healthcare systems (in the Kargil district hospital, without women doctors until 1984), the dividing line between life and death can be razor

thin. As stated by a female doctor, pregnancies are the most serious health problem faced by women. The lack of basic knowledge on natal/post-natal care and family planning methods leads to multiple pregnancies, misery, and even death for a large number of rural women. Sahba Husain's chapter complements Bhagat's essay by focusing on the way personal traumas have impacted upon women. Interviewing doctors and patients at two government psychiatric hospitals in Srinagar, she chronicles cases of depression, sleep and anxiety disorders, and heart-related problems. Despite the increase in the number of patients from 1,700 in 1971 to 32,000 in 1999, the number of psychiatrists in the hospital (five) has remained the same.

Neerja Mattoo's chapter discusses the women's college (Government College) set up in 1950. She examines the shift-

ing profile of the institution where she studied and, later on, taught. The built-in structure of discrimination ensured that before 1950 even very talented women were barred from higher education. Mattoo recounts the sheer vibrancy of the institution and how religion was absent from college life until 1990. After 1990, grenades, bombs, and religious extremism/fundamentalism frightened away many female students.

An extract from Krishna Mehta's *This happened in Kashmir* recounts the brutalities that visited Kashmir during the 1947 Partition. Shakti Bhan Khanna and Kshama Kaul continue on this theme, focusing on the 'second partition' of Kashmir that led Non-Muslims, such as Kashmiri Pandits, to leave the Valley. Woven around the authors' personal experiences, these chapters focus on forced displacement and the scars it

can leave on women. Their essays also illustrate how little people learn from the past. Sonia Jabbar's chapter outlines the massacre of Sikhs at Chittisinghpura, and the brutalities that so often accompany the stigmatization of 'otherness'.

The chapter by Uma Chakravarty raises vital issues related to human rights violations and the way these have devastated families and traumatized those women who have survived. These brutalities raise questions about the identity of women, aspirations of a people and the hopeless rot that can set into any region where civil society breaks down and military solutions and crisis management techniques are resorted to.

A report reproduced from the *Indian Express* written by Muzamil Jaleel recounts how the Bharatiya Janata Party grabbed hold of the home of Krishna Kotru, a Kashmiri Pandit, and converted it into its party headquarters after she was forced to flee Srinagar. For two years she petitioned government officials, including the Union Minister L.K. Advani, but to no avail. The local party leader, the Minister of Civil Aviation,

even told Krishna that were the Bharatiya Janata Party to remove its signboard from her house, it would appear as if the party had vanished from Kashmir. Such vignettes not only illustrate little-known aspects of the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits, but also reveal the real face of political parties that claim to represent 'Indian nationalism' in Kashmir. Taken together, the chapters of this socially engaged book comprise a laudable effort to give space to the voices of women, voices that are normally difficult to 'hear' and that are now further 'veiled' by the near war-like situation. <

- Butalia, Urvashi (ed.), *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir*, London: Zed Books (2003), pp. 314, ISBN 1-84277-209-0

**Dr Biswamoy Pati** is reader in History at Sri Venkateswara College, University of Delhi, India, with a particular interest in the social history of colonial and postcolonial India.  
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Both photos Vincent Houben



A group of Semalai women at Tasik Bera (Pahang, Malaysia).

Boats of Semalai at Tasik Bera

# Tribal Communities in the Malay World

In all area studies, studies of communities that ill fit dominant organizational forms, such as national states or world regions, have increased in importance. Research on minority groups in Southeast Asia has also blossomed in the past decade, producing a new field of cross-border, ethno-historical studies. Very few books, however, have tried to explain the development of tribal communities from a multidisciplinary, intra-regional comparative perspective. This volume, edited by Geoffrey Benjamin and Cynthia Chou, is therefore highly recommended.

Review >  
Southeast Asia

By Vincent Houben

The book's unit of analysis encompasses a narrowed 'Malay world': South Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra, Singapore, and Sarawak, home to numerous tribal groups ranging from established peasants to seafaring nomads. The volume addresses recent theoretical issues – internal differentiation, cultural contestation and negotia-

tion, alternative forms of modernity beyond assimilation – and discusses them in their particular political contexts, be it the premodern *kerajaan* or the present-day nation state. The book consists of a 70-page theoretical introduction on tribality in the Alam Melayu, and 18 case studies, derived from contributions by experts from Asia, the United States, and Europe to a conference held in Singapore in 1997.

The state-of-the-art theoretical introduction by Geoffrey Benjamin is among the best available. In a meticulously systemic manner, it discusses the many implications of tribality, Malay-ness, and their inter-connections. 'Tribal' here is intended as a non-discriminatory label to characterize a particular way of life and social organization. The term should not be seen as an ethnic category but as a culturally mediated social strategy within the broader state-led 'civilizing process'. An example from Juli Edo's contribution shows how this state influence manifested itself when the Semai, upon the Malay rulers' request, adopted a more settled lifestyle at the beginning of the twentieth century.

But tribality is more than a social strategy. 'Tribes' have become sub-nuclear societies in themselves, with lifestyles distinct from the majority of peasants. The Malay world is thus argued to be a singular place, where (re)tribalization

develops within a shared cultural and linguistic matrix. In this manner the Malay world has moved from a structuralist ethnological to a 'sociological' field of study, representing a 'Malayic societal pattern' (p.39). This social pattern has distinctive features, such as the combination of swidden farming, intensified gathering together with a sexual division of labour, and a large degree of complementarity between tribal communities and adjacent non-tribal peoples.

Apart from drawing readers' attention to commonalities and differences within the Malay tribal world, the many case studies resist easy summarization. It is clear that tribal people everywhere face pressure from the effects of globalization. It is also clear that such pressures have long been in existence. Ethnic and cultural complexity marks the localities where tribal people live and this has generated layered webs of names, symbols, and meanings. Oral histories contribute to the forging of collective yet separate identities. Complex identities are, in turn, subjected to the prejudice of state representatives and the conviction that tribal people need to be 'modernized'.

The minorities described in the chapters of this book all have unique features and live in particular environments, both of which are subject to change. Although many detailed insights are offered, the question remains what makes these tribal groups part of the Malay world other than being in proximity, or being complementary, to it. <

Benjamin, Geoffrey and Cynthia Chou (eds), *Tribal Communities in the Malay World. Historical, Cultural and Social Perspectives*, Singapore/Leiden: ISEAS and IIAS (2002), pp. x + 489, ISBN 981-230-167-4

Professor Vincent Houben is professor of Southeast Asian History and Society at Humboldt University Berlin. His research interests include the representation of Melayu and its political realization since 1900, and the history of Vietnam as reflected in the archives of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). He is also working on the Southeast Asia volume for the new Fischer World History series, scheduled to appear in 2007.  
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# Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China

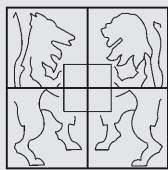
Review >  
China

Starting in the 1980s, socio-economic changes in China induced an ideological shift from Maoist Puritanism to market-oriented individualism. The originality of *Appetites* lies in Farquhar's theoretical and epistemological approach to her subject: the politics of food and sex, bodies and medicine, desire and pleasure in a modernizing and globalizing China. Accessible to non-specialists, the book offers a rich overview of post-Socialist Chinese popular culture as presented in various media.



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- 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004. Meeting of the Selection committee whose decision will be presented for the approval of the Academic Board.

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By Evelyne Micollier

*Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China* blurs the boundaries between many sources: popular fiction, television broadcasts, movies, popular health manuals, sex survey reports, classical erotic novels, advertisements, and observations of medical practices and daily life in urban China. All can be used, the author claims, as ethnographic text (p.5). For China specialists and medical anthropologists, Farquhar's cultural studies approach is theoretically and methodologically very interesting.

Farquhar's 'creative' methodology utilizes tools from various disciplines: postmodern rhetorical and narrative tools from literary criticism and critical anthropology, alongside more conventional fieldwork ethnography making use of Chinese textual materials. Her extensive field studies in China have already resulted in, among other works, a reference book on medical knowledge in the context of Chinese culture (1994); her ethnographic experience and anthropological knowledge of medicine now appear as 'red threads' informing her textual analysis.

*Appetites* is divided into two parts. Part one includes three chapters on food: 'Medicinal Meals', 'A Feast for the Mind', which is an analysis of Lu's novel *The Gourmet*, and 'Excess and Deficiency', Mo Yan's contribution on food and history. Part two is composed of three chapters discussing sex: 'Writing the Self: The Romance of the Personal', 'Sexual Science: The Representation of Behaviour', and 'Ars Erotica'. These chapters include discussions of Zhang's famous novel *Love Must Not Be Forgotten* and Zhou's film *Ermo*.<sup>1</sup>

According to Farquhar, the all-pervading nationalism of the reform period insured continuity from Maoist state-promoted culture to contemporary popular culture: 'One of the principal arguments of this book is that everyday life in reform China is still inhabited by the nation's Maoist past' (p.10). Economic reforms do not necessarily imply changes in the manner the state instrumentalizes science and the authority of experts. Farquhar uses the example of a research survey on sexual behaviour and sex education pedagogy (chapter 5) to highlight that, as in the past, and within the broader context a 'civilizing project of national modernization and bourgeois normalization' (p.219), the authority of science is used to legitimize a state project.

In a number of less convincing examples, Farquhar tends to overestimate the impact of the 'nationalistic trend' and 'national character' within narratives of Chinese modernity. What, for instance, do bedchamber arts texts such as *Rouputuan* (Qing period) or the classical meanings of *xing* (sex) found in the *Huainanzi* (second century BCE) tell us about sexuality in China today (chapter 6)? Arguing that research methods show strong biases, and that an ethnography of sexuality is almost impossible to conduct, Farquhar draws the attention of readers to the 'official' sex of the fore-mentioned state ordered sociological survey, and its so-called 'scientific' methods embedded in naturalized and normalized representations of sexuality.

Although the author sometimes focuses too much on the discontinuities of 'discourses and embodied practices', *Appetites*, with its innovative approach, addresses a large readership and stands as a valuable work for specialists and non-specialists alike. <

- Farquhar, Judith, *Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China*, Durham and London: Duke University Press (2002), pp. 341, ISBN 0-8223-2921-2 (paperback)

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- Pan Suiming, *Zhongguo xing xianzhuang* (Sexuality in China Today), Beijing: Guangmingri chubanshe (1994).
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Dr Evelyne Micollier is lecturer at the University of Provence and associate fellow at the Institute for Research on South-East Asia, Marseilles, France.  
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#### Notes >

- 1 Film director ZHOU Xiaowen, novelist MO Yan, writer ZHANG Jie, and novelist LU Wenfu are among Farquhar's best-known 'ethnographic partners' (p.18). Their works are available to Western readers in English translation.

## Chinese Media, Global Contexts

Review >  
China

Few books discuss such a fast-changing phenomenon as China's media landscape in such an observant and up-to-date a way as *Chinese Media, Global Contexts* does. Continuing the line of Chin-Chuan Lee's trilogy, it covers a wide range of topics on the development of Chinese media in the light of globalization.<sup>1</sup>

By Lokman TSUI

Looking back now, it is almost inconceivable how many transformations the Chinese media have undergone in the past ten years. The rise of cable and satellite television, the advent of the internet, and continuing marketization of the media are just a few of the monumental changes in the media landscape. *Chinese Media, Global Contexts* provides us with an excellent insight into the current situation, namely how the media affect China on different levels. The book covers a broad spectrum of articles, ranging from Greater China's pop culture to the media's reaction to landmark events such as entry to the WTO and the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Two questions dominate the book. Firstly, how do current developments, of which globalization is the

most crucial one, shape the media in China? Secondly, how do the media, as interpreters of truth, deal with these changes and relay them to the public?

China's increasing participation in the globalization process leads to a higher level of nationalism. Playing out this nationalism has a double-edged character for the Party-State. After the demise of communism as the state ideology, state-sponsored nationalism has become the most convenient way of gluing modern-day China's 'conflicting regimes of truth' together (p.2). At the same time, the outbursts of nationalist outrage displayed during international crises, such as the 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade or the EP-3 spy plane incident of 2001, had to be restrained in order not to cause an international political embarrassment. The huge impact these events had is shown

by Rosen (pp.109-110), who argues that 'the attack on the Belgrade Embassy is likely to remain the key image of American foreign policy intentions for young Chinese'. The explosive character of nationalism, as Lee shows us (p.2), is founded on xenophobia (anti-Americanism) on the one hand and narcissism on the other. This narcissism is born of a feeling of indignity about China's current position in the wings of the global stage, where it is waiting to be accepted and to claim its rightful place. The media play a crucial role in this process. They continue to selectively construct an image and portray landmark events, such as the entry to the WTO and the 2008 Olympics, as glorious national achievements, while at the same time downplaying or even ignoring possible negative social side effects. In this sense, the media function as a mirror which >

# An Anthology of Mongolian Literature

In *An Anthology of Mongolian Literature*, C.R. Bawden presents a rich and diverse collection of Mongolian literary genres, from translations of historic manuscript to modern poetry. Presenting a historical study of Mongolian literature, this anthology offers a beautifully translated, valuable selection of Mongolian poetry and narratives.

Review >

Central Asia

By Matthea van Staden

Bawden, Emeritus Professor of Mongolian at the University of London, was the first to chronicle Mongolian history from the early Manchu period to modern times. Although first published in 1968, his *Modern History of Mongolia* is probably still the text most relied upon in Mongolian

Studies. In his present *Anthology*, Bawden, having since contributed a massive oeuvre to the field, explores the definition and boundaries of literature. The prayers and rituals, shamanistic incantations, and ceremonial verse included in the *Anthology* are presented as specific genres, divided into myths, historical narratives, legends, epics, didactic literature, and the works of several authors known by name. The comparison of these various genres, according to their specific use and purposes and its related rhyme structure and content, is a valuable way of learning to appreciate the intention of the chosen piece. Likewise, Bawden successfully demonstrates how each text can tell us about the time in which it was created, and in which ways it is bestowed with evidence of contemporary historical circumstances. This can be gleaned from use of rhyme, structure, the choice of words and images, and historical backdrop. The book also emphasizes the strong connection of modern Mongolian literature with much older genres. The extensive variation of genres is put into context alongside a fixed chronology, which is dictated by an estimate of when the original versions of the translated manuscripts first appeared and covers literature from the early thirteenth century to the twentieth century. Each story or excerpt of poetry poses its own questions and expresses its own puzzlement and joy.

My sons, you are birds of prey striking at a cliff  
You are like black dogs biting your own placenta  
You are like grey wolves plunging into rainy day  
You are like camel-stallions biting the narrow-bones of  
their own foals,  
You are like dogs attacking the darkness  
You are like tigers unable to seize anything  
What have I made of my sons  
(From 'The Secret History')

Manuscripts dating from some three centuries later have a more magical style, introducing mythical figures and supernatural interventions. They represent a new phase of historical writing and are, in the words of the historian Bawden, more attributable to folklore than history:

The holy lord said: 'Tell me about the transformations of your Khagan. Tell me the truth of it.' The boar said: 'In the morning he turns into a poisonous, crawling yellow snake, and in that form he cannot be caught. At noon he turns into a tiger with dark-brown stripes, and he cannot be caught. In the evening and at night he turns into a beautiful yellow boy and plays with the queen. In that form he can be caught.'  
(From 'The Precious Summary')

cial work for anyone interested in the development of contemporary media in China. <

– Lee, Chin-Chuan (ed.), *Chinese Media, Global Contexts*, London: RoutledgeCurzon (2003), pp. 275, ISBN 0-415-30334-6

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Finally, the anthology contains examples of Indian and Buddhist influences on Mongolian literature, and nineteenth-century Mongol attempts to imitate the Chinese classical novels of the Qing dynasty. In these novels the Mongol language is lifted to another level of sophistication and is far-removed from the traditional epic style.

Qin Mo asked him: 'What did you see of interest on your journey?' Pu Yu said: 'There was one strange spectacle I observed, which was quite unusual as far as we are concerned.' Realizing that he was being serious they asked him: 'What was the strange spectacle? We want to hear about it.' Pu Yu said: 'That strange spectacle was something out of the ordinary run of things. People used to say: "A gentleman on the roof-beam". This has become: "Scholars in the gap". Shi Qing did not understand what he meant and kept asking him about it. Pu Yu told how they encountered the robbers at the village of Jiu Lian Shan, which made their hair stand on end.  
(From: *Injanashi*, 1837-1892)

## Facts and myths

Despite the breadth of the anthology, Bawden generally refrains from extensively commenting on the texts or their translations and does not overanalyse any particular meaning conveyed by them. He restricts himself to providing a historical context, introducing specific genres in the introduction, in the short interludes between each translation and, occasionally, in a note attached to the translation itself. All in all, the collection has an unpretentious, open presentation, to be explored at will, without the distractions that endless commentary sometimes causes. The drawback is that while the stories and verses are expected to speak for themselves, at times they do not. Thus the literature presented is not always intelligible. To fully grasp the meaning and purpose of what we read is, despite the beauty of the words, sometimes a hazardous undertaking, which calls for some guidance.

The lack of such guidance is all the more surprising in view of the fact that Bawden gives the impression to have compiled this anthology for a general audience. While providing some general introduction to contemporary Mongolian daily life, he refrains from answering more demanding questions. How, for example, are we to value the mythical, magical, and even spiritual thinking displayed in the literature? Reading the texts with a modern mindset, used to dividing the material world from the immaterial (or supernatural), and accustomed to the symbolism of Western psychology, our interpretations and imaginative reactions may be misleading. Apart from probing some historical, characteristic cultural influences, Bawden does not compare the modes of thinking represented by the literature, a comparison which is necessary for the reader to be able to judge the literature on its own merits and in the context of its original intentions. The author is apparently more concerned with judging the literature in a historical perspective. He generally separates reality (that is, historical facts) from the imagination, and only questions what the texts tell us about the Mongols' view of themselves and their past. In itself, Bawden's fascination certainly inspires intriguing questions and captures the reader's interest in what he or she has just read. However, it also leaves the reader with a bundle of facts and a bundle of myths and magic, without understanding the magic of the literature as a whole or the relationship between facts and myths. His methods of categorization reflects, above all, the European tendency to separate religion from science, the material from the immaterial world.

