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Easy pickings: the plight of asylum seekers in Indonesia

Asylum seekers in Indonesia provide endless opportunities for corruption and extortion.

By Antje Missbach

There is a common Indonesian proverb, *ada gula—ada semut*, which means 'where there is sugar, there are ants'.

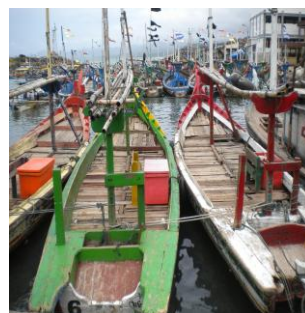
This saying proves especially true for asylum seekers in Indonesia given their high vulnerability to financial exploitation.

Officially, at at March 2012 there were almost 5000 asylum seekers and refugees registered under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Jakarta. Not all asylum seekers wish to register with the UNHCR, or have had the chance to do so. The real number of irregular migrants currently residing in Indonesia is therefore likely to be at least twice as high, according to official sources.

Since 2008, there has been a steady rise in numbers of people from conflict-ridden countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Sri Lanka coming to Indonesia. The past 12 months have seen an increase in people from conflict areas even further away, such as Somalia, Yemen and Sudan.

Traditionally, most asylum seekers arrive in Indonesia 'irregularly'. They land by boat outside official entry points and without visas. More recently, increasing numbers of asylum seekers are using either real or fake tourist or business visas to arrive 'regularly'—but once they overstay they too become irregular migrants. Contrary to asylum seekers' widespread

expectations, transit in Indonesia often turns out to be rather protracted.



Wooden boats at the port of Pelabuhan Ratu, a common exit point for asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers do not intend to seek asylum in Indonesia—an offer which is not available in the first place. For them Indonesia is often simply the last stepping stone on their way to Australia.

They hope to quickly move on to safer places either though the legal but time-consuming resettlement process that is facilitated by the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the

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Asylum seekers in Indonesia

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receiving third country, or with the help of people smugglers. 'Self-organised' onward journeys, however, are often delayed. More often than not, preparations take longer because of the weather or temporarily intensified border surveillance. Yet the longer transit migrants wait, the more money they require.

The worst delays occur for asylum seekers arrested by Indonesian authorities, most often on their irregular arrival in or departure from Indonesian territory. They can then find themselves caught in a highly bureaucratic immigration management system, facing possible detention for up to 10 years in local immigration detention centres—though this rarely happens.

Further delays arise when asylum seekers find they have been 'dumped' by their initial smugglers, even though they might have paid for the entire journey to Australia. They then have to find and pay for new agents. In such cases, many opt to register with the UNHCR first and receive a letter from the agency attesting to their status as asylum seekers. This provides them with a minimum of protection, such as deportation.

Asylum seekers making it as far as Indonesia are, generally, not the poorest of the poor. Their families have, or used to have, or have been able to sell sufficient assets to pay a facilitator to bring them as far as Indonesia. Refugees who have family members already residing in one of the desired host countries, such as Australia, are better off, as they can ask those family members to send money for travel expenses. It is therefore unsurprising to find many Western Union offices where refugees are residing temporarily.

While staying in Indonesia, it is difficult to earn additional income through work, as asylum seekers and refugees have no legal right to work. Although recognised refugees and vulnerable asylum seekers receive a monthly allowance from the UNHCR or the IOM for living costs, most still depend on help from friends and family.

In fact, living in transit in Indonesia is expensive, whether one is a registered asylum seeker, a recognised refugee or an

undocumented/non-registered transit migrant. The language barrier and the lack of knowledge of their rights, responsibilities and procedures for seeking asylum also make asylum seekers vulnerable.

In addition, Indonesia's heavy bureaucracy and corruption make things worse. Given their vulnerability, asylum seekers easily fall prey to all sorts of rip-offs. Not only do they have to pay inflated prices for housing and other services, but they are often exploited by greedy chisellers. For example, I have heard from asylum seekers, who were still in the process of registering with the UNHCR, that they were visited at night by unknown people who threatened to report them to the local police unless they paid a substantial sum for 'protection'.

False promises to passage stranded newcomers to Australia are also common among Indonesian smugglers. The alleged smuggler collects a down payment of several hundred dollars, and then disappears. There are also stories of potential boat passengers



One of the many warning signs to be found at airports and police offices.

who have been dumped in small towns far from the coast after their agent took them on a tour through Java and lodged them in a hotel, promising to collect them the next day to continue the journey. For reasons of 'security', the

'agents' even take their clients' mobile phones. Unable to contact their agent any longer, these people are left in a hotel they can hardly pay for, and also have to find their way back to where they started from the previous day.

Blackmailing and deception are not only carried out by 'genuine criminals', but also by local authorities. For example, as asylum seekers do not have driving licences from their home countries and cannot apply for Indonesian ones, they become a popular target for policemen. A young Afghani told me that every time he is caught driving his neighbour's motorbike, he has to pay the police at least RP 30 000 (AUS\$ 3).

Recently it has become known that, in areas

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where asylum seekers and refugees are allowed to officially reside, people pretending to be immigration officers conduct raids. Controllers do not wear uniforms, but come with office vehicles from the local authorities. Even though asylum seekers present them with their valid UNHCR attestation letters, they are asked to pay a bribe of between RP 2 500 000 and 5 000 000 (AUS\$ 250–500) in order to avoid arrest. The sums demanded often depend on the appearance of a person—for example, the more fashionable their clothes, the more they have to pay. According to informants, there is room for negotiation. Nevertheless, the captured migrants are not allowed to return to their homes until they have paid the demanded amounts, which they have to borrow. If they cannot not pay, they have to give up their mobile phones.

Time and again there have been strong suspicions about poorly paid guards who let inmates escape for a bribe.

Asylum seekers or recognised refugees caught by the police without valid UNHCR documents—or even with their documents but outside the assigned area of stay—are arrested and detained in special immigration detention centres like any other undocumented migrant. There are 13 detention centres in Indonesia, many of them built or renovated with Australian funding. Many are overcrowded and understaffed. Once in detention, unregistered migrants have the chance to register with the IOM and the UNHCR. Those with asylum papers undergo a verification process.



Graffiti at one of the shabby transit places in the Puncak area, one of the most frequented places for asylum seekers.

Like regular Indonesian prisons, detention centres are prone to corruption. From former inmates, I learned that every phone call they wanted to make—for example, to find out about their verification process—would require extra payments. Someone who has no money most likely has to wait much

longer for an interview, as their case might not be reported to the UNHCR immediately. The faster that interviews and verifications take place, the faster—usually—the release of asylum seekers from detention into the community.

Time and again there have been strong suspicions about poorly paid guards who let inmates escape for a bribe. For example, doors remain unlocked at times when the number of guards is particularly low, or tunnels are dug unnoticed. However, some 'alibi tunnels' are too small for a human to fit through, suggesting that they serve only as pretext for an otherwise easier escape, and also to save the guards from punishment. Also, as some detention centres are 'nicer' than others, inmates can 'apply' for a transfer. To speed up of one's release can cost several thousand dollars, depending on one's overall financial position.

Thanks to national and international pressure to release more people from detention centres into local communities, inmates are



Typical accommodation for asylum seekers in the Puncak area.

spending less time in detention—provided they can afford a bribe. High turnovers are more lucrative for detention centres, as more 'clients' might require 'extra services'. One week a detention centre might

recommend the speedy release of a group of inmates because of overcrowding, and the next apply for new inmates.

Opportunities for corruption are endless. Not only asylum seekers are extorted. The international organisations that provide food and other services to the detention centres are also targets. For example, given the monthly bills that some local branches of these organisations receive for delivering tanks of drinking water for the inmates, the average inmate drinks about 200 litres a day.

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China's new 'enemies of state'

The opening up of the Chinese economy is creating more opportunities for common crime and non-conventional crime.

By Roderic Broadhurst and
Brigitte Bouhours

As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, China has become a major partner in the global economy and attracts large amounts of foreign investment. Yet investors increasingly perceive corruption and economic crime as significant obstacles to doing good business in China. Knowing the extent and types of crime that affect businesses is important to guide investment and implement effective crime prevention measures; however, official crime data rarely includes commercial crime victimisation.

A recently released study¹, *The international crime against business survey* (ICBS), analyses the results of the first large-scale victimisation survey conducted with 5117 Chinese businesses in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Xi'an in 2005–06.

Across the four cities, over one-quarter (26.2%) of businesses reported at least one incident of crime against them over the past year. However, risks of victimisation by non-conventional crimes (i.e. fraud, bribery, extortion and intellectual property [IP] infringement) were much higher than by common crime (i.e. robbery, assault, theft). Overall, the rate of non-conventional crime (22.6%) was 3.4 times that of common crime (6.7%). Businesses in Shenzhen had higher rates of victimisation by non-conventional crime (27.9%) than those in Xi'an (25.3%) and Hong Kong and Shanghai each 19.5%. Fraud—by employees, outsiders or online—was the most frequently reported non-conventional crime, mentioned by 13% of businesses.

IP and copyright theft (e.g. counterfeiting) was reported by about 6%, but was more of a problem in Shenzhen (9.1%) and Xi'an (7.6%) than in Shanghai (6.5%) or Hong Kong (2.7%).

Just over 6% of respondents revealed that they had been asked to pay a bribe, but there was a large difference in rates between Hong

Kong (2.7%) and the mainland (8%), as well as in perpetrators.

In Xi'an, 9% of businesses had been the victims of bribery, which was as likely to involve officials as members of other companies. Lower levels of bribery were recorded in the other cities and bribes were more often sought by managers and employees of rival companies than by officials. We speculate that the higher level of bribery reported by businesses in Xi'an is due to the dominance of state-owned enterprises and the more recent commercialisation of its industries compared to the other cities.



Shanghai—one of the four cities surveyed in the crime study.

Extortion and intimidation were most common in Hong Kong and Shenzhen (reported by 3.1% of respondents). We attribute the relatively higher levels of such activities in both cities to the long-established activities of triad-related groups, which capitalised on the market for illicit protection on the opening up of the Special Economic Zone in Shenzhen.

For the businesses in our survey, the amount of direct monetary loss due to crime was significant. We calculated that our sample, as a whole, lost more than US\$ 20 million to crime in the year of the survey. Most of it (US\$ 15.1 million) was due to the various types of fraud, but only US\$ 3.7 million to common crime. Yet this snapshot of criminal victimisation against business reveals an overall level of crime against Chinese businesses that is relatively modest when compared to other emerging economies such as Brazil, India, Nigeria and Russia. It is also considerably lower than Western and Eastern Europe, apart from incidents of bribery and extortion, which were more frequent in China than in Western Europe and Australia, but,

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yet, less frequent than in Eastern Europe. The survey also suggests a certain level of confidence in the police, as respondents from mainland China were much more likely to report their victimisation, particularly by common crime, to police than elsewhere, including Hong Kong, although the levels of reporting of fraud were comparable.

Our study suggests that China's planned transition from a command economy to a market economy, supported by an emphasis on order and authoritarian forms of policing, has contributed to the containment of many crimes against business, including, to some extent, bribery.