Bearing in mind these restrictions, and the fact that many answers to questions concerning mythical, magical, and spiritual experiences remain unanswered, the anthology can be appreciated as more than simply literature, rather as a source for further cultural and historical analyses. This book ought to be kept safe for continuous delight and renewed exploration. <

– Bawden C.R., *An Anthology of Mongolian Literature*, London and New York: Kegan Paul (2003), pp.816, ISBN 0-7103-0654-7

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## the Cedar tree

The cedar tree with its nuts  
Enhances sun and moon  
Good behaviour, and honest mind  
Enhances one's own self.  
That young, lovely creature  
Enhances my own heart  
The tree with all its leaves  
Enhances sun and moon  
If one studies when young,  
It enhances one's own self.  
That young, happy creature  
Enhances my own heart  
Within my hopeful body

From 'Traditional Verse'

can be tweaked as much as is deemed necessary, so as to construct an image of China exactly as they see fit. Chang (pp.132-136) shows us that this is not an exclusive trait of Chinese media, as it equally pertains to US media during the coverage of presidential summits of 1997 and 1998.

The nature of the topic calls for a multidisciplinary approach as indeed is presented in the book. The articles are founded on insightful research and set within solid theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The exceptional collection of articles is written by a team of well-respected authors. It is slightly unfortunate, however, that in this collection of authors, whom are either US or Hong Kong based, no European scholar has been included, which would have further strengthened the balance of this book. The second suggestion is that, while the main scope of the book is the impact of globalization on media in China, it would have been interesting to analyse the other, even less researched, side of the two-way inter-

action of globalization: the impact China is making on the world and its media. For example, further to examining how the internet impacts on China, might it not be interesting to look into the ways in which the development of the internet in China impacts the internet worldwide? A first sign of things to come can be seen in the problems arising due to China's developing its own standards, which clash with international ones.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these minor suggestions, *Chinese Media, Global Contexts* further cements the outstanding reputation of the collection of books edited by Lee. *Chinese Media, Global Contexts* is a cru-

## Notes >

- 1 The book under review forms a series with *Voices of China: The Interplay of Politics and Journalism*, New York: Guilford Press (1990); *China's Media, Media's China*, Boulder (CO): Westview Press (1994); and *Power, Money, and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China*, Evanston (IL): Northwestern University Press (2000), all edited by Chin-Chuan Lee.
- 2 Lohr, Steve, 'China Poses Trade Worry as it gains in Technology', *New York Times*, 13 January 2004. [www.nytimes.com/2004/01/13/technology/13china.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/13/technology/13china.html)

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New York: Palgrave MacMillan (2003), pp.227, ISBN 1403961360

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# Art for the Masses: Revolutionary Art of the Mao Zedong Era 1950-1976

Asian Art >  
China

What are we to make of a traditionally shaped Chinese porcelain vase, of no obvious practical function, with a skilfully painted polychrome scene of a rosy-cheeked young soldier of the People's Liberation Army threading a needle for a peasant granny? Or a finely modelled biscuit porcelain statuette of an avuncular Lenin handing over power to an upstanding young Stalin? Devotees of revolutionary kitsch should not miss a small exhibition at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh of arts and crafts from China, dating from the early years of Liberation post-1949 to the death of Mao and the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, and containing some remarkable, indeed unique, pieces.

By Alison Hardie

The title of the exhibition, 'Mao: Art for the Masses', is partially misleading as to its content. This is really two exhibitions in one. The first being that of genuinely 'mass' visual culture – the propaganda posters and Mao badges which were produced in their millions, and slightly less mass-produced objects, such as a mould-cast porcelain lampstand in the form of a scene from the ballet *The Red Detachment of Women*. The second exhibition is that of one-off or limited-edition pieces in which the finest traditional craftsmanship has been used to portray ostensibly revolutionary subject matter. There are some true laugh-aloud moments, when one spots the portrait of model soldier LEI Feng engraved on a beautifully shaped solid turquoise snuffbottle – what was the point of that? – or the frieze of communist hammers and sickles replacing the usual lotuses on the lip of a porcelain vase. This vase, dated 1968, is a fascinating piece, bearing a large underglaze blue portrait head of the Chairman in a nimbus of rays. According to the catalogue, it is the only known image of Mao in underglaze blue; the technique is subject to a high risk of kiln failure, and a failed representation of the Chairman would have drawn down the wrath of the Party on the craftsmen responsible. Many a brow must have been mopped, and not just from the heat of the kiln, when the successfully fired vase was revealed.

Pieces such as this, or the exquisitely detailed ivory carvings of bumper harvests and happy minority peoples, were certainly never produced for the masses – nor was the spectacularly colourful and detailed lacquer plaque, inlaid with mother of pearl, depicting the opening of the Yangtze River Bridge at Nanjing in 1969. This is estimated to have required 6,000 man-hours to produce; it was intended as an official gift from General XU Shiyou to Commander-in-Chief LIN Biao, but by the time those 6,000 man-hours were up, Lin Biao had crossed his last bridge. The embarrassing gift was never claimed by the donor, and remained with the No. 1 State Lacquer Factory in Yangzhou until it was purchased in 1997 by the collector Peter Wain. The entire exhibition in fact comes from the collection of Peter and Susan Wain, and Peter Wain also wrote the catalogue essay. The catalogue, in the form of a 'little red book', illustrates all the three-dimensional pieces in the exhibition, though only a couple of the propaganda posters.

Overall the interpretation is disappointing, particularly so in the case of the posters, whose contents and iconography are not explained beyond a literal translation of their titles or slogans. The exhibition captions, and the catalogue itself, are vague on the purpose of most of the items, except to note that



Mao's little red book, an internationally recognised symbol of the Cultural Revolution. Five billion copies were distributed at home and abroad, and it was translated into over fifty of the world's languages. Many different versions were published. This 182-page book contains Chairman Mao's 'new instructions' issued between December 1965 and January 1968.

such objects were often produced as diplomatic gifts – this was probably the intended future of the Lenin and Stalin statuette – or for sale to the overseas Chinese market. Given the almost heroic lack of functionality displayed by many of the pieces, this vagueness is understandable, but in the absence of information on what the objects were actually for, more information on where and how they were acquired by the collectors would have been very interesting.

For the non-specialist audience at whom this exhibition is evidently aimed, more detailed analysis of how the revolutionary subject matter relates to traditional iconography might have been helpful. One of the striking lessons of the exhibition is just how conservative 'revolutionary' art can be. In many cases there has been a change of surface decoration without any change in fundamental form – as with the Lei Feng snuffbottle, or the Mao portrait vase. At least the 'Red

Large porcelain vase with image of Chairman Mao, dated 1968 (height 65.5cm). On this vase, Mao's image is painted in under-glaze blue, a high-risk process that often resulted in kiln failure. In decorating the vase this way the maker took an even greater risk of being declared a counter-revolutionary had Mao's image been marred in any way.



Detachment of Women' lampstand, whatever its aesthetic shortcomings, is not a form which could equally well have been produced in the mid-Qing dynasty.

It would also have been useful to have had more background information on how decisions were made in the official workshops about the form, subject matter, and design of decorative objects, though there is some attempt in the introduction to put handicraft production into its social context. Did the craftsmen simply carry out instructions, or did they have an input into the design? Was their role within the workshops different from what it had been before 1949, or was it much the same? How did it change after the start of the Cultural Revolution? One of the subtexts of the exhibition seems to be the role played by individual craftsmen in the preservation of traditional techniques and skills through some of the most destructive years of the People's Republic. The efforts made to preserve China's heritage are explicitly illustrated here by a porcelain commemorative plaque dated 1924, finely painted with a traditional landscape scene; wherever it was in 1966 at the start of the Cultural Revolution, its custodian at the time had the brainwave of turning it round and inscribing revolutionary slogans – Sweep away the Four Olds! – on the reverse, thus saving it from destruction. It is good to think that the creator of the Lei Feng turquoise snuffbottle, or of the glass snuffbottle interior-painted with the Foolish Old Man Moving the Mountains, may have had a similar conscious intention to do their bit to keep alive the national heritage of traditional crafts through the darkest days of officially sponsored vandalism. <

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Peasant Girl, Sculpture, porcelain, 1960. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, New China valued images of youth, health, and materialism. The technical mastery of the artist Zeng Shandong can be seen in the girl's headscarf which is made from real lace dipped in glaze. The lace has burned away during firing to leave only the glaze residue.

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Information >

*Mao: Art for the Masses*  
National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, May 2003 to March 2004  
[www.nms.ac.uk](http://www.nms.ac.uk)

## Australia

### National Gallery of Australia

Parke Place, Parkes  
Canberra ACT 2601  
T +61-2-6240 6502  
http://nga.gov.au/

#### Until 26 April 2004

##### Nam Jun Paik

This sculptural installation by Nam Jun Paik evokes the technologies and obsolescence of the twentieth century. It presents eight vintage automobiles: each has been stripped of its engine and interior, painted silver, stuffed with electronic parts, and fitted with a sound component.

### Art Gallery of New South Wales

Art Gallery Road, Domain  
Sydney NSW 2000  
T +612-9225 1744  
www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au

#### Until 9 May 2004

##### Fantastic Mountains: Chinese Landscape Painting from the Shanghai Museum

This exploration of the spiritual, philosophical, and aesthetic notions that have moulded Chinese landscape painting includes hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, album leaves, and fan-shaped paintings from the Ming and Qing dynasties (fourteenth – nineteenth century). Many of these paintings have never before been seen outside China.

## Austria

### New Art Path on Karlsplatz

Kunsthalle Wien  
Museumsplatz 1  
A-1070 Vienna  
T +43-1-52189 1201  
www.kunsthallewien.at

#### Until 21 November 2007

##### Introductions for Actions

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Kunsthalle Wien, 30 Austrian and international artists (including Wong Hoy Cheong and Cai Guoqiang) have created an installation designed to encourage passers by in this public space to perform brief actions. Passers-by encounter 'instructions for actions' that interrupt their daily routine and invite them to participate in a spontaneous encounter with art.

includes window panels, partition panels, lattice windows, and railings.

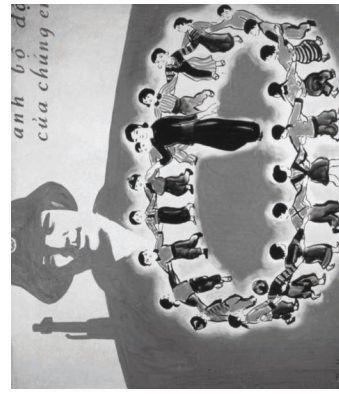
### Hong Kong Museum of Art

10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui  
Kowloon, Hong Kong  
T +852-2721 0116  
www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/Arts/

#### Until 2 May 2004

##### Vietnam Behind the Lines: Images from the War 1965-1975

This show features over 100 Vietnamese paintings from the collection of the British Museum and presents an unusual and compelling vision. North Vietnamese artists combine traditional and contemporary techniques to create a diverse range of media. Rather than showing more images of violence, raids, or excursions, these works all concentrate on the less-reported aspects of the war from a Vietnamese standpoint: life at base camp, official propaganda, the new active role of women in combat, portraits, and working life behind the lines.



Nguyen Thu (1931-)  
Inscribed Political Poster 1965  
Poster print on machine-made paper  
H: 86.5 cm W: 109.5 cm  
Given by the British Museum Friends  
OA1999-06-30-03

### He Xiangning Art Museum

Overseas Chinese Town  
Shenzhen  
T +852-2180 8188  
www.heritagemuseum.gov.hk

#### Until 11 December 2005

##### The Fifth System: Public Art in The Age Of 'Post-Planning': The Fifth Shenzhen

This exhibition provides new ways of perceiving and rediscovering urban reality through art. Shenzhen's Overseas Chinese Town developed at a very fast pace; conventional modern urban planning

was unable to keep up. The result is a unique urban typography of diversity, high speed, and high efficiency. This 'post-planning' city signals a new age of city making. The Fifth System project opens new spaces for experimental public art; the diverse works are produced specifically for this unique cultural context.

## Italy

### Museo Poldi Pezzoli

Via Manzoni 12  
20121 Milan  
T +02-79 63 34 – 79 48 89  
www.museopoldipezzoli.it/

#### Until 28 June 2004

##### Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran 1501-1576

The exhibition explores the origins and evolution of the Safavid (1501-1576) style. It features the great hunting carpet by Ghyas al Din Jami in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum and also includes other carpets, ceramics, metalwork, lacquer, hardstones, and examples of the arts of the book. The show was co-organized by the Asia Society, the British Museum, and the Poldi Pezzoli Museum.

## Japan

### Kyoto National Museum

527 Chayamachi, Higashiyama-ku  
Kyoto, 605-0931  
T +75-54 1151  
www.kyohaku.go.jp/indexe.htm

#### Until 4 April 2004

##### Japanese Dolls and the Doll Festival

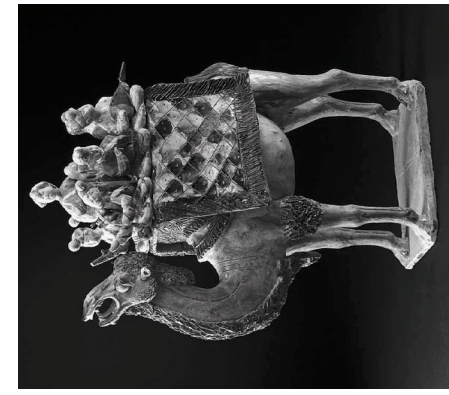
Hina dolls will be highlighted in this annual spring display, held in the New Exhibition Hall. The exhibition will also include a variety of Japanese dolls, including *goshō ningyō*, *kamo ningyō*, and costumed dolls.

### Miho Museum

300, Momodani, Shigaraki-cho,  
Koga-gun  
Shiga, 529-1814  
T +0748-82-3411  
www.miho.jp

#### 16 March – 10 June 2004

*Selected Pottery: Treasures from Xi'an*  
These works from the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), and before to the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) feature swift horses from the West that fascinated the ancient



Camel with a Musical Group on its Back

Chinese and beautiful women of the various dynasties.

### Mori Art Museum

Roppongi Hills Mori Tower,  
6-10-1, Roppongi,  
Minato-ku Tokyo  
T +03-5777 8600  
www.moriartscenter.org/

#### Until 5 May 2004

##### Roppongi Crossing: New Visions of Japanese Art

This is the first in a series of three exhibitions focusing on contemporary visual art; it includes examples of design, fashion, film, music, architecture, and new media. A team of curators selects some 60 artists based on works done in the last three to four years. Curators: Azumaya Takashi, Hara Hisako, Hatana-ka Minoru, Iida Takayo, Kataoka Mami, Shimura Nobuko.

## New Zealand

### Adam Art Gallery

Gate 3, Kelburn Parade  
Victoria University of Wellington  
Wellington  
T + 64-446-35489  
www.vuw.ac.nz/adamartgal

#### 21 February – 9 May 2004

##### Concrete Horizons: Contemporary Art from China

Featuring 25 works by seven artists from Mainland China, Concrete Horizons features some of the country's leading contemporary artists, including internationally acclaimed artists, Wang Gongxin and Song Dong – who are best known for their new-media installations and performance-based, interactive works. Artists Lin Tianmiao, Yin Xiuzhen, and

Yang Zhenzhong have similarly established international profiles for their photographic and video-based works; while Wei and Wang Jun, represent a younger generation of emerging artists.

## Singapore

### Singapore Art Museum

71 Bras Basah Road  
Singapore 189555  
T +65-6332 3222  
www.nhb.gov.sg/SAM

#### Until September 2004

##### Convergences of Art, Science and Technology (C.A.S.T)

This exhibition uses art to examine the practices and discourse of science and technology, as well as their impact on society. Installations include interpretations of the future, interactive stations to demonstrate the interface of science and creativity, and examples of science imitating art through intriguing images of cells and DNA. The exhibition will feature work by artists in collaboration with scientists, computer engineers, and medical professionals.

## Spain

### CaixaForum, Fundació

Venue: Sant Adrià Marina (North Pier)  
T +93-476 8600  
info.fundacio@lacaixa.es  
www.barcelona2004.org/eng/eventos/exposiciones/

#### 9 May – 26 September 2004

##### The Warriors of Xi'an

These exhibits of funerary art are examples of recent archaeological discoveries at the tombs of Qinshihuangdi and Yanling. The 100 works on display are from the Qin (221-206 BC) and Han (206 BC-220 CE) dynasties; featured exhibits include terracotta warriors from Xian, stone armour, and ceramic figures and domestic animals. These objects are on loan from various institutions and museums of the Shaanxi province.

### Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC)

Temporary Exhibitions Hall  
Palau Nacional, Parc de Montjuïc  
08038 Barcelona  
T +93-622 0376  
www.mnac.es/

#### The British Library

Pearson Gallery  
96 Euston Road  
London NW1 2DB  
T +44-20-7412 7595  
www.bl.uk

#### 22 June – 12 September 2004

*Feasts, rituals, and ceremonies: Ancient bronzes from the Museum of Shanghai*  
This exhibition covers bronze age art from the Xia Dynasty (twenty-first to seventeenth century BC) up to the beginnings of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC), focusing on pieces used for ritual purposes. The selection of objects offers a panorama of the role of bronze art in the protocol of ancestor worship, as well as an overview of the evolution of forms, styles, decorations, and metallurgical techniques over the course of this 2000-year period.

## Sweden

### Kulturhuset Stockholm

Box 16414, 103 27 Stockholm  
T +46 08 508 31 451  
www.kulturhuset.stockholm.se

#### Until 2 May 2004

##### Veil

This major international exhibition examines one of the most powerful symbols in contemporary culture: the veil. Veil includes diverse contemporary visual arts practices, but features lens-based work. Artists include Faisal AbdulAllah, Kourush Adim, AES art group, Jananne Al-Ani, Ghada Amer, Farah Bajjull, Samta Benyahia, Shadafarin Ghadirian, Ghazel, Emily Jacir, Ramesh Kalkur, Majida Khattari, Shirin Neshat, Harold Offeh, Zineb Sedira, Elin Strand and Mitra Tabrizian. It is an inIVA touring exhibition.

## United Kingdom

### The Museum of East Asian Art

12 Bennett Street  
Bath BA1 2QJ  
T +44-1225-464 640  
www.bath.co.uk/museumeastasianart

#### Until 11 April 2004

##### Understanding East Asian Art

An exhibition which takes a simple yet fascinating look at the way in which the art of China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, and Southeast Asia is viewed. The display examines the significance of material, function, and symbolism within these cultures.



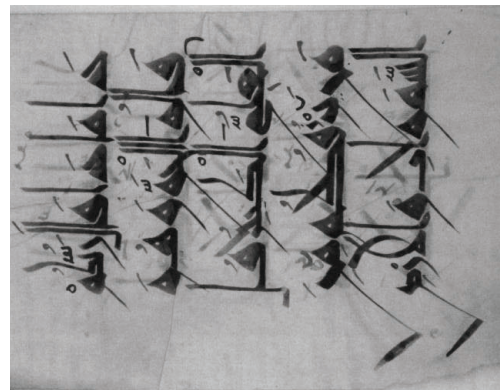
**23 April – 5 September 2004**  
(provisional dates)

*The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War, and Faith*  
This exhibition brings together over 200 of Aurel Stein's seldom seen Central Asian manuscripts, paintings, objects and textiles, along with other fascinating artefacts from museums in China, Japan, Germany, and France. The exhibition includes items as diverse as anti-war poetry, court documents to reclaim land from squatters, mousetraps, desert shoes, and a letter apologizing for getting drunk and behaving badly at a dinner party.

**The Hermitage Rooms at Somerset House**  
Strand and Waterloo Bridge  
London  
T +44-20-7836 8686  
www.somerset-house.org.uk

**25 March – 22 August 2004**

*Heaven on Earth: Art from Islamic Lands*  
The collections of The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the Nasir D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art are each lending more than 60 works to this display. The exhibition illustrates how the fine and decorative arts of Islam were used to glorify both God and human rulers. The objects cover a vast geographical area and range in date from the early medieval to the nineteenth century; they include illuminated copies of the Quran, paintings, textiles, jewels, metalwork, and ceramics.



**Bifolium from a large Qur'an, early eleventh century**  
Two folios: ink, watercolour and gold  
45 x 30 cm

**Horniman Public Museum & Public Park Trust**  
100 London Road  
Forest Hill  
London  
T +44-208-699-1872  
www.horniman.ac.uk

**May 2004 – February 2005**

*Woven Blossoms: Textiles from Savu, Eastern Indonesia*  
An exhibition of textiles and photographs of weaving traditions from the island of Savu. These beautiful ikat textiles reflect the kinship patterns of the island, with motifs which relate to the two matrilineal descent groups. Legends and events from the history of the island are also referred to in the designs. The photographs set the textiles in their cultural context, offering insights into a way of life which is undergoing considerable change in the twenty-first century but which still retains its unique character.

**30 March – 27 June 2004**

*Influencing Paris: Japanese Prints Collected by European Artists*  
This exhibition will highlight some of the most famous prints from the 'Floating World' images, which dramatically influenced the greatest painters of the French Impressionist movement. It includes works by masters such as Hokusai and Hiroshige that were admired and in some ways emulated by European artists, as well as *banjinga* prints of beautiful ladies that impacted the depiction of the female form in French Impressionism.

**United States**

**Museum of Fine Arts**  
Avenue of the Arts  
465 Huntington Avenue  
Boston, MA  
T +1-617-369 3222  
www.mfa.org

**Until 12 May 2004**

*The Glories of Al-Hind: Indian Paintings Made for Muslim Patrons*  
This exhibition of approximately 35 paintings highlights imperial Mughal art from the MFA's collection, including the renowned drawing of the dying Inayat Khan.

**Until 7 July 2004**

*Highlights from the Edward Sylvester Morse Collection of Japanese Ceramics*  
Highlights from the collection of ceramics acquired by Edward Sylvester Morse in Japan during the late nineteenth century feature tea ceremony vessels, including plates by the eighteenth century master Ogata Kenzan.

**Museum of Contemporary Art**

1275 19th Street  
Denver, CO 80202  
www.mcartdenver.org

**Until 9 May 2004**

*Over One Billion Served: Conceptual Photography from the People's Republic of China*  
This exhibit examines present-day China through the lenses of Chinese conceptual photographers, including Yiluo Bai, Jin Liu, Wei Liu, Qi Sheng, Jinsong Wang, Qingsong Wang, Xiaojun Wu, Bandi Zhao, Fadong Zhu, and Liang Yue. These images document personal interpretations of the ongoing restructuring of China's culture, society, and its dramatic economic growth. The photographs are divided into three sections: *Strangers in the Cities*, *Power Politics*, and *The McDonaldization of China*.

**Until 5 July 2004**

*Salvation: Images of the Buddhist Deity of Compassion*  
This exhibition celebrates the importance of Avalokitesvara – also known as Guanyin, Kwanum, and Kannon – across Buddhist Asia. Spanning some 1500 years, these works represent the creative achievements of ancient Pakistan, Central Asia, China, Japan, and Tibet and are rendered in stone, stucco, wood, and gilt bronze.

**Honolulu Academy of Arts**

900 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96814-1495  
T +1-808-532 8700  
www.honoluluacademy.org

**30 March – 27 June 2004**

*Influencing Paris: Japanese Prints Collected by European Artists*  
This exhibition will highlight some of the most famous prints from the 'Floating World' images, which dramatically influenced the greatest painters of the French Impressionist movement. It includes works by masters such as Hokusai and Hiroshige that were admired and in some ways emulated by European artists, as well as *banjinga* prints of beautiful ladies that impacted the depiction of the female form in French Impressionism.

**8 April – 6 June 2004**

*Japan & Paris: Impressionism, Postimpressionism, and the Modern Era*  
This exhibition explores the history of collecting Western art in Japan and investigates the influence of this collecting interest on Japanese modern art.

Both Western and Japanese artists who were collected at the beginning of the twentieth century by progressive Japanese art enthusiasts will be included, as well as the work of Japanese artists who were instrumental to the introduction of Western modes of expression to Japan such as Kojima Zenzaburō, Kume Keichirō, Maeda Kanji, Mitsutani Kunishirō, and Fujita Tsuguharu.

**Los Angeles County Museum of Art**

5905 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90036  
T +1-323-857 6000  
www.lacma.org

**Until 5 July 2004**

*Salvation: Images of the Buddhist Deity of Compassion*  
This exhibition celebrates the importance of Avalokitesvara – also known as Guanyin, Kwanum, and Kannon – across Buddhist Asia. Spanning some 1500 years, these works represent the creative achievements of ancient Pakistan, Central Asia, China, Japan, and Tibet and are rendered in stone, stucco, wood, and gilt bronze.

**Carlton Rochell Ltd.**

Fuller Building, 41 East 57th Street  
New York, NY  
T +1-212-759 7600  
www.carltonrochell.com

**Until 30 April 2004**

*Road to Enlightenment: Sculpture and Painting from India, the Himalayas and Southeast Asia*  
The exhibition includes examples of painting and sculpture from India, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. One of the highlights is an eleventh-century Chola bronze figure of Parvati, wife of the Hindu god Shiva, from southern India.

The exhibition will coincide with the International Asian Art Fair and the Asia Week auctions.

**China Institute Gallery**

125 East 65th Street  
New York, NY 10021  
T +1-212-744 8181  
www.chinainstitute.org

**21 June – 23 July 2004**

*Documenting China: Contemporary Photography and Social Change*  
This exhibition of documentary photographs by Zhou Hai, Jiang Jing, Zhou Min, Luo Yongjin, Lu Yuanmin, Liu Xiaodi, and Zhang Xinmin focuses on the effect of industrialization and urbanization on China's cities and rural areas. Curated by Gu Zheng, a prominent member of China recent documentary photography movement.

**Japan Society**

333 East 47th Street  
New York, NY 10017  
T +1-212-832 1155  
www.japansociety.org

**Until 20 June 2004**

*An Enduring Vision: seventeenth to twentieth Century Japanese Painting from the Gitter-Yelen Collection*  
The exhibition offers an overview of Japanese painting from the Edo to Meiji periods (seventeenth – early twentieth century), featuring the works of renowned masters and important paintings by lesser-known artists. Specific lineages or schools of painting form the focus of the exhibition, which presents the continuity, transformation, and revitalization of tradition from each generation to the next.

**The Newark Museum**

49 Washington Street,  
Newark, NJ 07102-3716  
T +973 596 6550  
www.newarkmuseum.org

**Until 30 June 2004**

*Southeast Asian Images in Stone and Terracotta*  
Highlights of this exhibition include a Cambodian sculpture of the goddess Uma, an Indonesian architectural section with a lion, and a large Thai elephant jar. The images date from the fourth to thirteenth century.

**Peabody Essex Museum**

East India Square  
Salem, MA 01970 – 3783  
T +1-978-745 9500  
www.pem.org

**Until 30 May 2004**

*Men Plow, Women Weave*  
Chinese rulers have frequently used both the literary and visual arts to celebrate the labour and industry of the Chinese people. Men Plow, Women Weave features a set of 46 wood-block prints. Each print is accompanied by the emperor's poem of gratitude. Also featured are paintings, prints, porcelain, embroidery, a mother-of-pearl inlaid screen, and late twentieth-century posters.

**Until 13 June 2004**

*Vanished Kingdoms: The Wulsin*

*Photographs of Tibet, China & Mongolia*  
1921-1925

Vanished Kingdoms presents 39 modern prints made from the original hand-colored lantern slides. These images were taken by the first Americans to reach the mountains and deserts of western China (Gansu) and Mongolia and the not previously photographed lamaseries of Eastern Tibet.

**The Bowers Museum**

2002 North Main Street  
Santa Ana, CA 92706  
T +1-714-567 3600  
www.bowers.org

**Until 16 May 2004**

*Tibet: Treasures from the Roof of the World*  
This exhibition is organized into four thematic sections: History and Culture of Tibet, Ritual Objects, Paintings, Sculpture and Textiles, and Daily Life of the Tibetan Nobility. The exhibition will include *thangkhas*, costumes, jewelry, and exquisitely crafted vessels that were used during daily as well as ceremonial activities.

**Seattle Asian Art Museum**

Volunteer Park  
1400 East Prospect Street  
Seattle, WA 98112-3303  
T +1-206-654 3100  
www.seattleartmuseum.org

**Until 11 April 2004**

*The Feast – Li Jin*  
Li Jin's twenty-metre long hand-scroll, *A Feast*, takes us on a historic culinary tour of China, providing contemporary insights into the central role of food in Chinese culture. Juxtaposed with Li Jin's departure from tradition are classical Chinese painting and calligraphy.

**Smithsonian Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art**

National Mall  
Washington, DC  
T +1-202-357 4880  
www.asia.si.edu

**Until 18 July 2004**

*Birds and Beasts in Japanese Art*  
Birds and animals have been an important subject of Japanese and East Asian art from pre-historic times. This exhibition will highlight the Freer Gallery's

diverse collection of bird, flower, and animal paintings, ranging from highly realistic, detailed renderings of the Maruyama-Shijo school to dynamic displays of brushwork in the works of Edo period artists Jakuchu and Buson.

**20 March – 18 July 2004**

**Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**  
*Faith and Form: Selected Calligraphy and Painting from Japanese Religious Traditions*  
The exhibition features eight to nineteenth century works from the Sylvan Barnett and William Burto collection, which is particularly distinguished by important examples of Buddhist inspired calligraphy and painting. Included are richly illuminated sutras texts, boldly expressive Zen Buddhist aphorisms rendered in ink monochrome, portraits of Zen masters, and mandala paintings.

**20 March – 8 August 2004**

**Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**  
*Return of the Buddha: The Qingzhou Discoveries*  
This exhibition presents 35 sculptures from the 1996 discovery of several hundred sixth-century Buddhist sculptures buried between 1102 and 1107. Broken at the time of interment, but otherwise remarkably well-preserved, the limestone sculptures give insight into past traditions of brightly painted religious images. These works illustrate the stylistic transition that occurred during a 50-year period that encompasses the Northern Wei (386-534), Eastern Wei (534-550), and Northern Qi (550-577) dynasties. This is the only North American venue of a highly acclaimed European exhibition by the same name.

**Williams College Museum of Art**

15 Lawrence Hall Drive, Ste 2  
Williamstown, MA 01267  
T +1-416-597 2429  
www.williams.edu

**Until 2 May 2004**

*Antoin Sevruquin and the Persian Image*  
Mingling Western and Eastern influences, Antoin Sevruquin is one of Iran's most creative photographers. This exhibition includes 35 black-and-white photographs made from original negative and vintage prints housed in the archives of the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art. <

# Sex Workers in Asia

Asian Art >  
General

Last autumn, a titillating and controversial show opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: *The Photographs of Reagan Louie*, billed as 'an artist's candid and complex study of the contemporary Asian sex industry'. The exhibit of large, bright, full-colour, close-up shots of female sex workers staring vacantly, preening, and plying their trade was accompanied by a context show of 50 paintings and photographs by other artists that had been selected by Louie from the museum's permanent collection. Posted at the entrance of Louie's exhibit was a warning about the explicit sexual nature of the content. The warning set up an expectation for a shocking and graphic display, and that expectation was fulfilled.

By Namiko Kunimoto

The written warning, the accompanying context show, and extensive textual information from the artist suggested there was a need to account for the sometimes harsh and provocative photographs. A large amount of wall space was devoted to an introductory preface written by the artist. Rather than articulate his motivation, Louie's essay seemed to justify and defend his art. As if to excuse himself, or to emphasize that he was not seeking gratification of a sexual nature, the artist states in his exhibit and in the catalogue *Orientalia* that he is a family man. We are told by the museum that the artist is of Chinese descent, as though this equation makes the issues of an American male photographing Asian women less relevant. Louie claims in both the exhibition text and the catalogue that his art is in keeping with the tradition of depicting the female nude. The question of why the artist felt compelled to venerate this tradition was not addressed. Louie chose images from the museum's collection whose subject matter dealt with the nude female body, including *The Desmoiselles D'Avignon* by Picasso,

Manet's *Olympia*, and a piece from Willem de Kooning's *Woman series*. Postmodern, self-reflexive artists such as Cindy Sherman, and more frightening forays into the psyche by Hans Bellmer, were also on exhibit. Unfortunately, a lack of creative and thematic unity between the pieces superseded their relevance as a whole. Consequently, this discordant compilation simply showed that psychological, sexual, and moral battles for power have been waged across women's bodies for a long time.

Moreover, Louie's photographs are inconsistent with themes raised in the context show. Paintings like *Les Desmoiselles D'Avignon* reveal the potential distortion in the viewer's reality, exposing the strong currents of emotion that emerge in the sexual encounter. De Kooning's *Woman* paintings are similarly evocative through the deformation of figural form, and they seem to express the surreal experience at play between sublimation and gratification. In these works, the distorted images of woman reveal more about the subjectivity of the artist than that of the female subjects. While Picasso and De Kooning use the visual form of the female body to express an emotional state,

Image from the exhibition under review. The exhibition raises the question: How does an image of a nude woman's backside, bent over a male figure in a bathtub, even begin to raise the issues of 'real' identity and sexual politics that Louie claims to invoke?



Photo by Reagan Louie

the lens of the camera. Louie's images stir us: the overwhelming skin and detail in the gallery space is erotic and discomfiting. The range of expressions on the faces of the women, silent and staring, sleek and sexy, scared and pitiful, may move us, perhaps arouse us. At their best, Louie's photographs stir uneasy feelings about sexuality and power, and at other times, they simply recreate the glare and pulse of any red-light district. Revealing and even intimate as the photographs seem, the tempting urge to believe that we know these women, that they might 'step out of expectations and present themselves as people' as Louie suggests, is an idealized and problematic urge. It insists on a dichotomy between prostitute and person, and assumes that the lens of the camera can provide the key to the truth. *Photographs of Reagan Louie: Sex Work in Asia* is not about the role of the female body in an artistic 'tradition', nor is it about the exploitation of sex workers. In the end, it is about sex and not much else. <

Namiko Kunimoto MA is a graduate student in the department of Art History at the University of California, Berkeley. She completed an MA at the University of British Columbia, focusing on photography during the Japanese-Canadian interment of the Second World War, and will be working on *Photography in Japan for her dissertation*. [Namiko\\_kunimoto@hotmail.com](mailto:Namiko_kunimoto@hotmail.com)

Louie, in contrast, writes that his aim was to 'get at the truth of [the sex worker's] reality and experience.'<sup>1</sup> Is there one singular, true experience for sex workers in Asia? How could thousands of women of different ages, classes, and cultures who live in different countries, share such a 'true reality'; and, even imagining for a moment that they could, how is it that the photographs of one man could reveal it all to us? How

does an image of a nude woman's backside, bent over a male figure in a bathtub, even begin to raise the issues of 'real' identity and sexual politics that Louie claims to invoke?

Photography, since its inception, has attempted to capture and define the meaning of reality. But meaning has proved too slippery for film, and we find that we cannot approach anything but our own subjective responses through

Information >

*The Photographs of Reagan Louie: Sex Work in Asia*  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 4 September 2003 – 7 December 2003  
[www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org)

Note >

1 Louie, Reagan, *Orientalia: Sex in Asia*, New York: Powerhouse Books (2003), p.183.

[ advertisement ]

## Asia-Europe Journal



### ASIA-EUROPE JOURNAL

The Asia-Europe Journal is devoted to the interdisciplinary and intercultural studies and research between Asia and Europe in the social sciences and humanities. The various aspects of bilateral relationships, comparative studies, Asian studies from a European perspective, or European Studies from an Asian viewpoint will be covered. Each volume is intended to follow one major subject such as security, historical experiences, cultural perceptions, civic rights, gender issues, regional integration, development, ethnic minorities or other areas of bi-regional interest.

Editor-in-chief: Albrecht Rothacher, Ph.D.

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# The Chester Beatty Library Asia in Ireland

Asian Art >  
General

Growing up in New York, Chester Beatty began by collecting stamps and minerals. Over the course of his life, and as he travelled the world, the collection expanded. He developed an interest in Arabic manuscripts and collected outstanding biblical papyri of vital importance for the early history of Christianity. A journey to Asia in 1917 added Japanese and Chinese painting to his interests. Beatty built up a magnificent collection, including important Persian, Turkish, Armenian, and Western European items and high quality Burmese, Thai, and Nepalese manuscripts. When, in 1949, he moved from London, where he had spent most of his life, to Ireland, he brought his amazing collection along. Upon his death in 1968, the collection was bequeathed to a trust for the benefit of the public. It is now funded by the Irish government and is one of the country's national cultural institutions.

By Michael Ryan

The context into which Beatty moved his collection is an interesting one. Following a century or so of population decline and economic stagnation, Ireland had become a net exporter of people. The Irish diaspora (including some of Beatty's ancestors) had spread large communities of people of Irish descent throughout the world, a trend which only began to be reversed in the 1980s. While many individuals living in Ireland may have had extensive experience of the wider world, at home cultural preoccupations concerned the identity of the newly independent state.\* The principal cultural issue revolved around the status of the indigenous Irish language (Gaelic) and as a result, in museums, Irish collections were stressed at the expense of those from elsewhere. For a long time, the Asian collections of Ireland's National Museum were only intermittently on exhibition, and some of them were until recently entirely unavailable to the public. In Irish universities, the study of Asian languages (other than Sanskrit) only began in the 1980s, largely at first as a module in business degree courses, while at about the same time Japanese appeared on the curriculum of selected secondary schools (high school/gymnasium equivalents).