Since the start of the economic reforms in China in the late 1970s, crime has risen sharply and is associated with a state of anomie or 'normlessness', which the sociologist Durkheim theorised was the result of rapid and significant societal and cultural change. Communist values associated with a control and command economy have been replaced with new values that support the free market, private property and the pursuit of individual wealth.

It seems it is harder to distinguish economic criminals from valued entrepreneurs, business leaders and officials who gamble with venture capitalism and fall for fanciful and fraudulent innovators.

Crime in general has risen, but economic crime, especially fraud, has risen much more sharply than common or street crime, which supports the hypothesis that an initial growth in property crime is also associated with modernisation. As the experience of the laissez faire transition to capitalism in the former USSR has demonstrated, a lag between rapid socioeconomic transformations and institutional adaptations to these transformations (institutional anomie) can occur. By contrast, the strong, authoritarian Chinese state has somewhat succeeded in reducing this institutional lag through planning, managing and facilitating the economic and social transition.

The effectiveness of measures aimed at mitigating crime against business, however, has been limited because of the absence of specialised policing of economic crime. Public police have been able to contain street crime, but they have not yet transformed into policing agencies with a capacity to focus on crime against business, which is highly attractive to a new type of criminal.

Identifying the 'new enemies of the state' has become harder than in the past when the simple categories—class enemies, 'rightists', feudal remnants and the like could be readily distinguished and demonised. It seems it is harder to distinguish economic criminals from valued entrepreneurs, business leaders and



Hong Kong—a reputation for clean and effective government.

officials who gamble with venture capitalism and fall for fanciful and fraudulent innovators. In addition, the failure to establish independent

oversight and checks and balances seems to have facilitated corruption. Corruption was more frequently reported in the mainland than in Hong Kong, and especially in Xi'an where state-owned businesses and traditional Party control remain strong.

Independently of the criminogenic impact of modernisation and urbanisation, the opening up of the Chinese economy has produced both an increase in the availability of consumer goods, thus creating more opportunities for common crime, and an increase in business and commercial activities, thus creating more opportunities for non-conventional crime.

Related to opportunity theory, but at the micro level, our analysis of the risk factors supports routine activity theory because the elements highlighted—criminal opportunity, absence of competent guardianship and target attractiveness—were the key drivers of risk of victimisation for business. Chinese businesses thus suffer similar risks as found elsewhere, and could benefit from many of the measures recommended by situational crime prevention approaches.

Our study shows that there is room for Chinese businesses to develop crime-

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prevention initiatives and build partnerships with police and local authorities in crime prevention. Only about one in six companies had contact with police or local councils or government and were aware of cooperative action about crime (e.g. joint security patrols, business watch groups, alarms/CCTV etc.), and one in four were interested in participating in such cooperative activities. Victimised businesses were more interested in being involved in collective action, but were not necessarily more aware of crime prevention activities.

Hong Kong's reputation for clean and effective government is a credible example of what can be achieved.

The results of our study raise more general questions, in particular about the oft-quoted assumption that adherence to the 'rule of law' provides an advantageous context for business. At the start of the study, we expected that there would be large differences in crime victimisation between Hong Kong and the mainland cities, and that Hong Kong, because of its rule of law advantage, would have a much lower rate of crime against business. Yet, apart from the lower level of bribery reported in Hong Kong, overall differences in crime rates were relatively modest. Indeed, the size of the business, irrespective of its location, was the most important predictor of crime risk.

The higher propensity of mainland businesses to report both common and non-conventional offences to police would also suggest, on the surface at least, that they, too, had a high degree of confidence in police. It indicates that the association between effective legal and law enforcement institutions and a successful climate for business is sufficiently functional in contemporary mainland China to provide the social order and predictability necessary for the expression of capitalist markets. Thus, the assumption that the British legacy of a 'rule of law' culture provides a substantial commercial (competitive) advantage for Hong Kong may be

exaggerated, at least in the context of risks of crime against business.

Although a legal system based on the rule of law is absent in the mainland, there has been an underestimation of the rapid development of commercial and contract law in China, especially in practice in Shanghai, the commercial hub of China, where business activity has been the engine of its economic revival. Yet it is also clear that Hong Kong has been able to curb bribery both among officials and businesses to a much greater extent than mainland Chinese cities.

Given the concern about corruption among businesses in China and elsewhere, Hong Kong's reputation for clean and effective government is a credible example of what can be achieved. In the mainland, the apparent recent demise of campaign-style policing and the shift to a prevention focus rather than reliance on crude deterrence and brutalising punishments should also help release police resources for greater specialisation in complex crime such as fraud and corruption.

Reference

1 Roderic Broadhurst, John Bacon-Shone, Brigitte Bouhours, and Thierry Bouhours, *Business and the risk of crime in China*, published in December 2011 by ANU E Press

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Afghanistan's education 'miracle'

Education is one of the success stories of war-ravaged Afghanistan over the past decade—but daunting challenges remain.

By Attaullah Wahidyar

If there is one story that can be called Afghanistan's own success story it is that of education.

The international community could have injected financial resources into education in the same way it has done for security, but that would not have guaranteed success if Afghans themselves had not willingly sent their children to school.

The 'miracle' of education in Afghanistan, achieved with the help of international support over the past decade, demonstrates Afghans' determination, love of education—and, overall, optimism for their future. It is also an example of how success can be achieved and sustained in Afghanistan.

In 2001, fewer than one million boys were enrolled in 3400 general schools, and there were only 20 700 male teachers in a country of 30 million people. There was no standard national curriculum or textbooks; there were only four teacher training colleges, with a total of 400 male students and 50 male lecturers in four provinces, and a total of 38 partly active technical and vocational education training (TVET) schools accommodating 1500 male students. Only 20 000 male adults were receiving literacy training, and only 7900 students in all were enrolled in 15 institutions of higher education.

Within 10 years Afghanistan's education system has been transformed into a modern enterprise delivering educational services to 8.4 million children—38% of them girls—in about 16 000 schools: more than an eight-fold increase. This achievement has been led and owned by Afghans themselves, with the support of the international community.

In the same period, there has been more than nine-fold increase, to 186 000, of teachers, of whom nearly one-third (31%) are women. The number of state-supported Islamic schools has increased three-fold, to 775, providing real Islamic education

opportunities to 197 600 students—13% of them girls. New national curricula, based on modern pedagogy and student-learning needs, have been developed for general education, teacher education, Islamic education, technical education and literacy. New textbooks and teacher-guides for Grades 1–9 have been printed and distributed, and new textbooks and teacher guides for Grade 10–12 are being printed.

In addition, 42 teacher-training colleges and 111 district teacher-support centres have



Girls are being educated in increasing numbers.

been established to accommodate 65 00 student teachers, 39% of them women. More than 48 000 students (16% female) are enrolled in TVET, in 142 TVET

schools or institutes, to respond to the country's growing need for technicians and skilled labour.

In 2010, more than 117 500 students (27% female) graduated from Grade 12, more than 600 000 (60% female) were enrolled in nine-month literacy courses in 2011; and since 2002, 2.7 million students have received such training.

The establishment of over 10 000 school *shuras*, or councils, has strengthened community participation in, and ownership of, education. The *shuras* are the public support arms of the schools, ensuring continuous school–community dialogue, and are key to generating public support among Afghans for education, by organising community gatherings and parent–teacher meetings to discuss education issues at the community and school level.

An impressive school-building program has seen over 6000 school facilities built or restored through active community engagement. Five hundred of the 1000 schools closed by insurgencies have been reopened to provide access to education for over 200 000 students. There are now 130 000

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students in 25 public and 50 private higher education institutions, and administrative reform has strengthened management, monitoring and evaluation practices.

Australia has been a generous contributor to this success story, providing scholarships to train young and vibrant minds to lead the future development of the country. In Urzgon province, Australia has supported the construction of 30 schools, and another 36 are being built. Australians are also training teachers and civil administrators to deliver better services to Afghans.

Nevertheless, daunting challenges lie ahead. Continuing security threats, the lack of proper learning facilities and the shortage of qualified teachers, especially female, mean that 4.2 million (34%) of the estimated 12.4 million school-age children and youth in Afghanistan still have no access to education.



Because of security problems, 495 schools in 10 provinces remain closed. About half the country's schools do not have useable buildings, and

in many rural areas children have to walk long distances to school. Of Afghanistan's 412 urban and rural districts, 158 have no female students in Grade 10 and above, and 228 have no single qualified female teacher. About 10 million adults remain deprived of literacy training.

Only 30% of teachers meet the minimum required qualifications for Grade 14. In many schools, the quality of learning is hindered by limited learning space, resulting in extremely short instructional time and overcrowded classrooms. School textbooks and learning materials are still in short supply. TVET is available to only 2% of Grade 9 graduates. Similarly, vocational training is available to a tiny portion of the adult population.

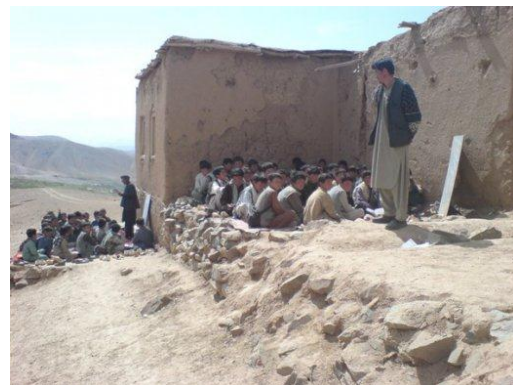
Because of the lack of required competencies, the gap between graduation and employment

remains huge. Only one-quarter of the 117 500 secondary school graduates in 2010 gained admission to institutions of higher education.

Despite efforts to strengthen institutional and personnel capacities, the overall executive capability of the education system, from central to district levels, remains inadequate, mainly due to insufficient qualified personnel and low pay. A shortage of proper and adequate infrastructure and equipment, especially information and communication technology, adds to the complexity.

By 2020, however, the Afghanistan Government is optimistic that the picture will be completely different. Guided by the Afghanistan Constitution and the government's Millennium Development Goals and Education for All commitments, the Ministry of Education has set a number of ambitious targets. These include having 98% of children enrolled in basic education—that is 14 million students, including 6.5 million girls, being educated in 22 000 schools, taught by 320 000 teachers, 50% of them women.

By 2020 the government also aims to have 470 000 students in Islamic education, taught by 14 000 teachers in 1200 schools; to have a National Institute of Curriculum Development operational and providing a complete set of quality textbooks to students each year; and to have at least 95% of teachers who have passed the national competency test.



About half Afghanistan's schools still do not have useable buildings.

At least 12% of basic education graduates will be in TVET—320 000 students taught by 23 000 professional teachers in 605 technical and vocational schools and 200 000 adults being trained in short-term vocational courses annually. Higher-education institutes will be

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tailored to produce professionals required for the country's development priorities, and 270 000 students will be acquiring higher education. The national literacy rate will exceed 75%, with 1 million of the illiterate population, including 60% females, being educated each year in 40 000 literacy courses by 20 000 teachers. By 2020, 8 million Afghans will be literate.