Apart from the reaction of a discerning few, the reception of Asian art was disappointing. Indeed, Beatty's first exhibition in Dublin, of ukiyo-e, was dismissed in a national newspaper as being of little interest. Fortunately some enlightened people ensured that the appropriate legal conditions were put into place for the Library's continuance as a public institution, despite the small numbers of visitors. In 1999 the Library, in close cooperation with the relevant government departments, moved to an eighteenth-century building with a modern extension at Dublin Castle, which was more welcoming to the public and better equipped to preserve and present the collections.

## A changing society

At this time, Ireland was changing; the economy began to grow rapidly and the demographic profile of the country, and of the city of Dublin especially, began to change sharply. In the early 1990s, there was a large influx of people from Western Europe, followed shortly by many from Eastern Europe. Then, in the last seven or eight years, African communities began to establish themselves and small groups of Asian émigrés began to expand. The most rapid growth has been in the Chinese population; the city of Dublin now has about 50,000 Chinese residents, of whom approximately half are students. The change in religious affiliation has also been marked. Ireland was, and in some ways still is, an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country with a relatively small

representation of other Christian churches. A variety of faiths now have a vibrant presence: the Muslim community in Dublin (mostly from the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia) is second only to Catholicism in observant membership in the capital, and Buddhist, Hindu, Ba'hai, and other belief systems are growing in support. The relevance of the Chester Beatty collection suddenly became obvious.

## A changing institution

In the first year of operations at its new home visitor numbers increased tremendously, and they have risen each year since. The Library assumes the role of a portal through which the local population, especially Asian communities, can access cultural experiences. The Library is seen as a valuable contributor to intercultural understanding, which takes place primarily in the traditional manner of exhibitions, publications, and lectures. However, the small Education Department has found partnering of schools especially fruitful: a three-year scheme to twin the Muslim National (primary

Henna hand-painting, workshop with Irish school children, Outreach project, 2002



Japanese tea ceremony with Irish school children, Outreach project, 2002



All photos: Chester Beatty Library

level) School with inner-city equivalents has been a success. It has led to exhibitions curated by the children displaying their artwork in response to the collections and a series of storytelling sessions using the Silk Road as a linking theme, and the teachers and staff of the Library have seen a steady rise in confidence on the part of the children both in their work and their interactions with one another. There have been valuable children's cultural festivals and Irish, Japanese, and Chinese volunteer presenters have reached a wide audience. Traditional schools' visits now occupy a significant part of total visitor numbers, and secondary-school students in particular benefit from these. And there is a series of family days where parents and children attend workshops at which, for example, they learn about the tea ceremony, origami, calligraphy, Bedouin life, and so on.

The Library has been very active in promoting a widening of the curricula for schools in art history; students must now study at least one module of non-European art, religious education, history, and geography, and a broad, less Ireland- or Eurocentric view of the world is actively supported. We were especially pleased to see that the Library itself was the subject of questions in the art history examination of the final state examination. It is perhaps too early to measure accurately what effect the new Chester Beatty Library is having on contemporary Irish society, but on the whole it appears to be a beneficial one.

Has it all been plain sailing? The answer is, of course, no. Chester Beatty collected very little Judaica and the Library's exhibitions, which do not claim to be encyclopaedic, reflect this. Nevertheless, we have been heavily criticized for this imbalance and even in a couple of cases been accused of extreme anti-Semitism. The charge is unfair, but we are actively seeking partnerships so that we can increase the presence of the Jewish religion in our Sacred Traditions display.

Intercultural Programme for schools, sponsored by the Paul Hamlyn and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundations, 2002

Likewise, some members of the Muslim community have objected to certain images (of Persian and Turkish origin) being displayed, while other Muslim visitors have commented favourably on the fairness and balance of our Islamic displays. Clearly, the road to understanding and respect is a winding one, and we have much to learn. <

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**Dr Michael Ryan** is an archaeologist and Director of the Chester Beatty Library. His academic interests are early mediaeval art and landscape history. He is President of the Royal Irish Academy (Ireland's academy of the humanities and sciences), Honorary Professor of Art History at Trinity College, Dublin, and Chair of the Discovery Programme, Ireland's Institute for advanced archaeological research.  
Mryan@cbl.ie

**The Chester Beatty Library**  
www.cbl.ie



## Note >

\* A dominion of the British Commonwealth until 1921, Ireland was an independent republic by 1949.

## Alfred Chester Beatty

Alfred Chester Beatty was born in New York in 1875. Following his schooling in New York, Beatty graduated as mining engineer from Columbia University and then headed west to work in the mines of Colorado and Utah. He rapidly made his fortune, and in his leisure moments he became a considerable collector of books and manuscripts. After the death of his first wife, and suffering from ill health, Beatty left the United States and founded a new mining consultancy in London. In 1949 he decided to move to Ireland, and built a library for his art collection on Shrewsbury Road, Dublin, which opened in 1954. In 1957, Chester Beatty became Ireland's first honorary citizen. In 1993 the decision was made to move the Library to a new location in the city centre, and the Library opened on its new site on 7 February 2000. <



Evenki people dancing in the village of Bakaldyn near Yakutsk.



Linguist and folklorist Anna Myreeva (right) during an Evenki healing ritual in Bakaldyn near Yakutsk.

# Voices from Tundra and Taiga Vitality and Education

Report >  
North East Asia

In the Evenki village of Bakaldyn, some 60 kilometres from Yakutsk, a dancing and healing ritual is taking place. Holding twigs with dry leaves glowing at the edges, diseases and evil thoughts are exorcized and, thus healed, the village can be entered. As the Evenki perform songs and dances surrounded by reindeer, the sun slowly sets behind the trees and the temperature drops below minus thirty degrees Celsius. If we do not hasten to record a cultural and linguistic description of such rituals, this unique expression of the Evenki identity and experience of the world will be lost for humanity. Visiting this ritual was the beginning of a hopefully fruitful cooperation with the fascinating peoples of the Asian North.

By Cecilia Odé

Native speakers of different ethnic groups in the region are bilingual: they all speak Russian. It is mainly elderly women who use or understand their indigenous language, sometimes rather poorly, by their own admission. From Stalin to Gorbachov, roughly speaking, languages other than Russian were, if not forbidden, at least not taught on the island of Sakhalin. Children were taken to boarding schools where Russian was the one and only language. This explains why most competent speakers of indigenous languages are of the older generation. It is, therefore, remarkable that one of their teachers, Nivkh language teacher Mrs S.F. Bessonova, was recently awarded the title 'Teacher of Merit of the Russian Federation', showing that, in contemporary Russia, indigenous languages have been rehabilitated and may



The island of Sakhalin and the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) in the north-eastern part of Siberia, Russian Federation.

again be taught. Within this new environment, there still is urgent need for a project such as 'Voices from Tundra and Taiga', which aims to build a scientific digital phono- and video-library of ethnolinguistic materials on

CD/DVD and on the internet (for example, spoken texts, songs, folkloristic narratives) to be used for research, and also to develop courseware for the safeguarding and revitalizing of the given languages.

## Sakhalin

The island of Sakhalin, with a length of nearly 950 kilometres and a varying width from 15 to 40 kilometres, is home to a persistently decreasing population of approximately 600,000 today, some 170,000 of whom live in the capital Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Of the island's total population 83 per cent is Russian. The indigenous population of Sakhalin as well as some of its languages are closely related to the indigenous people and languages on the Japanese side of the border. After a period of Japanese rule from 1905 till 1945, Sakhalin, together with the neighbouring Kuril Islands, is now part of the Russian Fed-

eration. As for the languages spoken on the island, Nivkh and Ulta are probably the oldest and only aboriginal ones. Nivkh is an isolated language, while the other indigenous languages of the area, including Ulta, belong to the Tungusic languages (explanation follows below). Ulta, being in a much worse situation than Nivkh, is in dire need of linguistic research and training programmes. Until 1995, Ulta was an unwritten language, and the only materials available consist of a limited language description and some booklets with fairy tales, games, and songs using the Cyrillic alphabet. At present, an Ulta alphabet is under construction and other steps toward its preservation are also taken.

In Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (Sakhalin), at the Sakhalin Regional Museum, the week-long seminar 'New approaches for safeguarding the disappearing languages and cultures of the aboriginal peoples of Sakhalin' included a training in the teaching of phonetics for native teachers of the four endangered languages of Sakhalin: Nivkh, Ulta, Evenki, and Nanai. The group of participants of the seminars organized on the island was very heterogeneous with only some of them having had a linguistic education. All were highly motivated and had come to the capital wishing to improve their skills as a language teacher and, some of them, keen to research their own cultural heritage. Our main subjects were orthography, orthoepy, and prosody (stress, intonation, duration, and rhythm), for which there is so far hardly any courseware available. During lessons confusion arose, due to the fact that Nivkh has three dialects. The students addressed matters such as, 'Which dialect do we teach our children?' These serious discussions were interrupted by pleasant breaks in which women came up with the origin of names: such as *iuuik* 'eternal spleen' for females, and, to exorcise a new-born boy, *ochan* 'sick and evil'.

This seminar was an important step

## Language Vitality and Endangerment

In the tables below the total population of ethnic groups included in the programme 'Voices from Tundra and Taiga' on Sakhalin and in the Sakha Republic are given, including numbers of members still speaking their mother tongue. The degree of endangerment, according to the UNESCO Redbook of Endangered Languages, does not only depend on the number of actual speakers, although it is an important feature. For a detailed discussion see *Language Vitality and Endangerment* by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages: Paris, March 2003. Note that most data presented here are from various sources, some of which go back to 1989 and 1993. Numbers have been rounded off.

Sakhalin					
Ethnic group	Total population	Population on Sakhalin	Speakers	Speakers on Sakhalin	Degree of endangerment
Nivkh	4,500	2,500	1,000	500	seriously endangered
Ulta	350	350	<35	<35	nearly extinct
Evenki	30,000	190	10,000	30	endangered
Nanai	12,000	170	5,800	40	seriously endangered
Sakha Republic					
Ethnic group	Total population	Population in Sakha	Speakers	Speakers in Sakha	Degree of endangerment
Yukagir (tundra)	700	700	<50	<50	nearly extinct
Yukagir (forest)	400	400	<50	<50	nearly extinct
Evenki	30,000	14,500	10,000	1,200	endangered
Even	17,000	8,500	7,000	2,800	endangered

## The Project in Brief

In IIAS Newsletter 29, November 2002, Cecilia Odé reported on the IIAS project 'Voices from Tundra and Taiga', a development programme for research on endangered languages in Northern Asia, focusing on the languages and cultures of the people of Sakhalin (Nivkh, Ulta, Nanai, and Evenki) and the Sakha Republic (Yukagir, Evenki, and Even) in the Russian Federation. The aim of the project is to build up a scientific digital phono- and video-library of ethnolinguistic materials on CD/DVD and on the internet (e.g. spoken

texts, songs, folkloristic narratives) that can be used for research, and to develop courseware for the safeguarding and revitalizing of the given languages. In the future Odé will join native linguists on field trips in order to record and analyse material by means of computer programmes for speech processing running on laptops.

The project was initiated in 2000 by Tjeerd de Graaf (Groningen University) and is related to similar projects that focus on the Northern Arctic. 'Voices from

Tundra and Taiga' is partly financed by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and by Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd.

The seminar on Sakhalin was fully financed by Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd., and organized at the Sakhalin Regional Museum in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk by Director Tatyana Roon in cooperation with Tjeerd de Graaf (Frisian Academy, the Netherlands) and Cecilia Odé. <

towards the realization of one of the aims of the project: the creation of a research centre in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. In this centre, teachers and scholars on the island will be involved in education and in describing the languages of local ethnic groups.

At Sakhalin State University, workshops were organized with the aim of attracting young linguists to study local languages. And, during a long interview about the seminar on Sakhalin TV, young viewers were invited to express their opinion on the need to safeguard the culture of northern peoples: for scientific purposes (13 votes), for the peoples themselves (12 votes), and for mankind (123 votes). An encouragement to continue the fight to safeguard the area's indigenous languages.

### Sakha Republic

It takes five hours to travel from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk to Yakutsk, flying north from autumn to winter over a landscape with white rivers like decorative ribbons gently draped on snowy plains and mountains. In the Sakha Republic, with a surface of, roughly speaking, 3 million square kilometres, and a population of over one million, of which one third are Yakuts, large numbers of ethnic groups speak their mother tongue. Languages focused on in this project are the nearly extinct Yukagir (an isolated language), Evenki, and Even (Tungusic), which have fascinating prosodic phenomena. For example, in Yukagir there is a gradual change from speaking to singing in the art of storytelling, where the intermediate phase between speaking and singing is particularly striking.

In Yakutsk (Sakha Republic), at the Arctic Institute and the Institute of Northern Minorities Problems, Odé held workshops for students and researchers. After this workshop some students showed interest in the project and even seriously considered continuing to study local languages after their

Master's degree. In fact, this is exactly what we are aiming at: local linguists describing a local language, enhancing its vitality and passing it on to future generations. <

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[www.iias.nl/iias/research/ode/index.html](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/ode/index.html)

### Information >

#### Projects related to 'Voices from Tundra and Taiga'

[www.let.rug.nl/~degraaf](http://www.let.rug.nl/~degraaf)  
[www.let.rug.nl/~markus](http://www.let.rug.nl/~markus)  
[www.elpr.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp](http://www.elpr.bun.kyoto-u.ac.jp)  
[www.nwo.nl](http://www.nwo.nl); [www.mpi.nl/DOBES](http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES)  
[www.fa.knaw.nl](http://www.fa.knaw.nl)

#### UNESCO Redbook on endangered languages in Northeast Asia

[www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/nasia\\_report.html](http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/nasia_report.html)

#### The Sakhalin Regional Museum

[www.museum.sakh.com](http://www.museum.sakh.com)

#### The Institute of Northern Minority Problems in Yakutsk

[www.sakha.ru/sakha/ync/ync\\_eng/narod.htm](http://www.sakha.ru/sakha/ync/ync_eng/narod.htm)

#### The Sakhalin Energy Investment Company

[www.sakhalinenergy.com/](http://www.sakhalinenergy.com/)

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The Sakhalin Regional Museum, formerly the Karafuto-Cho Museum, was built in 1937 in the Japanese period.

## 15 March 2004 – 15 July 2004

The IAS hosts several categories of postdoctoral researchers (fellows) in Asian Studies. Sponsorship of these fellows contributes to the institute's aim of enhancing expertise and encouraging the exploration of underdeveloped fields of study. One of the main objectives of the IAS is to mediate in establishing contacts in the field of Asian Studies and to stimulate cooperation between national and international scholars and institutes. The IAS consequently offers universities and research institutes the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge of its resident fellows. In terms of their scholarly contribution to the IAS, fellows are invited to present lectures, participate in seminars, and cooperate in research projects. IAS fellowship applications can be submitted at any time (no application deadline).

More information and an IAS fellowship application form are available at: [www.ias.nl/ias/appform.html](http://www.ias.nl/ias/appform.html)

For specific information, please contact: [iasfellows@let.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:iasfellows@let.leidenuniv.nl)

## Categories of fellows

### 1. Research fellows

- a. individual
- b. attached to a thematic research programme, i.e.:

- \*ABIA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index'
- 'Changing Labour Relations in Asia' (CLARA)
- 'Indonesianisasi and Nationalization'
- 'Islam in Indonesia: The Dissemination of Religious Authority in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries'
- 'Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia' (SMAP)
- 'Syntax of the Languages of Southern China'
- 'Transnational Society, Media and Citizenship'

### 2. Professors' fellows

Professional fellows are attached to the IAS to lecture at universities and institutes in the Netherlands.

### 3. Senior visiting fellows

The IAS offers excellent senior scholars the opportunity to do research in the Netherlands.

### 4. Visiting exchange fellows

The IAS has signed several Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with foreign research institutes, thus providing scholars the opportunity to participate in international exchanges.

### 5. Affiliated fellows

The IAS offers office facilities to excellent scholars who have found their own financial support and who would like to do research in the Netherlands for a certain period. The IAS furthermore mediates in finding funding for those who have not yet secured means to cover their fellowship expenses (please also see the application form).

### 6. Gonda fellows

Annually, the IAS offers office facilities and living accommodation to three fellows selected and funded by Stichting J. Gonda Fonds (KNAW). Please check the KNAW website for information and the application form at [www.knaw.nl](http://www.knaw.nl)

### 7. Research guests

The IAS offers office facilities to excellent scholars who would like to visit the institute for a short period.

Hereunder you will find, ordered by region of specialty and in alphabetical order, all fellows currently engaged at the IAS.

## General

### Miriyam Aouragh, MA (Morocco)

Stationed at the ASSR

PhD student within the WOTRO/ASSR/ IAS programme 'Transnational Society, Media and Citizenship'  
*The making of a collective Palestinian identity*

1 May 2001 – 1 May 2005

### Dr Bert Remijns (Belgium)

Affiliated fellow

*Hybrid word prosodic systems*

1 July 2002 – 1 July 2005

### Dr Margaret Sleetboom

(the Netherlands)

Research fellow within the programme 'Asian Genomics'

*Human genetics and its political, social, cultural, and ethical implications*

17 September 2001 – 15 December 2005

### Dr David N. Soo (United Kingdom)

Affiliated fellow

*Globalization: An investigation into the emerging Asian space industry. A new force in space?*

4 October 2002 – 4 July 2004

### Dr Yeo Lay Hwee (Singapore)

Senior visiting fellow

*Old Europe, new Asia: Fresh logic and raw emotions?*

31 March – 29 May 2004

### Dr Yi Jianping (China)

Affiliated fellow, sponsored by KNAW

*Impacts of warfare on the evolution of leadership in ancient history*

1 December 2003 – 31 May 2004

## Central Asia

### Dr Mehdi Parvizi Amini

(the Netherlands)

Research fellow, stationed in Leiden and at the Branch Office Amsterdam

*Conflict, security and development in the post-Soviet era: Toward regional economic cooperation in the Central Asian region*

1 July 2002 – 31 December 2004

### Dr Alex McKay (New Zealand)

Affiliated fellow

*The history of Tibet and the Indian Himalayas*

1 October 2000 – 1 October 2005

### Dr Irina Morozova (Russia)

Affiliated fellow, sponsored by NWO

*Conflict, security and development in the post-Soviet era: toward regional economic cooperation in the Central Asian region*

24 April 2003 – 30 November 2004

### Dr Cecilia Odé (the Netherlands)

Research fellow

*Voices from the tundra and taiga*

1 July 2002 – 1 July 2004

## South Asia

### Dr Dusan Déak (Slovakia)

Gonda fellow

*Shāh Datta – Hindu god in Muslim Garb*

1 April – 31 May 2004

### Dr Cezary Galewicz (Poland)

Gonda fellow

*Bhattarji Dikṣita's Sanskrit grammar, its reception and critique: A database and study on knowledge transmission and innovation in seventeenth and eighteenth century India*

7 June – 7 September 2004

### Dr Jean-Claude Galey (France)

Stationed at the Branch Office

Amsterdam

Affiliated fellow

*Legitimacy and power in India today*

5 February – 5 April 2004

### Dr Alexandra van der Geer

(the Netherlands)

Research fellow, sponsored by Gonda

### Foundation

*Animals in stone, Indian fauna sculptured through time*

1 January 2003 – 1 January 2005

### Prof. Haresh Jani (India)

Visiting exchange fellow

*Environmental management in a comparative perspective*

14 March – 14 June 2004

### Vishnu Khare, MA (India)

Stationed at the Branch Office

Amsterdam

Poet in residence

*Hindi and Anglo-Indian literature in India*

5 January – 5 April 2004

### Prof. Sheldon Pollock (United States)

Senior visiting fellow

*Indian knowledge-systems on the eve of colonialism*

15 June – 15 July 2004

### Dr Saraju Rath (India)

Research fellow, sponsored by Gonda

Foundation

*Catalogue collection Sanskrit texts*

5 January 2004 – 5 June 2006

## Southeast Asia

### Supaporn Ariyajsajskul, MA

(Thailand)

Research fellow, sponsored by CNWS

*Late Ayutthaya's foreign trade policy: A study in its regional and international context with an emphasis on the reign of King Boromakot (1733-1758)*

1 September 2003 – 1 September 2007

### Dr André Batie (Canada)

Affiliated fellow within the project

*'Islam in Indonesia'*

*Majlis Taklim, pengajian and civil society: how do Indonesian Majlis Taklim and pengajian contribute to civil society in Indonesia?*

4 January – 15 September 2004

### Jajat Burhanudin, MA (Indonesia)

PhD student within the project 'Islam in Indonesia'

*The making of Islamic modernism. The transmission of Islamic reformism from the Middle East to the Malay-Indonesian archipelago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century*

18 September 2001 – 18 September 2005

### Muhammad Dahlan, MA (Indonesia)

PhD student within the project 'Islam in Indonesia'

*The role of the Indonesian state institute for Islamic studies in the redistribution of Muslim authority*

15 June 2001 – 15 June 2005

### Jan-Paul Dirkse, MA (the Netherlands)

Affiliated fellow

*The Intergovernmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) 1967-1992: Dutch-Indonesian relations in a changing perspective*

29 September 2003 – 31 July 2004

### Myrna Eindhoven, MA

(the Netherlands)

Stationed at the ASSR

PhD student within the ASSR/IIAS/WOTRO programme

*'Transnational Society, Media and Citizenship'*

*Rays of new images: ICT's, state ethnopolitics and identity formation among the Mentawaians (West Sumatra)*

1 November 2000 – 1 November 2004

### Moch Nur Ichwan, MA (Indonesia)

PhD student within the project 'Islam in Indonesia'

*The making and unmaking of statism. Islam: state production of Islamic discourse in New Order Indonesia and afterwards*

6 April 2001 – 6 April 2005

### Jasper van de Kerkhof, MA

(the Netherlands)

Junior research fellow, sponsored by NIOD

*Indonesianisasi and nationalism. The emancipation and reorientation of the economy and the world of industry and commerce*

15 October 2002 – 15 October 2004

### Dr Michael Laffan (Australia)

Research fellow within the research project 'Islam in Indonesia'

*Sufis and salafis: A century of conflict and compromise in Indonesia*

1 January 2002 – 31 December 2004

### Dr Hotze Lont (the Netherlands)

Stationed at the Branch Office

Amsterdam

Affiliated fellow within the KNAW programme 'Indonesian Society in Transition'

*Coping with crises in Indonesia*

5 November 2001 – 5 December 2004

### Dr Johan Meuleman (the Netherlands)

Research fellow within the programme

*'Islam in Indonesia'*

*Dakwah in urban society in twentieth-century Indonesia*

1 January 2001 – 31 December 2004

### Noorhaidi, MA (Indonesia)

PhD student within the project 'Islam in Indonesia'

*The jihad paramilitary force: Islam and*

### Identity in the era of transition in Indonesia

1 April 2001 – 1 April 2005

### Dr Keat Gin Ooi (Malaysia)

Stationed at the Branch Office

Amsterdam

Affiliated fellow, sponsored by NWO

*The Japanese occupation of Dutch Borneo 1942-1945*

5 April – 5 June 2004

### Arief Subhan, MA (Indonesia)

PhD student within the project 'Islam in Indonesia'

*The changing role of the Indonesian Madrasah and the dissemination of Muslim authority*

15 June 2001 – 15 June 2005

### Prof. Md Salleh Yaapar (Malaysia)

Professorial fellow, holder of the European Chair of Malay Studies

*Pantun and Pantoun: A study in Malay-European literary relations*

5 February 2003 – 5 February 2005

### Prof. Ben White (the Netherlands, United Kingdom)

Stationed at the Branch Office

Amsterdam

Affiliated fellow, KNAW programme: 'Indonesian Society in Transition'

*Coping with crises in Indonesia*

25 September 2001 – 25 December 2004

### Prof. ZHUANG Guotu (China)

Research guest

*Indonesian Chinese Studies*

10 April – 30 May 2004

## East Asia

### Prof. CHANG Mau-kuei Michael

(Taiwan)

Visiting exchange fellow, sponsored by NSC

*Language Choice and Identity in Emerging Democracies: A view from recent Taiwanese Political Discourse*

30 September 2003 – 31 March 2004

## Acronyms:

- \* ASSR: Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, the Netherlands
- \* IDPAD: Indo Dutch Programme on Alternatives in Development
- \* CNWS: School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, the Netherlands
- \* KNAW: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
- \* KRf: Korea Research Foundation
- \* NIOD: Netherlands Institute for War Documentation
- \* NSC: National Science Council, Taiwan
- \* NWO: Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research
- \* WOTRO: Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research

programme  
*'The Syntax of the Languages of Southern China'*

1 January 2001 – 31 December 2005

### Mr TOGO Kazuhiko (Japan)

Professorial fellow, sponsored by Canon and Allion Foundation

*Japanese foreign policy*

1 August 2003 – 1 August 2004

### Prof. TSAI Wei-Tien Dylan (Taiwan)

Visiting exchange fellow within the joint NWO/Leiden University/IIAS research programme 'The Syntax of the Languages of Southern China', sponsored by NSC

*Unselective Binding and Various Wide-Scope Effects in Chinese*

1 October 2003 – 31 May 2004

### Dr YIN Hubin (China)

Affiliated fellow, sponsored by KNAW and the faculty of Literature Studies, Leiden University

*Epics and heroes in literature of Chinese minority nationalities*

1-31 March 2004

### Dr WANG Yiyan (Australia)

Affiliated fellow

*From local stories to national identity: A study of competing national myths in Chinese nationalist fiction*

1 January – 1 July 2004

### Dr WEI Jennifer Meei Yau (Taiwan)

Visiting exchange fellow, sponsored by NSC

*Language Choice and Identity in Emerging Democracies: A view from recent Taiwanese Political Discourse*

30 September 2003 – 31 March 2004

Stationed at the Branch Office

Amsterdam

Affiliated fellow, sponsored by NWO

*The Japanese occupation of Dutch Borneo 1942-1945*

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Stationed at the Branch Office

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Affiliated fellow, KNAW programme: 'Indonesian Society in Transition'

*Coping with crises in Indonesia*

25 September 2001 – 25 December 2004

### Prof. ZHUANG Guotu (China)

# IIAS Research Programmes & New Initiatives

## Programmes

### Socio-Genetic Marginalization in Asia

The development and application of the new biomedical and genetic technologies in Asian religious and secular cultures has substantial socio-political implications. This NWO/ASSR/IIAS research programme aims to gain insight into the ways in which the use of and monopoly over genetic information shape and influence population policies, environmental ethics, and biomedical and agricultural practices in various cultures and across national boundaries.

**Coordinator: Dr Margaret Sleeboom**  
[www.iias.nl/iias/research/genomics](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/genomics)

### The Syntax of the Languages of Southern China

This project aims to achieve a detailed description and in depth analysis of a limited number of syntactic phenomena in six languages, both Sinitic and non-Sinitic, spoken in the area south of the Yangtze River. On the theoretical side, it will compare these descriptions and analysis systematically in order to contribute to further developing the theory of language and human language capacity, through a study of non-Western languages.

**Coordinator: Dr Rint Sybesma**  
[www.iias.nl/iias/research/syntax](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/syntax)

### Islam in Indonesia: The Dissemination of Religious Authority in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries

Forms and transformations of religious authority among the Indonesian Muslim community are the focus of this research programme. The term authority relates both to persons and books as well as various other forms of written and non-written references. Special attention is paid to the production, reproduction, and dissemination of religious authority in the fields of four sub-programmes: *ulama* (religious scholars) and *fatwas*; *tarekat* (mystical orders); *dakwah* (propagation of the faith); and education.

**Coordinator: Dr Nico Kaptein**  
[www.iias.nl/iias/research/dissemination](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/dissemination)

### Indonesianisasi and Nationalization

During the period from the 1930s to the early 1960s, the Indonesian economy transformed from a 'colonial' economy, dominated by the Dutch, to a 'national' one, in which indigenous business assumed control. This NIOD project explores this transformation, studying the late-colonial situation as well as the Japanese occupation, the Revolution and the Sukarno period. The shifts in the command and management of the economy are closely linked to both economic structure and the political alignment. Two issues are given special attention: Indonesianisasi (increased opportunities for indigenous Indonesians in the economy) and nationalization, in particular the expropriation of Dutch corporate assets in Indonesia in 1957/58.

**Coordinator: Prof. J. Thomas Lindblad**  
[www.iias.nl/iias/research/indonesianisasi](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/indonesianisasi)

### ABIA South and Southeast Asian Art and Archaeology Index

The *ABIA Index* online database covers publications on prehistory, archaeology, and art history, material culture, epigraphy, paleography, numismatics, and sigillography of South and Southeast Asia. The project receives financial support from the Gonda Foundation and is coordinated by PGIAR, Colombo, with further support from the Central Cultural Fund. The Leiden office is based at the IIAS and offices have also been opened at the IGNC, New Delhi, and the Research Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta.

**Coordinator: Dr Ellen Raven**  
[www.abia.net](http://www.abia.net)

### Changing Labour Relations in Asia (CLARA)

Labour relations in different parts of Asia are undergoing diverse historical processes and experiences in terms of their national economies, their links with international markets, and the nature of state intervention. This programme aims to build a comparative and historical understanding of these changes, focusing on five strongly overlapping themes namely, the labour process, labour mobility, labour consciousness, gendered labour, and labour laws and labour movements.

**Coordinator: Dr Ratna Saptari**  
[www.iias.nl/iias/research/clara](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/clara)

### Transnational Society, Media, and Citizenship

This integrated multidisciplinary network programme studies the complex nature of contemporary cultural identities and the role which globalization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) plays in the (re)construction of these identities. Although the programme is based in the Netherlands, the projects are conducted at numerous fieldwork sites.

**Coordinator: Prof. Peter van der Veer**  
[www.iias.nl/iias/research/transnational](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/transnational)

## New Initiatives

### The Development of Space Technology in Asia

The space age has had dramatic effects on all nations and especially in Asia where India, China and Japan have achieved considerable success in building up indigenous space technology and applications, and have become what is known as space-faring nations. Meanwhile, other Asian nations have readily adopted applications. Well-known applications include satellite telecommunications, weather satellite services, and more recently by environmental and earth resources satellites. New and innovative satellite applications are being created each year with potential revolutionary effects. The IIAS is launching a new research initiative and has initiated a series of international workshops on this topic.

[www.iias.nl/iias/research/space](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/space)

### Piracy and Robbery in the Asian Seas

Acts of piracy loom particularly large in Asian waters, with the bulk of all officially reported incidents of maritime piracy occurring in Southeast Asia during the 1990s. Southeast Asian waters are particularly risky, a factor that is of serious concern for international shipping, as the sea-lanes between East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe pass through Southeast Asia. The IIAS and the Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) are currently identifying issues and concerns, and are delineating core elements of an interdisciplinary research programme on piracy and robbery at sea in Asia.

[www.iias.nl/research/piracy](http://www.iias.nl/research/piracy)

### Care of the Aged: Gender, Institutional Provisions, and Social Security in India, the Netherlands, and Sri Lanka

This IDPAD/IIAS research project, aims to research the implications of the process of population ageing for the social security and health care of aged people. As the experience of ageing is highly gendered and could vary according to class, caste, and religion, this project seeks to capture the dimensions, characteristics, and trends related to ageing among different social groups and economic categories and with an emphasis on the feminization aspect. This comparative study of India, Sri Lanka, and the Netherlands draws on multiple experiences of development to contextualize ageing.

[www.iias.nl/iias/research/aged](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/aged)

[ advertisement ]

## Research Positions for SMAP

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS, Leiden/Amsterdam, the Netherlands) is inviting applicants to submit PhD and postdoctoral research proposals for participation in the *Socio-genetic Marginalization in Asia Programme (SMAP)*.

The IIAS is presently in the process of forming a research team for this programme, which concerns research regarding the introduction of new genetic technologies in Asia. Target positions include two PhD (with a maximum term of four years) and two postdoctoral positions (with a maximum term of three years). The selection of candidates will take place on the basis of a research proposal (not to exceed 2,000 words) and a resume. Fellowships will be awarded from August 2004 onwards. Salaries conform to the standards set by the Dutch National Science Foundation (NWO) in agreement with the Organisation for Dutch Universities.

### Requirements PhD position:

- having (nearly completed) a master's degree
- have command of an Asian language
- be familiar with the scientific discussions relevant to the proposed research

### Requirements postdoctoral position:

- to have (nearly) completed their PhD
- have command of an Asian language
- fieldwork experience in the relevant region
- ability to work with research problems covering both natural and social sciences
- be familiar with the scientific discussions relevant to the proposed research.

Send your application (in English), consisting of a curriculum vitae and 2,000 word research proposal, before 15 April 2004 to

Mrs J. Stremmelaar  
 International Institute for Asian Studies  
 P.O. Box 9515 • 2300 RA Leiden • the Netherlands  
 The IIAS will continue recruitment until all suitable candidates have been found.

Queries: Mrs J. Stremmelaar  
 T +31-71-527 2227  
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[ advertisement ]

## Vacancy: Documentalist for Islam in Indonesia

The 'Islam in Indonesia: The Dissemination of Religious Authority in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries' programme studies four important themes relevant to the dissemination of religious authority: *fatwa*, *tarekat*, *dakwah* and education (for more information see: [www.iias.nl/iias/research/dissemination](http://www.iias.nl/iias/research/dissemination)). This joint research programme, carried out by an international team of specialists in Islamic Studies, falls within the framework of the agreement for scientific cooperation between Indonesia and the Netherlands.

For this project we are looking for a **documentalist (0.5 fte)** who will gather materials for a handlist of religious personalities who play a role in the four themes mentioned. The documentalist will then enter these materials in a database according to a fixed format.

- Requirements**
- a relevant master's degree
  - command of both Indonesian and English
  - knowledge of Indonesian Islam
  - experience in data processing

The documentalist will be posted at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, the Netherlands, and will work under the supervision of the project coordinators. The part-time position is for the period of one year starting no later than September 2004. A full-time position for half a year is negotiable. Salaries conform to the Collective Labour (Employment) Agreement of Dutch Universities.

Send your application (in English), including a curriculum vitae and a letter of recommendation by regular mail or fax before 15 April 2004, to

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# SOAS: A Brief History and Profile

Alliance news  
 General

'What sort of place is SOAS? What other university is it like?' I am often asked these questions and the answer is quite simple. SOAS is unlike any other higher education institution in Britain or indeed in Europe. Its teaching, research, and outreach programmes are designed around the specialized study of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. It is equipped as no other British university to speak with academic authority about the languages, cultures, societies, and politics of these regions.

By Colin Bundy

Originally founded as the School of Oriental Studies in the University of London, SOAS was intended to train officials for overseas service in the British Empire and to encourage the scholarly study of Asian languages and cultures. The School admitted its first students in 1917 and by 1927 was offering degree courses in a score of ancient and contemporary Asian languages as well as in history (of India and the Near and Middle East). In 1938 a department of Africa was created (alongside the other regional departments) and the School's title was expanded to the School of Oriental and African Studies. However, the academic standing and development of the School was decisively shaped by external events, especially by the war of 1939-45.

By 1941, Britain was at war with Japan. Military and Intelligence departments placed a premium on the acquisition of Japanese language skills, and SOAS provided this service. As the demands of war increased, there was a

heightened awareness of the national need for deeper knowledge of the wider world. In 1944, the government appointed the Scarborough Commission 'to examine the facilities offered by universities [...] for the study of Oriental, Slavonic, East European and African languages'. The Scarborough Report (April 1946) identified the growing importance in international affairs of Asia, Africa, and the Slavonic world, and led to substantial funding for the study of these regions. Subsequently, SOAS embarked upon two decades of academic expansion. Under the dynamic leadership of Sir Cyril Phillips (Director from 1957 to 1976) it added new academic disciplines: economic and political studies, anthropology, law, and geography. Phillips also created five regional centres to promote and extend interdisciplinary studies and research. The School's new standing was marked by substantial grants from foundations including Ford, Leverhulme, Nuffield, Gulbenkian, Rockefeller, and Wenner Gren. The *SOAS Bulletin* was firmly established as a leading journal in Ori-

entalist scholarship and new journals – the *Journal of African History*, *Journal of African Law*, *Journal of Development Studies*, and (jointly with other universities) *Modern Asian Studies* – marked its impressive and varied areas of expertise.

In the 1980s, SOAS was painfully affected by the funding squeeze imposed by the Thatcher Government on British universities, and shed some 60 academic posts. Recovery came in the shape of growing student numbers in the 1990s. In 1990 there were some 500 undergraduate and just over 400 postgraduate (Masters and PhD) students: in 2000-01 the total number of students at SOAS rose above 3,000 for the first time. New academic departments created in the 1990s included Art and Archaeology, Development Studies, Music, and the Study of Religions. The other major development of the decade was that the federal University of London entered a very different relationship with its constituent colleges. The colleges, including SOAS, no longer received their funds via the central university, but directly from

national funding bodies. SOAS became a self-governing institution, responsible for its own finances and institutional planning.