As a result of an ambitious infrastructure program, all schools and universities will have useable buildings and environments conducive to learning. The education system will be more balanced, and gender and regional disparity will be brought to a minimum, using norm-based provincial budget allocation and tracking. A functional monitoring and evaluation system will be in place at all levels, and decisions will be based on accurate statistics and research results. Education content and delivery will be tuned to address national development priorities.

In a country ravaged by fighting, killing and bombings, Afghanistan's educational achievements are a cause for great national satisfaction and pride. But to achieve such optimistic goals, Afghanistan will need continuous support from the international community—especially from countries like Australia that have global education expertise.

A better-educated population could also be the most effective way of integrating Afghanistan into the international community.

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Exhibition of *Nihonga* art

An exhibition celebrating the Japanese art form of *Nihonga* is currently on display at the Hamilton Art Gallery in Victoria.

Nihonga is a specific style of Japanese painting as a result of Western influence, and this exhibition offers a rare opportunity to experience an unfamiliar art form where beauty remains the criterion for success.



HASHIMOTO Meiji, Japanese (1904–91), *Cherry blossoms* 1976, mineral pigments on paper, 46.0 x 54.6 cm. Presented to the State Government of Victoria by the International Culture Appreciation and Interchange Society, Japan, 1976.

OGURI Ushio, Japanese (b. 1921). *Irises* 1976, mineral pigments on paper, 53.0 x 72.0 cm. Presented to the State Government of Victoria by the International Culture Appreciation and Interchange Society, Japan, 1976.

In 1977, 25 paintings were given to the people of Victoria by the International Culture Appreciation and Interchange Society of Japan. These paintings depict traditional themes in Japanese art such as landscapes, beautiful women, flora, fauna and nature in painting had always been executed with water-based pigments on paper or silk in the scroll format, but during the Meiji era (1868–1912) strong Western influences came into play and this traditional medium was challenged. Various different approaches to painting emerged and one of these became known as *Nihonga*. Artists continued to use natural pigments but also adopted Western characteristics such as working on canvas and framing the images.

The word *Nihonga* comes from two Japanese words *Nihon* meaning Japan and *Ga* meaning painting hence the title of this exhibition being *Nihonga—Japanese painting*.

The paintings will be on display at Hamilton Art Gallery, 107 Brown Street, Hamilton, until 1 July.

What did Kim Jong-Il want?

A purported will of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il advocates making peace with the South—but not yet.

By Leonid Petrov

Speculations about the last will and testament of the late North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il, who died on 17 December last year, are mounting and raise many questions about the future of interKorean relations. Separate parts of the alleged document have been recently obtained by the South Korean think tanks, the Sejong Institute and North Korea Strategic Information Service Centre.

The purported will was obtained via a person very close to a top North Korean official. It says that the North should make peace with the South, but only after the current president Lee Myung Bak's official term is over. When a new leader comes to power in Seoul, North Korea must avoid a war and should move forward hand-in-hand with the South. Peaceful reunification is named as the ultimate goal for the Kim family, which has ruled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) since 1948. Concrete policies, according to the will, include that the two Koreas should consider opening the interKorean rail, road and sea links. Moreover, the document also says that if the two Koreas go to war again with each other, the devastation would leave the entire Korean peninsula centuries behind other countries.

Still, Kim Jong-Il advises his successors that when pursuing relations with the South, the North must ensure that it is in a militarily advantageous position. Specifically, future leaders must 'Keep in mind that constantly developing and keeping nuclear weapons, long-range missiles, and biochemical weapons is the way to keep peace on the Korean peninsula, and never drop your guard'.

In its relationship with the United States, the will insists: 'We have to win the psychological war with America. By standing up imposingly as a legitimate nuclear power, we have to weaken the US influence on the Korean peninsula and work toward lifting international sanctions to prepare external conditions for economic development'. According to Kim, North Korea must return to

Six-Party Talks, but only to gain official recognition as a global nuclear power state.

It is interesting that with respect to China, Kim Jong-Il warns his countrymen to be vigilant, stating: 'Historically, China is the country that forced difficulties on our country, the country that currently has the closest relations with us, but could become the country we need to watch most in the future. Keep this in mind and be careful. Avoid being exploited by China'. This frank appraisal explains the perturbed attitude which the late leader had towards his country's long-term sponsor and ally (see page 11, 'Pirates or hawks: who hijacked the Chinese fishing boats?').



Kim Jong-Il—'never drop your guard'.

Apart from international relations and security, Kim Jong-Il's last will elaborates on three other areas: hereditary succession; the adherence to military-first policy; and the role of nuclear energy in the development of the domestic economy. As predicted, his youngest son, Kim Jong-Un, succeeded Kim Jong-Il. However, it is his younger sister, Kim Kyong-Hee, who was named as the executor of the will. She is the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, where she supervises the light Industry sector.

As for Kim Jong-Un, he should be named the Chief of the National Defence Committee within one year of the reading of the will. Thus, if this document is authentic, we shall see Kim Jong-Un occupying the highest post in the DPRK sometime in late December 2012. In the meantime, the junior Kim has already been promoted to the rank of four-star general and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army, the First Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, and the First Chairman of the National Defence Commission.

The will also states that the interests of Kim Jong-Il's children from previous marriages should be protected. The late leader of North Korea requests special care be extended to his

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eldest son Kim Jung-Nam—that he be permitted a comfortable life abroad. Kim’s daughter from the first marriage, Kim Seol-Song, is also to be given a special status in the family. Surely, these actions are designed to unite and strengthen the Kim dynasty and to avoid the danger of internal strife.

As a result, Kim Jung-Nam will continue residing in China and won’t need to seek asylum in South Korea or the United States. Likewise, Kim Seol-Song will never become a rival to her half-brothers Kim Jong-Un and Kim Jong-Cheol.

Furthermore, the family funds in Samcheonri safe No.216 are ordered to be transferred to Kim Jong-Un, while all state finances (domestic and international) are to come under the management of Kim Kyong-Hee. She and her husband Jang Seong-Taek were named as chief political advisors to Kim Jong-Un. As the executor of the will, Kim Kyong-Hee has gained the greatest influence over Kim Jong-Un compared to other members and figures of other elite groups. Jang Seong-Taek has remained at the top of the political pinnacle of North Korea, but his role is limited to supporting and advising Kim Jong-Un.

There are several other people whom Kim Jong-Il wanted to see as military and economic advisors to his successor, but they will continue to play secondary and temporary roles, not having enough authority to make executive decisions.

These days, North Korea watchers in South Korea and overseas are debating and evaluating the veracity of this document. There is no consensus yet, but the ‘will of Kim Jong-Il’ helps us understand the current situation in North Korea and tells us much about the direction in which the country is likely to advance. After reading the will, one can realise the nature of sudden and hardly explicable actions perpetrated by North Korea after the death of Kim Jong-Il.

For example, the ongoing aggressive anti-Lee Myung-Bak campaign can be better understood as an effort to inculcate in North Koreans the thought that no dialogue or reconciliation with South Korea is possible until the incumbent president is gone. Similarly, the recent launch of the ballistic

missile, as illogical as it may look, appears more like a careful calculation, where food aid and improved external relations were sacrificed by a regime desiring to boost the pride and confidence of the population on the eve of important national holiday, the centennial anniversary of Kim Il-Sung’s birthday.

Most importantly, the ‘will of Kim Jong-Il’, whether authentic or fake, emphasises the importance of interKorean relations and encourages Koreans in the North and South to resume dialogue and cooperation. Despite the belligerent rhetoric used by the leaders of the divided country to attain their immediate political goals, the long-term goal for all Koreans is peace and security. This can be achieved only if Seoul and Pyongyang make reconciliatory steps, rebuilding trust and respect toward each other.

Dr Leonid Petrov is a lecturer in Korean Studies at the University of Sydney.

Pirates or hawks: who hijacked the Chinese fishing boats?

China’s support for North Korea seems unlikely to change in the short term, despite some apparent recent provocations.

By Leonid Petrov

China often describes its relations with North Korea, its closest regional ally, as intimate but not substantial. For more than half a century, Beijing’s attitude towards the Korean peninsula has revolved around the avoidance of three scenarios: no new war on the Korean peninsula; no regime change in North Korea; and no American troops on the Sino-Korean border. But can some recent developments shake this strategic alliance tested by time, wars and revolutions?

This year North Korea declared that it has reached its self-professed goal of becoming a strong and affluent state. However, the state of its cross-border trade and cooperation with China indicates otherwise. There are signs that inside North Korea’s closed borders the

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domestic situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is deteriorating and the regime is using every opportunity to use government agencies to earn desperately needed cash and goods.

A range of UN sanctions have been imposed on North Korea. In response to two nuclear tests and recent ballistic missile launches, a ban on luxury goods has been imposed on North Korea by the UN Security Council. The country is now hard at work, evading these bans, with the help of China. Almost all imports of luxury goods (cigarettes, cosmetics, cars, watches and computers) go to North Korea via China. The criminalisation of border trade with North Korea is notorious within China, whose government does not officially recognise the contraband goods as 'luxury items'. This ambiguity often creates situations replete with potentials for border conflicts between the former communist allies.

One incident unfolded in the Yellow (West) Sea on 8 May 2012, where three Chinese fishing boats with 29 Chinese fishermen on board were abducted by unidentified and armed North Koreans, who demanded the payment of ransom for their return.

The vessels were seized in a traditional Chinese fishing area, about 10 nautical miles from the maritime boundary between the two countries. Seven Chinese boats were initially taken; four were later returned to the port of Dandong in return for ransom. Three Chinese boats remained in the hands of the unnamed North Korean kidnappers for another 13 days.

While these kinds of incidents are common, this one developed in an unusual way. As a rule, Chinese ship owners pay the ransom through private channels. There are many individuals and even companies involved in such cases and, on occasions, they are well connected to DPRK marine forces.

This time, however, the armed hijackers approached the Chinese fishing vessels on a speed boat. They wore blue hats and uniforms and some of them spoke perfect Mandarin. They initially demanded the payment of 400 000 Yuan (AU\$65,000) for each boat, but

later lowered their request and threatened to 'dispose' of the boats if the money was not sent through within a short deadline. The demand was transmitted by satellite phones via the crew members, who were kept in captivity on shore without food and were reportedly subjected to beatings.

The fact that the captors gave the kidnapped sailors the mobile number of an intermediary in the border town of Dandong to discuss how to send the ransom suggests that the captors were an international group of pirates. For some 10 days the Chinese Government worked closely with the North Korean maritime authorities to ensure the safety of the Chinese citizens. Pyongyang, however, has still not commented on the incident.

While the nature of this incident remains unclear, it came after Beijing criticised a recent North Korean rocket launch and expressed concern over another nuclear weapons test planned by Pyongyang. This raises a very serious question: were the hijackers real pirates or was this in fact all a carefully planned retaliation, by the DPRK government, against China?

The North Korean defectors, who are familiar with the chain of command in maritime border protection, assert that the three Chinese fishing boats were seized by operatives of the DPRK General Bureau of Reconnaissance. They usually use armed speed boats belonging to West Sea Base No. 2, located in Nampo, and secretly enter international waters to fulfil special missions. Their speedboats are disguised as mid-size fishing vessels but are equipped with four Russian-made M-400 engines. The General Bureau maritime bases also conduct infiltration missions against South Korea and exist both in the East and West Sea.

The initial reports of the attack testified that the group of captors was wearing blue uniforms and hats and included several Chinese-speaking people. However, the involvement of Chinese criminals in this particular incident is unlikely. The staff members of the General Bureau of Reconnaissance are fluent in Mandarin because they are trained to operate in Chinese waters. For example, the operatives stationed at East Sea Base No.1 are required to speak excellent Japanese.

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Could the General Bureau of Reconnaissance suddenly decide upon the capture of Chinese fishing boats simply to earn money? Capturing foreign nationals and their property would inevitably create a diplomatic problem and could not be done without the approval of authorities. Discipline in the North Korean military is stern and the hierarchy is thoroughly observed. While scheming with the authorities to demand money from the captured Chinese sailors, they must have been expressing discontent at something else. What message did the North Korean authorities want to convey to Beijing?

The most likely scenario was that the abduction of the Chinese fishermen was carefully planned by the new leadership in Pyongyang in retaliation for China's continuing criticism of the North Korea's April rocket launch and ongoing preparations for another nuclear test. In addition, Beijing recently permitted a number of North Korean defectors to leave China to seek asylum in South Korea. That could not but anger the DPRK leaders who wanted to teach China a lesson.

The timing of the incident (8–21 May) also supports this hypothesis. It coincided with the joint United States–Republic of Korea (ROK) aerial exercises Thunder Max, which was held between 7 and 18 May. While these exercises take place on an annual basis, this year's activities were of a particularly massive scale. These war games in the skies of south-western Korea not only send a warning message to the DPRK but also to China, serving to further strengthen the security cooperation between Beijing and Pyongyang. Paradoxically, joint US–ROK military exercises equip North Korea with extra leverage over China.

Beijing, however, is refusing to link the dots. So far, the Chinese Foreign Ministry is labelling the incident a 'fisheries case' and searching for the traces of criminal gangs in Dandong. Clearly, Beijing is trying to soft-pedal the incident and avoid open antagonism with its long-term regional ally. All signs indicate that this incident will not negatively affect the

strong political ties between the two countries. In the situation where the Chinese government at all costs prefers to maintain the status quo on the Korean peninsula, such a minor incident will not force Beijing to stop supporting the DPRK, a buffer state which separates its own borders from the US-allied South Korea.

After all, the Cold War in the region is continuing, Northeast Asia remains divided and paranoid, and its main front line still divides the Korean peninsula.

Timor-Leste forum

Timor-Leste's First Lady, Kirsty Sword Gusmao, will give the keynote address at a forum on Timor-Leste, to be held in Sydney on 14 July 2012.

The aim of the forum—'Building collaborative partnerships for Timor-Leste'—is to create a space for new dialogues between organisations and community groups that have experienced the challenges of and developed expertise in collaborating with Timor-Leste communities.

The forum will be held from 10 am to 5 pm, at the University of Western Sydney, Parramatta Campus.

The forum will include a dialogue—'Challenges of international engagement'—with Professor Damien Kingsbury, Director, Centre for Citizenship, Development and Human Rights, Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University; Jude Finch, Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters, former Australian Volunteers International, Timor-Leste; and a representative of a government aid provider in Timor-Leste.

There will also be parallel workshops for supporting education in Timor-Leste, with up to 10 different workshop themes on issues such as culture, language, partnerships and challenges.

To register, please complete the [online registration](#).

Further information:

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Language education in the Asian Century. Why language learning?

National leadership and community support are needed to make the changes necessary to provide quality language education in Australia.

By Yuko Kinoshita

Apparently we are in the 'Asian Century'. More people—outside of language educators—seem to be suddenly concerned about Australia's lack of Asian language capability.

The value of foreign language study is often measured in a context of global business and competition. This is, of course, one of the significant advantages that language education can bring, but its benefit goes well beyond producing workers who speak the language of a business partner.

Quality language education is not just about developing linguistic skills, and students learn far more than is being formally taught. The classroom is structured around acquisition of a target language, but language can never be independent of the cultural values of the society where it is spoken. This challenges students to think outside their native environment, and to be curious about unfamiliar cultures. Through learning a foreign language, students get a glimpse of life within a different cultural framework, experiencing affinity with unfamiliar worlds—and people.

For example, in Japanese we explicitly express respect or appreciation to others as an ingrained and important part of communication. The settings of a Japanese native speaker are very different to those of an Anglo-Australian, for whom respect is less structured and expressing it is more clearly a choice, rather than a linguistic obligation. People from other cultural backgrounds have different settings again. By learning about these linguistic features of culture, students efficiently develop understanding of the importance of cultural attitudes in relationships of all kinds.

Some suggest that students may be able to learn about a foreign culture more efficiently through ethnographic or sociological studies. This may be true for acquiring specific

knowledge, but experience is more powerful than knowledge alone. In a language classroom, students constantly put their newly gained cultural understanding into action through communication practice. Students experience the culture in an immediate, deep and personalised way.

Foreign language education gives people another invaluable experience: communication in a language that they cannot speak well. Struggling to communicate, feeling inadequate, getting frustrated or even frightened can forge pathways for understanding the experience of people in our own community who are from non-English speaking backgrounds, and by extension, anyone communicating across cultures. This



An iChat session at the University of Canberra. Students are connected with students at a partner university in Japan and discuss topics in both English and Japanese to benefit both sides.

empathy is crucial in engaging with our Asian neighbours, as well as in working together with fellow Australians from Asian backgrounds.

An understanding of the breadth and depth of cultural difference—and the possibility of bridging that gap—is the key outcome of quality language education. Empathy and openness to cultural difference are transferrable assets. Once we gain them through learning one language, we are much better placed when we face another unfamiliar culture.

Foreign language education at universities

Recent Australian political discussions around foreign language education have been largely focused on the school level. Exposure to a foreign language and culture at a young age is undoubtedly beneficial, but we also must ensure people can extend their skills and cultural breadth at the tertiary level. Students' capacity to appreciate and learn the complexity and subtlety of culture develops

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over time—some aspects require a certain level of maturity. In reality, however, quality language education at universities is becoming more and more difficult due to financial pressures. Language staff are often forced to increase class sizes, reduce face-to-face contact hours and eliminate continuous assessment, all of which reduce the quality of education. ‘Can’t you use modern technologies to deliver the course at a lower cost?’ is a popular question from management.

Modern technologies have brought some exciting changes to the environment of language education in the last few decades. Authentic materials from a language in its cultural home, such as articles, blogs, and videos, are now at our fingertips. Online exercises and quizzes for students can be set very easily.

Forty per cent of year 12 students learning another language, or even 40% of year 12 students learning an Asian language is absolutely achievable.

While creative uses of these technologies enhance students’ language learning experiences immensely, we cannot rely on them to develop well-rounded cross-cultural communication competence. To learn to communicate, students need to practise communicating: with humans. So, good language education cannot be done cheaply, making it unpopular with university managements.

The recent controversy around the Japanese Program at the University of Canberra is a good example. The university offers three languages: Chinese, Japanese and Spanish. Over the last decade, the Japanese Program has had an excellent record for quality teaching. It had 274 students enrolled in 2011; this has held fairly stable (4% decrease over 2009–11), despite language study not being a mandatory part of any degree—even International Studies. It is currently run by 1.6 full-time staff, plus tutors.

On 21 December 2011, without forewarning or discussion, the Dean of the Faculty notified staff that he intended closing down the program in 2012, possibly from the first

semester. The reason given was financial viability.

Staff and students began an intense period of protest and lobbying. After six months of campaigning, and with significant support from both ex-students and the wider community, they eventually won a reprieve—although the long-term future is uncertain. The decision was not based not on educational policy, but entirely on financial matters: a promised financial commitment from The Japan Foundation tipped the balance.

Need for national leadership

Recently, Federal Opposition leader Tony Abbott expressed his commitment to foreign language education in his response to the 2012 Federal Budget. Many have received his aspiration to have ‘40% of Year 12 students learning another language’ with bewilderment, and scepticism as to its achievability. But in many countries, a foreign language is mandatory for university entrance, and a significant part of compulsory education. As a fundamentally monolingual island, Australia faces challenges in selecting the languages to focus on, but this is not insurmountable.

The Australian Government’s NALSSP initiative (National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program) has successfully grown foreign-language learners in primary and secondary schools in the Australian Capital Territory. Learners of the Japanese language more than doubled between 2008 and 2011—an example of strong leadership making a real difference.

Forty per cent of Year 12 students learning another language, or even ‘40% of Year 12 students learning an Asian language, is absolutely achievable.

However, it will require long-term commitment. We will need more qualified teachers, and this will take time. We also need to work out curricula which engage students’ interest throughout their education, extending their linguistic and cultural competency effectively.

We will need to fund educational institutions contributing to this goal and, equally importantly, we need to ensure that the

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funding is tied to the goal. The current funding model has seen some additional money going to universities that teach foreign languages—at undergraduate level, foreign languages receive roughly 1.5 times more income per student from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations than the other areas of Humanities, presumably to cover the relatively high teaching cost in the language area.

Australia needs people who can face unfamiliar values and practices with a healthy respect and tolerance, not arrogance and fear.

However, the allocation of these funds within a university is up to each institution, and is not always directed at the language courses themselves. For example, at the University of Canberra, the language areas do not receive the extra funding.

Australia needs people who can face unfamiliar values and practices with a healthy respect and tolerance, not arrogance and fear. Be it economics, business, politics, or defence, the basis of any relationship is people who are driven by values and beliefs. Individual beliefs about cultural differences have a fundamental impact on our position in the region.

Learning a language is about valuing and respecting others' cultures and, perhaps more importantly, about each of us learning that we are not the centre of the universe. Quality language education is vital for Australia in the Asian Century. We need national leadership, and community support, to make the changes necessary.

Dr Yuko Kinoshita is the convenor of the Japanese Program, Faculty of Arts and Design, and a research member of the National Centre for Biometric Studies, University of Canberra.

New Australian mindset needed in dealing with Asia

Subnational government in Asia has much to teach Australia in forging international links

By Purnendra Jain

The Federal Government's white paper on 'Australia in the Asian Century', being prepared by the Henry Taskforce, recently released its summary of the 250-plus submissions from agencies, organisations and individuals across Australia.

All of these urge programs with Asia in business, education, science and technology, media and politics. Little has been mentioned about opportunities for exchange and cooperation at the subnational government (SNG) level—that is, all governments below the national government. In Australia, these



Professor Jain

are state and territory governments, and municipal governments from city councils to shire councils and town administrations.

A few years ago, I published a book that explored how SNGs take up or create opportunities in the international arena and maximise them for the benefit of their constituents. These SNGs are motivated by various types of need to best serve their constituents and reach success through the innovative efforts of creative workers and communities. That is, through people in positions just like yourselves—your counterparts in Asia.

Japan's SNGs, for example, operate as governing and administrative bodies from villages, towns and cities to prefectures and the exceptional Tokyo metropolis. Large-city and prefecture SNGs run universities, hospitals, railways and other public transport services that in federal systems like Australia's are generally the responsibility of state governments. Tokyo metropolitan government is nominally an SNG even though

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it has the ninth largest GDP in the world, surpassing that of Canada and Australia, and its annual budget of about 200 billion dollars is the equivalent of South Korea's and about half of Australia's.