Today, SOAS has some 3,800 students, almost half of whom are post-graduates. The student body is also strikingly international: some 16 per cent of the undergraduates and 50 per cent of postgraduates are drawn from outside the UK and the European Union. A recent development has been the introduction of strongly recruiting Masters programmes that are thematic or comparative – such as Violence, Conflict and Development or Migration and Diaspora Studies.

SOAS remains a research-intensive institution, and last year attracted over EUR 10 million in competitive research funding. Specialist and deeply informed knowledge about the world beyond the rich 'north' has arguably never been more important than it is now, in a world shaped so profoundly by global economic and political forces, but still dangerously divided by cultural, religious, and ideological differences. <

Professor Colin Bundy is the Director and Principal of SOAS. He can be contacted via his personal assistant, Lisa Cookson. lc34@soas.ac.uk

[ advertisement ]

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

# ICAS 4

The ICAS Secretariat General has the pleasure to announce that *ICAS 4* in August 2005 will be held in Shanghai and is organized by the *Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*, PR China; a leading think-tank and distinguished institution for the humanities and social sciences in East Asia.

For more details see [www.icassecretariat.org](http://www.icassecretariat.org)

International Convention of Asia Scholars

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Social Science and AIDS in Southeast Asia

# The Challenge of Antiretroviral Treatments



Department of Health, Taiwan

A Taiwanese AIDS prevention pamphlet in the early 1990s gives out warnings to discourage heterosexual men from visiting prostitutes or porn-related places.

By Sophie Le Coeur & Maurice Eisenbruch

When studying the dynamics of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it is crucial to take into account the cultural, social, economic, and political contexts of affected countries. These contexts affect perceptions and representations of HIV/AIDS, the process of negotiating stigma in local societies, and the effectiveness of NGO interventions and government policies. For example, the pattern of HIV transmission from commercial sex workers to young males, who then transmit the virus to their regular partners and in due course to their children, is common to Thailand and Cambodia. The mechanisms, behaviours, and cultural beliefs underpinning this pattern of transmission may be different among the countries, however, and need to be better understood if prevention campaigns are to be maximally effective.

Anthropological, sociological, psychological, demographic, and economic studies on HIV in Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, China, Cambodia, and South India were presented and debated at the international workshop 'Social

A Taiwanese AIDS prevention poster from 2000 targeted at heterosexual men.



Center for Disease Control, Taiwan

Report >  
Southeast Asia

10-12 November  
2004  
Chiang Mai, Thailand

Of the 40 million persons living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2003, UNAIDS estimates 7.4 million to be in Asia (UNAIDS, WHO, 2003). Last year, Asia witnessed one million new HIV infections and 500,000 AIDS-related deaths. In contrast to Sub-Saharan Africa where HIV is spread almost exclusively through heterosexual contact and mother-to-child transmission, Southeast Asia counts among its major routes of infection homosexual contacts, needle sharing among intravenous drug users, and unsafe medical procedures. Southeast Asia's silent epidemic is now spreading into the general heterosexual population of child-bearing age: the increased likelihood for mother-to-child transmissions may well have major consequences for child mortality.

Science and AIDS in Southeast Asia: Inventory of Research Projects, Priorities and Prospects for the Future'.<sup>1</sup> At the centre of deliberations were the complexity of interacting processes placing individuals at risk, and the significance of cultural, spatial, and economic contexts to the spread, prevention, and treatment of HIV/AIDS.<sup>2</sup>

Three research projects, carried out by People Living with HIV/AIDS in Vietnam and Thailand, were presented during the workshop, addressing issues of culturally competent counselling, informed consent, patient's rights, ethics, and confidentiality.<sup>3</sup> The response of patients and communities to this medical and human catastrophe has irrevocably altered the fight against HIV/AIDS. Pressure has been put on public and private research funding agencies, and on the pharmaceutical industry to speed up the development of drugs, decrease their costs and increase their availability. Given new technologies such as the internet, for the first time in the history of medicine, patients are becoming as knowledgeable about their disease as their physicians. In any case, patients can no longer be considered mere research 'subjects'; they are actively involved in developing and implementing the research projects.

Antiretroviral treatments are now becoming available to treat patients and to prevent mother-to-child transmissions. It is of utmost importance to study how these new drugs are received at the individual level, how medical staff are adapting their practices in the light of local cultural beliefs and practices, and how society is changing its perceptions towards the disease. During the session on the representation/perception of HIV/AIDS, Mei-Ling Hsu from the National Chengchi University in Taiwan emphasized the need for redesigning public health campaigns in the light of antiretrovirals availability, and the role social science research can play in shaping public health messages.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on society was studied from various perspectives.<sup>4</sup> Two studies presented the socio-economic impact of AIDS orphans on families, and adult deaths on elderly parents (R.M. Safman, J. Knodel). Another study carried out in Northern Thailand presented the potential demographic consequences of combined fertility decline, outmigration and AIDS (H. Jones). With the spread of antiretroviral treatments, the impact of AIDS at the micro and macro levels of society will need to be reconsidered, and, as the disease switches from a fatal to a chronic one, it is likely that gradually, AIDS patients will suffer less from stigmatization as shown by papers about China and Singapore (E. Micollier, O. Shir Nee).

The prevention of mother-to-child transmission is a good example of a feasible, highly effective intervention to reduce the number of children infected with HIV. However, few suc-

cessful programmes have so far been implemented in Asia. For programmes to be effective, traditional infant feeding patterns and cultural beliefs and practices surrounding birth need to be renegotiated (P. Hancart-Petitot, F. Pittolo, S. Talawat). In the confrontation between the one-size-fits-all biomedical knowledge advanced by Western programmes and maternity practices rooted in traditional and symbolic values, it is difficult for women to make informed choices (S. Crochet).

The challenges in confronting the HIV epidemic remain enormous and social science has a key role to play. As Michel Kazatchkine, Director of the French National Agency of AIDS Research (ANRS), stated in his keynote address: 'Prevention and treatment mutually reinforce each other and should be considered as part of an integrated approach to care. With the decreasing cost of antiretrovirals, wider access to treatment may become a reality'.

M. Eisenbruch presented the cultural construction of the causes, prevention, and treatment of HIV/AIDS in Cambodia, including mother-to-child transmission, based on fieldwork with monks, traditional healers, and villagers. Representations of treatment and compliance, perceptions of life with and without antiretrovirals, the use of local resources and 'key opinion leaders', and ethical issues such as confidentiality will require better understanding if culturally competent treatment is to become a reality (F. Bourdier).

The workshop was a great success and opportunity for strengthening contacts among social scientists researching AIDS in Southeast Asia. It enabled researchers to share the methods and results of their projects, to identify training and capacity-building needs and research priorities. Understanding the radical changes associated with the introduction of antiretroviral treatments will now be the main challenge for social scientists researching AIDS in Southeast Asia. <

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*Professor Maurice Eisenbruch has a background in medicine, psychiatry, and medical anthropology. He is Foundation Professor of Multicultural Health and Director of the Centre for Culture and Health at the University of New South Wales, in Sydney, Australia. His research interests are in traditional healing, Cambodian culture and society, and cultural competence in health education and research. m.eisenbruch@unsw.edu.au*

Notes >

- 1 The workshop was organized by M.E. Blanc, M. de Loenzien and S. Le Coeur on behalf of the Site Asie of the National Agency for AIDS Research in France.
- 2 These topics were discussed by: S. Ahmed, M.E. Blanc, D. Colby, M. de Loenzien, M. Eisenbruch, B. Ferry, W. Im-Em, E. Lelièvre, Le Van Son, Nguyen Minh Thang, A.M. Moulin, L. Pardthaisong-Chaipanich, Nguyen Thi Bich Van, Nguyen Tran Lam.
- 3 By: Nguyen Anh Thuan, L. Maher, V. Nopachai, Bui Quang Thuy, J. Permtunyangum, L. Messersmith.
- 4 These topics were discussed by: Y. Goudineau, P. Kunstadter, M. Muecke.

Information >

The above workshop was co-organized by Chiang Mai University in Thailand (Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Geography), the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, and the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement in France. It was sponsored by the Asia-Europe Foundation/European Alliance for Asian Studies, the National Agency for AIDS Research (ANRS), the Ford Foundation, and the Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) in France.

# Land as the Key to Urban Development

## Housing in Indonesian Cities, 1930-1960

Land is a key asset in urban development everywhere and Indonesia is no exception. Plots of urban land have been highly contested during the New Order regime and again with the current Reformasi. Real estate developers, in collusion with politicians, the military, and civil servants, have bought land under market-conform price. At the same time squatters have been evicted from their land by arson, as burning down a ward was a quicker and surer way to clear a plot than going through a legal procedure. By no means, however, were battles about urban land restricted to the New Order; they also occurred in Dutch colonial times. A new historical research project into urban change in Indonesian cities highlights the contested nature of land.

Research >  
Southeast Asia

By Freek Colombijn

The main focus of this project, which deals with the changes in a number of selected Indonesian towns and cities during the period 1930-1960, is on housing. Shelter is a basic need, a truism which has been underscored at two UN Habitat Conferences. Adequate housing, or shelter, gives people a degree of real, physical security, but just as important is the feeling of being secure; the existential importance of housing is expressed in the saying 'home is where the heart is'. In Indonesian, the word house (*rumah*) is associated with essential matters of life, such as in the expression *berumah tangga* ('to be married'). In practice, feelings of security and insecurity manifest themselves in ethnic and social residential segregation, gated communities, neighbourhood patrols, and so forth. The main analytical tool in studying housing is the 'housing delivery system' concept (Prins 1994), which deems housing not as a final state, but as a social process. Housing is not merely construction it is also the distribution of dwellings. Steps taken in a housing delivery system are: the initiation of the housing project; the provision of land; financing, planning and designing, authorization, construction, access mediation, rights of occupancy, and management. Different housing delivery systems usually exist side by side in one city, and any one system often combines inputs provided by actors from the public, from the commercial, and from the subsistence domain.

It is safe to say that different groups generally compete to control a city (or town) and that housing is one of the contested issues in this struggle for dominance. Behind the question of housing in the period here examined, looms a larger

A *kampung* in Batavia before and after a renovation project. The pair of photographs served a propagandistic purpose of the colonial government.



Both photos courtesy of Netherlands Institute for War Documentation

research question, namely which actor (or coalition of actors) dominated any one city. Among the main actors were ethnic or social groups (distinguished on the basis of the contemporary definitions), companies, and state departments. The competition between these actors focused on the control of urban space, access to utilities and facilities, and the claim to symbolic ownership of the street.

### Urban land

The provision of land is one of the steps in a housing delivery system. Land is a key resource for almost every human activity. Therefore, many groups compete for control of land, in both rural and urban settings. A multitude of tactics can be used to control a plot of land, examples of which are: registering land on a title deed, squatting, referring to customary (*adat*) rules, or employing gangs of vigilantes to guard the land. These tactics can result in contradictory claims on land, which in turn may lead to conflicts. State regulations mediate between competing groups in order to prevent or diminish violent conflicts over land. Adopting a Marxist view of the state, one will expect the state to protect the interests of the dominant group. If this expectation is correct, the hypothesis should hold true that a change of regime will be followed by a change in state regulations pertaining to (urban) land ownership. Indonesia does not, it seems, bear this hypothesis out. New agrarian laws may have followed the British Interregnum (early nineteenth century), and Sukarno's dictatorship (dubbed 'Guided Democracy', 1959), but the most consequential political change, the decolonization (from Dutch to Japanese rule, and from Japanese rule to independence) was not followed by a new agrarian law. The question is why decolonization did not change the state agrarian regulations.

### Medan

Medan may serve as an example of the complexities of urban landownership systems. Medan developed as the heart of the plantation belt in northern Sumatra. The town provided services to the plantations, such as banking, medical care, entertainment, and education. In late colonial times, people held land under either one of four titles. A *controleur's* grant was land registered at the land registration office. (The *controleur* was the local civil servant). People with a *controleur's* grant enjoyed full ownership of their plot of land, which continued after independence. The second type was the Deli Maatschappij grant. The Deli Maatschappij was the most potent tobacco company, which controlled large tracts of land in the environs of Medan. The company also controlled land in town. Part of this land was used for housing of its employees, but it seems that others also occupied this land. It is not clear what happened to it after the company was nationalized in the 1950s. The third type was the so-called sultan's grant. The sultan nominally claimed a considerable part of the town as his ancestral domain. In practice, it seems, many people could live on the sultan's land, if they acknowledged his sovereign rights. No substantial payment was required to obtain a sultan's grant. This kind of land tenure seems to have been registered less meticulously than the *controleur's* grant and Deli Maatschappij grant, so that conflicts about a sultan's grant regularly emerged. Municipal regulations were not valid on sultan's land, unless the sultan explicitly issued the same regulation. The loss of royal power after independence may have

eroded the value of a sultan's grant. The fourth type was land controlled by the municipal government. This land consisted of land for municipal buildings (market halls, schools, and so forth). It also consisted of village land (*kampung*) that had been incorporated by the city during the process of urban growth. The municipality claimed this land, but it is a matter for research whether the inhabitants knew about the state claims, and if they did, whether they acknowledged, ignored, or contested those municipal claims. It is likely that the local residents had their own ways for claiming land (actually constituting a fifth type of title).

The question of why decolonization did not change state agrarian regulations is currently being explored by employing data on land used for housing in Indonesian towns. Attention will be paid to general state laws pertaining to land, customary land rights in Padang, company land in Medan, agricultural estates in the environs of Jakarta and Surabaya, the land of aristocrats in Medan, Bandung, and Yogyakarta, and squatters. Initial research into the case of Medan has prompted the preliminary conclusion that land tenure in the city was far more complex than is suggested by the transfer from the old, colonial law to the new, agrarian law of 1960. This is a partial answer to the question of why decolonization was not immediately followed by agrarian change. The question that this, prompts, in turn, is what the complexity of land tenure meant for the smoothness of urban development. <

### Reference

- Prins, Wil J.M., *Urban growth and housing delivery past and present: A comparative analysis of nineteenth-century London and contemporary Delhi*, Leiden: Institute of Cultural and Social Studies (1994).

Dr Freek Colombijn is an assistant professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the Free University, Amsterdam. Together with Aygen Erdentug, he has edited, *Urban ethnic encounters; The spatial consequences* (at press). For his research within the NIOD programme 'From East Indies to Indonesia' Colombijn focuses on the struggle for the city. colombijn@kitlv.nl

### 'Indonesia across Orders:

The reorganization of Indonesian society' has been developed at the request of the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The research is aimed at providing new insights into the consequences of war, revolution, and decolonization for the different population groups in the Indonesian archipelago from the 1930s to the 1960s. The programme covers four research areas that embrace a wide range of social developments: the Indonesianisasi of the economy and of the world of industry and commerce; the financial settlement and the question of war damage, rehabilitation and repayment; the mechanisms of and views on order and security; and the changes in urban society.

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Netherlands Institute for War Documentation

'Indonesia across Orders: The reorganization of Indonesian society'

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### Information >

The above research project is a constituent of the NIOD (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation) programme 'Indonesia across Orders: The reorganization of Indonesian society'. This programme tries to transcend the conventional distinction between the colonial period and independence. By shifting the focus from the conventional, political *histoire événementielle* to long-term social, economic, and cultural change, the rifts will appear far less dramatic and, apart from change, continuity also becomes apparent. The key focus of the NIOD programme is the impact of the changes of political regime on social and economic conditions of the different groups in the Indonesian archipelago. For this research Freek Colombijn is attached to the KITLV (Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies in Leiden) for two days a week. The research is to result in a monograph ready for publication by August 2006, which will focus on the issue of housing.

# The Pitfalls of Independent Historical Research

In the interesting article 'Predicaments of Commissioned Research', published in the November 2003 issue of the *IIAS Newsletter*, professor Hans Blom expounds the practical problems surrounding commissioned research. Describing how the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) dealt with these problems in two of its projects, Blom stresses the importance of the independent nature of commissioned research. I was involved as adviser on the commissioning side in both these projects and although I am in general agreement with Blom's reasoning, I want to add some comments from the perspective of a particular stakeholder, the Indisch Platform, which is based on my own experience with this type of research.

Forum >  
General

By Herman Bussemaker

The historical research that NIOD conducts is commonly organized on a contractual basis. The contract involves two parties: the organization 'ordering' the research to be undertaken, and the executing organization. A public organization in almost all cases, the party ordering a historical project has, in most cases, hardly any historical expertise of its own. Obviously, this gives the executing organization a strong and unchecked position. Such a situation stands in sharp contrast to private business. An oil company that wants to build a refinery will use a contractor to do the design and the building, but the design specifications are drawn up by the oil company's own specialists, who have the same scientific academic background as the engineers employed by the contractor. This normally ensures easy communication, a shared vision of the expected results of the project, and the efficient progress of the design, building, and final acceptance of the refinery. In historical contractual research, this is seldom the case. A stronger role for specific stakeholders in historical research could bridge the unfortunate gap in knowledge between the ordering and executing parties.

At this point, it may be wise to call back to memory why NIOD had been founded in the first place. After the Second World War, there was general agreement in Dutch society that this traumatic period in the country's history should be adequately documented. The government ordered NIOD (at that time still RIOD) to write such a history, and over a period of twenty years Dr L. de Jong completed a magnum opus of thirteen volumes about the war. Having been granted almost complete scientific freedom by successive Dutch governments, De Jong took to using 'co-readers' for writing this history. These co-readers, who were experts in the specific fields covered by the research carried out by RIOD employees, made sure that adequate feedback was given to De Jong and his staff.

This set-up seemingly worked until 1983, when one of the co-readers, C.A. Heshusius, former colonel of the Royal Netherlands Indian Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indische Leger, KNIL), disagreed with the draft text of Volume 11a, which was De Jong's first part on the history of the war in the Far East against the Japanese. When the co-reader could not convince De Jong, he went public with his disagreement. This public disclosure caused a lot of commotion in the Indies community in the Netherlands, and led to a judicial process against De Jong in order to have him rewrite his text. In respect of scientific independence, the judge decided otherwise, but the whole affair raised a negative image of the RIOD among some people in the Indies community.