The central government's firm hold has ensured only a few doors have been opened for Japanese SNGs to connect to the world beyond the national border. Nonetheless, SNGs have been amazingly active—in international trade, sister-city and cultural exchanges, scientific and technical collaboration, economic cooperation and foreign aid delivery, with some even extending into hard-core issues of international diplomacy, foreign policy and national security.

The profile of their international involvement indicates that Japan's SNGs have forged extensive international links and connected themselves to global communities in ways that the central government, partly because of its status, is unable to do. For example, some local governments maintained close links with North Korea while the national government severed its ties with the Pyongyang regime due to its nuclear and missile programs.

Many young Australians know Japan's JET, or Japan Exchange of Teaching program, which invites thousands of young adults from different parts of the world, including Australia, to teach foreign languages to school kids throughout Japan. Here the contribution of SNGs has been critical both financially and logistically.

The JET program has provided the opportunity for hundreds and thousands of young people from outside Japan to work in Japanese schools and SNG offices, enabling them to develop long-term interest and forge close ties with Japan and its people and with other young JET participants from across Asia. These are valuable opportunities for mutual learning and connecting, and for the JETS to initiate further connections from Japan back to their home countries.

Japan has formed a national-level organisation or consortium to coordinate SNGs' international activities. The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, or

CLAIR, maintains offices throughout Japan and in many overseas locations including one in Sydney.

In recent years the SNGs' international programs have experienced a dramatic downturn. Japan's shrinking economy has reduced their sources of revenue right when these SNGs are under ever more pressure to deal with challenging issues such as care for the elderly and health and education in their localities. But this by no means signals the end of SNGs' strong interactions with the international community.

In fact, the need to seek outside sources of income is compelling some SNGs to approach the task of international linkages even more creatively—and strategically—to ensure durable connections that yield economic and other benefits to all parties into the long term.

We need to rid ourselves of the old mindset of positioning Asia 'out there'—poorly developed and in need of training and education from us.

Japan's model for international engagements has been adopted by South Korean SNGs and in recent years Chinese provinces and localities have also taken initiatives to link themselves with communities abroad for trade, investment, education, cultural, and other activities.

The advent of SNGs in many Asian nations becoming proactive in international policy to connect and establish networks with partners abroad presents opportunities for our state and local governments in Australia to identify linkage opportunities and creatively position themselves in ways that can work to mutual advantage.

Importantly, opportunities in Asia should not be considered a one-way street, with Australian trainers providing know-how and technical assistance on a commercial basis. This engagement must be a two-way street—learning and assisting each other across national borders bilaterally, or multilaterally where appropriate.

We need to rid ourselves of the old mindset of positioning Asia 'out there'—poorly developed and in need of training and education from us.

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For Australians to be effective and productive in the long-term, we need to think creatively and strategically, from a position that's very well informed about our counterparts and others we can usefully connect with across Asia both bilaterally and multilaterally. Results will not appear in a few months; likely they will take years to come through. But the investment in learning and preparing—the money, time and energy required—are surely worth our while.

Unfortunately, in Australia these decisions are made with focus much more keenly on annual budget cycles.

Unfortunately, governments at all levels in countries like Australia have their eyes locked on to electoral cycles—in our case three years. This tends to push pursuit of long-term opportunities off the radar. A forthcoming book that I've edited with my colleague John Spoehr, *The engaging state*¹, reveals South Australia's slightly more active approach in Asia, especially in the last five years. But the evidence still weighs heavily in favour of a strong European orientation. For example, parliamentary travel of South Australian MPs and their engagement with Asia is still fairly low key.

South Australia's new Labor premier, Jay Weatherill, announced last month that the state may close most of its international trade offices, many of which are in Asia: China, Hong Kong, India and Vietnam (*The Australian*, 1 May 2012). The offices in India and Vietnam were opened only recently, so this announcement may signal the SA Government's lack of vision and long-term planning.

Unfortunately, in Australia these decisions are made with focus much more keenly on annual budget cycles than on careful planning with medium- to long-term vision. Meantime, South Australia is likely to maintain its Agent-General's office in London and Premier Weatherill travelled to London to invite Prince

William and the Duchess of Cambridge to visit South Australia, while he has cancelled his planned trip to China.

The state's priorities are clear for all to see: traditional European partners are still streets ahead of Asian countries.

Where does that leave us? At the subnational government level, Australian engagement with our Asian neighbours remains fairly weak when compared to many other Western countries in North America and Europe.

Right now, opportunities for more extensive and varied links with Asia are virtually at our doorstep. It's now for us to take them up, or create them ourselves with our counterparts in Asia, and then to maximise these opportunities for long-term, mutual gain.

We must have deeper appreciation of our Asian partners—so that we can recognise opportunities to initiate and cultivate linkages; so that we know how to respond most effectively to the initiatives of those who are—or are not—our counterparts in Asia; so that we can pursue relations with them sensitively, as we wish to be treated ourselves. This brings us back to a call for education to steadily increase our knowledge of Asia at all levels of society, so that as a nation we are well prepared to create and maximise opportunities in this Asian century now upon us.

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Purnendra Jain is Professor, Centre for Asian Studies, the University of Adelaide, and President of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. This is an edited version of his keynote speech 'Australia and Asia: our links, our opportunities, our future' to the Institute of Public Administration of Australia, Melbourne, on 8 May 2012.

Myth or reality? Thailand's threat to Cambodia

Cambodian nationalists perceive Thailand as a threat to their country.

By Kimly Ngoun

Cambodian nationalists and rulers have often promoted Thailand as a threat to Cambodia's national identity at times of difficult relations between the neighbouring countries. But is the perception of Thailand as a threat to Cambodia a myth or a reality?

On the one hand, the perception of Thailand as a threat to Cambodia has been—and is—a construct of Cambodian nationalists and rulers to advance their personal and political agendas. They use Thai 'otherness' to construct their own 'Khmerness', which is a source of national political power and legitimacy. By branding Thailand as the enemy of Cambodia's nationhood, they can sometimes discredit their political rivals and divert attention from social issues like poverty, corruption, social injustice and human rights abuse.

In the 1950s and 1960s, King Norodom Sihanouk successfully promoted the perception of Thailand as a threat to discredit his Khmer political rivals, led by Son Ngoc Thanh, who cooperated with Thai government and used Thailand as a base from which to criticise Sihanouk's government. Sihanouk convinced the Cambodian people that the Khmer group were traitors because they were collaborating with the country's enemy.

In two recent disputes, Cambodia's current prime minister Hun Sen has portrayed Thailand as the 'bad guy' intent on stealing Khmer national heritage. The first dispute, in 2003, arose over a rumour that a famous Thai actress, Sovanan Kongying, would only ever accept an invitation to perform in Cambodia if the Angkor Wat Temple was returned to Thailand.

The latest border dispute, in 2008—over UNESCO's listing of the Preah Vihear Temple as a World Heritage site under the sole management of Cambodia—is also about land adjacent to the ancient temple. By projecting himself as the defender of this national heritage, Hun Sen has managed to erode the

popularity of his main opposition party, the Sam Rainsy Party.

In the late 1990s and well into 2005, high-profile members of the Sam Rainsy Party often escaped to Thailand after receiving threats of arrest for their political activities or for their harsh criticism of Hun Sen's government. By showing that the opposition party did nothing for the country except criticise him and his government while he was busy defending the ancient temples and national sovereignty, Hun



Hun Sen—strengthening his power base in the military.

Sen diverted the Cambodian people's attention from the various issues raised by his political opponents.

The conflicts with Thailand in 2003 and 2008 also contributed to the victory of Hun Sen's Cambodian People's

Party in both general elections. The 2008 border dispute also provided Hun Sen with an opportunity to strengthen his power base in the military by replacing the long-serving commander-in-chief, General Ke Kim Yan, with his deputy, General Pol Saroeun, who is seen as more loyal to Hun Sen. The Prime Minister also promoted military officials who are close to him.

One of PAD's leaders publicly urged the Thai army to invade Cambodia.

But the perception of Cambodian nationalists that Thailand is a threat is also a reality. Some Thai nationalists and leaders have shown a negative attitude towards Cambodia.

Prominent Thai historian Charnvit Kasetsiri suggests this has been influenced by later Thai rulers and elites instilling hatred against Cambodia among the Thai people, and nationalism.

This was perhaps started by King Rama VI (r.1910–1925) and further developed by field marshals Phibun Songkhram and Luang Wichit in the 1930s and 1940s, and then passed on to former prime minister, Field Marshal Sarit

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Thanarat (1959–63).¹ The Cambodian elites see these attitudes as a real threat to their nation.

After the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in 1962 that the Preah Vihear Temple and its vicinity are under Cambodian sovereignty and ordered Thailand to withdraw its soldiers from the ancient temple, the Thai flag and flagpole were removed and placed in



Angkor Wat—disputed claims.

a museum in Thailand. Thai prime minister Sarit Thanarat said that, although the ICJ's judgement gave the temple to Cambodia, the soul of the temple

of Phra Viharn (the Thai name for Preah Vihear) remains with Thailand.²



Preah Vihear Temple—flagpole removed.

Undoubtedly, Cambodia saw the removal of the flag in such a manner, and the words of the Thai prime minister, as Thailand's

intention to reclaim the temple back when the opportunity arose. Contemporary maps in Thailand showing the Preah Vihear Temple—marked Khao Prah Viharn—being on the Thai side of the border³, which has also caused Cambodian elites to further suspect Thai intentions.

The antiCambodia attitudes of the leaders of Thailand's People's Alliance for Democracy—the Yellow Shirts—also continue to worry the Cambodian elites. On one occasion, one of PAD's leaders, Sondhi Limthongkul, publicly urged the Thai army to invade Cambodia and capture the provinces of Siem Reap, Battambang and Koh Kong—so that Thailand could force Cambodia to give up Preah Vihear in exchange for the return of the provinces.⁴

Former Thai prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and Thai army commanders showed no willingness to accept unarmed Indonesian observers into the disputed border area. This, and remarks such as that of the Yellow Shirt

leader, have confirmed or reinforced the belief of Cambodian nationalists that Thailand remains a threat to Cambodian nationhood.

Thus, Cambodian elites have been able to provoke nationalist sentiments against Thailand—because Thai elites have continued to show signs or attitudes that could be interpreted as a threat to Cambodia. The perception of Cambodian nationalists of Thailand as a threat to their country is, therefore, both a myth and a reality.

The elites in both countries, however, have benefited politically by portraying themselves as nationalists defending the sovereignty of their respective countries. As shown, for example, Cambodia's former King Sihanouk and former Thai prime minister Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat benefited by playing the nationalist game—as do Cambodia's prime minister Hun Sen and Thailand's Yellow Shirts in the ongoing Preah Vihear Temple dispute.

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Malaysia's next general election shaping up to be a battle of the coalitions

The survival of the winner of the next general election will depend on their ability to address complex changes in Malaysian society.

By Greg Lopez

Malaysia's 13th general election, which must be held by April 2013, has been the most anticipated in Malaysian history, given the megatrends that are occurring in the country and the ability of the two main coalition contenders to manage them.

Barisan Nasional (BN/National Front) and the Pakatan Rakyat (PR/People's Alliance/Pact) are the main contestants. The BN—currently the longest-ruling coalition in the world—is a 13-party coalition based mainly around ethnic and regional interests. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) is the single most important political party in the ruling coalition, dominating not only the coalition, but all major institutions in Malaysia, except in the state of Sarawak. Najib Razak, son of Malaysia's second prime minister, has led the coalition through an interparty compromise since becoming UMNO president.

The PR, in turn, is a new and informal coalition, set up in the euphoria of the opposition's historical performance at the March 2008 12th general election. None of its three component parties has a clear majority, and all understand that their success is predicated on their ability to work together. Keadilan's (The People's Justice Party) unelected leader Anwar Ibrahim leads the coalition by virtue of his ability to hold together three disparate groups—the Chinese-dominated Democratic Action Party (DAP), the Islamic Party of Malaysia (PAS) and his own band of largely ex-BN/UMNO members.

Five critical megatrends face the contenders at the national level: economic performance, demographic changes, urbanisation, Islamisation and an island/peninsular divide.

The middle-income trap: The popular diagnosis for Malaysia's stagnating economic performance is that Malaysia is caught in a

middle-income trap, where it is unable to compete with low-cost producers on cost, but also by not having the institutions, human resources and technological capabilities to compete with advanced economies in innovative products and processes.

A young nation: 71% of Malaysians are under the age of 40, with 34% aged between 20 and 40.

An urban nation: 71% of Malaysia is now urban. Only Kelantan, Pahang, Perlis, Sabah and Sarawak, where urbanisation rates are below 55%, are still largely rural.

An Islamic nation: The pervasiveness of Islam as a political tool and the increasing piety among Muslims have reached unprecedented levels.



The Malaysian Parliament building, Kuala Lumpur.

Two nations: The politics of peninsular Malaysia starkly differ from that of the island of Borneo. Political leaders and citizens in

Sabah and Sarawak continue to distrust peninsular politicians, and all politics in these two states is local.

These trends translate into electoral issues in the following ways. Most critically for the BN, its successful economic strategy is now being questioned on several counts. First, Malaysia's low-cost, export-oriented economic model has seen wages for 80% of Malaysian households stagnate for the past three decades. These households earn less than RM3000 a month, in a country where the average monthly income is RM4025

More critically, the bottom 40% of Malaysian households earn RM1 440 a month. Seventy-one per cent of this bottom 40% are *bumiputeras*—a Malay term translated literally as 'prince of land'. The average monthly income of the top 20% of households is RM10 000.

Continued page 22

Battle of the coalitions

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International benchmarks and surveys consistently show that the quality of education in Malaysia, at all levels, cannot match that of the successful East Asian economies. Eighty per cent of Malaysia's labour force has no more than the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) qualification (equivalent to Year 10), and the 57 universities and the more than 500 colleges are producing large numbers of poorly equipped graduates. This has led to a poorly skilled labour force and unemployed graduates, with the economy facing severe skills shortages in a tight labour market.

This has had a significant impact on Malaysia's young voters. The majority of local graduates utilise a government loan scheme. With limited employability and mediocre wages, they end up saddled with enormous debts. The problem is exacerbated by high unemployment. Graduates accounted for more than one-quarter of those unemployed in 2007, while unemployment among new graduates was 24.1% in 2008.

The public sector, at the federal and state level, and government-linked corporations (GLCs) have long been used to mop up *bumiputera* graduates as part of an implicit contract between UMNO and the Malays. With the country experiencing economic stagnation, rising public debt, depleting natural resource rents from fossil fuels, the bloated civil service and GLCs are now a severe drag on the Malaysian economy and can no longer function as a source of employment opportunity for the thousands of *Bumiputera* graduates.

Many non-*bumiputera* graduates also suffer the same predicament, as they are locked out of the public sector and the GLCs. Many are also ill-equipped to meet the demands of the private sector, especially in businesses exposed to international competition.

Increasing urbanisation has led to greater interaction between Malaysians of different races and also between Malaysians and the outside world. Although there is still significant segmentation among the races and social classes in urban areas, this has meant greater interaction at work and global development that have produced varied results. Most importantly, the interactions

have forced Malaysians to focus more on the issues that affect their daily lives such as the quality of life, the cost of living, or global events such as the Arab Spring.

Urbanisation also challenges the BN's monopoly on information. In 2010, 65% of Malaysians were using the internet. Cyberspace has been a boon for the opposition and civil society, and is an arena the BN has yet to effectively control. High urbanisation rates, which are driven primarily through rural-urban migration, also connect rural areas and urban centres more strongly through social networks. Families and individuals returning to their rural homes for festivities bring with them the latest political developments, made more accessible by the internet. This is further challenging the BN's control in rural areas.

While Islam had always mattered in the political and social sphere as an ideology, it is now also encroaching into the economic sphere.

Islamisation of the public sphere—despite Malaysia's secular constitution—has taken a concrete foothold in Malaysian society, due mainly to the contest between UMNO and PAS for the Malay votes. Global developments have also influenced this trend. Islamic fundamentalism now pervades all aspects of Malaysian life, both public and private. While Islam had always mattered in the political and social sphere as an ideology, it is now also encroaching into the economic sphere.



Prime Minister Najib Razak

Politics on the island of Borneo is based on local issues and mistrust of the federal government. The 2008 general election established the importance of Sabah and Sarawak in forming federal government. Sabah and Sarawak have become increasingly assertive since. As all politics on the island are local, and as a result of their strengthened bargaining position, Sabah and Sarawak—long considered fixed deposits for the Basian Nasional—are no longer a foregone conclusion.

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Battle of the coalitions

From page 22

The response from the contenders is influenced primarily by their incumbency—or lack of it. The component parties of the BN—until the 2008 general election—had long-serving leaders, which impacted severely on inter and intraparty dynamism. The incumbency of these leaders and the BN resulted in a disconnect between entrenched party leaders and grassroots leaders, as well as members and supporters. Interparty competition for resource rents and for patronage has also resulted in leaders leaving the party or being put away in ‘cold storage’.

The incumbency of these leaders has also limited the ability of the parties to attract new members and develop new and dynamic second-echelon leaders. Most damaging has been the UMNO’s increased strength: this has relegated other coalition partners to minions, effectively making elite bargaining redundant—the hallmark of the BN.



Anwar Ibrahim:
charismatic.

In contrast, the Pakatan Ryat, despite strong leadership, has only marginally more democratic processes, due mainly to limited opportunities to access and distribute resource rents. The Reformasi, Bersih and HINDRAF movements, Anwar Ibrahim’s charisma, and most importantly, the government’s inability to manage the megatrends, have seen young people flocking to the PR.

The two main contenders have framed their arguments for support in a contrasting manner. UMNO, through the BN, has argued that social stability delivers economic growth and that only a strong UMNO can guarantee social stability.

At the 13th general election, UMNO will be arguing that it has the track record in delivering social stability and economic growth. PR, instead, is arguing that good governance and social justice are critical to Malaysia’s continued economic growth and social stability. PR argues that the persistent weakening of the Malaysian economy, and social unrest, are due to the BN’s

mismanagement of the economy, its divisive racial and religious politics, and the abuse of the rule of law.

The 2008 general election solidified the two-coalition system, and this is unlikely to be reversed. The surprising aspect of this development is that it took opposition parties 50-odd years to cooperate effectively, considering that Malaysians never gave the BN, on average, more than 57% of the popular votes—with its best-ever result of 65% achieved only in the booming 90s, at the 1995 general election.

Malaysians have demonstrated time and again that, despite its hegemony, the BN is not an overwhelmingly popular coalition. While the results of the 13th general election will depend mainly on the leadership abilities of Najib Razak and Anwar Ibrahim to manage their coalitions in addressing issues, neither coalition will remain in power for long—even with the support of a rigged electoral system—if it fails to address these megatrends effectively.

Greg Lopez is the editor of the Malaysia section of [New Mandala](#), an academic blog hosted by the College of Asia Pacific, the Australian National University. He is a PhD candidate at the ANU’s Crawford School of Public Policy.

Through the eyes of children— Japan's 3.11 disaster

An exhibition of children's photographs focuses on recovery after disaster.

By Evon Fung

Japan is a country that has always had a lot of momentum—a lasting energy bound by the spirit of its people, carrying them as one through the test of time.

Throughout 2012, the Japan Foundation, Sydney is presenting a trilogy of photographic exhibitions, illustrating the immense power and momentum that drives the nation of Japan. The *Momentum* series uncovers raw images of the 11 March 2011 disaster, takes

もう、道路を走れる。
The road is **clear**.



道元73歳の没後9年、
これだけで、道元は中が認めらるほどに尊敬されていく。
伴雲松の著した傳傳一対に人々、先づ眼を惹かれる。

*Exquisite City: Seven days after the storm,
the roads are sufficiently cleared for traffic.
Dante's Divine Comedy is stuck in their hearts.*

根っこがあれば大丈夫。
As long as you have roots



2017年 第 1 卷 第 1 期 福建档案与史学 *Fujian Archives and History*

洪亮吉、郑珍等。

郑珍对王士禛的山水诗进行了批评，认为王士禛山水诗在艺术上追求对偶精工，对仗工整，注重字句的锤炼，缺乏对山水景物的真实感受和深刻描绘，缺乏对自然美的深刻理解和感悟。

洪亮吉在《卷一》中批评道：“王士禛山水诗，多对偶精工，对仗工整，注重字句的锤炼，缺乏对山水景物的真实感受和深刻描绘，缺乏对自然美的深刻理解和感悟。”

Wangshi's 'Shan Shui Shi' (Landscape Poetry) Shows the Sign of a Style evolved only for the interests

you on a journey into the history of Japan's northern Tohoku region and finishes with a vivid collection of contemporary portraits depicting a vibrant nation full of strength and hope.

In the first of the series, the Japan Foundation, in cooperation with the Recovery Assistance Media Team (RAMT), a Japanese nongovernment, not-for-profit organisation, established to

directly help the people affected by the disaster, presented *Messages for our children—3/11: a new beginning*.

This exhibition—opened by RAMT founder, Ryuji Enokida (see interview, page 23)—featured 60 photographs, the majority taken by children from the affected areas in Japan. But rather than focusing on the actual disaster, the collection was centred on the nation's recovery process, and each photo was

accompanied with a brief account of the moment captured.

The project came about from RAMT. Through documentation, reporting and coverage on the disaster stricken areas, RAMT's aim was to create a resource for future generations. An ongoing project, RAMT is continually adding to its website pictures, video interviews and other forms of media. There is an expectation that the website will offer a wealth of information and advice for Japan and the rest of the world on how the Japanese people coped and survived the disaster. It is a contribution towards a positive future.