In 1996 a Dutch Committee was funded by a Parliamentary decision and charged with the task of organizing the festivities around the commemoration of 400 years of relations between Japan and the Netherlands in the year 2000. Contracted to organize an exhibition at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1999, which was to feature the history of these relations and emphasize the Japanese occupation of the Netherlands Indies, NIOD set up the exhibition 'Dutch, Japanese, Indonesians: The memory of the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies'. Possibly due to its negative

experiences in the 1980s, NIOD did not at first seek to involve the Indies community in the Netherlands in the early set-up phase of the project, despite the fact that it was of extraordinary emotional importance for precisely this group. Therefore it was not until early 1998 that the Indisch Platform was contacted and asked to contribute to an Advisory Council for this exhibition.<sup>1</sup> As one of those advisers, I quickly discovered that the concept of the exhibition had already been agreed upon, and could not be changed. I was not alone in advising that the position of the Dutch Eurasians during the Japanese occupation should receive more emphasis. Notwithstanding the fact that, in sheer numbers, there were two times more Dutch Eurasians outside the internment camps than Dutch inside them, they were more or less left out of the exhibition. A shift in emphasis was not possible, alas, and the ensuing exhibition encountered extremely mixed reactions from the Indies community. In my opinion this dissatisfaction could have been avoided through the earlier involvement of representatives of this community in the Advisory Council. Somer's publication that Blom mentions in his article, deals with all aspects of what was in the end still a groundbreaking exhibition.

In December 2000, the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) and the Indisch Platform reached an agreement on a number of issues, among which was that of how independent historical research was to be undertaken on the subject of the loss of property and (lack of) compensation and rehabilitation suffered by the Indies community in the Netherlands during the Japanese occupation and the Bersiap period (1945-1946). The Government agreed to pay for the study and, on account of NIOD's independent status, the Ministry soon selected the institute for the job, signing the contract in December 2001. While the organizational set up of the project was discussed with the Indisch Platform, the subjects to be studied were carefully left out of any of the discussions, by the executives of both the Ministry and NIOD. In other words, the lessons of the previous project about involving the stakeholders as early as possible were lost some-

where in the decision chain. When NIOD revealed the contents of its research project 'Indonesia across Orders, 1930-1960' on 4 December 2002, the fact that no study would be undertaken on losses and rehabilitation at the Bersiap period thus came as a shock to the Indies community in the Netherlands. It turned out that even the Academic Steering Committee of the project had been left out of the discussions on the contents of the project, as their first meeting with the project staff was to take place four months after the contents had been revealed. I fully accept the independence which professor Blom so fiercely wants to protect in a research project like this one, but I cannot escape the impression that too much insistence on independence can be harmful, because of the loss of valuable comments and feedback. In an open society like ours the quality of scientific research can only be enhanced by as much debate as possible, with openness, the will to listen, and respect for the opponent, and of course with the final responsibility resting with the organization charged with the commissioned historical research.

Leaving out such an important part as the Bersiap period from the study on loss and rehabilitation against the instructions of the Minister of VWS has resulted in an escalation of the debate about what went wrong in the process to the level of the highest political responsibility, i.e. the Cabinet.<sup>2</sup> Quite possibly because of the negative publicity among the Indies community in the Netherlands, which resulted from the conflict about contents, the project 'Indonesia across Orders' has not been warmly received by this community. It is a pity for the Indies community that NIOD has thus missed the chance to produce a clear and well-researched history about the very important transitional period from 1930 to 1960. As all parties involved are writing history at this moment, we have to await the final results. In apprehension of those results, it appears that however valuable independence in historical research may be, overly stressing the independence in historical research also comes with its pitfalls. ◀

*Dr Herman Bussemaker is currently writing a book in Dutch about the Bersiap period. After he retired in 1994, he finished his PhD thesis 'Paradise in Peril: Western Colonial Power and Japanese expansion in Southeast Asia, 1904-1941' in 2001 at the University of Amsterdam. For six years he was president of the Society of Children from the Japanese occupation and Bersiap (Kinderen uit de Japanse Bezetting en Bersiap).  
h.bussemaker@planet.nl*

## Response from NIOD

It was with great interest that I read Dr Herman Bussemaker's reaction to my article on 'The Pitfalls of Independent Historical Research'. Although I interpreted his contribution as a confirmation of much of what I wrote, there are a few things that might need emphasis.

Dr Bussemaker's contention that NIOD's research projects are executed unchecked is perhaps understandable but, alas, off the mark. As I tried to explain in my contribution to the *IIAS Newsletter*, much research carried out under the aegis of NIOD is of a sensitive nature, in the sense that it touches upon the often unhappy life stories of large numbers of men and women in Dutch society and beyond. For this reason, NIOD operates with a complicated structure of advisory boards, not only to guarantee the scholarly standards of the research, but also to elicit ideas and feedback from experts and activists from non-academic backgrounds. Thus, its present research concerning the issues of back-pay, war damage, and rehabilitation is monitored by a special advisory committee, consisting of representatives of the Indisch Platform and academics, who meet regularly to discuss research progress and provide the researchers both with advice and source materials.

One could argue, as Dr Bussemaker does, that NIOD follows its own course, regardless of the existence of sounding boards from the communities involved. In truth, NIOD has closely paid heed to suggestions from its discussion partners, and has amended its plans according to their feedback. This approach characterized both the 1999 exhibition 'Dutch, Japanese, Indonesians: The memory of the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies' in the Rijksmuseum and the current project 'Indonesia across Orders'. As a result, the period known as the Bersiap has, from the start, received ample attention in all the component studies of the latter programme, including the research into war damage and rehabilitation. Those among our discussion partners who criticize the choices NIOD has made, underestimate the extent of their own influence on these choices.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that in the end only one party will be held responsible for the results of the research, and that is NIOD. In fact, only if there is a decisive point where NIOD is responsible for making choices and for selecting research problems, will NIOD be able to avoid allegations of bias.

On many occasions over the last decade, and prior to that, NIOD has cooperated with many members from the Indies community in the Netherlands – who, it should be emphasized, are far from one-minded – and often, to mutual contentment. Dr Bussemaker has been a valuable voice in our past projects and will hopefully continue to be so in the future. ◀

*Professor J.C.H. Blom, Director NIOD  
indie-indonesie@niod.knaw.nl*

### Notes >

- 1 The Indisch Platform is an association that represents the community in the Netherlands with roots in the Netherlands Indies.
- 2 Source: Letter, dated 12 December 2000, from Els Borst, Minister of VWS, to the Cabinet and Parliament. In this letter the Minister records the agreements that had been reached with the Indisch Platform one day earlier. Concerning the 'Breed Historisch Onderzoek' it is stated that there will be 'a Historical Inquiry into, amongst other things, the damage and the (judicial) redress in the period of the Japanese Occupation and during the Bersiap.' It is my finding that the Ministry's civil servants have not executed the latter agreement. The 'Breed Historisch Onderzoek' that NIOD is undertaking does delve into these topics during the Japanese Occupation, but not during the Bersiap.

# EU-Vietnam Cooperation in Social Sciences and the Humanities

Notwithstanding a long history of economic, political, and cultural relations, the relationship between Vietnam and the European Union was not officially established until September 1990. As a result, cooperation between Vietnam and the EU remained somewhat limited and Vietnam was prevented from fully participating in various cooperative programmes between Asian nations and the EU.

News >  
Southeast Asia

By NGUYEN Duy Quy

The cooperative relationship between Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) was established 31 years ago. In subsequent years, this cooperation has greatly contributed to increasing mutual understanding among peoples of the member countries of both organizations, thus consolidating peace and stability and fostering the economic development of ASEAN and the EU alike.

Relying on the legal foundation of The Cooperative Agreement, signed on 17 July 1995, the cooperative relations between Vietnam and both the European Union and its individual member states have developed in all fields, including cooperation in social sciences and humanities. Upon joining ASEAN less than two weeks later, Vietnam became involved in the existing cooperation process between ASEAN and EU in many fields. Vietnam's ASEAN membership also facilitated Vietnam to join the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) afterwards. All the same, it can be said that there is still, today, some lack of understanding between Vietnam and Europe.

Hence, the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities (NCSSH) is seeking to promote Vietnamese research on the EU and its member states. In line with this the Center for European Studies (CES), under the NCSSH umbrella, is the first and as yet only centre in Vietnam to carry out fundamental research on the EU and on Europe at large. Through its research the centre provides scientific foundations for Vietnamese policy-making towards Europe and, in particular, towards the EU, while striving to enhance the understanding about Europe and the EU among Vietnamese people.

With assistance from the European Commission, the CES is conducting a three-year programme (2002-2004) on European Studies, implemented in the two main cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. This programme aims to enhance knowledge and awareness of the EU in Vietnam by promoting European Studies in the country. A department for EU Studies will be set up as part of the CES, consisting of a team of Vietnamese researchers who are being trained to upgrade teaching and research on the EU. The centre will also contain a library and hold regular seminars, workshops, and

training courses. Activities include sending European specialists to Vietnam to lecture or to give intensive training courses, and to invite Vietnamese scholars for research stays in Europe.

## Vietnam and EU member states

While the cooperation in social sciences and the humanities has just started and achieved very modest results, the cooperation between Vietnam and specific EU member states has a longer history and is now being accelerated. The National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities has already signed cooperation agreements with many Asian research centres in various EU member states. Looking back on the research cooperation in social sciences and humanities between Vietnam, as well as the NCSSH, and European partners, we may draw the following conclusions. Firstly, the results of this cooperation will not only contribute to enhance the mutual understanding between Vietnam and EU member states, but also enhance the scientific quality of many research topics, especially those related to development. Secondly, the academic cooperation in general and cooperation in social sciences and humanities research in particular between Vietnam and the EU is still not equal to the development of general relations between the two sides.

## Prospects

The above results are very modest, no doubt, but they are no less a promising start for the research cooperation in the coming years. Together with other countries in East Asia, Vietnam has a long tradition in social sciences and humanities studies. Quite distinctly, social sciences and humanities in Vietnam, are also expected to provide academic foundations for determining the country's development strategies from decade to decade, especially during the renovation period. The Vietnam Government therefore attaches great importance to social sciences and humanities, and to creating the necessary conditions for their development.

On the European side, EU scholars have set up many considerable initiatives to advance cooperation in Asian Studies, such as through the founding of the European Alliance for Asian Studies, which has already attracted the participation of seven leading Asian Studies research institutes in Europe. The main question is how to best explore this potential. It is to be hoped that not only the Research General Directory of the European Council but also European social sciences and humanities scholars in general will turn their attention to this question.

For its part, the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities will organize activities to further the cooperation between our Center and partners in Europe in the coming years. One of these will be to undertake a comprehensive research proposal on ASEM, the results of which will be published during the international conference, to be held just before ASEM 5 in Vietnam in 2004. We warmly welcome responses from European scholars to our initiative. <

Professor Acad NGUYEN Duy Quy is President of the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities in Vietnam.

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## Towards a Sino-European Institute of Advanced Studies

The main characteristics of the institute could be described as follows. Situated in Beijing in the vicinity of other scientific institutions in a campus-style environment, SEIAS will be headed by a director with proven skills in scientific management, who is a mediator bringing research interests together on a Sino-European scale. The director will be supported by a small secretariat which will also assist the staff, consisting of twenty researchers working in five groups each composed of four institutionally well-connected young postdoc researchers (two from Europe and two from China). The duration of the research programmes is four to five years and the researchers will be working in a laboratory-style environment with all possible means of communication and a (electronic) library at their disposal. Working together on interrelated research programmes in a multidisciplinary and border-transcending manner, they will be able to tap into the existing resources of their extended scientific network.

At a relational level this will lead to long-lasting (scientific and personal) friendships among all participants, which will ensure a high degree of continuity in the Sino-European research endeavour. The research results are to be made public regularly through updates and electronic newsletters, while yearly high-profile

China is fast developing into an economical and political superpower. Its buying spree and voracious markets underpin the new economic growth in Asia. Its enormous potential is not only attracting foreign investment, but also adding to its political weight. China has the allure of the new and an affinity is developing between the once-feared China and the rest of Asia, and European political leaders are also courting the dragon. What is academia going to do?

This concept is both appealing and recognizable to the Chinese leadership. The convergence of the Chinese and European way of viewing the future of the world should not only be seized upon with both hands, but also be strengthened at economical, political, and scientific levels.

The establishment of a Sino-European Institute of Advanced Studies (SEIAS) in Beijing can give this rapprochement a sound scientific basis and a focal point by studying problems of relevance to both continents, such as water management, welfare systems, migration, religious tensions, disease control, genomics, influence of the media, and information technology, to name but a few. Without an analysis of the problems facing both China and Europe, a consensus on how to tackle common problems is unattainable. To facilitate the process of establishing this institute the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the IAS are in the process of establishing the Asia-Europe Academic Network

News >  
Gene Intl

Although many new leaders in China have an American college background, they realize that the American unilateralist paradigm is standing in the way of a sustained and balanced global development. They are much closer to the European multilateral paradigm, which is based on an analytical and critical approach of the world. Furthermore, they share with the Europeans a profound historical awareness rooted in their millennia-long civilization. They are destined to consider the long term, while the Americans thrive on short-termism. While China is clearly leaping forward, Europe too is redefining its role in the world. Europe is far more hesitant than China to become a leading power in the emerging trilateral world order of the twenty-first century. However, it will only be a matter of time before Europe will have to act upon its own concept of effective multilateralism, which is based on using its policies on trade, aid, and migration in a politically targeted and conditional way (for example, the steel crisis with the US).

Professor Wim Stokhof and Dr Paul van der Velde

For more information, please contact: ias@let.leidenuniv.nl

## Information >

Some additional information on the National Center for Social Sciences and Humanities (NCSSH) can be found on the following web pages. Please note that these are not the Center's own:  
www.cts.ne.jp/~vncenter/viet-or/NCSSH.html  
http://asemconnectvietnam.gov.vn/ministries/social\_sciences.htm

# Islam and Asia

18-21 August 2004  
Manoa (HI) United States

Since 11 September 2001 Islam has moved from the margins of political thought to the centre of daily discourse in America. However, especially in the United States, our national dialogue unfortunately has been limited by a lack of knowledge and understanding about this religion. While experts in the media and government focus on the particulars of Islam in the Middle East, much less investigation, research or discussion has been directed toward Asian Muslims, a regional grouping that outnumbers Muslims in other parts of the world. And little or nothing is mentioned about the role of Islam in international commerce, and specifically its impact on Asian business.

The conference aims to bring together a diverse group of academic and professional experts, singly or in panel format, for presentations or discussion groups that analyse, explain or interpret Muslim Asia's current economic, social, political, and cultural environment. Most importantly, the conference hopes to unveil ongoing research and activities examining country-specific developments in Muslim Asian nations, business practices, bilateral and multilateral trade issues as well as Islam-related pan-regional topics that impact both Asia and the rest of the world.

Day 1 of the conference will be devoted to a historical profile of Muslim Asia, particularly in relation to economic concerns. Authors are encouraged to give attention to differences and similarities between Muslim practices in the Middle East and Asia. Submissions on the

following topics are welcome: (a) role of trade in the development of Islamic societies in Asia; (b) practice and ethics of commerce in Islamic contexts; (c) Muslim merchant communities in non-Muslim Asian states; and (d) women and the family economy in Asia's Muslim societies.

Days 2 and 3 will focus on the relationship between Islam and Asian business/trade: (a) banking systems; (b) management issues and human resources practices; (c) role of entrepreneurship and small businesses; (d) marketing, advertising, and public relations within an Asian Muslim context; (e) WTO, globalization, multilateral agencies and their impact on Asian Muslim countries; and (f) best practices and strategies by multinational and other non-Muslim corporations in the Islamic communities of Asia. Presentations on other relevant topics that fit the general theme of the conference will be considered. <

**Dr Rochelle C. Almanzor-McArthur**, Associate Director Pacific Asian Management Institute (PAMI), College of Business Administration, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
rochelle@cba.hawaii.edu

## Information >

Deadline abstracts/summaries: 22 March 2004  
All required documents should be emailed to: rochelle@cba.hawaii.edu  
Acceptances communicated by 15 April.  
Depending on the availability of funds, successful authors from the developing Asian countries may receive conference fee discounts.  
Sponsored by University of Hawaii, East-West Center, Muslim Association of Hawaii

# WOTRO Postdoc Project

Since 2002 WOTRO invites researchers from developing countries to apply for a postdoc project within the DC fellowship scheme. The DC Fellowship scheme aims to support high-quality PhD and postdoc projects executed by talented researchers from developing countries. The fellowship offers the candidate the opportunity to continue earlier collaboration and strengthen his or her research experience.

Since WOTRO wishes to encourage postdoctoral research, we kindly invite Dutch senior researchers to submit a postdoc proposal for their former WOTRO funded grantees.

The candidate researcher is required to have successfully finished a WOTRO PhD project and in the recent past was, or supervised, a PhD student from a developing country with a so-called DC Fellowship from WOTRO. Eligible candidates should hold a position in a local research institute in a developing country, guaranteed to be continued after the postdoc fellowship is completed. There are no restrictions with respect to the topic of the research for postdoc DC Fellows.

The deadline for preliminary proposals for the 2005 competition is 15 April 2004. After evaluation and ranking by the Advisory Committee, 20 applicants (PhD and postdoc) will be invited to submit a final, more elaborated application. <

**Dr Renee van Kessel-Hagesteijn**  
Director WOTRO  
wotro@nwo.nl

## Information >

www.nwo.nl/subsidiewijzer.nsf/pages/NWOP\_5VEJSH\_Eng

# First International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS)

20-22 May 2005, DeKalb (IL) USA

The Lao PDR today has a population of roughly five million people and as many as 25 million people in the Lao diaspora; comprising an amazing complex of ethno-linguistic groups. In recent years there has been an increased interest in Laos and its peoples. There has been a flowering of scholarly publications on topics pertaining to Laos in the last several decades and a growing interest cultivated by the international media. The First Lao History Symposium, held in the spring of 2002, heralded this growing interest in Lao Studies among a new generation of scholars. This conference will build on that momentum, beyond the study of history.