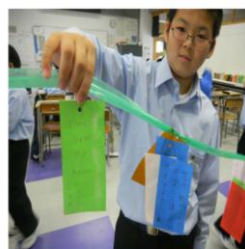
During the reporting process, RAMT discovered many inspiring stories and was touched by numerous encounters it had come across demonstrating the strength of the Japanese bond and community spirit. This is apparent from the many photos that demonstrated a sense of a cooperative spirit, family and friendships that lie at the crux of the exhibition. One particular example is a photograph titled 'Like having lots of grandchildren'. In the image taken at Koshi Junior High, an elderly man receives a massage from one of the students. 'After sleeping on the hard floor for so many

Continued page 25

見つけたのは、ビッグスマイル。
(Cheese!)



世界中の神様へ。
"Please new my home"



2011/7/7 女子部員記録 撮影：東北福祉大学中野校 Kawashima, P. H. 2

懐かしい語り場の復活。
Warm feet, soft eyes

[illegible]

Through the eyes of children

From page 24

nights, he deserves it,' says the caption. In another example, titled 'I did survive', taken at Touni Junior High, students join the school janitor to gather water for toilets. Another, 'I'll be your mom today' shows two little girls, roughly aged seven and three, with the older girl reading a book to her toddler friend who is staying at the same shelter.

小さな、お母さん。
I'll be your **mom** today



2011. 6. 18. 宮城県東松島町 避難所・仮設児童福祉センター
宮城県東松島町 避難所・仮設児童福祉センター
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Messages for our children—3/11: a new beginning concluded early in May, but there is a chance to see other exhibitions in the *Momentum* series such as *TOHOKU: through the eyes of Japanese*

photographers, which takes us back to the historical and cultural background of the Tohoku region. Many of the landscape images are now just remnants of the past.

TOHOKU: through the eyes of Japanese photographers is on at the Japan Foundation Gallery from 8–21 June 2012.

Evon Fung is Program Coordinator, Arts & Culture Department, Japan Foundation, Sydney.

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION:

The [Japan Foundation](#) aims to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations through a diverse range of programs and events. The Japan Foundation, Sydney, runs a gallery space, library and Japanese language courses for all levels, catering from beginner to advance. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 23 offices in 21 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1977.

An interview with Ryuji Enokida



The founder of the Recovery Assistance Media Team (RAMT), musician, songwriter and media producer Ryuji Enokida opened the first exhibition in the Japan

Foundation, Sydney's *Momentum* series in May.

In an interview with *Asian Currents*, he talked about RAMAT's work to draw out the responses of children in the Tohoku region to the 3.11 disaster.

What does RAMT do?

We're an organisation built on the premise of delivering support and information to and from disaster-affected areas over the medium to long term. We intend to increase the visibility of topics related to the affected areas [of the 3.11 disaster] so that as many people as possible are aware of what is going on in those areas, and therefore more people can work together to solve the problems arising from the various situation.

The children who endured this tragedy bear a great burden of trauma. So we asked as many of them as we could to engage in a photographic media-art project based on their everyday lives as they watch and help with the recovery of their homes, towns and families. By broadcasting this work worldwide, we're ultimately aiming to protect their vulnerable hearts and minds with encouragement.

You've worked with children on other projects. Why children?

I started what I named the Tsuatwaru Concert for the Yokohama Art Project around the time my eldest daughter was born. In Japan, education is too focused on teaching pure knowledge, but I believe the ability to think is directly supported by our ability to 'feel'. The number of class hours based on emotive subjects such as art or music are continually being diminished and, on top of that, children are being given less and less opportunity to really 'touch' the natural world. Based on that observation, I decided to start my own emotion or feeling-based form of education.

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Ryuji Enokida

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What are the main themes coming through from the children involved in the RAMT project?

The meaning of life in general. And also a heightened sense of insight through community, family and friendship.

The RAMT website refers to discovering the fundamental strengths of the Japanese. What are they?

Communicating—which is a core objective for RAMT.

But rather than outlining the strength of the Japanese we are, in a way, outlining the weakness of humankind. Compared to the full power of nature itself, humans are so weak—our ‘power’ doesn’t even come close to being measured on the same scale. People are equipped with the instinctive ability to work together for strength in numbers. Japan is a country blessed with incredible abundance in nature. That is perhaps why it also has such a comparatively large number of natural disasters. As a result, the Japanese people have learned over time that working together makes their chances of survival much higher in this hazardous environment. In other words, it is programmed in their DNA as a survival tactic.

How are the children themselves recovering from the disaster? Does their work reflect optimism for the future?

I don't know if it is optimism, so to speak. Rather, I think they're being watchful. A kind of careful supervision. They want things to go back to normal and are willing to do absolutely anything it takes to do that. They're working just like the community organisers. I believe this is a behaviour brought about when children are given a chance to see what they have inside them and how much they can do—how much change they can bring. Perhaps this is interpreted as optimism when viewed from an outside perspective. In other words, the kids have so many things they need to do—but slowly. They've figured out how to do these things together with the whole community. These are the scenes you see in the pictures.

Japan online art directory launched

The Japan Foundation, Sydney has launched the [Japan art directory in Australia](#) (JAD), an online reference site introducing Australian-based Japanese artists and non-Japanese artists practising traditional and contemporary Japanese art forms, as well as experts in the area of Japanese art and Japan-related arts organisations.



Ceramicist Mitsuo Shoji. Photo: Mayu Kanamori .



Australian ballet soloist Reiko Honbo.

JAD currently profiles nearly 120 artists, experts and organisations, and includes regular artist features. The database will continue to be expanded and can be searched by name, state, art forms and key words, or simply by browsing within the site.

‘With this online resource, we aim to raise the profiles of our featured artists and increase the possibilities for cross-cultural collaboration between Japan and Australia in the arts and culture sector,’ said Nao Endo, Director, The Japan Foundation, Sydney.



Shakuhachi player Riley Lee.

‘JAD provides Japanese and Japan-related artists with an important platform for promoting our presence and our work. In doing so, it paves the way for greater collaboration between the Japanese and Australian artistic communities, as well as strengthening the network among Japanese artists living and practising here in Australia.

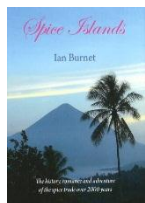
The foundation is [accepting applications](#) to be part of JAD on a continuous basis.

Books on Asia

From the Asia Bookroom

Sally Burdon

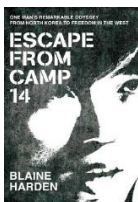
[Asia Bookroom](#)



***Spice Islands.* By Ian Burnet, dustjacket, Rosenberg, Australia. \$39.95.**

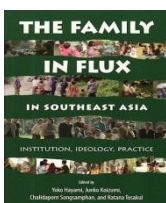
Cloves and nutmeg are indigenous to the Spice Islands of eastern Indonesia. The

book tells of the many uses of these exotic spices and the history of their trade over a period of more than 2000 years. It describes how the spice trade into Europe came to be dominated by Middle Eastern and Venetian merchants. Backed by the Crowns of Portugal and Spain explorers such as Columbus, Vasco da Gama and Magellan dreamt of sailing directly to the Spice Islands. Much of the story is told through the lives of these historical characters, as well as Sir Francis Drake, Jan Pieterzoon Coen, Pierre Poivre and others lesser known but equally important.



***Escape from Camp 14: one man's remarkable odyssey from North Korea to freedom in the West.* By Blaine Harden, paperback, 242 pp., Pan Macmillan. \$29.99.**

Introducing the incredible story of Shin Dong-hyuk—the only person born in a North Korean gulag ever to escape. Twenty-six years ago, Shin Dong-hyuk was born inside Camp 14, one of five sprawling political prisons in the mountains of North Korea. Located about 80 kilometres north of Pyongyang, the camp is a 'no-exit prison' where the only sentence is life. No one born in Camp 14 or in any North Korean political prison camp has escaped—except Shin.



***The family in flux in Southeast Asia: institution, ideology, practice.* By Yok Hayami et al. (eds), 546 pp., Silkworm Books, Thailand. \$61.95.**

The family in flux in Southeast Asia fills a gap in studies of the modern family. With much talk about the

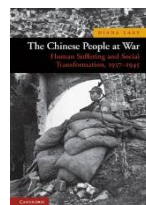
'family in crisis' in the industrialised world, new trends are affecting basic family structures in Southeast Asia as well. While there has been abundant research on the historical evolution of the 'family' in the West and much theorising about the 'family' in the industrialised world, accounts of the family in Southeast Asia are uneven, and understanding is still inadequate.

This volume, with contributions from leading scholars from Southeast Asia and Japan, covers a wide range of topics, such as legal institutionalisation, polygamy, national identity, nationalism and ideology, gender roles, migration, and trans-national marriage. The disciplinary backgrounds of the authors range across history, political science, economics, sociology, literary studies, and anthropology.



***The orphan master's son.* By Adam Johnson, paperback, 443 pp., Transworld. \$32.95.**

An epic novel and a thrilling literary discovery, *The orphan master's son* follows a young man's journey through the icy waters, dark tunnels, and eerie spy chambers of the world's most mysterious dictatorship, North Korea. Part thriller, part story of innocence lost, part story of romantic love, this is also a riveting portrait of a world heretofore hidden from view: a North Korea rife with hunger, corruption, and casual cruelty but also camaraderie, stolen moments of beauty, and love.



***The Chinese people at war: human suffering and social transformation, 1937-1945.* By Diana Lary, paperback, 231 pp., Cambridge University Press. \$62.95.**

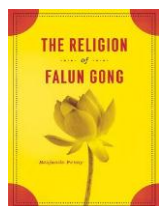
Historian Diana Lary tells the tragic history of China's War of Resistance and its consequences from the perspective of those who went through it. Using archival evidence only recently made available, interviews with survivors and extracts from literature she creates a vivid and highly disturbing picture of

Continued page 28

Books on Asia

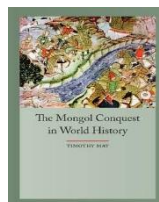
The Chinese people at war

From page 27



the havoc created by the war, the destruction of towns and villages, the displacement of peoples and the accompanying economic and social disintegration

As the author suggests in this 2010 interpretation of modern Chinese history, far from stemming the spread of communism from the USSR, which was the Japanese pretext for invasion, the horrors of the war, and the damage it created, nurtured the Chinese Communist Party and helped it to win power in 1949.



***The Mongol conquests in world history.* By Timothy May, dustjacket, 319 pp., Reaktion Books. \$64.95.**

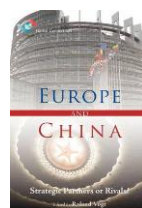
The Mongol Empire (c. 1200–1350) in many ways marks the beginning of the modern age, as well as globalisation. While communications between the extremes of Eurasia existed prior to the Mongols, they were infrequent and were often through intermediaries. The rise of the Mongol Empire changed everything: through their conquests the Mongols swept away dozens of empires and kingdoms and replaced them with the largest contiguous empire in history.

While the Mongols were the most destructive force in the premodern world, the Pax Mongolica had stabilising effects on the social, cultural and economic life of the inhabitants of the vast territory, allowing merchants and missionaries to traverse Eurasia. The conquests also set in motion other changes in warfare, medicine, food, culture and scientific knowledge. When Mongol power declined, it was replaced with over a dozen successors which retained elements of the Mongol Empire, but none of its unity. The *Mongol conquest in world history* examines the many ways in which the conquests were a catalyst for change and offers comprehensive coverage of the entire empire, rather than a more regional approach, as well as providing a long view of the Mongol Empire's legacy.