The First International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS) wishes to provide an international forum for scholars to present and discuss various aspects of Lao Studies. The conference will feature papers on any topic concerning Lao Studies. Topics include all ethno-linguistic groups of Laos, the Isan Lao and other ethnic Lao groups in Thailand, cross-border ethnic groups in Thailand, Vietnam, China, Burma, and Cambodia (e.g. Hmong, Tai Dam, Phuan, Kammu), and Overseas Lao. They are provisionally divided into the following broad categories: (1) languages and linguistics; (2) folk wisdom and literature; (3) belief, ritual, and religions; (4) history; (5) politics; (6) economics and environment; (7) ethno-cultural contact and exchange; (8) architecture, arts, music, and handicrafts; (9) archaeology; (10) science and medicine; (11) information technology; (12) the media and popular culture; and others. The First ICLS will create special panels for individuals, groups or organizations that have four or more presenters. <

**Professor Catherine Raymond**, craymond@niu.edu  
**Professor John Hartmann**, jhartman@niu.edu  
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb

## Information >

**First International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS)**  
cseas@niu.edu  
www.seasite.niu.edu/lao/events/Conference2005/FICLS.htm  
Registration form: www.seasite.niu.edu/lao/events/Conference2005/registration.htm

# Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe

16-18 June 2004, Barcelona Spain

Civil Society organizations can make a unique contribution to the political, socio-economic, and cultural development in Asia and Europe. The efforts of civil society actors, such as NGOs, trade unions, universities, research institutes, think-tanks, foundations, and resource organizations are indispensable to the building of a community sense in the two regions.

Recognizing the importance of bridging civil societies in Asia and Europe, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF, Singapore), Casa Asia (Barcelona, Spain), the Japan Center for International Exchange (Tokyo, Japan), and the IIAS are co-organizing the two-day conference 'Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe'. The meeting will bring representatives from various civil society groups in Asia and Europe together to discuss issues of mutual concern, such as governance, environment, academic cooperation, interfaith dialogue, social issues, and international relations. It will provide a platform for constructive dialogue on the future direction of civil society cooperation between Asia and Europe, a few months before the fifth ASEM summit, to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Participants will be invited to exchange ideas on possible solutions for an enhanced relationship between Asia and Europe and to describe their vision of future links between the regions. The Asia-Europe Foundation will convey the outcome of this consultation to the ASEM governments. <

**Bertrand Fort**  
ASEF, Director Intellectual Exchange

## Information >

**Dominik Zotti**  
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www.asef.org

# EUROSEAS 4

1-4 September 2004, Paris, France

The two panels described below can be seen to reflect the interdisciplinary character of the 36 panels at the fourth conference of the European Association for South-East Asian Studies. Participation to all panels is open to EUROSEAS members and non-members alike. The deadline for receiving paper abstracts (max. 200 words) is 1 April 2004. Those scholars interested are referred to the conference website.

## Information >

For information about EUROSEAS, please contact:  
**Dr Manon Osseweijer**  
EUROSEAS Secretariat  
osseweijer@kitlv.nl  
www.kitlv.nl/euroseas.html#conference

## Economic, Political, and Cultural Transformations of the Southeast Asian Uplands (Panel)

Scholars of Southeast Asia have long made a radical distinction between lowlands and uplands in matters ecological, political-economic, and cultural. They have only recently begun to question this separation on the basis of topographic features.

This panel intends to bring together and stimulate scholarship on the economic, political, and cultural processes constituting the Southeast Asian uplands. Its participants will be encouraged to investigate not only the processes differentiating lowlands from uplands, but also the processes linking these areas through tribute, trade, markets, state-formation, conservation, and development processes. Moreover, in order to debunk essentializing and generalizing notions of the uplands, participants will seek to understand patterns and processes of variation within upland regions.

Participants are expected to combine locally grounded studies with attention to the larger-scale forces bearing upon upland lives and environments. Concrete issues of interest include the dynamics of market liberalization, migration, international conservation, the exercise of state power, human rights agendas, and the representation of upland people in Southeast Asian media.

Those interested in participating may contact:  
**Tomas Sikor and Oscar Salemink**  
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Free University Amsterdam  
ojhm.salemink@fsw.vu.nl  
oscarsalemink@hotmail.com  
www.scw.vu.nl/medewerkers/casnw/salemink.html

## The Development of the Indochinese Peninsula: Risks & Possibilities (Panel)

In the 1990s various countries and international organizations were involved in ambitious development plans in Indochina. One of these projects is a development programme launched in 1992 by the Asian Development Bank called 'Greater Mekong Sub-region' (GMS). It has been very successful as well as controversial.

The aim of this project is to create the integration of the new ASEAN member economies (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) into ASEAN. However, concerned observers, mainly NGOs, as well as citizen groups and rural communities across the peninsula, have urged the Asian Development Bank to stop this large scale infrastructure project since it presents serious threats to the environment, the resources, and the livelihoods of millions of people in Mekong region. This panel proposes a cross-border and interdisciplinary examination of the GMS project to objectively appreciate the plan's merits and possibilities.

Those interested in participating in this panel may contact:  
**Guy Faure**  
Institut d'Asie Orientale  
Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lettres et Sciences Humaines  
guy.faure@ens-lsh.fr

# > International Conference Agenda

**March 2004**

**18-20 March 2004**  
**Singapore**  
 'The Internet and elections in Asia and Europe'  
 ASEF-Asia Alliance workshop  
 Convenors: Dr Nicholas Jankowski (University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands) and Dr Randolph Kluwer (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)  
 Information: iias@let.leidenuniv.nl

**18-20 March 2004**  
**Hong Kong, China**  
 'The production of food and foodways in Asia'  
 Contact: Ms Viki Li  
 Foodconference@cuhk.edu.hk  
 www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant

**20 March 2004**  
**Norwich, United Kingdom**  
 'The Archaeology of Towns in Medieval Japan and Beyond 1100-1600'  
 Sainsbury Institute  
 Information: c.potter@sainsbury-institute.org

**23-25 March 2004**  
**Leiden, the Netherlands**  
 'Niet-Javaans, nog niet Javaans en orijavaans: Ontmoetingen en breuken in een beschaving'  
 Sponsored by IAS  
 Contact: Prof. Ben Arps, convener  
 b.arps@let.leidenuniv.nl

**24-27 March 2004**  
**Berlin, Germany**  
 Fifth European Social Science History Conference  
 Information: eeshc@iisg.nl  
 www.iisg.nl/sshc

**24-27 March 2004**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**  
 'Illicit traffic in cultural property in Southeast Asia'  
 Sponsored by IAS  
 Organized by Chulalongkorn University (Institute for Asian Studies) and the IIAS  
 Convenor: Prof. Amarnath Galla  
 Information: iias@let.leidenuniv.nl

**25-27 March 2004**  
**New York City (NY) United States**  
 'Antiquarianism and the early modern age: Perspectives on Europe and China'  
 An interdisciplinary conference at the Brund Graduate Center

**28-29 March 2004**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**  
 'Gender and development in Southeast Asia: Emerging issues and new challenges'  
 First NAIS Conference  
 Contact: Dr Pia Moberg  
 Pia.Moberg@japan.gu.se

**22-24 April 2004**  
**Göteborg, Sweden**  
 'Study of Contemporary Japanese Study'  
 First NAIS Conference  
 Contact: Dr Pia Moberg  
 Pia.Moberg@japan.gu.se

**23-25 April 2004**  
**Beijing, China**  
 'Sogdians in China'  
 China National Library  
 Information: vaissier@ens.fr

**24-25 April 2004**  
**Ithaca (NY) United States**  
 'Vietnamese Late Socialism The Politics of Culture in Contemporary Vietnam'  
 Contact: Erik Harms  
 elhg@cornell.edu

**May 2004**

**May 2004**  
**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**  
 'Festival of literature and culture of the Islamic world'  
 Institute of Malay Language and Literature  
 Contact: Dato' Haji A. Aziz Deraman  
 aziz@dbp.gov.my  
 www.dbp.gov.my

**May 2004**  
**Shenyang, China**  
 'Educational Systems in Asia and Europe: a Comparative Approach: Innovation in Curriculum Development: International Trends and Strategies Management of Teacher Education Transnational Questions in Management of Education'  
 Organized by Shenyang Normal University  
 Contact: Johan Hoormaert  
 Johan.Hoormaert@rec.kuleuven.ac.be  
 www.kuleuven.ac.be/schoolmanagement/

**24-25 May 2004**  
**Wassenaar, the Netherlands**  
 'Wealth of Nature: How natural resources have shaped Asian History, 1600-2000'  
 NIAS/IIAS workshop organized in conjunction with the research group 'Environmental History of Southeast Asia'  
 Convenor: Prof. Peter Boomgaard (KITLV/ NIAS Wassenaar)  
 Information: iias@let.leidenuniv.nl

**25 May 2004**  
**Amsterdam, the Netherlands**  
 'Emerging national self-assertion in East Asia'  
 Convenors: Mr TOGO Kazuhiko and Prof. CHANG Michael  
 Contact: Wouter Feldberg  
 w.feldberg@let.leidenuniv.nl  
 www.iias.nl

**7-9 May 2004**  
**The Lake District, United Kingdom**  
 'Generational interaction and change'  
 Pakistan workshop 2004  
 Contact: Dr Steve Lyon or Prof. Pamina Werbner  
 S.M.Lyon@durham.ac.uk

**7-8 May 2004**  
**Lund, Sweden**  
 'Piracy and Non-traditional Threats to Maritime Security in Asia'  
 Organized jointly by NIAS and the Centre for East and Southeast Asian Studies, Lund University  
 Contact: Stefan Eklöf  
 Stefan.Eklöf@ace.lu.se  
 http://nias.ku.dk/activities/conferences/default.htm

**9-11 April 2004**  
**Fayetteville (NC) United States**  
 'Celebrating Tagore'  
 Fayetteville State University  
 Chair: Dr Rama Datta  
 Contact: Sherry Lamberth  
 s\_lamberth@yahoo.com

**14-16 April 2004**  
**Oxford, United Kingdom**  
 'Buddhism, Power, and Political Order in South and Southeast Asia'  
 Beckett Institute, Oxford University  
 Contact: Ian Harris  
 ian.harris@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk

**17-18 April 2004**  
**Cambridge (MA) United States**

**24-25 June 2004**  
**London, United Kingdom**  
 'Narratives of 'home' in South Asian literature'  
 SOAS workshop  
 Contact: Lucy Rosenstein  
 lr1@soas.ac.uk

**13 July 2004**  
**Barcelona, Spain**  
 'East - West Dialogue'  
 Organized by Casa Asia and Universal Forum of Cultures 2004  
 Information: rbueno@casaaasia.es  
 www.forum2004.org

**1-4 July 2004**  
**Paris, France**  
 'Orality and Improvisation in East Asian Music'  
 Ninth International CHIME Meeting  
 Information:  
 http://home.wx.s.nl/~chime

**2-3 July 2004**  
**Cambridge, United Kingdom**  
 'Ayurvedic Identities Past and Present: The Case of Modern and Global Ayurveda',  
 Indic Health Conference II  
 Information:  
 d.benner@divinity.cam.ac.uk  
 www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/CARTS/dhiir/in  
 dic/conf04.html

**5-7 July 2004**  
**Malang, Indonesia**  
 'Old-age vulnerabilities: Asian and European perspectives',  
 ASEF-Asia Alliance workshop  
 Convenor: Mr Warkum Sumitro (Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia) and Dr Ruly Marianti (Belle van Zuylen Institute, the Netherlands)  
 Information: iias@let.leidenuniv.nl

**5-30 July 2004**  
**Budapest, Hungary**  
 'Summer University'  
 Central European University  
 Information: summeru@ceu.hu  
 www.ceu.hu/sun/index.html

**6-8 July 2004**  
**Kolkata, India**  
 'Post-Colonial Indian Political Affairs: A Review'  
 Organized by Society for Indological Studies  
 Information: sis\_042003@yahoo.co.in

**July 2004**

**July 2004**  
**Beijing, China**  
 'Enabling role of the public sector in urban housing development'  
 ASEF-Asia Alliance workshop  
 Convenors: Prof. Anne Power (London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom) and Prof. Tuan

**19-20 June 2004**  
**Tokyo, Japan**  
 Asian Studies Conference Japan  
 Sophia University, Ichigaya Campus, Tokyo  
 Information: ascj@max.icu.ac.jp  
 www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~kokusai/ascj/

**24-27 June 2004**  
**Vladivostok, Russia**  
 The Fifth Pan-Asian Conference on Language Teaching  
 Organized by The Far Eastern English Language Teachers' Association (FEELTA), Russian Far East with the cooperation of the Far Eastern National University  
 Contact:  
 Galina Lovtsevich, FEELTA  
 feeltacon@dvgu.ru  
 www.dvgu.ru/rus/partner/education/feelta/pacs/

**28-30 June 2004**  
**Paris, France**  
 'Theory and method in Indian intellectual history'  
 Organized by the Equipe de recherche LACMI, the international research group 'Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism' (University of Chicago) and the IIAS  
 Contact: Prof. Jan Houben  
 j.e.m.houben@let.leidenuniv.nl

**29 June-2 July 2004**  
**Canberra, Australia**  
 Fifteenth Biennial Conference of Asian Studies Association of Australia  
 Contact: Prof. Robert Cribb  
 robert.cribb@anu.edu.au  
 http://coombs.anu.edu.au/ASAA/

**16-19 June 2004**  
**Leiden, the Netherlands**  
 'The Philippines: Changing landscapes, humanscapes, and mindscapes in a globalizing world',  
 Seventh International Philippine Studies Conference (IICOPHIL)  
 Contact: Prof. Otto van den Muijzenberg, convener  
 ovandenmuijzenberg@fmg.uva.nl  
 www.iias.nl/iias/agenda/icophil

**17-18 June 2004**  
**Heidelberg, Germany**  
 'The ills of marginality: New perspectives on subaltern health in South Asia'  
 Contact: Prof. W. Sax, convener  
 william.sax@urz.uni-heidelberg.de

**18-20 June 2004**  
**Eugene (OR) United States**  
 Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast (ASPAC) 2004 conference  
 Information:  
 felsing@oregon.uoregon.edu  
 http://fluffy.uoregon.edu/aspac/

August 2004

6-9 July 2004 Lund, Sweden 'Eighteenth European conference on Modern South Asian Studies' Organized by SASNET and Lund University

13-14 August 2004 Sheffield, United Kingdom 'A-Political? East Asian Postage Stamps as Socio-Political Artefacts' University of Sheffield, Korea Foundation and Sasakawa Foundation

18-21 August 2004 Manoa (HI) USA 'Islam and Asia' Sponsors: University of Hawai'i, East-West Center, Muslim Association of Hawai'i

23-27 August 2004 Moscow, Russian Federation 'Unity in diversity' ICANAS-37 Orientalist Society of the Russian Academy of Sciences

25-29 August 2004 Heidelberg, Germany 'Fifteenth Conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies' Institute of Chinese Studies, University of Heidelberg

26-28 August 2004 Leiden, the Netherlands 'Scholarship in Malay world studies: Looking back, striding ahead' Sponsored by IAS

28-31 August 2004 Heidelberg, Germany 'HRM Development through Education and R&D' Asia Pacific Conference Department of Electrical Engineering, Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

1-4 September 2004 Paris, France 'Economic, Political and Cultural Transfor...' Pacific and Asian History, Research Centre

7-11 September 2004 Heidelberg, Germany 'Japan in Asia. Geschichtsdenken und Kulturkritik bei Takeuchi Yoshimi' Convenor: Prof. W. Seifert

8-10 September 2004 London, United Kingdom 'Agriculture and Rural Development in China' Seventh European Conference on Agriculture and Rural Development in China (ECARDC)

9-11 September 2004 Leiden, the Netherlands 'Crossroads of Thai and Dutch history: International symposium on the occasion of 400 years of relations between Thailand and the Netherlands' Organized by the National Museum of Ethnology and the IAS

14-16 July 2004 Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 'Vietnam on the Road to Development and Integration: Tradition And Modernity' Second International Conference on Vietnamese Studies

14-17 September 2004 London, United Kingdom 'Tenth International conference European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists' Asian Archaeologists

15-17 November 2004 Chiang Mai, Thailand 'Impact of Globalization, Regionalism and Nationalism on Minority People in Southeast Asia' Sponsor: Chiang Mai University, Trent University, and Yunnan Nationalities University

20-22 May 2005 DeKalb (IL) USA 'First International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS)' Northern Illinois University, DeKalb Information: cseas@niu.edu

20-24 October 2004 Goiânia, Brazil 'Hybrid Cultures in the Atlantic: Relations Between Africa, Asia, Brazil, and the Caribbean' Third international Caribbean conference 2004

22-24 October 2004 DeKalb (IL) United States 'Burma Studies Conference' Contact: Alexandra Green, Center for Burma Studies

29-30 October 2004 New York, United States 'Asian Border Crossings' Contact: Li-hua Ying (for papers) or Katherine Gould-Martin

October 2004

10-12 October 2004 Lawrence (KA) United States 'In Godzilla's footsteps: Japanese pop culture icons on the global stage' Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas Interdisciplinary Symposium

22-24 October 2004 DeKalb (IL) United States 'Burma Studies Conference' Contact: Alexandra Green, Center for Burma Studies

29-30 October 2004 Beijing, China 'Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Illegal Migration, Its Impact and Policy Recommendation' Organized by the Ford Foundation and the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong

7-10 October 2004 Calgary (AB) Canada 'Tensions and Linkages' Canadian Asian Studies Association (CASA) twenty-fifth anniversary conference

14-16 October 2004 Leiden, the Netherlands 'Early Indonesian Photography: Searching and researching Isidore van Kinsbergen' (tentative title), IAS workshop

14-17 September 2004 Leuven, Belgium 'Japan and Spain: Resources for Study' Fifteenth Annual Conference of the European Association of Japan Resource Specialists

15-17 January 2005 Singapore 'Third Asia Pacific Bioinformatics Conference' Contact: Phoebe Chen

21-26 February 2005 Leiden, the Netherlands 'Masterclass on Archaeology in Southeast Asia' Convenor: Prof. John Norman Miksic (National University of Singapore)

31 March - 3 April 2005 Chicago (IL) United States 'Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting' Sponsored by Association for Asian Studies

3-8 July 2005 Sheffield, United Kingdom '2005 Biennial Conference of the Association for Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE)' University of Sheffield

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May 2005

20-22 May 2005 DeKalb (IL) USA 'First International Conference on Lao Studies (ICLS)' Northern Illinois University, DeKalb Information: cseas@niu.edu

2-5 December 2004 Santiniketan, India 'Buddhism for Peace and Harmony: Present Context' Visva-Bharati University

6-10 December 2004 Taipei, Taiwan 'Paradigm Shift in Asia: East, Southeast and South Asia in Comparative Perspective' Eighteenth IAHIA Conference 2004

1-4 June 2005 Hong Kong, China 'Asia-Pacific Conference 2005' Organized by the American Academy of Advertising in cooperation with Hong Kong Baptist University

17-21 January 2005 Singapore 'Third Asia Pacific Bioinformatics Conference' Contact: Phoebe Chen

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