***The religion of Falun Gong.* By Benjamin Penny, dustjacket, 262 pp., The University of Chicago Press. \$58.95.**

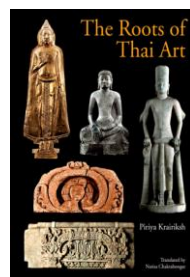
In July 1999, a mere seven years after the founding of the religious movement known as Falun Gong, the Chinese government banned it. Falun Gong is still active in other countries, and its suppression has become a primary concern of human rights activists and is regularly discussed in dealings between the Chinese Government and its Western counterparts. But while much has been written on Falun Gong's relation to political issues, no one has analysed in depth what its practitioners actually believe and do.

The religion of Falun Gong remedies that omission, providing the first serious examination of Falun Gong teachings. Benjamin Penny argues that in order to understand Falun Gong, one must grasp the beliefs, practices, and texts of the movement and its founder, Li Hongzhi. Penny opens a revealing window into the nature and future of contemporary China.



***Europe and China: strategic partners or rivals?* By Roland Vogt, paperback, 283 pp., Hong Kong University Press. AU\$45.00**

These essays explore the growing density of interlinkages between Europe and China, two of the world's most influential and dynamic regions. They explore the increasing intensity and complexity of Sino–European relations, critically reflecting on the challenges for building a partnership that is less dominated by trade, and highlighting important new dimensions that are beginning to characterise this relation-ship—strategic commitments, human rights, energy, climate change policy, and Africa among others.



***The roots of Thai art.* By Piriya Krairiksh, hardback, 416pp, River Books, \$ 65.**

The genius of the Mon and Khmer peoples, who inhabited what is present day Thailand from the 4th to the 13th centuries, manifested itself in the absorption of influences from India and China

Continued page 29

Books on Asia

The roots of Thai art

From page 28

into a distinctive local sacred art with quite exceptional aesthetic qualities. Thailand's pre-eminent art historian, Piriya Krairiksh, retraces these multiple interactions in the early and mediaeval period so as to reveal the roots of the unique cultural identity we know as Thai.

This publication provides a comprehensive survey of the origins and history of Thai Art to the 12th century. As Australia tries to engage more with the Asian region through a range of cultural activities, this book will provide Australian scholars and curators with a deeper understanding of the art of the region. The project will strengthen already existing links between Asian Art curators and Australian cultural institutions with their counterparts in Thailand.

New books from the ASAA series

[Southeast Asia Series](#)

The series seeks to publish cutting-edge research on all countries and peoples of Southeast Asia.

[Women in Asia Series](#)

The Women's Caucus of the ASAA operates a publication series in conjunction with Routledge that focuses on promoting scholarship for women in Asia.

[The East Asia Series](#)

The series welcomes proposals on subjects principally concerned with any part of the East Asian region (China, Japan, North and South Korea and Taiwan).

[South Asia Series](#)

The series publishes outstanding research on the countries and peoples of South Asia across a wide range of disciplines.

Asian Studies Review



[Asian Studies Review](#) is multidisciplinary and welcomes contributions in the fields of anthropology, modern history, politics, international relations, sociology, modern Asian languages and literature, contemporary

philosophy, religion, human geography, health sciences, and the environment.

The journal focuses on the modern histories, cultures, and societies of Asia and welcomes submissions that adopt a contemporary approach to critical studies of the Asian region. [Asian Studies Review](#) welcomes research in new fields and emerging disciplines, including cultural studies, gender and sexuality studies, film and media studies, popular and youth cultures, queer studies, diasporic studies, transnational and globalisation studies. [Asian Studies Review](#) is associated with the Asian Studies Association of Australia. All research articles in this journal have undergone rigorous peer review.

Registrations still open for ASAA conference

Registrations are still open for the ASAA's 19th Biennial Conference, from 11 to 13 July 2012.

Early-bird registration for the conference itself has now closed, but full-rate registration is still open.

Delegates are urged to register and pay for the conference dinner as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

A highlight of the conference will be a plenary panel on 'Australia in the Asian Century: reflections on the Australian Government White Paper'. The White Paper's author, Ken Henry AC, will lead the panel. Participants will include such distinguished exponents of Australian statecraft in Asia as Ric Smith AO, John Menadue AO and Richard Woolcott AC.

The conference papers and panels offer an enormous variety of topics with many parallel sessions—from power politics or transgender people; traditional monarchies or revolutionary movements; Bombay trams or new social media.



The Female Orphan School: the oldest building of any Australian educational institution

Special visitors and speakers come from all over Asia and elsewhere. They include Professor Lord Meghnad Desai from the London School of Economics; writer Christopher Kremmer; old

friends professors Wang Gungwu and Anthony Reid; and new friends like professors Lily Kong from Singapore, Jie-Hyun Lim from Seoul, Gaphee Ko, Hanshin University, and Hiroko Kataoka from California.

A closing plenary session on the future of Asian Studies will be chaired by ASAA president Pumendra Jain. The full program is available from the [conference website](#).

The conference will be held at the University of Western Sydney's Parramatta Campus. The campus is on the banks of the Parramatta River, adjacent to Rydalmere railway station, and is a fascinating architectural mix within fine landscaped grounds in a picturesque

location based on 18th-century landscape ideals. It features the oldest building of any Australian educational institution, the former Female Orphan School of 1813, which overlooks the river.

Accommodation is available at various Parramatta hotels and use of a frequent and free shuttle bus service between the hotels and the campus will be included in registration.

Jobs

Two full-time faculty positions (open rank), School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada.

The Faculty of Social Sciences comprises nine departments, schools and institutes, which offer undergraduate, Master's and doctoral programs in both English and French.

The School of International Development and Global Studies, with 17 professors, is Canada's largest department in the field of international development.

The school is accepting applications for two tenure-track positions (open-rank). In one of the positions, a suitable candidate may be considered for Director of the School. Priority will be given to candidates who can demonstrate expertise and a strong research and publication record in the broad area of development and globalisation. Expertise in the fields of sustainability and livelihoods; or social policy and poverty would be an asset.

Applications close: 20 November 2012

(Senior) Research Fellowships, one-year Visiting (Senior) Research Fellowships and Postdoctoral Fellowships (new), National University Singapore (NUS), Asia Research Institute, closes: 24 August 2012.

The institute is calling for applications for (senior) research fellowships, one-year visiting (senior) research fellowships and postdoctoral fellowships, 2013 intake.

Coming events

'Reading Dutch for historical research', intensive residential course, to be held at South Durras, NSW, 18 June–5 July 2012. The course is intended for those needing a working knowledge of written Dutch for professional purposes, including the study of Asian history. Open to academics, professionals and current and intending postgraduate students. See [website](#) for further information.

'China and Shakespeare: icons for a post-national age', Canberra, 6pm, 3 July 2012. Visiting scholar Dr Alexander Huang, author of *Chinese Shakespeares*, will speak at the Asia Bookroom. Dr Huang is Director of Dean's Scholars in Shakespeare Program and Associate Professor of English, Theatre, East Asian Languages and Literatures, and International Affairs at George Washington University, Washington, D.C. Venue: Asia Bookroom, Unit 2, 1–3 Lawry Place, Macquarie, ACT. RSVP by 2 July, 02 6251 5191, or by [email](#).

ANU Asia Pacific Week, 8–13 July 2012, the Australian National University, Canberra, will bring together leading experts on the Asia–Pacific region together with 100 delegates from around the world to engage in discussions and events focused on developments and trends that will shape the 'Asia Pacific Century'. Information on the latest confirmed content can be obtained by following the ANU APW Twitter feed #APW2012 or on [Facebook](#).

The Satyajit Ray Memorial Lecture, 'India: can the elephant run any longer?' Melbourne, 9 July, 2012, 6pm–7pm, by Baron Meghanad Desai. Baron Desai is an Indian-born British economist and Labour politician. He is an emeritus professor at the London School of Economics and has been a member of the UK House of Lords since 1991. Baron Desai will address issues relating to the national and regional political economy of India in recent times. Venue: The University of Melbourne, Melbourne Law School, Room G08, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton.

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art presents 'Variable truth', a group exhibition at the gallery at 181–187 Hay St, Sydney, **until 16 July.** The exhibition brings together a unique selection of artists who each look to the Asia–Pacific region for cross-cultural fertilisation and an understanding of their own historical trajectories. Further information from the gallery [website](#).

ASAA 19th Biennial Conference, 'Knowing Asia: Asian Studies in an Asian century', University of Western Sydney, 11–13 July 2012. See page 26.

Australian Historical Association 31st Annual Conference 9–13 July 2012, Adelaide, at the North Terrace campus, University of Adelaide. The conference seeks to explore the myriad ways in which human societies have connected over past

centuries, and the ways these interactions in time, space and cultures inform present historical debate. Further information available from the conference [website](#).

Exhibition: The complete series of Hiroshige's 'Fifty-three stations of the Tokaido', 13 July to 9 August 2012, Japan Foundation Gallery, Level 1, Chifley Plaza, 2 Chifley Square, Sydney. It will feature the complete series of Utagawa (Ando) Hiroshige's *Fifty-three stations of the Tokaido* (Hoeido version). Twenty of the prints in the series will be accompanied with photos, from the Taisho era (1912–26) and the present day, of actual locations depicted during the Edo period (1603–1868). More information: [Evon Fung](#) on 02 8239 0058 or [Amanda Thompson](#) on 02 8239 0079.

Timor-Leste forum, 10am to 5pm, 14 July 2012, University of Western Sydney, Parramatta Campus. The aim of the forum—'Building collaborative partnerships for Timor-Leste'—is to create a space for new dialogues between organisations and community groups that have experienced the challenges of and developed expertise in collaborating with Timor-Leste communities. See page 13.

Travelling the Silk Road: ancient pathway to the modern world, National Museum Australia, Canberra, until 29 July 2012. A new international exhibition from the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Open 9 am–5 pm daily. Further information: 1800 026 132 and from the [website](#).

The OzAsia Festival, Adelaide Festival Centre, 14–30 September. The festival will feature a range of performances, events and exhibitions showcasing Asian artists and Australian artists who identify with an Asian heritage. See [website](#) for further information.

Conference: 'The dimensions of the Indian Ocean world past: sources and opportunities for interdisciplinary work in Indian Ocean world history, 9th–19th centuries', the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Victoria Quay, Fremantle, 12–14 November 2012. This conference will provide a forum for a rare interdisciplinary discussion between archaeologists, historians, ethnographers and geographers about the materials, problems and opportunities for interdisciplinary work on the Indian Ocean world from the 9th to the 19th century. See [website](#) for further information.

The Asian Studies Association of Australia was founded in 1976 to promote and support the study of Asia in Australia. Its membership is drawn mainly from academic staff and students at Australian universities, but it also takes a strong interest in Asian Studies and the use of Asia-related materials in schools and in Australian attitudes to and policies towards Asia. *Asian Currents* is edited by [Allan Sharp](#).